



GREAT CLOUD *of* WITNESSES

A DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE *for* FAMILIES

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SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The book you now have in your hands has been a labor of love. It began with a realization that no matter how excellent and effective our teaching may be, it cannot compete with the influence of you as parents. God has called you specifically and gifted you uniquely to lead your kids “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Plainly said, you are the greatest spiritual influence in the lives of your kids. To some of you that is a very intimidating and overwhelming thought (I know I feel that way).

Therefore, we as the church want to help encourage and equip you in your role as the primary discipler of your children, and that is why this book exists. Our goal is to set you up in the best way that we can to have spiritual conversations as a family. Our hope is that you will have opportunities on Sundays, perhaps at lunch after Sunday school, as well as a couple of times a week with the Family Devotionals provided, to talk about God and His importance in our everyday lives. To help accomplish this, we have standardized the Sunday school curriculum so that everyone from JK-12th grade will be learning the same things each week (age appropriately, of course). This allows you as parents to know exactly what all of your kids are learning without having to keep track of multiple e-mails or schedules. Below you will find exactly what is included and how best to use it.

OUTLINE

We provide you with the main points that your students will be learning each week. We do this so you can be best prepared to discuss what they learned and answer any questions that might come up. We also have included a lengthy section of context for each lesson. We believe it is important for all of us to see how each story in the Bible does not stand alone, but instead fits into the larger drama that God has unfolded.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

The point of these questions is to be conversation starters for you as a family. They are not exhaustive as to the content of what your children have learned that Sunday, but should just get things started for your family. Our hope is that your children will come to expect a conversation about what they learned in Sunday school for two main reasons. First, we want them to see spiritual conversations as a normal and important part of life and second, we hope this expectation will make them more attentive to what they are learning.

FAMILY DEVOS

We have provided two days worth of Family Devotionals for you to do as a family at home. We chose this number so as to not overwhelm families or discourage them for not being able to live up to expectations. Our hope is that the two provided will be a springboard for even more times of Family Worship during the week. The two we have included will help build a foundation for the Bible character that they will study on Sunday. You will also see a page on “How to Do Family Devotions” which is there only as a resource for you and not a concrete model that must be followed. In the end, the most important thing is for families to spend time together focused on God’s Word and prayer; how that is accomplished is secondary.

Andrew Keasling

HOW TO DO FAMILY DEVOTIONS

When discussing family devotions, the first thing you must know is that there is not just one correct way to do it. Each family is made up of distinct individuals, each with a different personality. Therefore, trying to create a "one-size-fits-all" approach to family devotions is foolish. Below are some helpful hints and guidelines as you lead your devotions. Some of them will be very helpful, while some you will realize do not work for your family. In the end, the point is for you as a family to take time together, reading God's Word, and praying together. However you accomplish this is truly a secondary concern.

PLACE MATTERS

- It will be important to find a consistent place where you always do family devotions. Changing the location can drastically change the dynamics.
- Everyone should be at the same eye level. You don't want some on the floor and some in chairs or on the couch. This will encourage participation by all members because they will feel as if they are a part of the group.
- Minimize the distractions. Honestly, doing family devotions is hard enough! Only you know what might distract your kids so be sure you eliminate as many interruptions as possible.

PRAYER MATTERS

- It is important for your children to see the importance of prayer. Therefore, be sure that you pray to begin and end your time together. Often it works best to choose one family member to open the time in prayer (which also helps settle busy hearts). At the end is an opportunity to let everyone pray.
- Give your children a role in prayer. One of the things that my family does that has been successful is that we have four prayer categories: 1- Zachary's class, 2- Bryson's Class, 3- Our extended family and friends, and 4- Missions. Each time we give someone in the house one of these prayer categories. To minimize the "I want..." of our children, we rotate who assigns who to pray. That way, everyone gets a chance to decide who prays for what. It has saved a lot of disagreements. For our missions category, we alternate between a Mission Memphis partner and a World Missions partner and it has been such a blessing to watch and hear our kids pick up on and pray for those ministries. We also switch it up some nights and just have a time of confession or adoration or thanksgiving so they don't think of God as just someone from whom you ask things.

THE WORD MATTERS

HOW TO DO FAMILY DEVOTIONS

- God's Word is the only thing He promises will bear fruit. It is so important to not only expose them to God's Word but also to teach them how to think about it. One of the best ways to start doing this is to continually remind them that these stories are REAL - Isaiah 55:11.
- Get them to interact with the Bible for themselves. It is a huge temptation to just provide the answers for them (since we know everything) but they will get so much more out of it if they think about it for themselves. The hardest part for me in this is that I lose the control. I have to constantly remind myself that I want them to get something out of God's Word and not get frustrated when they don't get out what I want them to.
- Encourage every little step. It will be very important to encourage every interaction they have with God's Word. They will be more willing to share when they know it is a safe place for them to come with their thoughts. At times, that will mean you are going to go down some rabbit trails, but it will be worth the journey. As a part of that, you need to make sure that they get the truth; this means gently correcting when their theology gets out of whack.

TIME MATTERS

- One of the most important things you are teaching your children is that being together is very important. Just the simple act of carving out time every week that does not involve the TV or a meal out will bear fruit. The intentional act of studying the Word and prayer together will bear fruit even if it is down the line.
- Have fun! I know it sounds silly but if your kids have fun doing family devotions, they will want to keep doing them. For us, that is a short game or a role playing moment at the beginning but for you, it can be whatever. Sometimes I think we are afraid that we will be irreverent when we attempt to have fun, but we must remember that God created fun and laughter, so participating in those activities pleases Him.

Andrew Keasling

D6 DRIVING VALUES

At Second, we believe in three guiding principles, known as the D6 Driving Values. We hope that as you and your family go through these devotions together, you will be further encouraged in your relationship with the Lord, your church community, and in your Kingdom mission.

The Lord is my primary devotion.

- Confronted by the holiness of Christ, I seek Him in daily worship, prayer, and repentance. *Isaiah 6:1-8*
- Compelled by the love of Christ, I strive to be obedient to Him in my thoughts, words, and deeds. *II Corinthians 5:14*
- Created new in Christ, my identity is no longer in the things of this world. *II Corinthians 5:17*
- Confident of the eternity secured for me in Christ, I have peace in the midst of the troubles of this life. *Phillipians 4:6-7*

The Church is my primary community.

- Knowing that the Gospel liberates me from idols, I cannot imagine not joyfully worshipping God every week with my brothers and sisters in Christ. *Thessalonians 1:9b*
- Knowing that the church is called to be a holy nation, set apart from the things of the world, I will embrace this calling by seeking to be Christ-like in all aspects of my life. *I Peter 2:9-12*
- Knowing that I am a steward of my resources and not an owner, I cheerfully release my resources to build His Kingdom and not my own. *Matthew 25:14-30*
- Knowing that the Body of Christ is essential to my sanctification, I actively seek relationship and accountability within the church in order to grow in Christ. *Ephesians 4:11-16*
- Knowing that God has given me spiritual gifts to use in the church, I willingly serve. *I Corinthians 12:4-7*
- Knowing that Jesus is present where two or more are gathered in His name, I happily pray with and for my brothers and sisters in Christ. *Matthew 18:20*

Building Christ's Kingdom is my primary mission.

- Belonging to Christ Kingdom causes us to live as a distinct people who are called to be about applying Christ's work of redemption as far as the curse is found as we eagerly await His imminent return and the renewal of all things. *Romans 8:19-21*
- Building Christ's Kingdom in all of life is an act of worship, and the reason I am alive is to multiply worshippers and redeem culture. *II Corinthians 5:16-21*
- Building Christ's Kingdom begins in multiplying worshippers of Christ in my own household. *Joshua 24:15*
- Building Christ's Kingdom is the lens through which I filter every decision as I further the work of redemption. *Romans 12:1-2*
- Building Christ's Kingdom prioritizes Christ's work of redemption to the extent of intentionally sacrificing our time, money, and talents in furthering the application of the redemption of Christ. *I Corinthians 10:31-33*

TEACHING SCHEDULE

WEEK	WITNESS	FOCUS
1	Intro	God is the true hero of the Bible.
2	Adam	God provides forgiveness for sins.
3	Noah	God remembers His people.
4	Abraham	God provides for His people.
5	Jacob	God loves His people, even the unlikely ones.
6	Joseph	God has a plan for His people.
7	Moses	God protects His people.
8	People of Israel	God's patience towards His people.
9	Rahab	God adds to His people.
10	Joshua	God fights for His people.
11	Gideon	God's presence is with His people.
12	Samson	God hears the prayers of His people.
13	Ruth	God gives us people when we are in need.
14	Samuel	God listens to His people and gives them what they want and uses it for His glory and purposes.
15	David	God wins the victory for His people.
16	Solomon	God blesses His people even when they don't deserve it.
17	Elijah	God shows Himself to His people.
18	Job	God blesses His people, even through suffering.
19	Mary	God chooses His people for His purposes.
20	Joseph	God answers the doubts of His people.
21	Jonah	God has compassion not just for His people but for all the people of the world.
22	Isaiah	God speaks to His people.
23	Hezekiah	God protects His own name.
24	Josiah	God can use anyone for the good of His people.
25	Esther	God saves His people.
26	Jeremiah	God warns His people.
27	Ezekiel	God encourages His people.
28	Daniel	God spreads His name through His people.
29	Nehemiah	God is in control of all things for the good of His people.
30	Ezra	God teaches His people.
31	John the Baptist	God uses His people to spread His message.
32	John	God uses His people despite their sin.
33	Mary Magdalene	God uses unlikely people for very important things.
34	Peter	God restores His people.
35	Nicodemus	God is inviting to all people.
36	Stephen	God calls His people to forgive others because they have been forgiven so much.
37	Saul/Paul	God has a plan for His people even unlikely ones.
38	Barnabas	God sends His people out with His message.
39	Silas	God uses hard things in lives of His people for His purposes.

OVERVIEW

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12:1-12

The Christian life is hard. Especially in today's culture, being a true follower of Jesus has become more and more difficult. The writer of Hebrews understood this concept as he wrote to the new church who were a distinct minority and were just learning how to establish themselves in the culture around them. He takes all of Chapter 11 of Hebrews to highlight for his audience those who had come before them. He points out those who trusted the Lord and lived by faith. He doesn't do this to set them up as heroes or examples for their goodness but rather to show how God used even their meager faith to accomplish His purposes.

Therefore, as we study these historical figures, we do not want to make the very common mistake of setting them up as heroes to be applauded and followed but rather as fellow sinners who trusted the True Hero which was God and how God used that faith and them for amazing purposes. By so doing, we do not create Christians who feel defeated because they could never have the courage of David or wisdom of Solomon or strength of Samson. Rather, we point out that God can and will use them as and where they are, nothing more is needed but the faith and gifts that God has given them. In the end, it all points back to Him because apart from Him we can do nothing. We need to focus our hearts and minds not on people who change but on the One who is unchangeable. We need to clearly see God's faithfulness to and through even those who were unfaithful to Him.

In selecting the historical figures to study, I started with some baseline presuppositions. First, the Bible is God-breathed, as writer of Hebrews tell us, which means that what we read, study, and present to kids is a perfect and complete representation of God. Each word and person is intentional and is included in the Bible for the purpose of revealing to us more of God's character. Second, the events detailed in the Bible are historically accurate. Therefore, at a definite time and place, these characters lived and interacted with people and God as detailed by the Bible. They are not allegorical representations but real human beings who existed in the past. I see this as very important because we are finding more and more that the next generation of Christians does not see the Bible in this way. It is important for us to help the next generation see how each account is a part of a bigger story that God has been, and continues to, orchestrate and not just a set of bedtime stories that make Christians want to "be good."

Based on those assumptions, my hope and goal is to answer these fundamental questions with each account and person we study:

- Why is this person's life in the Bible?
- How do the experiences of their life show us God more clearly?
- How does this person's life fit into the bigger picture of God's story?

Andrew Keasling



INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God is the true hero of the Bible.

INTRODUCTION

God is the true hero of the Bible.

OUTLINE

- I. **Why we love heroes**
 - A. We all love to read about and watch heroes
 - B. We like to watch people save the day and beat the bad guys
 - C. We pretend to be like them and wish we could do what they do
 - i. Share a story about a hero you like and why
 - ii. Bring in pictures to have them identify the hero and what they do
 - D. They give us hope
- II. **What makes a hero a hero?**
 - A. They always do what is right
 - B. They protect those who can't protect themselves
 - C. They are willing to do the hard thing
 - D. They defeat the bad guy
 - E. They rescue those who are in danger
- III. **The Bible is not a book of heroes**
 - A. Many look at the Bible that way
 - B. We look at the stories and the people and are told to be like them
 - C. Why aren't the people in the Bible heroes?
 - i. Here are a few examples
 - a. Adam—sinned against God by eating forbidden fruit
 - b. Abraham—lied about his wife out of fear for his own life
 - c. Moses—doubted God's choosing of him and took matters into his own hands in wilderness
 - d. Elijah—ran away from Queen Jezebel after he saw God's power
 - e. Jacob—tricked his brother out of inheritance
 - f. David—was a murderer
 - g. Solomon—worshipped other gods
 - h. Paul—arrested and persecuted Christians

- i. Peter—denied Jesus
 - ii. None of them were without sin
 - iii. None of them had any power apart from what God gave them
 - a. Couldn't do it on their own
- IV. God is the only hero of the Bible**
- A. He is the One who always does what is right
 - B. He is the only One who consistently protected others
 - C. He was willing to do the hard thing by sending His one and only Son to die for us
 - D. He defeats our ultimate enemy, Satan
 - E. God rescues us from sin and death on the cross

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- How is God the real hero of the Bible?
- What are things that you remember that a hero does?
- Why aren't other Bible characters heroes?

INTRODUCTION

God is the true hero of the Bible.



Hands-On

SUPERHERO CHARADES

Everyone gets a card and a pencil and writes down their favorite superhero on the card. All the cards are shuffled, and kids come up one at a time and act out that superhero while their team guesses who it is. Go until all cards are done (or set time limit). The team with the most points wins.

YOU WITH SUPER POWERS

Have the kids draw a picture of themselves with the super powers they wish they had most. Have them share why.

PLAY SIMON SAYS

Discuss how important it is to obey the leader and be like them. God is the one we should be like and not the other people.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Who is our favorite superhero and why?
- Besides Jesus, who is your favorite character in the Bible?
- Why do people see the people in the Bible as heroes?
- Are they really heroes?
- Who is the only hero of the Bible? Why is He the only one?



ADAM

Genesis 3:1-24

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God provides forgiveness for sins.

ADAM

God provides forgiveness for sins.

CONTEXT

- God had just created everything in the universe and on the Earth
- God created a perfect home for His greatest creation to come
 - Provision of food, water, air, purpose, etc.
- God creates man in His own image and declares it all very good
- God gives Adam a purpose and a suitable helper—Eve
- God tells them to be fruitful and multiply and subdue the Earth for their needs
- God commands them not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil—His one restriction

OUTLINE

- I. **Adam and Eve listen to the serpent**
 - A. Makes them question God's goodness
 - i. "Did God really say?"
 - ii. You shall not eat from ANY tree in the Garden?
 - B. Makes them want to be like God
 - i. Your eyes will be opened
 - ii. You will know good and evil
- II. **Adam and Eve disobey God's command**
 - A. Saw fruit as good, pleasing and useful
 - B. Took it and ate it
- III. **The results of their disobedience**
 - A. Eyes were opened
 - B. Saw they were naked and felt shame
 - C. Tried to cover their shame with fig leaves
 - D. Hid from God
- IV. **God's response to their disobedience**
 - A. Came after them, didn't leave them alone
 - B. Spent time with them—asked what happened
 - C. Made better coverings for them and forgave them

- i. Covered their sin and shame
- ii. Took the death of an animal as sacrifice for their sin
- D. Gave them hope
 - i. Promise of a Savior who would defeat their enemy
- E. Protected them from eternal separation from God
 - i. Didn't want them to live forever in their fallen state
 - ii. Would have no hope of redemption otherwise

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What did God say for Adam and Eve not to do? Why?
- Why did they disobey God?
- What happened to them because they disobeyed?
- How did God show them love and grace?
- How does God show us love and grace?

ADAM

God provides forgiveness for sins.



Hands-On

COVERING UP THE MARK

Have a volunteer put on a neon shirt with black mark and see how long it takes to cover the mark while being wrapped in toilet paper.

ANIMAL SKINS

Have the students draw Adam and Eve in the animal skins, or have them make their own coverings by gluing or taping leaves together. How do you think they looked?



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Ask them what rules they have at school, at home and in Sunday school
- Ask them why those rules are there (for their good, to keep them safe)
- Can you think of a time where you did something wrong and felt really bad about it?
- How did you make it right?
- How do you try and cover yourself when you do something wrong?

ADAM

God provides forgiveness for sins.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could make any one thing (whether it already exists or doesn't) what would it be and why?

READ GENESIS 1:26-31

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does God decide to do in the first verse?
- Who does God want man to take care of?
- How can we take care of the Earth and animals?
- Why did God give us plants and animals?
- What did God say about all He created at the end of the day?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What had God been doing before He decided to make man?
- How was man different from everything else that He had made so far?
- What does "dominion" mean? How do we do that?
- How are we in the image of God?
- How does it make you feel that once God created people He saw His creation as very good? How must He feel about us?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How can we show God to people just by how we live?
- How are you reflecting God at school, with your family, etc.?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

ADAM

God provides forgiveness for sins.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If there was one rule that you could make the whole world have to obey, what would it be and why?

READ GENESIS 2:15-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where did God put the man?
- What was his job? What do you think that looked like?
- What commands did God give to Adam?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it important that God gave Adam a job to do?
- Why do you think God commanded Adam not to eat from tree of knowledge of good and evil? Was He just being mean?
- What did He say would happen to Adam if he ate from it?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- Why is it important that work came before the Fall and is not a result of the Fall?
- What are some things that you know God is asking you not to do but it will be hard to obey?
- Where is a place in your life where you think God is not fair? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



NOAH

Genesis 8:1-19

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God remembers His people.

NOAH

God remembers His people.

CONTEXT

- God had just created everything in the universe and on the Earth
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sin entered into the world
- Mankind grew in its wickedness to the point where God says He is sorry that He made man
- God plans to get rid of the sin on the Earth
- Noah finds favor in God's eyes and God chooses him for a special job
- Noah is told to build an ark to protect some of the animals and humans for after the Flood
- Noah obeys the Lord and once the ark is done, God floods the Earth
- After 190 days (basically six months), Noah and the animals are still in the ark

OUTLINE

- I. **God protects Noah**
 - A. Instructed him to build the ark
 - B. Saved him from the flood to come
- II. **God remembers Noah**
 - A. It would have been easy to feel forgotten after so much time had passed
 - B. Easy to wonder "how long will this go on?"
- III. **God provides for Noah**
 - A. In the seventh month, they come to rest on mountains
 - i. No more going back and forth with no land in sight
 - ii. They now have a firm place to stay
 - B. In the 10th month, other mountains can be seen
 - i. Visible proof that the waters were going down
 - ii. Encouraged Noah's heart to trust God
 - C. Gave him the birds in the ark to know when it was safe to leave
 - i. Doves
 - a. First one came back
 - b. Second one came back with fresh olive leaf
 1. Plants had begun to grow again
 - c. Third one did not return because it had found a home

- D. God tells Noah to come out
 - i. After a year in the ark (370 days)
 - ii. Had provided all the food and water he needed for a whole year
 - iii. Gives him the same charge He gave Adam and Eve
 - a. Be fruitful and multiply

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- Why did God decide to flood the Earth?
- How did He protect Noah and his family?
- What did Noah do to deserve God protecting him?
- What are ways that you see God protecting you? Be specific.

NOAH

God remembers His people.



Hands-On

BUILD AN ARK

See how hard it can be to make a small ark as opposed to the real ark.

ROCK THE BOAT

For the next two minutes pretend you are on a boat rocking through the waves. How hard is it to stand still and accomplish anything?



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Think about all that has happened in the last year. Name two or three big things.
- Now imagine having spent all that time on a boat with a bunch of smelly animals and never seeing land or plants or trees.
- Have you ever felt like God has forgotten you? If so, when and why?
- Can you think of a time when you felt like God was quiet but you see now what He was doing?
- What are ways that God is providing for you right now that you probably haven't even thought about?

NOAH

God remembers His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What is your favorite animal? Why? Which animal scares you the most? Why?

READ GENESIS 6:11-22

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- When God saw the Earth what did He see?
- How was that different than when He created it?
- What did God say to Noah about the people?
- What did He tell Noah to do?
- How did God say He would destroy the Earth?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What specifically were the people doing that upset God?
- How would you feel if God asked you to do something so public and “crazy”? (A boat in the middle of the desert!)
- What does it mean that God will make a covenant with Noah?
- How has He made covenants with us?
- What would be the hardest part of obeying the Lord in this?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What kind of things would the Lord see if He came and visited your school? Our church? Memphis?
- What are some hard things you think God is calling you to do?
- Where are some areas of your life where it is hard to do all that God commands you? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

NOAH

God remembers His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could repaint every room in your house what colors would you use? Why?

READ GENESIS 8:20-9:17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Noah do once he comes out of the ark?
- How does God respond to it?
- What does God give Noah?
- What is a covenant? When do we do that now?
- What picture did God give to show them His promise?
- When is that last time you saw a rainbow?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why do you think Noah made sacrifices to the Lord after coming off the Ark?
- Why don't we make sacrifices like that today? What do we do instead?
- What command does God give Noah? Where have we heard this before?
- Why do you think God used a bow as a sign of His covenant with His people?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- How are we called to worship God today?
- What does God say about life of men in verse 6?
- What other promises does God give to us? How do we know He will keep them?
- How does this story point us to Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



ABRAHAM

Genesis 22:1-19

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God provides for His people.

ABRAHAM

God provides for His people.

CONTEXT

- God created everything in the universe and on the Earth
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sin entered into the world
- Mankind grew in its wickedness to the point where God says He is sorry that He made man
- God destroys the sin of the world while also protecting Noah
- God makes a covenant with Noah that He won't destroy the Earth again with a flood
- Noah has kids who have kids and eventually Abram is born
- God chooses Abram and promises him that all nations on Earth will be blessed because of him
- God calls Abram to leave and God provides for him the whole way
- At one point Abram lies to escape Pharaoh, saying his wife was his sister, but his lie is found out
- God still makes a covenant with Abram and even changes his name to Abraham
- God promises that Abraham will have a son even though he is very old
 - Abraham and his wife do not always trust the promise and have a child another way
- Finally, at 100 years old, a son is born to Abraham—Isaac

OUTLINE

- I. **God's promises to Abraham**
 - A. Will make you fruitful and multiply—descendants as many as the stars
 - B. Will make you a blessing to all the nations
 - C. Will lead you to a land I will give you
- II. **Abraham's response**
 - A. Sometimes believes and obeys
 - B. Sometimes feels like he needs to take care of things—Egypt and Ishmael
 - C. Sometimes just wonders if it can happen—child at an old age
- III. **God provides the promised son**
 - A. Isaac was born to Abraham when he was 100 years old
 - B. The son he had waited to come for so long

IV. God tests Abraham

- A. Calls him to take his son, his only son whom he loves, and sacrifice him
- B. Would make no sense to Abraham—why sacrifice the one God had promised?

V. Abraham's response

- A. Abraham rose early the next morning—no indecision or doubt, but trust
- B. Takes his son where God instructed and puts him on the altar
- C. Was ready to completely obey out of his devotion to God
 - i. Because He has learned to trust in God's faithful provision

VI. God's response

- A. Provided an angel to stop Abraham
- B. Provided a ram as sacrifice for worship
- C. Reminder of the blessing that awaited Abraham

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What were some of the promises that God made to Abraham?
- Did Abraham always believe God's promises?
- Did God always keep His promises even when Abraham didn't believe?
- What did God ask Abraham to do with Isaac? Why?
- How did God protect Isaac?
- What would be one thing that God might call you to do that would be very hard? Why?

ABRAHAM

God provides for His people.



Hands-On

COUNTING STARS

Try and count the holes on one ceiling tile or a cup full of sugar and sand. How hard would that be and yet, God promised even more than that to Abraham.

DRAW THE ANGEL

Draw what you think the angel that spoke to Abraham looked like. Why did you draw him that way?

CONNECT THE STARS

Give each child a piece of black construction paper and a handful of paper stars. Allow them to glue their stars to the black paper, leaving some space between the stars. Next give each child a piece of chalk and have him or her connect the stars and count the stars. Glue the memory verse to the bottom of the page.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Where are some places where you have seen God provide for you?
- When the angel says about Isaac, "your only son whom you love" does it remind you of anyone else?
- What is something that would be very hard for you to give to the Lord? Why?
- How could Abraham have been willing to do this when he had doubted smaller things before?

ABRAHAM

God provides for His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Choose one person to be blindfolded and another to be the one leading them. After the person is blindfolded, rest of the family needs to choose where they need to go. The leader then gives them directions to get them to where has been decided. Talk about having to trust the person directing even when you couldn't see.

