

1

CANAAN, THE PROMISED LAND

Theme : The choices we make in life all have outcomes

AIM:

To learn to make sacrifices in our choices and resolve conflicts with others in a Christian perspective.

TEACHER PREPERATION:

We often look to choose the best for ourselves, forgetting what the consequences may be. As Christians, we need to consider others and make sacrifices as needed. We should look to resolve conflicts not by fighting but through love.

Today's lesson highlights the difference between two men and how they acted differently in the same situation.

Abram (later known as Abraham) is considered the father of the Jewish faith. His faith is an example to all believers. In this lesson, we focus on his unselfish love for his family.

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

In order to demonstrate the choices we have, the teacher should bring in two gift wrapped boxes: one big (with a fake \$1 dollar bill) and one small (with a fake \$100 bill). Ask each child to pick one of the boxes. After all have picked, ask for their reasoning. Did they think of the other children in the room when making their selection? Also explain what we think is the better choice, is not always better in the long run.

Sometimes, things are not as they seem. Even though one box was big and beautiful on the outside, it only had a \$1 inside. However, the smaller box, though not as attractive as the other bigger box, contained \$100. In today's lesson, we'll learn about a man who chose the seemingly better option but choosing that option had a significant negative impact on him and his family.



1

UNIT 1

CANAAN, THE PROMISED LAND

Theme : The choices we make in life all have outcomes

Genesis 13:5-18

AIM:

To learn to make sacrifices in our choices and resolve conflicts with others in a Christian perspective.

⁵ Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶ But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. ⁷ And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

⁸ So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

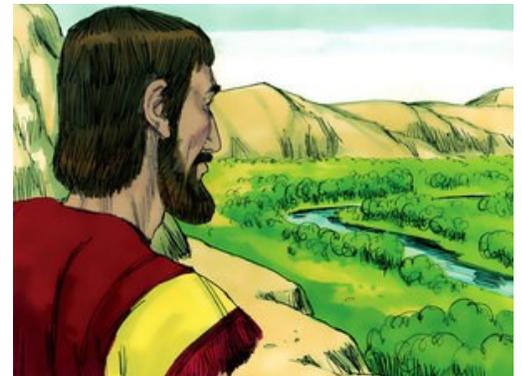
¹⁰ Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: ¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.

¹³ Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly

against the LORD.

¹⁴ The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."

¹⁸ So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the LORD.



Introduction

We all make plenty of choices on a daily basis. For example, the clothes you are wearing right now could be one of the choices you made today. While some choices are simple and straight, others are much more complicated and will have long term impacts. The choices we make may also affect people around us so it is important to take other people's needs into consideration.

When making important decisions, it is also important to rely on God for his guidance. Sometimes the choice that seems appropriate and desirable may not be the best choice. So it is important to put our faith in God when we make our decisions. In today's lesson, you'll learn that Abram and Lot acted very differently when they had to make a choice. Abram was both unselfish and trusting in God when he made his decision but Lot was selfish and relied on his own judgment.

Bible Exploration

In today's Bible portion, we learn about Abram and his nephew Lot. Lot had accompanied Abraham in his journey from Haran to the 'Promised Land' Canaan. In the long run, they both prospered. It became impractical for them to live together due to vast number of animals and wealth they possessed and constant arguments between their servants.

In order to resolve the conflict, Abram decided that it would be better for the two families to separate and live apart from each other. Being older and having authority on the household, Abram could have kept the best places for himself. But he was thinking of only of the family so he asked Abram knew that no matter which land he chose, God would provide for him. After reviewing the lands, Lot chose the fertile and seemingly beautiful land. He made the decision solely on the appearance of the land. He did not consider Abram's needs or even trust God's providence. He made the decision based on his own judgment.

Abram and Lot were very different people. Lot followed his own way and lived for himself. He chose the land that seemed green and fertile but the people were very wicked. In the next lesson, we'll see what happened to him and his family after he chose the beautiful land. On the other hand, Abram fully trusted God and chose the land that was available to him. Because of his faithfulness and unflinching trust, God blesses Abram abundantly

Did You Know?

The Reformation movement in Malankara Church led to the formation of Mar Thoma Church.

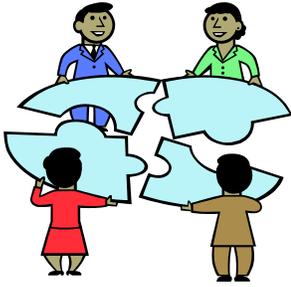
Following a Court order, the Mar Thoma Church had to make a **choice** between reformation and starting a new church with many obstacles or remaining with the Malankara Church. Our forefathers chose reformation.

Mar Thoma Church today is a global church with over one million members.

Canaan Today

Canaan is located in present day Israel, the Palestinian territories and parts of modern day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt.



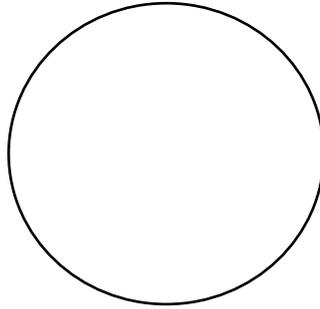


Activities

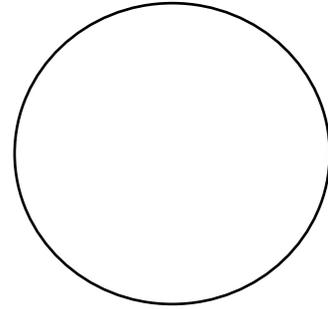
Circle of Love

In the circle to the left, write the names of people who were in Abraham's circle of love. These are the people he was willing to sacrifice for because of his love.

In the circle below, write the names of people who are in **your** circle of love. Write the names of those who **are not** in your circle of love outside of the circle. What can we do to make those people part of your circle of love?



Abraham's "Circle of Love"



Your "Circle of Love"

Let's Review

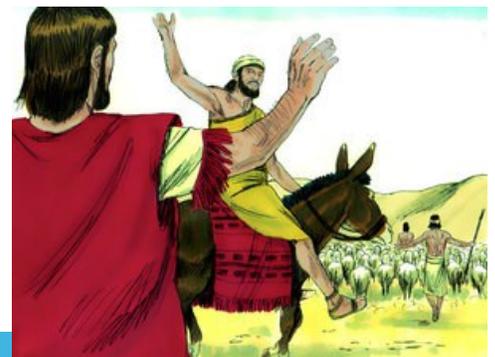


We see that God blessed Abram & Lot but there were problems. What's the problem? What suggestions would you have given to them to resolve the problem?

What does this show about Abram

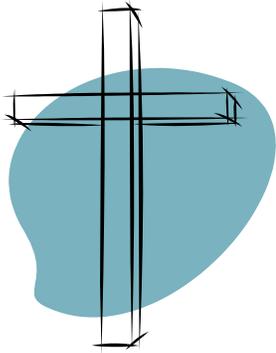
Compare and contrast Abram & Lot's actions. How would we act in this situation?

What does God promise Abram? Why do you think he appeared to Abram and not Lot?



Values For Life

What about you? Do you live for God and do things God's way or do you want to do things your way? Jesus Christ summarized 10 commandments in to two – Love your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. Material wealth is not the measurement of a successful Christian life. What matters is our faith in God and our faith in action.



Faith In Action

- Let us be unselfish in thoughts and our actions towards others.
- In times of conflict, let us look to resolve conflicts in a loving and Christian manner



Memory Verse

The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring

Genesis 13:14,15



Closing Prayer

Let us thank God, the great provider, for all His blessings in our life and pray that we learn to be unselfish in our love to others



2

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Theme : God fulfils His promises in His time.

AIM:

To understand that God is faithful in His promises.

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Abraham is considered the father of the Jewish religion and his faith can be seen throughout his life. Whether it be moving to an unknown land hundreds of miles away or sacrificing his only son, Abraham did as God commanded him to do. His life is an example to all believers on what true faith is. It is through this faith, we see the fulfillment of God's promise. As children of God, we are called to be like Abraham and trust in God's plan for us. The master of the universe knows what's best for us much better than what we may think.

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Ask the children, "What is a promise?"

Why is it important to keep our promises?

- ◇ Did anyone ever promise you something but you never got what was promised?
- ◇ How did you feel when that happened?
- ◇ Would you trust that person again?

Explain how God made a promise with the main character of today's story but the promise was only fulfilled years later.

Another option: Have the students imagine their grandparents having children in their old age. Discuss how unbelievable that is. Explain that God made a promise with Abraham but he only fulfilled it in Abraham's old age.

2

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Theme : God fulfils His promises in His time.

Genesis 15:1-7

AIM:

To understand that God is faithful in His promises.

1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." 2 But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." 4 But the word of the Lord came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." 5 He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness. 7 Then he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess."

Sarah as he had promised. 2 Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. 3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. 4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." 7 And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Genesis 21:1-7

1 The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for



Jessy John, St. Peters , NJ

Introduction

How many children in your class have a smart phone? How would you feel if everyone in your class had a smart phones except you? Sad? Angry? Then one day to your surprise, your parents promise to get you the latest iPhone! How would you feel now? But there is a catch... they did not mention when you would get it. It could be when you graduate High School!! After finding out that piece of information, would you still be excited? Probably not. Would you begin to bother your parents each and every day about what happened to their promise? Waiting for something without knowing when it will happen is not fun.

In today's lesson, we learn about a man who trusted and waited for the fulfillment of God's promise even though it seemed impossible. No wonder, Abraham is called the 'Father of believers'!

Bible Exploration

Background

Abraham (formerly known as Abram) was born in the city of Ur of the Chaldeans about 2,000 years before Jesus was born. The people of Ur worshipped many false gods. Abraham traveled about 500 miles to Haran with his family and stayed there until his father Terah's death.

God's Covenant

God appeared to Abram in Haran and made a covenant with him (Genesis 12: 1-4). The Lord had said to Abram "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing." I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:2-3) When God called Abraham, he set out from Haran and traveled 400 miles south to the land of Canaan and lived there.

Though God had promised to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation, Abraham had no children. In Genesis 15:4, we see that God promised Abraham a son through whom these promises would be fulfilled. However, Abraham and Sarah were growing older and according to human understanding, it was not possible for them to have a child. Yet Abraham trusted God.

As any human being, Abraham also faced difficult experiences in his life. God tested Abraham on multiple occasions but his unwavering faith, trust and obedience to the will of God prevailed.

Covenant

**An Agreement
or promise**

WHERE ARE THEY TODAY?

UR OF THE CHALDEAN
PRESENT DAY IRAQ

HARAN
PRESENT DAY TURKEY

ISAAC

means

“HE LAUGHED”



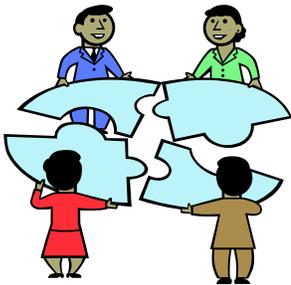
Fulfillment of the covenant through Isaac

“The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. ²Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him” (Genesis 21:1). Abraham was about 100 years old and his wife about 90 when the promised son, Isaac, was born to them. This was the beginning of the great nation that God had promised and the fulfillment of God’s promise.

Fulfillment through Jesus Christ (John 3:16)

In Paul’s letter to the Galatians, he writes “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:29) Today, we are in a covenant with God which God has fulfilled through His son Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection has made the covenant a reality for the entire human race. Whoever believes in him shall have eternal inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.

Activities



GOD’S COVENANT WORD SEARCH

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | S | F | L | L | H | R | P | K | S | S | T |
| Q | A | D | W | T | J | R | E | K | V | N | B |
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| E | F | I | S | A | A | C | X | G | Z | T | R |
| D | Z | O | G | K | B | U | P | O | E | X | P |

- ABRAHAM
- COVENANT
- FAITH
- FATHER
- FULFILLMENT
- HUNDRED
- ISAAC
- LAUGHED
- PRAYER
- PROMISE
- SARAH

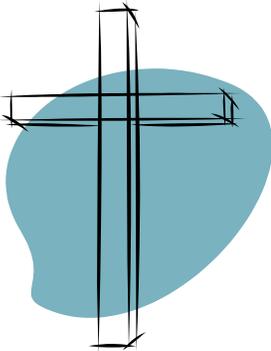


Let's Review



1. God called Abraham from _____ of the _____.
2. _____ was born to Abraham when he was _____ years old.
3. _____ means agreement or promise.
4. The name Isaac means “_____”.
5. What are the three parts of God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-4)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Values For Life



Though obeying God's call may lead us to face challenges and demand a great deal of patience, God in His right time will fulfill His promises. We may think we know the right time, but God definitely does. What matters is our faith and willingness to obey Him. God can make our tests a testimony, turn our trials into triumphs and our mess into a message. Shall we listen to God's calling?

Faith In Action

- Let us have faith in God and trust in His ways.
- God has our best interest at all times and will provide in His time

Memory Verse



He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

Genesis 15:5



Closing Prayer

Thank you Lord, for your promise that you will never forsake us. Help us to put our trust in you and never lose faith, no matter what happens in our lives. Amen.



3

ABRAHAM PLEADS FOR SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Theme : One faithful person can make a difference

AIM:

To teach the importance of intercessory prayer.

TEACHER PREPERATION:

What is intercessory prayer?

The Greek noun for intercession is "enteuxus." The verb to intercede means to petition or speak on behalf of others. It is one of our greatest privileges as a believer to take place of another and ask God for forgiveness and mercy on their behalf.

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

1. Have the children count off by twos. Let each pair sit together for a few minutes identifying prayer requests they may have. The children should pray for one another in their pairs. After the exercise, ask the children how they felt praying for their fellow students. How did they feel when their fellow students prayed for them?
2. Provide a world map. Have the students identify areas in which other religions dominate. Pray for those countries or regions where Christianity is not a major religion or even allowed.

