







LESSON DESCRIPTION INTRODUCTION FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

- Pre-Lesson: John 1 Introduction to The Word, this Advent Study, and Art by Vincent van Gogh
- 3 Lesson #1: Genesis 1
 Creation, Apologetics: Literal 24-hour days,
 Romantic Art, Hudson River School, Art by
 Thomas Cole, Novel: Introduction,
 Geography, Switzerland Study
- Creation, Apologetics: Written language from the beginning, Baroque Art, Art by Jan Brueghel and Jan van Ravenswaay, Novel: Chapter 1, Geography, Author Biography: Missionary Parents Part 1, Saul's Conversion, Nature Study: Beetles
- Lesson #3: Genesis 3

 Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise,
 Art by Benjamin West, Prophecy: Genesis
 3:14-15, Apologetics: Literal Genesis, Novel:
 Chapter 2, Switzerland: Electric Trains,
 Author Biography: Missionary Parents Part 2

29 | Lesson #4: Various Verses

War in Heaven, Spiritual Forces, Armor of God, Swiss Traditions, Art by Pieter Brueghel the Elder and Albert Anker, Novel: Chapter 3, Author Biography: Missionary Parents Part 3, Geography, Grittibanz Bread Recipe

- 38 Lesson #5: Genesis 4
 Death of Abel, Art by Santiago Rebull and
 Albert Bierstadt, Novel: Chapter 4, Author
 Biography: Childhood Part 1
- 45 Optional Lesson #6: Genesis 6-9
 First Covenant, Art by Jan Brueghel the Younger

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- 47 Optional Lesson #7: Genesis 11:1-9
 Tower of Babel, Art by Pieter Brueghel
- 49 Lesson #8: Genesis 12:1–9
 Abrahamic Covenant, Novel Chapters 5-6,
 Elements of Romantic and Baroque Art,
 Nature Study: Flowers, Author Biography:
 Childhood Part 2, Art by A. Anker, Johan
 Edward Bergh, and Pietro da Cartona
- 56 Lesson #9: Genesis 22:1–19
 Sacrifice of Isaac, Novel: Chapter 7,
 Author Biography: Childhood Part 3,
 Switzerland: St. Bernard Alpine Legend
 and Red Cross, Baroque Art, Art by
 Bartolomeo Cavarozzi, A. Anker, William
 James Müller, and Edouard Castres

- 64 Lesson #10: Genesis 25 & 27
 The Birthright, Jacob Have I Loved, Dutch
 Golden Age, Art by Jan Victors, Novel:
 Chapter 8, Nature Study: Chamois, Author
 Biography: Childhood Part 4
- Jesson #11: Genesis 28 & 32

 Jacob's Ladder, Jacob Wrestles with God,
 Dutch Golden Age, Art by Rembrandt and A.
 Anker, Novel: Chapters 9-10, Author
 Biography: Childhood Part 5
- Joseph and the Israelites in Egypt,
 Apologetics: Tablet Theory and the
 Authorship of Genesis, Dutch Golden Age,
 Novel: Chapter 11, Author Biography:
 Childhood Part 6, Art by A. Anker,
 Rembrandt, and Paul Freidrich Meyerhelm
- **84** Optional Lesson #13: Genesis 47 & 48 Israel in Egypt, Art by Jan Victors

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- **86** Optional Lesson #14: Exodus 1 Slavery of Israel, Art by Edward Poynter
- Moses and the Plagues of Egypt, How the plagues demonstrated the lack of power of each Egyptian god, Victorian/ Romantic/ Dutch Golden Age Art, Art by Lawrence Alma-Tadema, John Martin, Joseph Mallord William Turner, and Bartolomeus Breenbergh, Novel: Chapters 12-13
- 95 Lesson #16: Exodus 12
 Death of the Firstborn, Passover, Feast of
 Unleavened Bread, Feast of First Fruits,
 Prophecy: Exodus 12:40-41, Romantic Art,
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 Novel: Chapters 14-15, Author Biography:
 Nurse Part 1
- 100 Lesson #17: Exodus 19–20
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 Art by Rembrandt, Apologetics: The First
 Alphabet, Novel: Chapters 16-17, Author
 Biography: Nurse Part 2

- 106 Lesson #18: Joshua 1

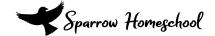
 Joshua and the Promised Land, Neoclassical and Impressionist Art, Novel: Chapters 1819, Author Biography: Patricia the Author, Art by B. West, J. Tissot, and A. Anker
- 772 Lesson #19: 1 Samuel 1
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- 776 Optional Lesson #20: Prophecies Prophecies of the Messiah, Art by Rembrandt

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- 779 Optional Lesson #21: Daniel 1
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- 122 Lesson #22: Malachi & Luke 1
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 Washington Allston, Guiseppe Angeli, and
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MERRY CHRISTMAS!