READ GENESIS 12:1-9

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did God tell Abraham to do?
- What was God promising to give Abraham?
- What did God say He would make Abraham?
- Why was God going to bless Abraham?
- Did Abraham obey?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why would it have been hard for Abraham to do what God told him to do?
- What are some blessings that God has given to you?
- What are some ways that you can use your blessings to bless others?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What is something that God might be calling you to leave that might be difficult for you?
- What are some specific ways that you are being obedient to what the Lord is calling you to do?
- Where are some places that you are not obeying? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

ABRAHAM

God provides for His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time you made a promise to someone? How did you do keeping it? When is a time someone broke a promise to you? How did that feel?

READ GENESIS 15:1-21

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does God tell Abraham to not do in verse 1?
- What does God call Himself here? What does a shield do?
- What promise does God give Abraham in verse 4?
- What does God have Abraham do in verse 5?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How does God answer when Abraham asks about his offspring?
- What does it say about when Abraham believed in verse 6?
- Why does God have Abraham split the animals in two?
- What does God do with them?
 - At this time, this is how a promise was made between men. They would pass between the pieces, saying that if I don't keep my promise, let what happened to these animals happen to me
- What does it mean to make a covenant?
- What covenant is God making with Abraham?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How was Abraham's faith credited him as righteousness? What does that mean?
- Where is a place in your life where you are struggling to have faith in God's plan for you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JACOB

Genesis 32:22-32

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God loves His people, even the unlikely ones.

JACOB

God loves His people, even the unlikely ones.

CONTEXT

- God chose Abraham, promised him a great land, and to make him a great nation to bless the Earth
- Abraham believed that God was faithful and was willing to sacrifice his own son at God's command
- God spared Isaac and provided a different sacrifice instead
- Isaac grew and had twin sons of his own—Jacob and Esau
- Esau was born first with Jacob grasping his heel
- Jacob was named as one who would be a deceiver (also what was meant by grasping at the heel)
- Jacob lived up to his name by cheating his brother out of his birthright (which was 2/3 of his father's estate) with a bowl of stew and out of his blessing by dressing up like him
- Jacob had made enemies with his brother and brothers-in-law
- Jacob was definitely not the one you would expect for God to use
- Jacob prepares to meet Esau with great fear

OUTLINE

- I. **Jacob the Schemer**
 - A. The name Jacob means "schemer"
 - B. Jacob tricked his brother out of his birthright (two-thirds of the inheritance)
 - C. Jacob deceived his dad into giving his brother's blessing to him also
 - D. Was very smart but also selfish
- II. **God's dealings with Jacob**
 - A. Protected him through his mother
 - B. Provided a home and family for him—his uncle Laban
 - C. Gave him wives and children
 - D. Gave him much wealth
- III. **Jacob wrestles with God**
 - A. Jacob sends his family across the stream and is by himself
 - B. A man appears and wrestles with Jacob
 - C. Jacob is hurt and yet will not give up
 - i. Believes it is the Lord and wants a blessing

- D. God gives Jacob a new name
- i. Took away the name of "schemer"
 - ii. He is now called Israel—"strives with God"
 - iii. Will be the name of the nation God would create
 - iv. God would often refer to Himself as "God of Jacob"
 - a. Exodus 3:6, 15, 16, 4:5
 - b. Psalms 20:1, 24:6, 46:7, 11, 75:9, 76:6, 94:7, 114:7, 146:5
 - c. Isaiah 2:3, 29:23; Micah 4:2
 - d. Matthew 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37; Acts 3:13, 7:46

IV. Jacob's response is to worship God

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What did Jacob's name mean? Why?
- What were some of the tricky things that Jacob did?
- Why was it so important that God calls Himself the "God of Jacob?"
- What does God change Jacob's name to? Why?
- How does God look past your mistakes and show you love?

JACOB

God loves His people, even the unlikely ones.



Hands-On

REFLECTION

Take a few minutes and have the students write out the things that they have done recently that they know God wouldn't like or draw a picture of one of those times. Once they are done, have them tear it up and throw it in trash can. That's how God treats your sins if you trust in Jesus.

A NEW NAME

Ask the students if they could change their names to anything, what would it be and why? Have them write their new name and draw pictures to show why they chose it.



Small Groups Discussion Questions

- Have you ever felt that there is no way that God could love you because of something you did?
- Do you ever feel like you just can't get it right?
- Why did God love and care for Jacob? What did he do to deserve that?
- Is there anything we can do to make God love us more than He already does? Why?
- If God were to give you a new name what do you think it would be? Why?

JACOB

God loves His people, even the unlikely ones.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What is the best food you have ever tasted? Why? What of yours would you give to have it again?

READ GENESIS 25:29-34

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who was Esau?
- What was Jacob doing when Esau came back?
- What are we told about how Esau was feeling?
- What did Esau ask Jacob for?
- What did Jacob say it would cost Esau?
- What does Esau do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why was birthright important?
 - The oldest received two-thirds of the inheritance and youngest only one-third
- Why would Jacob do this to his own brother?
- Have you ever done something mean to your brother or sister or parents? Why?
- What should Jacob have done?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Have you manipulated someone else to get what you want? How did you feel afterwards?
- What was so bad about what Jacob did?
- Have you given away something of great value for something that would only satisfy for a moment?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JACOB

God loves His people, even the unlikely ones.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time that a sibling or friend did something mean to you? How did it make you feel? What is a mean thing that you have done to a sibling or friend?

READ GENESIS 27:1-44

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What was going on with Isaac?
- What did he ask Esau to do?
- What does Rebekah tell Jacob to do?
- How did Rebekah help Jacob?
- What did Isaac do for Jacob?
- What happened to Esau? How did he feel towards Jacob?
- What does Jacob do after Esau finds out?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why did Jacob decide to try and trick his dad? Was that a good reason?
- Why was the blessing so important?
- How did Esau feel about what Jacob did? How would you have felt?
- Have you ever tricked someone into doing what you wanted? How did they respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- When have you pretended to be someone else around others to get something from them? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JOSEPH

Genesis 41:1-57

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God has a plan for His people.

JOSEPH

God has a plan for His people.

CONTEXT

- God chose Abraham, promised him a great land, and to make him a great nation to bless the Earth
- Abraham believed that God was faithful and was willing to sacrifice his own son at God's command
- God spared Isaac and provided a different sacrifice instead
- Isaac had a son named Jacob who was a schemer and yet God chose Him
- God renamed Jacob "Israel" and thus named His great nation that He promised to Abraham
- Jacob had many sons but loved Joseph the most and gave him gifts and favor
- The other sons hated Joseph and sold him into slavery
- Joseph was taken to Egypt and God was with him in all that he did there

OUTLINE

I. Joseph and his brothers

- A. Jacob greatly loved Joseph which made the other sons jealous
- B. Joseph was also given dreams and interpretations by God
- C. His brothers hated him and sold him into slavery; told Jacob he was dead

II. Joseph in Egypt

- A. Was sold by Midianites to a man named Potiphar in Egypt
 - i. Had become very successful and was moved into Potiphar's house
 - ii. Potiphar saw that the Lord was with him
 - a. Everything he was in charge of succeeded
 - b. Made him overseer of his whole house
 - iii. Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph and tried to trap him
 - a. Joseph ran away from her but she grabbed his cloak
 - b. She made up a story about Joseph to her husband
 - c. Potiphar had him thrown in prison although he hadn't done anything wrong
- B. God was with him in prison
 - i. God gave him favor with his keeper
 - ii. Joseph was put in charge of all the prisoners and the prison
 - iii. Whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed
 - iv. God allows him to interpret dreams

- a. King's cupbearer and baker
- b. Was right about both dreams and they came true
- c. The cupbearer promised to tell the king about Joseph, but forgot
- v. He was in prison two more years but God remembered him there
- C. God gets him out of prison
 - i. Pharaoh has a dream that none can interpret; cupbearer remembers Joseph
 - ii. Joseph tells Pharaoh that he can't do it, but that God would through him
 - iii. God tells Joseph what the dream means
- D. Joseph is put in charge of all of Egypt
 - i. Preparing them for the famine that was to come
 - ii. All the Earth came to Joseph for grain because of the famine

III. God's plan with Joseph

- A. God allowed Joseph to be sold into slavery to get to Egypt
- B. God allowed what happened with Potiphar to happen so he would meet the cupbearer in prison
- C. God allowed him to interpret dreams so that when Pharaoh had a dream the cupbearer would know he could help
- D. God allowed him to speak to Pharaoh so that he could save people from the famine that was to come
 - i. Including his brothers and family who came to him for food
 - ii. God protected His people from starving to death by using Joseph in Egypt to help them
- E. God even provided a land for them in Egypt when Joseph brought them over to be protected and fed

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- How did Joseph's brothers feel about him? Why?
- What did Joseph's brothers do to him?
- How did God take care of Joseph along the way?
- How did God use Joseph to help all His people?
- Do you believe that God is completely in control of your whole life?
- Is there anything that is hard for you to believe that God is in control of?

JOSEPH

God has a plan for His people.



Hands-On

INTERPRETING DREAMS

Share a dream you had and let someone in the class “interpret” it. Who knows what it means? Do you always know what your dreams mean? Discuss how God gave Joseph the interpretation.

TIMELINE

Make a timeline of Joseph’s life. Discuss how long he had to wait between his brothers selling him and them coming to Jesus. Make two lists on the board: one of everything amazing that happened to Joseph and one of all the hard things. Was God with Joseph in the good and bad? Did God have a plan? How do you know? How might some of the hard things in your life be part of God’s good plan for you?



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Have you ever been blamed for something that you didn’t do? How did you react? What did you do?
- Name a time when you had a hard time believing that God was in control. Why?
- How might it have been hard for Joseph to believe that God was working for his best?
- When it was all over do you believe that Joseph was able to see how God was at work? Why?

JOSEPH

God has a plan for His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time that you were really jealous? Why were you jealous? What did you do?

READ GENESIS 37:1-36

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who was Joseph?
- Why didn't his brothers like him?
- What did they decide to do to him? Who saved Joseph from that?
- What did the brothers then do to Joseph?
- How do you think he felt?
- Where did Joseph end up?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who are some people you are jealous of? Why?
- Who are people at your school that people don't like? How do you treat them? How should you?
- Why do you think the brothers did that to Joseph?
- How did it affect their dad?
- How do we see God protecting Joseph during this?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways that your sins affect other people?
- Who is someone you wish you could just get rid of? How can you love them like Jesus does? Be specific.
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JOSEPH

God has a plan for His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time you got blamed for something that you didn't do? How did you respond?

READ GENESIS 39:1-23

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where do we find Joseph?
- What does it say about how the Lord was taking care of Joseph?
- What was Joseph's job?
- Why did Potiphar's wife want to kiss Joseph? Why was that wrong?
- Where did Joseph end up?
- How was God with Joseph in prison?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- When tempted by Potiphar's wife, how did Joseph respond? Who did he say he'd be sinning against?
- How did Joseph handle being falsely accused?
- How are we tempted to feel like God has forgotten us when things don't go the way we want?
- Why was Joseph successful?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Do you see your sin as against God first and foremost?
- What does it mean that our sin tramples on God's character?
- How can we trust God when we don't understand what He is doing?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

NOTES



MOSES

Exodus 12:1-42

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God protects His people.

MOSES

God protects His people.

CONTEXT

- God chose Abraham, promised him a great land, and to make him a great nation to bless the Earth
- Abraham believed that God was faithful and was willing to sacrifice his own son at God's command
- Isaac had a son named Jacob who was a schemer and yet God chose Him
- God renamed Jacob "Israel" and thus named His great nation that He promised to Abraham
- Jacob had many sons but loved Joseph the most and gave him gifts and favor
- Joseph was taken to Egypt and God was with him in all that he did there
- God used Joseph to protect His people from the great famine that occurred
- The Israelites lived in Egypt until their numbers threatened Pharaoh and he enslaved them
- Israel cried out to the Lord for a deliverer and God answered through Moses
- God called Moses to do His wonders among the Egyptians
- God sent nine plagues but still Pharaoh's heart was hard

OUTLINE

- I. The Lord speaks to Moses and Aaron
 - A. Not the most likely suspects
 - i. Moses killed a man and ran away from his people
 - ii. Moses even questioned God when he was called
 - a. They won't listen to me; I am not a good speaker
 - B. Something big was about to happen
 - i. They would reset their calendar around it
 - ii. They needed to prepare
 - a. Each household would need to have a one-year-old lamb that was without blemish
 - C. The Passover
 - i. They would take their lambs and kill them
 - ii. They would spread the blood of the lamb on their home's doorpost
 - iii. They would eat the lamb with bitter herbs and unleavened bread
 - a. Any leftover was to be burned in the morning
 - b. Eat it a certain way – belt fastened, sandals on, staff in hand, ready to go
 - c. IT IS THE LORD'S PASSOVER – not theirs

- iv. God was coming
 - a. Would kill all the firstborn of Egypt—man and livestock
 - b. Executing judgment on the gods of Egypt
 - c. Would pass over and not destroy those whose door was covered in the lamb's blood
 - d. They were not allowed to go out and watch
- D. How to celebrate it in the future
 - i. Remember and feast by removing the leaven from your house and preparing for the feast
 - ii. Observe this for themselves and the generations after them
 - a. Even when you enter the Promised Land
- II. The Lord moves throughout Egypt**
 - A. At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn of land of Egypt
 - i. From the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the captives in the dungeon
 - ii. None escaped the wrath besides those with blood on their doorposts
 - B. Pharaoh responds by letting God's people go
- III. The Lord leads His people out of Egypt**
 - A. He keeps His promise to Abraham (400 years in captivity before freedom)
 - B. God even provides for His people who had nothing
 - i. Received gold and silver, clothing, and jewelry from Egyptians
 - C. 600,000 men (not including women and children) left Egypt that day
 - D. It was called a "night of watching by the Lord"
- IV. Gospel Implications—God was laying groundwork for the cross even then**
 - A. Jesus is our Passover lamb whose blood makes God's wrath pass over us
 - i. Perfect, spotless sacrifice
 - B. God will come again and we need not fear because of blood of Jesus
 - C. We are called to remember what God has done and celebrate it among all generations

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- Why was Moses not a likely choice to be used by God? How did God use Moses?
- What was the final thing that God did to convince Pharaoh?
- How did God protect His own people?
- How does the Passover show us Jesus? How does God "pass over" your sins?

MOSES

God protects His people.



Hands-On

ROBE RELAYS

Have a few students do a relay of putting on robe, sandals, and while holding staff and standing, eat something.

PASSOVER DRAWING

Have the students draw and color the doors at Passover with the blood on them.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Why did God pick Moses? Did he do something to deserve that?
- How did the Passover show both God's grace and justice?
- How would you have felt if you were there during the Passover? Why?
- Why did God want them to remember and celebrate this into the future?
- How does the Passover point us towards Jesus?

MOSES

God protects His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Look at some baby pictures of the kids or watch the video of them being born. Talk about how small and helpless they were.

READ EXODUS 1:16, 22, 2:1-10

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What command did Pharaoh give about the Hebrew children?
- Why did Pharaoh do this?
- What did Moses' mom do to protect Moses?
- Where did Moses end up?
- How would that help him be safe?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What was happening to God's people at this time in Egypt?
- How was God preparing the way to show Himself to them?
- Who was God going to use to do this?
- Do you believe that God has a specific plan for your life?
- How has God protected you like He did Moses?
 - This is a good place to talk about the Gospel—we are saved from our sin and the death it brings
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are some ways that God might use you to show Himself to others?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

NOTES

MOSES

God protects His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Mention the 10 plagues (Exodus 7:14-12:11:10) and talk about which ones you would most like to see and least like to see.

READ EXODUS 3:1-22

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What was Moses doing?
- How did God appear to Moses?
- What did God tell Moses to do?
- What did God tell Moses that He had heard?
- What did He say He was going to have Moses do?
- What did Moses say to God?
- What did God promise He would do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why did Moses notice the burning bush?
- How did God identify Himself in verse 6? Why was that important?
- How did God identify Himself in verse 14? Why was that important?
- How did God encourage Moses to do what He was calling him to do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Why do you think that God often speaks to people while they are just living normal life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

NOTES



PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

Exodus 16:1-36

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God's patience toward His people.

PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

God's patience toward His people.

CONTEXT

- God chose Abraham, promised him a great land, and to make him a great nation to bless the Earth
- Abraham believed that God was faithful and was willing to sacrifice his own son at God's command
- God used Joseph to protect His people from the great famine that occurred
- The Israelites lived in Egypt until their numbers threatened Pharaoh and he enslaved them
- Israel cried out to the Lord for a deliverer and God answered through Moses
- God called Moses to do His wonders among the Egyptians so he would free them and used the 10 Plagues to change Pharaoh's heart and point us to the cross
- God used Moses to lead His people out of Egypt and towards the Promised Land, but problems arise almost immediately

OUTLINE

- I. **The Lord delivers His people safely across the Red Sea**
 - A. Walked on dry ground—pretty amazing for land that had been underwater for a REALLY LONG TIME
 - B. Protected them from Pharaoh's army
 - C. Led to song of worship by all of the people acknowledging God's care and protection for them
- II. **The people begin to grumble and complain**
 - A. Almost immediately after they were saved—after three days journey
 - B. Grumble—complaining angrily about a situation
 - C. First complaint- Water being bitter (not tasting right)
 - i. God provides the answer
 - ii. Log thrown in water makes it sweet
 - iii. God responds with a covenant for them
 - a. Listen to my voice and obey what I say
 - b. If you do I will not put plagues on you that I did on Egypt
 - D. Second complaint- Lack of food
 - i. Say they wished they would have died in Egypt
 - a. At least they had food there
 - b. Totally forgetting the harshness of their slavery
 - ii. Blame Moses and God and believe they have been brought out of Egypt to die in desert

III. God graciously answers their complaint

- A. Didn't deserve God's help or favor
- B. Had forgotten what He'd done for them and were complaining against Him
- C. Provides for their wants and needs
 - i. Manna—bread from heaven rained down on them
 - ii. Daily—enough each day for them to have and be satisfied
 - a. Were not to try to take too much and hoard it for themselves
 - b. Would spoil the next day
 - c. Would be melted by sun once all were full
 - d. Would only get more than one day's worth the day before the Sabbath so they could keep it holy and not work
 - iii. They did nothing to get it
 - a. Didn't have to plant seeds and grow it or kill animal for it or even cook or prepare it
 - b. Just a gift from the Lord each day
 - iv. In response to their grumbling
 - a. God heard and answered them
 - b. Even in their complaints, selfishness and ingratitude
- D. They ate the manna for 40 years
 - i. God provided for them every day in the wilderness
 - ii. Even when they didn't "deserve" it

IV. God has them keep some manna

- A. To show the generations that were to come
- B. To teach them God's provision
- C. So they would also trust that God would help and provide for them as well

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who were the witnesses from this morning?
- How did God show the people His power as He brought them out of Egypt?
- How did the people respond to all God did for them?
- How did God respond to their grumbling?
- What things do you complain about when it comes to God? Why?

PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

God's patience toward His people.



Hands-On

RED SEA DRAWING

Have the students draw what they think it would have looked like for God to part the Red Sea.

GATHERING SUPPLIES

Scatter some strips of paper all over the classroom. Give the students an amount of time to gather enough for them and their families "while the sea is parted."



Small Group Discussion Questions

- How did God show the people His power as He brought them out of Egypt?
- Which part do you wish you could have seen? Why?
- How did God take care of them in the wilderness?
- What did the people complain about? Why?
- How did God respond to their complaints?
- What are things you complain about? Why?

PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

God's patience toward His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time you can remember being really angry? What made you so angry? How did you handle it?

READ EXODUS 32:1-24, 35

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where was Moses?
- What had just happened to the people? What had God done?
- What did the people ask Aaron to do? What does Aaron do?
- How did God respond to their sin?
- What did Moses bring down from the mountain? What did he do to the tablets?
- What did the Lord do to the people for their sin?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why do you think they wanted to make gods for themselves? Why did Aaron do that for them?
- When is a time that you did something that wasn't right just because you wanted to please others?
- What did Moses do for the people before God?
- What did Aaron say to Moses when he questioned him? How do we know that was an excuse?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What is something that God has created that you have turned into an idol? How do we avoid that?
- Why do we justify our sin and make excuses when we are found out?
- How should we respond when we see our sin?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

God's patience toward His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Make a family list of all the ways that God has blessed you as individuals and a family. At the end, take some time to thank God for them.

READ NUMBERS 11:1-15

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What were the people doing?
- Why was God angry for their complaining?
- What had God done for them that they forgot?
- What were their specific complaints?
- How had God been taking care of them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it important for us to remember all that God has done for us?
- Why do we quickly forget what God has done for us?
- How do you think God felt when the people wanted to go back to Egypt after He had freed them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are some of the things that you have complained to the Lord about lately? Why?
- Why do we sometimes long for things that aren't the Lord's?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



RAHAB

Joshua 2:1-14

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God adds to His people.

RAHAB

God adds to His people.

CONTEXT

- God chose Abraham, promised him a great land, and to make him a great nation to bless the Earth
- Abraham believed that God was faithful and was willing to sacrifice his own son at God's command
- God used Joseph to protect His people from the great famine that occurred
- The Israelites lived in Egypt until their numbers threatened Pharaoh and he enslaved them
- Israel cried out to the Lord for a deliverer and God answered through Moses
- God called Moses to do His wonders among the Egyptians so he would free them and used the 10 Plagues to change Pharaoh's heart and point us to the cross
- God used Moses to lead His people out of Egypt and towards Promised Land, but problems arise almost immediately
- God's people grumble against the Lord and refuse to trust God and enter the Promised Land
- God has His people wander in the wilderness for 40 years before allowing them to enter the land He promised to Abraham
- As they prepare to enter the Promised Land, one big things stands in their way—Jericho

OUTLINE

- I. **The Lord chooses Joshua as the new leader**
 - A. To come after Moses
 - B. The people pledge to follow him as they followed Moses
- II. **Joshua sends spies into the Promised Land**
 - A. Risky since last time spies went in the people rebelled
 - B. Wanted to get a feel for what they would encounter there
- III. **Spies go to house of Rahab**
 - A. She was a prostitute—unlikely house for Jews to enter
 - i. Not usually associated with sin
 - ii. Embodiment of Leviticus 18:24
 - B. She was unlikely protector of God's people
 - i. The king of Jericho seeks the men at her house
 - ii. It would make sense for her to side with her people by giving men to the king
 - iii. Was a risk for her to protect them

- iv. Sends the king's men away
 - v. Helps them escape the city and king's men
 - C. She was unlikely messenger of the Lord
 - i. "I know the Lord has given you this land"
 - ii. "The fear of you has fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you."
 - iii. They had heard what the Lord had done for His people
 - a. Bringing them through the Red Sea
 - b. Defeating other kings before them
 - c. Knew He was the God of heaven and Earth
 - iv. Her words embolden Israelites to enter into Promised Land
 - a. Trust that the Lord is already at work
 - D. She makes an unlikely request
 - i. Let me and my family join you
 - a. Knew the power of God
 - b. Wanted to be included with His people
 - ii. Men assure her that she will be saved
 - a. Our life for yours
 - b. Sign of her deliverance—scarlet cord in window
 - 1. Symbol of Passover— Sign of the blood = Wrath of Israel would pass over her house
- IV. Rahab and family are saved**
- A. When Jericho was taken over, only she and her family were spared—Joshua 6:25
 - B. She becomes part of God's people—Joshua 6:25
 - C. She even becomes part of the line of Jesus—Matthew 1:5
 - D. She becomes unlikely example of faith—Hebrews 11:31

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- Who was the new leader of God's people?
- Who does God provide for the spies to protect them?
- Why would she be unlikely to help?
- How does God use her for His ultimate purposes?
- How does God use us for His purposes?

RAHAB

God adds to His people.



Hands-On

GUESS THE LEADER

Pick one person to leave the room. While they are out of the room have the group get in a circle and choose one to be the leader. The leader's job is to have the group do motions without getting caught. They will do a motion and then whole group will do what they do. Have the person re-enter and stand in the middle of the circle. They win once they pick who the leader is. The leader then goes out of the room and you start over.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Who did God use to help His people into the Promised Land?
- Why was she not a likely person to help?
- How did she help them?
- How did God already provide the city to His people?
- Who are people in your life that you think God might have you go to? Why?

RAHAB

God adds to His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Draw a family tree, including grandparents and great grandparents, so your children can see their family history.

READ MATTHEW 1:1-6

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who does it say that Jesus was son of in verse 1?
- Do you recognize any of these names? What do you know about them?
- Why were they important?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What is a genealogy and why was it important?
- Why was it especially important when it came to Jesus?
 - God had promised Him to come through Abraham and David
- Why was it strange to have a woman in the list?
 - At this time only men were listed
- What does it say about Rahab that she was on this list?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Why do you think God loves to use very normal and ordinary people to do His work? How does that encourage you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

NOTES

RAHAB

God adds to His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time that you helped someone else out? When is a time that someone helped you out? How did it make you feel?

