LESSON 25: COMMITMENT

GOD REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF HIS COVENANT

Deuteronomy 1, 3:23–4:40, 5–6, 8–11

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GOD REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF HIS COVENANT

- Deuteronomy 1; 3:23–4:40; 5–6; 8–11
- Big Picture Q&A: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.
- Key Passage: Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

JESUS CONNECTION

God kept His promise to give land to the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As the Israelites stood at the edge of the Promised Land, God reminded them of His covenant. He commanded them to be holy and to obey Him, but He knew they would not. God was working out His plan to send Jesus to rescue people from sin and bless the whole earth.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COMMITMENT – Doing what I say I'll do.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The Lord was faithful to keep the promises He made to Abraham and his descendants. He made the Israelites innumerable (Deut. 1:10) and gave them the land of Canaan (Deut. 1:8). All the Israelites needed to do was take possession of the land.

But the Israelites refused. They sent twelve men to scout out the land, and when the men reported about Canaan's inhabitants, the Israelites were afraid. Despite Joshua and Caleb's insistence that the Lord would protect them, the people did not trust God.

So God punished the Israelites. They wandered in the wilderness for forty years, and none of the disobedient people would enter the Promised Land. Not even Moses would go in. Only Joshua, Caleb and the children who grew up in the wilderness.

By the time the Israelites reached the edge of Canaan, most of the people who had left Egypt as adults had died. Kids had now grown, and many of the Israelites had been born in the wilderness. It was to this group—a new generation—that Moses spoke in the opening chapters of Deuteronomy.

Moses reflected on Israel's history and encouraged the people to trust the Lord. Deuteronomy 4 records Moses' commands to the new generation of Israelites. He commanded obedience, told them to remember Israel's history and urged them to avoid idolatry.

Moses prompted them to consider if anything greater had ever happened (Deut. 4:32). Moses said, "You were shown these things so that you would know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides Him" (Deut. 4:35). Moses commanded the people to obey God so that they would live. He told them to worship only God—the one true God.

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After God, through Moses, brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He met with them in the wilderness and established a covenant, or agreement, with the people of Israel: "Now if you will listen to Me and carefully keep My covenant, you will be My own possession out of all the peoples … and you will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation" (Exod. 19:5–6).

God promised five things in the Mosaic covenant: 1. Israel will be God's own possession (Exod. 19:5); 2. Israel will be God's kingdom of priests (Exod. 19:6); 3. Israel will be a holy nation (Exod. 19:6); 4. God will defend Israel from her enemies (Exod. 23:22); and 5. God will be gracious, merciful and forgiving to Israel (Exod. 34:6–7).

God's conditions for the covenant were clear: "You must carefully follow every command I am giving you" (Deut. 8:1). "Be careful that you don't forget the Lord your God by failing to keep His command" (Deut. 8:11). "If you ever forget the Lord your God … you will perish" (Deut. 8:19).

In the opening chapters of Deuteronomy, the Israelites were at the edge of the Promised Land. Moses reminded them of all the things God had done. He reminded them of the Lord's commands and implored them to worship only God. Through faith, trust and love, the Israelites would receive the blessings of mercy, grace and forgiveness. Moses' message was clear: Remember!

Scripture reveals that Israel did not keep the covenant (see Ezek. 16:59; Hos. 6:7). But God was merciful to His people. His new covenant focuses not on obedience, but on the heart (see Jer. 31:31–34).

Our obedience cannot earn us God's favor. We receive His blessings by holding out empty hands of faith. As you teach students about God's message through Moses, emphasize that we receive eternal life from God by trusting in Jesus, and we obey Him because only He is God.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

God's people, the Israelites, wandered in the desert for forty years. Does anyone remember why? (*They didn't trust God and refused to enter the Promised Land*). Raise your hand if you can complete the sentence. During this time, God continued to lead them as a _____ (*a pillar of cloud and fire*). When they were thirsty, God brought water out of a _____ (*rock*). God also provided food for them. In the morning, God gave them _____ (*manna*), and in the evening, _____ (*quail*). When they complained that what He had provided wasn't enough, God taught them to trust Him. He punished them by sending poisonous _____ (*snakes*). Then God told Moses to make the bronze snake. Anyone who looked at the bronze snake and had faith that God would save them was _____ (*healed*).

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Eye Test (Older Students)

- Display the remembrance pictures by spreading them out on a table or along a focal wall. Tell the students to study the images as hard as they can for twenty seconds. Set the timer. After 20 seconds, turn over the images and pass out paper and pencils. Ask questions about the pictures to see what students can remember. Consider these questions:
  - What color was Moses' pillow? (*Purple*)
  - How many quail were in the picture of the little girl with the basket? (*Four quail*)
  - Who was crossing his arms? (*Pharaoh*)

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- As you review the answers, show the pictures again for students to check their work. Sometimes it is hard to remember! In our Bible story today, we will hear that God wanted the Israelites to remember this one truth: The Lord alone is God; there is no other besides Him.

Motion Name Game (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite students to stand or sit in a circle. Explain that one at a time, each student will stand in the middle of the circle, say his name and then perform a motion. After he sits down, the next student will stand in the center, say the first student's name, perform his motion, say her name and do a motion for her name. Go around the circle, with each student saying all the names that came before. Once all of the students have had a turn, you or an adult helper will step inside the circle and say all names with actions, starting with the very first student. For younger students, reset after every three names.

- How many of you had a hard time remembering the movements and names? It's hard to remember things, especially when there is a lot to remember or when it happened a while ago. In today's Bible story we are going to see how God reminded His people of His covenant with them.

Dancing Through the Decades (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite students to do some older dance moves with you such as the Twist, the Mashed Potato, the Funky Chicken, the Charleston and the Bunny Hop. Check out videos of these moves online before class if you are unfamiliar with them.

- Those were some pretty silly dance moves from a long time ago! While dance moves change over time, God's Word never changes. We should worship only God because the Lord alone is God; there is no other besides Him.

Pattern Pickup (Older and Younger Students)

- Securely tape construction paper in five different colors to the floor in a pattern similar to a hopscotch board. One student will create a pattern by hopping on three papers in an order of his choosing. The next kid must repeat that pattern, then create a new pattern for the next student to copy. To increase difficulty, allow four or five hops. To decrease difficulty, use one or two hops.

- Activity Variation: Divide larger classes into groups. Have several hopscotch boards ready, or rotate groups between the activity/coloring pages and the Pattern Pickup activity.

- Today we will hear how God reminded His people of His covenant with them. God said, "If you listen carefully to Me and keep My covenant, you will be My people."

Playing Favorites (Younger Students)

- Invite students to call out their favorite foods, movies and toys for you to write down. Next, invite them to list their favorites in each category from a year or two ago.

- Do you remember your favorite things from a year ago? What about two years ago? While your favorites may change from year to year, God's Word never changes. God wanted His people to remember what He had done for them. The Lord alone is God; there is no other besides Him.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Joshua 1:9

Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Partner Passage (Older and Younger Students)

- Read the key passage together two times. Split into two groups. The first group will say the first half of the passage (*Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous?*) and the second group will say, "Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Then switch parts.

- Why did God command His people to be courageous? [*Allow students to respond.*] The people living in Canaan were still as big and strong as ever. Their cities were strong and well defended. God had commanded the Israelites to go in, attack and take the land. Forty years ago, the people refused to take the land because they were afraid. God promised them that He would be with them and help them to take over the land. All they had to do was place their confidence in Him and move forward.

Fill in the Blank (Older and Younger Students)

- Write several key words from the passage on index cards. Read the key passage poster aloud together. Cover the key passage poster and write the key passage on a chalkboard or dry erase board, drawing a blank for the key words. Invite the class to say the key passage from memory. Invite a student who remembers the key word to put the correct index card over the blank on the board.

Craft Stick Scramble (Younger Students)

- Before class, write out the key passage and reference, one word at a time, on large craft sticks. Attach adhesive hook and loop fasteners to each end of the craft stick. (One end will have the fuzzy end; the other end will have the scratchy part.) Invite the class to sit in a circle. Mix up the craft sticks and drop them in the middle of the circle. Challenge students to work together to put the key passage in order by sticking the craft sticks together.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: **Whom can we trust?**

A: *We can trust God to take care of us.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

God Reminded The People of His Covenant | Deuteronomy 1; 3:23–4:40; 5–6; 8–11

Moses and the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Some of the older people remembered every year. They had been children when Moses led the people out of Egypt, away from Pharaoh and slavery. Some of the young people had been born in the wilderness. They heard stories from their parents and grandparents about the things God did to help His people.

Now the Israelites were at the edge of the Promised Land—the land God had promised to give to His people. The Promised Land would be their new home. **But before they entered the land, Moses**—who

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was now 120 years old—gave the people a message to remind the Israelites of God's commands. He **told the Israelites everything God had commanded him to say.**

First, Moses reminded the people of why they were in the wilderness. "Many years ago, God told us to enter the Promised Land," Moses said. "This is the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to us—their future families. Twelve spies went into the land, and they saw that the land was good. **But the people refused to go in. They were afraid of the people who lived there."**

Moses said, "God had brought us so far, but the people refused to trust Him. **So God said that everyone who chose to disobey Him would not enter the Promised Land—not even me. Only their children and Joshua and Caleb (who had trusted God completely) would go in.**

"So we wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Babies were born, young children grew into adults and the people who had chosen to disobey God died. **Now it is time for God's people to enter the Promised Land."**

Moses explained, "I begged God to let me go into the Promised Land, but He said no. God told me to make Joshua your leader. He will lead you into the land."

Moses told the people to remember all the things God had done—all the wonderful things since He created the world! **Moses said, "Know this: The Lord alone is God; there is no other besides Him."**

Moses said it again. "The Lord is God in Heaven above and on Earth below. **The Lord alone is God; there is no other besides Him.** Obey His commands so that you may live long in the land the Lord is giving you."

God spoke through Moses. Moses reminded the people that God had made a covenant, or agreement, with the Israelites at Mount Sinai (SIGH nigh). **God said, "If you listen carefully to Me and keep My covenant, you will be My people. Here are the rules and laws I am telling you today. Learn them and obey them."**

God gave the Ten Commandments: 1) Do not have other gods besides Me; 2) Do not make an idol for yourself; 3) Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God; 4) Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy; 5) Honor your father and your mother; 6) Do not murder; 7) Keep your marriage promises; 8) Do not steal; 9) Do not lie; 10) Do not want what belongs to someone else.

"Israel, listen to me! The Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.

"God wants you to obey all of His commands," Moses said. "God wants me to teach you all of His rules and laws, and He wants you to obey them exactly as He commanded. If you do, things will go well in the land He promised to give you, and you will live there for a long time.

"Teach these commands to your children. Talk about them all the time—when you are home, when you are walking along the road, when you go to bed at night and when you get up in the morning."

Moses told the people about the wonderful things God would do. "God promised to bring you into the land of Canaan. He promised to give this land to your fathers—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God will keep His promises!

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"When you get to the Promised Land, don't forget the Lord. Remember what He has done for you. The Lord rescued you from slavery in Egypt. Worship Him, and worship only Him. Do not make an idol for yourselves. Do not worship things you created, and do not worship things God has created. Worship only God! If you do not do what is right, God will scatter you to other lands. But He will not leave you. If you look for God, you will find Him. He will not destroy you. He will not forget His covenant. Your God is a compassionate God."

Moses told the people that it was almost time for them to enter the Promised Land. He warned them that tall, strong people lived in the land. "But God will go ahead of you," Moses said. "He will drive them out."

Then Moses made a very important point. "God is not doing this because you are righteous," he said. "God is keeping the promise He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In fact, you are stubborn people."

Finally, Moses said, "Love the Lord your God. If you obey His commands, you will be blessed. If you do not obey, you will be punished."

JESUS CONNECTION

God kept His promise to give land to the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As the Israelites stood at the edge of the Promised Land, God reminded them of His covenant. He commanded them to be holy and to obey Him, but He knew they would not. God was working out His plan to send Jesus to rescue people from sin and bless the whole earth.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

COMMITMENT – Doing what I say I'll do.

Living LifeWise

Because God always does what He says, we can follow through with our commitments too.

Character Connection

When someone doesn't do what they say they'll do, it can make us feel forgotten and unimportant. God never does this to us. He never once broke His commitment to Israel, even when He had to punish them in the wilderness. He protected and provided for them and, finally, brought the next generation to the Promised Land as He said He would.

God still keeps all of His commitments to us, too. He saves us through Jesus' death on the cross. He never leaves us on our own or withholds His grace. He gives us His Spirit to help us live God's way and keep our commitments, too, so we don't leave others hanging.

When we don't do what we say, even in small ways, it creates problems. What problems could happen in these situations?

- You said you'd feed the dog but forgot
- Your classmate said they'd build something for your group project, but they didn't

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- You promised yourself you'd finish your homework before playing games, but you didn't

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- How many years did Moses and the Israelites wander in the wilderness?

  Forty, Deut. 2:7

- Where were the people headed at the beginning of the story?

  The Promised Land, Deut. 1:8

- How often were the people supposed to talk about God's commandments?

  All the time, Deut. 6:4–7

- What did God promise to do?

  Bring them into the land of Canaan, Deut. 6:10

- Did God keep His promise because the people were righteous?

  No, in fact, they were a very stubborn people, Deut. 9:6

- What would happen if the people obeyed God's commands?

  They would be blessed, Deut. 11:26–28

- What would happen if they did not obey?

  They would be punished, Deut. 11:26–28

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

What's the Word? (Older Students)

- Choose a keyword from the Ten Commandments and draw a blank for each letter in the word on the board. Invite students to take turns guessing letters. Write in the correct letters. [*Suggested keywords: idol, name, Sabbath, father, steal, mother, holy, lie, promises, etc.*]

- God reminded His people of His covenant with them when Moses reviewed the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were not meant to be a burden to the people. They were meant to show the people how they could love the God who already loved them. God's rules are good and are meant to help us, but we cannot earn God's favor by obeying them. God accepts those who put their faith in His Son, Jesus.

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Can You Remember? (Older Students)

- Explain that the students will hear instructions for movements that don't make much sense, but they need to remember which instruction goes with which movement. When I say, "hands," you will stomp. When I say "feet," you will clap, and when I say "fingers," you will turn around in a circle. Finally, when I say "body," you will snap. Got it? Begin giving instructions. You may choose to practice with just hands and feet until kids catch on. As time allows, play again. Consider introducing new actions or allowing volunteers to give instructions.

- It was hard to remember which instruction went with which movement. Remembering isn't always easy! It was hard for the Israelites to remember all the things God had done for them. But God wanted them to remember His mighty acts and laws. He wanted them to remember that He alone is God; there is no other besides Him. Moses commanded the people to obey God so that they

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would live. He told them to worship only God—the one true God. We receive eternal life from God by trusting in His Son, Jesus, and we obey Him because only He is God.

Conditional Promises (Older Students)

- Assign the following Bible verses for individuals to look up and read aloud. Before each reading, tell the kids to note what exactly God was promising as part of the covenant.
  - Exodus 19:5 – Israel will be God's own possession.
  - Exodus 19:6 – Israel will be a kingdom of priests.
  - Exodus 19:6 – Israel will be a holy nation.
  - Exodus 23:22 – God will fight against Israel's enemies.
  - Exodus 34:6–7 – God will be gracious, merciful and forgiving to Israel.

- Read Exodus 19:5–6 and 23:22 again. Before reading, tell the students to pay attention to the beginning of the verses. A *conditional* statement says "If/then." It's like when your mom says, "*If* you put away your clean clothes, *then* you can play outside." The second part relies on the first part. Some of God's promises to the Israelites were conditional. That means that God said *if* the people listened to Him and obeyed Him, *then* He would do certain things. Do you think God expected them to always listen, always obey and never sin? No. God said He is "a compassionate and gracious God" (Exod. 34:6). God said He would forgive "wrongdoing, rebellion and sin" (Exod. 34:7).
- God wanted the Israelites to trust Him, love His law and worship Him with their heart, soul, mind and strength. God still wants that today! In the Old Testament, God wanted the people to trust that He would send a Savior in the future. God kept His promise and today, He wants us to trust in that Savior—His Son, Jesus. When we trust in Jesus by faith, God accepts us. Our salvation is not conditional. If God had said, "*If* you are good and always obey, *then* I will give you eternal life," who could be saved? Everyone has sinned. We cannot earn God's favor. We can only hold out our hands and receive God's free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Bible Story Sequencing (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite the students to do a sequencing activity. Stick the 10 remembrance images on the kids' heads. Instruct them to put themselves in the proper order of events in the Bible. Allow the students who do not have images taped to their heads to help with the sequencing. Ask the following review questions based on the images:
  - Who found baby Moses in a basket in the river? (*Pharaoh's daughter, Exod. 2:5–6*)
  - What did God tell Moses to do when He spoke to him from the burning bush? (*Lead His people out of Egypt to a good land God had for them, Exod. 3:7–10*)
  - What happened to the Nile River after Pharaoh refused to let God's people go? (*God turned the river into blood, Exod. 7:14–20*)
  - Did the plague of the frogs come before or after the Nile turned to blood? (*After, Exod. 8:1–6*)
  - Did Pharaoh tell the people to go after the flies came? (*Yes, but he changed his mind, Exod. 8:28–32*)
  - What kind of bad weather did God send as a plague? (*A hailstorm, Exod. 9:22–25*)
  - How did God destroy the Egyptians? (*They followed the Israelites into the Red Sea and God caused the walls of water to crash over them, Exod. 14:23–28*)

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- How did God feed the people in the desert? (*Sent manna in the morning and quail in the evening, Exod. 16:13–15*)
- What rules did God give the people to show them how to love God and love others? (*Ten Commandments, Exod. 20:1–17*)
- Why did people worship the golden calf? (*Moses went up on the mountain and they didn't know what happened to him. They said to Aaron, "Make us a god to lead us," Exod. 32:1–4*)

If It Rains Tomorrow … (Older and Younger Students)

- Announce a statement that gives students a choice to make. Instruct them to move to one side of the room for the first option or the other side for the second option. Samples:
  - If it rains tomorrow, you will go outside and play in the rain OR you will stay inside and stay dry.
  - If you had a million dollars, you would spend it all OR you would save some for when you are old.
  - If you could fly, you would fly every day OR you would fly once in a while.
  - If school were closed tomorrow, you would do homework OR you would play all day.
  - If you could meet the president of the United States, you would give him a high five OR you would shake his hand.
- The statements I just read are called "conditional statements." *If* one thing happens, *then* another will follow. The covenant God made with Abraham was unconditional. It didn't depend on Abraham. God made the promises. God did not require anything of Abraham for God to keep this covenant. The covenant God made with His people through Moses was *conditional*. God required the Israelites to listen to Him and keep His commands in order to receive some particular blessings. Before they entered the Promised Land, God reminded His people of His covenant with them so they would trust Him and put their faith in Him.

Faithfulness Frames (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, cut out squares of thick paper that could easily be glued to a frame made of four large craft sticks. During class, pass out one square to each student and instruct them to list all the wonderful things God has done for them recently. Each student will then frame their list by decorating four large craft sticks, gluing the tips of the sticks into a square and gluing their list face-forward onto the back of the frame. Set them aside to dry, if needed. Encourage them to take their frames home to display somewhere they will see them often.
- Take your beautiful frame home and display it somewhere you will see it every day this week. Each time you look at it, remember how God has been faithful to you. Remember that we worship God because the Lord alone is God; there is no other besides Him.

Memory Motion (Younger Students)

- Select a few kids to be "memory motion" volunteers to act out the mighty deeds God had done for the Israelites. Read the statements below and invite students to act them out.
  - God gave food to the people in the desert. (Deut. 1:31) [*Kids may play out "gathering" manna and quail or when Moses struck a rock.*]
  - God spoke to His people at Mt. Horeb in a fire. (Deut. 4:12) [*Kids may make trumpet sounds.*]

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- God gave the Ten Commandments. (Deut. 4:13) [*Kids may hold up ten fingers.*]
- God led Israel out of Egypt with powerful signs and wonders. (Deut. 4:34) [*Kids may hop like frogs, pretend to swat gnats or locusts, and scratch as if covered with boils.*]
- God chose Israel to be His people out of His love for them. (Deut. 4:37) [*Kids may cross their arms over their hearts.*]

What Did the Israelites Do? (Younger Students)

- Invite the class to stand in the center of the room. Explain that you are going to call out some actions. If kids think it is something the Israelites did, they will go to one side of the room. If they think it is something the Israelites did not do, they will go to the opposite side of the room.

  - They heard the Ten Commandments. (*Did*)
  - They obeyed the Ten Commandments all the time. (*Did not; they broke God's laws*)
  - They ate manna and quail in the wilderness. (*Did*)
  - They were always thankful in the desert. (*Did not; they grumbled a lot*)
  - They wandered in the desert for forty years. (*Did*)
  - They built the tabernacle. (*Did*)
  - They worshiped only God. (*Did not; they worshiped a golden calf*)

- God reminded His people of His covenant with them and the good things He had done in the desert. Before we think that the Israelites were silly to break God's laws, remember that we're sinners too. The Bible says that all people have sinned except for Jesus. We all need Jesus to rescue us from sin. When we turn away from sin and trust in Jesus, we are forgiven completely.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Repeat These Things (Older Students)
  - Answers: *Down: 1, wilderness; 2, Canaan; 3, commandments; 4, Moses; 6, Joshua. Across: 5, covenant; 7, Mount Sinai; 8, Israelites; 9, Egypt.*

- Who Else? (Older Students)
  - Commandments not listed on the activity page: *Do not make an idol for yourself; remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; honor your father and mother; keep your marriage promises; do not lie.*

- Password (Younger Students)

- Review Crossword (Younger Students)
  - Answers: *ACROSS: 1. Mount Sinai, 2. Egypt, 3. Commandments, 4. Joshua; DOWN: 5. Moses, 6. Covenant, 7. Israelites, 8. Wilderness, 9. Canaan*

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Dear Lord, thank You for all the amazing ways You have shown Your power and Your love for us. Help us trust You and remember You are God alone. There is no other besides You. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and rise again to forgive us and give us life with You forever. In Your name we pray, Amen.

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Journal Page

Memorizing Scripture helps us remember who God is and what He has done. Write out the key passage or another verse you want to memorize this week.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What did God want His people to remember?
- Tell about a Bible story you heard recently. What do you remember?
- Choose a verse or passage of Scripture for your family to memorize this week.



GOD REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF HIS COVENANT

DEUTERONOMY 1, 3:23–40:40; 5–6; 8–11

MAIN POINT: GOD REMINDED HIS PEOPLE OF HIS COVENANT WITH THEM.

God had an important message for the Israelites, and He spoke through Moses. "Here are the rules and laws I am telling you today. Learn them and obey them," Moses said.

Moses reminded the people that God had made a covenant, or agreement, with the Israelites at Mount Sinai. God said, "If you listen carefully to Me and keep My covenant, you will be My people."

God gave them the Ten Commandments.

"God wants you to obey all of His commands," Moses said. "God wants me to teach you all of His rules and laws, and He wants you to obey them exactly as He commanded. If you do, things will go well in the land He promised to give you, and you will live there for a long time.

"Israel, listen to me! The Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.

"When you get to the Promised Land, don't forget the Lord. Remember what He has done for you. The Lord rescued you from slavery in Egypt. Worship Him, and worship only Him."

