

How Mini-Series Keep People Engaged for 31 Weeks

One way to keep the campaign fresh is to create mini-series within the 31-week schedule. Insert starts and stops so people have more than one ending and starting place. Endings give you a chance to recap and look back at how far you have come, and starting places offer the refreshment of new beginnings and natural on-ramps for those who joined late. The following ideas from other churches are provided to give you theme ideas and creative ways to schedule breaks during the 31 weeks based on different starting points in the year. One plan even incorporates Max Lucado's study on the New Testament, *God's Story, Your Story!*

3 Mini-Series, 11 Weeks Each

God Forms a People (Chapters 1-11)

Close by using the Jeopardy-style review from the adult Sunday school curriculum in the Online Resource Library, posted on the Bulletin Board.

God Pursues His People (Chapters 12-21)

Add a week after these ten chapters to review the Old Testament. Check out a review resource called Old Testament Rewind from Willow Creek Association that could be a feature in the weekend service. (www.willowcreek.com, search for "Old Testament Rewind" or "Long Story Short")

God Saves His People (Chapters 22-31)

Add a week after these ten chapters to review the New Testament. There is a New Testament Rewind product from Willow Creek Association, as well as a New Testament Jeopardy-style review in the adult Sunday school curriculum on the Bulletin Board in the Online Resource Library. (www.willowcreek.com, search for "New Testament Rewind" or "Long Story Short")

9 Mini-Series Starting in September

Hosanna! Lutheran Church in Lakeville, Minnesota broke up The Story into the following 9 mini-series, complete with changing stage sets and backdrops for each mini-series. They started in September, took a 5-week break at Christmas, a 2-week break in February for a stewardship series, a 2-week break at Easter (right after finishing the Old Testament), a 2-week break around Mother's Day, and they finished at the end of June.

- **From Eden to Egypt:** Chapters 1-4 (they built a Garden of Eden on one end of the stage and a 20' tall pyramid on the other end. True story!)
- **Homeward Bound:** Chapters 5-7
- **Unlikely Heroes:** Chapters 8-10
- **Glory Days:** Chapters 11-12
- **Headed South:** Chapters 13-15
- **Dark to Dawn:** Chapters 16-21
- **Jesus 101:** Chapters 22-24
- **Jesus 201:** Chapters 25-27
- **Our Story:** Chapters 28-31

7 Mini-Series Starting in January

*Shoreline Church in Monterey, California, starts the campaign in January, 2012 and is developing the following seven mini-series. Their plan is to do the Old Testament in the winter/spring, taking a break at Easter and for the whole summer after finishing the Old Testament, do the New Testament in the fall ending at Thanksgiving, then doing a 6-part deeper dive into the New Testament, building on the study based on Max Lucado's **Your Story, God's Story** for the 5 Sunday services plus the Christmas Eve services in December.*

- **New Beginnings** (Pentateuch): Chapters 1-6
- **Lessons in Courage** (Joshua & Judges): Chapters 7-9
3-week break for Easter
- **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly!** (United & Divided Kingdom): Chapters 10-14
- **Messages From Above** (The Prophets): Chapters 15-21
9-week break for summer
- **Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus** (The Gospels): Chapters 22-27
- **God's Work in the World and in Heaven!** (The Apostles): Chapters 28-31
2-week break for Thanksgiving
- **God's Story, Your Story** (Themes in the New Testament): Chapters 1-11, 6 parts

8 Mini-Series Starting in September

Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minnesota is starting The Story on September 11, 2011. They are dividing the campaign into eight mini-series, six on the Old Testament and two on the New Testament. The following descriptions and series titles are subject to change, but the focus is on relevant themes for today's average person who needs eternal wisdom on such issues as family, career, brokenness, busyness, and, yes, Star Wars.

Introduction "Defining Moments"

Rally Sunday, September 11th, will be themed "*Defining Moments*," talking about 9/11 as a defining moment in our nation's history, as well as the defining moments in our own lives, especially including defining moments of faith.

Chapters 1-3 "Modern Family"

This will center on family life, ours and those of Scripture. What should a family look like? What do families look like? How do we go from dysfunction to function? Ideas for improving our own family and family life. Functioning as God intended.

Chapters 4-6 "Lost and Found"

Centering on the theme of deliverance, being set free, freedom in Christ, freedom from the world's agenda, freedom to live a Christ-like life, free from sin, death, and the power of the devil; picking up themes of Lord's Prayer, "deliver us from evil (or the evil one)."

Chapters 7-10 "The Right Egg Basket"

Taking us up to Thanksgiving week, making sure we have our eggs in the right basket, laying up treasure in heaven, not on earth, leaving a legacy, facing our problems with God at our side. Dealing with the monsters or giants in our lives. Dealing with our own fear and failure.

Chapters 11-13 “Follow the Leader”

We will do Chapters 11 and 12, then insert a Christmas series, and pick up Chapter 13 the first week of January. Who is sitting on your throne? Is the King of the Universe King of your heart? As the leader goes, so go the people. How do we make sure we’re following the right “guy.” Following the greatest leader ever—Jesus.

Chapters 14-18 “Broken”

What happens when dreams and plans are shattered? Address the issue of suffering and God. Why do bad things happen? How does God work through tough situations? If God is so powerful, why do these things happen?

Chapters 19-21 “Homeward Bound”

Rebuilding your life, priorities—getting them right, making sure you’re on the right path, the death of busyness. Are you hoping for success or significance? Equip people for true mission and living for God in a godless world.

Chapters 22- 27 “The Heart of THE STORY”

This mini-series ends with Chapter 27 coinciding with Easter. Address the themes of the gospels, Jesus as God and man—the God-Man. Healings, teaching, shattered expectations, a whole new vision of the Kingdom of God. Include a build-up to Easter, inviting and welcoming first time guests, using the post-Easter series as encouragement to come back.

Chapters 28-31 “Beyond Star Wars”

Describe the birth of the church – an unstoppable force – and how people can join “the Force” and defeat the “evil empire.” What are our weapons for war? God’s plans are so much bigger than we ever think or imagine. He really does want us to save the world. End on the first week of May.