READ JOSHUA 2:15-21

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who was in Rahab's house?
- What was she doing for them?
- How did she lead them away from trouble?
- What promise did the men make to her?
- What did the men say to Joshua when they returned?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why was it risky for Rahab to help them?
- Who are some people in your life that it might be risky for you to help?
- What did the scarlet cord symbolize for us?
- How was it risky for Jesus to help us?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who is someone that has helped you in your journey with the Lord? Have you thanked them for how God has used them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JOSHUA

Joshua 6:1-27

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God fights for His people.

JOSHUA

God fights for His people.

CONTEXT

- God used Moses to lead His people out of Egypt and towards the Promised Land, but problems arise almost immediately
- God's people grumble against the Lord and refuse to trust God and enter the Promised Land
- God has His people wander in the wilderness for 40 years before being allowed to enter the land He promised to Abraham
- As they prepare to enter the Promised Land, one big thing stands in their way—Jericho
- Joshua sends spies in to the land to check it out
- The spies are helped by an unlikely person—the prostitute, Rahab
- She helps them escape the hands of the king and encourages the Israelites by telling how the people are afraid of them because of the Lord
- The spies return and the people prepare for battle

OUTLINE

- I. **The Lord chooses Joshua as the new leader**
 - A. To come after Moses
 - B. The people pledge to follow him as they followed Moses
 - C. Had been faithful from the beginning
 - i. Was one of two original spies who trusted the Lord and wanted to enter the Promised Land 40 years ago
- II. **Joshua encounters the Lord's help**
 - A. Saw a man before him with sword
 - B. Asked him if he was for Jericho or Israel
 - C. Man responded with who he was—Commander of the Lord's army
 - i. Made it clear that He would go before His people
 - ii. Fight a battle they couldn't win on their own
 - D. Man responded with whose side he is on—the Lord's
- III. **The Lord's plan for His people**
 - A. The city was shut up tight out of fear—no one left or entered
 - i. Had a very high wall which made it hard to get in to fight
 - B. "I have given Jericho into your hand"

- C. March around the city once a day for six days
 - i. Strange plan—just march around the city
 - ii. The men of war—what you would expect to go to battle
 - D. On 7th day, march around city seven times and have seven priests with seven horns before the Ark of the Covenant and blow them. After seventh time around make a loud blast with horns and all the people are to shout
 - E. Once you do that the wall will fall flat and you will enter and defeat them
 - F. I am sure that all of Israel was a little confused
 - i. “So we don’t need to climb the wall or really do anything but march and blow horns and shout...”
 - ii. Not what they expected
 - G. This plan ensured that God would be credited with the victory
 - i. They couldn’t later say it was their strength that defeated the city
 - ii. They couldn’t say it was because of their superior strategy
 - iii. It was nothing about them at all—they couldn’t earn this victory
 - iv. When the story was told to future generations, it would be obvious that the Lord won the battle for them
- IV. The people obeyed God’s plan and God delivered the city**
- A. The walls fell and they entered in and defeated the people of Jericho
 - B. They devoted the city to destruction as the Lord commanded
 - C. They saved Rahab and her family as the spies promised her
 - D. Word of this spread throughout the land

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- How did God help Joshua?
- What was the challenge before God’s people? Why was it scary?
- How did God deliver the city into their hands?
- Why did God do it like that?

JOSHUA

God fights for His people.



Hands-On

THE WALLS OF JERHICO

Have the students re-enact the Battle of Jerhico scene with Legos or blocks to see how crazy it would have seemed to do this.

DRAW THE WALLS

Ask the students to draw the city of Jerhico with the walls falling down.

PASS IT DOWN

Have someone explain the story acting as if they were telling their children later on.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- How did God use His angel to encourage Joshua?
- What was the plan that God had for them to take Jericho? Why was it a crazy plan?
- Why did God plan it out like this?
- How did God show His power through it all?
- How have you seen God's power in your life?

JOSHUA

God fights for His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What Halloween costume has been your favorite? Why?

READ JOSHUA 5:13-15

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where do we find Joshua?
- Who was there with Joshua? How did he respond?
- What question did Joshua ask him?
- How did the angel respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why was it important how the angel of the Lord responded to Joshua's question? What does that remind us about God?
- How did Joshua respond to the angel? Why was that important?
- Who was ultimately in charge?
- What are some ways that you need to "bow" before the Lord in worship?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who is God ultimately for in all situations?
- Why is it a good thing that God is for Himself and His Glory?
- Why was it important for Joshua to remember that God was the one in charge?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JOSHUA

God fights for His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Make a family list of all the ways that God has blessed you as individuals and as a family. At the end take some time to thank God for them.

READ JOSHUA 24:1-28

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who did Joshua gather? What did they do?
- What did Joshua remind the people of?
- What did Joshua tell the people to do in verse 14?
- What does Joshua say about him and his family in verse 15?
- What are ways that you as a family can serve the Lord?
- What did the people say they would do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it important for us to remember all that God has done for us?
- What are ways that we choose God instead of other things? Why is that important?
- What are ways that you as a family can serve the Lord?
- How have you committed to serving the Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are some false gods that you serve?
- What are ways that you as a family can serve the Lord?
- How can you serve the Lord at your school?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



GIDEON

Judges 7:1-23

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God's presence is with His people.

GIDEON

God's presence is with His people.

CONTEXT

- God used Moses to lead His people out of Egypt and towards the Promised Land, but problems arise almost immediately
- God's people grumble against the Lord and refuse to trust God and enter the Promised Land
- God has His people wander in the wilderness for 40 years before being allowed to enter the land He promised to Abraham
- As they prepare to enter the Promised Land, one big thing stands in their way—Jericho
- God uses a prostitute, Rahab, to help the spies in the Promised Land
- God knocks down the walls of Jericho and allows His people to take over the city, led by Joshua
- As His people go, God commands them to devote to destruction all people and things in order to keep His people from following their gods but Israel disobeys the Lord
- At Joshua's death Israel strays away from the Lord to other gods and is in terrible distress
- God raises up judges to deliver the people. While judges lead, the people followed the Lord, but when the judges die, they follow the gods of the people that they had not devoted to destruction
- Because of the evil done by Israel, God gives them into the hand of Midian to oppress them

OUTLINE

- I. **The Lord calls Gideon to lead- Judges 6:11-18**
 - A. Midian was oppressing the people of God to the point that they lived in holes and caves out of fear
 - B. Midianites destroyed all crops of Israel and brought them very low
 - C. The people of God cry out to Him for help
 - D. Gideon was also in hiding from Midianites
 - i. Was hiding his food for fear of Midian
 - ii. Threshing his wheat in winepress—not what it was used for
 - iii. Not who you would expect God to use
 - E. The angel of the Lord greets Gideon with a strange greeting
 - i. "O Mighty Man of Valor"
 - a. Would almost seem sarcastic based on his actions
 - b. Was not acting like a Mighty Man or acting bravely (valor)
 - ii. Let Gideon know that God was with Him
 - a. Sure didn't seem like it because of oppression of Midian

- b. Felt helpless and powerless and afraid
 - F. Gideon questions the angel
 - i. If God is really for us and with us why is all this happening?
 - a. Seems like He has forsaken us
 - ii. How can He use me?
 - a. I am least in Father's house and my clan is the weakest
 - b. God was using a very unlikely person
 - G. God's response—I will be with you
 - H. Gideon needs some convincing along the way—Fleece
 - i. Does not seem like the right choice to lead
 - ii. Doesn't have strength or faith to lead in eyes of the world
 - iii. God saw something Gideon didn't see in himself
- II. God delivers Midian into hand of His people—Judges 7:1-23**
- A. Gideon raises up an army to fight Midian
 - i. How it was done, get more people than the other guys
 - ii. The Lord says the army is too many- 32,000
 - a. Wants to be sure that Israel does not take credit for the victory but sees it as the Lord's
 - 1. Important to trust God's provision which would lead to worship
 - b. Anyone who was afraid was allowed to leave and 22,000 did
 - iii. The Lord continues to say that the army is too big
 - a. Had the men go down to water to drink
 - b. 300 men who lapped the water with their tongues were chosen
 - c. God was going to deliver Midian with only 300 men
 - B. Gideon was still afraid
 - i. God tells him to send some spies into the camp
 - ii. The spies hear how the Midianites were afraid of God and Gideon
 - a. Had even heard of Gideon and called him a man of Israel
 - b. Knew the Lord had given into the hand of Gideon not only the camp but all of Midian
 - iii. Gideon responds with worship to what he hears
 - C. God's plan
 - i. Each man would have a trumpet and torch inside a jar
 - ii. They would surround the camp from a distance and at same time blow trumpets and break jars with a shout "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"
 - iii. The Israelites did as were commanded and the Midianites were so afraid that they turned on each other
 - iv. God's people didn't even have to fight and yet they won

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What had been happening to God's people?
- Who did God choose to help them? Why was he an unlikely choice?
- How did God use Gideon to save His people?
- Why did He do it the way He did?
- What are reasons you think that God can't use you?

GIDEON

God's presence is with His people.



Hands-On

FLEECE AND WATER

Take a piece of fabric and a plate with some water. Put the fabric on the plate and try to only get a fleece wet and not the plate it is on. What about getting the plate wet, but not the fleece? Discuss how God can do anything!

DOTS

Print off 100 pages with 300 dots on each them. Place all pages on the ground so the students can visually understand what 30,000 looks like. Then remove all but one page so they can understand how many people God had leave and then how many were left.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What was happening to God's people at this time? Why were they afraid?
- Who did God choose to help His people? Why was he an unlikely choice?
- How specifically did God use Gideon to save His people?
- How did God make sure that people knew it was His power and not the army that won the battle?
- Are there any reasons that you think God can't use you? Why?

GIDEON

God's presence is with His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Think of a time when you were really afraid. Why were you scared and what did you do?

READ JUDGES 6:11-18

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who comes to where Gideon is?
- What does the angel call Gideon?
- What question does Gideon ask the angel?
- What does the angel tell Gideon to do?
- What excuses did Gideon make?
- What does Gideon want from the Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it important to know what Gideon was doing when God arrived?
 - Showed he was afraid of Midianites and was hiding his food
- Why is what the angel says to him ironic?
- What does Gideon say that the Lord has done? What does that mean? Is it true?
- What excuses do you make to avoid what the Lord is calling you to do?
- Is it enough that God is with you or do you need more than that?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- When is a time that you have felt forsaken by the Lord? How did you respond?
- What do you need in order to do God's will?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

NOTES

GIDEON

God's presence is with His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time that you had to do something that was very hard for you? How did it go?

READ JOSHUA 6:25-40

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did God tell Gideon to do? Why would that be hard?
- Did Gideon obey? When did he obey? Why?
- What happened when the people found out?
- What did they want to do to Gideon?
- How did his dad stand up for him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it tell us about Gideon that he obeyed at night?
- What are some things God might call you to do that you would be afraid to obey? Why?
- What did Joash say to defend Gideon?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are some things you need to get rid of in your life that draw your worship away from God?
- Why are we sometimes afraid of standing up for Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



SAMSON

Judges 16:4-30

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God hears the prayers of His people.

SAMSON

God hears the prayers of His people.

CONTEXT

- God's people enter the Promised Land after 40 years of wandering
- As His people go, God commands them to devote to destruction all people and things in order to keep His people from following foreign gods but Israel disobeys the Lord
- At Joshua's death Israel strays away from the Lord to other gods and is in terrible distress
- God raises up judges to deliver the people. While judges lead, the people followed the Lord, but when the judges die, they follow the gods of the people that they had not devoted to destruction
- Because of the evil done by Israel, God gives them into the hand of Midian to oppress them but then delivers them from Midian by hand of Gideon
- Thus a new pattern develops for God's people: 1) They turn from the Lord to the gods of the people they didn't drive out; 2) God allows His people to suffer for their disobedience so they will turn back to Him; 3) They ask the Lord for help and deliverance and He provides a judge to rescue them; 4) As long as the judge lives Israel follows the Lord; once he dies they forget the Lord and cycle continues
- Again they follow the pattern of disobedience and the Lord allows the Philistines to rule over Israel

OUTLINE

- I. **The birth of Samson-Judges 13:1-7**
 - A. Samson's mom could not have children
 - B. Angel of the Lord tells his mom that she'll have a son and he'll be special
 - i. Instructions
 - a. She could eat nothing unclean or have any wine
 - b. Once he was born they could not cut his hair
 - ii. He will begin to save Israel from hand of Philistines
- II. **Samson's strength**
 - A. Was able to tear a lion in pieces with bare hands-Judges 14:6
 - B. Struck down 30 men-Judges 14:19
 - C. Tore off ropes and defeated 1,000 men with a jaw bone-Judges 15:14-15
 - D. How did he do this?—"The Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him"
 - i. Not by his great strength and power but the Lord
 - ii. As judgment upon the Philistines

III. Samson's downfall

- A. Fell in love with a woman named Delilah
- B. The Philistines convinced her to help them find the key to his strength
- C. Delilah asks Samson to tell her his secret
 - i. Three times he tricks her with a lie about what could bind him
 - a. New fresh bowstrings; new ropes; weave seven locks of his hair
 - ii. Each time she does the very thing he says, the Philistines "just happen to show up" to ambush him; Samson should see what she is up to
 - iii. He is blinded by his love for her; She continues to press him until he finally tells her
- D. He tells Delilah about his hair and she shaves it in his sleep
- E. The Philistines take him, put out his eyes, and lead him to prison in chains

IV. Samson's redemption

- A. The leaders of Philistines displayed Samson for their entertainment
- B. They also credit their god, Dagon, with why they were able to overpower Samson
- C. Samson's hair began to grow back in prison
- D. Samson was placed between the pillars of the temple
 - i. Asked young man to help him to touch the pillars
- E. Samson prayed to the Lord
 - i. Please remember me and strengthen me this once
 - ii. God didn't have to answer—Samson didn't deserve it
 - a. Sacrificed his strength for Delilah
 - b. Cared more about her than the Lord
 - iii. God answered his prayer and gave him strength
- F. Samson knocks over the pillars and thus brings down the temple
 - i. Over 3,000 on roof plus many more inside, including all of the leaders of the Philistines
 - ii. Was punishment for their false worship as well as their treatment of God's people
 - iii. Samson killed more people in his death than in his life

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was special about Samson?
- How did Samson lose his power?
- What are some things in your life that distract you from the Lord?

SAMSON

God hears the prayers of His people.



Hands-On

FIND THE PILLARS

Choose two students to stand in the room as the pillars. Blindfold a student and have them come into the room and try to find the pillars. Once they find them, choose other students.

SAMSON'S HAIR

Have the students draw what they think Samson's hair would have looked like.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- How did God use Samson's life to help His people?
- How did Samson lose his power?
- What distracted him from what God called him to do?
- How did God use Samson's death to help His people?
- What are ways that you can help others?
- What things most distract you from God? Why?

SAMSON

God hears the prayers of His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?

READ JUDGES 13:1-25

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are we told about what Israel was doing?
- How did God respond to that?
- After the 40 years, what did the angel of the Lord come and announce to the wife of Zorah?
- What were the instructions that the angel gave them concerning the son they were to have?
- What did they offer to the Lord?
- What was the name of the son they had?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why are we surprised when there are consequences to our sin?
- How did Manoah respond when he heard what the Lord said?
- How do you respond when you hear someone tell God's Word to you?
- What do you have to offer to the Lord?
- What did it say that happened to Samson in verse 25?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are things that we shouldn't do because we have been set apart by God for His purpose?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

SAMSON

God hears the prayers of His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could have one super power, what would it be and why?

READ JUDGES 16:4-22

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who did Samson fall in love with?
- What did the Philistines ask her to do? What did they offer her?
- What happened the first time they tried to capture him?
- What happened the second time they tried to capture him?
- How did they finally capture him?
- What did they do to Samson?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who is someone who has had a lot of influence over you? Why?
- How do you stand up to people when they try to get you to do wrong?
- Why is it important to have true friends?
- Why did Samson finally give in to Delilah?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who are some people that you have a tendency to give in to?
- How do you protect yourself from them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



RUTH

Ruth 1:1-18

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God gives us people when we are in need.

RUTH

God gives us people when we are in need.

CONTEXT

- God's people enter the Promised Land after 40 years of wandering
- As His people go, God commands them to devote to destruction all people and things in order to keep His people from following foreign gods but Israel disobeys the Lord
- At Joshua's death Israel strays away from the Lord to other gods and is in terrible distress
- God raises up judges to deliver the people. While judges lead, the people followed the Lord, but when the judges die, they follow the gods of the people that they had not devoted to destruction
- Because of the evil done by Israel, God gives them into the hand of Midian to oppress them but then delivers them from Midian by hand of Gideon
- Thus a new pattern develops for God's people: 1) They turn from the Lord to the gods of the people they didn't drive out; 2) God allows His people to suffer for their disobedience so they will turn back to Him; 3) They ask the Lord for help and deliverance and He provides a judge to rescue them; 4) As long as the judge lives Israel follows the Lord; once he dies they forget the Lord and cycle continues

OUTLINE

I. Naomi

- A. Was an Israelite
- B. Because of famine, she travels with her husband and two sons to Moab looking for food
- C. Her husband dies and then after 10 years in Moab her sons die as well, leaving behind wives
- D. Would have been scary for her to be all alone
 - i. No food or land; she must provide for herself
- E. Naomi decides to return because she heard the Lord had brought food back to the Israelites
 - i. Realized that the Lord was in control
 - ii. Was because of their idolatry
- F. Tells her daughters-in-law to return to their moms' houses and prays the Lord's blessing on them
 - i. They cry with Naomi
 - ii. Want to go with her
 - iii. Naomi's response—I have no more and so nothing to offer you

II. Ruth

- A. Was a Moabite and thus not part of God's people
- B. Instead of granting Naomi's request, she clings to her

- C. Not a very smart move; if she stays she can get remarried and be taken care of, but going with Naomi was risky
 - i. Israelites were told not to marry Moabites, so would she be able to find another husband?
 - ii. If she can't find a husband, how would she provide for herself and Naomi?
 - iii. What about after Naomi dies? What will she do then?
- D. Ruth loved Naomi and was loyal to her
 - i. Saw Naomi's sadness and need and wanted to be there for her
 - ii. Insisted on returning with her
 - a. Where you go, I will go and where you stay, I will stay
 - b. Your people shall be my people and your God my God
 - 1. Seems she didn't know the Lord at this point
 - 2. Instead of returning to her gods as Orpah did—verse 15
 - iii. Where you die, I will die and be buried
 - iv. Swears an oath to Naomi
 - a. May the Lord do so to me and more if anything but death separates us
- E. Ruth does go with Naomi

III. Implications

- A. Even though Naomi believes God has dealt bitterly with her and she says it, He continues to care and provide for her
 - i. Journey would have been hard alone
 - ii. God uses Ruth to help Naomi survive
- B. Often we also don't see God's hand at work when we are disappointed in our circumstances
- C. God begins to reveal His heart for all the nations by making a Moabite woman His vehicle of blessing on one of His people
 - i. Ruth is also used by God to help bring the Messiah
 - ii. Part of Jesus' genealogy even though she was a Moabite

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What happened to Naomi? Why was that so hard?
- Who did God give to Naomi to help her?
- How did Ruth help her?
- Who are people in your life that you can help?

RUTH

God gives us people when we are in need.



Hands-On

HELPERS

Pair up the group and blindfold one of the partners. Use the chairs in the room to create an obstacle course. Have their partner help them make it through by giving them instructions. Ask them about how it feels to be helped like this.

JESUS' GENEALOGY

Write Jesus' genealogy from Matthew 1. Who is in this genealogy? Discuss how God had a plan to use Ruth and her family to bring forth the Messiah. Did Ruth know that she would be part of that plan when she decided to follow Naomi? Do you always know what God is doing in your life? Ruth wasn't from Israel, yet God made her part of His family. How does He offer to do this for you too?



Small Group Discussion Questions

- How was what happened to Naomi so hard? How did she respond?
- How did God show her that He was still with her?
- Why would it be scary for her to be on her own?
- Who are the people in your life that you can help?
- Who are the people in your life who help you?
- What are ways that you see God taking care of you?

RUTH

God gives us people when we are in need.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What is the saddest movie you have ever seen? Why was it so sad?

READ RUTH 1:1-4, 4:1-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who was Ruth?
- What happened to her in Chapter 1?
- What does it mean to be a widow?
- Does the redeemer take Ruth? Why not?
- Who does redeem Ruth?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does verse 4:1 tell us that Ruth needed? Why?
- What is a redeemer? Who is our redeemer?
- Why do we often only think about ourselves when making decisions?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Have you ever made a very selfish decision that hurt someone else? How did you feel after?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

RUTH

God gives us people when we are in need.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If someone gave you the chance to name their baby, what would you name it? Why?

READ RUTH 4:13-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What happens between Ruth and Boaz?
- Why is this baby important?
- What did the women say to Naomi about the baby? What does that mean?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How did God show Himself faithful to Ruth?
- How had God blessed Naomi?
- What does this baby ultimately point us to? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- When is a time that you experienced an unexpected blessing from the Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



SAMUEL

1 Samuel 8:1-22

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God listens to His people and gives them what they want, even if they are wrong, but uses it for His glory and purposes.

SAMUEL

God listens to His people and gives them what they want, even if they are wrong, but uses it for His glory and purposes.

CONTEXT

- God's people enter the Promised Land after 40 years of wandering
- As His people go, God commands them to devote to destruction all people and things in order to keep His people from following foreign gods but Israel disobeys the Lord
- At Joshua's death Israel strays away from the Lord to other gods and are in terrible distress
- God raises up judges to deliver the people. While judges lead, the people followed the Lord, but when the judges die, they follow the gods of the people that they had not devoted to destruction
- Because of the evil done by Israel, God gives them into the hand of Midian to oppress them, but then delivers them from Midian by hand of Gideon
- Thus a new pattern develops for God's people: 1) They turn from the Lord to the gods of the people they didn't drive out; 2) God allows His people to suffer for their disobedience so they will turn back to Him; 3) They ask the Lord for help and deliverance and He provides a judge to rescue them; 4) As long as the judge lives Israel follows the Lord; once he dies they forget the Lord and cycle continues
- God raises Samuel as prophet and judge for Israel from an early age to help lead and deliver His people

OUTLINE

- I. **God uses Samuel-1 Samuel 7:3-17**
 - A. Samuel speaks to the people
 - i. Told the people to no longer follow idols
 - ii. The people put away their idols
 - B. Samuel prays for the people
 - i. Asked God to forgive them
 - ii. Asked God for His protection from Philistines
 - a. The people were afraid of them
 - C. God delivers Israel
 - i. Philistines had come to fight Israel
 - ii. While Samuel was making an offering to the Lord
 - iii. The Lord thundered with a mighty sound and thus confused the Philistines
 - iv. They were defeated before the Lord

- D. God blessed the land while Samuel was judge
 - i. Philistines no longer enter Israel
 - ii. Hand of the Lord was against Philistines
 - iii. God also granted peace between Israel and Amorites

II. Samuel is not perfect

- A. Sons not following him or God
 - i. He made them priests but they cared more about money

III. Israel asks for a king

- A. They didn't trust Samuel's sons
 - i. Would need a leader when Samuel died
- B. Wanted to be like all the other nations
 - i. King would guide and protect them
- C. Samuel was offended by this request
 - i. What was so bad about their request?
 - ii. Up until now, God had been their king
 - a. Guided their steps and led them
 - b. Protected them in battle
 - c. Fought for them
 - iii. They were saying that they didn't want God to be their king but wanted a human king just like all the other nations
 - iv. God had made them a nation to be different than all the rest so they would glorify Him
- D. Samuel prays to the Lord to ask His wisdom

IV. God responds to their request

- A. God tells Samuel to do what they want
- B. God also tells Samuel to warn them about what an earthly king would do to them
 - i. Will take your sons and make them part of his army
 - ii. Will take people as servants to grow his food and take care of his house
 - a. Your sons and daughters
 - iii. Will take the best of all you make and grow for himself
 - iv. Will take your servants and animals for his selfish gain
 - v. You will cry out because of your king
- C. The people refused to obey the voice of Samuel
 - i. Wanted to be like the rest of the nations
 - ii. Wanted a king that would fight for them
 - iii. Forgot that the Lord has been their king all along

- D. God grants their request
 - i. Even though it would be bad in the long run for them
 - ii. Even though it would make them forget Him
- V. **The Kings of Israel**
 - A. Most were evil kings
 - i. Led the hearts of the people away from the Lord
 - ii. Led them to worship idols
 - iii. Even led God's people to be divided into 2 groups
 - B. Fulfilled what God had predicted about them

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- How did God use Samuel to help His people?
- What did people want against God's wishes?
- Why was this a big deal?
- Why did God grant their request?
- What are things you ask God for that you probably shouldn't?

SAMUEL

God listens to His people and gives them what they want even if they are wrong but uses it for His glory and purposes.



Hands-On

THE KING SAYS

Choose one person to be the king. They are allowed to give orders to the people and they have to obey. Whoever obeys the slowest is thrown in prison by the king. Whoever the last person is gets to be next king.

A BAD KING

Discuss the helplessness of being under a bad king. Have them write down the list of warnings that Samuel gave Israel about having a king. Have the students draw one of the warnings.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What was Israel's biggest problem at this time?
- How did they want to solve it?
- What was the big deal about asking for a king?
- What does it look like for God to be your king? What would change in your life?
- What are ways you are trying to be "just like everyone else?" Why?