3

ABRAHAM PLEADS FOR SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Theme : One faithful person can make a difference

Genesis 18:16-33

AIM:

To teach the importance of intercessory prayer

¹⁶ When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?”

¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”

²⁰ Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” ²² The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it?”

²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

²⁶ The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” ²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?” “If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.” ²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?” He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.”

³⁰ Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” ³¹ Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?” He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.”

³² Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.” ³³ When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.



Introduction

When you pray with your family, who do you pray for? Do you just pray for yourself or do you pray for others as well?

There was a young man who kept a notebook for all the people he prayed for. He would write them by name and keep a list. As prayers were answered, he crossed the names off. After some time, the young man looked back and was amazed at the amount of prayers God had answered!

Do we pray continuously for those around us? Or do we just pray for ourselves? In today's lesson, we learn about a faithful Abraham praying for the wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Intercession
Praying to God
on behalf of
others

Intercession In Practice

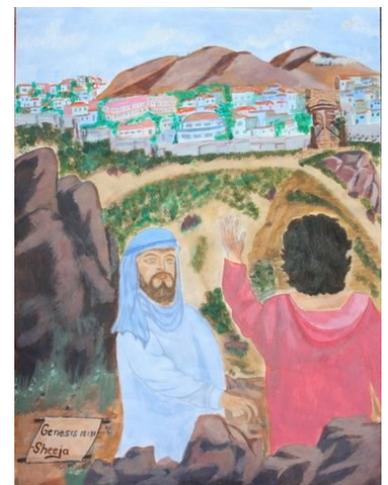
Youcef Nadarkhani, an Iranian Christian pastor, was 'sentenced to death' in 2010 for practicing Christianity in Iran. Pastor Youcef was offered freedom if he were to renounce Christianity, but he refused. People all over the world prayed for the pastor. International response poured in from all over the world to release Nadarkhani. Pastor Youcef was finally released from jail on January 7, 2013. God makes impossible things possible when we intercede for others.

Bible Exploration

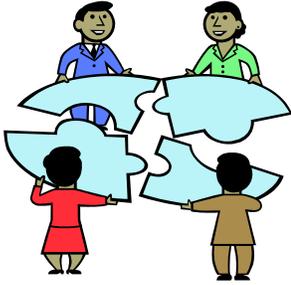
In lesson 1, we learned about Abraham and Lot dividing land between themselves. Lot chose to live in the land of Sodom which looked prosperous but the people in the city were very wicked. Because of their wicked ways, God decided to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. However, God confides this message to Abraham. Why did God communicate this important information to Abraham? It was because Abraham's special relationship with God. Abraham is also known as 'God's friend' (James 2:23).

Abraham pleaded with God to save the people of Sodom & Gomorrah. Why did Abraham plead for the wicked people of Sodom & Gomorrah? He was deeply concerned for his nephew Lot. He pleaded with God six times for the sake of the righteous people. God heard Abraham's prayer and was willing to spare the city from destruction even if there were only 10 righteous among them. God destroyed the land because there were not even 10 good people in the city. But in an answer to Abraham's prayer, God rescued Lot and his family.

Many times, we are too focused on our own problems and needs that we forget to pray for others. But God has commanded us to pray for others including our nation's leaders, and even other countries. This is all part of God's plan for the extension of His kingdom and it opens the way for God to work in the lives of people and the nations. (Remember that there are still many nations that do not allow Christianity to enter their countries.)



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Activities

Write your name on the spaces below.

Write someone else's name starting with each letter vertically. Take a few moments to pray for each person that you identified.

We should pray for others.

Let's Review



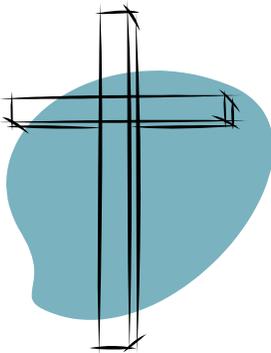
1. All nations on earth will be blessed through _____.
2. Who said "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" and to whom?
3. How many righteous people in Sodom did Abraham finally ask God to spare the city of Sodom for?

Values For Life

We are called to pray for those around us. Prayer is very powerful. It is our ability to communicate to the Creator of this world. Our all powerful and mighty God wants to hear from us. During this special time, when we speak the prayer requests of friends and family, God is listening.

Faith In Action

- I will make it part of my routine to pray for others.
- I will put others first in my decisions and actions.





Memory Verse

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone

1 Timothy 2:1



Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us to be considerate for the people around us. Let us not to be selfish but bring them to You in prayer.



4

JONAH AND THE WHALE

Theme : God has control over His creation

AIM:

To understand that God may use any of His creation to fulfill His divine purpose.

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Nineveh is described in Genesis 10:11 as having been founded by Nimrod, the hunter who built the tower of Babel. With that legacy, one can possibly understand why the people of Nineveh were wicked in their ways. The Jews were followers of God. They would not want the unfaithful and wicked to be afforded the same relationship with their God but rather to be judged for their ways. It is with this in mind that Jonah looked to run the other way.

The lesson is focused on how God has control over nature and His creation. He used the storm and the whale to change Jonah. It must be reiterated what a powerful God we have. It is important to understand that he did all this so that he could save the people of Nineveh. We see God's love for all His people.

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

1. Ask the children the following questions:

- Have you ever been in a very bad storm? Describe it.
- How did you feel?
- How does it feel to not be in control?

2. Ask the children the following questions:

Have you ever disobeyed your parents or your teachers? Was there any consequence?

In today's lesson, we are going to learn about a man who tried to disobey God. Let's see what happened to him.

4

JONAH AND THE WHALE

Theme : God has control over His creation

Jonah 1:1-17

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, ²“Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.” ³But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid his fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

⁴But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. ⁶The captain came and said to him, “What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.”

⁷The sailors^[a] said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, so that we may know on whose account this calamity has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸Then they said to him, “Tell us why this calamity has come upon us. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” ⁹“I am a Hebrew,” he replied. “I worship the LORD, the

God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” ¹⁰Then the men were even more afraid, and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them so.

¹¹Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea was growing more and more tempestuous. ¹²He said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great storm has come upon you.” ¹³Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more stormy against them. ¹⁴Then they cried out to the LORD, “Please, O LORD, we pray, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life. Do not make us guilty of innocent blood; for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.” ¹⁵So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶Then the men feared the LORD even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

¹⁷^[b]But the LORD provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 2:10

¹⁰Then the LORD spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land.

AIM:

To understand that God may use any of His creation to fulfill His divine purpose.



Introduction

Have you ever played “Hide and Seek”? It is a common game among young children. We try to find the perfect hiding place where it takes others a very long time to find you.

In today’s lesson, we are going to study about a person who tried to hide from God. Do you think it is possible to hide from God? Through the lesson, let us see who that person was and what happened to him?

Bible Exploration

One day God told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn the people that God would destroy them and their city if they did not stop being wicked. God asked Jonah to warn them against their sins and to preach about repentance and salvation. He was commissioned to bring the word of God to the Ninevites. Jonah was not happy to hear this at all because people of Nineveh were Gentiles. Jonah, being a Jew, knew that if he preached to the Gentiles and they repent, God who is loving and merciful would forgive them. Jonah did not want this to happen because the Ninevites were the enemy of Israelites. He got on a ship that was going to the city of Tarshish which was far away from Nineveh. As we read in the Bible portion, God sent a huge storm and the sailors threw Jonah into the sea. God sent a big fish (probably a whale) to swallow Jonah. He remained three days in the big fish’s stomach. The third day the fish spit Jonah on the shore.

Jonah willingly disobeyed God. He tried to ignore God’s call and attempted to run away. But in the end, he learned a valuable lesson about God’s mercy and forgiveness. God may use different means and ways to find the lost.

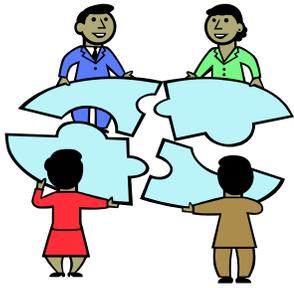
Through the Bible portion, we learned that God is in control of all events in nature. He sent a wind to create a storm to destroy the ship and he commanded the fish to swallow and spit out Jonah.

Nineveh & Tarshish

From the map, we can see that Tarshish is in the total opposite direction of Nineveh. Nineveh is located in present day Iraq.

In what present day country is Tarshish located?





Activities

Put the following events in chronological order.

- A. Jonah is swallowed by a giant fish.
- B. Word of the Lord came to Jonah to preach to the Ninevites
- C. The Lord commands the fish to spit Jonah onto dry land
- D. Jonah boards a ship to Tarshish
- E. Jonah is thrown overboard
- F. A storm threatened to sink the ship



Let's Review

Using the noted bible passage, answer the following questions.

Jonah 1:1-2 What did God want Jonah to do?

Jonah 1:2-3. What did Jonah do instead?

Jonah 1:4-5. Where was Jonah when the storm began?

Jonah 1:6-8. What did the sailors do to determine the reason for the storm?

Jonah 1:9-10. Why did Jonah's answer scare the sailors?

Jonah 1:11-12. What did Jonah instruct the sailors to do to calm the storm?

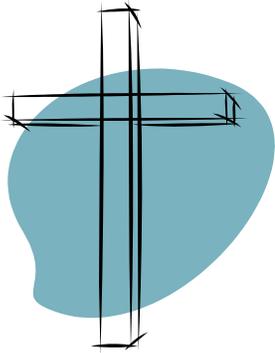
Jonah 1:13-15. What happened when the sailors did what they were told?

Jonah 1:16-17. What did the sailors do? What happened to Jonah?



Values For Life

We may think that we can run or hide from God, but we are only fooling ourselves. We must learn to follow God's word and strive to do His will. God will save us if we call upon him. God commands everything in His creation from the weather to a whale, to carry out His plan. God is always in control.



Faith In Action

- Do you know that God is in control of every situation?
- When you are facing a difficult time, do you place your trust in God?
- Rather than running away from God, are we ready to run to Him?



Memory Verse

But the Lord provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

Jonah 1:17



Closing Prayer

We thank you Lord that you are in control over all things here on earth and in heaven. Let us not run away from you Lord and help us to follow your will always.



5

GOD PROVIDES IN THE DESERT

Theme : God has control over his world to provide for the needs of his people

AIM:

To understand that though believers may go through difficult situations, God is in control.

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Background :

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for many years. God called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. Pharaoh refused to let them go at first. God sent 10 plagues and Pharaoh finally relented and let them leave. Pharaoh later sends his army after the Israelites. With the Red Sea before them, God parts the Red Sea and saves the Israelites from the Egyptian hands. God delivered His people from slavery through Moses and the Israelites are enroute to the promised land through the desert. This is the background from which the lesson begins.

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

1. Consider bringing in a shallow aluminum tray filled with sand (or a picture of a desert). Have them imagine walking in it for one day and then 40 years. Ask them to describe the environment and the people's mood. How would this compare to their life in Egypt?
2. Ask students to visualize a desert. Imagine walking through the desert without anything else to do. How long would they be able to handle to it?

5

GOD PROVIDES IN THE DESERT

Theme : God has control over his world to provide for the needs of his people

Exodus 16:1–16

AIM:

To understand that though believers may go through difficult situations, God is in control.

The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. ² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.” ⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.” ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?” ⁸ Moses also said, “You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the

bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.”

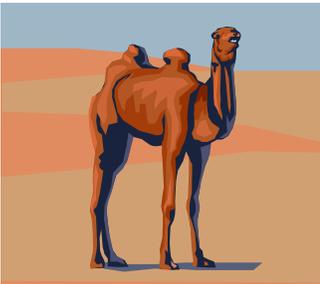
⁹ Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’”

¹⁰ While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud.

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, ¹² “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’”

¹³ That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor.

¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer (about 3.6 liters) for each person you have in your tent.’”





Introduction

Many of us have not experienced true hunger. If we are hungry, we wait til the next meal time or just ask our parents. In other parts of the world, hunger is a true problem. Many have hard time trying to find food. We take for granted how blessed we are that we do not have to struggle for our basic needs. Yet we may find ourselves arguing with our parents over the clothes they choose for us or the food that is on our plates. In today's lesson, we find the Israelites in a similar situation.

Bible Exploration

The Israelites had been delivered from the clutches of Pharaoh and were wandering in the wilderness. It wasn't too long before the people forgot what the Lord had done for them and began to complain. Instead of remembering the great things God had done to free them from slavery, they complained about their hunger. The Israelites focused on their current troubles yet forgot what God had just done in the recent past for encouragement. Was it God's intention to deliver His people out of Egypt so that they could die in the wilderness?

God told Moses he would "rain bread from heaven". God provided specific instructions on gathering the manna. The Israelites were to gather enough food for that day. No more, no less. Each day God would give them that day's food. They were to trust him each day for the very food they ate. On the sixth day, He would provide two day's worth of food because they were supposed to rest on the next day due to the rules

of the Sabbath. If one of them was mistrustful, and tried to stock up, the food would melt or rot away.

There are two lessons that we learn from this Bible passage. The first is that the Israelites never spoke to God directly. They complained to Moses and Aaron. They did not have a relationship with God. Secondly, we see the Israelites soon forgetting how God delivered them from Egypt and instead complaining about not having food. They focused on their immediate need but forgot about God.

The Lord heard their grumbling yet provided food for them: quail at night and manna in the morning for the next forty years. We see a compassionate God who took care of His people. His wonderful world yielded to his power and provided food for his chosen people.

Did you know?

Moses journeyed to the Promised Land with an estimated total of 2-3 million people.