136 Lesson #24: Matthew & Luke 2
The Birth of Jesus, Art by Federico Barocci



INTRODUCTION Novu

This lesson study is intended to be used along with the chapter book *Treasures* of the Snow by Patricia St. John. Patricia has been called "a poet of forgiveness" because her novels are interwoven with the Gospels and a focus on redemption. They are truly beautiful stories, and this particular novel has been my all-time favorite story since I first heard it as a child. If you have never read it, you are in for a treat!

LESSONS

This study is intended to begin with Advent and end on Christmas Day. However, we recognize that weekends are very busy during the holiday season, so weekend readings are always optional and consist of just Bible readings and a painting each day to help set the scene.

BIBLE READINGS

Each day begins with readings from the Bible. Usually, there is a chapter of the Bible to read, and often there are additional verses. Each of the scripture readings has been prayerfully included in this study to show that Jesus doesn't just show up in the Bible in the New Testament, but that a plan was put into place that looked ahead to Jesus from the earliest chapters in Genesis.

ART HISTORY

Most of the lessons include paintings of the Biblical topic by famous artists, and children will study these paintings while learning about various styles of art. They should start to be able to identify elements of Romantic art and Baroque art by the end of this study since these two styles are used in nearly every lesson. There are additional paintings on many of the days to help set the scene for the novel.

APOLOGETICS

All of our materials have a high focus on apologetics, which is a defense of Christianity through rational arguments and evidence. This study includes apologetics that cover topics such as: a literal six-day Creation week, Genesis as a real and historical account, authorship of the Bible, an early alphabet for writing the Bible, and much more.

SWITZERLAND COUNTRY STUDY

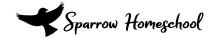
To help set the scene, there are many pictures of Switzerland and information about the country. A map and some geography are also included.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

There are many interesting details from the author's life and the lives of her missionary parents that add to the story and to the holiday season, so most days include part of her story.

FUTURE ADVENT SCHEDULES

This Advent Study was written for 2025, but we will be adapting it each year for use for additional years. Check the "Extras" tab on our website for Advent schedules for future years.





BIBLE READING

READ JOHN 1:1-18

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:1-5

The first verses of John parallel the first verses of Genesis:

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness." Genesis 1:1-4

Both start with "In the beginning." In John, we read about the Word. The Greeks used the term "logos," which means "word," to describe what gives the world order or meaning.

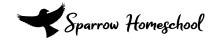
The Word existed before creation. The Word existed with God. The Word WAS God (the Trinity). God spoke, and the world came into being. The Word was involved in the creation of all things. He was life and light.

"The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world." John 1:9

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14

Who is the Word? Who is the true light? Who became flesh and dwelt among us? Jesus. Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus is the reason for Christmas, and the whole Bible looks ahead to the birth of Jesus.

"Advent" means arrival or coming. The Advent season is a time to think about



the birth of Jesus in the days leading up to Christmas.

ADVENT STUDY

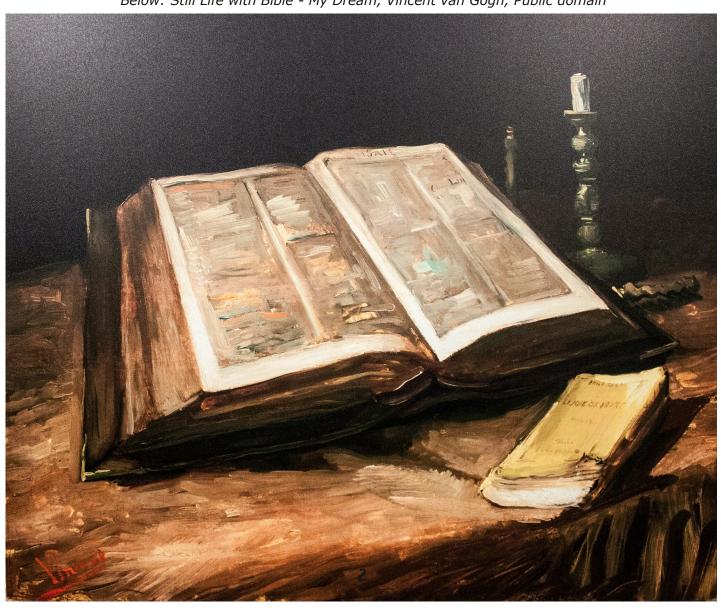
This Advent study will combine chapters from the Bible that look ahead to the birth of Jesus, beautiful art and things to look for in the art that add to our Bible passages, chapters out of a novel we will be reading, beautiful art to help bring the novel to life, paintings and pictures of Switzerland (the setting for the novel), some nature journaling, and moving biographical stories about the author of the novel.

ART HISTORY

Look at the painting below for at least a minute. What do you see? It is an open Bible. The artist's father was a Protestant minister, and this is a painting of his father's Bible. What else do you see in the painting? There is a novel. This represents worldly literature. Vincent struggled much of his life with his faith.