Then Moses made a very important point. "God is not doing this because you are righteous," he said. "God is keeping the promise He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Finally, Moses said, "Love the Lord your God. If you obey His commands, you will be blessed. If you do not obey, you will be punished."

Jesus Connection: *God kept His promise to give land to the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As the Israelites stood at the edge of the Promised Land, God reminded them of His covenant. He commanded them to be holy and to obey Him, but He knew they would not. God was working out His plan to send Jesus to rescue people from sin and bless the whole earth.*

Key Passage: *Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

DISCIPLEHOOD

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WHO ELSE?

Trace the main point of today's Bible story. Put your pencil in the start space and follow these directions. Write down each letter you pass over.

Move...
1. up 2 spaces
2. right 1 space
3. down 5 spaces
4. right 2 spaces
5. up 2 spaces
6. right 4 spaces
7. up 1 space
8. left 5 spaces
9. up 2 spaces
10. right 6 spaces
11. down 5 spaces
12. left 4 spaces
13. up 1 space

E	L	N	O	O	T	H	E	R
H	O	S	G	E	R	S	H	B
Start T	R	I	E	R	E	H	T	E
E	D	T	I	S	G	O	D	S
G	A	S	E	M	B	L	R	I
T	L	O	N	I	H	S	E	D

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REPEAT THESE THINGS

Read Deuteronomy 6:7 in your Bible. Can you find in this scene the four scenarios described in the verse? Circle each one.



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A CROSSWORD TO REMEMBER

God reminded His people of His covenant with them. Solve this crossword to see how much you remember from the Bible story.

DOWN

1. where the Israelites wandered for 40 years
2. the Promised Land
3. rules and laws God gave to show us how to love God and others
4. the man who led God's people out of Egypt
6. the one who would lead God's people into the promised land

ACROSS

5. an agreement
7. where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments
8. God's people, a stubborn people
9. where the Israelites were slaves

WORD BOX

COVENANT, MOUNT SINAI, CANAAN, EGYPT, ISRAELITES, COMMANDMENTS, WILDERNESS, MOSES, JOSHUA

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PASSWORD

INSTRUCTIONS: Cross out every other letter, beginning with the second letter, to fill in the blanks of the secret message.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

BIBLE STORY: GOD REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF HIS COVENANT
- The Israelites had wandered in the desert for 40 years. They were ready to enter the Promised Land.
- Moses told the people there is no one like God. They must worship only Him.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- What did Moses say about remembering God's commands? (See Deuteronomy 4:40.)
- Who is like God?
- How can you show God that you love Him?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Invite family members to talk about a fun memory you shared together. Why do you remember that special moment?
- Take it further: Write the key passage on your bathroom mirror with a dry erase marker to help you memorize the key passage as a family this week.

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REVIEW CROSSWORD

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the words to complete the crossword puzzle.

DOWN

5. the man who led the people out of Egypt

6. an agreement

7. God's people, a stub-born people

8. where the Israelites wandered for 40 years

9. the Promised Land

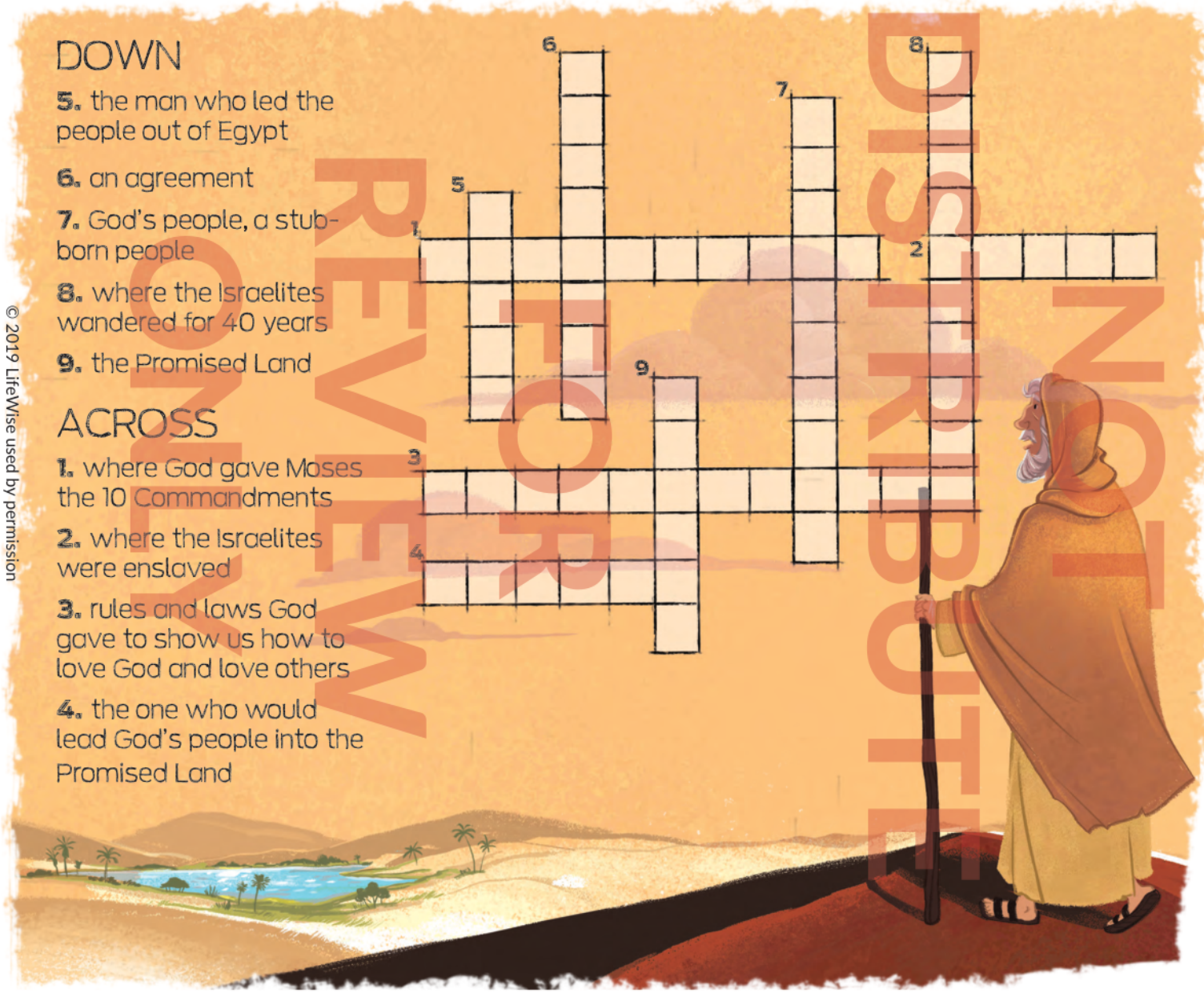
ACROSS

1. where God gave Moses the 10 Commandments

2. where the Israelites were enslaved

3. rules and laws God gave to show us how to love God and love others

4. the one who would lead God's people into the Promised Land



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KEY PASSAGE:
Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

BIBLE STORY: GOD REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF HIS COVENANT

- The Israelites were ready to enter the Promised Land.
- Moses gathered the people and reminded them of God's laws and His covenant.
- Moses said if the people obeyed God, they would be blessed in the land.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What were the rules God gave His people on Mt. Sinai?
- Name the Ten Commandments. (See Deut. 5:6-21.)

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 to your family. Talk about ways to remind each other of this verse throughout the week.
- Take it further: If weather permits, take a walk as a family. As you walk, remember today's Bible story.

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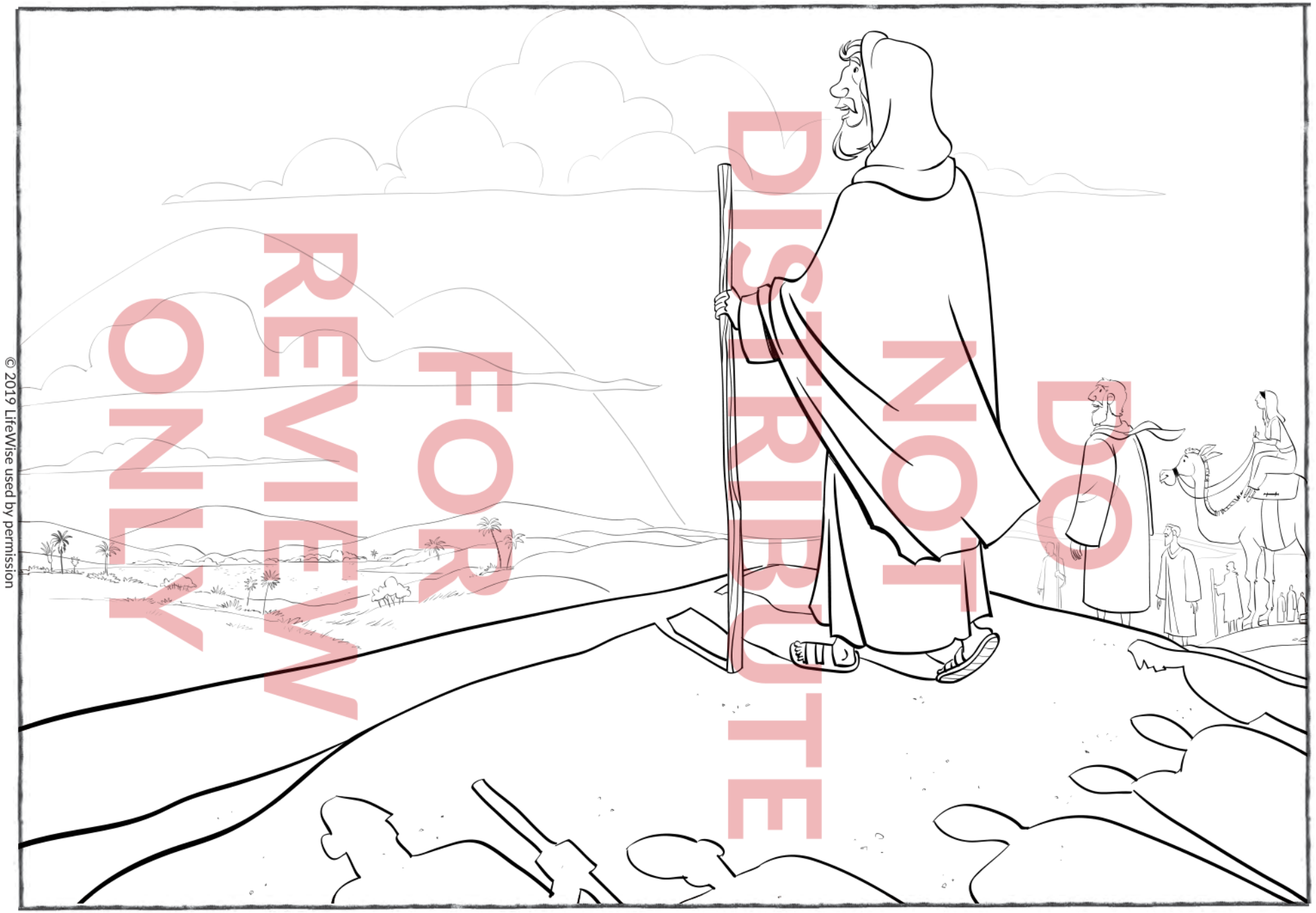

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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GOD REMINDED HIS PEOPLE OF HIS COVENANT WITH THEM.

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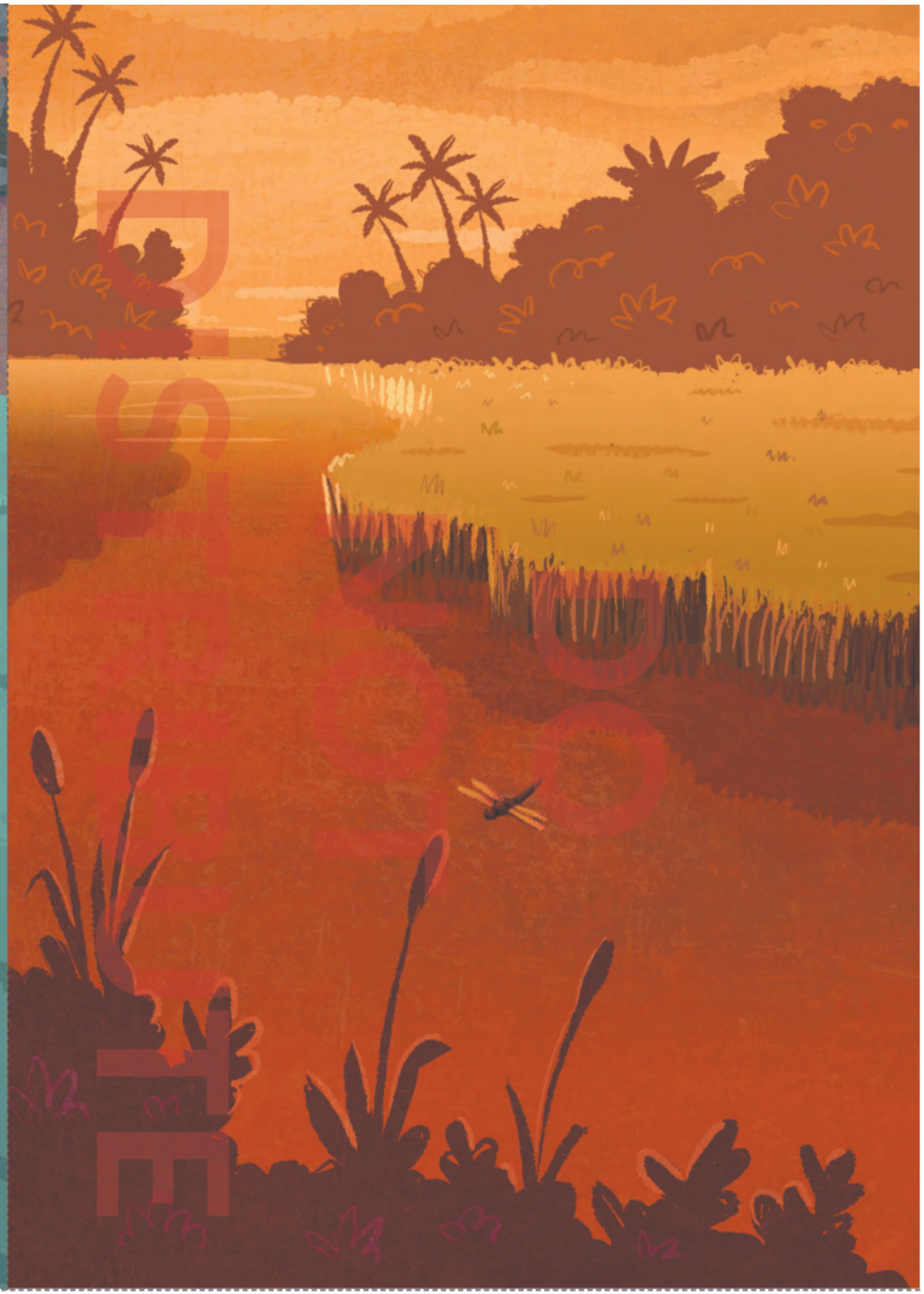

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Remembrance Pictures

Instructions: Print and cut apart. Use as directed in the leader guide.

L 25 God Reminded the People of His Covenant | COMMITMENT

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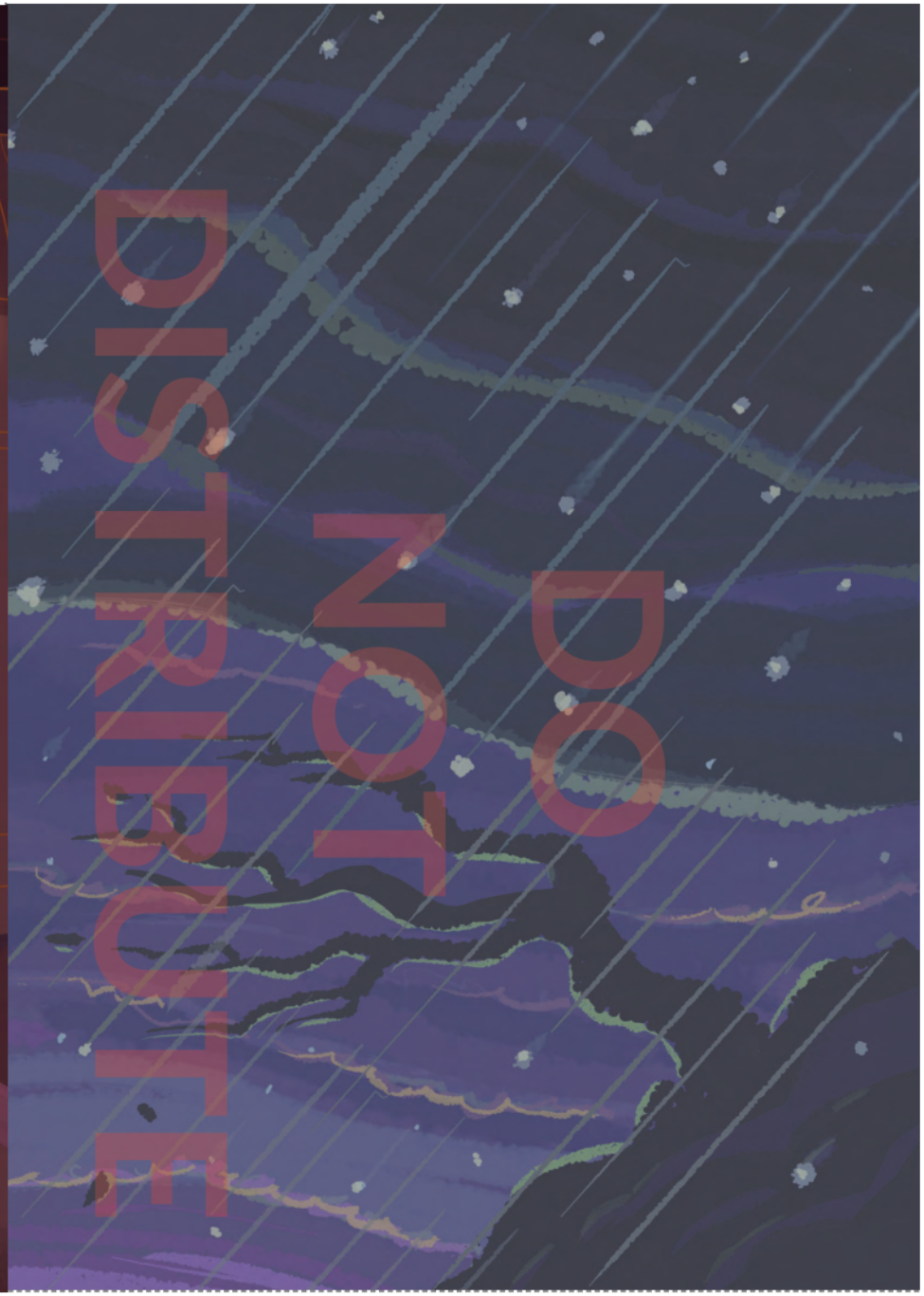

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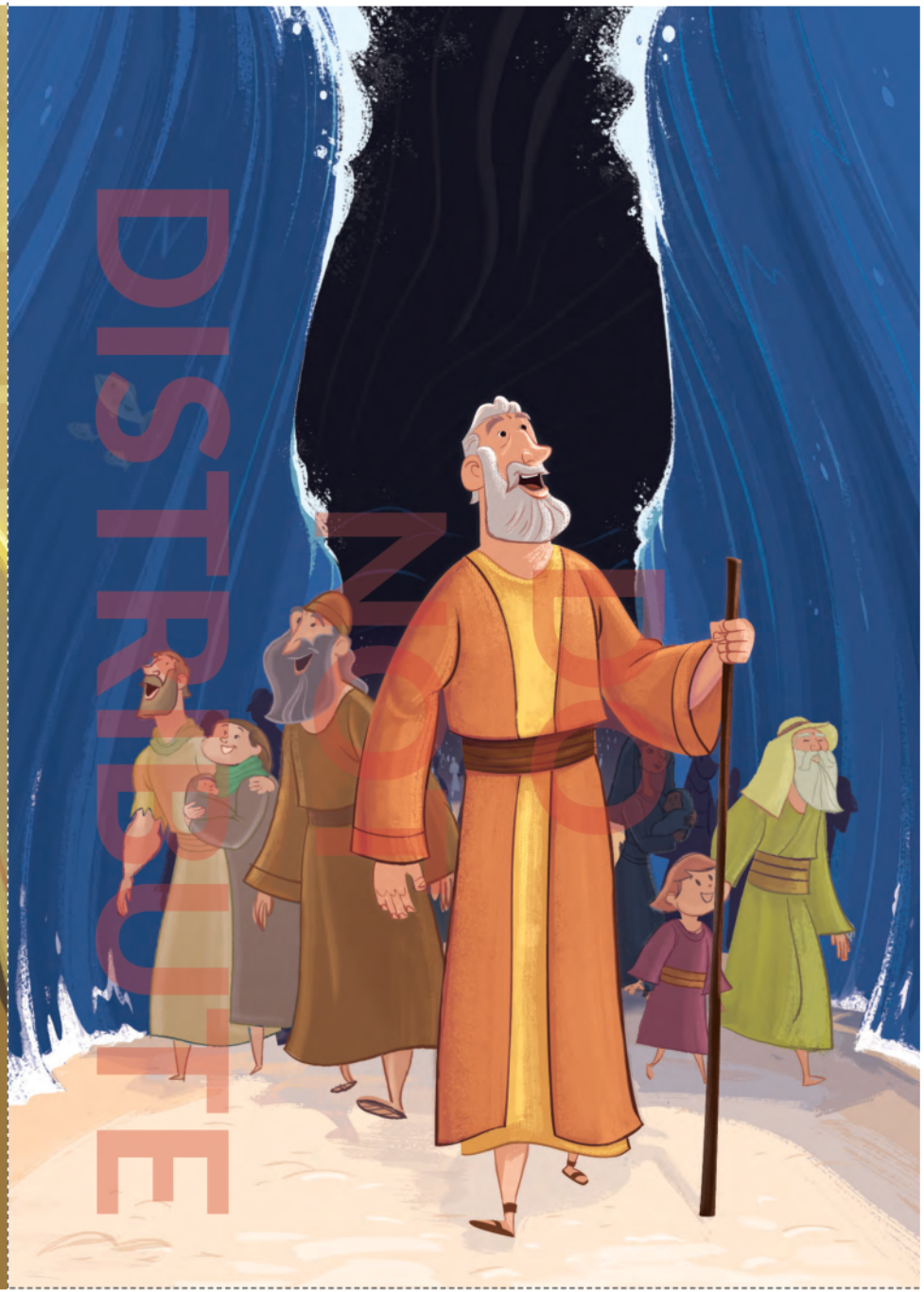