About 40 years ago, members of the Mar Thoma Church started migrating to North America and Europe from India.

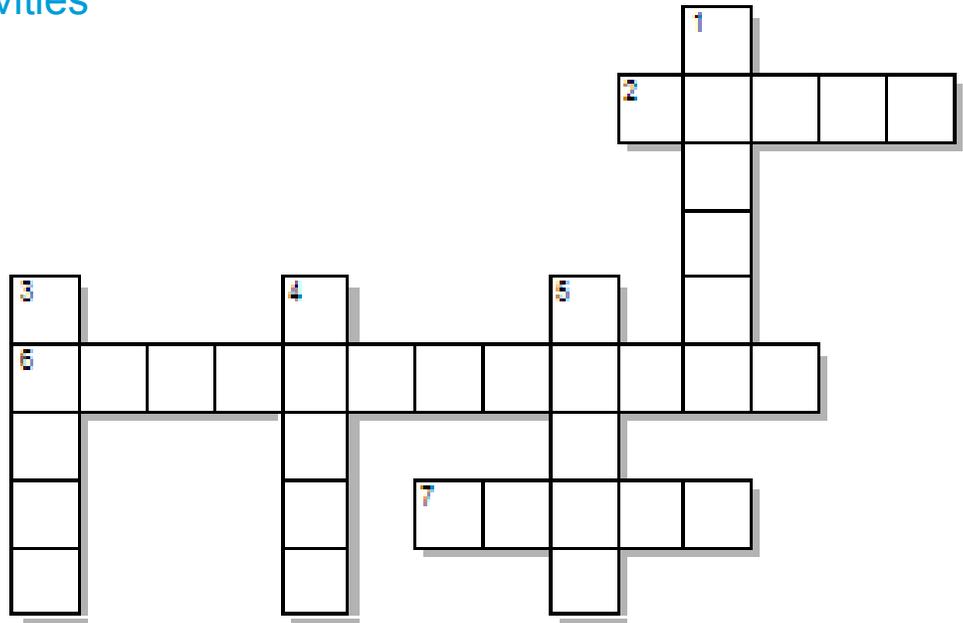
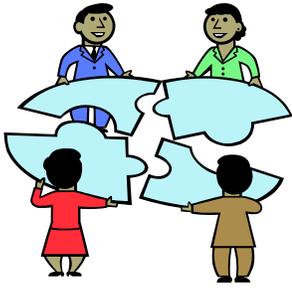
Today, there are over 66 parishes, 13 congregations, and 70 clergy in the North America and Europe Diocese.

What an amazing story!

How long is 40 Years?

Identify something that is about 40 years old. How about something that happened 40 years ago?

Activities



DOWN

- 1, What was the name of the Promised Land?
3. Israelites were allowed to gather Manna twice as much on the _____ day
4. God said to Moses "I will rain down _____ from heaven
5. 'Desert of Sin' is between Elim and _____

ACROSS

2. The Israelites complained to _____ and Moses.
6. God tested Israelites to see whether they will follows His _____
7. God provided _____ in the evening.

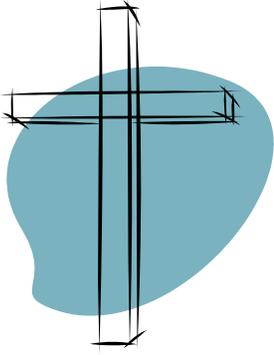
Let's Review



1. Why did the Israelites grumble and complain?
2. How did God test the Israelites through the directions He provided them when gathering manna?
3. What two lessons do we learn from the Israelites?



Values For Life



- Let us not complain but rather be thankful for the blessings that God showered upon us.
- Let us seek to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ rather than hearing about that relationship from others.

Faith In Action

- Do we thank God for all the blessings He has provided us with?
- Do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ?



Memory Verse

While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud.

Exodus 16:10



Closing Prayer

- Let us thank God, the great provider, for all His blessings in our life
- Pray for those who are less fortunate than we are, who are hungry and without basic needs



6

JETHRO'S ADVICE TO MOSES

Theme : All positions come with responsibilities

AIM:

To learn how to resolve conflict peacefully and listen to the advice of others

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Background:

As the leader of the Israelites, Moses was called to help resolve conflicts between the people. There were so many issues that lines were forming to see Moses. It is in this situation that Jethro speaks to Moses. Jethro was a priest and after hearing of all things that God had done to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, he offered scarifies to God. Jethro advice to Moses comes from a man of God. He advises Moses to delegate the responsibility of judging the various cases to other trustworthy and God fearing men. Only the most difficult cases should be brought to Moses. We learn that :

1. We need to listen to the advice of elders that God puts in our lives
2. We should have Godly people around us and delegate to them as necessary
3. Conflict should be resolved peacefully

Introduction Activity

Ask the children the following questions :

- What is the meaning of delegation?
- Is delegation a sign of weakness?

- When conflicts arise, what is the best way to handle it?
- If one compromises, is it a sign of weakness?

6

JETHRO'S ADVICE TO MOSES

Theme : All positions come with responsibilities

Exodus 18:13-27

AIM:

To learn how to resolve conflict peacefully and listen to the advice of others

¹³ The next day Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening. ¹⁴ When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?" ¹⁵ Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶ When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God." ¹⁷ Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸ You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. ¹⁹ Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; ²⁰ teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. ²¹ You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. ²² Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. ²³ If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace."

²⁴ So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. ²⁵ Moses chose able men from all Israel and appointed them as heads over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. ²⁶ And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any minor case they decided themselves. ²⁷ Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went off to his own country.

Introduction

Mr. Sullivan is a middle school gym teacher. He promptly intervenes when students argue or fight over something. Do you ever fight with your siblings or classmates? More often who starts the fight? In Mr. Sullivan's case, someone would tell him that **"the other kid started it."** Mr. Sullivan's favorite response is **"well, I am going to end it."** Whether it is a dispute between siblings, families, communities or countries, it has to be resolved promptly or it could become disastrous. That is why we need discipline, rules and regulations.

In today's lesson, we see how Jethro advised Moses to share responsibilities and have a system in place to resolve problems and conflicts among the Israelites.

Bible Exploration

Delegation

The Mar Thoma Church has an established system of delegating responsibilities.

- Diocese
- Region
- Center
- Parish
- President (Achen)
- Executive Committee

As we all know, Moses led the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land - Canaan. Bible says that there were about six hundred thousand men of 20 years of age and older in this journey – (Exodus 38:26) It is quite natural that there would be plenty of questions and disputes among such a large crowd that needs to be settled. Do you think Christian families will have differences and disputes? Of course yes. But we should be able to resolve our differences based on the teachings of Jesus. Moses was occupied with the responsibility of hearing cases and solving problems from morning until evening. It was really exhausting. Jethro observed this problem and laid out a detailed plan to solve the problem effectively. In fact, the administrative system of the whole world today is based upon Jethro's sound advice.

Delegation of Responsibilities in the New Testament

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself delegated the responsibility of spreading the gospel in the entire world to his disciples (Matthew 28:19-29). Apostles delegated the responsibility of taking care of the needs of the Church by selecting seven men who were filled with Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3).

Activities

Who is a 'Jethro' in your life? Who in your family can you thank for sharing good advice?

Create a simple thank you note for someone who gives good guidance to your life.



Let's Review



1. Who was Jethro?

2. How did Jethro help Moses with the burden of judging the entire Israelites?

- Jethro observed what Moses was doing
- Jethro advised Moses to change his current method of solving problems.
- Jethro advised Moses to represent the people before God, and teach them the statutes.
- Jethro advised Moses to share the responsibilities.

3. What are the qualities of men whom Moses should select?

- Men who fear God
- Men who are trustworthy
- Men who hate dishonest gain

Faith In Action

When you get a responsibility, it is important to know what is expected from you. As Christians, God expects us to fulfill the given responsibilities to our best. We will face conflicts with people in our lives, here's some techniques to resolve the conflict without fighting:

HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICT - Without Fighting

STEPS:

- STOP.** Don't let the conflict get worse. The less angry you are the easier it will be to solve the problem.
- SAY** what the conflict is about. What is causing the disagreement? What does each of you want or not want?
- THINK** of positive options. How could you meet each other's needs and be fair?
- CHOOSE** a positive option each of you can agree on.

If you still can't agree, ask someone else (an outsider) to help resolve the conflict.

RULES:

-  Agree to resolve the conflict.
-  No name calling.
-  Take turns talking. Don't interrupt.
-  Be clear and truthful about what is bothering you and what you really need.
-  Listen to the other person. Be sure you understand how he or she sees the problem.
-  Use your brains, not your hands.
-  Be willing to compromise (if that's appropriate).

Values For Life

- We should seek and listen to advice of those that God has put in our lives
- We should strive to resolve conflict in a prayerful and peaceful manner



Memory Verse

Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters

Colossians 3:23



Closing Prayer

God, we thank you for the many blessings you showered in our lives. Help us to treat each others with respect and if conflict arises, to work to peacefully solve the issues. Help us to seek and listen to the advice of our elders. Amen.



7

JOSHUA AND CALEB

Theme : Focus on positive attitudes even in times of difficulties

AIM:

To understand how people of God kept their faith in every situation of their life

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Background

The Israelites were wandering in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. Moses decided to send 12 spies into Canaan, the promised land, and have them report back on what they uncovered regarding their enemies. One person from each of the 12 tribes was selected.

When they returned, they brought back some of the fruit that they had found. They referred to the land as “the land of milk and honey”. 10 of the spies reported that the people of the land were very big and tall. They also told of the large cities and great walls that protected them. They compared themselves to grasshoppers as opposed to their enemies who were giants.

Two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua tried to encourage the Israelites to go into Canaan and conquer their enemies. They had faith in God, as God was the one who told them that Canaan was their land.

We learn that we need to trust in God even if things might look impossible. God knows better than us and we should have faith in Him rather than get distracted by the many obstacles that we may create.

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

1. Ask the students about the attitude required in life to face problems.
2. Have the students think about how being pessimistic can affect their lives.
3. Is God encouraging us to be pessimists or optimists?

7

JOSHUA AND CALEB

Theme : Focus on positive attitudes even in times of difficulties

Numbers 13:17-20, 17:25-33

¹⁷ Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, “Go up there into the Negeb, and go up into the hill country, ¹⁸ and see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, ¹⁹ and whether the land they live in is good or bad, and whether the towns that they live in are unwallled or fortified, ²⁰ and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in it or not. Be bold, and bring some of the fruit of the land.” Now it was the season of the first ripe grapes.

25 At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. 26 And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the Israelites in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 Yet the people who live in the land are strong, and the towns are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites live in the land of the Negeb; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea, and along the Jordan.”

³⁰ But Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” ³¹ Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we.” ³² So they brought to the Israelites an unfavorable report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land that we have gone through as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are of great size. ³³ There we saw the Nephilim (the Anakites come from the Nephilim); and to ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

Numbers 14:5-12

⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the Israelites. ⁶ And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes ⁷ and said to all the congregation of the Israelites, “The land that we went through as spies is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only, do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they are no more than bread for us; their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.” ¹⁰ But the whole congregation threatened to stone them.

Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the

AIM:

To understand how people of God kept their faith in every situation of their life

Israelites. ¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? ¹² I will strike them with pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.”

Introduction

One of the reasons for the loss of blessings in our life is our lack of strong faith in God. How we can endure our faith will be proven only in the middle of crisis and chaos. We should be ready to practice our faith in the middle of ordeals of our life. We have to remember that we will be led in life to unpleasant circumstances. As a child of God we should equip ourselves to stand firm in faith in every situation of our life.

Bible Exploration

Background

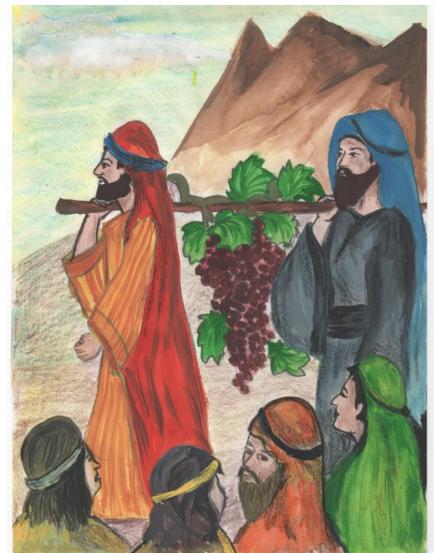
The Israelites are on their way to the land of Canaan under the leadership of Moses. God asked Moses to send men to spy out the land. Moses selected 12 men with one man each from each of the twelve tribes and gave them specific instructions on how to spy the land (Numbers 13:17-20). They were to give a report of what they saw in the land.

Negative attitude to challenges

After forty days of spying, they came back to give the report to Moses and Aron in the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. And they told, ‘We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Yet the people who live in the land are strong, and the towns are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the land of the Negeb; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea, and along the Jordan.’ They thought that that is the end of the rod for them.

Positive attitude to challenges

One of them was Caleb, son of Jephunneh from the tribe of Judah. His attitude was different. He said, ‘Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it’ (Numbers 13:30). Caleb saw obstacles. But beyond that he saw the saving power of God. He knew that Almighty God who brought them out of slavery



Mrs. Jessy John, St. Peters MTC NJ

Meaning of Names

Joshua

YAHWEH is Salvation

Caleb

Faithful

was going to give them victory over the strong enemies in the land of Canaan. On the other hand, others told that the people there are very strong. They will never be able to defeat the enemies they saw there. The people raised a loud cry, and they wept that night. Israelites started complaining. They thought that it would have been better to die in the Egypt or in wilderness than to face these strong enemies. They even tried to choose another leader and go back to Egypt.

