

# PATHWAY

BIRTH TO COLLEGE FAITH DEVELOPMENT  
AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



**FIRST BAPTIST**  
*of* **GAINESVILLE**

# PATHWAY

At First Baptist Church, we love our children. They come to us innocent, curious, and eager to learn. Our primary priority is to teach them in age-appropriate ways, about the love of God, the saving grace of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

We also love our youth. As they grow, they face the same three age old questions: Who am I? (identity); Where do I fit? (belonging); and What difference do I make? (purpose). Our primary priority is to help them develop a personal faith where they find clear, healthy, individual answers to those questions in Christian Community.

How do we do that? We follow the **PATHWAY** we have created, which is explained in this booklet.



# WE BEGIN WITH THE END GOAL IN MIND

Before you can accomplish a goal, you first define the goal, then assess where you are, and finally determine how to get from here to there. Our goal is that at High School Graduation Sunday Service, each of the graduates walking across the podium has a deep and abiding faith that will sustain and inform the decisions being made into adulthood. That faith will sustain against all obstacles because it is rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They have already learned how to seek God's will for their life, the power of prayer in making important decisions, and how to depend upon the Bible as a source of wisdom and inspiration. Thus, being rooted in a genuine faith in Jesus Christ and a connection to a loving church community, graduates will continue to mature as Christians, participate in the life of a faith community, and make wise life choices.



## WE START BY FORMING A PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE IN THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As hard as we try, we will probably never have the influence on our children and youth that their parents and other significant caretakers have. The hours we have them will never compare to the hours you have them. That is the way it should be, and we embrace that. Our Pathway calls for us to work in partnership with parents and any other significant people in the lives of our youth and children. We are a team. We will communicate with you on a regular basis on what we are teaching your children at each age level. We seek your input on the curriculum, teaching methods, and how your child is responding. We welcome your input on any needs your child has that we should take into consideration to help your child reach maximum potential. We will give you literature on what your child will be going through at different ages as well as age-appropriate family activities and techniques to help you with those growing pains. In short, we want you to help us know your child as much as possible, tell us what is working when we are doing well, and what is not working when we are not as successful. Each child is a different individual, and with your help, we want to treat them as such.



# OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH HAVE MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

Faith development occurs through learning God's story as well as meaningful involvement within the life of the church.

We believe our children and youth should have the opportunity to participate in worship through singing, praying, being an acolyte, reading of scripture and sharing their musical and dramatic gifts. God has gifted each person differently, and we will seek to find a way for each child and youth to serve. A child or youth who attends worship regularly will be more comfortable with taking a leadership role. We help children and youth become familiar with worship words and their meaning.



# OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO RESPOND TO THE CALL OF JESUS

We do not manipulate or pressure our children and youth to make a decision for Christ. That comes at different times for different people according to the Holy Spirit. We do, however, want every child and youth to hear a clear, age-appropriate, message of how a person becomes a Christian and what that means. We are happy to provide help to any family that would like to have this discussion with their child or youth.



# OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF CHURCH ORDINANCES

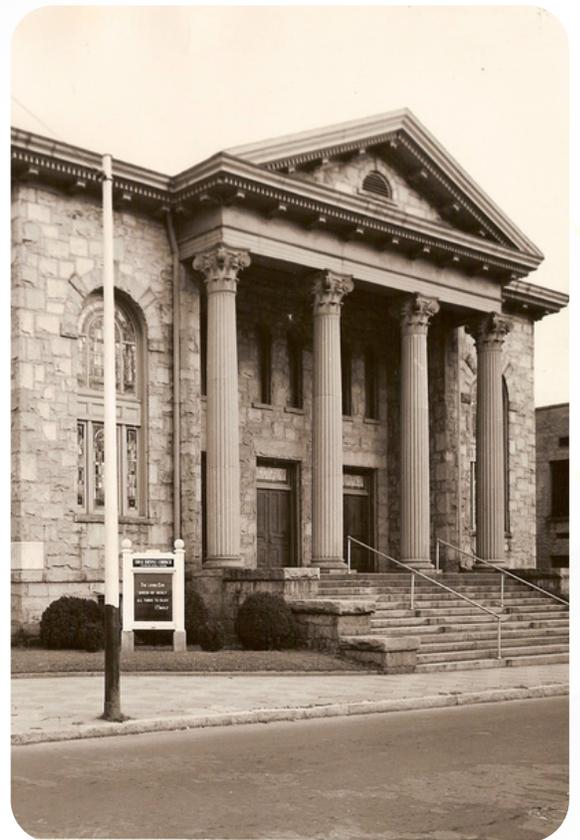
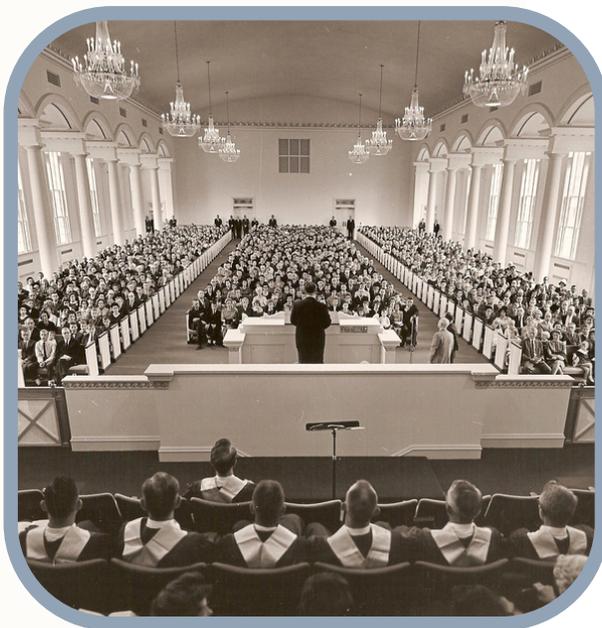
We observe two ordinances at FBCG, Baptism and Communion. One of the most important steps a new believer can take is the step of baptism. Baptism signifies the beginning of new life and testifies to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Communion is a way of remembering Jesus' sacrifice of his life for each of us. Jesus' body was broken and his blood shed for the forgiveness of sin. The bread represents Jesus' body and the cup represents the blood shed for us.

- Children (and parents) will learn to ask questions such as, "Should I be baptized?"
- Children attend New Christian class to facilitate a better understanding of making their decision to follow Christ.



# OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH LEARN ABOUT THE HISTORY OF BAPTISTS, OUR CHURCH, AND BASIC BAPTIST BELIEFS

It is difficult to know who we are if we do not know where we came from and what we believe. We teach our youth and children the basic historical background and theological concepts of what it means to be part of First Baptist Church.



# WE CELEBRATE MILESTONES WITH OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

These milestones are all opportunities for our church to celebrate and help our families normalize spiritual conversations at home:

- Family/Baby Dedication
- Starting School (Kindergarten – or 1st Bible)
- Faith Commitment (any age)
- Baptism
- 5th to 6th grade bridge event
- 8th to 9th grade bridge event
- High School graduation
- College – Spiritual retreat (at beginning of each year)



# OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH LEARN HOW TO EXPRESS THEIR FAITH THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

We give opportunities for children at all ages to participate in missions with the hope that as they age they embrace service as fully integrated into the Christian life. By graduation, we hope to see our youth taking leadership roles in service, mentoring younger youth/children, and sharing their faith through words and deeds.



# OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH CAN VERBALIZE A NON-MEMORIZED PRAYER

We teach our children and youth that a prayer from the heart does not need big words, long sentences, or a particular form. We teach them to talk to God respectfully and lovingly as their Heavenly Father, to thank Him for their blessings, ask forgiveness for what they have done wrong, and to seek help for themselves and for others.



# OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH PARTICIPATE IN A CHURCH-RELATED CAMP OR RETREAT

We believe children and youth need opportunities to grow in their faith by attending church-related camps or retreats. Such camps build relationships with others in our church as well as make new friends with other Christ followers.



# OUR YOUTH AND CHILDREN GROW SPIRITUALLY THROUGH MUSIC

Music can be a powerful tool in helping children and youth learn spiritual concepts and biblical truths. It is also a primary vehicle for actively expressing praise to God which makes music a key component of worship. It is vital to equip people of all ages to participate fully in worship, while at the same time leading toward growth in a deepening faith. To this end, opportunities for children and youth in our music ministry are designed to support and connect with the overall goals for spiritual development in our church. Opportunities include choirs, handbells, orchestra, and the Performing Arts Academy.

## CHOIRS AND ENSEMBLES CONSIST OF

- Cherub Choir (Birth - 2 years)
- 3 – 4 year old choir
- Music Makers 1 Choir  
(Kindergarten - 2nd grade)
- Young Musicians Choir (3 – 5th grades)
- Young Musicians Choir Chime Ensemble  
(3 – 5th grades)
- Sonlight Youth Choir (Grades 6 – 12)
- Sonlight Handbell Choir (Grades 6 – 12)
- Exaltation Orchestra (Grades 9 and above)

## ACADEMY OPPORTUNITIES ARE

- Beginning Strings Class
- Student String Orchestra
- Individual piano and violin lessons
- Voice and woodwind instrument lessons upon request



# THE ADULTS WORKING WITH OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE THOROUGHLY VETTED AND TRAINED

Any adult working with our children and youth will be thoroughly vetted and trained. Before they start, they must pass an independent third-party background check, be approved by the minister in charge of the ministry, and be initially trained by that minister. Training will continue on a quarterly basis to insure that each volunteer has the knowledge and resources to properly teach the lessons set out in this Pathway. Our volunteers gladly hold themselves and their peers accountable for properly instructing our youth and children under the supervision of the ministerial staff.