SAMUEL

God listens to His people and gives them what they want, even if they are wrong, but uses it for His glory and purposes.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What is your favorite memory from being at church?

READ 1 SAMUEL 1:1-20

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who was Elkanah? What do we learn about him?
- Who was Hannah? What was her problem?
- How did Elkanah feel about Hannah? How did Peninnah treat Hannah? Why?
- How did Hannah feel about all of this?
- What did Hannah do at the temple? What was her prayer?
- What did Eli think about that? What did he say to her?
- What did God do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you treat those that you think are "beneath you"?
- How do you treat those who are very sad around you? Why?
- When you are upset, do you pray? Do you think you can go to the Lord in prayer when you are upset?
- Are you ever afraid to pray because of what others might think?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What hurts are you avoiding? What hurts are you acknowledging and taking to the Lord?
- What is something you've been earnestly praying for? What should you be praying for?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

SAMUEL

God listens to His people and gives them what they want, even if they are wrong, but uses it for His glory and purposes.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Play telephone. Have the first person come up with a short phrase and tell the person next to them. The next person will repeat that phrase but add something to it and pass it on. Go through your whole family twice and see what the final message was. Talk about the importance of listening.

READ 1 SAMUEL 3:1-21

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where is Samuel? What is he doing?
- What does it say about God speaking at this time? How can we hear God speaking to us today?
- What does the Lord say to Samuel? How does Samuel respond?
- How many times did it take for Eli to figure out what was going on?
- What did Eli tell Samuel to say? What does God say to Samuel?
- What did Eli ask him in the morning? Why would it have been hard to tell him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Do you treat the Bible as the very words of God to you? Why or why not?
- Are you listening to the Lord speak through His Word and creation and godly people?
- Are you speaking the truth in love to those you are close to or just ignoring the truth?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Is there anything the Lord has been trying to tell you or show you but you haven't been listening?
- How do you handle it when someone tells you a hard thing? How did Eli respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



DAVID

1 Samuel 17:1-54

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God wins the victory for His people.

DAVID

God wins the victory for His people.

CONTEXT

- God's people enter the Promised Land after 40 years of wandering
- God raises up judges to deliver the people. While judges lead, the people followed the Lord, but when the judges die, they follow the gods of the people that they had not devoted to destruction
- Thus a new pattern develops for God's people: 1) They turn from the Lord to the gods of the people they didn't drive out; 2) God allows His people to suffer for their disobedience so they will turn back to Him; 3) They ask the Lord for help and deliverance and He provides a judge to rescue them; 4) As long as the judge lives Israel follows the Lord; once he dies they forget the Lord and cycle continues
- Israel continues in its wickedness until a new prophet and judge arrives, Samuel
- The people ask the Lord for a king like all the other nations thus rejecting God as their king
- After warning them about how a king would treat them, God tells Samuel to give them a king and Saul is chosen
- Saul continually disobeys the Lord and is rejected as king
- God sends Samuel to find a new king and is led to a young shepherd boy named David

OUTLINE

- I. **The Philistines continued to threaten Israel**
 - A. Gathered their armies for battle and drew up battle lines
 - i. On opposite mountains from each other with valley between them
 - B. Philistines have new strategy
 - i. One champion from each army fights as representative
 - ii. The loser's army must become slaves to other army
 - iii. Their champion was Goliath
 - a. Nine feet, nine inches tall
 - b. Had 55 pounds of armor and six pound spearhead
 - c. Very intimidating
 - iv. Goliath challenged the army of Israel and spoke out against them
- II. **Israel was very afraid**
 - A. As king, it was Saul's responsibility to answer the challenge
 - i. The king's job was to fight for his people
 - ii. Saul was afraid

- B. For 40 days this continued with Goliath coming and calling out Israel morning and evening
- C. No one was brave enough to answer and trust that the Lord would deliver
- D. The men would flee from Goliath when he came out

III. David arrives

- A. Jesse sends David to check on his brothers who were fighting
- B. David hears Goliath and wonders why nothing has been done
- C. David volunteers to fight Goliath
 - i. Not because he is strong and brave
 - ii. He knows who the true King of Israel is
 - iii. "The Lord will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine"
 - iv. Refuses Saul's armor and instead takes only his staff, some stones and a sling
 - a. Not very prepared for battle—no sword or shield
 - b. Shows again that his trust is not in armor or weapons but the Lord
 - c. Knew he was going in the power of the name of the Lord of Hosts

IV. "For the battle is the Lord's..."

- A. David knew that God would be the One to fight for him
- B. God sends David's stone into Goliath's forehead and he is defeated
- C. The armies of God then pursue and defeat the Philistine armies
- D. God shows Himself to be the only trustworthy king of Israel
 - i. Uses a young boy with no weapons to defeat a giant soldier
 - ii. So that no one would believe it was because of Israel's strength or bravery that brought the victory, but God alone

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was the problem for God's people?
- How did David beat Goliath? – God did it through David
- Where is a place in your life that you are having a hard time trusting God? Why?

DAVID

God wins the victory for His people.



Hands-On

HIT THE GIANT

Stack boxes to the ceiling and on top box, draw a head and face. Have a cup or small bucket with 5-10 ping pong balls. Put a small target on the forehead to show where David's stone hit. Mark off 8-10 steps and let each person have three tries to hit the target. Discuss how hard it would be to hit Goliath with a sling if he were the target.

LOOKING UP

Stack boxes to ceiling and measure how tall it is. Let them know how much taller Goliath was than that. Let them stand before "him" as you explain how strong he was as well.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What are some things you are afraid of? Why?
- Why were God's people afraid?
- How did God provide for His people when they were afraid?
- Where is a place that you find it hard to trust God? Why is that so important?

DAVID

God wins the victory for His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you owned a restaurant and were hiring a cook, what qualities would you look for? Why? What if you were hiring someone to protect you and your family? Why?

READ 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does God say to Samuel? What does that mean?
- What does he tell Samuel to do? Why was Samuel afraid?
- What did Samuel think when he saw Jesse's sons?
- What does the Lord say He looks at? Why is that important?
- What do you look at when you see people? Why?
- Who did God choose to be king?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- When is a time you were afraid to do the right thing? What did you do?
- What does someone look like who really loves Jesus? Is it always the same?
- How does someone act who really loves Jesus? Who is someone you know who acts like this?
- Do you ever feel unworthy of God using you? What does this passage say to that?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- Why is it scary to do the right things at school?
- Who are the people you are afraid of most?
- What is God looking for in you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

DAVID

God wins the victory for His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Who are people that you are the nicest to? Why? Who are people that you have the hardest time being nice to? Why? Who are the people that need your family to help them the most? Why?

READ 2 SAMUEL 9:1-13

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does David ask in verse 1? Why did he want to show kindness to Jonathan's house?
 - Jonathan was his best friend who was Saul's son and even chose to protect David rather than get the throne for himself
- Who is left to show kindness to? What was wrong with him?
- Why was it a big deal that he was crippled?
- What did Mephibosheth do when he got to David? Why did he do this?
 - Was afraid David would kill him because he was last person left of Saul's line
- What did David do for him? Why was that a big deal?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it significant that David went after Mephibosheth? What could he do for David?
- How is this like our relationship with God?
- How are we also the king's kids?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Where do you see God coming after you to bring you to Himself?
- What changed about Mephibosheth's condition because of living with David?
- Did he suddenly get better and become perfect? Do we have to?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



SOLOMON

1 Kings 3:1-15

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God blesses His people even when they don't deserve it.

SOLOMON

God blesses His people even when they don't deserve it.

CONTEXT

- God's people enter the Promised Land after 40 years of wandering
- God raises up judges to deliver the people. While judges lead, the people followed the Lord, but when the judges die, they follow the gods of the people that they had not devoted to destruction
- Thus a new pattern develops for God's people: 1) They turn from the Lord to the gods of the people they didn't drive out; 2) God allows His people to suffer for their disobedience so they will turn back to Him; 3) They ask the Lord for help and deliverance and He provides a judge to rescue them; 4) As long as the judge lives Israel follows the Lord; once he dies they forget the Lord and cycle continues
- Israel continues in its wickedness until a new prophet and judge arrives, Samuel
- The people ask the Lord for a king like all the other nations thus rejecting God as their king
- After warning them about how a king would treat them, God tells Samuel to give them a king and Saul is chosen
- Saul continually disobeys the Lord and is rejected as king
- God sends Samuel to find a new king and is led to a young shepherd boy named David
- David is called "a man after God's own heart" but also sins greatly and murders one of his soldiers for his own personal gain
- Despite his sin, God shows grace to David and keeps him as king and promises that from his line shall come the Messiah
- As David gets old, he chooses his son Solomon to be the new king

OUTLINE

- I. **Solomon becomes king**
 - A. Typically the oldest son became king when the father died
 - B. David's sons had proved to be wicked and even rebelled against him
 - C. Adonijah, one of David's sons, proclaimed himself to be king and gathered followers
 - D. David chooses Solomon as king and has him anointed
 - E. Adonijah hears of this and is afraid of Solomon, but Solomon deals graciously with him
- II. **Solomon begins to rule**
 - A. Makes marriage alliance with Pharaoh
 - i. Marries Pharaoh's daughter so that Egypt will protect Israel
 - ii. Disobedient to God's commands—Deuteronomy 7:3-4
 - iii. Shows he doesn't fully trust the Lord to protect Israel

- B. People continued to sacrifice at “high places”
 - i. These were set up throughout Israel to worship foreign gods
 - ii. The Lord continued to command them to be destroyed and yet they remained
 - iii. Solomon himself sacrificed there instead of Jerusalem before the Ark

III. The Lord appears to Solomon

- A. Solomon is sacrificing at Gibeon instead of Jerusalem
- B. Solomon not worthy of God meeting him
 - i. Had killed most of his brothers who might want the throne
 - ii. Made marriage alliance with Egypt
 - iii. Was sacrificing at “high places” instead of at ark
 - iv. Was constantly disobeying the Lord
 - v. The Lord appears to him anyway
- C. God wants to bless Solomon despite his sin
 - i. Showing grace, mercy and love to him
 - ii. “Ask what shall I give you”—God says to basically ask for anything
- D. Solomon’s response
 - i. Knew the love God had shown to David—great and steadfast
 - ii. Knew he was still a young king with much to learn
 - iii. Asked God only for wisdom to lead the people
 - a. Know between good and evil
- E. The Lord’s response
 - i. Pleased by what Solomon asked for
 - a. Was not about selfish gain but wanted to lead the people in way of the Lord
 - b. Was not about protecting the throne from his enemies
 - ii. “I will do according to your word”
 - a. Gave him the wisdom he asked for
 - b. Solomon was considered the wisest man who ever lived
 - iii. “I will give you also what you have not asked”
 - a. Also would give him riches and long life and fame
 - b. But he must keep God’s statutes and commandments
 - c. Solomon was richest man in the world at his time, but eventually forgot about the Lord and followed other gods

- F. Solomon's act of thankfulness
 - i. For all the Lord blessed him with, he responded with obedience
 - a. "He came to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings"
 - b. Starting offering sacrifices where he was supposed to in accordance with God's Word as an example to His people

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What did Solomon ask God for? Why?
- What was God's response to Solomon's request?
- What things do you typically ask God for?
- What are things you should ask God for? Why?

SOLOMON

God blesses His people even when they don't deserve it.



Hands-On

WISHLIST

If you could have anything in the world what would it be and why? Have the students draw the one thing they would ask for and explain why they picked that

MAKE A SCROLL

Make a scroll and have the students write Psalm 111:10a on it: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

PAPER CROWNS

Make paper crowns to represent King Solomon and put the above verse on it.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Where was Solomon when God appeared to him? Why was that important?
- What did God ask of Solomon and what did he answer?
- How has God blessed you with things you haven't asked for? Did you ever pray for parents, house, food, clothes, good school, etc.?
- How did Solomon respond to God's blessing?
- How do you thank God daily for all He has given you? How should you?

SOLOMON

God blesses His people even when they don't deserve it.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What are some of the best pieces of advice that someone has given you over the years?

READ 1 KINGS 3:16-28

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What is the situation that is brought before Solomon?
- How would you know who is right?
- What does Solomon decide to do? How would this help solve the situation?
- What does he find out?
- What did the people think of Solomon?
- Where did they know his wisdom came from?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you know how to make hard decisions? Where do you go to get wisdom?
- What would you have done in this situation?
- How can you show Jesus to others in the decisions you make?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- Have you asked the Lord for wisdom in certain situations? Do you feel like He has answered?
- How can you show Jesus to others in the decisions you make?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

SOLOMON

God blesses His people even when they don't deserve it.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could build anything what would it be and why?

READ 1 KINGS 5:1-13

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Why did it say that David couldn't build the house of the Lord?
- Why could Solomon build it now?
- How big was the temple Solomon made?
 - 90 feet long x 30 feet wide x 45 feet high. Use a basketball goal or tape measure to visualize
- Why was it a big deal to build something that size then but it's not a big deal now?
- What did God say about the temple in verse 13?
- What did God's people have to do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What is the new temple?—1 Cor 3:16
- What are you building for the Lord?
- How are you walking in God's commandments?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How are you using your temple for the Lord?
- How do you feel when God tells you that you have to wait to do something? How do you respond?
- Where are you doing a good job obeying the Lord? Where are places you struggle to do so?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



ELIJAH

1 Kings 18:20-40

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God shows Himself to His people.

ELIJAH

God shows Himself to His people.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- David is called "a man after God's own heart" but also sins greatly and murders one of his soldiers for his own personal gain
- Despite his sin, God shows grace to David and keeps him as king and promises that from his line shall come the Messiah
- David's son, Solomon, becomes king and is blessed by the Lord with great wisdom and wealth and even builds the temple of the Lord
- Solomon's heart is turned away from the Lord to follow foreign gods because of his many wives
- Thus begins a line of wicked kings who did not obey the Lord, but instead followed the gods of the nations they had not devoted to destruction
- One of the most wicked kings who rules at this time was Ahab
- God raises up a prophet, Elijah, to speak His truth and confront Ahab

OUTLINE

- I. King Ahab
 - A. "And Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him."—1 Kings 16:30
 - B. He not only worshipped false gods but built temples and altars to lead others into idolatry as well

- i. Built altar and house for Baal
- ii. Built an altar for Asherah
- iii. Even rebuilt Jericho—which Joshua said not to do
- C. "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him."—1 Kings 16:33

II. Elijah

- A. Tells Ahab of the drought—will not rain except by my word
 - i. As punishment for Ahab's idolatry
 - ii. To show them who the true God is—Baal was supposedly storm god who brought rain
- B. God cares for Elijah during the drought
 - i. God told him where to go
 - ii. Provided food and water for him daily
 - a. Ravens brought him bread and meat twice a day
 - b. Amazing provision
 - iii. God sends him to widow after brook dries up
 - a. She only had enough flour and oil for one last meal
 - b. Convinces her to bake him bread first
 - c. Promises that her oil and flour will not run out until it rains and it doesn't. It is enough for the widow, her son, and Elijah
 - d. God even uses Elijah to bring widow's son back from dead

III. Elijah vs. Ahab

- A. After more than 3 years of drought, God calls Elijah to confront Ahab
 - i. Ahab assembles the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah who eat with them to meet at Mt. Carmel
- B. Ahab calls all the prophets and all the people as well to come to Mt. Carmel
- C. The proposition—Who is the real God?
 - i. If it's the Lord, follow Him; if Baal, follow him
 - ii. Each side is given a bull and prepares an altar, and whichever one produces fire is the One and True God
- D. Prophets of Baal went first
 - i. Prepared bull and altar
 - ii. Cried out and prayed from morning until noon
 - a. Even cut themselves, which was the custom to make gods hear
 - b. There was no response at all

- E. Elijah's turn
- i. Elijah gathered the people around and rebuilt the altar of the Lord
 - a. Built it with 12 stones to symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel
 - b. Dug a trench around the altar
 - ii. Prepared the sacrifice
 - iii. Called for them to fill four jugs of water to pour on offering and wood
 - a. This was very costly—after three years of drought, water was very hard to find and was needed for survival
 - b. The water would prevent the wood from burning
 - c. Did this three times so water ran down altar and filled trench
 - iv. Elijah prays to the Lord
 - a. No dancing or cutting himself or shouting
 - b. "Let it be known this day that you are God in Israel"
 - c. "Answer me that these people may turn their hearts back to know you"
- F. The Lord shows up
- i. Though the people had turned away from Him, He still loves them and wants them to turn back to Him
 - ii. Gives them something they can see to know who He is
 - iii. Fire of the Lord comes down from heaven
 - a. Burned up wood, offering, and stones
 1. Not easy to burn up a stone
 2. Even dried up all the water in the trench
 - b. They people respond
 1. Fell on their faces
 2. Confessed that the Lord is God
 3. They capture false prophets of Baal and kill them

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- How did God use Elijah to show Himself to His people?
- How did Elijah trust God through it all?
- Why would it have been scary for him to trust God?
- Where is a place that you need to trust God?

ELIJAH

God shows Himself to His people.



Hands-On

BURNING ROCKS

Bring in a lighter and a rock. Burn the rock for a minute and show the students that it doesn't damage the rock. Now have them think about how powerful the fire from heaven was to burn up the rocks of the altar.

UNDERSTANDING THE SCALE

Bring in \$10 worth of pennies. Divide your group into four groups and have each group count out 200 pennies. Have an extra 50 counted out to add in. Have each group spread their pennies on the floor until they are all together. Take two steps away from it and place one penny on the floor. There were 850 total false prophets and only one Elijah. Talk about how it was only because he knew God loved him and would take care of him that he could stand up for what is right.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Have you ever seen something wrong happening and stood up for what was right? What happened?
- What are some other idols that people give their attention to instead of God?
- What are some things that you give your attention to instead of God?
- What are ways that you could worship God for all He has done for you?
- How are you standing up for Jesus at your school? How could you?

ELIJAH

God shows Himself to His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could only have one food forever what would it be and why?

READ 1 KINGS 17:1-16

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Elijah say would happen?
- What did the Lord tell him to do?
- How did God take care of him there?
- What ended up happening?
- Where did God send him next? Who did he meet there?
- What did he ask her to do? Why would that be hard for her to do?
- How did God take care of him and the widow?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are some ways that you see the Lord taking care of you? How do you respond?
- How did Elijah represent God to the woman? How can you represent God to others?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What is something in your life that you are having a hard time trusting God with right now? Why?
- How can you trust Him more?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

ELIJAH

God shows Himself to His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time when you remember being really scared? What did you do?

READ 1 KINGS 19:1-18

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What had Elijah done? How did Jezebel respond?
- How did Elijah respond to Jezebel's threat? Why?
- What did Elijah ask to do? How did God take care of him even as he ran?
- What did God ask Elijah in the cave? How did Elijah respond?
- How did God come to Elijah? In what forms?
- What does God tell Elijah to do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How often do you think about all that God has done for you? During those times do you find it easier to trust the Lord?
- Do you ever believe that God is disappointed with you and your choices and is giving up on you?
- What does it mean that God came not in the big signs but the gentle whisper? What are ways you are listening to God's gentle whisper to you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How do you see God coming after you even when you run from Him?
- Do you ever think that God doesn't realize all you have done for Him?
- What are ways you are listening to God's gentle whisper to you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JOB

Job 42:1-17

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God blesses His people even through suffering.

JOB

God blesses His people even through suffering.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both god and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- David is called "a man after God's own heart" but also sins greatly and murders one of his soldiers for his own personal gain
- Despite his sin, God shows grace to David and keeps him as king and promises that from his line shall come the Messiah
- David's son, Solomon, becomes king and is blessed by the Lord with great wisdom and wealth and even builds the temple of the Lord
- Solomon's heart is turned away from the Lord to follow foreign gods because of his many wives
- Thus begins a line of wicked kings who did not obey the Lord, but instead followed the gods of the nations they had not devoted to destruction
- Because of the leadership of the wicked kings, those loyal to the Lord often suffered through difficult times and temptations

OUTLINE

- I. Who was Job?
 - A. A man who lived in land of Uz, which was part of Judah
 - B. Was a very good man who feared the Lord and went away from evil
 - i. He would make regular sacrifices to the Lord for himself
 - ii. After times of feasting, he would even make sacrifices on behalf of his children in case they sinned

- C. He was very successful—greatest man among all the people of the East
 - i. Large family—seven sons and three daughters
 - ii. Lots of livestock
 - a. 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 donkeys

II. Satan asks to test Job

- A. Satan goes to the Lord after roaming the Earth
- B. God tells Satan about Job and what a great man he is
- C. Satan's response
 - i. He only does this because you protect him
 - ii. He has everything, so of course he doesn't sin against you
 - iii. If you struck everything he has, then he would curse you to your face
- D. The Lord gives Satan permission to test Job
 - i. Shows that God is in control
 - ii. Satan could do whatever he wanted to Job's things, but he couldn't touch Job

III. Job's tragedies

- A. Tragedy #1- His oxen, donkeys and servants
 - i. They were attacked and killed by Sabeans
 - ii. Many of the animals were carried off
- B. Tragedy #2- His sheep and servants
 - i. Fire came down upon them and burned them up
- C. Tragedy #3- His camels and servants
 - i. The Chaldeans came and killed servants and carried off camels
- D. Tragedy #4- His sons and daughters
 - i. A mighty wind blew down the house they were in, killing them all
- E. All of these happened at the same time
 - i. Would have been very sad and overwhelming
 - ii. How would he respond?

IV. Job's response

- A. At first to the Lord
 - i. Tore his clothes—sign of sadness and despair
 - ii. Shaved his head—sign of mourning
 - iii. Worshiped the Lord
 - iv. "The Lord gave and has taken away; may the Name of the Lord be praised"
 - v. Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing
 - vi. He trusted God even with so many very difficult circumstances

- B. To the people
 - i. Many people tell him that he must have sinned for all this to have happen to him
 - a. How people thought of God
 - b. Punished those who did wrong
 - c. All hard things in life were punishment
 - ii. He continues to trust God through it all
 - iii. He knows that it was not because of his sin that this happened
 - C. After some time passed, to the Lord
 - i. Job wondered where God is—feels forgotten
 - ii. He wondered why it seems that the wicked prosper but the righteous suffer
 - iii. Job begins to doubt God's goodness to him
- V. God's response to Job**
- A. Reminds Job that He is greater than him
 - B. Reminds Job that He is wiser than him and has a plan
 - i. Where were you when I laid the foundations of Earth?
 - ii. Did you tell the seas where to go?
 - iii. Have you told the day when to start?
 - iv. Can you make it rain or snow?
 - v. Can you sustain all life that is on the Earth?
 - C. Job responds to God with repentance
 - i. Tells Him he is sorry and prays for those who were mean to him
- VI. God blesses Job**
- A. Gave him twice as much as he had before
 - B. Blessed his latter life more than first part, even though he doubted
 - i. 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, 1,000 donkeys
 - C. Died as an old man getting to see his children and grandchildren grow up

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- How does Job show us God's faithfulness?
- How would you respond if what happened to Job happened to you? Why?
- How do you trust God when hard things happen?

JOB

God blesses His people even through suffering.



Hands-On

YOUR FAVORITE POSSESSIONS

Give the students a piece of paper and have them write down all of their favorite possessions. After you give them some time, collect the lists and then tear them up and throw them away as if they were all now gone. Ask them how they feel about losing all the things they care about. Ask them how they would respond to losing everything they have.

BLESSED BE YOUR NAME

Listen to the song “Blessed be Your Name” and color a sheet (provided) with Job 1:21- “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Discuss how Job could believe this? What did he know about God and His faithfulness? How can we trust God’s good plan even when it is hard?



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What happened to Job? Why did it happen?
- What would have been the hardest part of that for you?
- What did Job’s “friends” think Job must have done? Why?
- How did Job respond to all this?
- How did God show His love for Job in the midst of all these hard things?
- How do we trust God when hard things come? Can He be trusted?

JOB

God blesses His people even through suffering.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Go around the circle and assign everyone a family member. Each person then needs to describe the person they were assigned. Be as encouraging as possible.

READ JOB 1:1-12

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are we told about Job?
- What all did Job have?
- What was said of him in verse 3?
- How did he follow the Lord even for his children?
- What did God say about Job?
- What did Satan want to do to Job? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- If those at school were to describe you in a few words, what would they say?
- What are ways that you worship the Lord?
- How are you helping others worship the Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- Why might God allow hard things and suffering in your life?
- How can you show God through the way you handle them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JOB

God blesses His people even through suffering.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What things that you have now would you be the saddest to lose? Why?

READ JOB 1:13-22

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What happens to Job's children?
- What happened to his sheep and servants?
- What happened to his camels, oxen and donkeys?
- How did Job respond to all this happening in verse 20?
- What does Job say about it all?
- Why is his response amazing?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What do you think when God doesn't let things go your way?
- How do you typically respond?
- Put yourself in Job's shoes. How would you respond to all of this?
- What did it say about Job in verse 22? How is that possible?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What is a time when you felt frustrated at the Lord? What did you do?
- How can you respond like Job during tough times?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



MARY

Luke 1:26-38

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God chooses His people for His purposes.

MARY

God chooses His people for His purposes.