Belief in God's Providence

Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the Israelites. Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, took a positive approach. Read Numbers 14:7-9. Joshua and Caleb told them not to fear the enemies. They knew God's protection was with the people of Israelites. Joshua and Caleb believed that the protection and presence of Lord the Israelites were enjoying could give them victory in difficult situations. But the people were not ready to listen to them. God became very upset at the fact that Israelites were refusing to believe in His power. Still he loved them and promised that He will make them a great nation.



Activities

Ask yourself these questions:

Are you more likely to point out the possibilities or the problems?

Are you more likely to get excited or discouraged?

Are you more likely to motivate others or discourage?

Are you more likely to challenge or criticize?

Are you more likely to be hopeful or pessimistic? Possibilities or Problems?

Don't get me wrong. There is a time to examine the problems, to determine the obstacles. As a matter of fact, as already mentioned, Joshua later sent spies to the land to spy out the weaknesses, but the first step is one of faith – one of faith in God's Provision.

Our actions are not to be determined by the problems, but by faith that God will provide. Go back and read Numbers 13:2 "Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites." God promised the land to them. God would provide the land. He would give it to them.

Your first question is not what are the problems, but what has God promised.

What has God provided. You want to evaluate your faith – examine your focus!

Read more: <http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/youth-sermons/mustard-seed-faith/#ixzz3BG3qtmMt>

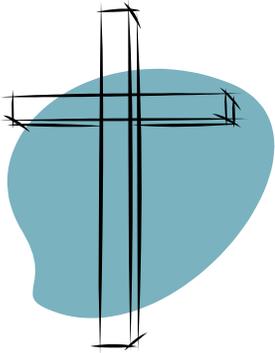
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Let's Review



1. What was the report given by Joshua and Caleb about the land they spied out?
2. What distinguishes Caleb and Joshua from other leaders of the tribes?
3. Do you think they were honest in their report? Justify your answer.

Values For Life



- Let us consider the example of Caleb as a guide line when we meet challenges in life.
- Remind yourself – faith relies on God's abilities, not our own.

Faith In Action

Describe some situations where you be more like Caleb and have faith in God rather than be overcome by the challenges

Memory Verse

A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones .
Proverbs 17:22



Closing Prayer

God, we thank you for the great protection you have given in our lives. Help us to understand your divine providence in the midst of problems. Open our eyes to see your good works in our daily life. Amen



8

ELIJAH CHALLENGES KING AHAB—FIRE FROM HEAVEN

Theme : Focus on God rather than the actions and idols of others

AIM:

To encourage children to stand up for God, even if it is not the popular choice

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Background

Ahab was a wicked king who married a non Jewish woman, Jezebel. She worshiped Baal and Ahab followed as well. Soon many started to worship Baal. Elijah approached King Ahab about his wicked ways. Elijah went into hiding for a few years and God provided ravens to feed him and a brook for water. This is where today's story begins with Elijah challenging the prophets of Baal

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Discuss the following questions as a class:

- How many of you kept silent when you saw someone being bullied?
- How many of you have been afraid to stand up for what is right because you were outnumbered or feared embarrassment?

Explain that it is easier to go with the crowd. Going against the crowd will make us feel like outcasts or unpopular among our friends. As Christians, we are called to be different and not do the wrong thing just because everyone else is doing it.



8

ELIJAH CHALLENGES KING AHAB—FIRE FROM HEAVEN

Theme : Focus on God rather than the actions and idols of others

1 King 18:20-40

AIM:

To encourage children to stand up for God, even if it is not the popular choice

²⁰ So Ahab sent to all the Israelites, and assembled the prophets at Mount Carmel.

²¹ Elijah then came near to all the people, and said, “How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” The people did not answer him a word. ²² Then Elijah said to the people, “I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal’s prophets number four hundred fifty. ²³ Let two bulls be given to us; let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it; I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the LORD; the god who answers by fire is indeed God.” All the people answered, “Well spoken!” ²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many; then call on the name of your god, but put no fire to it.”

²⁶ So they took the bull that was given them, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, crying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no answer. They limped about the altar that they had made. ²⁷ At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud! Surely he is a god; either he is meditating, or he has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” ²⁸ Then they cried aloud and, as was their custom, they cut themselves with swords and lances until the blood gushed out over them. ²⁹ As midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice, no answer, and no response.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come closer to me”; and all the people came closer to him. First he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down;

³¹ Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, “Israel shall be your name”;

³² with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. Then he made a trench around the altar, large enough to contain two measures of seed. ³³ Next he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood. He said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.” ³⁴ Then he said, “Do it a second time”; and they did it a second time. Again he said, “Do it a third time”; and they did it a third time, ³⁵ so that the water ran all around the altar, and filled the trench also with water.

³⁶ At the time of the offering of the oblation, the prophet Elijah came near and said, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your

bidding. ³⁷ Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The LORD indeed is God; the LORD indeed is God.” ⁴⁰ Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape.” Then they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Wadi Kishon, and killed them there.

Introduction

Ahab is considered one of the most wicked kings that ever ruled Israel. He married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, King of Sidonians. Jezebel worshipped Baal, who was considered the god of storms and was believed to have the ability to make crops grow. Ahab also began worshipping Baal and built an altar to Baal in the temple of Baal in Samaria. Ahab had forgotten his roots and worshiped Baal just as many of the Israelites did during the same time. Elijah, from Tishbe, warned Ahab that there would be a drought in Samaria. Three and a half years later, Elijah presents himself to Ahab and challenges him to a contest.

Bible Exploration

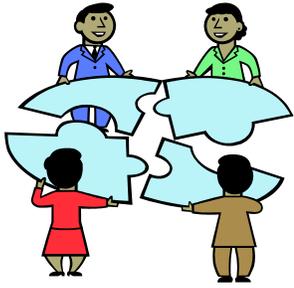
Elijah challenges Ahab and the people of Israel to a contest to be held on Mount Carmel, which was a major center of Baal worship. He explains the contest in verses 23-24. After choosing their bull, the Baal prophets called upon the name of Baal from morning till evening but there was no answer from Baal. We can see the efforts by the prophets of Baal in verses 25-29. Even after all the efforts by the prophets, no one answered them.

Now it was Elijah’s turn. He prepares the altar. Verses 30-35 describe how Elijah prepared his altar. He uses 12 stones to represent the 12 tribes of Israel and the unity of the tribes. He also dug a trench around the altar to hold two seahs of seeds. We can tell from this action that he had complete faith that the Lord will answer his prayers. After placing the sacrificial bull, he gives instructions to have the altar completely drenched in water. Why do you think he drenched the altar in water? Think about how hard it is for waterlogged wood to catch on fire. These verses demonstrate that Elijah called upon on the Lord in total faith. He knew that he was worshipping the true God of Israel. Remember also that this is being done in front of the king and the people of Israel. He is outnumbered and it could be a huge embarrassment for Elijah if nothing happened on the altar.

In verses 36-40, we can see how Elijah worshipped the Lord and the Lord answered Elijah’s requests. These verses clearly show God’s mighty power and superiority over Baal. The people of Israel were amazed and fall down and cried “The Lord-he is God!”. People saw that the God of Israel was a God that answered the prayers of one simple man who had complete faith in Him.

**Elijah
means
"The Lord
is my
God"**





Activities

- ◇ What are some “idols” that keep you from worshipping God?
- ◇ How can we overcome these obstacles that are standing in the way of worshipping God?
- ◇ Think about some of the influential people that we know. Imagine if they had chosen to stay quiet and do nothing in the presence of injustice, hatred, and corruption. Some examples: Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Malala Yousafzai, Martin Luther King Jr. etc.

Let's Review



1. Where did King Ahab assemble all the prophets?
2. Elijah was the only prophet of the one true God. How many prophets did Baal have?
3. How many stones did Elijah place around the altar? What is the importance of that number?

Values For Life

- Let us have the courage to stand up when we see things that are not right
- Let us reach the full understanding that if God is for us, who can be against us.

Faith In Action

What things do we do in our life that we need to change? Make a list and ask God to help us to make changes so that we can live a life according to His will.

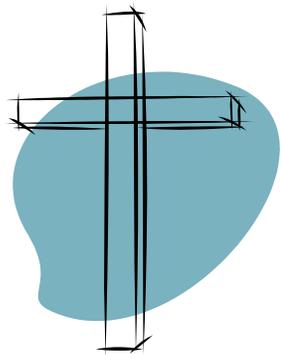
Memory Verse

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

Jeremiah 33:3

Closing Prayer

Heavenly father, we thank you that you are the living God who answers our prayers. Help us to be strong to stand up against forces fighting against you and help us to show courage and faith through our actions.



9

JEHOSHAPHAT DEFEATS HIS ENEMIES

Theme : God strengthens us in times of crisis when we trust Him

AIM:

To understand that though believers may go through difficult situations, God is in control.

TEACHER PREPERATION:

King Jehoshaphat loved the Lord. When surrounded by 3 armies, Jehoshaphat called the people to pray to God. The Lord told him that his enemies would be defeated and the battle was not theirs but God's. God told them to trust in Him. Rather than fight, the people sang and praised God and their enemies were defeated.

When all the world looks like it is against us, we need to understand that God is mightier than any enemy against us. We need to trust Him totally

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Ask one of the children to volunteer. Have them stand in the middle with the rest of the class in circle around them. Have the children in the circle hold their fists in the air and pretend to threaten the one child in the middle.

Ask the child in the middle how they felt with the entire class against them. Did they think if they were to fight, would they be able to win.

Explain that this was the situation of Jehoshaphat and his people.



9

JEHOSHAPHAT DEFEATS HIS ENEMIES

Theme : God strengthens us in times of crisis when we trust Him

AIM:

To learn that seeking God's help in our times of difficulty enable us to experience His mighty power and bring others to God.

2 Chronicles 20:1-30

After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. ² Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; already they are at Hazazon-tamar" (that is, En-gedi). ³ Jehoshaphat was afraid; he set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the towns of Judah they came to seek the LORD

⁵ Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, ⁶ and said, "O LORD, God of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven? Do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In your hand are power and might, so that no one is able to withstand you. ⁷ Did you not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? ⁸ They have lived in it, and in it have built you a sanctuary for your name, saying, ⁹ 'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house, and before you, for your name is in this house,

and cry to you in our distress, and you will hear and save.' ¹⁰ See now, the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy— ¹¹ they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession that you have given us to inherit. ¹² O our God, will you not execute judgment upon them? For we are powerless against this great multitude that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

¹³ Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. ¹⁴ Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the middle of the assembly. ¹⁵ He said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not fear or be dismayed at this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's. ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them; they will come up by the ascent of Ziz; you will find them at the end of the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ This battle is not for you to fight; take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.'

Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you.”

¹⁸ Then Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. ¹⁹ And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

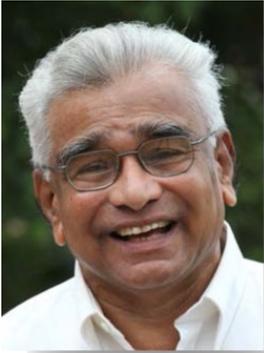
²⁰ They rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God and you will be established; believe his prophets.” ²¹ When he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy splendor, as they went before the army, saying,
“Give thanks to the LORD,
for his steadfast love endures forever.”

²² As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the Ammonites, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. ²³ For the Ammonites and Moab attacked the inhabitants of Mount Seir, destroying them utterly; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.

²⁴ When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; they were corpses lying on the ground; no one had escaped. ²⁵ When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take the booty from them, they found livestock in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They spent three days taking the booty, because of its abundance. ²⁶ On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore that place has been called the Valley of Beracah ^[f] to this day. ²⁷ Then all the people of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat at their head, returned to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had enabled them to rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸ They came to Jerusalem, with harps and lyres and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. ²⁹ The fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰ And the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

Introduction

Have you ever been in a difficult situation? How did you overcome it? Do you know anybody else who was in a difficult situation? How did they respond? Well, every human being will go through difficult situations in their life. People may get help from friends, experts, counselors etc. to find a solution for the problem. There is nothing wrong with it. But as Christians, our primary trust should be in God.



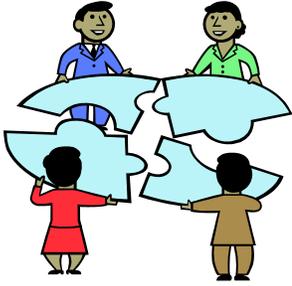
Dr. George Samuel, a Scientist in nuclear medicine, worked for NASA and Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). At present, he is a full time missionary. His life is a story of witnessing Christ in the midst of great difficulties. All three of his sons died due to a rare illness called ‘cystic fibrosis’, which has no cure. Dr. Samuel’s wife also passed away due to illness while untiringly taking care of her three sick children for many years. Even in the midst of this enduring pain and difficulties, the whole family trusted and praised God. Today, the life and testimony of Dr. George Samuel attracts many people to Jesus Christ.

Bible Exploration

In our story today, we learned how King Jehoshaphat turned to God in his difficult situation and how he pointed other people to God as well. Today’s Bible lesson also illustrates how God shows His mighty power as God’s people turn to Him when faced with a difficult situation. King Jehoshaphat was scared when he heard that his nation was going to be attacked. As a King many people had been looking up to him to make the right choice. Jehoshaphat was a leader whose heart was devoted to the Lord. He prayed and asked God for help. Not only did he personally turn to God for wisdom, he also led the people in his kingdom to fast and up to God for help. While seeking help from God, Jehoshaphat also praised God for all the wonderful things He had done as we read in verses 5-8. When God told Jehoshaphat what to do, they completely trusted and obeyed God. In response to Jehoshaphat’s prayer, God performed a miracle and caused their enemies to destroy each other. Not only did God rescue Jehoshaphat from the enemy, He also gave them a large amount of treasure left behind. There was so much treasure that it took three days to collect. Because Jehoshaphat loved God, his kingdom lived at peace during his reign as a king. Just like king Jehoshaphat, we are sometimes scared or afraid of something. When we are in this situation, we should pray and ask God for help like the king did. When we choose to seek God’s help in our difficulties, we can trust that He will help us. Not only that we experience His mighty power but people who see us will also know how great and



Activities



The following song written by Chris Tomlin is taken from 2 Chronicles 20:21. Let students learn and sing this song together.