# WE DON'T FORGET ABOUT OUR YOUTH WHEN THEY GRADUATE

It is our goal that a college age young adult be independent, interested and confident enough in continuing their spiritual journey that they actively search for other Christians with whom they can feel comfortable and participate in a sense of community. We want to create an atmosphere for people which fosters interaction with something larger than themselves. It is our goal to provide such an atmosphere to young adults who are not married, as well as married young adults, with or without children. We wish to reach all people, wherever they are, and help them nurture their relationship with Jesus Christ throughout every stage of life.

- We will provide resources to help students connect to a local church, Baptist Campus Ministries, or small groups in their respective college town. Finding a community of believers on campus is invaluable. Christian community encourages us to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with other believers.
- We encourage students to engage in or attend an annual spiritual retreat to recharge as well as help train them in deeper spiritual disciplines, become more self-aware and prepare them for the future.
- We challenge students to serve others. (Christian camp counselor or serve at a local or international mission event/opportunity). We help students look for ministries they can partner with to serve their city and love their neighbors.
- We support deeper learning of Biblical truths to empower our students to be confident of their faith in the classroom and in life.
- We will model and teach students to live in gratitude. As they grow in gratitude, they will see their classmates and campus as good gifts from God.



# OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH CAN QUOTE A LIFE VERSE

We encourage every youth and child to have a life verse that is important to them. Those verses are often chosen at baby dedication or baptism. We invite you to contact any of our ministers if you have questions about this concept or need help selecting a verse.

Our children and youth can locate important bible verses and know important bible passages.

Our children and youth also have a basic understanding of key biblical passages and people.  
(Please see appendix)



# Appendix

## Key Passages

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Joshua 1:9

This is my command--be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.

Psalm 139:1

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Isaiah 9:6

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

OLD TESTAMENT



John 1:12

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 12:16

Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

II Corinthians 5:17

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun.

Philippians 3:20

But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

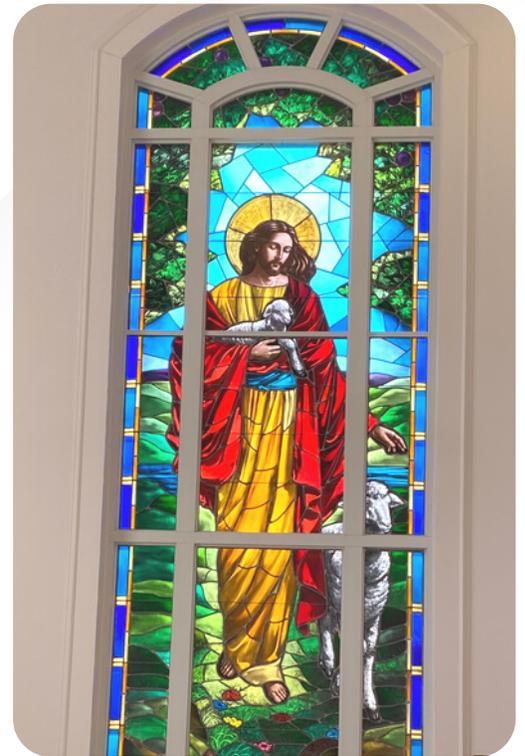
I John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 4:9

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.

THE CREATION - Genesis 1-2  
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS - Exodus 20:3-17  
A SHEPHERD'S PSALM - Psalm 23  
A PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS - Psalm 51  
A PSALM OF PRAISE - Psalm 100  
THE BAPTISM OF JESUS - Matthew 3:13-17  
THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS - Matthew 4:1-11  
THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - Matthew 5-7  
THE LORD'S PRAYER - Matthew 6:5-15  
THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS - Matthew 28  
THE GREAT COMMISSION - Matthew 28:19-20  
THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS - Mark 12:28-34  
THE BIRTH OF JESUS - Luke 2:1-7  
THE COMFORT CHAPTER - John 14  
THE CRUCIFIXION - John 19  
PENTECOST - Acts 2:1-13  
THE LOVE CHAPTER - I Corinthians 13  
THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOR - Ephesians 6:10-20  
THE FAITH CHAPTER - Hebrews 11