CONTEXT

- God created everything in the universe, including man and woman
- Adam and Eve disobey God and sin enters the world
- Even as Adam and Eve are put out of Garden, the promise of Messiah is given
- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God continues to provide for His people always with the promise that the Messiah would come and lead God's people in justice and truth
- God gave the people His Law so they would know how to live with Him
- God gave the people priests to help them worship Him
- God gave the people kings to lead and protect them
- God gave the people prophets who would speak and teach them God's Word
- Even after all the Lord had done for them, the people continued to disobey the Lord and turn away to false gods
- God continues to warn His people through His prophets and call them to return to Him
- God tells the people that they will be exiled for their idolatry, but He continues to promise the Messiah
- After the return from exile, God still speaks to the people through His prophets
- God goes silent for around 730 years, but the people still await the promised Messiah

OUTLINE

- I. **The Lord sends an angel to Mary**
 - A. Sends angel, Gabriel, to Nazareth to speak with her
 - B. There was nothing special about her to cause the Lord to choose her
 - C. She is engaged to a man named Joseph
- II. **The angel speaks to Mary**
 - A. Calls her favored one
 - B. Tells her that the Lord is with her
 - C. Tells her not to be afraid

- D. Tells her the plan
 - i. She will have a baby
 - ii. He will be great and will be called the Son of God
 - iii. He will receive the throne of David
 - iv. His kingdom will never end

III. Mary's response

- A. At first she was afraid and troubled
 - i. This would change everything for her
 - ii. Would Joseph still want to marry her?
- B. She asks how this can happen
 - i. Angel tells her—Holy Spirit
 - ii. Nothing is impossible with God
- C. She agrees
 - i. I am the Lord's servant
 - ii. Let it be to me according to your Word
 - iii. She is a willing vessel of the Lord for His will to be done

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What would have been scary about what God was asking of Mary?
- What does Mary say to the angel in response?
- What are ways that you are being "the Lord's servant?"

MARY

God chooses His people for His purposes.



Hands-On

DRAW AN ANGEL

Have the students draw what they think an angel would look like. Remember that whenever someone sees one they fall to the ground.

TOILET PAPER ROLL ANGEL

Supplies: toilet paper roll, printer, paper, scissors, glue, something to color with (B&W version). Instructions: Print out template. Color (where appropriate) and cut out the template pieces. Glue the large rectangular piece on first to form the dress. Glue on the wings, face, arms and feet. Cut out the hair as indicated and curl the individual strands around a pencil. Glue it onto the head. Use a pipe cleaner or piece of twisted aluminum foil in the shape of circle as a halo. Glue onto the back of the head.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What was hard about what God was asking Mary to do?
- What is something hard that you think God is asking you to do?
- How did Mary respond?
- How are we also supposed to be "the Lord's servant?"

MARY

God chooses His people for His purposes.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What is your favorite song right now? Why?

READ LUKE 1:46-55

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Mary had just found out that she was going to have Jesus and responds with a song of praise
- What does she say at the beginning?
- What does it mean to magnify the Lord?
- What does she say that God has done for her in verse 49?
- What are some great things God has done for you? How should you respond?
- Take some time & write a "song" of praise for all God has done for you
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are ways that you can magnify the Lord?
- What does verse 50 say He shows to His people?
- What does mercy mean? Why is it such a big deal that God shows mercy to you?
- Take some time & write a "song" of praise for all God has done for you
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What does it mean that holy is His name?
- Why does it say He helps His servant Israel in verse 54?
- What does it mean that He does it for remembrance of His mercy?
- Take some time & write a "song" of praise for all God has done for you
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

MARY

God chooses His people for His purposes.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What is the best gift you have ever received? How did you respond when you got it?

READ GENESIS LUKE 2:8-21

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who comes to see baby Jesus and Mary?
- Why are they not who you would expect to greet the new king?
- Why did they come?
- How would you have felt if some angels showed up and spoke to you?
- What did the angels say to them?
- How would they know how to find him?
- How did Mary react to their coming? What does that mean?
- What did the shepherds do as they left?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How is Jesus a great joy for all the nations?
- What did the shepherds do with what they were told?
- What do you do with what you read or are told about Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are some things about Jesus that you treasure up and ponder in your heart?
- Where are places that you can be glorifying and praising God?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JOSEPH

Matthew 1:18-25

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God answers the doubts of His people.

JOSEPH

God answers the doubts of His people.

CONTEXT

- God created everything in the universe, including man and woman
- Adam and Eve disobey God and sin enters the world
- Even as Adam and Eve are put out of Garden, the promise of Messiah is given
- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God continues to provide for His people always with the promise that the Messiah would come and lead God's people in justice and truth
- God gave the people His Law so they would know how to live with Him
- God gave the people priests to help them worship Him
- God gave the people kings to lead and protect them
- God gave the people prophets who would speak and teach them God's Word
- Even after all the Lord had done for them, the people continued to disobey the Lord and turn away to false gods
- God continues to warn His people through His prophets and call them to return to Him
- God tells the people that they will be exiled for their idolatry, but He continues to promise the Messiah
- After the return from exile, God still speaks to the people through His prophets
- God goes silent for around 730 years, but the people still await the promised Messiah

OUTLINE

- I. **Joseph learns of Mary's pregnancy**
 - A. Has the right to put her to death
 - B. Decides instead to divorce her quietly to protect her
 - C. Joseph was a just man and didn't want to put her to shame
 - D. Would be very hard on him to accept her
 - E. Would be easy to feel betrayed by Mary
- II. **The Lord appears to Joseph**
 - A. As he was deciding about divorcing her
 - B. He came to answer his doubts and concerns

- C. Speaks to him
 - i. Do not fear
 - ii. Take Mary home as your wife
 - iii. The baby is from the Holy Spirit
 - iv. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus
 - v. He will save His people from their sins
 - vi. He is fulfillment of prophecy

III. Joseph agrees to do what the Lord has asked

- A. He married Mary and protected her
- B. Took care of her as they waited for Jesus to be born
- C. Would not be easy
 - i. People would judge them and not understand
 - ii. People wouldn't believe what was happening

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was hard that God was asking of Joseph?
- Why would he be scared?
- How does God make sure Joseph knows it will be okay?

JOSEPH

God answers the doubts of His people.



Hands-On

PROTECTORS AND ATTACKERS

Pick a volunteer to be the “protected one.” Have half of the group act as “protectors” and the other half as the “attackers.” The “attackers” each try to hit the “protected one” with a wadded up piece of paper. The “protectors” job is to prevent this from happening (WITHOUT ANY VIOLENCE!). Give the groups time to plan. If time permits, switch “protectors/aggressors.”

PROTECTING THE CHILD

Have the students list the ways that babies need to be protected. Discuss what it must have been like for Joseph and Mary to protect Jesus like this, knowing He was God’s Son. Have them write a thank-you note for their parents for all they do to take care of them.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What was the hard thing God was asking Joseph to do?
- Why is it hard to trust God sometimes?
- How can we trust God when He doesn’t send an angel to speak?

JOSEPH

God answers the doubts of His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could give Jesus a birthday gift, what would it be and why?

READ MATTHEW 2:1-12

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who are we introduced to here?
- How did they learn about Jesus?
- What did they decide to do?
- How did Herod respond? Why?
- What did they do when they saw Jesus?
- What did they give him?
- What happened as they left?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are ways that you can seek after Jesus?
- What are ways that you can worship Him?
- What gifts can you give to Him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What are ways that Jesus threatens your "kingdom?"
- What things in your life are you giving as offerings to Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JOSEPH

God answers the doubts of His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What is your favorite trip that you have ever gone on? Why?

READ MATTHEW 2:13-23

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did the angel tell Joseph to do? Why?
- How did Joseph respond?
- How did Herod respond? Why?
- What happened after Herod died?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How did this fulfill Scripture?—Isn't it cool to see how God was at work
- How did Herod's actions fulfill Scripture?
- How did Jesus living in Nazareth fulfill Scripture?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How do you feel when you see God's plan at work in the Bible?
- Do you truly believe that He is completely in charge of all things in your life? In this world? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JONAH

Jonah 3:1-10

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God has compassion not just for His people,
but for all the people of the world.

JONAH

God has compassion not just for His people,
but for all the people of the world.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them but the people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
- David's line leading to the Messiah resides in kings of Judah
- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and sake of David
- God also raises up prophets to speak His truth to kings and the people
- The prophets faithfully are God's mouthpiece to the people, warning them of God's coming and righteous judgment

OUTLINE

- I. **Who was Jonah?**
 - A. He was a prophet of the Lord
 - B. He prophesied during the time of King Jeroboam II
 - C. Was liked because his prophecy was for Israel to restore their old borders
- II. **God calls Jonah**
 - A. Tells him to go to Nineveh and preach against it
 - B. Their wickedness had come up before the Lord

III. Jonah runs away from the Lord

- A. Goes in the exact opposite direction from where God called him
- B. Gets on a boat to flee from the presence of the Lord
- C. People of Israel thought that God was only for them

IV. God comes after Jonah

- A. Sends a great storm onto the ship and sailors are afraid
- B. Jonah tells them that the storm is his fault
- C. Jonah has them throw him overboard and the storm stops
- D. The sailors leave, believing and worshipping the Lord
- E. God provides a fish to swallow Jonah
 - i. Not punishment but protection
 - ii. Keeps him from drowning in middle of the sea
 - iii. God has compassion on Jonah even as he disobeys Him

V. Jonah decides to obey God

- A. After 3 days in the fish praying, God has the fish vomit Jonah up on land
 - i. Brings him closer to Nineveh
- B. Word of the Lord comes to him a second time
 - i. God gives Jonah another chance, instead of getting someone else to do it
 - ii. Wanted Jonah to obey
- C. Jonah goes to Nineveh
 - i. Doesn't just walk up to the country's border and give a message
 - ii. Goes in a day's journey
 - iii. Proclaims the message God gives him
 - a. In 40 days, Nineveh will be overthrown because of their wickedness

VI. The people of Nineveh

- A. Believe the message of the Lord
 - i. Called for a fast and put on sackcloth
 - ii. As a show of being sorry for their sin
- B. King of Nineveh decreed all the people and livestock fast and be covered in sackcloth
 - i. Tells them to turn from their evil ways and violence
 - ii. Hopes that God would turn from His anger and relent

VII. God has compassion on Nineveh

- A. When God saw them turn from their evil ways, He relented from the disaster that Jonah had mentioned
- B. Shows that He cares for and has grace on people of the world, not just Israel

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What did God call Jonah to do?
- How did he respond?
- How did God still show grace to Jonah? To Nineveh?
- What is something that would be hard to say “yes” to if God asked you to do it?

JONAH

God has compassion not just for His people,
but for all the people of the world.



Hands-On

INSIDE THE FISH

Have the students draw what they imagine it would have been like inside the fish. Set up large cups with cooked spaghetti, frozen grapes, burlap, Jello, etc. Have the children touch the items without looking into the cups. Discuss how the fish was dark and Jonah wouldn't have known what he was touching. What must it have been like?

BURLAP BRACELETS

Make burlap bracelets. Discuss how people repented in sackcloth and ashes—how this reminded them that sin makes us uncomfortable. Our bracelets can remind us of that this week.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Why was Jonah's answer to God so surprising?
- What is something that would be hard to say "yes" to if God asked you to do it?
- Why didn't God just choose someone else when Jonah ran away?
- How did God continue to show His grace and love for Jonah even when Jonah disobeyed Him and ran away?
- Where is a place God is calling you to share about Him? What would it look like?
- What are some other things you think God might be calling you to do but you are trying to ignore?

JONAH

God has compassion not just for His people,
but for all the people of the world.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time you remember getting in big trouble? What happened and what did you do afterwards?

READ JONAH 1:1-6

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did the Lord tell Jonah to do? Why?
- How did Jonah respond?
- What happened when Jonah was on the boat? Where did all that come from?
- How did the sailors respond? What did the captain tell Jonah to do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why do you think that Jonah disobeyed God and went the other way?
- When is a time that you have done that?
- Have you ever tried to run away from God? Is it even possible?
- When is a time that you have prayed because you were afraid?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- Where is a place that you would not go with the Gospel even if God told you? Why?
- How does it make you feel that you cannot escape God no matter how hard you try?
- What are ways that God has tried to get your attention lately? How has it worked?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JONAH

God has compassion not just for His people,
but for all the people of the world.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time that things didn't work out how you wanted them to? How did you respond?

READ JONAH 3:6-4:4

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- How did the Ninevites respond to God's words through Jonah? Why did they do this?
- How did God respond to what they did?
- How do you feel about God treating them this way? How has God treated you this way?
- How did Jonah respond to what God did? Does that surprise you?
- What does Jonah say about God? What did he want God to do to him? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you respond when you know you have sinned?
- How has God shown you grace and mercy like He did the Ninevites?
- Why do you think Jonah responded that way?
- What does it mean that God is "slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love?"
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How do you feel when you see people who have been mean to you come to Jesus?
- When is a time that God didn't do what you wanted? How did you respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



ISAIAH

Isaiah 6:1-13

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God speaks to His people.

ISAIAH

God speaks to His people.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but the people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
- David's line leading to the Messiah resides in kings of Judah
- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and sake of David, His servant
- God also raises up prophets to speak His truth to kings and the people
- The prophets faithfully are God's mouthpiece to the people, warning them of God's coming and righteous judgment

OUTLINE

- I. **God's people continue to sin against the Lord**
 - A. Following after the false gods of the people
 - B. Being led by kings away from the Lord
- II. **God raises up prophets to speak to His people**
 - A. Warning them against their sin and disobedience
 - B. Prophesying judgment and exile upon them
 - C. Faithful to proclaim the Word of the Lord

III. God calls Isaiah

- A. The Lord appears to Isaiah
 - i. Sitting on throne high and lifted up
 - ii. Surrounded by heavenly host calling out
 - a. "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole Earth is full of His Glory"
 - iii. Foundations shook and smoke filled the temple
- B. Isaiah's response
 - i. Woe is me!! I am a man of unclean lips
 - a. Saw his unworthiness before God
 - b. Knew that he was a sinner
 - ii. I live among a people of unclean lips
 - a. Saw the sins of God's people
 - b. Knew they couldn't be in God's presence
 - iii. Knew his and people's sin kept them from God, and yet, here He is
- C. God takes care of his sin
 - i. Sends an angel to him
 - a. Holding a burning coal
 - b. Touched his lips and took his guilt away
 - 1. Like fire burning up a guilt sacrifice was this burning coal taking away his sins
 - c. Your sin is atoned for
 - 1. Nothing he did or could do; a gift from God
- D. God gives him a mission
 - i. "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" asks God
 - ii. Isaiah says, "Here I am! Send me."
 - iii. Gave him what to say
 - a. "Keep on hearing but do not understand; keep on seeing but do not perceive"
 - b. Let Isaiah know that the people would not truly get it
 - 1. Would be a hard time to be a prophet
 - c. Also let them know that eventually he would send them away into exile
 - 1. Would be hard knowing that it wouldn't make a difference
 - 2. "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, and the Lord removes people far away..."

- E. Isaiah lives out his mission
 - i. Boldly proclaims God's word for many years and to many different kings
 - ii. God allowed Isaiah to address His people for when they would need it
 - a. Addressed the people before the exile-Isaiah 1-39
 - b. Addressed the people that would be in exile-Isaiah 40-55
 - c. Addressed the people who would return from exile-Isaiah 56-66
 - d. Gives all of God's people hope and promise for the Messiah
 - 1. Birth-Isaiah 9
 - 2. Death for us-Isaiah 53

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- Why would it be hard to be a prophet at this time?
- How does Isaiah show his desire to serve the Lord?
- How do you show your desire to serve the Lord?

ISAIAH

God speaks to His people.



Hands-On

CHARCOAL

Bring a piece of charcoal so they can understand what was placed on his lips. Would it hurt? How does fire take sin away? Why is it important that it came from the altar?

ACT OUT THE STORY

Select people to act out the story as you narrate it.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Why was Isaiah so scared?
- What did Isaiah get to see? Why was that important?
- How was Isaiah's sin forgiven?
- What was Isaiah forgiven to do?
- How have your sins been forgiven?
- What does God want you to do now that He has forgiven you?

ISAIAH

God speaks to His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Where is a place you would love to go and visit? Why?

READ 2 KINGS 19:1-7

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- How did King Hezekiah respond to Assyria's threat?
- Where did he go?
- What did his servant say to Isaiah?
- What does it say that Isaiah was?
- What did Isaiah say to them?
- How was that encouraging?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Where do you go when you are nervous or afraid?
- What did the messengers of Hezekiah say to Isaiah? What does all that mean?
- How did God encourage the king and His people?
- How does God encourage you during hard times?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- Who in your life do you let speak to you on God's behalf?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

ISAIAH

God speaks to His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is the sickest you can ever remember being? How did you feel? What helped you get better?

READ 2 KINGS 20:1-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What happens to Hezekiah?
- What did Isaiah say to him?
- What did Hezekiah pray? How did God respond to his prayer?
- What did Isaiah tell the servants to do?
- What did Hezekiah say to Isaiah?
- Why did he need a sign?
- What was the sign?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Do you truly believe that God hears and answers your prayers? Why or why not?
- Who are the people you go to when things are not going well? Why?
- Who is someone who has encouraged you in the Lord lately? How did they do it?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are things that you have stopped praying for? Why?
- Who is someone who has encouraged you in the Lord lately? How did they do it?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



HEZEKIAH

2 Kings 18:13-37, 19:32-37

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God protects His own Name.

HEZEKIAH

God protects His own Name.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but the people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- God also raises up prophets to speak His truth to kings and the people
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
- David's line leading to the Messiah resides in kings of Judah
- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and the sake of David, His servant

OUTLINE

- I. Assyria comes up against Judah**
 - A. Because the people did not obey the Lord
 - B. Sennacherib was king of Assyria
 - C. Had taken all the fortified cities of Judah besides Jerusalem
- II. Hezekiah responds out of fear**
 - A. Tells king of Assyria he will do whatever it takes to get them to leave
 - B. Hezekiah gives to the king out of that which belonged to God
 - i. Gave all silver found in the temple
 - ii. Stripped all the gold from doors and doorframes to give
- III. Assyria continues to come up against Jerusalem**
 - A. Sennacherib sends armies and leaders to talk to them
 - i. Want to make them surrender

- B. Speaks to the king
 - i. What are you resting your trust in?
 - a. Egypt can't help you
 - b. Don't say the Lord can either
 - ii. Says that the Lord has told them to come and destroy
 - a. An obvious lie
- C. Speaks to the people
 - i. Trying to scare them into surrendering
 - ii. Testing whether they trust the Lord
 - iii. Tells them that Hezekiah won't be able to deliver them
 - iv. Tells them to make peace and receive blessings from Assyria
 - a. Own property
 - b. Have food and possessions
 - v. Speaks against the Lord their God
 - a. "Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?"
 - b. No God is a match for Assyria, not even yours
 - c. Your only hope is to make peace with us
 - d. Your God has let this happen
 - vi. The people were silent
 - a. King had told them not to answer

IV. The Lord speaks

- A. Speaks through the prophet Isaiah to Hezekiah
- B. The King of Assyria will NOT prevail
 - i. He won't even enter the city
 - ii. He won't even shoot an arrow
 - iii. He won't even raise a shield
 - iv. He won't even make the preparations to fight (siege mound)
 - v. By the way he came so shall he return
 - vi. I WILL DEFEND THIS CITY TO SAVE IT, FOR MY OWN SAKE AND FOR THE SAKE OF MY SERVANT DAVID
 - a. God will protect the city to glorify Himself
 - b. Will show His power to the nations
 - c. Continues in His promise to His people
 - 1. Messiah will come through line of David

V. The Lord acts

- A. Angel of the Lord went through the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000
- B. The soldiers that were spared woke up surrounded by dead bodies
- C. Because of this Sennacherib and his army returned home, just as the Lord said
- D. Sennacherib is killed in his own land while worshipping a false god

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What are things you are afraid of?
- Do you think God is big enough to handle your fears?
- What is something you need to trust God for? Why?

HEZEKIAH

God protects His own Name.



Hands-On

SWORD BOOKMARK

Make a card stock sword template and have the students design their sword with felt, jewels, etc.

VERSE OF TRUTH

Assyria lied to the people and tried to make them afraid. One of the best ways to fight lies and fear is with Scripture! What is a lie you are tempted to believe? What is a verse that might help you with that lie? Write it out on paper and put it up in your room. Every time you are afraid this week or tempted to believe something that isn't true, say your verse.

(Common fears/lies and verses...Fear-John 14:27; Sibling issues-Phil 2:3-4; Authority-Eph. 6:2; Losing friends-Prov. 18:24; I am bad-Romans 8:1; God is not most important-1 Timothy 4:8; What I have isn't enough-Hebrews 13:5)



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What is the scariest situation you have ever been in?
- What was scary about what happened in the story this morning?
- How did God take care of His people? Why did He do that?
- How have you seen God take care of you? Why does He do that?
- What is the hardest thing for you to trust God for?

HEZEKIAH

God protects His own Name.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What are the qualities you think are most important in picking a leader or President? Why?

READ 2 KINGS 18:1-8

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who becomes the new king?
- How old was he when he became king?
- What did it say about him in verse 3? What does that mean?
- What were the things that he did?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it mean to hold fast to the Lord?
- What are some commandments that the Lord wants you to obey?
- What does it look like to trust the Lord?
- How would you like to be described like Hezekiah was?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What are some of the "high places" that you need to get rid of in your own life?
- How are you being sure not to follow the world?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

HEZEKIAH

God protects His own Name.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Who is your favorite person to have visit you? Why?

READ 2 KINGS 20:12-21

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who comes to visit Hezekiah?
- What did Hezekiah show them?
- Why did he do that?
- What does Isaiah say to Hezekiah?
- How did Hezekiah respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- When is a time that you showed off something to other people? Why did you do it?
- How would you describe Hezekiah in this passage? What did he care most about?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- When have you justified doing something because it wouldn't really affect you that much?
- Why is it so easy to only care about ourselves?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JOSIAH

2 Kings 23:1-20

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God can use anyone for good of His people.

JOSIAH

God can use anyone for good of His people.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but the people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- God also raises up prophets to speak His truth to kings and the people
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
- David's line leading to the Messiah resides in kings of Judah
- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and the sake of David, His servant

OUTLINE

I. Kings of Judah from Hezekiah to Josiah

- A. Manasseh- Evil king; rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah tore down; even built altars to false gods in the temple of the Lord; burned his own son as an offering; shed much innocent blood in Jerusalem
 - i. "Manasseh led them (people of God) astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the Lord had destroyed before the people of Israel"
- B. Amon- Did evil in sight of the Lord, did what his father before him did and worshipped false gods

II. Josiah

- A. Was only eight years old when he became king
- B. His father was an evil king
- C. Would have been a very unlikely leader
- D. Did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in way of David, not turning to right or left

III. Josiah leads his people back to the Lord

- A. Orders that the temple is repaired so people can worship there again
- B. Book of the Law is found in the temple while being repaired
 - i. Book was read to the king and he tears his clothes because he knows they haven't obeyed God's commands
 - ii. Josiah has priests pray to the Lord for guidance on what to do
- C. Josiah assembled all the people at the temple and read aloud to them the Book of the Covenant
- D. Josiah and people made covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord and keep His commandments
- E. Josiah tore down and burned all the high places and false altars
- F. Josiah got rid of all the priests who offered false sacrifices
- G. He got rid of all false worship in all of Judah in obedience to the Lord
- H. Josiah commands the people to keep the Passover
 - i. None had celebrated it since the Judges
 - ii. Not even David had celebrated the Passover with the people
 - iii. In obedience to God telling them to keep the feast and remember
- I. "Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him"

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- Why would it have been hard for Josiah to be king at first?
- How did Josiah help the people know God better?
- What are things in your life that help you know God better?

JOSIAH

God can use anyone for good of His people.



Hands-On

CHANGING YOUR CITY

Brainstorm as a group about some things that would make Memphis a better place to live. What if you could make that happen right now? Imagine if everyone loved God—how would Memphis be different?

THE BOOK OF LAW

Have the students draw the book of the Law being found as they were cleaning out the temple.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Why would it be really hard for you to be the President right now?
- What were the important things that Josiah did as king?
- Why would it have been hard to do the right things?
- How did what Josiah do help the people know God better?
- What are some things you can do to know God better?
- What are some ways you can obey God but that will be hard to do?

JOSIAH

God can use anyone for good of His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Imagine that you got to be President of the United States for a week. What things would you do?

READ 2 CHRONICLES 34:1-7

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- How old was Josiah when he became king? Can you imagine being that young and in charge of everything?
- What did it say he did in verses 2-3?
- Do you ever think you are too young to really follow Jesus or make a difference? Why?
- What does this passage say about that?
- How did God use Josiah to help His people?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Do you ever think you are too young to really follow Jesus or make a difference? Why?
- How do you think people would describe you at school? Why?
- What are ways that you can walk in the ways of the Lord? Why will that be hard at times?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What excuses do you use for not really following Jesus?
- What are ways that you can walk in the ways of the Lord? Why will that be hard at times?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JOSIAH

God can use anyone for good of His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What are your favorite things about church? What are your least favorite?