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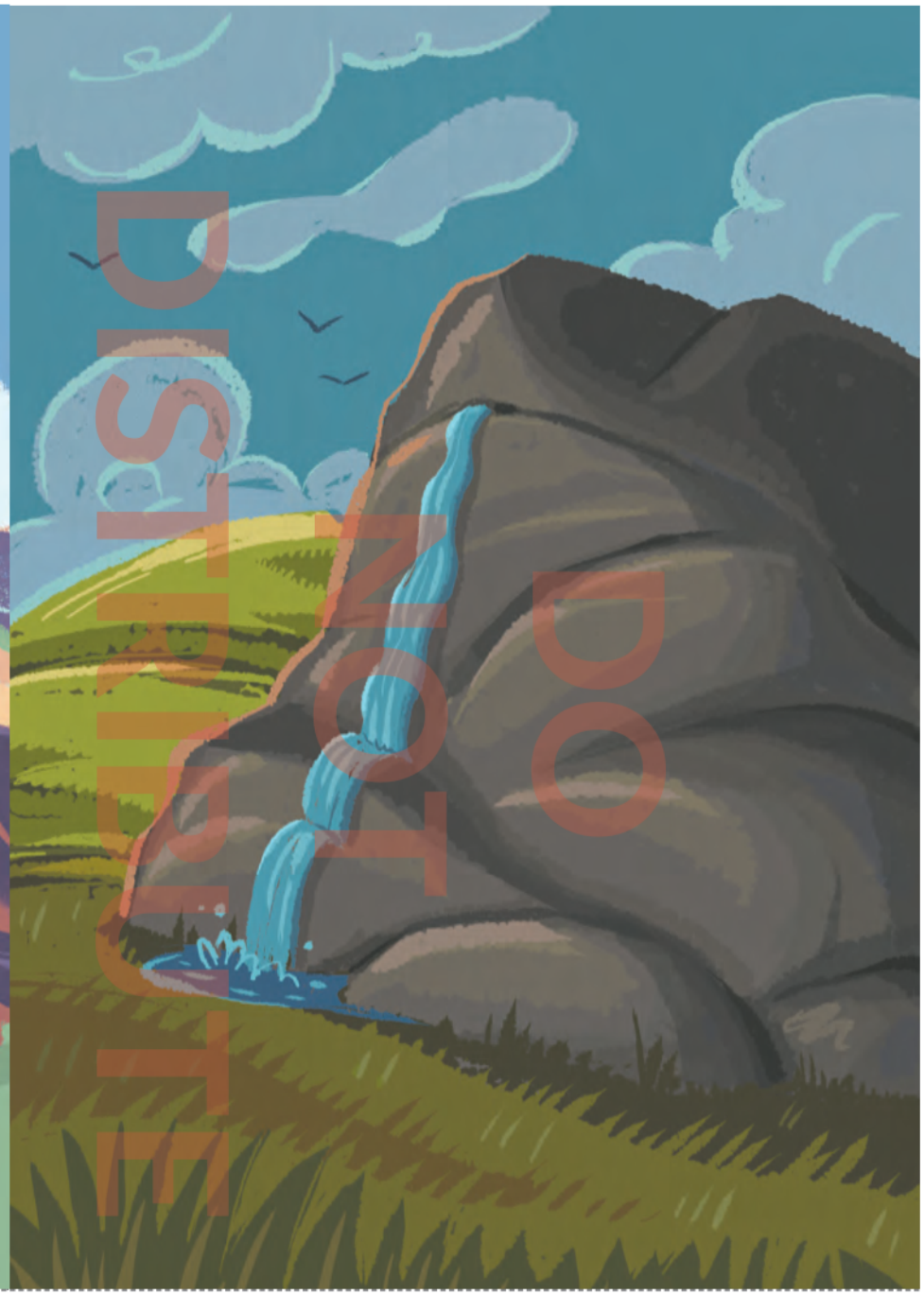

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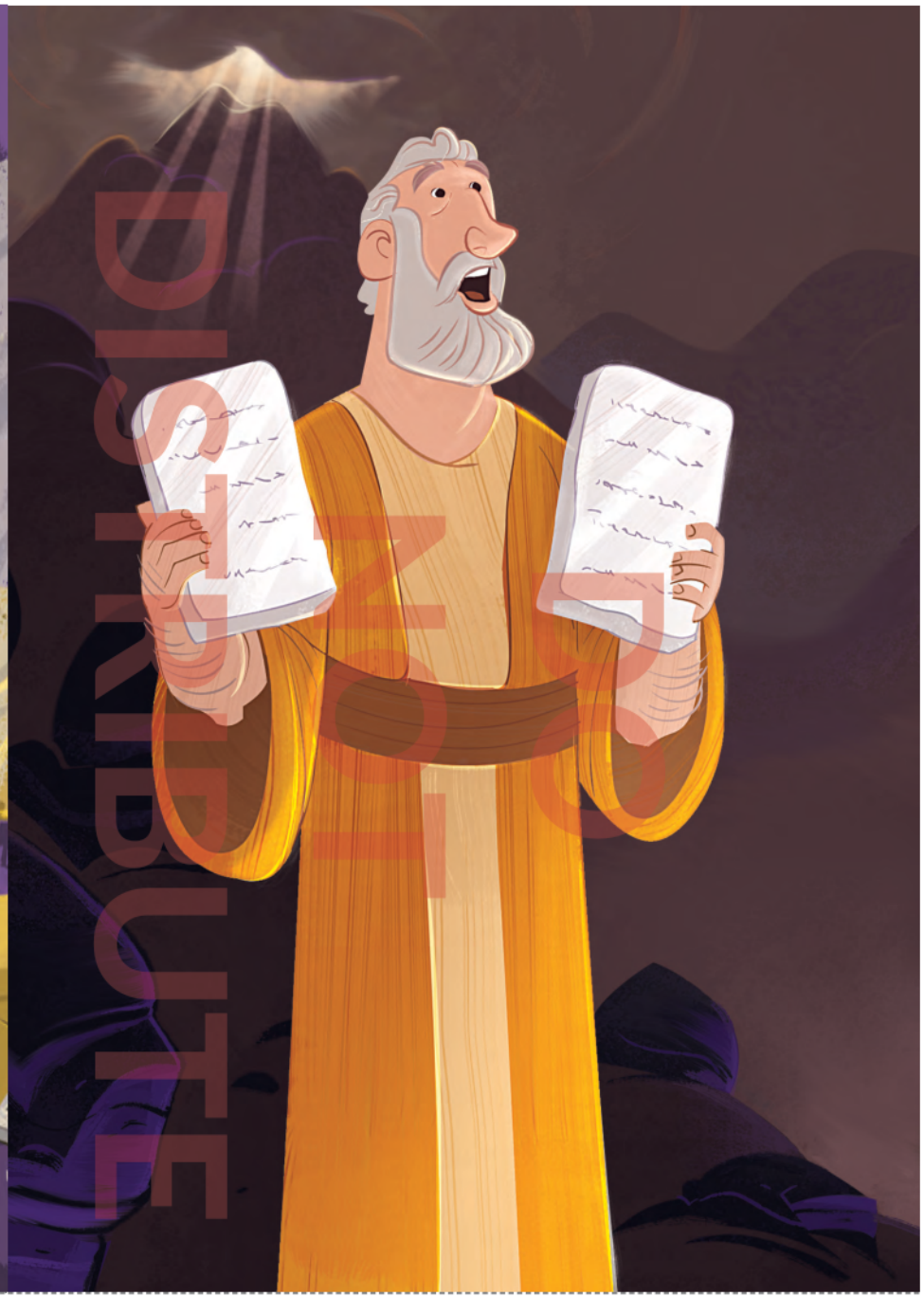

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LESSON 26: HOPE

RAHAB AND THE SPIES

Joshua 2, 6:22–24

REHAB AND THE SPIES

- Joshua 2, 6:22–24
- Big Picture Q&A: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.
- Key Passage: Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

JESUS CONNECTION

Rahab was not a perfect woman, but God considered her righteous, or right with God, for saving the lives of the two spies (Jas. 2:25). God saved Rahab and her family, welcomed her as one of His people and included her as an important part of His plan of salvation. Rahab married a man named Salmon and had a son named Boaz. God placed her in Jesus' family line (Matt. 1:5).

LIFEWISE QUALITY

HOPE – Expecting God will do what is best in every situation.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The Lord brought His people into the Promised Land. Now their task was to conquer the people living in the land. The Israelites came to Jericho. The people of Jericho had heard about God and what He had done for the Israelites. They understood God's power and wanted nothing to do with Him.

Joshua sent spies into Jericho. A prostitute named Rahab also lived in Jericho. Rahab wanted to be on God's side, so she hid the spies and kept them safe from the people of Jericho. In return for her kindness, the spies promised that Rahab and her family would be safe when the Israelites conquered the city.

[*Be prepared to explain Rahab's profession in the following age-appropriate way if students ask: As a prostitute, Rahab was living a sinful life. Rahab was not married, but she took many men from the city into her home and treated each man as if he were her husband for a time.*]

Although Rahab wasn't perfect, the Bible says she believed in God. Her faith caused her to save the lives of the two spies. In James 2:25, she is declared righteous—or justified—by this act because it was done in faith. The Bible tells us that after the city of Jericho was destroyed, Rahab chose to live with the Israelites, and she married a man named Salmon. She became the mother of Boaz and was included in the family lineage of Jesus Himself. Through Rahab's story, we see that God does not only call those who do what is right. God calls people with a sinful past, changes their hearts and includes them in His plan of redemption.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

In our last lesson, God told the Israelites that He is the one true God and reminded them of their covenant with Him. How did He promise to bless them if they kept their covenant with Him? (*He would give them the*

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land and bless them.) What did God remind His people not to worship? (*Idols.*) What punishment did He warn the people about if they refused to obey His commandments? (*God would scatter them away from the Promised Land.*) In our story today, the Israelites are ready to enter the promised land. They have waited 40 years, and now God has told Joshua to prepare for battle against Jericho.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Alphabet Word List (Older Students)

- List the letters of the alphabet vertically on a large piece of paper or divide a white board in half. Form two teams and distribute Bibles to students. Instruct them to turn to the book of Joshua, chapter 2. Teams will take turns choosing a word from the Bible to write next to a letter of the alphabet. They may only write next to letters not already used. Teams earn one point for each letter in their chosen words.

Spy Game (Older and Younger Students)

- Guide students to sit in a circle facing inward, holding their hands open behind their backs. Walk around the circle while their eyes are closed. Place an object in one student's hand and tap the shoulder of another student to indicate he is the spy. Instruct everyone to open their eyes. The spy will come to the center of the circle and guess who has the object. Repeat with other students as time allows.

- Joshua sent two men to spy out the city of Jericho. Unfortunately, this time, the king found out about them and sent his soldiers to capture them.

Hidden Ribbon (Older and Younger Students)

- Hide a red ribbon or cord in your classroom or hang it from a window in your building. Instruct students to hunt for the ribbon. For larger groups, use more than one color of ribbon and assign groups to find a specific color.

- In our story today, a woman is told to tie a red cord in her window to save herself and her family. Orders were given to all the Israelite soldiers not to harm anyone in the house with the red cord. Let's find out why.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Joshua 1:9

Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Loud, Quiet, Silent (Older and Younger Students)

- Practice the key passage normally all the way through. Then challenge the students to do it three times, with the motions, at three different volumes without stopping. The first time with a very loud voice (use very big movements to do the motions), the second time in a quiet voice (using smaller, less intense motions), and the third time mouthing the words silently and doing motions.

Military Cadence (Older and Younger Students)

- Sing a military cadence with the students and teach them how to do a sound off.

Teacher: Joshua 1:9 **Class:** (Echoes)

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Teacher: Be strong, be brave, do not be terrified — **Class:** (Echoes)

Teacher: don't be discouraged, the Lord our God — **Class:** (Echoes)

Teacher: will be with you everywhere you go — **Class:** (Echoes)

Teacher: Sound off! — **Class:** 1 – 2

Teacher: Sound off! — **Class:** 3 – 4

Teacher: Sound off! — **Class:** 1 – 2 – 3 – 4

Both Together: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 1 – 2! – 3 – 4!

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Whom can we trust?

A: *We can trust God to take care of us.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Rahab and the Spies | Joshua 2, 6:22–24

When Moses died, Joshua became the leader of the Israelites. God told Joshua it was time to go into the land of Canaan (KAY nuhn), **the land God promised to give Abraham's family. Other people lived in the land, so the Israelites had to defeat them.**

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho to check it out. **They stayed at the house of a woman named Rahab** (RAY hab). Rahab was living a sinful life. The king of Jericho heard the spies were with Rahab and sent soldiers to find them. **Rahab hid the men on her roof under stalks of flax to keep them safe.** Rahab had heard what God did to Pharaoh in Egypt and believed in God. She wanted to help His people.

When the king's men ordered her to bring the spies out of her house, Rahab told the soldiers that the spies had already gone out of the city. The king's men left to look for the spies and the city gates were shut tightly behind them.

After the soldiers left, Rahab went back up to her roof and told the spies, "I know that the Lord has given you this land and made us afraid of your people. We have heard how the Lord parted the Red Sea to allow you to cross and destroyed your enemies. The Lord your God is God in Heaven above and on the earth below."

Rahab asked the spies to save her and her family when the Israelites came to attack. The spies promised to protect her as long as she kept their plans a secret. Rahab's house was built into the wall of the city. She let a rope down through her window and helped the spies escape.

As the spies left, they promised to keep Rahab and her family safe when the Israelites attacked her city if she tied a red rope in her window. She warned the spies to hide in the hill country for three days before returning to Joshua and the Israelites.

The spies left Jericho and followed Rahab's directions. Rahab tied a bright red rope in her window so the Israelites would know which house she lived in. **After three days, the spies returned to Joshua and told him everything that had happened. They said, "The Lord has given us the entire land. The people are terrified because of us."**

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When the Israelites came back and attacked Jericho, the spies kept their promise to Rahab. They saved Rahab and her family. Through faith in God, Rahab was accepted as one of God's chosen people. She left her old life behind, became an Israelite and married a man named Salmon.

JESUS CONNECTION

Rahab was not a perfect woman, but God considered her righteous, or right with God, for saving the lives of the two spies (Jas. 2:25). God saved Rahab and her family, welcomed her as one of his people, and included her as an important part of his plan of salvation. Rahab married a man named Salmon and had a son named Boaz. God placed her in Jesus' family line (Matt. 1:5).

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

HOPE – Expecting God will do what is best in every situation.

Living LifeWise

God's power protects and rescues His people, so we can hope in Him.

Character Connection

We hear about our favorite celebrities, important politicians or influencers all the time. Even though we've never met them, we can build up an idea about what they're like. What we hear makes us think we know them. But often, when we do meet them, they are nothing like what they seemed to be.

Rahab had heard about God. For 40 years, people had told stories about what happened in Egypt, and Rahab was sure it was all true. She believed that God was who the stories said He was. And when the spies came and Jericho was attacked, she put her hope in Him, and God proved Himself to be exactly the powerful, miracle-working God Rahab had heard about.

God is still exactly the same God Rahab came to know. He is powerful and merciful. He protects and rescues His people, and He welcomes any who trust in Him. Remembering who God is helps us have hope that He will do what's best in every situation we face.

In each example, which response is based on hope because of who God is?

- My friend starts hanging out with someone else.
  - This makes me sad, but I know God loves me, so I will get through it.
  - This makes me sad. No one will ever want to be my friend again.
- Someone on the bus calls you names.
  - No one helped me, so I can't trust anyone to have my back.
  - God never leaves us alone. I can trust Him to help me respond kindly.
- One of your parents may lose their job.
  - God provides everything we need, so I will trust Him to take care of us now.
  - God doesn't even care that we may have to move and everything could change.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Why did Joshua send spies into Jericho?

  To gather information about the city, Josh. 2:1

- How many spies went into the Promised Land?

  Two, Josh. 2:1

- Where did Rahab hide the spies?

  On her roof, under flax stalks, Josh. 2:6

- Why did Rahab help them?

  She believed that God was the one true God, Josh. 2:11

- How did Rahab's people feel about the Israelites now?

  Terrified, Josh. 2:11

- What did Rahab ask the spies to do for her?

  Save her and her family, Josh. 2:12

- What did the soldiers say she must do in order to be saved?

  Keep their secret, tie a red cord in her window, Josh. 2:14, 18

- How did the spies escape from Jericho?

  Rahab let them down the city wall on a rope, Josh. 2:15

- What important person was later born in Rahab's family line?

  Jesus

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Personal Testimony (Older Students)

- Invite a mature believer to share a brief personal testimony with your class. They should include age appropriate information on the following four points: Their life, feelings and thought processes before Christ; how they came to faith in Jesus; specific ways Jesus has changed them and their life and the role/roles God has given them in His plan. Encourage your speaker not to dwell on their life before faith, but draw the most attention to their life after faith.

- One of the biggest miracles God does is to change a person who doesn't know Him into someone that loves God and wants to follow Him and be a part of His plan. God can do this miracle for anyone who believes in Jesus and wants to follow Him.

Tic Tac Toe (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, choose nine questions from the Bible Review Questions and write them on large colored cards. Hang them in a 3x3 grid on a white board or focal wall. Make up 5 *X* and 5 *O* cards. Divide the class into two teams. Students may choose any question on the board to answer. Each team will attempt to get a tic tac toe by answering three questions in a row. In order to put their *X* or *O* card on the board, the team must answer the question correctly.

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Rappelling (Older and Younger Students)

- Teach students about rappelling. If you have access to rappelling equipment (harnesses, carabiners, ropes, hooks, etc.) bring it to class. If not, play a short video or show pictures of the equipment.

- How did the two spies escape from the city of Jericho? (*They had to climb down the city wall on the red rope.*) Let's pretend that you [*the students*] are Rahab and I [*the teacher*] am one of the spies. How would you anchor this rope to support my weight if I had to climb or rappel down a wall? Be prepared to give students some ideas. For each idea that the students have, have them try to secure the rope to the object and demonstrate if the rope would support your weight or not.

- It must have been difficult for Rahab to help the spies escape, climbing down the wall unseen. But God helped the spies to escape and deliver the message to Joshua.

Braided Cords (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, bring in different shades of red yarn. Pre-cut the yarn needed for each student to make a bracelet or cord for a bookmark. [*If making bookmarks, have cardstock cut and hole punched in advance.*]

- Rahab believed in God and used the red cord to save the two spies. The same red cord was used to save her own life and the lives of her family.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Actions of Faith (Older Students)

- Actions of Faith Maze (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, You are so holy and perfect! We thank You that even though You are perfect, You chose to love us. You sent Jesus to save sinners like Rahab and like us. Thank You for calling us to become a part of Your family, through faith in You. Thank You for inviting us to be a part of Your plan. Amen.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What are some ways you can think of that God has included imperfect people as an important part of His plan?
- How is a person justified, or made right with, God? (James 2:25)
- List one way you can act on your faith in God this week. (James 2:26)



RAHAB AND THE SPIES

JOSHUA 2, 6:22–24

MAIN POINT: GOD SAVES THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM.

When Moses died, Joshua became the leader of the Israelites. God told Joshua it was time to go into the land God promised to give Abraham's family. Other people lived in the land, so the Israelites had to defeat them.

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho. They stayed at the house of a woman named Rahab. Rahab hid the men on her roof under stalks of flax to keep them safe.

When the king's men ordered her to bring the spies out of her house, Rahab told the soldiers that the spies had already gone out of the city. The king's men left to look for the spies, and the city gates were shut tightly behind them.

Rahab asked the spies to save her and her family when the Israelites came to attack. The spies promised to protect her as long as she kept their plans a secret.

Rahab's house was built into the wall of the city. She let a rope down through her window and helped the spies escape.

As the spies left, they promised to keep Rahab and her family safe when the Israelites attacked her city if she tied a red rope in her window. She warned the spies to hide in the hill country for three days before returning to Joshua and the Israelites.

The spies left Jericho and followed Rahab's directions. After three days, the spies returned to Joshua and told him everything that had happened. They said, "The Lord has given us the entire land. The people are terrified because of us."

When the Israelites came back and attacked Jericho, the spies kept their promise to Rahab. They saved Rahab and her family.

Jesus Connection: *Rahab was not a perfect woman, but God considered her righteous, or right with God, for saving the lives of the two spies (Jas. 2:25). God saved Rahab and her family, welcomed her as one of His people and included her as an important part of His plan of salvation. Rahab married a man named Salmon and had a son named Boaz. God placed her in Jesus' family line (Matt. 1:5).*

Key Passage: *Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

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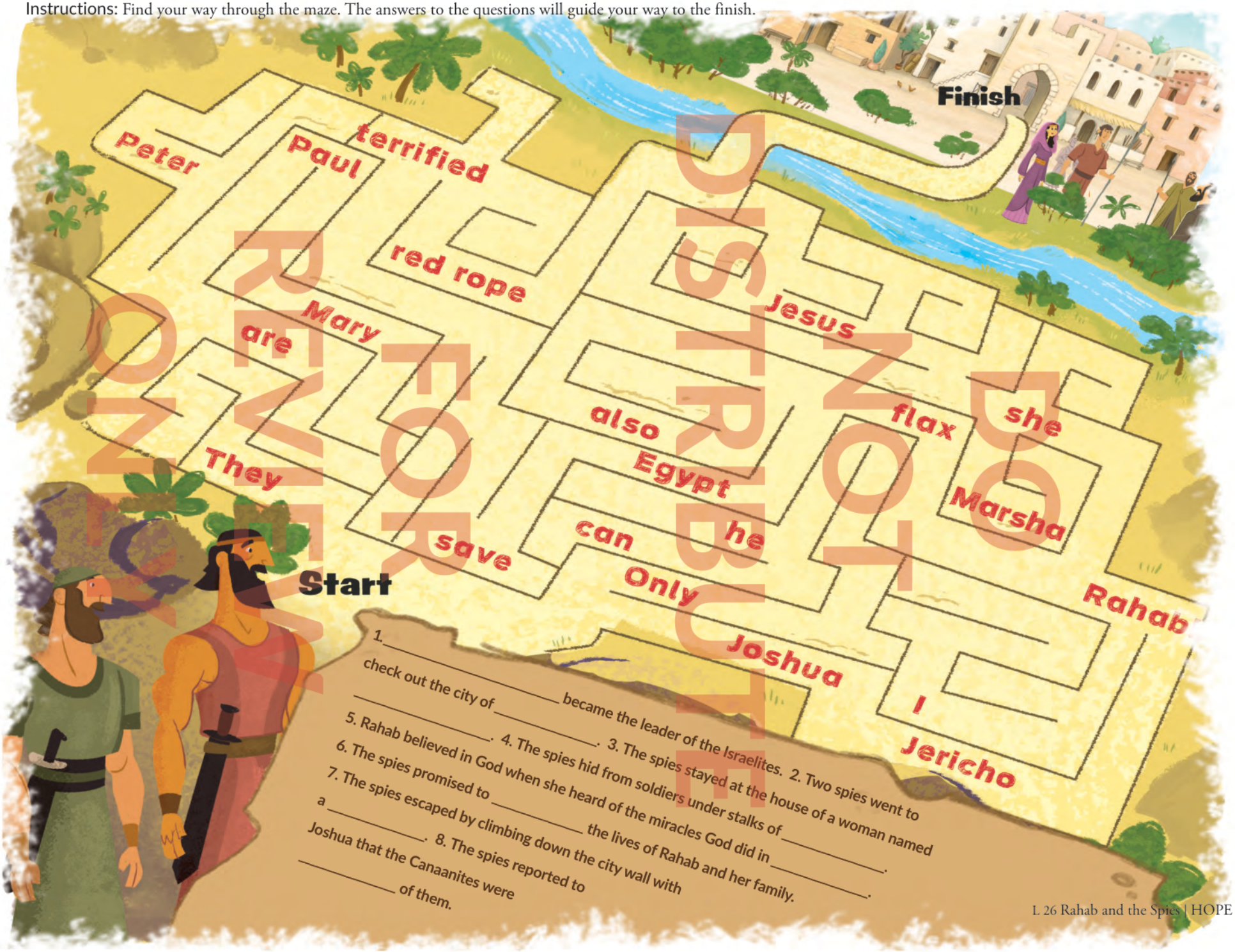
ACTIONS OF FAITH MAZE

Instructions: Find your way through the maze. The answers to the questions will guide your way to the finish.