One theme we will see throughout this study is God reaching out over and over; Jesus knocking on the door. It is up to each of us to decide whether or not to let him in.

Below: Still Life with Bible - My Dream, Vincent van Gogh, Public domain



ELEMENTS OF ROMANTIC ART

Each art style has specific things in common. See if you can see the following elements of Romantic art in the painting on the previous page.

- Awe of nature
- Nature taking over a scene
- Imagination
- Strong emotions
- Vivid Colors
- Solitude (being alone)
- Beauty

HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL OF ART

Thomas Cole was a Romantic painter, but he created a specific type of art under the umbrella of Romantic art called the Hudson River School of Art. This was the first art movement that started in the United States. This style of art was a Christian branch of art that focused on nature and God's presence in nature. Look at the painting on the previous page again, and pay particular attention to the use of light in the painting. How does the light make you feel? Some of the things you will see in the Hudson River School of Art include:

- Nature as orderly and intelligently designed
- Man's experience of nature as a way to connect with God
- The idea that man is small in the face of nature that God created
- Use of light to show God's presence

NOULL READING

Our novel for this lesson study is Treasures of the Snow by Patricia St. John. Patricia St. John has been called "a poet of forgiveness" because her novels are interwoven with the Gospels and a focus on redemption.

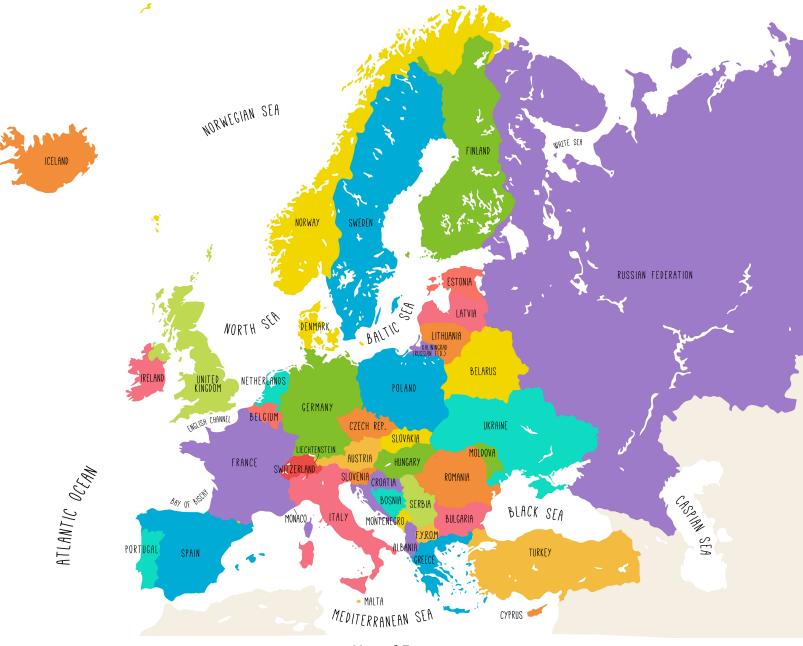
This book has been my very favorite story since I first heard it as a young child. I still love it today, and I'm sure you will love it also. The author is very descriptive and really draws you into the scene. Think about her descriptions as you listen to the story. Today you are just going to read a couple of pages with a note from the author, but you will hear her descriptions even in this note.

Chalet: a wooden house with eaves like those found in the Swiss Alps **Narcissi:** a flower like a daffodil

READ: A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Did you catch where this story takes place? The setting is in Switzerland. Do you know where that is? See if you can find it on the map of Europe on the next page.





Map of Europe

GLOGRAPHY

Did you find Switzerland? It is the small country that is red in the middle of the countries in Europe. Can you see which countries are next to Switzerland?

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is one of the world's most developed and wealthy countries. There is no official language in Switzerland, and its people speak Swiss German, French, and Italian. Switzerland became a union of three states in 1291, and it became a country in 1815. The constitution of Switzerland, adopted in 1848, does not allow soldiers to serve in foreign wars. The country has remained neutral in all of the international wars since 1815. It became a member of the United Nations in 2002, so it does get involved in world government but it primarily focuses on building peace.

Swiss German: a dialect of German that is spoken in Switzerland



THE SWISS ALPS

About 60% of the land in Switzerland is made up of the Swiss Alps. You can see the Alps in the pictures on the next several pages. The first three pictures are similar to the setting of the novel that we will be reading. Look at each of them, the mountains in the background, the green grass, the flowers, the hills, and the houses. What do you think of this landscape? Would you like to live in this place?

While most of the animals live in the mountains, most of the people live on the plateau, between the Alps to the south and the Jura Mountains to the north.

LAKES AND RIVERS

Switzerland is known as "the water tower of Europe" because of its thousands of lakes and rivers. About 6% of all of the freshwater in Europe is in Switzerland.