READ 2 KINGS 22:3-13

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Josiah tell them to do?
- What was wrong with the house of the Lord?
- What did people do there?
- What do we call that place for us?
- What did Hilkiah find while they were fixing the temple?
- What did they do with it?
- How did Josiah respond to it when it was read? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are ways that you can help build up the church?
- How often do you read God's Word? Is it an important part of your life? Why or why not?
- What was Josiah concerned about?
- Do we need to be concerned about God's wrath? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What are ways that you can help build up the church?
- What was Josiah concerned about?
- Do we need to be concerned about God's wrath? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



ESTHER

Esther 7:1-10

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God saves His people.

ESTHER

God saves His people.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but the people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- God also raises up prophets to speak His truth to kings and the people
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
- David's line leading to the Messiah resides in kings of Judah
- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and the sake of David, His servant
- God allows both Israel and Judah to be taken into exile because of their disobedience to the Lord

OUTLINE

- I. **God's people in captivity**
 - A. Persia had overthrown Judah and brought God's people to live among the Persians
 - B. They were placed in the society and expected to adopt its traditions and customs as their own
 - C. They often found hard times and were often forced into being servants
- II. **Need for a queen**
 - A. King was having a feast for all the army and nobles of Persia
 - B. King wanted queen to come so all the men could look at her because she was beautiful
 - C. She refused to come so the king became very angry and made a decree that she would no longer be queen

III. Esther becomes queen

- A. The king had his servants search for beautiful women to be his new queen
- B. As they were searching they found Esther
 - i. She was Jewish girl with neither father nor mother, but raised by Mordecai, her relative
 - ii. She found favor with them and was given cosmetics and food
- C. Esther never revealed that she was a Jew for fear of the Persians
- D. She was treated for 12 months before going before the king
- E. The king loved Esther the most and she became the queen

IV. Plot against the Jews

- A. A royal official named Haman became second in command and was angry because Mordecai did not bow to him
- B. Instead of just hurting Mordecai, he decided to kill all the Jews
- C. Haman goes to the king to get authority to kill the Jews and it is granted to him
 - i. They planned to do it all on one day so there would be no resistance
 - ii. Word wouldn't get to other Jews to protect themselves

V. Mordecai speaks to Esther

- A. Mordecai was deeply distressed about what was going to happen
- B. Esther finds out he is sad and asks why
- C. Mordecai reveals the plot and ask her to do something since she is queen
- D. Esther is afraid to help
 - i. Would reveal she is a Jew
 - ii. Would require her going to the king without being summoned, for which the punishment was death
- E. Mordecai's response
 - i. You are not safe in the palace from this
 - ii. God will save His people somehow
 - iii. Maybe the Lord allowed you to become queen for such a time as this
- F. Esther agrees to go to king and asks Jews to pray and fast on her behalf

VI. Esther prepares a banquet to speak to king

- A. She reveals the plot to the king
- B. Asks him to spare her people
- C. The king agrees and has Haman hung and gives Mordecai his place in royal court

VII. God uses Esther to save the Jews

- A. Gets permission from king to write letters to all the provinces to not kill the Jews
- B. The Jews proclaim a holiday and feast in honor of the Lord and His salvation

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was the very hard thing she was called to do?
- Why did she not want to do it?
- How did God use her to help His people?
- How can you trust God when hard things come up?

ESTHER

God saves His people.



Hands-On

ISRAELITES GOT TALENT

Have the students walk across the room trying to impress their teachers. Give them only 5-10 seconds to make an impression. Ask them who they remembered from their classmates and why. Now imagine how hard it would be to stick out if there were 100 or 1,000 people competing. Shows how God was in control.

ACT OUT THE STORY

Have the students act out the story of Esther.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Where do we find the Israelites right now? Why would that be scary?
- What would be cool about being the queen and what would be hard about it?
- How did God make sure that Esther was the queen? Why did He want her to be queen?
- Who was going to need her help?
- Why do you think God has blessed you with all the things you have?
- Who needs your help?

ESTHER

God saves His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What are some of the best gifts and talents that God has blessed you with? What are ways that you could use those to glorify Him?

READ ESTHER 2:1-18

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does the king decide to do because he was angry with the queen?
- Who did he get to help him pick a queen?
- Who was Mordecai? What had happened to him?
- Who was Esther? What had happened to her?
- What did the king think about her?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How would you feel having to live in a foreign country because your country was taken over?
- Why did Esther hide who she was?
- When is a time that you have hidden that you are a Christian? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- When is a time that you have hidden that you are a Christian? Why?
- Why did the king choose Esther?
- How is God orchestrating all these events?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

ESTHER

God saves His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What is a hard decision you have had to make recently? How did you decide what to do?

READ ESTHER 4:1-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- How did Mordecai respond when he heard? Why?
- How did Esther find out about Mordecai? What did she do?
- What did Mordecai ask Esther to do?
- What would she risk by doing this?
- How does Mordecai convince her to go?
- What does Esther decide to do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- When is a time that you knew you needed to stand up for what was right? Did you do it? How did you feel?
- What are some ways God has blessed you that could be used for His purposes?
- What keeps you from using them for Him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Do you believe that God is using all your circumstances for His glory and purposes? Why or why not?
- What is the last scary thing you did just because you knew Jesus would want you to?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JEREMIAH

Jeremiah 26:1-19

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God warns His people.

JEREMIAH

God warns His people.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but the people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
- David's line leading to the Messiah resides in kings of Judah
- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and the sake of David, His servant
- God also raises up prophets to speak His truth to kings and the people
- The prophets faithfully are God's mouthpiece to the people, warning them of God's coming and righteous judgment

OUTLINE

- I. **Jeremiah's timeframe**
 - A. His ministry began during reign of Josiah
 - i. Last faithful king of Judah
 - ii. Spent most of the time speaking to unfaithful kings and people
 - iii. Was a prophet even after the exile happened
 - B. It was at a very troubled time for Judah
 - i. Leading up to the exile
 - ii. Wickedness was everywhere - people were not ready to listen to the Word of the Lord

II. Jeremiah's messages

- A. Trusting in the Lord and obeying Him
- B. Showing God's people how they had broken His commandments and given into idolatry
- C. Predicting the fall of Jerusalem
- D. God will judge the nations
- E. Promising that God would restore Judah and Israel

III. Jeremiah and the people of Judah

- A. The Lord commanded Jeremiah to speak to the people
 - i. Told to stand in court of the Lord's house
 - ii. Speak all that God commands and not hold back a word
 - a. They may relent from their ways
 - b. Would have been a difficult message for the people to hear
 - c. Could have been dangerous to Jeremiah
 - iii. The message—if you don't listen to me and walk in my laws, I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the Earth
 - a. Exact opposite of promise to Abraham
 - iv. The priests and prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah's words
- B. Response of the people
 - i. They took hold of him to kill him—even the priests and prophets
 - ii. Did not like his prophecy and didn't believe it came from the Lord
 - iii. All the people gathered around Jeremiah in house of the Lord
 - iv. Priests and prophets speak to the officials
 - a. This man deserves death for prophesying against Jerusalem
- C. Jeremiah's response
 - i. Would have been difficult for him
 - ii. He had only been doing what God told him to do
 - iii. Speaks to the people- Would he stay true to the message?
 - a. The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and city
 - b. Mend your ways and your deeds and obey the voice of the Lord your God
 - c. If you obey, the Lord will relent from the disaster He has pronounced against you
 - d. As for me, do with me what you think seems good and right to you but if you put me to death you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves for in truth the Lord has sent me
 - 1. Trusted the Lord to protect him

- D. The people listen to Jeremiah's words
- i. Agree that he shouldn't be put to death
 - ii. Remember that Micah had also prophesied against Jerusalem
 - iii. Realize they would bring disaster upon themselves

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- Why was Jeremiah's ministry so hard?
- How did the people respond to him?
- What did he do when the people didn't respond well or at all?
- How can we continue to be faithful to God when people don't respond well?

JEREMIAH

God warns His people.



Hands-On

THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE

Have students write out God's blessing to Abraham and the curse from Jeremiah on the same paper. Compare them. Why does God want us to obey?

ONE LIGHT IN A SEA OF DARK

Glue tissue paper onto construction paper (1/4 sheet). All black with one piece of yellow, orange or red hidden in the middle. What is it like to be "one light in a sea of dark?" When are times you feel like this? What can you do when you feel like this? How would working with other Christians in your school, etc, change what your paper looks like?



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What was hard that Jeremiah had to do? How did he have the courage to do it?
- What is something really hard you have had to do lately?
- How did you have the courage to do it?
- How did God protect Jeremiah from the people?
- How does God protect you each day?

JEREMIAH

God warns His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Who knows you best in the world? Why them?

READ JEREMIAH 1:1-12

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did the word of the Lord say to Jeremiah?
- What does it mean that God knew Jeremiah in the womb?
- How does it make you feel that God knew you and had a plan for you before you were even born?
- What was Jeremiah's response?
- How did God respond to Jeremiah's words?
- Why should we not be afraid?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What difference does it make that God knows EVERYTHING about you?
- What does it mean to you that God has had and does have a plan for your whole life?
- What excuses do you use for not telling others about Jesus?
- What difference does it make that God is always with you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What excuses do you use for not telling others about Jesus?
- How has God also put His words in your mouth? What are you to do with them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JEREMIAH

God warns His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Who is someone you have a really hard time getting along with? Why is that?

READ JEREMIAH 39:1-18

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What is happening to Jerusalem here?
- What does the king of Babylon do?
- What does it mean that they were carried into exile?
- What instructions did the king give in regards to Jeremiah?
- What did the Lord say to Jeremiah?
- Why was God saving him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who would you say are your enemies?
- How would you feel being defeated and taken away like this?
- How are we also in some ways in exile?
- How do you see God taking care of you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- When is a time that you have taken credit for something the Lord did?
- Why do we do that?
- How is God still faithful to us even when we aren't faithful to Him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 37:1-14

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God encourages His people.

EZEKIEL

God encourages His people.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but the people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
- David's line leading to the Messiah resides in kings of Judah
- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and the sake of David, His servant
- God also raises up prophets to speak His truth to kings and the people
- The prophets faithfully are God's mouthpiece to the people, warning them of God's coming and righteous judgment

OUTLINE

- I. **Ezekiel's timeframe**
 - A. His ministry began after the exile of Judah
 - B. Speaking to people who feel forgotten by God
- II. **Ezekiel's messages**
 - A. Trusting in the Lord and obeying Him
 - B. God will judge the wickedness of people and the nation
 - C. God is God of the universe and not just over Israel
 - D. Promise of future prince who would rule with justice and stand at point of connection between people and God

III. Ezekiel in Valley of Dry Bones

- A. The Lord brought him out to the middle of a valley full of bones
- B. God asks Ezekiel whether the dry bones could live again
- C. God tells him to prophesy to the dry bones
 - i. Would seem as useless as prophesying to people in exile
 - ii. Ezekiel is to tell the bones that they will live again and have breath in them
 - iii. This will be done so that they will know the Lord
- D. Ezekiel obeys the Lord
 - i. Might not want to because it would seem weird or silly but he does anyway
 - ii. At the sound of the prophecy, the bones rose up and began to come together
 - iii. Then the bones were connected together and flesh came upon them but they were not alive
 - a. Like Israel, not enough to just look good on outside and be restored to former place
 - iv. God commands him to prophesy the breath on to them and it happened and they lived and stood as an exceedingly great army
 - a. Would seem like an army to deliver Israel from exile
 - v. God interprets what happened
 - a. The bones are like Israel who feels cut off and dried out
 - b. Prophecy is for people of Israel to encourage them
 - c. God will bring them out of their exile and return them to Israel
 - d. God will also put His Spirit inside of them
 - e. He will do all this so they will know that He is the Lord
 - f. Even though they have sinned and disobeyed the Lord He will continue to show them grace and take care of them

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was going on with God's people during this time?
- What very cool thing did God do for Ezekiel?
- What does a heart alive for the Lord look like?

EZEKIEL

God encourages His people.



Hands-On

SKELETONS AND DOLLS

Bring in a toy skeleton and another toy doll. Discuss how you would get from one to another.

SPEAK TO THE SKELETONS

Have part of the group lay down on the ground pretending to be skeletons. Have one person pretend to be Ezekiel and speak to the "skeletons." Have them act out rising up to life



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Why would it be hard for the Israelites to be in exile?
- What does God do that shows His power?
- What would you think watching this happen?
- How does this apply to us?
- How does God make us alive?

EZEKIEL

God encourages His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could do anything as your job what would it be and why?

READ EZEKIEL 2:1-3:3

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did God say to Ezekiel?
- What does it mean that the Spirit entered him?
- Who was God sending Ezekiel to?
- What does God say about people of Israel?
- What was Ezekiel to say to the people?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do we also have the Holy Spirit?
- Who do you think God is sending you to? Why?
- Why does he tell Ezekiel to not be afraid?
- Are there people you are afraid to talk with about God? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- Who do you think God is sending you to? Why?
- Are there people you are afraid to talk with about God? Why?
- How does it make you feel that God tells Ezekiel to speak whether they respond or not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

EZEKIEL

God encourages His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could be any animal what would you be and why?

READ EZEKIEL 34:11-16

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does the Lord say He will do?
- How does it make you feel that He promises to search after you and rescue you?
- How does God describe His people?
- How does He talk of taking care of them?
- What things that He says do you like the most?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it important that God searches for us Himself?
- How have you felt Him coming after you and rescuing you?
- How have you seen Him taking care of you lately?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Why do we not like to see ourselves as sheep that God takes care of?
- Which of the ways that God speaks of taking care of His people do you like the most? Which do you like the least?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



DANIEL

Daniel 6:1-28

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God spreads His Name through His people.

DANIEL

God spreads His Name through His people.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but the people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
- David's line leading to the Messiah resides in kings of Judah
- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and the sake of David, His servant
- God warns the people through His prophets to turn from their sin and to the Lord
- Finally the people's idolatry and disobedience lead the Lord to send His people into exile
- God's people now have to live for Him in a foreign culture with many temptations and false gods

OUTLINE

- I. **Daniel taken into captivity**
 - A. He was taken to Babylon as part of exile
 - B. The Babylonians took youth from the nobility of Israel to teach them Babylonian culture
 - i. The desire was to spread their culture and language
 - C. They would be educated for three years and then stand before the king
- II. **Daniel remained faithful to the Lord even in captivity**
 - A. Would not eat the king's food that would make him unclean

- B. God blessed him while in exile
 - i. Had skill in learning and understanding
 - ii. Daniel could even interpret dreams
 - iii. He was found 10 times better than any of the wise men in the kingdom

III. Daniel rises to power

- A. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and none could interpret it
- B. Daniel interprets the dream and is put in charge of all of Babylon
- C. God blessed Daniel because he was faithful to the Lord

IV. Daniel's challenge

- A. Darius became the new king and Daniel remained in a place of honor
 - i. Was one of three presidents over the whole kingdom
 - ii. Many were jealous of Daniel and his position
- B. The other presidents and satraps looked for a way to accuse Daniel
 - i. Came up with a plan
 - a. Appealed to the king's sense of being a god
 - b. Made it a law that no one could pray to anything or anyone but the king for 30 days
 - c. If one disobeyed, he would be cast into the den of lions to die
 - d. The king approves the plan and makes it law
 - e. Once the law was made even the king could not change it
- C. Daniel had a choice to make—honor the king or the Lord
 - i. Would be a hard decision to make
 - ii. Could have decided not to pray for 30 days...surely God would understand
 - iii. Could even pray silently to himself and no one would know
 - iv. Knew the punishment was harsh
- D. Daniel chooses the Lord
 - i. Went into his house and opened the windows and prayed
 - a. Prayed three times a day as he always did
 - ii. People found Daniel praying and turned him into the king
 - iii. King was distressed when he found out it was Daniel
 - a. Had to punish him according to the law

- E. Daniel in lion's den
 - i. The king has him put in lion's den
 - ii. Hopes that God will deliver him
 - iii. King can't sleep and spends night fasting and praying for Daniel
 - iv. King arose early and went to lion's den to check on Daniel
 - a. Found Daniel unharmed by the lions
 - 1. Because he trusted in the Lord
 - b. Daniel tells him that the Lord sent an angel to protect him
 - c. The king was exceedingly glad that Daniel was saved
- F. The accusers are punished
 - i. Those who accused Daniel are thrown in the lion's den
 - ii. They are killed even before they reach the bottom of the den
- V. King Darius worships the Lord
 - A. Made a decree to all nations, peoples, and languages
 - i. God is the living God
 - ii. His kingdom shall never be destroyed
 - iii. He delivers and rescues, and works signs and wonders
 - B. God used even this hard thing for His Glory

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- How did God help Daniel to come to power?
- How did Daniel show His faith in God?
- How did God use Daniel to glorify Himself?

DANIEL

God spreads His Name through His people.



Hands-On

LOOKING AT LIONS

Bring a few pictures of some lions so the students can see exactly what was at stake.

LOVING GOD IN HARDSHIP

Have students make a list of ways that Daniel could have still loved God, but not been caught praying.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Why were the other leaders jealous of Daniel?
- What was the difficult situation that Daniel found himself in?
- What are some of the ways that Daniel could have handled his situation?
- How did the king feel about having to put Daniel to death?
- What was the end result of this whole thing?
- What are ways in which we can glorify God?

DANIEL

God spreads His Name through His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could change your name to anything else what would you change it to and why?

READ DANIEL 1:1-7

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What has happened to Judah here?
- What kind of people did the king want? Why?
- How did he take care of them?
- How long were they educated in the Babylonian ways?
- Why were they given new names?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How have you been singled out because you love Jesus?
- What are ways in which the culture tries to “rename you”? How do you keep that from happening?
- How do you stay true to God in this culture?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- How is our culture trying to make you more like it instead of more like Jesus?
- How do you stay true to God in this culture?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

DANIEL

God spreads His Name through His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you had to eat only one food forever what would it be and why?

READ DANIEL 1:8-21

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Daniel resolve to do?
- What did he ask for instead?
- What did God give to Daniel?
- What test did Daniel propose?
- What were the results of the test?
- What did God give the youths?
- How did God bless them before the king?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What things of this world do you need to avoid?
- What are ways that you can stand out for God at school? Why is that also scary?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What things are you avoiding to not defile yourself?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 2:1-8

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God is in control of all things for the good of His people.

NEHEMIAH

God is in control of all things for the good of His people.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
- The people disobey and the Lord's words come true and there is great idolatry throughout the land
- God allows hardships so they will turn their hearts back to Him and also provides judges to lead them, but the people do not wholeheartedly return to the Lord
- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit on the throne of Israel
- God also raises up prophets to speak His truth to kings and the people
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
- David's line leading to the Messiah resides in kings of Judah
- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and the sake of David, His servant
- God uses Josiah to reform His people and return their hearts to Him but the kings and people turn back away from the Lord
- God allows both Israel and Judah to be taken into exile because of their disobedience to the Lord
- After many years of exile, the Lord stirs the heart of Cyrus to allow the exiles to return to Jerusalem

OUTLINE

- I. **The captives return**
 - A. After 70 years of exile (as prophesied by Jeremiah)
 - B. Given their freedom by King Cyrus of Persia after Persia defeated Assyria
 - C. Go back to Jerusalem to rebuild homes, the altar, the temple, the wall etc.
 - D. Even given supplies and help by the king to do it
 - i. God was working in heart of Cyrus for good of His people

II. The captives struggle at first

- A. Have to rebuild everything
- B. No defenses for the city
- C. They were in great trouble and shame because they had no wall or gates
- D. Nehemiah hears of their struggle

III. Nehemiah

- A. Was cupbearer of King Artaxerxes
 - i. Meant he drank the wine before the king to make sure it wasn't poisoned
 - ii. Was a very important position and they were well provided for
 - a. Lived in palace
 - b. Ate from king's table
- B. Was broken over the struggles of his people that returned
 - i. Had a good life for himself but still cared about others
 - ii. Wept and mourned for days
 - iii. Prayed and fasted before the Lord on their behalf
 - iv. Admitted the sins of himself and God's people over the years and asked for forgiveness
 - v. Remembers God's promises to and about His people and prays for them to come true
 - vi. Nehemiah wants to help the people in Jerusalem

IV. Nehemiah before the king

- A. You did not speak to the king without being spoken to or risk being killed so Nehemiah had said nothing
- B. The king had noticed that Nehemiah had been sad in his presence for many days
 - i. Asked Nehemiah what was wrong, knowing it was sadness of heart
 - ii. Nehemiah was still afraid to speak
 - a. Didn't want to seem ungrateful for all king has done
 - b. Not sure how he would respond if Nehemiah asked to leave
 - iii. Nehemiah makes his heart known
 - a. First he "prayed to the God of heaven"
 - b. He asks the king to return to Jerusalem to help in rebuilding the city
 - iv. The king allows him to go
 - a. Sends letters with him for safe passage
 - b. Sends letters with him to get all the wood he needs from the king's forest in order to rebuild
 - c. The good hand of the Lord was upon him

- V. **God uses Nehemiah to rebuild the wall and the people's faith**
- A. Even though Nehemiah encounters much opposition along the way, the Lord blesses him and the wall is again built around Jerusalem
 - B. Once wall is built, the temple and altars are repaired and the people worship the Lord and confess their sins
 - C. Nehemiah enacts many reforms so the people will obey the commandments of the Lord now that they have returned

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was happening to God's people at this time?
- How did Nehemiah help them?

NEHEMIAH

God is in control of all things for the good of His people.



Hands-On

BUILD A WALL-IDEA #1

Divide the group into a few groups and give them an equal number of blocks or some play dough. Have each group build a wall to “protect” them. Have the groups throw ping pong balls or tennis ball and see which wall lasts the longest.

BUILD A WALL- IDEA #2

Give each group only a certain amount of blocks and see who can build tallest and most sturdy wall.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What was the main problem facing the Israelites?
- Where was Nehemiah when he heard?
- What did Nehemiah come to do?
- What was the lasting effect of Nehemiah’s work?
- What is something you can do to help God’s people?

NEHEMIAH

God is in control of all things for the good of His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be and why?

READ NEHEMIAH 1:1-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Nehemiah hear about those who had returned from exile to Jerusalem?
- Why was the fact that the wall was down such a big deal?
- How did Nehemiah respond?
- What did he pray to the Lord?
- What does he say about God in his prayer?
- What was Nehemiah's job? What did a cupbearer do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you respond to the struggles and hard times of others? Do you weep with them or try to do something to help or are you just glad it isn't you?
- When you pray do you glorify God or just ask for things you want?
- How does Nehemiah show us an example of prayer?
- Do you confess your sins when you pray? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What do your times of confession look like before the Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

NEHEMIAH

God is in control of all things for the good of His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could win any award, what would it be and why?

READ NEHEMIAH 4:1-14

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What happens when they start rebuilding all around Jerusalem?
- What do Sanballat and Tobiah say about the Jews' efforts?
- What did the people pray to God?
- What did they keep doing?
- What did Sanballat and the others decide to do?
- Did the people believe that they could do it? Why or why not?
- How did God frustrate the plans of those against Israel?
- Why were they told not to be afraid?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What is something you stopped doing because of how people responded? Why?
- What are ways in which people try to keep you from following Jesus? How do you respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What is something that God wants you to do but may be hard or not be received well?
- How does God fight for you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



EZRA

Nehemiah 8:1-12

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God teaches His people.

EZRA

God teaches His people.

CONTEXT

- God tells Abraham that He will make him into a great nation
- God tells Abraham that all the nations will be blessed through him and his offspring
- God promises a kingdom through Abraham's line that will never end and a land where they will dwell
- As God's people enter the land, the Lord instructs them to devote to destruction everything so they will not be turned away towards other gods
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- Israel wants a king to lead and protect them, thus saying that they do not want the Lord to rule them anymore; He gives them what they want
- The time of the kings has now come and both good and evil men sit of the throne of Israel
- God also raises up prophets to speak His truth to kings and the people
- The kingdom is divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah
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- God continues to protect His people even in their disobedience for His own sake and the sake of David, His servant
- God uses Josiah to reform His people and return their hearts to Him but the kings and people turn back away from the Lord
- God allows both Israel and Judah to be taken into exile because of their disobedience to the Lord
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OUTLINE

- I. **The captives return**
 - A. After 70 years of exile (as prophesied by Jeremiah)
 - B. Given their freedom by King Cyrus of Persia after Persia defeated Assyria
 - C. Go back to Jerusalem to rebuild homes, the altar, the temple, the wall etc.
 - D. Even given supplies and help by the king to do it
 - i. God was working in heart of Cyrus for good of His people

II. They are met with much opposition along the way

- A. From people that now inhabited the land
 - i. Didn't want them to rebuild temple or altar
 - ii. Bribed people to make the building harder
 - iii. Once Cyrus died they wrote to new king for them to stop
 - a. King ordered them to stop and they did
- B. Later the prophets Haggai and Zechariah told them to start rebuilding again
 - i. People of the land heard of it and opposed it again
 - ii. Wrote letter to the new king, asking him to stop them
 - iii. King Darius read the letter and looked back to find what Cyrus had said and finding that Cyrus had allowed it, he allows it as well
 - a. God has turned the heart of the king to aid them in work of the Lord

III. Once construction is complete, the people worship God again

- A. First the exiles celebrate the Passover
- B. They kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread

IV. Ezra is sent to teach the people

- A. Was a scribe who was skilled in the Law of Moses
- B. God's hand was with him and the king gave him whatever he wanted
 - i. Would be hard to leave exile for him
 - ii. Had a good life and success and possessions
- C. Ezra desired to teach the exiles the ways of the Lord
 - i. Knew this was better than anything Persia could offer
 - ii. Heart was for the Lord
 - iii. Ezra traveled with blessing of the king to Jerusalem
- D. Ezra reads the Law to the people
 - i. All the people gathered together
 - ii. Read it from early morning until midday and people were listening
 - iii. People stood as he opened the Word
 - iv. Ezra led the people in prayers and worship
 - v. Ezra and Levites explained the Word to the people

V. Day set apart as holy

- A. People had wept at hearing the Word
 - i. Clearly saw their sin and God's holiness
- B. The people were told instead to rejoice and they did
 - i. The joy of the Lord is your strength
 - ii. God has brought us back to the Promised Land
 - iii. God has given us His Word that we might obey Him
 - iv. God has dealt graciously and bountifully with us

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What did Ezra come to do for God's people?
- How did he do that?
- What happens to the people?