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ACTIONS OF FAITH MAZE

INSTRUCTIONS: Find your way through the maze. The answers to the questions will guide your way to the finish.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

BIBLE STORY: RAHAB AND THE SPIES
- Joshua sent two men to spy out Jericho.
- Rahab protected the spies from being found in Jericho.
- The spies promised to save Rahab and her family from the coming battle.
- God included Rahab as one of His people because of her faith.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- What are some ways you can think of that God has included imperfect people as an important part of His plan?
- How is a person justified, or made right with, God? (James 2:25)
- List one way you can act on your faith in God this week. (James 2:26)

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Name some ways you have seen God's power and how it has helped you believe in God.
- Choose a neighbor, extended family member or individual in your community who needs to see God's power in action. Pray for them as a family and decide what need your family could meet for this person.

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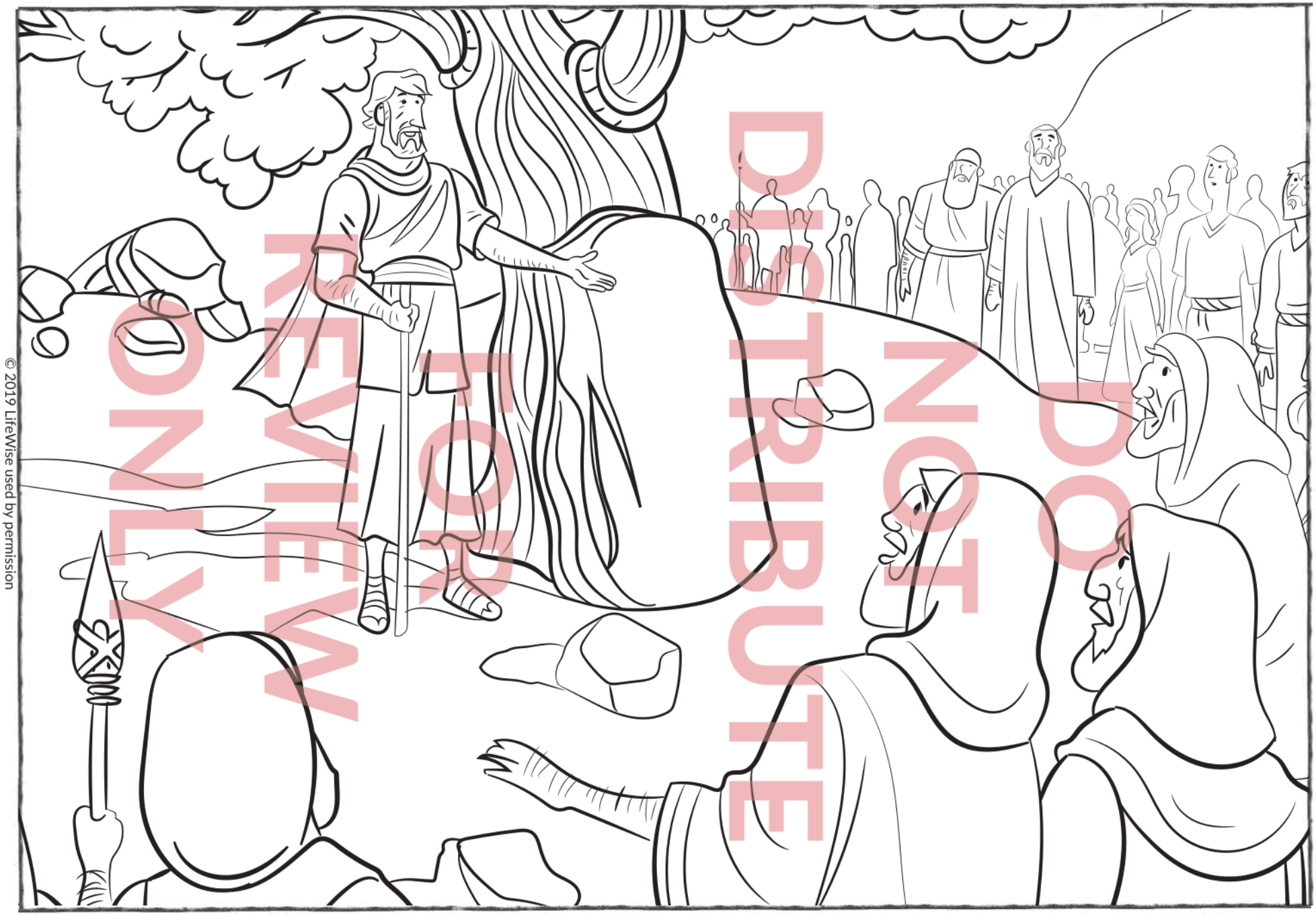

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GOD SAVES THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM

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LESSON 27: CONFIDENCE

THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

Joshua 2–4, 6

THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

- Joshua 2–4, 6
- Big Picture Q&A: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.
- Key Passage: Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

JESUS CONNECTION

God fought for His people and led them into the Promised Land. Just as the Lord defeated Jericho for the Israelites, Jesus defeats His enemies and leads believers into the Promised Land of eternity.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

CONFIDENCE – Trusting in God's goodness and character no matter what.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Only one geographical barrier separated the Israelites from the Promised Land of Canaan: the Jordan River. When Joshua and the Israelites arrived, the Jordan River was flooded due to spring rains and snowmelt. Any other time, the river would have been manageable, but crossing the swollen river would have been daunting like crossing the Red Sea. Like He did at the Red Sea, God dried up the waters so the Israelites could cross (see Josh. 4:23).

God instructed them to take twelve stones from the Jordan's riverbed to set up as a monument. It was to be a tangible symbol of God's power and protection for them and the generations after them.

God gave Joshua very specific instructions about how to take the city of Jericho. The Israelites fought the battle of Jericho by faith. They obeyed God's direction, even when it seemed nothing was happening for six days in a row. On the seventh day, the trumpets sounded, declaring, "The Lord is near!"

Joshua commanded the people to destroy everything in the city except for Rahab and her family. The Israelites were not to keep anything for themselves. The Lord was going to provide for all of their needs. They had no reason to plunder Jericho.

God fought for His people and led them into the promised land. Just as the Lord defeated Jericho for the Israelites, Jesus defeats His enemies and leads believers into the Promised Land of eternity.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time we learned that Joshua sent two spies to scout out the city of Jericho. Do you remember where the spies stayed? (*Rahab's house.*) Where did Rahab hide the spies when the king's soldiers came looking for them? (*On the roof under flax stalks.*) Why did Rahab choose to help the spies instead of her own people?

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(*She believed in God and that he was giving the land to the Israelites.*) How did the two spies help Rahab in return? (*They promised to save her and her family from the coming battle.*)

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Sure Success (Older and Younger Students)

- Play a short video of a success story—someone trying something that seemed impossible but became possible for them.
    - Watch one or two stories from this video: "10 Times the Impossible Became Possible" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2S1CRx2luY
- What is one thing you would try if you knew you couldn't fail? In our story today, God has led the Israelites back to the land of Canaan. Forty years ago, the people refused to enter the land God promised them because they were afraid. The people there were large and powerful, and the cities were well protected. They thought victory was impossible, but God promised them that He would make the impossible possible.

12 Stones Relay (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, gather twelve balloons or balls per team and masking or painter's tape. Form two or more even teams of at least three players. Use tape to mark a start line and a finish line on the floor. Guide teams to stand single file between the lines. Position the balloons or balls at the front of each line. When you say "go," the first player will pass a balloon over her head to the player behind her. The second player will receive the balloon and pass it between his knees to the third player who will pass it over his head, and so on. The last player will pile the balloons at the finish line. When each balloon reaches the end, the last player should shout, "One stone!" "Two stones!" and so on to signal the leader to pass another stone. When the last player shouts "Twelve stones!" the team should sit down. The first team to finish wins.
- In our story today, Joshua asks one leader from each of the twelve tribes of Israel to get a stone from the river. Let's begin our story and find out why.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Joshua 1:9

Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Key Passage Knockout (Older Students)

- Read the key passage two or three times together. Remove or cover the poster. Instruct the students to stand in a circle. Choose a student to say the first word of the key passage. The next player will say the second word, the third player will say the third word and so forth. When the last word is said, the next player will try to say the reference (Joshua 1:9) to the player after her before that player says it to her. Whoever says it last is out. Any player who forgets a word or says the wrong word is also out. Begin the passage again with the next player. Play as time allows or until only one player remains.

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Stone Pass (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite the students to sit in a large circle. Give a stone to one student and instruct the group to slowly pass the stone around the circle. Each player who receives the stone should say a word of the key passage in the correct order. When students finish, play again. For the second round, call out "Change directions!" randomly. Students will switch the direction in which the stone travels.

Military Cadence Review (Older and Younger Students)

- Sing a military cadence with the students and teach them how to do a sound off.

Teacher: Joshua 1:9	**Class:** (Echoes)
Teacher: Be strong, be brave, do not be terrified	**Class:** (Echoes)
Teacher: don't be discouraged, the Lord our God	**Class:** (Echoes)
Teacher: will be with you everywhere you go	**Class:** (Echoes)
Teacher: Sound off!	**Class:** 1 – 2
Teacher: Sound off!	**Class:** 3 – 4
Teacher: Sound off!	**Class:** 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
Both Together: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 1 – 2! – 3 – 4!	

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Whom can we trust?

A: *We can trust God to take care of us.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Battle of Jericho | Joshua 2–4, 6

Now the Israelites traveled toward the Jordan River, which separated them from the Promised Land. They camped next to the wide, deeply flooded river. God gave instructions to Joshua and the other leaders. God was going to help the Israelites cross the river—about 40,000 of them!

The people got ready to cross. The priests carried the ark of the covenant to the edge of the water. Joshua said, "God is with us. He will defeat our enemies." **Then the priests stepped into the water, and the river was held back, piling up higher and higher,** all the way back to a town called Adam. **All the people crossed the Jordan on dry ground.**

After all the men had crossed, Joshua told one leader from each tribe to take a stone from the Jordan's riverbed. The twelve stones were taken to their camp and **set up** as **a reminder that God stopped the water and helped them cross the river.** When the Israelites were all on the other side, and the priests with the ark of the covenant stepped out of the riverbed, the water started to flow again.

Next, God told Joshua, "March around the city one time each day for six days. Don't shout or say a word. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times. Then all the people should shout, and the walls of Jericho will fall down. The Israelites can then go into the city and conquer it."

Joshua did what God said. The people marched around the city on the first day: Seven priests blew rams horns as they marched, and four priests carried the ark of the covenant. Armed soldiers

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marched in front of the priests and behind the ark. Every day for six days, the Israelites marched around the city quietly. **On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times.** Then Joshua said, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!" So **the people shouted, and the wall fell down. The Israelites went into the city and captured it.** They destroyed everything in the city, **but Rahab and her family were safe.**

JESUS CONNECTION



God fought for His people and led them into the Promised Land. Just as the Lord defeated Jericho for the Israelites, Jesus defeats His enemies and leads believers into the Promised Land of eternity.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

CONFIDENCE – Trusting in God's goodness and character no matter what.

Living LifeWise

God powerfully protects us, so we can follow Him with confidence.

Character Connection

The place God had called the Israelites seemed very scary. The Promised Land was full of strong people who didn't want to leave. The Jordan River was at flood stage, impossible to cross. And the walls of Jericho could not be defeated.

But God had called the Israelites to go in and conquer the land. He told them He would provide the victory and protect them. All they needed was God. Unlike their ancestors forty years before, they followed Him confidently into the land. God worked on their behalf, just like He promised He would. He conquered the people of the land. They walked through the Jordan River on dry ground, and He knocked down Jericho's walls.

God is all we need, too. When God calls us to go somewhere or do something, He will protect us, so we don't have to be afraid. We can be confident, knowing He will provide everything we need.

We can have confidence in God because He is totally dependable. But sometimes, we trust in other things or people instead of God. For each person or thing I name, let's tell why God is a better one to have confidence in.

- Your best friend.
- Your money
- Your own strength.
- The fact that nothing bad happened last time.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Why was it difficult for the Israelites to cross the Jordan River?

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It was flooding, Josh. 3:15, 4:18

- What happened to the water when the priests stepped into the river?

  It piled up, 3:16

- How many days did the Israelites march around Jericho?

  Seven days, Josh. 6:14–15

- What did the priests do as they marched around Jericho?

  Blow ram's horns, Josh. 6:13

- How many times did the Israelites march around Jericho the seventh day?

  Seven times, Josh. 6:15

- What did God tell the people to do after the seventh trip around the city?

  Shout, 6:10

- How did the walls of Jericho fall down?

  Through God's power, Josh. 6:5

- What did God command the Israelites to do with everything they found in the city?

  Destroy it, Josh. 6:21

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Marching Drill (Older Students)

- Guide kids to stand in several rows. Ask if any of them has ever seen an army marching. Explain that troops move together in unison. Invite them to imagine how the Israelites might have marched around the city of Jericho. Teach students a few commands and lead them to march in place. As they master the commands, allow a volunteer to lead them.

  - **Attention** – Stand with heels together, toes pointed slightly outward. Stand up tall with arms at their sides.
  - **March** – Call out "Left, left, left, right, left" as kids march in place.
  - **About face** – Kids turn around (180 degrees) and then stand at attention.

Memorial Stack (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, cut 12 pieces of gray foam board to resemble rocks. Ask students the review questions. For each correct answer, a student may put a rock on the stack to make a memorial, like the Israelites made after God led them across the Jordan River. For a more competitive game, make 24 rocks, split the class into two teams and use Bible review questions from both this lesson and the previous lesson on Rahab.

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Act It Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Act out the battle of Jericho. Gather props to represent the soldiers (swords, sticks, etc.), priests (paper towel tubes for horns), and a model of the ark of the covenant (cardboard box with dowel rods pushed through. Be sure to secure dowel rods well). Assign students the part of a soldier, priests (7), or priest carrying the ark (4), and line them up. Read the last two paragraphs of the story script, and lead the class in marching around their classroom 13 times. To decrease noise while walking, have priests echo your own ram's horn sound.

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Make Trumpets (Younger Students

- Provide enough supplies for each student to make a trumpet, including paper towel tubes, crayons, colored pencils, markers, stickers, and colorful tape. Show the class an example of the craft and encourage them to be creative.

- Each of your trumpets is different and unique, just like you. God has a plan for each of you that is different and unique. Sometimes God's plan surprises us, as it surprised the Israelites in today's story. Listen for how God used trumpets in an unusual way as part of His plan.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Design a Boat (Older Students)

- Wall of Jericho Word Search (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, You are so great! You showed Your power when You knocked down the wall of Jericho. Thank You for Your Word so we can learn about You. Help us to trust You to take care of us. You are always faithful, and we love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

List several things that God has done to help you or your family. You may also list events from the Bible in which God helped His people. Remember, God takes care of His people!

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How many times did the Israelites march around Jericho? (See Joshua 6:3-4.)
- Who knocked down the wall of Jericho?
- As a family, how can you give God glory for providing?

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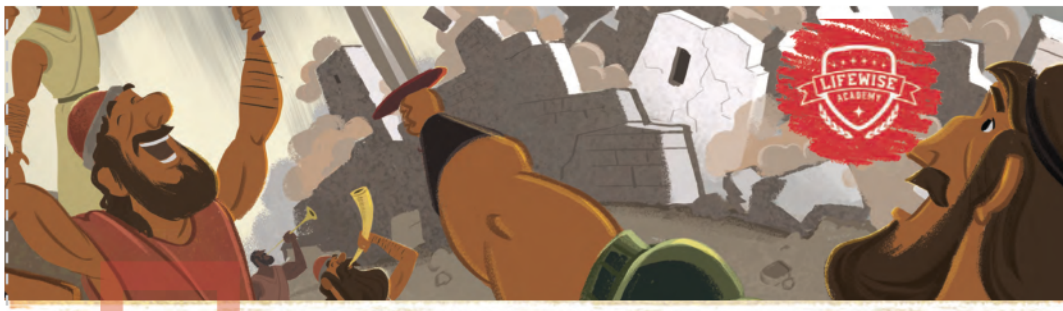

THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

JOSHUA 2–4, 6

MAIN POINT: GOD FOUGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE AND LED THEM INTO THE PROMISED LAND.

When Moses died, Joshua became the leader of the Israelites. God told Joshua it was time to go into the land God promised to give Abraham's family. Other people lived in the land, so the Israelites had to defeat them.

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho to check it out. They stayed at the house of a woman named Rahab. Rahab hid the men on her roof to keep them safe.

The spies promised to keep Rahab and her family safe when the Israelites came into the city. Then the spies left Jericho.

Now the Israelites traveled toward the Jordan River, which separated them from the Promised Land. The people got ready to cross. The priests carried the ark of the covenant to the edge of the water. Then the priests stepped into the water, and the river stopped. All the people crossed the Jordan on dry ground.

Joshua set up a reminder that God stopped the water and helped them cross the river.

Next, God told Joshua, "March around the city one time each day for six days. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times. Then all the people should shout, and the walls of Jericho will fall down. The Israelites can then go into the city and conquer it."

Joshua did what God said. On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times. The people shouted, and the wall fell down. The Israelites went into the city and captured it. They destroyed everything in the city, but Rahab and her family were safe.

Jesus Connection: *God fought for His people and led them into the promised land. Just as the Lord defeated Jericho for the Israelites, Jesus defeats His enemies and leads believers into the Promised Land of eternity.*

Key Passage: *Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

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DESIGN A BOAT

Imagine you and your family needs to cross a wide, deep river.
What would you use? In the space below, design a boat to carry you across.



ACROSS THE JORDAN

Number the stones from 1 to 12 to put the events from today's Bible story in the order that they happened. (We've done the first one for you.)

Tip: Need help? Read Joshua 2–4; 6 in your Bible.

1 God told Joshua to go into Canaan.

The Israelites shouted.

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho.

The priests carried the ark of the covenant to the edge of the water.

Rahab hid the spies on her roof.

The Israelites captured Jericho.

Rahab tied a bright red rope in her window.

Joshua set up 12 stones as a reminder.

All the people crossed the Jordan on dry ground.

The wall of Jericho fell down.

The Israelites marched around Jericho.

The water stopped flowing.

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WALL OF JERICHO WORD SEARCH

INSTRUCTIONS: Find the hidden words from the word bank on the wall of Jericho.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Joshua 1:9 – Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

BIBLE STORY: THE BATTLE OF JERICHO
- Joshua sent two spies into Jericho where they were protected by Rahab.
- The spies promised to protect Rahab and her family.
- The Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground.
- The Israelites marched around Jericho and the walls fell down.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- How can we see God's power and glory around us?
- What do you think it would have been like to march around Jericho in the Israelite army?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Make a "city wall" with pillows or boxes, march around it and knock it down. Talk about how God knocked down Jericho's walls.
- Go further: Invite another family to walk laps around a track with you to exercise and build relationships.

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GOD FOUGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE AND LED THEM INTO THE PROMISED LAND.

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LESSON 28: GROWTH

THE FIRST JUDGES

Judges 3:7–31

THE FIRST JUDGES

- Judges 3:7–31
- How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.
- Key Passage: Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

JESUS CONNECTION

The judges saved the people from the consequences of their sin, but not the cause of it. God's plan was to one day send a true Deliverer—Jesus, His own Son—to be the King of His people. Jesus saves people from sin forever.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

GROWTH – Becoming more mature by learning from my mistakes.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Following Joshua's death, the Israelites were without a leader. They fell into a cycle of sin that can be seen during each reign of the judges. The cycle is marked by an A-B-C-D-E pattern. Let's look at the first judge, Othniel, to see this pattern.

First, the people fell into *Apostasy*. They turned away from God and served other gods (Judg. 3:7). Next, they experienced a period of *Bondage*. God was angry with the Israelites, and He gave them into the hand of the king of Aram (v. 8). Third, the people *Cried* out to God (v. 9). God sent a *Deliverer* to save them (vs. 9–10). Finally, they had *Ease* in the land (v. 11). Then Othniel died.

This pattern continued with Ehud. The people had again turned from God. Their apostasy made God angry. He sent them into bondage by strengthening the king of Moab to defeat Israel. The Israelites served the king of Moab for 18 years.

The Moabites were well-fed, especially the king. They enjoyed the fruit of the Israelites' labor while the Israelites went hungry. By thrusting a sword into the king's belly, Ehud disemboweled the king and left him dead on the floor of his room. The fat covered over the handle of the sword so that Ehud could not remove it.

After Ehud delivered Israel, the Israelites struck down the Moabites, and there was peace in the land for eighty years. But Ehud died, and they needed another judge to lead them.

The Israelites needed someone better than a judge; they needed a king who would save them not only from the consequences of their sin, but the sin itself. That was all part of God's plan. God sent a true Deliverer: His Son, Jesus, died for our sin and delivered us forever from the oppression of sin and death.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

How many years did the Israelites spend in the wilderness before God used Joshua to lead the people into the promised land? (*Forty years.*) During our last story, we learned about the battle of Jericho. What miracle did God do to help the Israelites cross the flooded Jordan River? (*Held back the river and piled up the water.*) What instructions did God give the Israelites so the wall of Jericho would fall down? (*March around the city for seven days.*) Who were the only people in Jericho the Israelites allowed to live? (*Rahab and her family.*) God continued to lead Joshua and the Israelites to attack and take over the Promised Land. God commanded Joshua and the Israelites to kill or completely drive out all the people in the land of Canaan so that the Israelites wouldn't be tempted to live like them, but the people did not obey God. They allowed some of the Canaanites to stay in the land. God gave the Israelites rest from their enemies, and they settled down in the promised land.

Joshua lived until he was 110 years old. When he knew he was going to die soon, he reminded the people to remember all of God's laws and obey them. Joshua told the people to love and worship only the one true God. Unfortunately, it wasn't long before the Israelites forgot about God. They actually started worshiping some of the false gods, or idols, that the nations around them served.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Share a Secret (Older Students)

- Guide students to play a game of telephone by forming a line or circle. Choose one player to begin. Whisper a secret phrase in her ear, such as "The king will arrive for the pancake dinner at 7:15 p.m." Students should pass the secret message around the circle until it reaches the end. Allow the final player to say the phrase aloud. Was the message communicated clearly?

- The judge in today's Bible story told the king of Moab that he had a secret to tell him. I wonder what happened next!

Non-Dominant Hand Challenge (Older and Younger Students)

- Choose three or four students to compete at a time. Volunteers will come to the front. Using a pencil and paper or the white board, players must complete a task you announce with their non-dominant hand. (Right-handed people must use their left hand, and vice versa.) *Sample tasks: Write your name, write today's date, draw a circle, draw a tree.* Applaud students for their efforts. Choose new volunteers and play again with the same task or a new one.