His Love Endures Forever

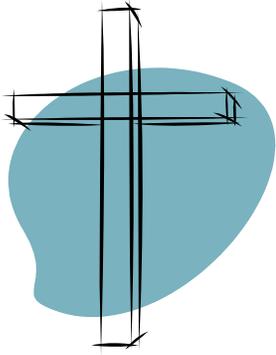
Give thanks to the Lord our God and King
His love endures forever
For He is good, He is above all things
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise
With a mighty hand and outstretched arm
His love endures forever
For the life that's been reborn
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise
Forever God is faithful
Forever God is with us
Forever
From the rising to the setting sun
His love endures forever
By the grace of God we will carry on
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise

Let's Review



1. What difficulty did Jehoshaphat face?
2. How did Jehoshaphat respond when he heard the news?
3. Who was appointed to go before the soldiers?
4. How did God rescue Jehoshaphat from his enemies?
5. What were Jehoshaphat and the soldiers' response to God's help?

Values For Life



King Jehoshaphat loved God with all his heart. He knew that God was the only one who could save his people from the enemy. We may not have an enemy like the king but our enemy is our sinful nature. Sin separates us from God. To save us from our “sins” God sent His son Jesus Christ and He died on the cross for our salvation. If we trust and believe that He died for our sins and ask for forgiveness, He will forgive our sins. We will have a blessed life in this world and inherit eternal life in heaven.

Faith In Action

- In good times and bad, let us turn to God first.
- Let us share with others how God has been wonderful in our lives.



Memory Verse

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
Acts 2:21



Closing Prayer

Father God, we thank you for giving us life. We thank you for always being there in all our times of need. Help us to never forget that you are the creator of this world and that with you, nothing is impossible. May our trust begin and end with you. Amen.



10

SAMSON & DELILAH—SAMSON'S REPENTANCE AND CRY TO GOD

Theme : God answers prayer of confession and repentance

AIM:

To understand that no matter what we do we must repent

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Background

Samson was dedicated to the Lord at birth and was raised as Nazirite. Nazirites were to:

- Abstain from wine, wine vinegar, grapes, raisins and other alcoholic beverages
- Refrain from cutting one's hair
- Not come into contact with dead bodies or graves, even of family members

Ref Wikipedia

Samson was a judge but also fought for the Israelites. He became a legend during his time with regard to his bravery and ability to destroy numerous of enemies. It is this man, who is larger than life, that is the central figure in today's story.

Teacher should review following chapters for this lesson:

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Discuss the following with the class :

- Do you pray to God?
- When we speak to God, do we earnestly repent for our sins?
- Do we just recite the same prayer or do we have a loving discussion?



10

SAMSON & DELILAH—SAMSON'S REPENTANCE AND CRY TO GOD

Theme : God answers prayer of confession and repentance

Judges 16:25-30

AIM:

To understand that no matter what we do we must repent

²⁵ And when their hearts were merry, they said, "Call Samson, and let him entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them. They made him stand between the pillars; ²⁶ and Samson said to the attendant who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, so that I may lean against them." ²⁷ Now the house was full of men and women; all the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about three thousand men and women, who looked on while Samson performed.

²⁸ Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "Lord GOD, remember me and strengthen me only this once, O God, so that with this one act of revenge I may pay back the Philistines for my two eyes." ²⁹ And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. ³⁰ Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." He strained with all his might; and the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So those he killed at his death were more than those he had killed during his life.

Introduction

Have you ever not listened to your parents and did what they asked you not to do? When your parents found out, were they happy with you? How did you feel? Did your parents still love you? Today we will learn about someone who was blessed by God with strength that was unmatched at the time. He did wrong things and eventually lost everything. God still loved him and used him one last time.

Bible Exploration

Samson, a judge over Israel, was known throughout the land as having incredible strength. He had fought and destroyed many of the Philistines, enemies of the Israelites. One day he fell in love with Delilah. Learning of this, the Philistines offered money to Delilah to determine the secret of his strength. She discovered that Samson was set apart for God and as such took a Nazirite vow at birth to never have cut his hair. Samson told Delilah that he would lose his strength if his hair was cut. Armed with that information, Delilah worked with the Philistines to cut his hair when he was asleep.

The Philistines captured Samson and then gouged his eyes. They humiliated him and made him the center of attention. It is at this time that Samson prayed to God. With the help of a servant, Samson located the two central pillars of the temple. He humbled himself before God and asked for strength to get revenge on the Philistines. Then with a mighty push, Samson moved the supporting pillars causing the temple to come down on the Philistines and their rulers.

In spite of Samson's past, God still answered his prayer and destroyed the pagan temple and worshipers. God still loved him and was willing to hear Samson's prayer of confession and repentance. God was able to use Samson one final time. One of the effects of sin in our lives is to keep us from feeling like praying. We do not have to be perfect to pray to God. We shouldn't let guilty feelings of our sin keep us from speaking to God. No matter how long you have been away from God, he is ready to hear from us and restore us to the right path. Every situation can be salvaged if we are willing to turn to Him. If God could still work in Samson's situation, He can certainly make something worthwhile out of ours.

Even though Samson was not right in the eyes of the Lord, the Lord still loved him. When Samson cried out to the Lord to forgive him, God heard him and looked beyond his past through grace. Grace is goodness and kindness from the Lord to a person who does not deserve it. God's grace is still available to those who repent and ask God for forgiveness.



Mrs. Priya Easaw, St. Peters MTC, NJ

Activities

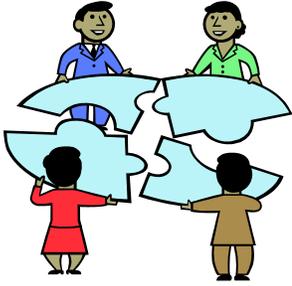
Unscramble the following words from today's lesson:

HLAILDE

SILNPISIETH

ERAGC

IZINTREA



Let's Review

1. What was Samson's prayer to the Lord?
2. How did Samson destroy the people and the temple?
3. What happened to Samson in the end?



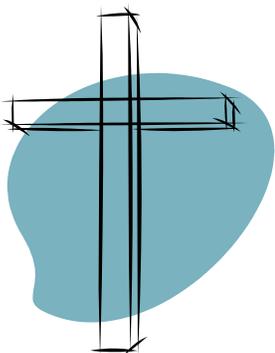
Values For Life

Samson repented and asked God forgiveness. We should never feel that we can not come to God. He is our father and He loves us. He is waiting with open arms but we must be honest with him and turn from our wicked ways. He loved us so much that He sent His only son to die on the cross for us.

Faith In Action

We should have one great ambition in life .It is to please God.

God loves us. He saved us. So we should show everybody how great He is. Then they would want to know Him too.





Memory Verse

Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

James 5:16



Closing Prayer

God, we thank you for creating us. We continue to hurt you but yet you still love us. We are sorry and want you in our lives. We want to please you and live for you. Christ is all we need and we look to you for strength and protection. Amen.



11

DECLARING THE GLORY OF GOD

Theme : God, His creation and His Word is perfect

AIM:

To understand that the heavens and the scriptures declare God's majesty. In the same way, we are created to glorify God with our thoughts, words, and deeds.

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Psalm 19 is one of the most magnificent writings in the Bible and a masterpiece in all poetic literature. Its depth, meaning, spiritual truths, analogy, and scientific concepts are very powerful. If explained in simple language, this Psalm will make great impact in children.

Creation or Evolution

As Christians, we believe that God **created** the Universe. We believe that God created animals and plants of each kind and finally human beings as crown of creation. We believe all that is written in the Bible are true.

But in regular schools, students are taught that the Universe came in to existence out of nothing due to a 'big bang'. Later a primitive form of life also appeared accidently. Students are taught that different kinds of creatures emerged from this primitive form of life due to **evolution** (from one kind to another kind).

As more and more High school and college students are turning away from faith life, we should teach our students the facts of science and how to defend their faith. **It is pure Science that something cannot happen out of nothing. Till this date, nobody has proved that evolution occurred from one kind of life to another kind, like monkey to man.** However, a 'big bang' could have occurred in the beginning when God created the Heavens and the Earth with His wisdom and command.



11

DECLARING THE GLORY OF GOD

Theme : God, His creation and His Word is perfect

Psalm 19

AIM:

To understand that the Heavens and the Scriptures declare God's majesty. In the same way, we are created to glorify God with our thoughts, words, and deeds.

¹The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

²Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

³There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;

⁴yet their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,

⁵which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

⁶Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple;

⁸the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;

⁹the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹²But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.

¹³Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Introduction

Have you ever visited Niagara Falls, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park or any other natural wonder?. What was your response when you saw it for the first time? You might have exclaimed “Wow, Unbelievable!” In fact, the Heavens and the Earth is all created unbelievably wonderful. In Psalm 19, the writer illustrates how glorious is God, His creation and His word.

As a shepherd, David spent days and nights out in the field with his sheep. One morning, David carefully watched a sunrise. He was amazed. Then he remembered the night skies he had seen – the moon and stars. He thought about it. Though they did not use any words or language, they all clearly spoke to him about God and His glory.

Now, David thought about the word of God. It spoke much more about God and His character. It made David happy but it also reminded him about his sinful nature. He prayed for God’s forgiveness and guidance. David called God “my Rock and Redeemer”. A rock is something permanent and unchanging. A Redeemer is someone who saved you from your sins.

Bible Exploration

Psalm means sacred song or poem. The book of Psalms in the Bible includes 150 songs. They have great influence on Christian liturgy and worship. Psalm 19 is one of the magnificent writings in the Bible and in all literature. King David is the author of Psalm 19. The theme of this psalm is God’s revelation of Himself to mankind. This song can be divided into three parts - Knowing God through His World; Knowing God through His Word; Knowing God through Living His Way.



Psalm

means
sacred song
or poem

Verses 1-6 speak of God’s Natural Revelation through His Creation.

David introduces the heavens (sky) as announcers of the glory of God. The firmament (space), sun, moon, stars, day and night all declares that God who created all this is glorious. They speak to us without any words but still proclaim the greatness of God. Every succeeding day and night reveals God’s wisdom. The glory of God displayed in the sky is communicated to all mankind, not matter what their language is. The sun is a magnificent creation of God. The psalmist poetically refers night sky as a tent for the sun and the rising sun as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber.

Verses 7-11 speak of God’s Special Revelation through Scripture.

Scripture is the law of the Lord. It reveals the will of God and shows the way to God. The word of God is a greater revelation than creation because it tells much more about God. David uses different expressions to mention the word of God – law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, judgments. The character of God’s word is also described in many ways - perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true and righteous. Verse 10-11 describes great value of God’s word.

Verses 12-14 are a Prayer for Grace.

David acknowledges that he makes mistakes and his sins are not hidden from God. Then he asks for forgiveness of sins. He ends the song with his desire to walk in a right relationship with God and live a life pleasing to God.

God has revealed himself to us in creation, in scripture and finally in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God because he is God himself. He is our Savior and Redeemer.

Activities

The following hymn "How Great Thou Art" written (translated) by Stuart Hine praises God and His creation. Let the class learn and sing this song together.

"How Great Thou Art"

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

*Jesus is the
ultimate revelation
of God because
He is God*



Let's Review

1. Psalm 19 was written by _____.
2. The heavens are telling the _____ of God; and the firmament proclaims his _____.
3. The sun comes out like a _____ from his wedding canopy, and like a _____ runs its course with joy.
4. What are different expressions used by David to refer to the Word of God?
5. What are some of the characteristics of the Word of God?

Values For Life

Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God to mankind. Let us accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. As the heavens declare God's glory, let us praise God with our lives. Let us meditate upon the word of God as it will always lead us in the right way.

Faith In Action

- Are you comfortable in telling your friends at school that you regularly attend Sunday school or church or do you feel ashamed?
- Have you ever asked your friends at school whether they attend Sunday school or church?



Memory Verse

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalms 19:14



Closing Prayer

Praise God for He is Holy. Thank God for giving us this wonderful world. Adore Jesus Christ for coming to the world and revealing God as a loving father in heaven. Ask God for his grace to lead a life that is pleasing to him.

12

ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN

Theme : Loyalty

AIM:

To understand that we should be loyal to God

TEACHER PREPERATION:

In the Bible, the concept of loyalty is purely relational. It means that our whole being is thoroughly committed to someone. This is made clear to us in the first two commandments: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,” and “Love your neighbor as yourself. As believers, we must show our loyalty towards Jesus and that will be rewarded in due time.

12

ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN

Theme : Loyalty

2 Kings 2:1-12

AIM:

To understand that we should be loyal to God

Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ² Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. ³ The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?” And he said, “Yes, I know; keep silent.”

⁴ Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. ⁵ The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be silent.”

⁶ Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. ⁷ Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸ Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” ¹⁰ He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” ¹¹ As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. ¹² Elisha kept watching and crying out, “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

Introduction

Have you ever wanted something so much that you would do whatever it takes to get it? Perhaps you've asked your parents to buy you something or allow you to go to an event that all your friends are attending. Maybe you desire to win through a competitive sport or achieve very high grades. Either way, you know that to earn what you want, you have to work with loyal diligence. In the story of Elijah and Elisha, we'll see how Elisha's loyal diligence was rewarded.