There are many rivers and over 1500 lakes. Lake Geneva, shared by Switzerland and France, is the largest freshwater lake in central Europe.

Tourism

Tourism is important in Switzerland. One of the oldest mountain guesthouses in the country is the Aescher Guesthouse. You can see it on page 12. Tales are told about wild cavemen who once lived in the Wildkirchcaves here. Stone tools and bones of cave bears have been found in the caves.

One of the most popular tourist destinations is the town of Zermatt, which was made famous in 1865, when the first group of mountain climbers reached the top of the nearby Matterhorn, the largest mountain in the Swiss Alps. Unfortunately, only 3 of the original 7 mountain climbers survived. Today, tourists wanting to climb the Matterhorn begin at Zermatt.



Sparrow Homeschool

Vineyards in Vaud, Switzerland with Lake Geneva

ZERMOTT

Today, Zermott is unusual because it is a car-free, combustion-free zone. This means that people cannot drive in the town. The reason is to prevent air pollution from blocking the view of the Matterhorn, which you can see in the photo to the right.

Local shops are allowed to use electric vehicles. Police and emergency services are allowed to operate. However, tourists use electric shuttles, provided by local hotels, or horse-drawn carriages. Most tourists arrive at the town by train, though some are given

permission to park their cars outside city limits. Helecopter services operate in the town, which also provide alpine rescue services.



Zermott

Zermott is also known for its year-round skiing. In the summer, there is limited skiing at Theodul Glacier at Klein Matterhorn. A cable car system can transport people to the top in 9 minutes.





BIBLE READING

READ GENESIS CHAPTER 3

ART

THE EXPULSION OF ADAM AND EVE FROM PARADISE

Look at the painting on the next page for at least a minute. What do you notice? What emotion do you see?

In paintings, it is important to pay attention to the use of light. Which part of the painting is your eye drawn to? Probably the angel. This means the angel (or its symbolism) is really important.

What do you notice about the angel? Why do you think the angel's hair is raised? It helps give the impression of movement.

Symbolism: using specific images or things to represent ideas or qualities

There is also a contrast between the dark hair and the lightness of the angel's garments and airy wings. Why do you think the angel has red material draping down? It is symbolic of the entrance of death and bloodshed into the world. What animals do you see in the painting? There are horses and birds. What are they doing? They are fighting with each other, another sign of sin and bloodshed.

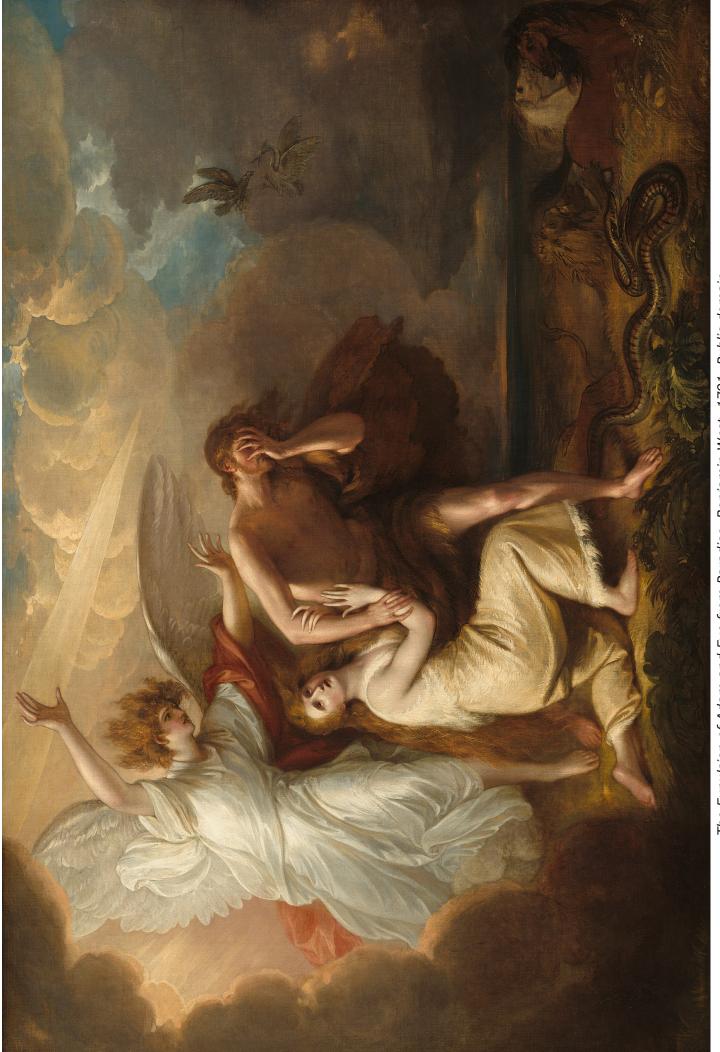
Why do you think Adam is holding his face? Because he ate of the fruit, he is now aware of good and evil, and his character is showing shame by covering his face.