- Most people are right-handed. Today's Bible story is about someone who was left-handed. Raise your hand if you are left-handed!

Sin Chain Reaction (Older and Younger Students)

- Print and cut apart two or three sets of the sequencing cards. Tape the sequencing cards to cardboard blocks. Explain the cards to the class.

    - **A**way from God: God's people sinned against God.
    - **B**ondage: God's people were captured by a nation.
    - **C**ried to God: God's people cried to God for help.
    - **D**eliverer: God sent a deliverer—a judge.
    - **E**ase: God's people enjoyed peace.

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- Have one or two students set up the blocks on their shortest side, a few inches apart, like dominoes. Once they have set up the blocks, invite a volunteer to tap the first block to knock the others over. Reset the blocks in a new pattern and play again.

- Often, our thoughts and behavior begin a chain reaction, just like the dominos. Once begun, it can be hard to stop. Every time the Israelites began worshiping idols, they started a chain reaction of events that led to the same place: sin and slavery. Only God could deliver His people from these things. Today we will learn two stories about how God delivered, or saved, the people from this chain reaction.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Isaiah 33:22

The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

Fill in the Blank (Older and Younger Students)

- Play a hangman-style game with the class. Write out the key passage on a dry erase board or large paper, leaving four blanks where the words *judge*, *lawgiver*, *king*, and *save* should go. Draw a small line, one for each letter in the key word, in the blanks. Draw a picture, such as an ice cream cone, a snowman, or a tree with fall leaves, depending on the time of year. Students will guess a letter. If the letter is in the word, place it in the correct blanks. If it is not correct, erase one part of the object. If the entire object is erased, the teacher wins the game. Give students helpful hints before beginning the game. For example, it's always smart to start by guessing vowels.

- This verse tells us four things about God. Can anyone tell me what those four things are? (*He is our Judge, Lawgiver and King. He will save us.*) Exactly! So, what do you think of when you hear the word *judge*? [*Allow kids to respond.*] Very interesting.

- A judge is someone who has authority and makes decisions about what is right and wrong. In today's Bible story, God chose people to be leaders, or judges, over Israel. But the judges were not the ultimate authority. This verse says that God is our Judge. Even though God chose people to lead the Israelites, we know that ultimately, He is in charge.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How does God accomplish His plan?

A: *God uses people for His glory and our good.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The First Judges | Judges 3:7–31

Joshua had died. Without a strong leader, the Israelites began to disobey God and worship false gods. They forgot about the one true God. **God** was angry. He **let an enemy king take over the Israelites,** and they served the king for eight years.

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Then the Israelites remembered how good they had it when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to Him, "Save us!" God wanted the people to love and obey Him, so **God raised up Othniel** (AHTH nih el) **to rule over them as the first judge.**

Othniel led the Israelites into battle against the king of Aram, and God helped the Israelites win. **The land was peaceful for 40 years, then Othniel died.**

Again, Israel forgot about God. God gave the king of Moab power to attack the Israelites and defeat them. The Israelites served the king of Moab for eighteen years. **The Israelites** were sad. They **remembered how good they had it when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to Him, "Save us!" So God raised up a left-handed man named Ehud** (EE huhd) **to save them.**

The Israelites sent Ehud to the king of Moab, who was a very fat man. Ehud had a double-edged sword under his clothes. **Ehud said, "I have a secret message for you." The king dismissed all his attendants so he was alone with Ehud.**

When the king stood up, Ehud pulled out his sword. He pushed it into the king's belly. The sword was swallowed up by the king's fat. Ehud couldn't even pull it out! **Ehud escaped down the porch, locking the doors of the room behind him.** Ehud was gone when **the king's servants came in.** The door was locked, and they thought he was using the bathroom. They waited, but the king never opened the door. The servants got worried, so they unlocked the door **and found their king dead** on the floor!

When Ehud escaped, he blew a ram's horn, and he became the Israelites' leader. "God will help us defeat our enemies, the Moabites," Ehud told them. So the Israelites battled the Moabites and took control over them. **There was peace in the land for 80 years.**

When Ehud died, the Israelites forgot God again. They turned away from Him. When they remembered how good they had it when they loved and obeyed God, they cried out to Him, "Save us!" God sent a third judge, Shamgar (SHAM gahr)**, to save them.**

JESUS CONNECTION

The judges saved the people from the consequences of their sin, but not the cause of it. God's plan was to one day send a true Deliverer—Jesus, His own Son—to be the King of His people. Jesus saves people from sin forever.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

GROWTH – Becoming more mature by learning from my mistakes.

Living LifeWise

God's Spirit empowers us to grow toward maturity in every area of life.

Character Connection

Plants, animals and people were all made to grow. They start out small and become mature. But in the book of Judges, God's people did not grow. They made the same mistakes over and over. God doesn't want us to be stuck in a sin cycle like the Israelites. So He sent Jesus. Jesus saves us from our sin and gives us

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His Holy Spirit so we can stop making the same mistakes and start to grow. The Bible says that, every day we can think and act more like Him until, one day, we will be just like Jesus.

Our lives will be marked by a pattern, too. We want to develop a pattern of making good choices and learning from our mistakes so that we become mature. Or, we can make unwise choices, blame others for our problems, and stay stuck right where we are. Which of the two patterns do these situations show?

- Last quarter, I turned in a lot of homework late. I asked God to help me do better, and so far this quarter, I have turned in my homework on time every day.
- My mom doesn't want me to play the new video game, so I play at night after bedtime. She doesn't know.
- My friend doesn't like to read, so he looks up summaries of books online to get points.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- What did God tell the Israelites to do when they took over the land of Canaan?

  Completely drive out the other people living in the land, Judg 2:2
- What were the names of the leaders God chose to deliver the people?

  Judges, Judg. 2:16
- When did God save the people from their enemies?

  After they asked for His help, Judg. 2:15
- Who was the Israelite's king during the time of the Judges?

  God was their king
- Who did God raise up to rescue Israel from Moab?

  Ehud, Judg. 3:15
- What weapon did Ehud carry?

  A double-edged sword, Judg. 3:16
- What did Ehud say he had for the king?

  A secret message, Judg. 3:18–19
- How did Ehud escape?

  Down the porch, Judg. 3:23

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

The Cycle of the Judges (Older Students)

- Print and cut apart the sequencing cards. Encourage students to put them in the right order based on what they remember from the Bible story. Review the cycle three times for each of the first judges: Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar. Remind kids that after Joshua died, the Israelites forgot about God and worshiped false gods.

- The judges saved the people from the consequences of their sin, but not the cause of it. God's plan was to one day send a true Deliverer—Jesus, His own Son—to be the King of His people. Jesus saves people from sin forever.

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Review Relay (Older Students)

- Use the Bible review questions to make review relay cards. Mix up the cards and attach them face-out on a focal wall. Form three or four teams. Give each team a Bible and guide students to stand at the far side of the room. When you say *go*, the first player from each team will run to the cards, grab a question and take it back to his team. They should work together to think of the answer, then raise their hands and share it with the teacher. If they are correct, another player should race to grab the answer card and return it to the team. Teams should continue collecting question and answer pairs until teams have collected all the cards.

Going in Circles (Older and Younger Students)

- This game should be played in a large open area or outside. Instruct students to make a circle, arm's length apart—students should touch each other. When the game begins, all students should begin walking in a clockwise circle. Designate one player to leave his place in the circle, run around the outside of the circle and return to where he started without touching another person. If the runner touches anyone in the circle he must return to his place and start again. When the first student successfully returns to their original spot, he should touch the next person in front of him. Continue until everyone in the circle has run. For large groups, make more than one circle.
- Did this game achieve anything? Even though God used the judges to rescue His people when they cried out to Him, the Israelites kept making the same mistakes. They were going around and around in circles, never learning from their mistakes.

Bible Trivia (Younger Students)

- Form two teams of students. One student from each team will come forward. Ask a Bible review question. Once you have finished the question, students may ring a bell to respond or be the first to grab an object placed in the middle. If he is correct, he receives a point for his team. If not, his opponent may answer to steal the point for her team. The team with the most points wins.

The Judge Says (Younger Students)

- Invite the class to play Simon Says, but instead of saying "Simon says," they will say "The judge says." If students do not do the judge's command, or if they do a command the judge did not say, they must sit out. For younger students, do not eliminate players who make a mistake.
- It was hard to obey everything the judge said, wasn't it? The Israelites struggled to obey God, just like some of us struggle to obey our parents, our teachers, and other people whom God has chosen to be our leaders. The judges rescued the people for a little while, but the judges could not make the people stop sinning. Jesus is a better Judge, lawgiver, and King.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Who's There? (Older Students)
  - Color the even-numbered spaces, then turn the page sideways to discover the name of one of Israel's first judges. (*Ehud.*) Complete the quiz on the activity page by reading Judges 3:7–31 and circling the correct words in each statement. [*Answers: 1. Joshua; 2. Othniel; 3. forgot about; 4. fat; 5. sword; 6. leader; 7. peace; 8. Shamgar.*]
- Find the Treasure (Younger Students)

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Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to break the cycle of sin once and for all. Help us to continually turn away from sin and trust in You alone. Use us to spread the gospel of Jesus in our community, city and throughout the world. Amen.

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Journal Page

The Israelites forgot about God, and God allowed their enemies to defeat them. List a few things you want to remember about God.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What happened when a judge died?
- Why did the Israelites disobey God? (See Judges 2:10.)
- How can your family remember what God has done?

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THE FIRST JUDGES

JUDGES 3:7–31

MAIN POINT: GOD'S PEOPLE TURNED FROM HIM TO WORSHIP IDOLS.

Joshua had died. Without a strong leader, the Israelites began to disobey God and worship false gods. God let an enemy king take over the Israelites.

Then the Israelites remembered how good they had it when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to Him, "Save us!" God raised up Othniel to rule over them as the first judge. The land was peaceful for 40 years, then Othniel died.

Again, Israel forgot about God. God gave the king of Moab power to attack the Israelites and defeat them. The Israelites remembered how good they had it when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to Him, "Save us!" So God raised up Ehud to save them.

The Israelites sent Ehud to the king of Moab. Ehud said, "I have a secret message for you." The king dismissed all his attendants so he was alone with Ehud.

When the king stood up, Ehud pulled out his sword. He pushed it into the king's belly. Ehud escaped down the porch, locking the doors of the room behind him. The king's servants came in and found their king dead!

When Ehud escaped, he blew a ram's horn and he became the Israelites' leader. There was peace in the land for 80 years.

When Ehud died, the Israelites forgot God again. They turned away from Him. When they remembered how good they had it when the loved and obeyed God, they cried out to Him, "Save us!" God sent a third judge, Shamgar, to save them.

Jesus Connection: *The judges saved the people from the consequences of their sin, but not the cause of it. God's plan was to one day send a true Deliverer—Jesus, His own Son—to be the King of His people. Jesus saves people from sin forever.*

Key Passage: *Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.*

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WHO'S THERE?

Color in the even-numbered spaces. Then turn the page sideways to discover the name of one of Israel's first judges.

3	2	32	20	11
40	37	65	61	42
62	17	63	59	4
6	48	52	22	24
39	19	21	29	43
8	72	50	76	74
5	27	41	35	54
86	26	88	90	56
47	7	57	33	13
80	46	10	18	82
25	23	28	9	15
44	30	68	78	84
69	53	55	67	45
70	51	14	31	58
12	49	38	1	60
66	34	36	64	16



FIRST JUDGES QUIZ

Read Judges 2:6-10; 3:7-31. Circle the correct answers.

1. The Israelites needed a new leader because (Moses / Joshua) had died.

2. God raised up (Othniel / Samson) to rule as the first judge.

3. Each time a judge died, the Israelites (remembered / forgot about) God.

4. The king of Moab was a very (fat / thin) man.

5. Ehud killed the king of Moab with a (hammer / sword).

6. After Ehud escaped, he became the Israelites' (leader / servant).

7. The Israelites experienced (war / peace) for 80 years.

8. After Ehud died, God sent a third judge named (Peter / Shamgar).

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FIND THE TREASURE

INSTRUCTIONS: Make your way to the hidden treasure while avoiding other ships, sharks and dead ends.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

BIBLE STORY: THE FIRST JUDGES

- After Joshua died, the Israelites began to disobey God and worship false gods.
- God disciplined Israel and when they cried out for help, He provided a judge to deliver them.
- Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar were the first judges.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What sins do you struggle with over and over again?
- What leaders has God blessed us with? How can we support them?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Play a game of "Follow the Leader" through your neighborhood.
- Go further: Write, decorate and send thank-you cards to leaders whom God has placed in your life. Consider including a gift card as well.

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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GOD'S PEOPLE TURNED FROM HIM TO WORSHIP IDOLS.

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Judges Sequence Cards

Instructions: Print and cut apart. Use as directed in the leader guide.

L 28 The First Judges | GROWTH

God's people cried out to Him for help.

God sent a judge to help His people.

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Judges Sequence Cards

Instructions: Print and cut apart. Use as directed in the leader guide.

L 28 The First Judges | GROWTH

God let Israel's enemies defeat them.

God's people forgot about God.

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God gave His people peace.

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LESSON 29: AVAILABILITY

DEBORAH AND BARAK

Judges 4–5

DEBORAH AND BARAK

- Judges 4–5
- Big Picture Q&A: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.
- Key Passage: Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

JESUS CONNECTION

God does what is for His glory and my good (Psalm 115:3; Romans 8:28). God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak and Jael to defeat Canaan. In a similar way, God uses people and events to not only save us from our enemies, but to bring about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

AVAILABILITY – Being ready and willing to do my part.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The time of the judges continued after the death of Ehud. The Israelites fell into a continuous cycle of apostasy, bondage, crying out to God, deliverance and ease. The people of Israel were oppressed by the king of Canaan. At this time, Deborah was the judge of Israel. Deborah sent for Barak and encouraged him to take up an army and fight the army of Canaan and its leader, Sisera.

Deborah reminded Barak that God would hand Sisera and his troops over to him (Judg. 4:6–7). Barak agreed to go, but only if Deborah went with him. Deborah went, but she informed Barak that he would get no glory for the battle; God was going to use a woman to defeat Sisera.

When Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men, "The Lord threw Sisera and all his army into confusion with the sword before Barak" (Judg. 4:15). Everyone in the army died, but Sisera escaped on foot. Sisera fled to the tent of Jael, whose family was at peace with Sisera. She invited him inside and gave him a drink. While Sisera slept, Jael drove a tent peg through his temple, and he died.

Judges 5 records a victory song Deborah and Barak sang on that day, praising God for defeating the Canaanites. The land rested for 40 years.

The Israelites' sin had resulted in 20 years of defeat. God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak and Jael to accomplish the Israelites' victory over Canaan. As you teach students this week, highlight the actions of Deborah and Barak, who willingly served God and used their gifts for His glory. Use the Jesus Connection to emphasize that God uses people and events to save us not only from our enemies, but to bring about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time, we learned about the cycle of sin the Israelites went through. What did the Israelites begin worshiping instead of God? (*Idols.*) How did God punish them for this? (*Allowed their enemies to attack them.*) When the people cried out to God for help, who did God send to deliver the people? (*Judges.*) Does anyone remember the name of one of the three judges we learned about in our previous lesson? (*Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar.*)

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

You Be the Judge! (Older Students)

- Make two signs to label opposite sides of the room: *Agree* and *Disagree*. Guide students to stand in the middle of the room. Ask for two volunteers. Explain that you will announce an opinion. One volunteer will make the case to disagree with the opinion, and the other volunteer to agree. The rest of the students should listen carefully to the points and move to a side of the room to indicate their opinion. Point out that individuals can move a little or a lot toward one side to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. Example opinions:
    - Children should be paid for doing chores around the house.
    - Children should be required to walk a mile every day.
    - If a student is caught cheating, he should have to repeat a grade level.
- Was it hard to decide, or judge, what is right and wrong? Today we will hear about someone who was a judge over Israel. Her name was Deborah.

Would You Go? (Older Students)

- Instruct students to sit in a circle. Begin by saying, "I'd go on an adventure, even if I saw [*fill in the blank*]" and then describe something such as tigers, killer bees or a wild dingo. Then invite the next player to repeat what you said and add on something of his own. For example, "I'd go on an adventure, even if I saw tigers and a rattlesnake!" The third player will repeat the first two responses and add his own. Continue around the circle. Help students recall the previous responses.
- I'm not sure I'd be brave enough to go on an adventure if I were going to see all *those* types of things! Today we are going to hear a story from the Bible about a man who did not want to go into battle unless someone else went with him. Let's find out more.

All In (Younger Students)

- Use pool noodles or a rope to form the outline of a square on the floor large enough for the entire class to fit inside. Challenge the students to work together to fit everyone completely inside the square and, when they're done, to call out "All in"! Repeat the challenge, shrinking the square a few feet on each side every round. Everyone must be completely inside every time. The game ends when the class can no longer fit inside the square.
- Today we are going to learn about a judge named Deborah and a man named Barak whom God asked to work together to rescue His people. Barak said he would only be "all in" if Deborah went with him.

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Order the Pattern (Younger Students)

- Form two teams and provide a set of Judge Sequencing Cards (from LWL 28) for each team. Students will race to put the cards in the correct order of the pattern in the book of Judges. Once the teams have placed the cards in order, allow volunteers to explain what is on each card.

- Can anyone remember the three judges we talked about last week? (*Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar.*) That's right! God's people fell into a cycle of sin and rescue that happened over and over again. Today, we are going to learn about another judge God provided to deliver His people.

KEY PASSAGE & ACTIVITY (5 MIN)

Isaiah 33:22

The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

Memory Verse Pass (Older Students)

- Instruct students to sit in a circle. They will put their right hand, palm up, over the left hand of the player to their right and their left hand, palm up, under the right hand of the player to their left. Demonstrate how a player can swing over her right hand to pat the left hand of the next player. As the first student pats the hand of the next player, she should say the first word of the key passage. Continue around the circle with each player saying one word at a time. Encourage students to "pass" the key passage around the circle faster or slower.

Memory Verse Cross Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite students to read the key passage aloud with you. Cover the bottom half of the key passage with a poster and practice until they can say the whole verse without seeing what's beneath the poster. Do it again, this time covering the top half as they say it. Finally, cover the entire key passage with the poster and challenge the students to say it from memory. Divide the room into three groups. Assign each of the groups one part of the key passage. Point to each group in order as they say their part, and then raise both hands for all groups to say, "He will save us!" together.

Pass the Ball (Younger Students)

- Have the class sit in a circle. Give the ball to a student. He will say the first word and pass the ball to the next student. Each student will say the next word of the passage and pass the ball on. Challenge them to say the verse as fast as possible. After practicing, use a timer to see how many seconds it takes to get through the entire class. Then, ask them if they'd like to try it faster. The class will enjoy beating their own record!

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How does God accomplish His plan?
A: *God uses people for His glory and our good.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Deborah and Barak | Judges 4–5

Ehud and Shamgar had been judges over Israel. After they died, the Israelites forgot about God. So God allowed the king of Canaan to overtake them. The commander of the king's army was named

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Sisera (SIS uh ruh). **Sisera was cruel to the Israelites for 20 years. God's people remembered how good they had it when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to God, "Save us!"**

Deborah was the judge over Israel at this time. She listened to the people and helped them with their problems. **One day, Deborah called for Barak and said, "God wants you to gather 10,000 men.** Lead them to Mount Tabor. **God will help you defeat Sisera** there."

Barak said to Deborah, "I will go if you will come with me. If you won't come, I'm not going."

"I'll go," Deborah said. "But you will receive no honor for the battle. Instead, God will use a woman to defeat Sisera." So Deborah, Barak and 10,000 men went to Mount Tabor. Sisera heard that Barak was at Mount Tabor, and he took his 900 chariots and all his men to fight.

"Barak, go! God will help you defeat Sisera today," Deborah said. Barak and his 10,000 men moved down the mountain toward Sisera and his army. The Lord confused Sisera and all of the army. Barak chased the chariots and the army, and everyone in the army was killed by the sword. **None of them survived, but Sisera had escaped!**

Sisera went to the tent of Jael (JAY uhl) because he and Jael's husband were friends. Jael said, "Come in. Don't be afraid." **Jael gave Sisera something to drink and covered him with a rug. Sisera was so exhausted that he fell into a deep sleep. Jael knew that Sisera was an evil man, an enemy of God.** She took a tent peg and a hammer, and **she killed him while he slept.**

Barak arrived, looking for Sisera. Jael greeted him and said, "I will show you the man you are looking for." Barak went into her tent and saw Sisera lying dead.

That day, God allowed the Israelites to defeat the Canaanites. The Israelites had won the battle! Deborah and Barak sang a victory song. They praised God for helping them beat the Canaanites. The land was peaceful for 40 more years.

JESUS CONNECTION

God does what is for His glory and my good (Psalm 115:3; Romans 8:28). God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak and Jael to defeat Canaan. In a similar way, God uses people and events to not only save us from our enemies, but to bring about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

AVAILABILITY – Being ready and willing to do my part.

Living LifeWise

God designed each of us for a purpose, so we can be available to play our role in His plan.

Character Connection

Who was the most important person in today's story? [*Let the students answer.*] Why do you think so? Who was the least important person? Why?

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Actually, every person in our story today was important because God designed them to fill different roles. Deborah was the judge. Barak led God's armies. The soldiers were willing to fight. Even Jael was willing to do a brave thing when she had the opportunity. And because they willingly did what God had designed them to do, God used them to rescue His people.

We aren't all good at sports. We don't all get straight As. And we don't all have the same skills or talents. And that's okay. God made each of us just the way He wanted us. He designed us to play a part in His big rescue plan by living His way and showing Jesus' love to the world. If we are willing, He will help us do our part to change the world in big and little ways.

We sometimes think it only matters if we do big things, but how can these little things show God's love to someone else?

- Giving a flower to a neighbor, friend, or teacher.
- Showing a new classmate where his cubby is.
- Picking up the game your sister left out so she doesn't get in trouble.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Who was the commander of the Canaanite army?

  Sisera, Judg. 4:2
- Why did God allow the Canaanites to have power over his people?

  The Israelites turned away from God, Judg. 4:1–3
- What was the name of the judge God called to deliver the people?

  Deborah, Judg. 4:4
- Who did God choose to lead Israel's army?

  Barak, Judg. 4:6
- Barak said he would only lead the army if _____?

  Deborah went with him, Judg. 4:8
- How many men was Barak commanded to rally?

  10,000, Judg. 4:6
- Where did Sisera hide?

  In Jael's tent, Judg. 4:17
- What was Sisera doing when he was killed?

  Sleeping, Judg. 4:21
- Why did Jael kill Sisera?

  To free her people from their enemies

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Bible Trivia (Older Students)

- Form 2 to 4 groups of students. Provide paper and pencils or small white boards and markers. Ask the Bible review questions with shorter answers. Instruct teams to determine their answer as a

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group and write it down. Call for groups to hold up their answers. Award a point for each correct answer.

Simon Says (Older and Younger Students)

- Lead students in a game of Simon Says. Explain that they must listen carefully to your instructions. Instruct players to turn to the right, left, front or back. Try to trick the players by how you move your body. For example, you might say "Simon says, 'Turn to the left,'" while you turn your body to the right. Kids who move when you do not say "Simon says" or who turn the wrong direction are out.