Bible Exploration

Background

Elijah was the chief prophet of Israel. He is about to experience the end of his time on earth by being miraculously taken up into heaven by God through chariots and horses of fire in a whirlwind. Elisha, a prophet whom Elijah had been mentoring, sees his loyalty to God through his loyalty to Elijah will soon be rewarded.

Elisha remained loyal to his service to Elijah till he was taken to heaven by God.

Elijah was an extraordinary man who loved God with all his being; God looked back upon his past services, and chose to take him to heaven rather than die a mortal death. It was known to all the prophets, including Elisha, that Elijah's encounter with God into eternal life would happen soon. Determined to stay by Elijah's side till the end of his service as chief prophet, Elisha refused to leave Elijah, who asked him to leave him three times on his journey at the following places

Elisha

means

*"My God is
Salvation"*

A. First, Elisha refuses to leave Elijah at Bethel (verses 1-3)

B. Second, Elisha refuses to leave Elijah at Jericho (verses 4-5)

C. Third, Elisha refuses to leave Elijah at Jordan (verses 5-8)

Elisha's loyalty proved he was ready to be the next chief prophet for God.

Elisha's loyalty to Elijah showed he was committed to following the will of God and was humble to do whatever it took to be faithful to Him. Elijah used his God-given authority to grant Elisha's request to be the next chief prophet ONLY IF Elisha witnessed Elijah being taken up to heaven.

God's presence (anointing) is on those who follow His will, like Elisha.

Elisha specifically asked to be the next chief prophet by requesting to receive a "double-portion" of Elijah's spirit. This was proven when Elisha was able to part the Jordan River the same way Elijah did (verses 9-12).

Let's Review



1. How did God plan to end Elijah's time on earth in a unique way? (2 Kings 2:1)
2. Where did Elijah plan to go, and how did Elisha respond to each place Elijah traveled to? (2 Kings 2:2-6)
3. What miracle occurred that showed Elijah was truly God's chosen chief prophet? Where did this occur? (2 Kings 2:7-8)
4. What did Elisha want from Elijah? (2 Kings 2:9)
5. What did Elijah say Elisha must do to receive what he wanted? (2 Kings 2:10)

Values For Life

We should be loyal to God, and in due time, He will call us to new levels of blessing and leadership for the betterment of others.

Faith In Action

- How can you show your loyalty in your everyday life?
- What does the word 'loyalty' mean to you?



Memory Verse

Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to the Jordan."
And he replied, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you."
So the two of them went on.

2 Kings 2:6

Closing Prayer

Father God, help us to trust Your good plans for our lives. Help us to be loyal, committed, and humble to Your good will for our lives so that we will be a blessing to many as we are too blessed. Amen.



13

GOD EXPECTS US TO RESPECT OUR LEADERS

Theme : Humility

AIM:

To understand we should no speak against God's people

TEACHER PREPERATION:

God uses men and women for His different purposes. All throughout the Bible there are examples of how God dealt with those that rose up and spoke against God's people. In this chapter we see how God punished Aaron and Miriam for speaking against Moses. However, even today there are many that have not the fear or respect to restrain themselves from talking against or doing ill against the leaders that God Himself has appointed.

13

GOD EXPECTS US TO RESPECT OUR LEADERS

Theme : Humility

Numbers 12:1-16

AIM:

To understand that we should not speak against God's people

While they were at Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had indeed married a Cushite woman); ² and they said, "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. ³ Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth. ⁴ Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." So the three of them came out. ⁵ Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the entrance of the tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forward. ⁶ And he said, "Hear my words:

When there are prophets among you,

I the LORD make myself known to them in visions;

I speak to them in dreams.

⁷ Not so with my servant Moses;

he is entrusted with all my house.

⁸ With him I speak face to face— clearly, not in riddles;

and he beholds the form of the LORD.

Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" ⁹ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.

¹⁰ When the cloud went away from over the tent, Miriam had become leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned towards Miriam and saw that she was leprous.

¹¹ Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, do not punish us for a sin that we have so foolishly committed. ¹² Do not let her be like one stillborn, whose flesh is half consumed when it comes out of its mother's womb." ¹³ And Moses cried to the LORD, "O God, please heal her." ¹⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut

out of the camp for seven days, and after that she may be brought in again." ¹⁵ So Miriam was shut out of the camp for seven days; and the people did not set out on the march until Miriam had been brought in again. ¹⁶ After that the people set out from Hazeroth, and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

Introduction

Have you ever seen people become jealous of other people, or become so competitive because they actually feel inadequate (not good enough)? What was the outcome of that behavior? Did those people remain happy, or did their jealousy actually hurt them in the long run? We will see the effects of having jealous hearts in the story of Aaron and Miriam and how God dealt with their attitude.

Bible Exploration

Background

Moses has been leading the Israelites to the promised land of Canaan. Although he was appointed by God to do so, however, he had very little qualification for leadership from the very beginning. Not only did he have problems with speaking (also known as “stuttering”; see Exodus 6), but he also married a woman who was not an Israelite; she was actually a Cushite who came from a God-fearing family. At the time, intermarriage between the Israelites and other people groups (like the Cushites) was frowned upon, and in jealousy, Moses’s siblings - Aaron (the priest) and Miriam (the prophetess) - began to grumble against him out of jealousy for his high position.

Moses was very humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth

Numbers 12:3

God Values Real Humility in People

The Bible makes it very clear that the main qualification for leadership - in God’s eyes - for Moses was his humility. Moses was considered “a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.” A humble man, like Moses, is one who can come before God with an obedient attitude that trusts Him fully.

God Calls Us to Honor His Election of Humble Leaders

For this reason, God made it clear to Aaron and Miriam that His decision to appoint Moses as the main leader among the Israelites must be honored. Therefore, Moses ought to be respected; his favor in God’s eyes was so great that God chose to speak to him face-to-face. God deemed Aaron and Miriam’s jealous grumbling against Moses as a sign of disrespect against Him.

Criticizing God’s Choice of Leaders Causes Distance From Him, As All Sin Does

In verses 9-16, Miriam was infected with leprosy and temporarily expelled from the rest of the people. God is a merciful God, and so He healed Miriam after Moses prayed for her healing as an act of forgiveness.

Let's Review



1. What were Miriam and Aaron grumbling about against Moses? (Numbers 12:1-2)
2. What character trait did Moses have that made him special in God's eyes as a leader? (Numbers 12:3)
3. How did God respond to Miriam and Aaron through His words and actions? (Numbers 12:4-12)
4. How did Miriam experience healing and forgiveness from God? (Numbers 12:13-16)

Values For Life

We should submit to the will of God for our lives. We should be respecting our leaders who are leading us with humility under the authority of God.

Faith In Action

- If we assist our leaders instead of going against them, more spiritual battles can be won.
- Think how jealousy can ruin relationships among friends and family and above all our heavenly Father.



Memory Verse

For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.

James 3:16,17



Closing Prayer

Father God, help us to remember that You look at the sincere hearts of every person, and our hearts qualify us to be chosen to be used by You in accomplishing things we cannot do apart from Your help. Help us to trust Your decision in electing our leaders, and teach us to respect them. Amen.

14

DAVID'S KINDNESS TOWARDS MEPHIBOSETH

Theme : Be kind to others, especially those less fortunate than us

AIM:

To understand the importance of showing kindness to everyone

TEACHER PREPERATION:

In this lesson, we learn how God uses David to take care of someone with special needs. It had been about 18 years since Saul and Jonathan had been killed. David was now established as king over all of Israel. God had blessed him greatly, and he was probably remembering back over his life and reflecting on how faithful God had been. He remembered a promise that he made to Jonathan. The promise was that he would show kindness towards Jonathan's family.

14

DAVID'S KINDNESS TOWARDS MEPHIBOSETH

Theme : Be kind to others, especially those less fortunate than us

2 Samuel 9:1-13

AIM:

To understand the importance of showing kindness to everyone.

David asked, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"² Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and he was summoned to David. The king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "At your service!"³ The king said, "Is there anyone remaining of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?" Ziba said to the king, "There remains a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet."⁴ The king said to him, "Where is he?" Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar."⁵ Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.⁶ Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, and fell on his face and did obeisance. David said, "Mephibosheth!" He answered, "I am your servant."⁷ David said to him, "Do not be afraid, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan; I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul, and you yourself shall eat at my table always."⁸ He did obeisance and said, "What is your servant, that you should look upon a dead dog such as I?"

⁹ Then the king summoned Saul's servant Ziba, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson.¹⁰ You and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him, and shall bring in the produce, so that your master's grandson may have food to eat; but your master's grandson Mephibosheth shall always eat at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so your servant will do." Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons.¹² Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants.

Introduction

Do you make promises? More importantly, do you keep your promises? Is it always easy to show kindness to everyone? Even to those who might have hurt you or your feelings?



One day at summer camp, Willie received a large package of cookies in the mail from his mother. He ate a few and then placed the remainder under his bed. The next day after lunch, he went to his tent to get a cookie. The box was gone. Willie was upset and told his camp counselor, Bruce.

That afternoon Bruce saw Sam sitting behind a tree eating the cookies he stole from Willie. Bruce decided that he wanted to teach Sam a lesson.

Bruce went up to Willie, whose cookies were stolen, and asked for his help to teach the thief a lesson. Bruce told Willie to ask his mom to send him another box of cookies. When the cookies arrived, Bruce asked Willie to share them with Sam. Willie protested saying "He's the thief." The counselor said "I know. But try it-see what happens."

Half an hour later, Bruce saw the two boys walking together, arm in arm. Sam was earnestly trying to get Willie to accept his toy rocket in payment for the cookies he had stolen and Willie was just as earnestly refusing the gift from his new friend, saying that a few cookies weren't that important anyway. Willie's act of kindness, made Sam realize his mistake and got him a new friend!

Bible Exploration

The story of David and Mephibosheth is one of the many great stories found in the Old Testament that provide a valuable lesson for us today. It emphasizes the value of good friendships and the importance of kindness.

Saul was the first King of Israel. Saul and three of his four sons, including Jonathan were killed in a battle with the Philistines. Hearing this sad news, his nurse picked up Mephibosheth (Jonathan's son, who was 5 at that time), and fled. In a hurry, she dropped him and Mephibosheth became crippled in both legs. Saul's fourth son, Ishbosheth, was killed after he tried to become king of Israel and with that Mephibosheth became Saul's only surviving descendant.

Saul had tried to kill David and as the grandson of Saul, Mephibosheth may have thought that David would try to kill him, if he was ever found. Mephibosheth sought safety in the wilderness.

Shortly after David became king, he remembered his promise to his dear friend, Jonathan. He had promised to show kindness to Jonathan's family forever. Now that Jonathan was dead, it would have been easy for him to forget his promise. But David was a man of his word, and he was determined to show compassion and kindness to Saul's descendants- **for Jonathan's sake.**

He sent for one of Saul's servants, Ziba, to find out if any of Saul's descendants were still alive. Ziba told King David that Jonathan's son was crippled and was living in Lo-debar with Machir, son of Ammiel. So David sent for him and brought

David and Jonathan, Mephibosheth's father, were the closest of friends.

Mephibosheth to see him. When he came before David, Mephibosheth bowed low to the ground in deep respect. He was probably afraid that David saw him as a threat to his throne and was going to kill him.

Instead, David comforted him and told him not to be afraid. David promised Mephibosheth that he would return him all of the land that belonged to him from his grandfather King Saul. He also told Mephibosheth that he would always eat at his table at the palace like his David's other sons.

Mephibosheth knew that he had not done anything to earn this kindness and blessing from David. He was not a mighty warrior who had fought a great battle for the King. He was not courageous. In fact, he was deeply afraid to even appear before David. David did not bless Mephibosheth because of anything he had done but because of his father, Jonathan. These blessings were freely given to him as a gift. And they were a **gift** that he could never repay. David also appointed Ziba and his family as Mephiboseth's servants to take care of his land for him.

Just like Mephiboseth, we all are unworthy of God's love and grace. But in spite of all our sins, God has invited us to 'eat at His table'. We just need to accept his invitation. This means we stay close to Him, remain with Him, abide with Him, learn from Him, and enjoy His presence! God took all of the blessings and honor of Jesus, His Son, and showered them on us, sinners. Just as Mephibosheth bowed before David, we must bow our hearts before God. We must realize that He is perfect and we are sinful. We must recognize we are spiritually broken. We must understand that we don't deserve this grace that God offers us. When we accept God's grace, God treats us as His Own Children, though we are crippled with sin.

Activities

Write down one separate act of kindness each you can practice at home, school, play and church and what impact it can have on the person whom you show the kindness to.

Let's Review

1. Who was Mephiboseth?
2. Who told David about Mephiboseth?
3. What happened to Mephiboseth after the death of his father?
4. How did David keep his promise to Jonathan?



Values For Life

As we look at this lesson, a beautiful picture of our loving God emerges. For, he desires to show kindness and compassion toward us who do not deserve his love. We are undeserving, yet we are loved and accepted by a King - because of His faithful Son, Jesus.

Faith In Action

- David's example of love and kindness is one that we should follow.
- We must show the *kindness of God* to others.



Memory Verse

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

Philippians 2:3



Closing Prayer

Let us pray for all the physically challenged children around the world and for the organizations that work for them. Let us ask God to help us to show kindness to everyone around us in whatever way we can.

15

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Theme : God's promise of the Redeemer

AIM:

To understand that God promised the coming of the Savior, Sanctifier, Healer and King for our salvation

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Introduce Isaiah to the class.

- Who was Isaiah?
- What is the meaning of the name Isaiah?