What is Eve doing in the painting? She is kneeling on the ground, possibly pleading for mercy.

Look at the colors. Where is the painting the lightest, and where is it the darkest? Where are Adam and Eve compared to the light and darkness? Do you think this is symbolic? They are leaving the light and perfection of the Garden of Eden and heading into sin and darkness.

What else do you notice? What animals do you see? What do you notice about





The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, Benjamin West, 1791, Public domain

the serpent? It is slithering before them. Look at the serpent's mouth. It looks like it is laughing. It almost seems like Adam and Eve are doomed forever.

Yet, there is hope as well. What are Adam and Eve wearing? They are wearing animal skins that God crafted for them. The garments are not just animal skins but are specifically fleece—sheepskin. What do you think this alludes to? It looks ahead to the Lamb of God—Jesus.

PROPHECY

In this chapter (Genesis 3:14-15) is the very first prophecy that alludes to Jesus:

"The Lord God said to the serpent,

'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring:

he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Apologetics

Some Bible scholars believe that Genesis is made up of myths and that sometimes a snakebite is just a snakebite. If they believe in the Bible at all, they think

Allude: to suggest or hint at something indirectly

Genesis is just an allegory and not a true account of history. If you look at the Bible in this way, it wouldn't make sense for there to be a clear meaning, understanding, and order throughout the entire Bible.

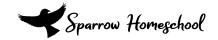
However, this view is incorrect. In fact, Genesis 3:15 is the reason for the entire Bible. Adam and Eve sinned and were separated from God, but immediately God wanted to bring them back into communion with him. In this early verse in Genesis, God said he would "put emnity" between the serpent and Eve. This indicates an ongoing feud. The two would NOT be on the same side, and if Eve wasn't to be on the side of the serpent, whose side would she be on? There were two sides: God's and the serpent's. If she wasn't going to be on the serpent's side, it means she would be on God's side. Finally, God promises that the serpent would receive a head wound, and the offspring of the woman would receive a heel wound. A heel wound can be survived. A head wound cannot. This was looking forward to the cross, where Jesus died but then rose again, defeating death (and the serpent) forever.

NOULL READING

READ CHAPTER 2

The chapter says that "Dani belonged to Annette." How would you like it if your younger brother or sister became yours to take care of? How did Annette feel about it?

The painting on the next page shows a scene that looks similar to what could have been Annette and Dani.





Knitting girl watching the toddler in a cradle, Albert Anker, 1885, Public domain

ART HISTORY ALBERT ANKER: NATIONAL PAINTER OF SWITZERLAND

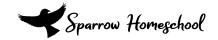
Albert Anker (1831-1910) is called "the national painter of Switzerland" because of his many extremely popular paintings of everyday life in Switzerland. His four surviving children were sometimes his inspiration for his paintings. His Christian worldview led him to paint scenes of everyday life without the social

challenges shown in the art of some other painters of his day. Anker preferred to paint orderly scenes that showed harmony and stability.

On the next page is another painting by Albert Anker. Annette's grandmother may have looked something like this woman.

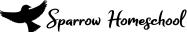
SWITZERLAND

This chapter talks about the electric train that Grandmother arrived on. To help you





TREASURES OF CHRISTMAS





Bahnhof Arosa 1914, Wlh. Halder, † 1937, Public domain

picture this, look at the painting above of a train station in Switzerland in 1914.

ELECTRIC TRAINS

Railways were built, and trains began operating in Switzerland in 1847, and within 15 years, they connected western and northeastern Switzerland. In the early 1900s, they moved from coal engines to electric. Trains decreased in popularity when cars became popular after World War II, but two major mountain routes continued to operate.

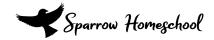
Today, the train system is widely used, and the only country that uses trains more than Switzerland is Japan. About 30% of all people in Switzerland

commute to work using trains. There are fast, high-powered trains as well as street-running trains that have tracks embedded on city streets and operate alongside cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians. You can see a modern electric train on the next page.—

AUTHOR'S LIFE

MISSIONARY PARENTS - PART 2

In our last lesson, we started talking about the author's (Patricia St. John) missionary parents and left off with them in South America amid beetles crawling on the walls at night.





Over the next few years, Patricia's mother, Ella, learned the language and began raising their first two babies, Hazel and Farnham. Patricia's father, Harry, traveled by horseback over mountains to preach and teach new Christians who could barely read. He became convinced that the world needed solid Bible-taught pastors and evangelists. To meet that need, Harry and a fellow missionary decided to open a Bible school in Brazil, and his little family had to travel over 2000 miles by boat and mule. With their two-year-old and 7-week-old children, Harry said that trip was "the most difficult journey they had ever undertaken" (St. John, p. 7). Since they were moving, they traveled with all of their possessions. One customs official remarked "that times had changed since the days of the early apostles who went out without purse or scrip [money]," to which Harry replied

that the apostles weren't traveling with babies.