- Just as some of you turned in the wrong direction, the Israelites turned away from God. God's people needed someone to rescue them from their enemies.

Take the Credit (Older and Younger Students)

- Have a volunteer come to the front of the room, sit in a chair and close her eyes. Choose another student to quietly tap her on the shoulder and then resume his seat. Invite the volunteer to open her eyes and guess who tapped her on the shoulder. After a couple of guesses, instruct the student who tapped her to take credit for it.

- Wouldn't it be strange if someone else took credit for tapping the person? That would not make any sense. That's what it would have been like if Deborah, Barak or Israel's army had taken credit for winning the battle. God's people needed someone to rescue them from their enemies, and God used Deborah and Barak in His plan. They did not deserve the credit for winning the battle because God won the battle for His people!

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Cross It Out (Older Students)
  - Answers: *Barak—God called me to go to battle; Sisera—I was the commander of the Canaanite army; Deborah—I ruled as a judge over Israel; Jael—I killed an enemy of the Israelites.*

- Musical Note Code (Younger Students)
  - Answer: *God's people needed someone to rescue them from their enemies.*

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, we thank You for Your mercy. You saved Your people, the Israelites, over and over when they turned away from You. Like them, we do not deserve Your love, but You love us anyway. We praise You because You are in control. You work all things together for Your glory and our good. We trust You and love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write a short prayer or poem, confessing your sin to God and asking for His forgiveness.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Who was responsible for the victory? (See Judges 4:6-7.)
- What does it mean to give glory to God?
- What do we need to be rescued from? Whom did God send to rescue us?

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DEBORAH AND BARAK

JUDGES 4–5

MAIN POINT: GOD'S PEOPLE NEEDED SOMEONE TO RESCUE THEM FROM THEIR ENEMIES.

Ehud and Shamgar had been judges over Israel. After they died, the Israelites forgot about God. So God allowed the king of Canaan to overtake them. The commander of the king's army was named Sisera. Sisera was cruel to the Israelites for 20 years. God's people remembered how good they had it when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to God, "Save us!"

Deborah was the judge over Israel at this time. One day, Deborah called for Barak and said, "God wants you to gather 10,000 men. God will help you defeat Sisera."

Barak said to Deborah, "I will go if you will come with me. If you won't come, I'm not going."

"I'll go," Deborah said. "But you will receive no honor for the battle."

"Barak, go! God will help you defeat Sisera today," Deborah said. Barak and his 10,000 men moved down the mountain toward Sisera and his army. The Lord confused Sisera and all of the army. Barak chased the chariots and the army. None of them survived, but Sisera had escaped!

Sisera went to the tent of Jael. Jael gave Sisera something to drink and covered him with a rug. Sisera was so exhausted that he fell into a deep sleep. Jael knew that Sisera was an evil man, an enemy of God. She killed him while he slept.

That day, God allowed the Israelites to defeat the Canaanites. The Israelites had won the battle! Deborah and Barak sang a victory song. They praised God for helping them beat the Canaanites. The land was peaceful for 40 more years.

Jesus Connection: *God does what is for His glory and our good. (Psalm 115:3; Romans 8:28) God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak and Jael to defeat Canaan. In a similar way, God uses people and events to not only save us from our enemies, but to bring about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.*

Key Passage: *Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.*

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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CROSS IT OUT

Cross out every third word. Then unscramble the remaining words to find the answer to the big picture question.

How does God accomplish His plan?

AND	GLORY	LORD	OUR
PEOPLE	PLAN	USES	FOR
BATTLE	GOOD	HIS	NOT

God _____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____.



WHO AM I?

Match each description to the person from the Bible.

Barak

Sisera

Deborah

Jael

I RULED AS JUDGE OVER ISRAEL.

GOD CALLED ME TO GO TO Bbattle.

I KILLED AN ENEMY OF THE ISRAELITES.

I WAS THE COMMANDER OF THE CANAANITE ARMY.

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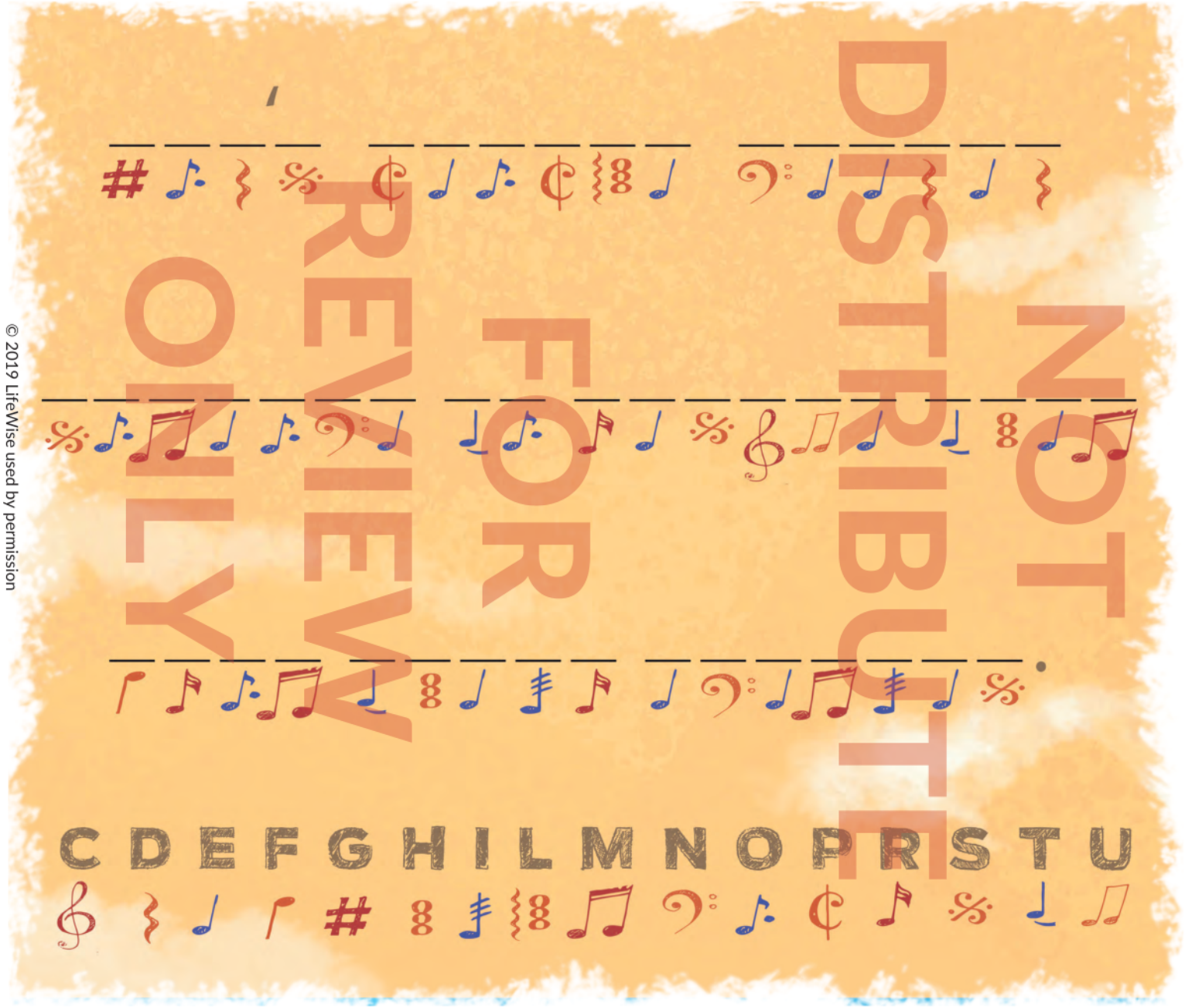
MUSICAL NOTE CODE

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the code at the bottom to fill in the words of today's main point.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

BIBLE STORY: DEBORAH AND BARAK

- When Israel forgot about God, God allowed Canaan to overtake them.
- God used a new judge, Deborah, to deliver Israel.
- Deborah told Barak to fight Canaan. He would only go if Deborah went with him.
- Barak, his army and Sisera defeated the Canaanites.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do you think Barak wanted Deborah to go with him?
- How can we develop our own faith in God?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Research how God used women in the Bible. Consider Ruth, Mary, Esther, Timothy's mother and grandmother, and so forth.
- Go further: Learn about a care ministry to women in your area and how you can get involved.

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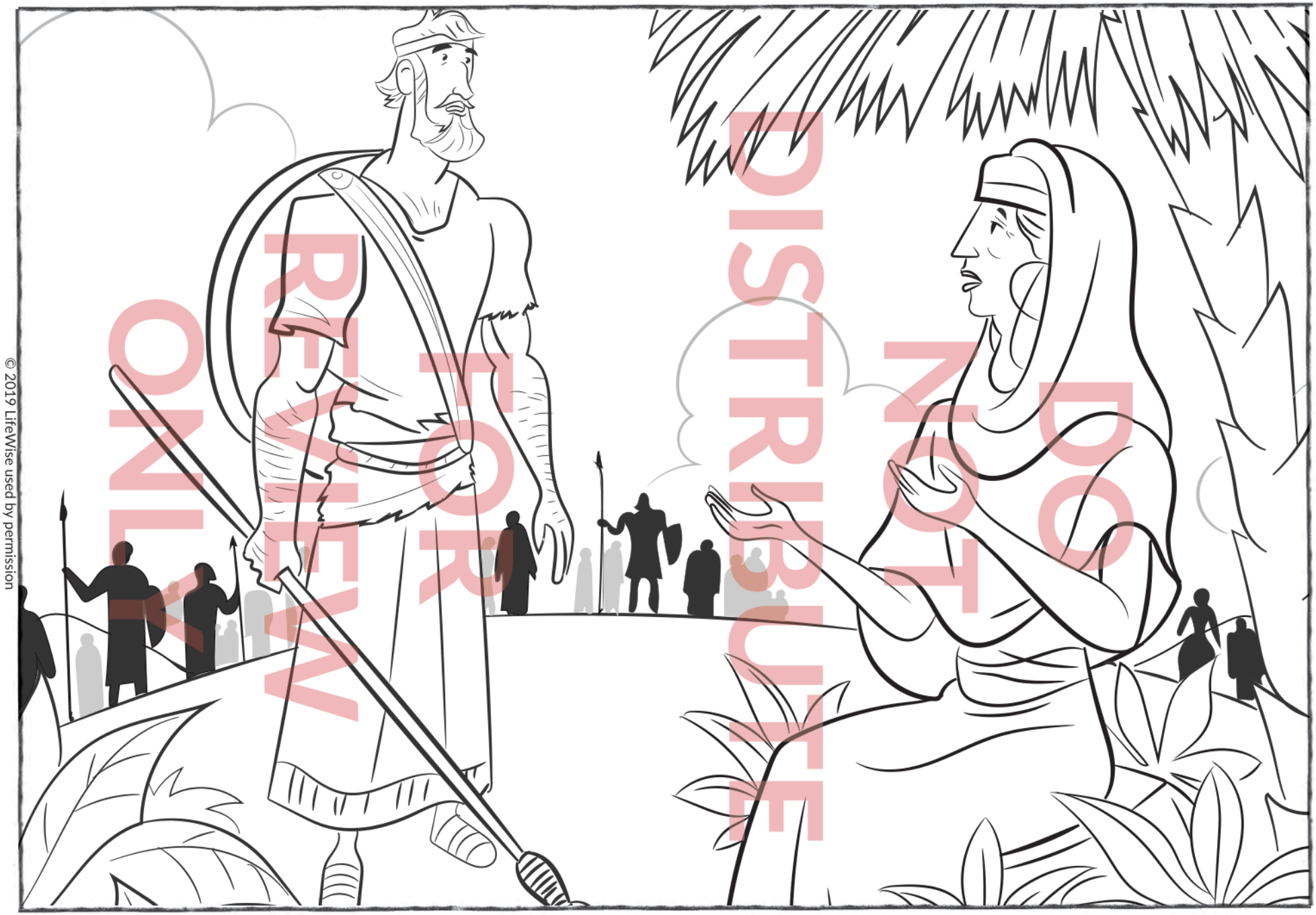

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GOD'S PEOPLE NEEDED SOMEONE TO RESCUE THEM FROM THEIR ENEMIES.

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LESSON 30: COURAGE

GIDEON

Judges 6–8

GIDEON

- Judges 6–8
- Big Picture Q&A: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.
- Key Passage: Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

JESUS CONNECTION

The Israelites cried out to God because they knew they could not save themselves. Even Gideon was not enough to save them; God used Gideon to save His people, but God fought the battle for them. The people needed someone who was mighty to save. Jesus Christ came to save us from sin because we cannot save ourselves. Only God, through Christ, can save us.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even when it's hard.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Judges 6 starts out in a familiar way: "The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord." The period of Judges was not a good time for the Israelites. Their cycle of sin, bondage, deliverance and peace clearly showed they had not learned from their past mistakes.

The Israelites were oppressed by the Midianites, and they cried out to God for help. God chose a man to save them, and his name was Gideon. Gideon was an unlikely leader, and he knew this. Gideon said, "Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house" (Judg. 6:15).

God doesn't need the biggest and the best to accomplish His plan. In fact, He often uses the weakest and least of people to fulfill His plans because that is what gives Him the most glory. God had a plan to empower Gideon in his weakness: "But I will be with you," He said (Judg. 6:16).

Gideon and an army of men assembled. God told Gideon he had too many men. God didn't want the men to think they had the power to defeat the Midianites themselves. When the army was reduced to just 300 men, they prepared for battle (see Judg. 7:1–7).

The men ran toward the Midianites' camp, blowing their trumpets and shouting. God turned the swords of the Midianites against each other. They ran away, but Gideon and his army chased after them and killed them.

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God was with the Israelites when they went to battle. The Israelites did not win the battle themselves; God fought for them. As you teach kids this week, point out that God used Gideon in the victory. Gideon alone was not enough to save the Israelites. Only God could win the battle. In the same way, we are unable to save ourselves from sin. Jesus came to save us from our sin because He is enough. Only God, through Christ, can save us.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Review the cycle of sin (*Away, Bondage, Cried, Deliverer, Ease*). Can anyone tell me which judge we learned about last time? I'll give you a hint: This judge was a woman. (*Deborah.*) God's people needed someone to rescue them from their enemies, and God told Deborah to tell Barak to gather an army. Unfortunately, Barak said he was only willing to do what God said if _____? (*Deborah went with him.*) Because of Barak's response, Deborah told Barak that someone else would receive the honor for winning the battle against Sisera. Who was it? (*A woman, Jael.*) God won the battle for the people. But after Deborah died, the people went through the same cycle of sin again. God raised up another judge whom we will learn about today. His name was Gideon.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Elimination Game (Younger Students)

- Instruct students to stand. Call out traits one at a time. If a student fits the description, he should follow your command. For each trait, you may choose to allow players to remain standing or to be seated. When only one or two players remain, invite all the students to stand. For example:
  - Sit down if your name begins with a vowel.
  - Remain standing if your birthday is in January, February, March, April or May.
  - Sit down if you are left-handed.
- In today's Bible story, an army started out with thousands of men. With that many soldiers, they probably could have easily won any battle! But God gave them a test and reduced the number to just 300.

Choose Your Weapon (Older and Younger Students)

- If you were chosen to be a soldier in a battle, what type of weapons do you think you would want to fight with? Allow students to answer, then display several pictures of modern or ancient weapons, like swords, guns, tanks or bows and arrows. Do these weapons seem like they would protect you well? Next, show students pictures of a clay pitcher, torch and ram's horn. Do these seem like good weapons for fighting a battle? Allow students to respond briefly.
- These things may not seem like powerful weapons, but God told the Israelites to use these weapons for a battle in today's Bible story!

Red Light, Green Light (Younger Students)

- Invite the class to play Red Light, Green Light according to traditional rules. After a few rounds, ask them how they know that a red light means stop and a green light means go. Talk about how they understood the commands because they have seen traffic lights and understood what those colors represented. Lights and signs tell us important messages that we must understand if we're

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going to stay safe. In today's Bible story, Gideon asked for a sign from God. We will discover more in a little while.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Isaiah 33:22

The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

Memory Verse Bop (Older and Younger Students)

- Inflate two balloons (keep one as a backup). Have students form a line. The first student in line will say the first word of the verse and bop the balloon to the next person in line. If a student can't remember the next word of the Bible verse, have the group say it together. For a more advanced class, have the balloon start back at the beginning of the line and verse every time someone forgets a word.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How does God accomplish His plan?

A: *God uses people for His glory and our good.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Gideon | Judges 6–8

The Israelites did what is evil in the sight of the Lord, so God allowed them to be ruled by their enemies, the Midianites. The Midianites destroyed their crops and livestock. The Israelites were so afraid of them that they left their homes and lived in caves nearby. Finally, after seven years, the Israelites cried out to God, "Save us!"

One day, a man named Gideon was hiding in a winepress, beating grain off the stalks to keep the food from the Midianites. The angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak tree. He **appeared to Gideon and said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior!"**

Gideon was afraid. He was not a soldier. His family was the weakest family in his tribe, and he was the youngest son in the family. But the **Lord chose Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the power of their enemy. He assured Gideon, "I will be with you."**

That night, God told Gideon to tear down the altar to a false god. So Gideon obeyed God, but Gideon did it at night because he was afraid of the men in the city. The next day, the men in the city saw that the altar was torn down. "Who did this?" they asked. When they found out Gideon had torn down the altar, they wanted to kill him, but God promised Gideon he would not die.

Some time later, Israel's enemies gathered together. So Gideon blew the ram's horn. An army of 32,000 men gathered behind Gideon, ready to fight. Gideon still wanted a sign from God. "If You will deliver Israel by my hand, as You say, I will put fleece on the ground. If the fleece is wet with dew, but the ground is dry, I will believe You."

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That is exactly what happened—the fleece was so wet Gideon squeezed enough water out of it to fill a bowl! **Again, Gideon asked for a sign. This time, the fleece was dry and the ground was wet. God showed Gideon He would deliver the Midianites into his hand through this miracle.**

God wanted Gideon to know that it was God's power alone that would deliver the Israelites. God told Gideon that he had too many men with him. He let anyone who was afraid to go to battle go home. 22,000 men left and 10,000 remained. "That's still too many," God said. **God told Gideon to lower the number of soldiers in this way: All of them were to go to the river to drink the water. Anyone who knelt to drink water directly from the stream was sent home, but whoever used his hands and brought the water to his mouth stayed. Only 300 men remained to fight.**

During the night, God told Gideon to take his servant, go into the Midianite camp and listen to what the Midianites were saying. Gideon arrived and heard a man talking about his dream. He said, "I had a dream that a round loaf of barley bread came rolling into our camp. It hit the tent with such force that the tent collapsed."

The man's friend responded, "The bread can be nothing but the sword of Gideon, the Israelite. God has given us and the whole camp into Gideon's hands" When Gideon heard this, he worshiped God.

Gideon woke up his soldiers and told them, "Get up, God has given the Midianites into your hands!" **That same night, the army carried torches, blew their trumpets and shattered pitchers before running toward the camp of Midianites. God gave Israel the victory,** and everyone in the Midianite army ran. Gideon and his army chased them away.

The Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us, for you delivered us from the Midianites."

Gideon said. "No, God will rule over you." But **after Gideon died, the Israelites did not remember the Lord, who had delivered them from the power of their enemies.**

JESUS CONNECTION

The Israelites cried out to God because they knew they could not save themselves. Even Gideon was not enough to save them; God used Gideon to save His people, but God fought the battle for them. The people needed someone who was mighty to save. Jesus Christ came to save us from sin because we cannot save ourselves. Only God, through Christ, can save us.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even when it's hard.

Living LifeWise

Because God is dependable, we can be courageous every day.

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Character Connection

Gideon is probably one of the wimpiest guys in the Bible. He wasn't big and athletic. He even knew he was the youngest, smallest guy in the least important family. When the angel came to Gideon, he was down in a hole hiding from God's enemies.

Even though Gideon wasn't very spectacular, God asked Gideon to do some pretty big things. Did Gideon jump up and do what God asked? Nope! He was scared, obeyed at night and asked for a sign … twice!

The fact is, Gideon was afraid all the time. But he still did what God asked him to do even though he was afraid. That's courage! He trusted that God would be big enough to keep His promises and help Gideon do what God called him to do. God calls us to do big things, too. And while it's okay to be scared, we can be courageous. Like Gideon, we can depend on God who is powerful and trustworthy and always good. God is with us today just like He was with Gideon way back then.

Would you be afraid in each situation? What might it look like to show courage?

- Your team is facing the best team in your league in today's game.
- The teacher asks for someone to read a speech in front of the whole school.
- You see a classmate being teased or made fun of in the bathroom.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Who was the judge of Israel before Gideon?**

  Deborah, Judg. 4:4

- **What group of people took over the Israelites?**

  The Midianites, Judg. 6:1

- **Who appeared to Gideon?**

  The angel of the Lord, Judg. 6:12

- **What did the angel say Gideon was?**

  A mighty warrior, Judg. 6:12

- **Why did Gideon tear down Baal's altar at night?**

  He was afraid, Judg. 6:27

- **How did Gideon call men to battle?**

  He blew the ram's horn, Judg. 6:34

- **How did God prove to Gideon that He would be with him?**

  God gave Gideon a sign by making the fleece wet and the ground dry, then the fleece dry and the ground wet; Judg. 6:36–40

- **How many men stayed to fight the battle with Gideon?**

  300, Judg. 7:6

- **Who did Gideon say would be the Israelites' leader?**

  God would lead them, Judg. 8:23

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Bible Story Guessing Game (Older Students)

- Write the following words on separate index cards: *Gideon*, *Midianites*, *Angel of the Lord*, *fleece*, *river*, *300*, *Jesus*. Invite students to play a guessing game. Players will take turns drawing a card. They have 30 seconds to describe what is on the card without saying the actual word. Group members may call out guesses. The first player to guess the word gets to draw the next card. Prompt students who guess the word to describe how the word relates to today's Bible story. Possible responses:

    - Gideon—the man God chose to lead Israel as a judge
    - Midianites—Israel's cruel enemies
    - Angel of the Lord—appeared to Gideon with a message and calling
    - Fleece—used by Gideon to receive a sign from God
    - River—where the soldiers went to drink water
    - 300—the number of soldiers remaining to fight
    - Jesus—the only one who truly saves

- God used Gideon's weakness to show that only He had the power to deliver the Israelites from their enemies.

Fear Factor 2.0 (Older and Younger Students)

- Create your own fear factor challenge for students. Dare them to eat odd or gross looking food. Congratulate anyone that meets the challenge. Ask students why they were hesitant to go through with the challenge.

- Before class, write the answers down on separate pieces of paper, when a student gives a corresponding answer, fasten it on a white board or wall. Gideon was afraid to obey God. What are some possible reasons he hesitated to listen? (*He was weak, not good enough, didn't believe God, didn't want to get hurt or die, didn't want to be a leader, afraid people would be angry or make fun of him, no one would listen, didn't think he could accomplish what God had planned.*) Have students create an order of biggest to smallest reasons.