EZRA

God teaches His people.



Hands-On

THE TEMPLE AND THE SANCTUARY

Compare temple to our Sanctuary. Talk about the different parts of our sanctuary and what they are for (Eg. Organ—lead worship, Pulpit—preaching, Pews—People). Talk about how Temple led people into worship (Eg. Altar—sacrifices, Basin—holy washing).

DRAW A TEMPLE

Have the students draw what they think the temple would look like and different parts in it.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What did the people need?
- What did Ezra come and do for them? Why was it important?
- What purpose did the temple serve for the people then?
- How did the people respond to reading of God's Word? Why?
- What role does God's Word play in your life?
- How do you take joy in God?

EZRA

God teaches His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could spend the day with any famous person alive or dead who would it be and why?

READ EZRA 7:1-10

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who is Ezra?
- What are we told about him?
- What was he skilled in?
- What did the king grant him? Why?
- Where did he go and for what purpose?
- Who went with him?
- What did Ezra set his heart on?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it mean that the hand of the Lord was upon him?
- Who has God given you in your life so that you will know His Word better? Do you listen to them?
- Who in your life is with you on your journey to follow Jesus? Why is that important?
- What is your heart set on doing most of the time?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- How do you see the hand of the Lord on you?
- Who has God given you in your life so that you will know His Word better? Do you listen to them?
- What is your heart set on doing most of the time?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

EZRA

God teaches His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you won \$1,000,000 what are the first three things you would do with the money?

READ EZRA 7:21-28

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What decree did the king make? Why is that amazing?
- Why would the king give Ezra some of his own money?
- What does the king say in verse 23?
- What does the king say that those who serve in temple don't have to do?
- What does the king say about those who do not obey the Law of the Lord?
- Who caused the king to do this? How do we know?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Have you ever given something of yours to help someone else? How and why?
- How are you making sure you know God's commands?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who are people that you can teach God's Word to?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JOHN THE BAPTIST

John 1:35-42

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses His people to spread His message.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

God uses His people to spread His message.

CONTEXT

- God fulfills His promise from the Garden and the Messiah has come
- Instead of coming as a king, the Messiah comes to two “nobodies” from Nazareth—Joseph and Mary
- Jesus has grown up in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man
- Jesus is now ready to begin His ministry of bringing God’s promised Kingdom to all the people
- God also has provided one to come before Jesus and prepare the people for the message and ministry that is to come—John the Baptist

OUTLINE

I. John the Baptist’s ministry

- A. Set apart from before birth
 - i. Born to a priest named Zechariah and his wife, who was barren
 - ii. “They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.”—Luke 1:6
 - iii. God tells Zechariah of His plans while he is serving in the temple
 - iv. Told his purpose—“And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him (Messiah) in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of their fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”—Luke 1:16-17
- B. Was very different than what priests did at this time
 - i. Spent most of his ministry in the wilderness instead of the temple
 - ii. Wore camel’s hair instead of fine robes
 - iii. Ate locusts and wild honey instead of the food from the temple
- C. Response to his ministry
 - i. People came to him—was pretty popular
 - a. Would not have been an easy journey from Jerusalem
 - b. God was working so people would repent; willing to go to where he was
 - ii. He baptized them
 - a. Was an old idea from the Old Testament but wasn’t done like this
 - b. People confessed their sins to him

II. John the Baptist's perspective

- A. Would have been easy to really enjoy the crowds and people
 - i. See himself as very important
 - ii. Accept the praises and worship of the people
- B. John knew who he was
 - i. "I am not the Christ"—John 1:20
 - ii. "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'"—John 1:23
 - iii. "I baptize with water, but among you stands one who you do not know, even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."—John 1:27
 - iv. Saw his role was to point others to Jesus
- C. John knew who Jesus was
 - i. Lamb of God
 - a. Who takes away the sin of the world
 - b. Knew that He would not be the king many expected but the sacrifice for the sins of God's people
 - ii. John pointed others to Jesus—John 1:35-37
 - a. John was walking with his disciples
 - 1. People who had left everything to follow John
 - 2. Companions and helpers to John and his ministry
 - 3. Showed that you were important when you had people following you like this
 - b. John points his disciples to Jesus
 - 1. Instead of trying to "protect" the importance of his ministry
 - 2. Knew that ultimately they needed to follow Jesus and not him
 - 3. "He must increase and I must decrease"—John 3:30
 - c. John's disciples left him and followed Jesus
 - iii. John kept pointing others to Jesus his whole life

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was different about John the Baptist?
- How did John the Baptist point to Jesus?
- How can you point to Jesus?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

God uses His people to spread His message.



Hands-On

DRESS UP LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIST

Bring either a burlap sack or camel's hair jacket for them to wear. Bring honey and some sort of gummy insects for them to eat (or a grasshopper if you are super brave!!).

DRAW JOHN THE BAPTIST

Have the students draw a picture of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus with Holy Spirit coming down.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- How was John the Baptist different from the religious leaders?
- What was the message he gave to the people? What does that mean?
- Why do you think so many people came to John the Baptist?
- How did John the Baptist show Jesus to others? How could that have been hard?
- What does it mean that Jesus was the Lamb of God?
- What are some ways that you can point others to Jesus?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

God uses His people to spread His message.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Watch a baptism video of one of the kids if you have one. Talk about the day and why it was important.

READ MATTHEW 3:1-12

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What was John the Baptist doing and where?
- What was his message?
- What was different about John?
- What did John say about the Pharisees? Why?
- What does John the Baptist say about Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How was John the Baptist's ministry a fulfillment of Scripture?
- Why do you think the people went out to John?
- How did he see himself compared to Jesus?
- How do you see yourself in comparison with Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What are some areas in your life in which you need to repent?
- How are you preparing the way of the Lord at your school?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JOHN THE BAPTIST

God uses His people to spread His message.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could ask God one question, what would it be?

READ MATTHEW 3:13-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who came to be baptized by John?
- How did John react?
- What happened after Jesus was baptized?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Do you believe that God is pleased with you? Why or why not?
 - He is, by the way, since when He sees you He sees Jesus
- Why was it important for John to baptize Jesus?
- Why was it important for Jesus to hear God's voice here?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What does it mean that you are a beloved child of God?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



JOHN

Mark 10:35-45

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses His people despite their sin.

JOHN

God uses His people despite their sin.

CONTEXT

- God fulfills His promise from the Garden and the Messiah has come
- Instead of coming as a king, the Messiah comes to two “nobodies” from Nazareth—Joseph and Mary
- Jesus has grown up in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man
- Jesus is now ready to begin His ministry of bringing God’s promised kingdom to all the people
- God also has provided one to come before Jesus and prepare the people for the message and ministry that is to come—John the Baptist
- Jesus is doing amazing things in the midst of the people
- His teaching is like none they have ever heard because it is accompanied by miracles and power
- Jesus goes not to the religious leaders, but to the sinners; not to the rich and powerful, but to the poor and needy
- Jesus brings along 12 men as His disciples (with other men and women also following Him closely) to help Him in ministry and to teach and train them how to spread God’s glorious Kingdom
- Jesus is often more interested in what He’s doing *in* the disciples than *through* the disciples to others
- These followers have given up everything to follow Jesus

OUTLINE

- I. Chosen as one of the 12
 - A. Not who you would expect to change the world
 - i. Fishermen, tax collectors, and ordinary people
 - ii. Not well educated or important or powerful
 - B. John left everything to follow Jesus
 - i. Left his business with James and Peter
 - ii. Left his family
 - iii. Left his old life
- II. Was very close to Jesus
 - A. Was included in things that other disciples weren’t
 - i. Got to see Jesus transfigured—Matthew 17:1-2
 - ii. Saw Jesus raise a little girl from the dead—Luke 8:51
 - iii. Got to watch Jesus pray in Gethsemane—Matthew 26:27

- B. Followed Jesus all the way to the cross
- C. Was chosen by Jesus to take care of his mother after Jesus' death
 - i. While Jesus was on the cross
- D. Called himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved"
 - i. Was not arrogant about it, but was confident in Jesus' love for him

III. Still didn't always get it right

- A. Being that close to Jesus you would assume that they understood
- B. James and John ask for places of honor—Mark 10:35-45
 - i. There were two places of highest honor next to a king, sitting directly on his right or left
 - a. Closest to him
 - b. Usually reserved for queen and prince or queen and chancellor of the land
 - ii. They believe Jesus is coming to rule now in Jerusalem
 - a. Think he will overthrow Roman rule
 - b. Want to call "dibs" on the places of honor when He does
 - iii. Problems with their request
 - a. Jesus was not coming to rule now
 - 1. He was coming to die to forgive our sins
 - 2. Came to establish a heavenly Kingdom now and earthly Kingdom in the future
 - 3. Meant they were missing the point of His teaching and ministry
 - b. It would make the other disciples angry
 - 1. "Why should they get those places instead of me?"
 - 2. Would make them jealous
 - c. Distracts the disciples from their mission
 - 1. Now only thinking about themselves and not others
 - 2. Trying to get their own security instead of helping those in need
 - iv. Jesus' response
 - a. Not frustrated or angry, but saw as a teaching moment
 - b. Reminds them of their mission: not rule over others but serve others
 - c. "Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."
 - d. Still used John to do amazing things
 - 1. He wasn't disqualified because of his selfishness
 - 2. John even got to see a glimpse of heaven and write it down for us
 - 3. Still trusted him to take care of mom

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What did John ask of Jesus? Why was it wrong to ask?
- What was Jesus' response to John?
- What are ways you can serve others as Jesus did?

JOHN

God uses His people despite their sin.



Hands-On

DIRTY JOBS

On the board, make a list of 10 jobs people can have. Number the jobs 1-10 with 1 being the worst job and 10 being the best job. Who did Jesus hang out with the most? Why? Is what someone does for their work what makes them important in Jesus' eyes?

DISCIPLE NAMES

John called himself the "disciple whom Jesus loved." If you could give yourself a name having to do with your relationship with Jesus, what would it be? Make a necklace or door hanger with your new name on it and hang it where you can remember what Jesus thinks of you!



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What did the disciples have to leave in order to follow Jesus?
- Why would that be hard?
- What would be very hard for you to give up to follow Jesus?
- What did John ask Jesus for? What did that mean? How did Jesus respond?
- What did Jesus call His disciples to do?
- What are ways that you can serve others? At school? In your family? In your neighborhood?

JOHN

God uses His people despite their sin.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you had to pick two people not in your family to live with, who would it be and why?

READ MATTHEW 4:18-22

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What was Jesus doing?
- Who did He see there?
- What did Jesus tell them to do?
- How did they respond?
- What did they leave?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How are you being a “fisher of men”?
- How often do you immediately obey what the Lord calls you to do?
- What are things you wouldn’t be willing to leave for the sake of following Jesus? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What is the difference between following Jesus and just believing in Him?
- What do you need to leave to truly follow Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

JOHN

God uses His people despite their sin.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What are some of the nicknames that other people have had for you? What are your favorites and what are ones you don't like?

READ JOHN 19:17-27

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What is happening to Jesus here?
- Where are the disciples? Who is there at the cross?
- What was written above the cross?
- What does John call himself? Why?
- Do you know that Jesus loves you like this?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why was it important what was written above the cross and how it was written?
- How did what the soldiers do fulfill Scripture?
- Why is it important what John calls himself? Do you truly feel that way?
- What does Jesus give to John while on the cross?
- Isn't it amazing that in all that pain Jesus was thinking about others?
- How do you handle others when you are in pain or struggling?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Why is it important what John calls himself? Do you truly feel that way?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



MARY MAGDALENE

John 20:11-18

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses unlikely people for very important things.

MARY MAGDALENE

God uses unlikely people for very important things.

CONTEXT

- God fulfills His promise from the Garden and the Messiah has come
- Instead of coming as a king, the Messiah comes to two “nobodies” from Nazareth—Joseph and Mary
- Jesus has grown up in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man
- Jesus is now ready to begin His ministry of bringing God’s promised Kingdom to all the people
- God also has provided one to come before Jesus and prepare the people for the message and ministry that is to come—John the Baptist
- Jesus is doing amazing things in the midst of the people
- His teaching is like none they have ever heard because it is accompanied by miracles and power
- Jesus goes not to the religious leaders, but to the sinners; not to the rich and powerful, but to the poor and needy
- Jesus brings along 12 men as His disciples (with other men and women also following Him closely) to help Him in ministry and to teach and train them how to spread God’s glorious Kingdom
- Jesus is often more interested in what He’s doing *in* the disciples than *through* the disciples to others
- These followers have given up everything to follow Jesus
- Ultimately, Jesus goes to His death on the cross
- The disciples and the rest of His followers are shocked and confused by His death and are not sure what to do next—they had not understood when Jesus taught that this would happen

OUTLINE

- I. **Who was Mary Magdalene?**
 - A. A woman that Jesus cast seven demons out of
 - i. Was a miracle
 - ii. Would have completely changed her life
 - B. Out of thankfulness, she follows Jesus
 - C. She helped provide for Jesus’ ministry
 - i. He had no job and no home and little food
 - ii. She along with others helped Jesus and the disciples along the way
 - D. Some scholars believe she was the sinful woman forgiven by Jesus in Luke 7:36-50
 - i. No direct evidence of it
 - ii. Would follow her pattern of thankfulness and service for what Jesus had done for her

- E. She followed Jesus all the way to the cross—John 19:25
 - i. Stayed with Him to the end
 - ii. Was not afraid of harm coming to her

II. Why was she important?

- A. Was the first one to see the empty tomb
 - i. She had gone early to finish preparing His body for burial
 - ii. Saw that stone had been rolled away and tomb was empty
 - iii. Went and told Peter and John
 - iv. She thought the body was stolen
- B. Was the first one to see Jesus resurrected

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was special about what Mary Magdalene got to see and do?
- What did she do with what she saw?
- What are ways you can tell others what you know about Jesus?

MARY MAGDALENE

God uses unlikely people for very important things.



Hands-On

ACT OUT THE STORY

Have one angel, one Mary, one Jesus, and two disciples. Have them act out the story.

DRAW THE EMPTY TOMB

Have the students draw a picture of the empty tomb with the grave clothes.

MUMMY WRAP

Discuss how bodies were prepared for burial. Pick three or four pairs and give each a roll of toilet paper. One person gets wrapped and the other is the wrapper. Have them wrap for three minutes. The winning team is one that looks most complete.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What do we know about Mary Magdalene?
- How did she help Jesus with His ministry?
- Why did she go to the tomb on that Sunday morning?
- What did she see? When did she realize it was Jesus?
- What did she do with this information? Did they believe her?
- What are ways you can share what you know about Jesus?

MARY MAGDALENE

God uses unlikely people for very important things.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you had to give away half of what you have who would you give it to? Why?

READ LUKE 8:1-3, JOHN 19:25

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What was Jesus doing here?
- Who was helping Him besides the disciples?
- What were they doing for the disciples?
- Where else do we find Mary Magdalene in John?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why was it surprising that these women were helping Jesus the way they were?
- Who is a group of fellow believers that you can work with to accomplish Jesus' mission? Will you?
- Who is someone who has stuck with you through good and bad?
- Why is it so important to have someone like that in your life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What are ways in which you are committing your stuff for the ministry of Jesus?
- Who is a group of fellow believers that you can work with to accomplish Jesus' mission? Will you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

MARY MAGDALENE

God uses unlikely people for very important things.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time you were really surprised by something? How did you respond?

READ MATTHEW 28:1-10

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What had just happened to Jesus?
- Who went to the tomb to prepare Jesus' body?
- What happens when they get there?
- What did they expect to see?
- What did they do when Jesus showed up?
- What does Jesus tell them to do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- If Jesus showed up in bodily form to you, what would you do?
- Who do you need to go and tell about the Resurrection of Jesus?
- When is the last time you were surprised by Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who do you need to go and tell about the Resurrection of Jesus?
- When is the last time you were surprised by Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



PETER

John 21:1-19

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God restores His people.

PETER

God restores His people.

CONTEXT

- God fulfills His promise from the Garden and the Messiah has come
- Instead of coming as a king, the Messiah comes to two “nobodies” from Nazareth—Joseph and Mary
- Jesus has grown up in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man
- Jesus is now ready to begin His ministry of bringing God’s promised Kingdom to all the people
- God also has provided one to come before Jesus and prepare the people for the message and ministry that is to come—John the Baptist
- Jesus is doing amazing things in the midst of the people
- His teaching is like none they have ever heard because it is accompanied by miracles and power
- Jesus goes not to the religious leaders, but to the sinners; not to the rich and powerful, but to the poor and needy
- Jesus brings along 12 men as His disciples (with other men and women also following Him closely) to help Him in ministry and to teach and train them how to spread God’s glorious Kingdom
- Jesus is often more interested in what He’s doing *in* the disciples than *through* the disciples to others
- These followers have given up everything to follow Jesus
- Ultimately, Jesus goes to His death on the cross
- The disciples and the rest of His followers are shocked and confused by His death and are not sure what to do next—had not understood when Jesus taught that this would happen
- On the third day, the disciples find an empty tomb and receive word that Jesus rose from the dead
- Jesus then appears to the disciples to show Himself and answer their doubts

OUTLINE

- I. Peter’s calling
 - A. Jesus went to Peter and got in his boat
 - B. Jesus told Peter to go and fish; he was reluctant
 - i. Hadn’t caught anything all night
 - ii. This was wrong time to fish
 - C. Jesus caused Peter to catch so many fish that the boat was about to sink
 - D. Peter’s response
 - i. Leave me; I am a sinful man
 - E. Jesus tells him to follow and he will become a fisher of men

II. Peter's promise

- A. Jesus predicts his betrayal and death in the Upper Room
- B. Jesus tells the disciples that they will all fall away
- C. Peter disagrees with Jesus
 - i. "Even though they all fall away, I will not"—Mark 14:29
 - ii. "Lord I am ready to go with you both to prison and death"—Luke 22:34
- D. Jesus predicts that before rooster crows in the morning, Peter will deny him three times

III. Peter's denial

- A. After Jesus tells Peter to put his sword away at His arrest, Peter follows Jesus from a distance
- B. Once at courtyard of the High Priest, Peter is recognized
 - i. First by a servant girl and then by two others
 - ii. They claim that they had seen him with Jesus before and also because he was in Galilee
 - iii. Last accusation was by relative of Malchus—the guy whose ear Peter cut off in the garden
- C. The rooster crows
 - i. After his last denial the rooster crows and he remembers Jesus' words
 - ii. Luke even tells us that Jesus looked at Peter after his denials—Luke 22:61
- D. Peter leaves and weeps bitterly

IV. Jesus' restoration of Peter—John 21:1-19

- A. Jesus has now risen from the dead and shown Himself to His disciples
 - i. Even upon his Resurrection, he sent Peter a specific message through Mary Magdalene—tell the disciples AND PETER
- B. The disciples have returned to their old lives
 - i. Jesus goes to them as they are fishing
- C. Jesus shows Himself to Peter
 - i. Tells them to fish on other side after they caught nothing all night
 - ii. Again they have a huge catch that was so many that they couldn't even haul them in
 - iii. Jesus re-creates Peter's first call
 - a. Reminds him of his job—to be fisher of men
 - b. Still comes to him even though he is "a sinful man" and has denied Him
 - iv. Peter jumps out of the boat to be with Jesus

- D. Jesus ask Peter a question
 - i. "Do you love me?"
 - ii. Asks him three times
 - iii. Peter responds with "you know that I love you"
 - iv. Peter was sad because Jesus asked three times
 - a. Perhaps because He realized what Jesus was doing
 - v. Jesus asked him three times for the three times he denied Jesus
 - a. Makes sure that he knows he is forgiven for it all
 - b. More than just forgave him but gave him a mission
 - 1. God wasn't done with because of what he did
 - 2. "Feed my sheep" - He was going to take care of the disciples and the church. God had big plans for him, and he needed to know that
 - 3. Reminds him to "Follow Me"
- E. Peter became the leader of the church
 - i. Preached boldly about Jesus
 - ii. Took care of the sheep

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was Peter doing when Jesus called him?
- What did Jesus want Peter to do?
- How did Peter deny Jesus?
- How did Jesus make sure Peter knew he was forgiven?
- How do you KNOW you are forgiven?

PETER

God restores His people.



Hands-On

ACT OUT THE STORY

Have the students act out Jesus calling Peter, Peter denying Jesus, and Jesus coming back to the disciples.

FISHING GAME

Bring a net of some sort (or a weaved hammock). Choose one person to be fisherman. Take them out of the room and blindfold them. While out and have everyone else laying on floor spread out. When fisherman returns put them in room and have them stand on one leg and throw their net and see how many "fish" they can catch. "Fish" can't move once they have selected a spot.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- How did Jesus call Peter? What did He do and say?
- What did Peter say he would do for Jesus? What did he actually do?
- How did Peter respond?
- How do you respond when you know you have sinned? Why?
- What does Jesus do so that Peter KNOWS that He still loves him?
- How do you know KNOW that you are loved and forgiven?

PETER

God restores His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

If you could spend a whole day only doing what you wanted, what would you do and why?

READ LUKE 5:1-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- How did Jesus meet Peter? What was his name at this time?
- What did he tell Peter to do?
- What was Peter's response?
- What happened when he cast the nets?
- What did Peter say to Jesus? Why?
- What did Jesus tell them that they would now do?
- What was the response of the fishermen?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you see yourself before a Holy God?
- How would you respond to a situation like this?
- What were they risking to follow Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Why would it be hard to leave everything to follow Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

PETER

God restores His people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time that you had to stand up for someone else? How did it go?

READ ACTS 4:1-22

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What had Peter and John just done? What were they doing?
- How did the religious leaders react to what they were doing? Why? What did they do to them?
- How did the people respond to Peter's words?
- Who were Peter and John brought to talk to?
- What did the religious leaders see in Peter and John? What had they taken note of?
- What did religious leaders tell Peter and John not to do? How did they respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Where is a place that you can stand up for Jesus like that?
- What was very bold about what Peter said?
- What does it mean that Jesus is the cornerstone?
- How does your life look different because you have been with Jesus?
- How would your life look different if you were not allowed to talk about Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What would people say they recognize in your life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



NICODEMUS

John 3:1-21

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God is inviting to all people.

NICODEMUS

God is inviting to all people.