Harry was immediately busy teaching at the Bible school while Ella began getting to know the local women. While their previous house had been filled with beetles, Ella nicknamed their new home "the House of a Thousand Fleas." The roof also leaked, so when it rained, the two children slept under the kitchen table.

Their older child, Hazel, thrived there and did very well there, playing with the local children and becoming nearly as dark as they were. However, the baby, Nana, wasn't doing well. Though he was happy, he was weak and sickly. Ella and Harry realized the conditions were not good there for young babies.



Lucien continues to nurse his anger and resentment.

Annette has a moment when she notices a patch of pink sky in the far mountains. What does she think about in this moment? She considers trying to make it right with Lucien. Why doesn't she? Her pride kicked in, and she decided Lucien was more at fault than she was, so she wouldn't be the first to apologize.

Lucien also notices the beauty of the winter sunset. Why did his anger "seem like a poor, small thing, not worth hanging onto" (p. 38) for just a moment? He feels his smallness in the face of the beauty of the sunset.

He wants to run and catch Annette to make it right again. Why doesn't he? Sin is crouching at the door.

Lucien refuses to try to make things right, and a cloud covers the gap, hiding the sunset from view. This is brilliant storytelling, using light in nature to try to show God's presence and his trying to draw two quarreling children back to Him and back to peace.

ART HISTORY ALBERT BILRSTADT

Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902) was a famous Romantic painter in the Hudson River School of Art style. You can look back at page 6 for a refresher on elements of this style. How do you see these elements in the painting on the next page?

Albert Bierstadt was born in Germany,

but his family immigrated to the United States when he was two years old, and he was raised in Massachusetts. As a young man, he returned to Europe to study painting, as most artists did. While in Europe, Albert traveled through Switzerland and painted the Swiss Alps. This helped him refine his skills at painting mountains, which he put to good use by painting similar paintings in the American West. He became very well known for his paintings of the Rocky Mountains and Yosemite, and he was one of the best-known and loved landscape painters of the 19th century.

AUTHOR'S LIFE

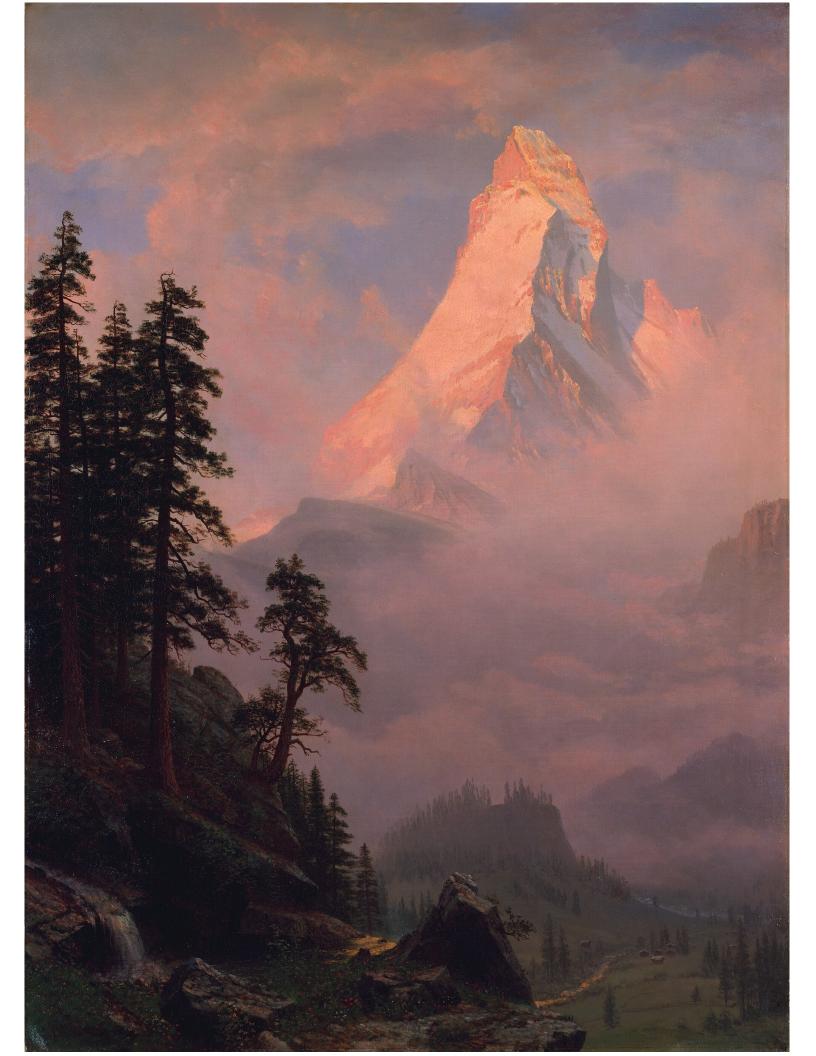
PATRICIA'S CHILDHOOD - PART 1

When we left off with the author's life story, her father had just returned to the mission field, and Patricia, her mother, and her siblings were living with her Granny and Great-Granny. Patricia's Granny had a great influence on Patricia's life. Her cot was in her Granny's room, so Patricia would spend early mornings with her. Granny taught Patricia hymns, which fascinated Patricia with their complex vocabulary and meaning. She was especially intrigued by one particular hymn about the archangel summoning the ransomed host.