- Do you ever feel a little like Gideon when God asks you to do difficult things in His word? [*Examples: Tell the truth, be generous with what we have, love our enemies, tell other people about God.*] When we feel afraid, weak or powerless, God is strong. He wants us to depend on Him and live courageously.

Bible Trivia (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Ask the first team a Bible review question. If they answer correctly, allow a player to roll a die to determine how many points they earn. If they are incorrect, award no points and play passes to the second team.

Story Review (Older and Younger Students)

- Let's see what you remember from the story. I will read a sentence. If the sentence is true, stand up. If the sentence is false, sit down.

    - The Midianites were good friends to the Israelites. (*False; they were enemies, Judg. 6:2*)
    - The angel of the Lord appeared to a man named Barak. (*False; to Gideon, Judg. 6:12*)

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- Gideon's family was the weakest family in the tribe. (*True, Judg. 6:15*)
- Gideon was the youngest son in his family. (*True, Judg. 6:15*)
- God promised to be with Gideon. (*True, Judg. 6:16*)
- Gideon put fleece on the ground and asked God to make it disappear. (*False; make it wet, Judg. 6:37*)
- Gideon's army went to a river to go sing. (*False; to drink water, Judg. 7:4–5*)
- Gideon went to battle with only 300 men. (*True, Judg. 7:6–8*)
- Israel lost the battle against the Midianites. (*False; they won, Judg. 8:4, 12, 22*)
- When Gideon died, the Israelites forgot about God. (*True, Judg. 8:33*)

Knock It Down (Older and Younger Students)

- Set up plastic cups or cans into a simple pyramid shape. If you have a large group, make several stations with cup pyramids. Put a piece of painter's tape on the floor a short distance from the pyramid. Students must stand behind the tape and toss a bean bag or small ball to knock down the pyramid. Have adult volunteers set them back up for the next student.

- After the game, discuss how God called Gideon to knock down idols. The Israelites turned from God and worshiped idols once again, including Gideon's father. When God called Gideon to deliver the Israelites, the first thing God told him to do was knock down the idols in his own house. The people of Gideon's village wanted to kill him, but guess what Gideon's dad said? "If Baal is a god, let Baal fight for himself" (Judg. 6:31–32). God used Gideon to get rid of the idols the people wanted to worship instead of God. What are some people or things you are tempted to love or worship more than God? Brainstorm ways to put God first by knocking down these idols. Pray with the students for the courage to place God first in their life.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- A Name for Gideon (Older Students)
  - Answer: *"The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."*

- Which Is Better? (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, You are mighty. When we hear the story of Gideon and the Israelites defeating the Midianites we want to give You praise and honor. We know that the Israelites did not win the battle on their own. You fought the battle for them. Help us to rely on You and not ourselves in everything we do. You are our strength. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write down something you like to do—even if you are not the best at it. Then write a few sentences about how you might do that task for the glory of God.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How many men went to battle with Gideon? (See Judges 7:7.)
- Who was really responsible for the Israelites' victory?
- Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Who saves us from our sin?



GIDEON

JUDGES 6–8

MAIN POINT: GOD USED GIDEON'S WEAKNESS FOR HIS GLORY.

The Israelites did what is evil in the sight of the Lord, so God allowed them to be ruled by their enemies, the Midianites. The Midianites were very mean to them, so the Israelites cried out to God, "Save us!"

The angel of the Lord appeared to a man named Gideon and said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior!"

The Lord chose Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the power of their enemy. He assured Gideon, "I will be with you."

Some time later, Israel's enemies gathered together. So Gideon blew the ram's horn. An army of men gathered behind Gideon, ready to fight. Gideon still wanted a sign from God. "If You will deliver Israel by my hand, as You say, I will put fleece on the ground. If the fleece is wet with dew, but the ground is dry, I will believe You."

That is exactly what happened! Again, Gideon asked for a sign. This time, the fleece was dry and the ground was wet.

God told Gideon that he had too many people with him. God made a test for the people. All of them were to go to the river to drink the water. Anyone who knelt to drink water was sent home, but whoever lapped the water with his tongue stayed. Three hundred men remained.

The next day, the army carried torches, blew their trumpets and shattered pitchers before running toward the camp of Midianites. God gave Israel the victory. But after Gideon died, the Israelites did not remember the Lord, who had delivered them from the power of their enemies.

Jesus Connection: *The Israelites cried out to God because they knew they could not save themselves. Even Gideon was not enough to save them; God used Gideon to save His people, but God fought the battle for them. The people needed someone who was mighty to save. Jesus Christ came to save us from sin because we cannot save ourselves. Only God, through Christ, can save us.*

Key Passage: *Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.*

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A NAME FOR GIDEON

Solve the code to discover how the angel of the Lord called to Gideon.

Each number matches up with a letter of the alphabet. (1 = A, 2 = B, 3 = C, and so on)

"The Lord is with you, ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____."

13 9 7 8 20 25 23 1 18 18 9 15 18



MAIN POINT WORD MAZE

Use the words of today's main point to fill in the crossword puzzle.



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WHICH IS BETTER?

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the item on the left or the right which you believe would be better.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

BIBLE STORY: GIDEON

- God called Gideon as a judge to deliver Israel from the Midianites.
- Gideon used a fleece as a sign from God that He would be with him.
- God told Gideon he had too many men and reduced his army to 300 men.
- Gideon's army carried torches, blew trumpets and shattered pitchers, and God gave them the victory.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How did you think the 300 men felt going into battle?
- What makes you afraid? Why?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Research various phobias and what the Bible says about fear.
- Go further: Overcome a common fear by telling someone about Jesus or inviting him to church with you.

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GOD USED GIDEON'S WEAKNESS FOR HIS GLORY.

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LESSON 31: STEWARDSHIP

SAMSON

Judges 13–16

SAMSON

- Judges 13–16
- Big Picture Q&A: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.
- Key Passage: Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

JESUS CONNECTION

Samson's sin led to his own death, but God used his death to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. Samson's story reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but God sent Him to die on the cross and rise again to rescue believers from sin and give them eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

STEWARDSHIP – Using the gifts God has given me wisely, without wasting them.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Samson was the last of the major judges of Israel. He was born to parents who dedicated him to the Lord as a Nazirite after the angel of the Lord announced that Samson would be born to save the Israelites from the power of the Philistines. A Nazarite was someone who made a vow to abstain from using any products from the grape vine (grapes, raisins, wine, vinegar) and fermented drinks, cutting their hair and having contact with a dead body (Num. 6:2–8).

Samson grew up, and God blessed him with great strength. But when Samson requested to marry a Philistine woman, his parents were confused. Samson was supposed to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines. Why would he want to marry one of them? But God had a plan in all of this (see Judg. 14:4).

As Samson prepared for the wedding, he gave a riddle to the men with him about an event that occurred on his way to Timnah (see Judg. 14:9–14). Days passed, and the men convinced Samson's wife to tell them the answer to the riddle. This action sparked a series of events that would eventually lead to the death of Samson.

When the men solved his riddle, Samson was so angry that he torched the fields of the Philistines. He used the jawbone of a donkey to kill 1,000 men, and he left his wife. The Philistine leaders determined to kill Samson. Later, when Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, the leaders bribed her into telling them where Samson's strength came from.

A man came and shaved the braids from Samson's head. He lost his strength and became helpless. The Philistines gouged out his eyes and took him prisoner. They had him stand between the pillars of a pagan temple. In a final plea to God, Samson asked for his strength back. God gave him strength, and Samson

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knocked over the pillars, collapsing the temple. In his death, Samson killed more Philistines than he had killed in his life (Judg. 16:30).

Though Samson disobeyed God, God used him to accomplish His purpose of delivering the Israelites from the Philistines. Jesus would come as the last Deliverer, saving through His life and His death those who would trust in Him.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We've been learning about the Israelites during the time of the judges. What cycle did they fall back into over and over? (*The cycle of sin.*) Last time, we learned about how God used Gideon. Why wasn't Gideon the most likely person to lead Israel? (*Wasn't a soldier, was from the smallest tribe, smallest family, was the youngest son.*) How did God help Gideon to have courage? (*He gave him signs.*) How many men did God defeat the Midianites with? (*300 men.*)

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Boot Camp Race (Older Students)

- Instruct students to lie down on the floor. Make sure everyone has room to move around. Explain the drill. On the count of three, students will quickly do one sit-up, one push-up and one jumping jack. For round two, have them do two sit-ups, two push-ups and two jumping jacks. Add a repetition to each activity every round (three, four, five, etc.). Students may stop when they are tired. The student who does the most repetitions wins.

- This activity required a lot of physical strength. Today's Bible story is about someone who was very strong, but his physical strength didn't come from working out. His strength came from God.

Who Is Stronger? (Older Students)

- Invite students to vote by raising their hands to determine who would win a fictional battle. If you have a tie, invite a few volunteers from opposing viewpoints to explain why their character would win and then vote again. [*Suggested battles: Batman vs. The Joker, Tyrannosaurus Rex v. Triceratops, Darth Vader v. The Emperor, Captain Marvel v. Thanos.*]

- In our favorite books, comics, video games and movies, our heroes often have weaknesses that make it harder for them to win the battle. In today's Bible story, Samson had great strength, but he also had a weakness. We will find out more in a moment.

Thumb Wrestling (Younger Students)

- Invite students to find a partner and clasp hands, making a fist with their thumbs up in the air. When you say *go*, students will try to pin down the other person's thumb for three seconds. Change partners and play again.

- Which is better in thumb wrestling, being strong or having flexible thumbs? Both skills could come in handy in a thumb-wrestling match. Today, we are going to learn about Samson. God made Samson incredibly strong so God could use him to defeat the Israelites' enemies, the Philistines.

Doctor, Doctor, Race (Younger Students)

- Choose a volunteer to be the "doctor." The doctor should go to the other side of the room while the students quietly choose an affliction (flu, poison ivy, mosquito bites, etc.). Students will act out

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symptoms (scratching, coughing, and so on). The doctor will ask students yes-or-no questions to try to diagnose the group's affliction. Play multiple rounds with a different affliction each time.

- Today's Bible story is about Samson. Just like we tried to figure out what made the group sick, a woman named Delilah kept asking Samson what made him strong.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Isaiah 33:22

The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

Key Passage Mix-Up (Older Students)

- Write words or phrases of the key passage on several paper plates or index cards. Punch a hole on each side of the plate or card, and cut lengths of string to go between each plate. Mix up the plates and challenge students to put them in order. When they finish, use the key passage poster to check their work. Use the string to tie together the plates in order and read the key passage aloud.

Key Passage Hair (Younger Students)

- Cut strips of black or brown construction paper and use a gel pen or chalk to write one word of the key passage on the strips. On a chalkboard or dry erase board, draw a simple stick figure "Samson." Mix up the key passage strips and provide tape. One at a time, kids will grab one strip and tape it to Samson's head in order, going clockwise around him. Once finished, invite kids to say the key passage together.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How does God accomplish His plan?
A: *God uses people for His glory and our good.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Samson | Judges 13–16

The Israelites disobeyed God, so God let their enemies, the Philistines, rule over them. One day, the angel of the Lord appeared to two of God's people: **Manoah** (muh NOH uh) **and his wife. He told them they would have a son who would save the Israelites from the Philistines. God had special instructions for their son: He should never cut his hair, eat or drink anything from the grapevine or touch a dead body.**

Manoah's wife had a baby, and she named him Samson. God blessed Samson and made him strong. When Samson grew up, he saw a Philistine woman he wanted to marry. He went with his parents to meet the woman. On their journey, a young lion jumped out at Samson. Samson killed the lion, but he did not tell his parents what he had done. **When Samson and his parents returned for the wedding, Samson found the lion's body. Some bees had made honey in the lion's body.** Samson scooped up some honey and ate it. He also gave it to his parents to eat, but they didn't know where it had come from.

Some Philistine men came to help Samson prepare the wedding feast. Samson told the men a riddle: Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet. The riddle was

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about the lion and the honey, but the men could not figure it out. They asked Samson's new wife for help. Samson told his wife the answer to the riddle, and she told the men. Samson had been tricked! He was angry, and he left his wife. When he went back to get her, she had married someone else. Samson was so upset that he burned the Philistines' fields. This made the Philistines angry. They wanted to kill Samson.

Samson led Israel for 20 years. Then Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistines offered Delilah a large amount of money if she would find out why Samson was so strong. Samson gave Delilah reasons for his strength, but none of them were true. He said, "If you tie me with seven fresh pieces of leather, I'll become as weak as any other man." Next he said, "If you tie me with new ropes that have never been used, I will become as weak as any other man." After this, he said, "If you weave my braids into the fabric on the loom and tighten it, I will become as weak as any other man." Delilah tested his explanations, but Samson was still strong.

Finally, Samson told Delilah the truth. "If you cut my hair, I will not have my strength," he said. So when Samson was sleeping, the Philistines cut his hair. Delilah shouted, "Samson! Wake up! The Philistines are here to kill you!" But **Samson wasn't strong anymore. The Philistines grabbed him and made him blind. They took him away in chains to prison.**

Samson's hair began to grow back. One day, the Philistines took Samson to a temple to their false God, Dagon (DAY gon)**. All the rulers of the Philistines came to offer sacrifices. They made Samson stand between two pillars in their temple.** Samson cried out to God, "Lord, please remember me. Strengthen me once more." So **God strengthened Samson. Samson pushed on the pillars and collapsed the temple. Samson and everyone in the temple died.**

JESUS CONNECTION

Samson's sin led to his own death, but God used his death to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. Samson's story reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but God sent Him to die on the cross and rise again to rescue believers from sin and give them eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

STEWARDSHIP – Using the gifts God has given me wisely, without wasting them.

Living LifeWise

God gives us gifts and abilities that He will help us steward wisely for His glory.

Character Connection

Samson is kind of a sad story in the Bible. God called Samson to save His people from the Philistines. And to do that, God gave him many amazing gifts, like extreme strength. Samson did use some of his gifts, some of the time, to do what God had called him to do, but he didn't always. He wasted his strength, and he broke God's law instead of obeying. Samson was foolish, instead of wise.

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God gives us gifts, too. The Bible tells us that each of us has been designed by God to do good works that He planned for us (Eph. 2:10). We may not be as strong as Samson—he knocked down a building by pushing on the columns!—but God has given us skills and abilities to serve Him and help others. Can you think of some gifts God gives us? [*Take answers, but add other, less obvious ones, too.*]

We have to choose whether we will be good stewards of the gifts God's given us or, like Samson, waste them. When we ask, God always helps us live wisely and use the gifts He's given us to share His love with the world.

Does the person in each situation use their gifts well or waste them?

- My friend is really smart, but instead of working hard at school, he doesn't try at all.
- I want to be the best musician I can be, so I practice for 30 minutes every day.
- My teacher always includes creative and fun ways to help us learn the material.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **When did God choose Samson to be a Nazarite?**

  Before he was born, Judg. 13:2–5
- **What wild animal did Samson fight?**

  A lion, Judg. 14:6
- **What did Samson later find inside the dead lion?**

  Some bees and honey, Judg. 14:9
- **What did the Philistines ask Delilah to do for them?**

  Learn the secret of Samson's strength, Judg. 16:5
- **What was the secret of Samson's strength?**

  His uncut hair, Judg. 16:17
- **What happened after the Philistines shaved Samson's head?**

  His strength left, Judg. 16:19
- **How did the Philistines punish him?**

  They blinded him and put him in prison, Judg. 16:21
- **How did Samson deliver the Israelites from the Philistines?**

  God gave him the strength to push down the pillars in the temple onto all the people, Judg. 16:28–30

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5–10 MIN)

God's Good Gifts (Older Students)

- Provide a marker and a piece of construction paper for each student. Instruct kids to write their names in large letters at the top of their papers. Have students sit in a circle and pass their papers one person to the right. Give kids 30 seconds to write on each piece of paper something positive they see in the person whose name is on the paper. Keep passing the papers to the right every 30 seconds until each paper reaches its owner.

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- Samson did not become powerful on his own. The Bible says that every good and perfect gift comes from God. We can thank God for blessing us with talents or abilities or qualities that glorify Him. As time allows, encourage kids to silently pray and thank God for giving them the things described on their pages. Prompt them to ask God for the power to use their gifts to glorify Him.

Bible Charades (Older Students)

- Before class, write a few phrases from the Bible story on index cards. Have two students pick a card and then silently work together to act out the scene on the card. The class will guess the part of the Bible story they are trying to portray. Be prepared to give students suggestions for actions or gestures. [*Examples: The angel appeared to Manoah and his wife, Samson killed the lion, Delilah tricked Samson, the Philistines captured Samson, Samson pushed down the temple pillars.*]

Bible Pictionary (Older and Younger Students)

- Instruct one student at a time to pick a card and silently draw the person, place or thing on the board. [*Examples: Angel, Samson, Lion, Honey, Delilah, Samson's hair, temple.*] The rest of the class should call out guesses. The first student to say the correct answer will be the next to draw. For classes that struggle to read, the teacher will divide the class into two teams and draw each word out. Both teams will guess. The team that guesses correctly will be awarded a point.

Strength As Weakness (Older and Younger Students)

- Follow the steps below by using scissors and a piece of 8 x 11" paper to challenge students to show off their strength. You may provide paper and scissors for students to try this or simply demonstrate and have them take turns attempting to tear your paper.

    1. Demonstrate how to fold the paper into thirds.
    2. Open the paper and cut along the folds, leaving approximately one inch uncut at the top of each fold.
    3. Point out that the paper is separated into three strips. Hold the paper by grabbing at the top of the two outer strips.
    4. Challenge students to try to tear the paper so the middle strip drops out, separating the paper into three pieces.

- Were you able to tear the paper into thirds? No matter how strong you are, you cannot tear the paper into three parts. The cuts in the paper are weak points, and they are not perfectly equal. When you pull the paper, it tears at the weaker point. In today's story, God gave Samson power. But when Samson's hair was cut, his strength left him. Even though Samson lost his strength, God made him strong again to help him defeat the Israelites' enemies, the Philistines.

Samson, Delilah, Philistines (Younger Students)

- This is a version of Rock, Paper, Scissors. Students will stand back to back with a partner. When you count to three, they will turn to face their partner and strike one of three poses: *Samson*: Flex your muscles in a strong man pose; *Delilah*: Put one hand on your hip; the other hand fluff your hair; *Philistines*: Hold up both fists in a boxing stance. Philistines beat Delilah, Samson beats the Philistines and Delilah beats Samson. For a large group, the partner who loses is out. The winners will choose a new partner and play again. Play until one student remains.

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- As much as the Philistines tried to beat Samson, Samson won in the end. This victory wasn't because of Samson and his strength, but because God had chosen Samson to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines.

Cheer or Boo (Younger Students)

- Read one statement at a time to the class. Explain that, for each statement, students should cheer if something good happened or boo if something bad happened.
    - Judges 13:1—Israel disobeyed the Lord. (*Boo*)
    - Judges 13:3–5—God promised a couple that their son would set Israel free from the Philistines. (*Cheer*)
    - Judges 13:24—Samson was born. (*Cheer*)
    - Judges 16:6—Delilah tried to find out what made Samson strong. (*Boo*)
    - Judges 16:7, 11, 13—Delilah tried to make Samson weak. (*Boo*)
    - Judges 16:17—Samson told Delilah the secret to his strength. (*Boo*)
    - Judges 16:19—A Philistine man cut off Samson's hair. (*Boo*)
    - Judges 16:21— The Philistines made Samson blind and made him a prisoner. (*Boo*)
    - Judges 16:22—Samson's hair started to grow back. (*Cheer*)
    - Judges 16:25— The Philistines brought Samson to the temple of their false god. (*Boo*)
    - Judges 16:28–30—Samson prayed, and God made him strong again. (*Cheer*)

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Samson in Action (Older Students)
    - Answers: *Who was the woman who lived in a tent? Jael, Judg. 4:17–24 Who met with the king of Moab? Ehud, Judg. 3:15–25 Who tested God by putting a fleece on the ground? Gideon, Judg. 6:11–16*

- Power Source (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for Your plan to rescue Your people. Thank You that nothing can stop Your plan, not even the weaknesses and sins of Your people. Help us to trust in Your plan to rescue us from sin by sending Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and rise again. Show us how to use our God-given gifts to share the good news about Jesus with others.

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Journal Page

List three things you are good at. Thank God for your talent. Then write a few sentences about how you might use your skills to glorify God. (We glorify God when we show others how great He is.)

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Samson was supposed to rescue the Israelites from what people?
- What was Samson not supposed to do? (See Judges 13:5.)
- Talk about a time you disobeyed. What were the consequences?



SAMSON

JUDGES 13–16

MAIN POINT: GOD GAVE SAMSON POWER.

The Israelites disobeyed God, so God let the Philistines rule over them. One day, the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife. He told them they would have a son who would save the Israelites from the Philistines. God had special instructions for their son: He should never cut his hair.

Manoah's wife named her son Samson. God blessed Samson and made him strong. When Samson grew up, he saw a Philistine woman he wanted to marry. He went to meet the woman. On the journey, a young lion jumped out at Samson. Samson killed the lion. When Samson and his parents returned for the wedding, Samson found the lion. Some bees had made honey in the lion's body.

Some Philistine men came to help Samson prepare the wedding feast. Samson told the men a riddle: *Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet.* The riddle was about the lion and the honey, but the men could not figure it out. They asked Samson's new wife for help. Samson told his wife the answer to the riddle, and she told the men. Samson had been tricked! He was angry, and he left his wife. When he went back to get her, she was gone.

Later, Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistines offered Delilah money if she would find out why Samson was so strong.

Finally, Samson told Delilah, "If you cut my hair, I will not have my strength." So when Samson was sleeping, the Philistines cut his hair. Samson wasn't strong anymore. The Philistines grabbed him and took him away in chains.

Samson's hair began to grow back. One day, the Philistines made Samson stand between two pillars in their temple. Samson cried out to God, "Lord, please strengthen me once more." So God strengthened Samson. Samson pushed on the pillars and collapsed the temple. Samson and everyone in the temple died.