Israelites disobeyed God over and over again. Many times they forgot what God had done for them. The kings and priests were not good leaders; they led the people to worship idols. God sent prophets to warn them. Isaiah, the prophet warned the people of the judgment that was to come on Israel if they did not turn from their sin and rebellion. Even in the midst of warning them of the consequences of their disobedience, God reminds them of His great love and promises. God gave Isaiah the great insight to write about the future and the coming of Jesus the Messiah for our redemption and salvation.

15

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Theme : God's promise of the Redeemer

Isaiah 53

AIM:

To understand that God promised the coming of the Savior, Sanctifier, Healer and King for our salvation

Who has believed what we have heard?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.

4 Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;

yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

8 By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.

9 They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.
When you make his life an offering for sin,

he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.

11 Out of his anguish he shall see light;[g]
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one,[h] my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Introduction

Can anyone clearly tell what is going to happen tomorrow? Do you know anyone who can look into the future and predict what is going to happen? It would be just guessing. But during the Old Testament days, God empowered prophets to foresee the future.

About 750 years before Jesus was born, God promised His people that He would send them a savior. What is the meaning of the word savior? Savior is a person who rescues or delivers. It was God's promise. This is what we see in Isaiah 53. God always keeps His promise.

Bible Exploration

God gave Isaiah great insight to write about the future and the coming of Jesus, the Messiah and His death for the sins of the world. He took the penalty and died for us. Some people say that Isaiah 53 is the New Testament in the Old Testament.

*Isaiah 53
prophesizes the
birth, life and
death of Jesus.*

Verses 2-7 are prophecy of the birth, life, and death on the cross of our Savior Jesus Christ.

- Verse 2 speaks of the childhood of Jesus. It explains how Jesus was not unique in the way he looked. He was like everyone else in appearance.
- Verse 3 says He was despised and rejected which means strongly disliked and not accepted by his own people.
- Verse 4 says Jesus suffered for others. He took their grief and sorrows.
- Verse 5 says He was wounded. Jesus was wounded on the cross for our sins, not due to anything that he did.
- Verse 6 says that we are like lost sheep. We go foolishly where ever we want to go without realizing the danger. But in great love, Jesus our shepherd laid down His life for us.
- Verse 7 says that even though people attacked him, he did not open his

mouth. He did not fight back or try to run away.

- Verse 8 says justice was not done when he was sentenced.
- Verse 9 says He was assigned a grave with the wicked. He was crucified between two thieves. His tomb was with the rich, referring to the tomb which he was laid belonged to Joseph of Arimathea., a rich man (Matthew 27:57)
- Verse 10 says that Jesus became the sin offering for us. It was God's will for Christ to take the punishment for our sins for our salvation.
- Verse 11 says that it would bring pleasure and satisfaction to God if we live in fellowship with Jesus Christ and be a light in this world.
- Verse 12 says that Jesus is interceding for us with the Father.

Activities

After reading the verses from the given bible portion, find a verse in Isaiah 53 that is the prophecy of the event you read.

- Mathew 13: 54-58.
- Luke 22: 65
- Mark 15: 25-28
- John 1: 11
- John 19: 4-12

Let's Review



This chapter contains Isaiah's prophecy of a Messiah who would save His people through humble suffering.

Write the meaning of the following words.

1. Oppressed (v 7)
2. Shearers (v 7)
3. Deceit (v 9)
4. Transgression (v 8)
5. Offspring (v 10)
6. Anguish (v 11)

Values For Life

How precious it is to realize that God planned our salvation. So 750 years after Isaiah prophesized, our Savior came. He bore our sins and carried our sorrows. He offered salvation through his death on the cross. What we need to do is to believe in him and accept Jesus Christ as our personal savior.

Faith In Action

Do you believe that Jesus died for us? Yes, He died for our sins and freed us from its bondage. So, what should we do? We must accept Jesus as our personal savior and invite Him into our hearts. We must live a life which is pleasing to Him.

Memory Verse



“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3:16

Closing Prayer



Almighty father, we thank you for giving us the Bible which is your message for us. Heavenly Father, give the wisdom to understand thy word. Thank you Jesus for the salvation you offered through your death and resurrection. Help us O Lord to lead a life that is pleasing to you. Amen.

16

BOY JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

Theme : God's will

AIM:

To understand that we must learn from the Word of God regularly

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Jesus was born on earth as a baby, and grew up as a child, just like you and me. Every year, Jesus' family went to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple like God told all the Jews to do. When Jesus was twelve, his family made the trip, and was on the way back to Galilee when they realized that Jesus wasn't with them. They went back to Jerusalem and searched for Him for three days.

- Can you imagine how frantic they must have been?
- Can you guess where they finally found Jesus?
- He was in the temple among the teachers, listening to them, asking and answering questions.

The Bible goes on to say that Jesus went back with His parents and obeyed them, following the commandment to "honor your father and mother" which is the first commandment with a promise.

Introduction Activity

Jesus and his family were taking a trip to Jerusalem. What would they take along? How were they travelling?

Have you been to a trip? What have you taken along? How did you travel?

Imagine yourself as a teacher in the Temple with Jesus. What would you think about this kid and all he had to say?

How can you honor our father and mother today?

We can obey them, tell the truth, and do nice things for them.

When we do what is right, God, our parents and everybody else will be happy with us.

16

BOY JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

Theme : God's will

Luke 2:41-52

AIM:

To understand that we must learn from the Word of God regularly

⁴¹ Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³ When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴ Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹ He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.



Introduction

Why do we have to go to Sunday School? Describe the characteristics of the teachers in your Sunday School. Do you see younger children teaching elders in your Sunday School? In today's lesson, we learn about Jesus as a boy teaching the teachers in the temple.

Bible Exploration

Jesus Knew He Was the Son of God

According to Old Testament law, the Jews were required to go to Jerusalem for festivals like Passover. Passover was celebrated to remember the days that Jews escaped from Egypt. Every year, Jesus's parents also went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. When He was 12 years old, Jesus got the opportunity to go with them. When the feast was over, they were returning home. However, Jesus stayed back in the temple.

Even though He was a 12 year old boy, Jesus knew He was the Son of God. Jesus would have been eager to listen to the discussions of the religious teachers. Since it was a great festival period, it is possible that all the great religious teachers assembled at the temple. The Bible says Jesus did not feel ashamed to ask questions to these religious teachers. Since He was the Son of God, Jesus already possessed the knowledge to talk and listen to them.

Jesus Sought the Will of God the Father Through His Word



After a day's trip, Jesus's parents realized that Jesus was not with them. Since they had to travel miles and miles, people of the time used to travel in groups. It is possible that men and women traveled in separate groups, so this may be why both Mary and Joseph assumed that Jesus was with another traveling group.

Mary and Joseph went back to Jerusalem, and after 3 days they found Him sitting with teachers in the temple. He was listening and asking questions. Everyone who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. It is the Holy Spirit who gave the knowledge. It is possible that He was questioning their false beliefs.

Jesus Sought God's Will In Truth and Love

We have to seek the word of God like a treasure, and then only we can identify right from wrong. Mary and Joseph knew Jesus was a God-given child; however they were regular human parents. It is a natural response to ask Him "Why have you treated us like this?"

The answer that Jesus gave to His parents was the proof that He knew He was the Son of God. He asked, "Didn't you know that I had to be in my father's house?" Even though Mary and Joseph did not understand His response, they did not say

anything back. His burning desire to share the Word of God made Him stay at the temple. As a human being and a teenager, it was possible that He was tempted to do worldly things. However, the Word of God led Him through His childhood and youth.

Even though Jesus knew He was the Son of God, He did not reject His earthly parents. He went back to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. God's people respect family relationship and respect parents and elders. The Bible does not mention anything about next 18 years of His life. They raised Him like a regular child and verse 52 states, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men."



Let's Review

1. Explain the situation where Mary and Joseph lost their 12 year old boy, Jesus.
2. Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus, and what was He doing there? How did He astound them?
3. "Didn't you know that I had to be in My Father's house?" Why did Jesus respond the way He did to this question?

Values For Life

We must have a burning desire to know the Word of God. If we know the Word of God, we will have the capability to face challenges in our lives. If we have the Word of God, we will be able to say "no" to many worldly temptations. The knowledge and wisdom from the Word of God will lead us through the right path. Even though we know that we have an eternal Father, we should respect our earthly parents. In today's world, we have many resources to learn and obtain knowledge. However, the Bible teaches us invaluable lessons for our spiritual life. We have to utilize our Sunday school lessons to know the Word of God. In this way, we can learn about God and understand His will (desire) for our lives as seen to the example of Jesus during His younger years as a boy.

Faith In Action

- Do you have a burning desire to know the Word of God? How can you ask God to help you in this area of growth?
- Do you believe the Word of God will lead us in our day to day life? How?
- Read a Bible portion every day.



Memory Verse

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years,^[a] and in divine and human favor.
Luke 2:52



Closing Prayer

Dear God, as we come together, help us to learn more from the Word of God and give us the knowledge to see the right from wrong. Bless our parents and Sunday school teachers with wisdom so that they can share their knowledge from the Word of God. Help us to see that Your Word is relevant to our lives and that You desire to speak to us through Scripture. Amen.

17

JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS

Theme : Obedience

AIM:

To understand that we should submit to the will of God

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Today we are going to study about a person named John the Baptist whose main aim in life was to show Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. John was very different from other religious leaders of his time. Many were greedy, selfish, and preoccupied with winning the praise of the people.

John did not fear the religious leaders of that time; he spoke boldly about their wicked ways of living and preached repentance and salvation. He was a forerunner of Jesus Christ and he prepared the way for the Lord.

He was chosen by God to baptize his cousin, Jesus.

Introduction Activity

- What is baptism?
- Have you attended any baptism services?

Baptism is not a meaningless ritual. It is a sacrament. Baptism is our identification with His death and resurrection. It is the washing away of our sins by His death and resurrection. The practice of baptizing children varies from church to church. In the Mar Thoma Church, both infant and adult baptisms are being practiced.

17

JOHN BAPTIZES JOHN

Theme : Obedience

Matthew 3:3-17

AIM:

To understand that we should submit to the will of God

This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹ Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him.

¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Introduction

The “will” of God is the desire that God has for our lives. What does God want us to do with our time, talents, and resources? How can we be a blessing to others? How do we remember that He loves us and will provide for our needs, as the Bible says? How can we make the right decisions? God’s will is shown through much time of prayer, hearing Him speak to us through His Word, and gaining wise, biblical advice from Godly people. Here we will read how the will of God the Father was revealed through the baptism of Jesus.

Bible Exploration

Background

John the Baptist followed the will of God for his life to encourage others to repent of their sins and prepare themselves for the salvation that was to come through the Messiah.

John’s Faith in God’s Will Was Shown By His Bold Lifestyle

John the Baptist lived like a traveling preacher when he sensed God calling him to call others to repent of their sins and prepare themselves for the salvation through the coming Messiah. In faith by God’s leading, John traveled wherever God led him to preach (the Desert of Judea as the starting point). He also wore clothes of camel’s hair and ate locusts and wild honey, choices made to allow his constant travel to preach (verses 1-6).

God’s Grace For Us is Found in Our Sincere Repentance, Not Outward Tradition

In verses 7-12, John the Baptist strictly told the Pharisees and Sadducees (Jewish/religious teachers) to not assume their lineage to Abraham is enough to save them from their sins. It was wrongly believed - at the time - that righteousness was determined just by being related to Abraham because he was considered righteous by God for believing in Him and His promises (see Genesis 15:6). John the Baptist told them they have to humble themselves to repentance and that they, too, just like every other person need the Messiah to be saved from their sins. This would be proven by being baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire.

God’s Will Requires Us to Obey Him, Trusting in His Good Purpose for Us



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Jesus followed the will of God the Father to show others He was the Son of God. He came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. John thought baptism was for him because he was a sinner, so he objected to Jesus’s request to be baptized because he was the sinless, holy Messiah. Jesus, however, knew that God the Father’s had good reasons for ordering such to happen, saying, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” John obeyed, and as soon as Jesus was baptized and went up out of the water, heaven was opened, and Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove on Him. God the Father affirmed He is His Son, the coming Messiah, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.”



Let's Review

1. What did Isaiah prophesize about John the Baptist? (Matthew 3:3)
2. Describe John the Baptist's physical appearance? (Matthew 3:4)
3. Why was John the Baptist upset and concerned with the Pharisees and Sadducees? (Matthew 3:7-10)
4. How did John the Baptist describe Jesus the Messiah? (Matthew 3:11-12)
5. What did Jesus say to John the Baptist to convince him that He must be baptized? (Matthew 3:13-15)
6. What happened when Jesus was baptized? (Matthew 3:16-17)

Values For Life

We should submit to the will of God for our lives. In order for us to submit to the will of God, we need to trust in the Lord wholeheartedly.

Faith In Action

- Do you trust in God?
- Do you seek what He wants you to do by reading the Bible regularly.?



Memory Verse

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 3:17



Closing Prayer

Father God, help us to trust Your will for our lives and follow Jesus's example of how to follow Your will as our Heavenly Father. Help us to remember that Your will is good and perfect, and it is not to harm us, but to make us prosper. Help us to follow Your will so that we continue to remember how deeply loved we are by You and to be a blessing to others. Amen.

18

JESUS TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL

Theme : Faith

AIM:

To understand that we should use Jesus as an example when we are tempted

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Did you know that Jesus, the son of God, our Savior was tempted too? His enemy, Satan tempted him with three different temptations. Let us not forget that He could have put Satan away from Him, but He didn't. Jesus wins over Satan with God's words. He is here teaching us that God's word in our heart keeps us from sinning.