Growing up in a multi-generational household was interesting, but they made it work. Patricia wrote that her younger brother, Oliver, was her great-granny's favorite, and he loved to sit with Great-

Image (next page): Sunrise on the Materhorn, Albert Bierstadt, Albert Bierstadt, after 1875, CCO, via Wikimedia Commons





Granny in bed and look at picture books. One day, his mother left the two looking at a train book, only to peek in later to discover that the story had made its way off of the page. There were three chairs placed one in front of another. Oliver was sitting on the first chair, and Great

Granny was sitting in the second in her nightgown. Both were bouncing up and down saying, "Puff... puff... puff..." (St. John, p. 13).

Patricia's younger brother, John, was born when Patricia was five years old. Pregnancies were not talked about at that time. Patricia wrote that she and her brother "thought babies were left by God in the cistern at the top of the house," and they "sometimes went to look" (p. 14). One day, Patricia was sent to visit her aunt, and she was told there was a live toy for her to play with when she returned home. She was expecting a kitten or puppy, but instead she found a baby brother. She wrote, "I touched the down on his head and sat down on the stairs and wept for joy. He was my baby and where ever he had come from, I adored him" (p. 14).

Does this sound like anyone in the novel we have been reading? It sounds like how Annette felt about Dani. Authors often put situations into their books that they have personally experienced, and this helps make the scene feel more real.



Old Woman Reading the Bible, Albert Anker, 1904, Public domain



AUTHOR'S LIFE

PATRICIA'S CHILDHOOD - PART 4

We last left off with Patricia's life during the year she lived in Switzerland with her family. She wrote that they spent a good deal of time wandering the mountains around their valley. Patricia and her siblings explored all of the mountains they could travel to on foot except Mount Corjon (probably Dent de Corjon, which you can see in the background of the photo on the next page). Patricia and her brother, Farnham, never went anywhere near this mountain because they were terrified of falling to their deaths like other mountain climbers had.

However, the father of one of Farnham's friends was a mountain guide, and he was taking his boys up the mountain and offered to take Farnham also. Patricia's mother didn't realize that the mountain was "an object of terror" (St. John, p. 24) to Farnham and readily agreed, believing her son would be safe with a mountain guide. Farnham was a brave child, so he didn't say anything about the fear he felt about the trip as he packed his rucksack and nailed boots. Then he went to bed, but he wasn't able to sleep.

"Lying there in the dark, death seemed very near. He would slip and fall and then... He wasn't quite sure. He just felt desperately lonely and afraid.

And then the patient teaching he had received all his life came alive; the forgiveness of sin, the certainty of Heaven, and everlasting life suddenly became very

real, and with this reality, common sense prevailed. The One who had died to open heaven was alive and very near to keep him safe. He slipped out of bed, knelt down, and gave himself into those keeping hands, and slept soundly." (St. John pp. 24–25)

Patricia wrote:

"I was alseep when he left but I have never forgotten his return. Late in the afternoon he burst into the house dropping with tiredness but his brown eyes were alight with happiness and his arms full of edelweiss. His joy was contagious and overflowing and I thought it was because he had climbed Corjon and I burned with envy. Not until many years later did he tell anyone that there was much more to it than that."

This was a time of trust for Patricia's mother as well since their time in Switzerland was "slightly hazardous," and her mother had to accept it as part of life. Patricia recalled a time when she and her siblings were all up a high beech tree along with Norah, a girl her mother was caring for while her parents were abroad. Patricia slithered down the tree to find her mother sitting with her eyes closed and her hands clasped together. Patricia asked what she was doing.

"I'm just praying that if one of you falls it won't be Norah,' she said calmly."

Patricia's mother modeled faith and trust that angels were at hand to protect them.

Image (next page): Grand Rue, Château-d'Oex, Zacharie Grossen, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons







BIBLE READING

When God first called Moses from the burning bush and told him to go and bring the Israelites out of Egypt, God said:

"... I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." Exodus 3:12b

READ EXODUS 19:1-20:21

On the same mountain where God had first called him, Moses received the Ten Commandments. Jesus was later asked which of the commandments was the greatest:

"And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:37-40

The Ten Commandments aren't just a series of rules. They are instructions so that our lives will be better. The basis of all of the commandments is love. Love God, and love each other.

ART HISTORY

Look at the painting on the next page for at least a minute. What do you notice? What details do you see? Can you guess what art style this was painted in? Here is a hint: the artist studied under Rembrandt. Do you remember what style Rembrandt used? This is a Baroque painting, Dutch Golden Age to be specific.