CONTEXT

- God fulfills His promise from the Garden and the Messiah has come
- Instead of coming as a king, the Messiah comes to two “nobodies” from Nazareth—Joseph and Mary
- Jesus has grown up in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man
- Jesus is now ready to begin His ministry of bringing God’s promised Kingdom to all the people
- God also has provided one to come before Jesus and prepare the people for the message and ministry that is to come—John the Baptist
- Jesus is doing amazing things in the midst of the people
- His teaching is like none they have ever heard because it is accompanied by miracles and with power
- Jesus goes not to the religious leaders but to the sinners, and not to the rich and powerful but to the poor and needy
- Jesus brings along 12 men as His disciples (with other men and women also following Him closely) to help Him in ministry and to teach and train them how to spread God’s glorious Kingdom
- Jesus is often more interested in what He’s doing *in* the disciples than *through* the disciples to others
- Jesus also is attracting crowds of all kinds to hear and see Him
- Along with the poor and sick, the religious leaders are also keeping a close eye on Jesus as they watch Him draw huge crowds

OUTLINE

- I. Nicodemus’ curiosity
 - A. He was a Pharisee
 - i. Member of the religious ruling council
 - ii. Were often teachers and priests in the temple
 - iii. Desired to lead the people towards God but often did it by placing difficult burdens on them
 - iv. Was a place of high honor so was enjoyed by the Pharisees
 - B. He goes to talk with Jesus
 - i. There was much talk about Jesus at this time
 - a. His teaching with power
 - b. The miracles He performed

- ii. They were wondering who He was and what His purpose was
 - a. Some saw Him as trouble
 - b. Some knew He was from God
- iii. Nicodemus wants to find out the truth
- C. He goes to Jesus at night
 - i. For fear of being seen by other Pharisees
 - ii. Would have been a risk to be seen with Jesus
 - iii. Already many were looking to get rid of Jesus out of jealousy
- D. He calls Jesus "Rabbi"
 - i. Was a term of great respect
 - ii. Acknowledged Jesus as a teacher
 - a. Meant he came to learn
 - b. Put himself below Jesus even though he was also a rabbi
 - 1. Jesus called him "the teacher of Israel"

II. Jesus' response

- A. Answered him—made himself available
- B. Was not cautious and careful with him
- C. Revealed the truth—"truly, truly I say to you"
- D. Gave him a hard teaching—not just something easy
 - i. Must be born again
 - ii. Born of water and Spirit
- E. Gave him the Gospel
 - i. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life"—John 3:16
 - ii. Made it clear what God was about
 - a. To save and not condemn
 - b. Sacrifice for their sakes
 - c. Done out of love
- F. Not who you would expect to get this teaching
 - i. Most famous verse we have
 - ii. Would assume it was to the faithful disciples or the needy crowds
 - iii. Instead he gives this teaching to Nicodemus
 - a. A Pharisee who thinks he can earn his way to heaven
 - b. Who came to Jesus by night for fear of being seen

III. What happens to Nicodemus?

- A. We only find Nicodemus's name a couple of more times in the Bible, but they are very important
 - i. When the Pharisees begin to want to arrest and kill Jesus
 - a. Nicodemus speaks up on Jesus' behalf—John 7:50
 - 1. Not hiding this time
 - b. The Pharisees ask Nicodemus if he is one of Jesus' men
- B. Claiming Jesus' body after His death
 - i. He goes with Joseph of Arimathea
 - ii. Asks Pilate for Jesus' body to bury
 - iii. Again, he puts himself out there for all to see
 - iv. Honored Jesus after His death

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- Why was it important how Nicodemus came to Jesus?
- What did Jesus tell Nicodemus? Why is that a big deal?
- How did Nicodemus stand up for Jesus later in life?
- How can you stand up for Jesus?

NICODEMUS

God is inviting to all people.



Hands-On

FIND YOUR PARTNER

Divide into two groups. Take one of the pair out into the hall with other one in the room. Have the partner in the room find a spot and sit down, then turn out the lights in the room. Have the folks come in from the hall and find their partner. If it seems too easy or your room is too bright, you can blindfold one of the pair and assign each pair an animal noise and to find each other. The idea is to reinforce the fact that Nicodemus came at night, with no electricity.

CARRY THE BODY

Divide into groups of three. Set up a path for which they must go on in room and even in hallway. Have two of the people carry the third one along the path you marked out. Everyone can be carried once. It was not easy to take Jesus a few miles to bury Him - it showed their love and respect for Him.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- Why was it risky for Nicodemus to talk to Jesus? How did Jesus respond?
- What important verse does Jesus give Nicodemus? Why is it surprising that He gave it to him?
- How did Nicodemus stand up for Jesus later in life?
- When are times that it is hard for you to stand up for Jesus?

NICODEMUS

God is inviting to all people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time you had to make a hard choice? How did you decide what to do?

READ JOHN 7:40-52

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What were people saying about Jesus?
- Why were the people divided over Him?
- Why didn't He get arrested?
- How did the religious leaders handle them not arresting Him?
- What did Nicodemus say?
- How did religious leaders respond to him? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who do you say Jesus is with your words and actions?
- Why was it risky for Nicodemus to get involved?
- Would you be willing to stand up for Jesus before those who are against Him? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who do you say Jesus is with your words and actions?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

NICODEMUS

God is inviting to all people.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Who is someone you know who really follows Jesus? What do they do to make you think that?

READ JOHN 19:38-42

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What had just happened to Jesus?
- Who took Jesus' body?
- Why was that significant and risky?
- What did they do with the body?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What do you think would happen if you really lived for Jesus at school? Why?
- How is Nicodemus an example to us?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What do you think would happen if you really lived for Jesus at school? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



STEPHEN

Acts 7:54-60

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God calls His people to forgive others because they have been forgiven so much.

STEPHEN

God calls His people to forgive others because they have been forgiven so much.

CONTEXT

- After Jesus' death and Resurrection, He gives the disciples a mission
- They are to spread God's glorious Kingdom to the ends of the Earth by making disciples of all nations
- Jesus sends them first to Jerusalem to preach the Good News
- Thousands hear and respond and the Church is born
- The Church continues to gain followers because of the truth of the Gospel and the way they live it out—taking care of everyone who has needs among them
- When the Church gets too large, men are chosen to help take care of the needs of the people and especially the widows, so the apostles can continue to teach about Jesus

OUTLINE

- I. **Who is Stephen?**
 - A. Was chosen by the Church to help take care of the poor among them
 - i. Qualifications from disciples
 - a. Good reputation
 - b. Full of wisdom
 - c. Full of the Spirit
- II. **Stephen is used by the Lord**
 - A. Did great wonders and signs among the people
 - i. Because he was full of God's grace and power
 - ii. Had more wisdom than religious leaders
 - a. They could not argue with him
 - b. Made them very jealous
 - B. Was falsely accused by religious leaders
 - i. Set up false witnesses against him - said he spoke blasphemy and was against Moses and God
 - ii. The council saw that his face was like that of an angel
 - C. Boldly spoke to religious leaders
 - i. Would be a good time to be quiet

- a. Knew they were mad and jealous
- b. Had been trying to get rid of Christians
- c. He was greatly outnumbered
- ii. Taught them the Scriptures
 - a. Talked about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and Solomon
 - b. Pointed out how God had always been with His people, making and fulfilling promises
- iii. Challenged them
 - a. Called them stubborn people who were unwilling to listen to truth
 - b. Said that just as their fathers did, they were persecuting the true prophets of God
 - c. Called Jesus the Righteous One and told them that they killed Him
- iv. Told them that he saw Jesus right then at God's right hand because the Spirit was upon him
- D. Religious leaders respond to Stephen's words
 - i. Were enraged and ground their teeth at him
 - ii. Cried out in a loud voice and stopped their ears and ran at him
 - iii. Seized him and took him outside of the city
 - iv. Killed him by stoning him
- E. Stephen's response to the religious leaders' actions
 - i. Prayed
 - a. "Lord, receive my spirit"
 - b. "Lord, do not hold this sin against them"
 - ii. Stephen was forgiving them in the midst of what they were doing to him
 - a. Not what usually happens
 - b. Didn't come up with this on his own
 - c. Following the example of Jesus
 - 1. "Father forgive them for they don't know what they are doing"
 - iii. Showed Jesus to others even in his death

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was Stephen's job at the church?
- Why were the religious leaders so mad at Stephen?
- How did Stephen respond to the religious leaders?
- How did he show others Jesus?
- How can you show others Jesus?

STEPHEN

God calls His people to forgive others because they have been forgiven so much.



Hands-On

FORGIVE OTHERS

Have the students privately make a list of people who they have been mean to or who they might be mad at, and write down why. Read the “Parable of the Unforgiving Servant” to them from Matthew (18:21-35). Explain how Stephen was forgiving them when they were being mean to him. Have them think about all the ways that Jesus has forgiven them. Give them time to forgive those who have done things to them. Have them throw away the paper.

A VISION OF HEAVEN’S GATES

On a piece of blue construction paper or regular white paper, arrange the pieces from template 3 to create your vision of heaven. Cut out the gate from templates 1 and 2. Then fold each gate on the dotted line to create a hinged tab. Glue the tab for each gate onto your picture of heaven so the gate can be opened.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What was the problem going on with the church at this time?
- Why was Stephen chosen to help and what was he supposed to do?
- Why were the religious leaders mad at Stephen? How did they respond?
- How did Stephen show the religious leaders Jesus?
- What are specific ways that you can show Jesus to others?

STEPHEN

God calls His people to forgive others because they have been forgiven so much.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Have everyone make their best “innocent angel” face and decide as a family whose is the best.

READ ACTS 6:1-15

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What was the problem that was happening in the Church?
- How did the disciples respond to it?
- Who did they choose?
- What is said about Stephen?
- What was happening to the Word of God?
- Why were the people angry with Stephen?
- What did they do to him?
- How did they describe how he looked?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What do you think someone who is “full of faith and the Holy Spirit” would look like? Do you know anyone you would describe like this?
- Has anyone ever said something about you that wasn’t true? How did it feel? What did you do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who is someone you know who has much godly wisdom? How often do you tap into that wisdom?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

STEPHEN

God calls His people to forgive others because they have been forgiven so much.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Because this passage is so long, have everyone listen for when you say "God" and write down all that He did for the people. Go over them at the end.

READ ACTS 7:1-53

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Stephen say to the religious leaders?
- What was he trying to convince them of?
- What did he call the religious leaders in verse 51? What does that mean?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How important is knowing the Old Testament to you?
- How important was it to Stephen in his speech?
- Why was him saying this risky?
- How was Stephen's faith evident by his speech?
- What does "stiff-necked people" mean? When have you been stiff-necked towards God?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How did Stephen show God's hand on His people?
- How well do you know all that God has done in the Old Testament?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



SAUL / PAUL

Acts 9:1-22

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God has a plan for His people, even unlikely ones.

SAUL/PAUL

God has a plan for His people, even unlikely ones.

CONTEXT

- After Jesus' death and Resurrection, he gives the disciples a mission
- They are to spread God's glorious Kingdom to the ends of the Earth by making disciples of all nations
- Jesus sends them first to Jerusalem to preach the Good News
- Thousands hear and respond and the Church is born
- The Church continues to gain followers because of the truth of the Gospel and the way they live it out—taking care of everyone who has needs among them
- When the Church gets too large, men are chosen to help take care of the needs of the people, especially the widows, so the apostles can continue to teach about Jesus
- An intense persecution led by Saul comes upon the Church and the people are scattered
- Saul continues to arrest Christians in an effort to stop their growth

OUTLINE

- I. **Saul's old life**
 - A. Approved the execution of Stephen
 - B. Ravaged the church
 - i. Went from house to house and dragged people away to prison
 - ii. Arrested them simply because they loved Jesus
 - C. Was a part of religious leadership at that time
 - i. Tribe of Benjamin
 - ii. Pharisee
 - iii. Persecutor of the church
 - D. Was violently opposed to those who followed Jesus
- II. **Saul's life is changed**
 - A. Saul was on his way to Damascus to arrest more followers of Jesus
 - i. Was threatening the disciples
 - ii. Had letters from the High Priest with permission to arrest them
 - iii. Was prepared to arrest men and women
 - a. Any belonging to the Way

- B. Jesus appears to Saul
 - i. Appeared in bright flashing light
 - ii. Spoke to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"
 - iii. Identified Himself as Jesus "whom you are persecuting"
 - iv. Showed him grace
 - a. Could have punished him
 - b. Could have taken his life
 - v. Gave him instructions
 - a. Go and enter the city
 - b. You will be told what to do
 - vi. Made him blind
 - a. Not punishment but power
 - b. To prove that Jesus was who everyone said He was
- C. Jesus sends Saul a helper
 - i. Not only did He go to Saul personally, but sends one of His followers, Ananias
 - ii. Tells him who he is going to
 - a. Ananias was afraid because of all that Saul had done
 - iii. Tells him what to do
 - a. Lay hands on him
 - b. I will restore his sight
 - iv. Tells Ananias His plan for Saul
 - a. Will suffer for the sake of My Name
 - b. Will carry My Name to the Gentiles
 - 1. People of the world who weren't Jewish
 - 2. Message goes beyond just God's people
 - v. Ananias obeys and Saul's sight is restored

III. Saul's new life

- A. Immediately went into synagogues and talked about Jesus
 - i. Told others He was Son of God
 - ii. Shocked the people who knew who he was
 - iii. Proved that Jesus was the Messiah

- B. God continued to grow him
- i. Increased in strength and wisdom
 - ii. Was used by God to take the Gospel around the world
 - a. 1st- 46-48 AD, 1400 miles (Memphis to Las Vegas)
 1. Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe
 2. Cyprus and Asia Minor
 - b. 2nd- 49-52 AD, 2800 miles (NYC to LA)
 1. Lystra, Derbe, Phrygia, Galatia, Troas, Neapolis, Phillipi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus
 2. Macedonia, Greece, Syria, Turkey
 - c. 3rd- 53-57 AD, 2700 miles
 1. Tyre, Caeserea, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Troas
 - d. 4th - Journey to Rome, 59-60 AD, 2250 miles
 1. Turkey, Crete, Malta, Sicily, Italy
 - e. TOTAL- 14 COUNTRIES OR TERRITORIES
 1. Approx. 10,000 miles
 3. Memphis to Sydney, Australia- 9,000 miles
 3. 14 years

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What was Saul's life like before Jesus?
- What was Paul's life like after Jesus?
- Where is a place you can go to tell others about Jesus?

SAUL/PAUL

God has a plan for His people, even unlikely ones.



Hands-On

BLIND MAN WALK

Divide the group into pairs. Blindfold one of the two partners. Put all of those who are blindfolded on one end of room and their partner on other end. Tell them that they have to listen to their partners voice in order to make it safe. Put a few chairs in the way as obstacles and have the non-blindfolded person lead them to safety. Switch partners and do it again. Talk about how helpless they felt and how that happened to Saul.

PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

Get a map of Paul's missionary journeys (most study Bibles have one). Let the students trace the routes in different colors. Help them understand the scale of the map so they can see just how far he went. It might be helpful to bring in a map of the USA and rulers so they can see where they could go in the if they went as far as Paul.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What was Saul like before he met Jesus?
- How did Jesus show himself to Saul?
- How did Jesus restore Saul's sight? What did Jesus call Saul to do?
- What is your story about how you came to know Jesus?
- What is your missions field? Where can you go to tell others about Jesus?

SAUL/PAUL

God has a plan for His people, even unlikely ones.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time that you did something that you really wished you hadn't done? What did you do afterwards?

READ ACTS 7:54-8:3, 9:1-2

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What do the people do to Stephen? Why?
- Who did the people give their garments to?
- Who was approving of his death?
- What was Saul doing to the church?
- What is Paul doing in chapter nine?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does persecution mean?
- Have you ever felt persecuted because you follow Jesus? How?
- What are ways in which you have persecuted other people? How did it make you feel?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- If we are truly following Jesus should we expect to be persecuted? Why or why not?
- How would you feel if you were Saul later in life after all you did?
- How does this show how much he trusted in the Gospel?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

SAUL/PAUL

God has a plan for His people, even unlikely ones.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Think about either a friend or a character in a movie, TV show, or story who changed a lot. What sticks out to you about their story?

READ ACTS 9:20-25

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Paul do after he started following Jesus?
- Where did he go and teach? Why was this important?
- What did the people think of his teaching?
- What did the Jews want to do to Paul?
- How did he escape?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it mean that Paul confounded the Jews?
- If you had to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, how would you do it?
- If you were in big trouble like Paul was, who would stand by you? Who would you stand by?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How does your life look different because Jesus is in it?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



BARNABAS

Acts 14:8-18

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God sends His people out with His message.

BARNABAS

God sends His people out with His message.

CONTEXT

- After Jesus' death and Resurrection, He gives the disciples a mission
- They are to spread God's glorious Kingdom to the ends of the Earth by making disciples of all nations
- Jesus sends them first to Jerusalem to preach the Good News
- Thousands hear and respond and the Church is born
- The Church continues to gain followers because of truth of the Gospel and the way they live it out—taking care of everyone who has needs among them
- When the Church gets too large, men are chosen to help take care of the needs of the people, especially the widows, so the apostles can continue to teach about Jesus
- An intense persecution led by Saul comes upon the Church and the people are scattered
- In response to God's call, they take the Gospel with them wherever they go
- The Church continues to grow and is strengthened everywhere
- After Saul is met by Jesus, he joins the Church to fulfill his call to take the Gospel to the Gentiles
- The Church sends Paul off with help and resources to go and tell people about Jesus in new cities

OUTLINE

- I. Who is Barnabas?
 - A. Leader in the early church
 - B. Nicknamed Barnabas because he was such an encourager
 - C. Was willing to help those in need
 - i. Sold a field that he owned and gave all the money to the Church
 - D. Was the one who brought Saul to the Church after he converted
 - i. Many were afraid of Saul because of what he had done
 - ii. Spoke on behalf of Saul so people would trust him
 - E. Went with Saul/Paul on his first missionary journey
 - i. Took about three years
 - ii. Went about 1,400 miles (distance from Memphis to Las Vegas)
 - iii. Went to Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Cyprus and Asia Minor
 - iv. Spread the Gospel wherever they went
 - a. People had never heard of Jesus before
 - b. People everywhere believed and trusted in Jesus

II. Barnabas and Saul in Lystra

- A. They were preaching the Gospel
- B. Healed a man who was crippled from birth as a show of God's power and that their message was true
- C. The people respond to the healing and teaching
 - i. Thought they were false Greek gods
 - a. Zeus and Hermes
 - b. Didn't know of any other options
 - c. Why they needed to hear about Jesus
 - d. They were right that the power was from God; they just didn't know Him yet
 - ii. They tried to offer sacrifices and worship to them
 - a. Might have been nice to get all this attention
 - b. Could have thought they should just go with it and then explain it later because they wouldn't want to offend them
- D. Saul and Barnabas respond to the people
 - i. Rushed out of the crowd and tore their clothes
 - a. What someone did when they were upset
 - b. Tried to correct the people
 - 1. We are men like you
 - 2. Turn from these false gods to the One and True Living God
 - 3. Wanted to point them to God and not to themselves
 - c. Even with all that the people still wanted to worship them
 - 1. Saul and Barnabas wouldn't allow it

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- What did Barnabas do for the early Church? Why was that important?
- How did he help Saul on his missionary journey?
- How did they make sure that God was worshipped and not themselves?
- How do you worship God? With your words? With your actions?

BARNABAS

God sends His people out with His message.



Hands-On

ENCOURAGE SOMEONE

Barnabas' nickname means "Son of Encouragement." Give every student a piece of paper and pencil and have them write two letters: one to someone who encourages them thanking them and one to someone who they think needs encouragement. Have them be as specific as possible.

ENCOURAGEMENT PAGE

Each student gets one large piece of construction paper and writes his or her name in the center. The teacher will ask students to write one encouraging thing about each student in the room on his or her paper (for the littles, use stickers or draw). It can be one word or it can be a short sentence. The teacher will say "Scoot" and the students will move to each student's paper and have 15-20 seconds to write. Students can color and decorate their "encouragement page."



Small Group Discussion Questions

- What do we know about Barnabas before he went with Saul?
- Why did they give Barnabas his nickname?
- How did Barnabas help Saul right after he saw Jesus?
- How did Barnabas help Saul on his trip? What did they run into at Lystra?
- How would it feel for people to worship you? Who alone is to be worshipped?

BARNABAS

God sends His people out with His message.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Who is someone that you see as very unselfish? What do they do? How can they be so unselfish?

READ ACTS 4:32-37

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does it say about the early Church in verse 32? What do you think that means?
- How were they taking care of each other?
- What were the people doing with their property? Why?
- What was Barnabas' real name?
- Why did they call him Barnabas?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you treat needy people? Do you run to them or away from them? Why?
- What is our equivalent of laying down our stuff at the disciples' feet? Do you do that? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How different would Memphis look if all Christians did what the early Church was doing?
- Who are some needy people in your life that you need to love?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

BARNABAS

God sends His people out with His message.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

Who is someone who is always an encouragement to you? What do they do that is so encouraging?

READ ACTS 9:26-31

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What has just happened to Saul?
- What did Saul try to do?
- Why were the disciples afraid of Saul?
- Who helped Saul join the disciples? How did he do that?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who do you know that may feel excluded at church? What should you do for them?
- How did Barnabas help Saul?
- Why do you think he helped Saul?
- Who is someone that you can help others to understand or get to know?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who do you know that may feel excluded at church? What should you do for them?
- How does Barnabas show his faith in the Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



SILAS

Acts 16:25-34

PURPOSE

God is faithful even to those who are unfaithful.

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses hard things in lives of His people for His purposes.

SILAS

God uses hard things in lives of His people for His purposes.

CONTEXT

- After Jesus' death and Resurrection, He gives the disciples a mission
- They are to spread God's glorious Kingdom to the ends of the Earth by making disciples of all nations
- Jesus sends them first to Jerusalem to preach the Good News
- Thousands hear and respond and the Church is born
- The Church continues to gain followers because of truth of the Gospel and the way they live it out—taking care of everyone who has needs among them
- When the Church gets too large, men are chosen to help take care of the needs of the people, especially the widows, so the apostles can continue to teach about Jesus
- An intense persecution led by Saul comes upon the Church and the people are scattered
- In response to God's call, they take the Gospel with them wherever they go
- The Church continues to grow and is strengthened everywhere
- After Saul is met by Jesus, he joins the Church to fulfill his call to take the Gospel to the Gentiles
- The Church sends Paul off with help and resources to go and tell people about Jesus in new cities
- Paul and Barnabas take the Gospel to new cities and people respond by putting their trust in Jesus
- After they return, Paul and Barnabas split up. Paul gets a man named Silas to join him in strengthening the new churches and spreading the Gospel to new places

OUTLINE

- I. **Silas and Paul in Philippi**
 - A. Philippi was a leading city in Macedonia
 - B. Were there a few days
 - C. People were responding to the Gospel
- II. **Silas and Paul with slave girl**
 - A. Found her at a place of prayer
 - B. She had a spirit through which she interprets dreams
 - C. She followed Paul around saying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."
 - D. Paul commands the spirit to come out of her and it did
 - E. The owners found out and were angry

- i. They had been making money off of her
 - ii. Dragged them before the rulers
- F. Silas and Paul were beaten and then put in prison

III. Silas and Paul in prison

- A. Were praying and singing hymns to God
- i. Not what you would expect
 - ii. Had just been beaten and thrown in prison only for talking about Jesus
 - iii. The other prisoners were listening to them
 - iv. Shows that they trusted God even among hard circumstances
- B. God appears to free them
- i. A great earthquake that shook the prison's foundations
 - ii. All the doors were opened and all the chains were unfastened
 - iii. The prisoners do not leave however
- C. Silas and Paul with the jailer
- i. The jailer finds out and almost kills himself
 - a. Punishment when prisoners escaped and you were in charge
 - ii. They cry out to him, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here"
 - iii. Jailer fell down before Paul and Silas
 - a. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
 - iv. Silas and Paul share the Gospel with him
 - a. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household"
 - b. Spoke the word of the Lord to him and all who were in his house
 - v. The jailer washed their wounds and took them into his house and fed him
 - a. They all rejoiced because they believed in God

IV. Silas and Paul continue on their journey

- A. 2nd- 49-52 AD, 2800 miles (NYC to LA) - Lystra, Derbe, Phrygia, Galatia, Troas, Neapolis, Phillipi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Macedonia, Greece, Syria, and Turkey
- B. God used them to bring many to know Him

Follow-Up Questions for Parents

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- Who was the witness from this morning?
- Who was Silas?
- How did God use Silas to help Paul?

SILAS

God uses hard things in lives of His people for His purposes.



Hands-On

THREE-LEGGED CHALLENGE

Pair the students up and connect their middle legs. Give them an obstacle course with chairs in your room, with challenges to jump over a tape line in the room, walk backwards, crawl under a table, hop only on middle foot. Explain how Paul and Silas were chained to guards and how hard that was.

PAPER PLATE TAMBOURINE

Materials needed: two paper plates, stapler, hole punch and string/wool, dried pasta, beans, sand, etc. Optional: stickers, paint, markers, to decorate.

Pair students and tie arms together. Have them create their tambourine as if they were in prison. After making the tambourine they can sing together "Rejoice in the Lord Always." Decorate outside of paper plates. Fill one plate about 1/4 full of dried pasta or beans. Put the other plate over the first and staple around the edge. Punch holes all the way around the plates. Lace the plates together with string.



Small Group Discussion Questions

- How did Silas help Paul? Why were they arrested? Does that seem fair?
- What did Paul and Silas do in prison to worship the Lord?
- How did God show himself to Paul and Silas and the other prisoners?
- How did Paul use that to share the Gospel with the jailer?
- What hard things in your life can God use for you to talk about Him?

SILAS

God uses hard things in lives of His people for His purposes.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What is the most pain you can remember being in? What happened?

READ ACTS 16:16-24

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where were Paul and Silas going?
- Who did they see there?
- What was she doing?
- What did Paul and Silas do?
- How did the people feel about what Paul and Silas did? Why?
- What did they do to Paul and Silas?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who would you be willing to go this far for?
- Who is someone who is annoying to you that needs the Gospel?
- What punishment would not be worth enduring for Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who is someone who is annoying to you that needs the Gospel?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

SILAS

God uses hard things in lives of His people for His purposes.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

When is a time you were very jealous of someone else? What did you do? How did you get over it?

READ ACTS 17:1-9

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What city were Paul and Silas in here?
- Where did they go first?
- What did they do in the synagogue?
- What happened to many of the people from the synagogue?
- How did the Jews respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why do you think that the Jews responded this way to Paul and Silas?
- How were they able to persuade people to believe in Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- If you had an opportunity to share the Gospel with a friend, what would you say?
- Have you ever had that chance?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



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