Introductory Activity:

Ask the children the following questions:

- **What are some of the temptations that you have come across?**
- **What do you do when you are faced with temptations?**

18

JESUS TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL

Theme : Faith

Luke 4:1-12

AIM:

To understand that we should use Jesus as an example when we are tempted

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." ⁴ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" ⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

⁹ Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,'

¹¹ and

'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

¹² Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Introduction

Have you experienced discouragement on your sense of self-worth or on your self-esteem? Do you doubt that God loves you or doubt that God made you lovable? The devil tries to make God's people - like you - doubt that we are saved by faith through Jesus Christ. This doubt is something that even Jesus was confronted by when the devil tried to tempt Him. However, Jesus believed with all His being that He was indeed the Savior of the world and God the Son. It is through His belief that He mentioned the Word of God to correct all the lies the devil said against Him. Let's learn from Jesus's example and protect our identity as saved and loved children of God.

Bible Exploration

Background

After Jesus was just baptized and received the anointing to do His ministry, He is confronted by the devil who tries to tempt Him into sin by trying to make Jesus doubt His identity as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Here Jesus shows us how we, too, can be victorious against the devil who will try to question our own identity as saved and loved children of God.

We will be tempted by the devil with what ONLY SEEMS good to us.

In 1 John 2:16, it states that we will be tempted with three types of temptation involving our eyes, our flesh, and our pride. Jesus was tempted on these levels:

- a. The devil tried to tempt Jesus with bread to feed his hunger, even though Jesus was still in his period of prayerful fasting. (This is a temptation of the "flesh" which means to please your bodily needs immediately, even if it is morally wrong.)
- b. The devil then tried to tempt Jesus into desiring worldly wealth. – (This is the temptation of the "eyes," which causes us to want people or things that we see without God's permission to have them. If we do not resist this temptation, we can become jealous, greedy, or envious.)
- c. The devil then tried to tempt Jesus by falsely promising Him power if He jumped from the temple. (This is the temptation involving pride; pride is an attitude that you don't need God and you don't need to respect others or yourself.)



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We can counter the devil's lies with truth from God's Word, the way Jesus did.

Because Jesus COMPLETELY KNEW with His entire being (mind, heart, soul, strength) that He is the true Messiah and the Son of God, He was rooted in the truth of the Word. For every attack the enemy had against Jesus, Jesus had Scriptural truth to reaffirm who He is and that He has true authority, not the devil.

- When the devil tried to tempt Jesus with bread to feed his hunger, Jesus quoted Scripture that said, “Man shall not live by bread alone (but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (from Deuteronomy 8:3). Jesus referred to this verse to show that He is looking to the will of God to determine His life, and not merely the physical needs of this world.
- When the devil then tried to tempt Jesus into desiring worldly wealth through all the kingdoms of the world, Jesus quoted Scripture again by quoting Deuteronomy 6:13, “Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.” Jesus said this because the devil wanted to be worshipped, but Jesus reaffirmed who the one true God was through Scripture.
- The devil then tried to tempt Jesus by promising Him power (saying that if He jumped from the temple, Jesus could order angels to prevent Him from falling). Jesus, however, knew that in order to follow the will of God the Father as Savior of the world, He could not misuse His power, and neither did He need to use it to prove His power to the devil. Jesus already knew his identity as the Savior, the Son of God, God Himself. He therefore refused this temptation with the truth from Scripture again (Deuteronomy 6:16: “Do not put the Lord Your God to the test.”)

Let's Review



1. When was Jesus tempted? (Luke 4:1-2)
2. What were the three ways the devil tried to tempt Jesus? (Luke 4:3-11)
3. How did Jesus refute the devil's attempts? (Luke 4:3-12)
4. How can we learn from Jesus's example when we experience temptation?

Values For Life

We should use Jesus as an example when we are tempted. Jesus gives us all an example that we can overcome temptation by keeping God's Word in our heart. Christians cannot live by bread alone (just having our physical needs met), but must learn to live by every word of God. Note that every word of God is contained in the Bible. If we feed on His Word, we will be able to resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Faith In Action

- Satan often chooses to come to us when we are weak and vulnerable. We need to be especially careful during those times.
- Jesus used scriptures to win over Satan's temptation and so we need to study God's Word to always be prepared.
- Let us concentrate on praying and fellowshiping with God.



Memory Verse

No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13



Closing Prayer

Father God, help us to always remember that we are Your saved children who You deeply love. Help us to believe Your truth about ourselves, about others, and about life through Your Word, and help us to know how to destroy the devil's lies against us with that truth. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

19

THE LOST SHEEP

Theme : The Kingdom of Heaven rejoice over the sinner who repents

AIM:

To understand that God seeks the sinners to come to Him

TEACHER PREPERATION:

The parable of the lost sheep is the first of three consecutive parables Jesus shares with his disciples to show us the heart of God and the mission of Christ. God's mission in Christ is to seek and to save the lost. This story challenges us to look at our own hearts, to see God's heart, and to move with compassion to reach the lost with the hope of Christ.

Jesus narrates this parable as a response to Pharisees and Scribes grumbling over the fact that Jesus receives sinners. It ends with Jesus speaking of the 99 persons who think they are righteous and do not need to repent.

Introductory Activity:

Ask the children if they have ever lost something that they had to look very hard for?

Let the students tell you how they felt when they were looking for it. Then tell the students, "Today our story is about God's big search." Ask the students, "Did you know that God is searching for something? Now, what could God be hunting for, that he does not already have?" Let the students offer some ideas. Feel free to offer some ridiculous suggestions: water, a cheeseburger and fries, a new coat, or a computer game.

Open your Bible to Luke 15:1-7. Then tell the students, "The Bible says that God is on a big search. I want you to listen carefully to God's Word in the book of Luke. See if you can figure out what God is searching for. After the story, I'll ask you again."

19

THE LOST SHEEP

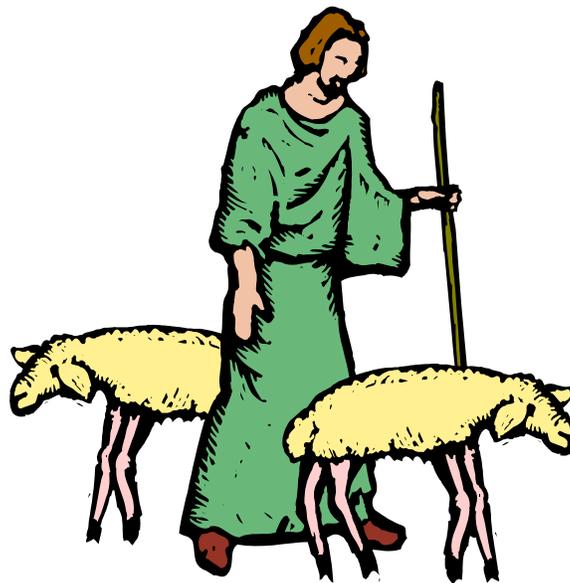
Theme : The Kingdom of Heaven rejoice over the sinner who repents

Luke 15:1-7

AIM:

To understand that God seeks the sinners to come to Him

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”³ So he told them this parable: ⁴ “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.



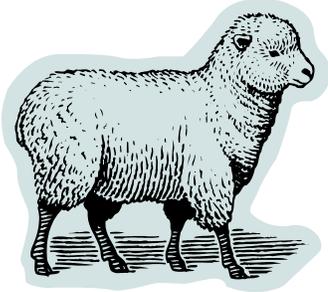
Introduction

Sheep are known to be animals that stray very easily. They can be very heedless and when they are lost they are totally incapable of finding their way back to the flock. They are very vulnerable animals. Besides, back in Jesus' days, most of the men used to herd sheep. So Jesus used the example of the shepherd and his sheep in his parable so that the people could relate to it and understand exactly what he was trying to say.

Jesus is often referred to as 'The Good Shepherd' and we are the 'lost sheep'.

Bible Exploration

Jesus was once talking to a group of really bad people. The Bible calls them sinners. Some of these people, were tax collectors, they stole money from everyone. They stole so much money from people that many families didn't have enough to buy food for their little boys and girls. Many families could not even buy enough clothes to keep their children warm. Some of the other bad people in the group told lies all the time. Some got into fights and hit people. Most people would not talk to such bad people, but not Jesus!" The religious leaders were very upset that Jesus was often seen associating with sinners. He was even sometimes seen eating with them. The religious leaders didn't like that at all and were very critical of Jesus. Jesus told them a story to help them to understand.



Jesus asked these people to imagine that they had a hundred sheep and one of them got lost. The lost sheep could never find the shepherd by itself. If the shepherd does not go looking for the sheep, it could get killed by any wild animal. So he would leave the ninety-nine sheep and search for the lost one until he found it. Then he would put it on his shoulders with joy, take it home, and tell his friends and neighbors to rejoice with him, because he had found his lost sheep.

Many religious leaders of that time believed that God forgave the sinners who came to Him the right way. But in this parable, Jesus taught that God seeks those who are lost and brings them back to Him. He does not wait for the lost to find their own ways back home. He searches them out and 'carries' them home. He does not grudgingly receive these sinners, instead he rejoices when they are found. Jesus concludes that there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine 'righteous' people who think that they do not need to repent.

Let's Review

1. Who was Jesus' audience for this parable? (Luke 15:1-2)
2. How are we like sheep? In what ways do we go astray?
3. How does the shepherd in the parable react when his lost sheep is found?



Values For Life

The Bible teaches us that we are like sheep and sometimes stray away from God. That makes God very sad, but he never gives up on us. He keeps searching for us and calling to us. He wants to draw us back into his arms. He even sent Jesus, his Son, to save those who are lost. God is seeking out the lost. He is not waiting for people to find their own ways home to Him, but He is searching them out and carrying them home.

Faith In Action

God doesn't give up on his lost sheep? So we should not give up on anyone who has drifted away from the Word of God. We should keep trying to reach out to them and help them get back to the right path.



Memory Verse

Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Luke 15:7



Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd. We are thankful that you came to save those who are lost. Strengthen us to help in bringing others who are lost to you. Amen

20

A POOR WIDOW'S OFFERING

Theme : God notices those who give to Him with a pure heart

AIM:

To understand that we should not give based on amount but rather based on our love of God

TEACHER PREPERATION:

During Jesus ministry He used parables, life experiences and demonstrations to teach his disciples and the crowd. In this lesson Jesus is teaching His disciples through the poor widow's offering the importance of giving to God. He emphasizes that it is not the quantity but the quality. Giving to God should not be to impress other people or to have your name in the top list of giving.

God wants us to be giving, but it is important that our hearts are right. Jesus praised the widow in this story because, although she didn't give a lot of money, it was everything she had and it came from her heart. Even though this bible portion is talking about giving money, make sure that the children understand that there are many ways to give and be generous with their possessions, with their time, with their forgiveness.

Introductory Activity:

Distribute pennies to the class, giving each child between two and ten pennies. Then ask each child to put two of their pennies in a jar for the collection that day. The students who received only two pennies may complain that other students will have pennies to keep, but they won't. Explain that while every student put in two pennies, some put in a greater percentage of their total pennies. Some gave all they had while some had plenty left. (Optional). Give a quarter to those who gave all they had. Explain that God always rewards those who sacrifice for him, while those who are greedy may have to depend on what they can get for themselves.

20

A POOR WIDOW'S OFFERING

Theme : God notices those who give to Him with a pure heart

Mark 12:41-44

AIM:

To understand that we should not give based on amount but rather based on our love of God

41 He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. 43 Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44 For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."



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Introduction

What is their most precious possession? Would be willing to give up that most precious possession to someone who needed it? What if the person who needed it was Jesus? Would you give it up then?

Today you will hear a story about a woman who gave up her most prized possession for God.

Bible Exploration

In this bible passage, we see two types of people, two types of giving, rich people putting a lot of money in the offering box and a poor widow who put in two very small copper coins. They were worth much less than a penny. Watching this, Jesus told the disciples that the poor widow has put more into the offering box than all the others.

How can this be? How can a penny be more than a \$100? How can the widow's gift be the one that Jesus finds the most beautiful? Jesus praised the widow because, although she didn't give a lot of money, it was everything she had and it came from her heart. How did the woman think she would buy dinner that night? She trusted in God to provide for her. She obeyed God's command, knowing that He would fulfill His promise to care for her in return. We must trust God the same way.

People might look at how much money rich people give. But God cares more about how we give than how much we give. God doesn't want our money, but He wants our hearts and our lives. When we give our money, our time or our talents, we are worshipping Him with those things that are most valuable to us, not trying to impress others. God knows what we are thinking and feeling when we give.

1 Samuel 16: 7 says, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart". So when the people were making their gifts in the temple that day, and Jesus was watching them, He saw more than the size of their gifts. He saw how generous and pure their hearts were as they put their money in the box.



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Activities

Read the following verse:

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Explain or act out the meaning of giving reluctantly, under compulsion and cheerfully.

Let's Review



1. Why was Jesus unhappy with the way the rich people gave their gifts to God?
2. Who gave the gift that God liked the best?
3. What did Jesus like about the woman's gift?
4. Why did He say that it was the best?

Values For Life

Jesus knew that the woman was not just a poor widow, she was truly needy. Those two coins were all she had, and when she put them in the box, there was nothing left. The widow's offering demonstrated her deep love for God. And it showed that she trusted that God would provide food, clothing and everything else that she needed. Her gift was a beautiful sacrifice.

Just as God's gift to us, His only begotten son, Jesus Christ for the salvation of our sins, that was a sacrificial gift.

Faith In Action

- What real special gift could you give to God?
- Would it be hard for you to give it? Why and Why not?



Memory Verse

For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.

Mark 12:44



Closing Prayer

O Lord, all what we possess is a gift from you. Enable us to give whole heartedly and cheerfully. May our offerings be pleasing to you. We thank you Lord, for your sacrificial gift, Jesus Christ for our salvation. Amen.