Remember, Baroque artists painted grand, dramatic events. They focused on emotion. What emotions do you see in this painting? Compare the emotions of the people with the emotion of Moses. Are they the same? No, Moses looks calm and collected, yet fiercely protective of the Ten Commandments. The people look terrified and overwhelmed. They are at the foot of the mountain.

This is the second time Moses came down

Image (next page): Moses Descends from Mount Siniai with the Ten Commandments, Ferdinand Bol, 1662, Public domain







BIBLE READING

READ LUKE 2:1-21 & MATTHEW 2:1-12

ART HISTORY

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:4-5

Look at the painting on the next page. How does the painting show the verse above? The brightest parts of the painting are Baby Jesus and Mary. The light reflects from the eyes of the animals. Notice the emotion on Mary's face. She adores Jesus. Her arms are open wide, welcoming him.

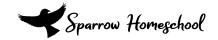
Joseph is in the shadows pointing the shepherds to Jesus. You can almost feel his excitement.

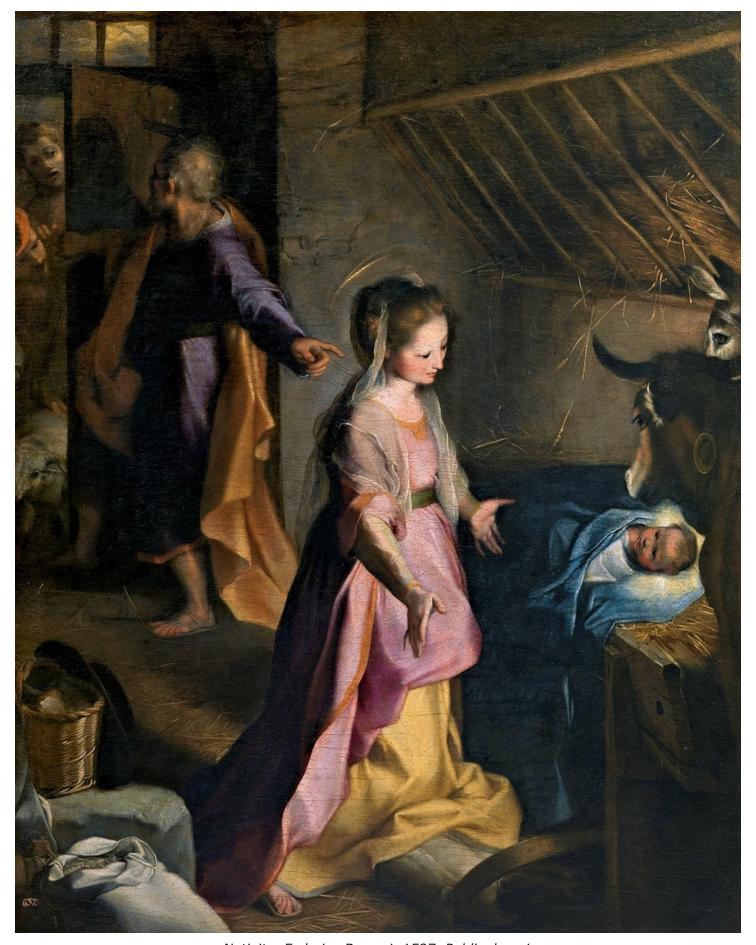
Why do you think the artist painted the shepherds at the door? They have to decide whether or not to enter in. Like we read in the novel about Jesus at the door, we each have to decide whether or not to open the door and recognize Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

ISAIAH 9:6

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

MERRY CHRISTMAS!





Nativity, Federico Barocci, 1597, Public domain

TREASURES OF CHRISTMAS HOMESCHOOL ADVENT STUDY

Bible Readings Beautiful Art Art History Novel Readings Apologetics Switzerland Country Study Geography Author Biography Nature Study

This Advent study for homeschooling families begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas and goes to Christmas Day. It is designed to be incorporated into your homeschooling day as your morning basket for December. Weekend readings are always optional and are much shorter, with just a Bible reading and painting to look at. Weekday lessons are full of content, so they will probably take 30-45 minutes per day. There are beautiful paintings and pictures on nearly every page to help set the scene both for the Bible readings and for the novel study. The Bible readings begin with Genesis and look ahead to Jesus in each lesson, ending on Christmas Day with the Nativity story. The novel, *Treasures of the Snow*, accompanies this study. Patricia St. John has been called "a poet of forgiveness" because her novels are interwoven with the Gospels and a focus on redemption. This story is much loved by children and adults alike and is a perfect addition to the Christmas season! This study is best for 5th grade and up, but younger children will enjoy the

novel, pictures, and much of the content also. There are two other versions of this study. One is a devotional for families not homeschooling, and the other is a simpler study for families who only have elementary children.

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