# Timeline and Key People

## OLD TESTAMENT

### THE BEGINNING

	Adam & Eve Cain & Abel Noah & Sons	- Garden of Eden - Sons of Adam & Eve - The flood, rainbow promise
2200-2000 BC	Abraham Sarah Isaac Abraham	- Covenant - Abraham's wife - Abraham's son - Willing to sacrifice his son
2000-1800 BC	Isaac & Rebekah Jacob & Esau Jacob & Leah Jacob Joseph	- Twins are born - Birthright stolen - Had 12 sons - Name changed to Israel - Sold into slavery
1800-1600 BC	Joseph Joseph's Family Israelites	- Became ruler - Moved to Egypt - Slaves – 400 years
1600-1400 BC	Baby Moses Moses	- Saved by princess - Burning bush - Spoke to Pharaoh - Miracles - Plagues - First Passover - Exodus (1450 BCE) - Wandered 40 years - Received the Ten Commandments
1600-1400 BC	Aaron	- Moses' brother - First High Priest, Israel
1400-1200 BC	Joshua & Caleb	- Tabernacle finished - Ark of the Covenant - Rahab hid spies - Moses died - Canaan conquered

# OLD TESTAMENT

1200-1100 BC

- Deborah - Became a judge
- Gideon - Became a judge
- People of Israel - Attacked often
- Ruth - Followed God
- Eli - High Priest, 40 years

1100-1000 BC

- Samson - Destroyed a temple
- Samuel - Hannah gave to God
- Heard God's voice
- First prophet of God
- Israel's last judge
- Saul - Israel's First King
- David - Killed Goliath
- Jonathan - Friend of David
- Saul - Disobeyed God
- David - Chosen to be King

1000-900 BC

- David - Second King
- Conquered Jerusalem
- Defeated Philistines
- Ark to Jerusalem
- Sinned with Bathsheba
- Made Solomon King
- Solomon - Third King
- Built first temple
- Kingdoms divided at his death

900-800 BC

- Northern Kingdom - Israel, ten tribes
- Southern Kingdom - Judah, two tribes
- Elijah - Prophet
- Kept the food of a widow from being used up
- Called down fire from Heaven
- Elisha - Parted Jordan River
- Multiplied widow's oil
- Naaman - Healed from leprosy by Elisha



# OLD TESTAMENT

800-700 BC	Jonah	- Refused to go to Nineveh - Swallowed by a big fish
	Joel	- Warned of locusts and promised that someday there would be peace
	Amos	- Prophesied to Israel about the poor
	Obadiah	- Warned about helping the enemy
	Micah	- Warned about worshipping idols
	Fall of Israel	- 722 BCE
700-600 BC	Isaiah	- Greatest prophet - Told wonderful things about God - Told about the coming of Jesus
	Jeremiah	- Threatened for warning the people - Told of a time when God would make a new covenant
	Nahum	- Wrote to comfort the people
	Babylonians	- Seized Judah – 606 BCE
	King Nebuchadnezzar	- Greatest King of Babylon - Came to know God
	Daniel	- Taken to Babylon
600-500 BC	Jerusalem	- Fell to Babylonians in 586 BCE
	Judan	- Destroyed in 586 BCE
	Daniel	- Placed in Lion's Den - Told the future with great accuracy
	Jews	- Returned to Jerusalem in 536 BCE - Second Temple Built
	Esther	- Chosen to be Queen and saved her people
	Jews	- Rebuilt walls

## PERIODS BETWEEN OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

100 BC – 1 AD Herod - Appointed Governor of Judea

# NEW TESTAMENT

10 BC – 1 AD

Angel  
John the Baptist  
Jesus

- Appeared to Mary and Elizabeth
- Elizabeth gave birth
- Born in Bethlehem
- Star shone, angels sang, shepherds came, wise men traveled

Joseph  
/Mary/Jesus  
Herod

- Fled to Egypt
- Went to Nazareth
- Died

1 – 10 AD

Jesus

- Traveled to Jerusalem for Passover
- Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple talking with the teachers

Saul

- Born in Tarsus

10 – 19 AD

Jesus

- Obedient to his parents

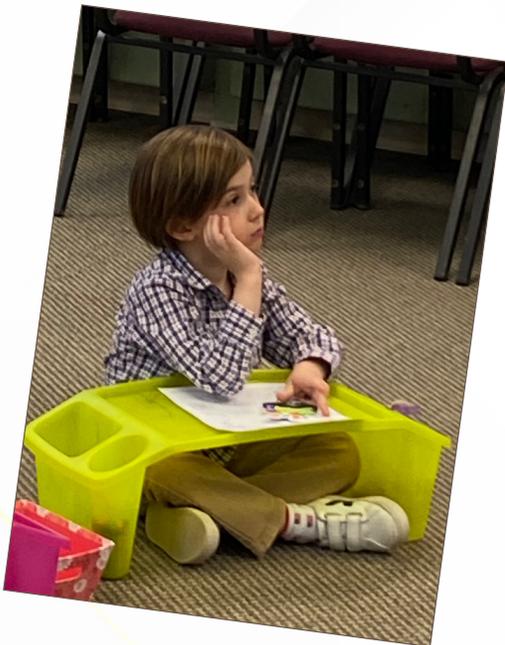
20 – 29 AD

Jesus

- First miracle, turned water into wine at the wedding in Cana
- Used a whip to clean out the temple
- Met a Samaritan woman at the well
- Healed a man's son in Capernaum, his second miracle
- Helped the fisherman catch many fish
- Called the fisherman to be disciples
- Healed the man who was lowered through the roof by his friends
- Healed individuals who were sick or who could not walk or see
- Peter, Andrew James, John, Philip, Nathanael, Matthew, Thomas, Simon, James son of Alphaeus, Jude and Judas Iscariot
- Preached the Sermon on the Mount
- The woman washed the feet of Jesus

Disciples  
/Apostles

Jesus



## THE CHURCH

BEGINS Pentecost- Ascends to Heaven after 40 days

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observed 50 days after Passover</li> <li>- God sent the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised</li> <li>- The Christian Church was founded</li> </ul>
	Peter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preached the first Christian sermon</li> <li>- 3,000 believed and joined the church</li> </ul>
	Peter & Apostles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performed many miracles</li> </ul>
	Deacons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chosen to serve the people in the church</li> </ul>
	Stephen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stoned for preaching about Jesus</li> </ul>
	Saul/Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Becomes a believer on the road to Damascus</li> </ul>
40 – 49 AD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Followers of Jesus first called Christians</li> </ul>
	Philip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Witnessed to the Ethiopian</li> </ul>
	Dorcas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Helped many people</li> </ul>
	Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brought Dorcas back to life</li> <li>- First missionary journey</li> <li>- Wrote Galatians</li> </ul>
	Barnabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accompanied Paul</li> </ul>
	Cornelius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First Gentile to become a Christian</li> </ul>
	Peter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An angel rescued him from jail</li> </ul>
	Council of Jerusalem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Christians met to talk and make decisions about non-Jews who wanted to be Christians</li> </ul>
	James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brother of Jesus</li> <li>- Wrote book of James</li> </ul>
50 – 59 AD		
	Judas & Silas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joined Paul's missionary team</li> </ul>
	Paul & team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Second missionary journey</li> <li>- Wrote I &amp; II Thessalonians</li> <li>- Third missionary journey</li> <li>- Wrote I &amp; II Corinthians</li> <li>- Wrote Romans</li> </ul>
	Priscilla & Aquila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friends and helpers of Paul</li> </ul>
	Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visited Jerusalem</li> <li>- Arrested in Jerusalem but was taken to Rome for trial because he was a Roman citizen</li> <li>- Shipwrecked on Malta</li> </ul>

# NEW TESTAMENT

60 – 69 AD

- Paul
- In prison
  - Wrote Ephesians
  - Wrote Colossians
  - Wrote Philemon
  - Wrote Philippians
  - Released and continued to travel and tell about Jesus
  - Wrote I Timothy
- Peter
- Wrote I & II Peter
- Paul
- Travels to Spain
  - Wrote Titus
  - Travels to Greece
  - Arrested and taken back to Rome
  - Wrote II Timothy
- Peter
- Crucified
- Paul
- Was put to death

70 – 79 AD

- City of Jerusalem is destroyed
  - Jews begin to scatter
- Jude
- Possibly a half brother of Jesus
  - Wrote book of Jude warning about false teachings

80 – 89 AD

- Persecution of Christians increases
  - Being a Christian is punishable by death under Roman law
- John
- Wrote I John to encourage fellowship with God
  - Wrote II John to encourage obedience to God
  - Wrote III John to encourage fellowship with other believers

90 – 99 AD

- John
- Imprisoned on the island of Patmos
  - Received a revelation from Jesus in a vision
  - Wrote the vision in a letter and sent it to seven churches
  - Released from Patmos and goes to Ephesus
  - Died about 100 AD

## THE CHURCH

**BEGINS** Pentecost- Ascends to Heaven after 40 days

Each person listed above is important to understanding the biblical story. As you read and study your Bible with your child try to place each person into the larger biblical picture.





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