Jesus Connection: *Samson's sin led to his own death, but God used his death to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. Samson's story reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but God sent Him to die on the cross and rise again to rescue believers from sin and give them eternal life.*

Key Passage: *Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.*

DISCIPLE BOOK

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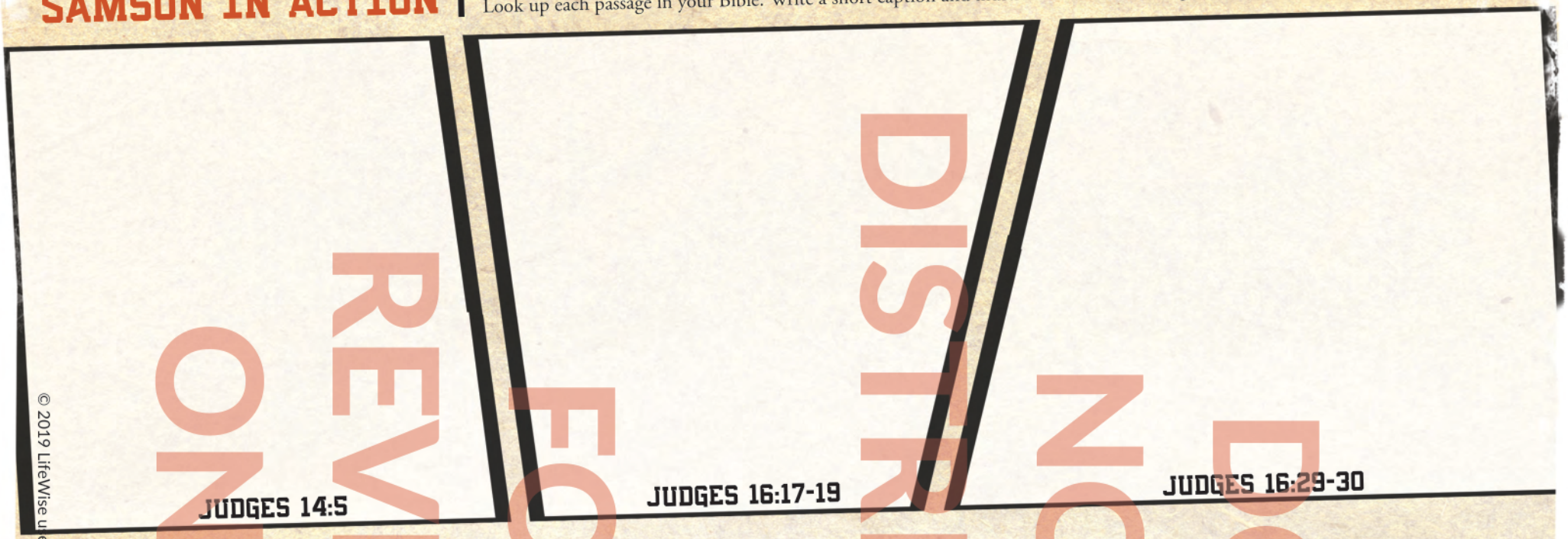
SAMSON IN ACTION

Look up each passage in your Bible. Write a short caption and illustrate the scene to complete the comic strip.



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WHO AM I? RIDDLES

Can you solve these riddles about people in the Bible? Look up the verses to check your answer!

THIS MAN MET WITH EGLON,
KING OF MOAB.
HE PULLED OUT HIS SWORD
AND GAVE HIM A JAB.
GOING ONTO THE PORCH
AND LOCKING THE DOOR,
HE LEFT THE KING THERE,
DEAD ON THE FLOOR!

WHO AM I? (SEE JUDGES 3:15-25.)

THERE ONCE WAS A WOMAN
WHO LIVED IN A TENT.
GOD USED HER FOR GLORY
IN ONE BIG EVENT.
WHEN THE ARMY COMMANDER
CAME IN FOR A SNOOZE,
SHE GAINED ISRAEL'S VICTORY
AND CANAAN DID LOSE.

WHO AM I? (SEE JUDGES 4:17-24.)

AN ANGEL APPEARED
UNDER A TREE
AND TOLD THIS MAN,
"A MIGHTY WARRIOR YOU'LL BE!"
THIS MAN TESTED GOD,
PUTTING FLEECE ON THE GROUND.
GOD CLEARLY WAS WITH HIM;
HE WAS ALWAYS AROUND!

WHO AM I? (SEE JUDGES 6:11-12.)

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POWER SOURCE

INSTRUCTIONS: Match the four items on the left with its power source on the right. Not all power sources will be used.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

BIBLE STORY: SAMSON
- God chose Samson to deliver Israel from the Philistines.
- God made Samson strong.
- Delilah told the Philistines the secret to Samson's strength.
- Samson pushed on the pillars of the Philistine temple and it collapsed.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Do you think Samson loved God like he should have? How do we fail to love God at times?
- What are you good at? How can you use that talent for God's glory?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Conduct a family Olympics or feats of strength competition.
- Go further: Take bottled water or sports drinks to a local park where people run or exercise and give them away for free.

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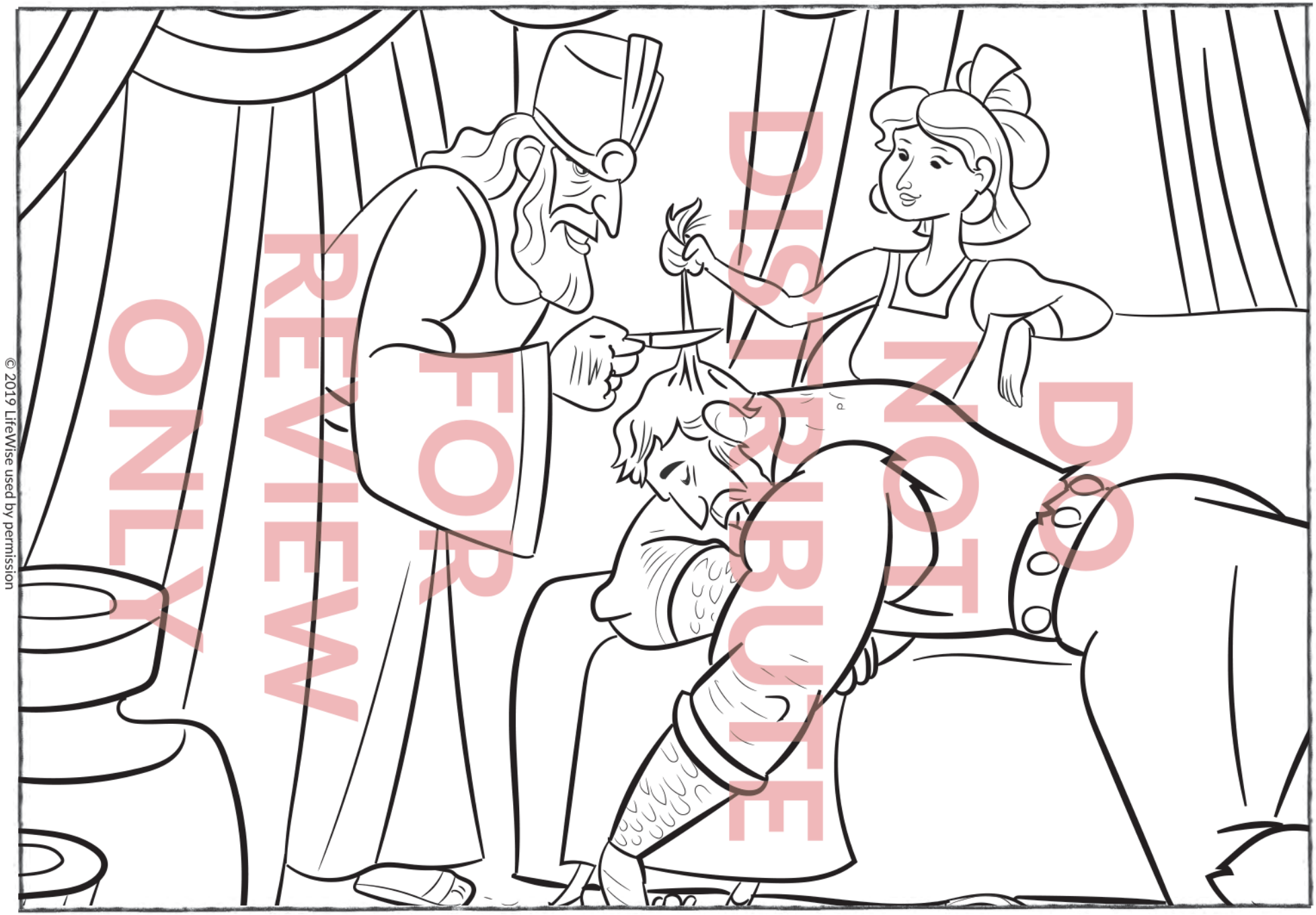

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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GOD GAVE SAMSON POWER.

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LESSON 32: KINDNESS

RUTH AND BOAZ

Ruth 1–4

RUTH AND BOAZ

- Ruth 1–4
- Big Picture Q&A: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.
- Key Passage: Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

JESUS CONNECTION

Boaz was a family redeemer. That means he would help his close relatives who were in trouble. Boaz cared for Ruth and Naomi because their husbands had died. In a similar way, Jesus is our Redeemer. We need help because we sin. Jesus bought our salvation by taking our punishment when He died on the cross.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

KINDNESS – Showing others they are valuable by treating them with compassion and generosity.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Only two books in the Old Testament bear the name of a woman: Ruth and Esther. Ruth's story occurs at the time when judges ruled over Israel. God's people were characterized by rebellion and immorality. At a time when the Israelites desperately needed a king to lead them back to God, Ruth's story of faithfulness points us to Jesus Christ, a coming Redeemer who will make all wrong things right again.

Ruth was the daughter-in-law of Naomi, a woman from Bethlehem who settled in Moab with her husband and two sons to escape a famine. Naomi's husband died, and her two sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. They lived in Moab for 10 years; then Naomi's sons died.

Naomi heard that the Lord had provided food for His people during the famine, so she decided to go back to Judah. Naomi encouraged Orpah and Ruth to return to their families. Orpah returned home, but Ruth clung to Naomi. Ruth said, "Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God" (Ruth 1:16). So Naomi and Ruth traveled back to Bethlehem together.

Naomi permitted Ruth to gather fallen grain in a field. The owner of the field was Boaz, a relative of Naomi's late husband and a family redeemer. Boaz noticed Ruth and told her she could safely gather grain in his field. At Naomi's urging, Ruth sought to be redeemed by Boaz. Boaz bought back the land Naomi and Ruth had lost when their husbands died, and he married Ruth. They had a son named Obed, whose grandson was King David.

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God gave Ruth—a foreigner—a special place in the lineage of Jesus Christ. As you teach students today, introduce them to Jesus, our Redeemer. He bought for us salvation, paying the price with His very own blood.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We've been learning about the judges of Israel. Can anyone name the first judges? There were three. (*Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar.*) What was the name of the female judge we learned about? (*Deborah.*) What judge admitted he was very small and weak? (*Gideon.*) What judge did God give great physical strength to? (*Samson.*) Do you remember the secret of Samson's strength? (*His uncut hair.*) How was Samson able to defeat the Philistines inside? (*God gave him the strength to push down the pillars of the temple when the people were inside.*)

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Key Word Scramble (Older Students)

- Form groups of 4–6 students. For each group, write the following letters on separate paper plates: *R*, *E*, *D*, *E*, *E*, *M*. Mix up the plates and scatter them on the floor. Challenge students to arrange the plates to form a word, using every letter. The first group to come up with the word *redeem* wins. If groups struggle, give hints such as "The first letter is *R*" or "This word is found several times in Ruth 3."
- The word *redeem* means "to buy back." In today's Bible story, a man named Boaz redeemed a woman named Ruth. Let's find out more about what that means.

I'm Going on a Journey (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite students to sit with you in a circle. Begin a simple pat, clap, clap rhythm as you say "I'm going on a journey and I'm going to take an [*a food that begins with an A*]." The student to your right will say, "I'm going on a journey, and I'm going to take a [*food that begins with B*]." Continue moving clockwise around the circle as you go through the alphabet. Encourage creativity for difficult letters. If someone gets stumped, invite another player to offer a suggestion.
- Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, were widows. Their husbands had died, and they did not have any sons. Naomi decided to journey back to the land of Israel, and Ruth went with her. They were poor, so they would only have taken a few things with them.

Hunt and Gather (Younger Students)

- Before the session, cut various colors of construction paper into small squares—at least 10 squares of each color. Hide the squares around the room. Form a team for each color of paper square. Instruct each team to collect the squares in its assigned color. When teams have found all the squares, mix up the papers and scatter them over the floor. Reassign colors and play again. Challenge teams to be the first to gather all the squares of their color.
- During Bible times, God's laws allowed poor people to glean, or collect leftover crops from farmers' fields. God told the Israelites not to harvest the corners of their fields. They were to leave these areas for the poor. In today's Bible story, a woman named Ruth went into a field to gather leftover grain.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Isaiah 33:22

The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

Hunt, Gather and Thresh (Older and Younger Students)

- Write the words of the key passage on separate index cards. Make multiple sets if your class is large. Include several random words [*peanut, teacher, Boaz, an, etc.*]. Mix up the cards and scatter them face-up on the floor. Students should take turns searching the cards and picking up one word that belongs in the key passage. They should arrange the cards to complete the key passage. Then guide them to say the passage aloud together.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How does God accomplish His plan?

A: *God uses people for His glory and our good.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Ruth and Boaz | Ruth 1–4

Naomi lived in Bethlehem in Judah with her husband, Elimelech (iy-LIHMM-eh-Lehk), and their two sons. At that time, the people of Israel were ruled by judges like Gideon, Samson and Deborah. **There was a famine in the land, so** it was difficult to find enough food to survive. **Naomi and her husband decided to go to Moab.**

While they were in Moab, Naomi's husband died. Naomi's sons married women from Moab, Orpah and Ruth. They lived in Moab for 10 years, and then Naomi's sons died. Naomi, Orpah and Ruth were all alone. **The famine was over, so Naomi decided to go home to Israel.**

The women were very sad to leave each other. **Orpah returned home, but Ruth clung to Naomi. "Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God," Ruth said. So Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem together.**

Naomi gave Ruth permission to go into the fields and gather fallen grain. She happened to go to the field of Boaz, a good man from the family of Naomi's late husband. Ruth worked hard, picking up grain all morning. Boaz saw Ruth in his field. He had heard how kind Ruth was to Naomi, so **Boaz told Ruth to stay in his field where she would be safe. Boaz made sure Ruth had enough food to gather.**

Ruth gathered plenty of grain in the field. She **returned to Naomi and told her about Boaz. "Boaz is one of our family redeemers," Naomi replied. A *family redeemer* was someone who would help his close relatives if they were in trouble. Naomi knew Boaz would take care of Ruth, so she encouraged Ruth to stay in his fields.**

Naomi wanted to make sure Ruth had a husband to care for her, so she gave Ruth special instructions. Ruth did as Naomi said. She put on her best clothes, went to the threshing floor where Boaz was spending the night and laid down near Boaz's feet and uncovered them. In this way, Ruth showed Boaz that she hoped he would marry her. Boaz woke up later and was surprised to find Ruth at his feet. "Who are you?" Boaz asked.

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"I am your servant Ruth," she answered. "You are my family redeemer."

Boaz spoke kindly to Ruth. He promised to redeem her, which meant he would buy back the land that Naomi sold after her husband died, and he would marry Ruth. Ruth spent the rest of the night at his feet. Then Boaz gave Ruth grain and sent her home.

Boaz bought back the land that had belonged to Naomi's family, and he married Ruth. Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed. Naomi took care of Obed. When Obed grew up, he was the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David.

JESUS CONNECTION



Boaz was a family redeemer. That means he would help his close relatives who were in trouble. Boaz cared for Ruth and Naomi because their husbands had died. In a similar way, Jesus is our Redeemer. We need help because we sin. Jesus bought our salvation by taking our punishment when He died on the cross.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

KINDNESS – Showing others they are valuable by treating them with compassion and generosity.

Living LifeWise

God's compassion for us motivates us to show kindness to others.

Character Connection

We all want to be treated kindly. While we sometimes think it's enough to not be purposely *un*kind to someone, Boaz shows a better way to be kind. He was intentionally kind with his attention, his words *and* his actions. He paid attention to Ruth, even though she was a foreigner and a widow and totally *not* someone a man like Boaz would typically notice. He spoke kindly to her, praising her character and inviting and welcoming her to his fields. He acted kindly to her. He gave her grain repeatedly so they would have food. He put her under his protection, and he redeemed the women and their family's land.

Boaz represents God and how God treats us with abundant kindness. He pays attention to us and knows us (Psalm 139). The Bible is full of His kind words and promises, and He answers when we pray. He always acts kindly toward us (Jer. 9:24). The Bible is filled with references to God's loving-kindness to us. God is abundantly kind. And when we follow Him, His Spirit helps us to be abundantly kind to other people, too.

Does each situation I share show someone being kind in attention, words or actions?

- You let a classmate who is difficult to get along with tell you a story. (*Attention*)
- The art teacher points out several positive qualities for every single piece. (*Words*)
- You really want to go out to recess, but stay to help another student finish putting away her stuff before you go. (*Actions*)

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Why did Naomi and her family leave Israel?

  A famine, Ruth 1:1

- Whom did Naomi's two sons marry?

  Ruth and Orpah, Ruth 1:4

- What happened to Naomi's husband and two sons?

  They died, Ruth 1:3–4

- Ruth promised not to leave Naomi saying, "Where you go, _____."

  I will go, Ruth 1:16b

- Who was Boaz?

  A family redeemer, Ruth 2:20

- What did Naomi tell Ruth to do in order to ask Boaz to be her family redeemer?

  Put on her best clothes, go to the threshing floor at night, uncover Boaz's feet and lay down at his feet, Ruth 3:3–4

- Who was Boaz and Ruth's great grandson?

  King David, Ruth 4:21–22

- Whose family line was Ruth included in?

  Jesus' family line, Matt. 1

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Ruth and Naomi (Older Students)

- Attach a large piece of paper to a focal wall. Draw a Venn diagram (two overlapping circles) on the paper. Label one circle *Ruth* and the other *Naomi*. Invite students to call out details they remember from the Bible story about Ruth and Naomi. They should describe how Ruth is different from or similar to Naomi. If a characteristic is true for only Ruth, write it in Ruth's circle. If it is true for only Naomi, write it in Naomi's circle. If it is true for both women, write it in the middle where the circles intersect. If students struggle to remember details, provide the sample statements and allow them to determine who the statement describes. [*Examples:* ***Naomi*** *(came from Bethlehem, had two sons, was related to Boaz);* ***Ruth*** *(came from Moab, married Boaz, had a son named Obed);* ***Both*** *(had a husband who died, returned to Bethlehem, was cared for by Boaz).*]

- Ruth understood some of the hard things Naomi had been through and chose to sacrifice her wants and desires (to stay with her family and people, to marry again, to live comfortably, etc.) to help her mother-in-law.

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Family Mix-Up (Older Students)

- Write the following names on separate plastic cups or index cards: *Abijah, Abraham, Ahaz, Boaz, David, Eleazar, Hezekiah, Isaac, Jacob, Jehoshaphat, Jesse, Jesus, Joseph, Josiah, Matthan, Obed, Rehoboam, Solomon, Uzziah, Zerubbabel*. Scatter the cards or cups on the floor or on a table. Provide Bibles and challenge students to use the genealogy listed in Matthew 1:2–16 to put the names in order. They should begin with *Abraham* and end with *Jesus*. When students finish, check their answers. [*Genealogy of Jesus Answer Key: Matthew 1:1–16; 1. Abraham, 2. Isaac, 3. Jacob 4.*

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Boaz, 5. Obed, 6. Jesse, 7. David, 8. Solomon, 9. Rehoboam, 10. Abijah, 11. Jehoshaphat, 12. Uzziah, 13. Ahaz, 14. Hezekiah, 15. Josiah, 16. Zerubbabel, 17. Eleazar, 18. Matthan, 19. Joseph, 20. Jesus.]

- Ruth lived more than 1,000 years before Jesus was born, but even then God was working out His plan to rescue people from sin. God provided a redeemer for Ruth, and He provided a greater Redeemer—His Son, Jesus. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin so those who trust in Him can receive forgiveness and eternal life.

Bible Scenes (Older Students)

- Divide students into four groups. Provide each group with a Bible, a large piece of paper and crayons or markers. Assign each group one of the following passages from the Bible story. Guide them to find the passage in the Bible, read it, then work together to draw a picture of the scene.
  - Ruth 1:1–5 (Naomi and her family left their home to escape a famine.)
  - Ruth 2:1–7 (Ruth gathers grain in Boaz's field.)
  - Ruth 2:17–20 (Ruth carried 64 pounds of grain home to Naomi.)
  - Ruth 4:13–17 (Boaz married Ruth, and they gave Naomi a son who was King David's grandfather.)
- After the groups finish their drawings, invite them to share their creations and describe what is going on in the scene. You may choose to retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script, pausing for each group to give further detail. Make sure the students understand what it means that Boaz was a family redeemer: he would help his close relatives who were in trouble. Boaz cared for Ruth and Naomi because their husbands had died. In a similar way, Jesus is our Redeemer. We need help because we sin. Jesus bought our salvation for us by taking our punishment when He died on the cross.

Bell Trivia (Younger Students)

- Briefly review the story and use the questions above to play Bible Trivia. Place one bell in the center of the room. Have two students stand at opposite sides of the room. Instruct students to run to ring the bell once they have heard the trivia question. The student who rings the bell first may answer first. If they answer incorrectly, allow the second student to answer.

Wherever You Go, I'll Go (Younger Students)

- Form a path or obstacle course using the items in your room. Guide students to choose a partner and spread out around the room. Remind them of Ruth's response to Naomi: "Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." Invite one partner to say to the other, "Wherever you go, I'll go." He should close his eyes as his partner leads him along the path. Play again with the other partner leading. Continue playing as time allows. If working with a large class, divide the class so that some students do this activity and some work on their activity page. Then, switch.

- Ruth understood some of the hard things Naomi had been through and chose to sacrifice her wants and desires (to stay with her family and people, to marry again, to live comfortably, etc.) to help her mother-in-law.

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Key Word Scramble (Younger Students)

- Form groups of 4–6 students. For each group, write the following letters on separate paper plates: *R*, *E*, *D*, *E*, *E*, *M*. Mix up the plates and scatter them on the floor. Challenge students to arrange the plates to form a word, using every letter. The first group to come up with the word *redeem* wins. If groups struggle, give hints such as "The first letter is *R*" or "This word is found several times in Ruth 3."

- The word *redeem* means "to buy back." In today's Bible story, a man named Boaz redeemed a woman named Ruth. What did it mean for Boaz to redeem Ruth?

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- On the Move (Older Students)

- How Much? (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, thank You for reminding us You are always ready to rescue those who call out to You for help. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to redeem us and rescue us from our sin. Help us to tell others Jesus's great love story! Amen.

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Journal Page

List people who provide for you or protect you. Be sure to thank those people for their care! Whom did God send to care for us in the greatest way?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Who promised to take care of Ruth and her family?
- When Jesus redeems us, whose family are we adopted into?
- How can you show God's love to someone in need?



DISCUSSION GUIDE

RUTH AND BOAZ

RUTH 1–4

MAIN POINT: GOD PROVIDED A REDEEMER FOR RUTH.

Naomi lived in Bethlehem in Judah with her husband and their two sons. There was a famine in the land, so Naomi and her husband decided to go to Moab. While they were in Moab, Naomi's husband died. Naomi's sons married women from Moab, Orpah and Ruth. They lived in Moab for 10 years, and then Naomi's sons died. The famine was over, so Naomi decided to go home.

Orpah returned home, but Ruth clung to Naomi. "Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God," Ruth said. So Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem together.

Naomi gave Ruth permission to go into the fields and gather fallen grain. She happened to go to the field of Boaz, a good man from the family of Naomi's late husband. Boaz told Ruth to stay in his field where she would be safe. Boaz made sure Ruth had enough food.

Ruth told Naomi about Boaz. "Boaz is one of our family redeemers," Naomi replied. A *family redeemer* was someone who would help his close relatives if they were in trouble. Naomi knew Boaz would take care of Ruth, so she encouraged Ruth to stay in his fields.

Boaz promised to redeem Ruth, which meant he would buy back the land that Naomi sold after her husband died, and he would marry Ruth.

Boaz bought back the land that had belonged to Naomi's family, and he married Ruth. Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed.

Jesus Connection: *Boaz was a family redeemer. That means he would help his close relatives who were in trouble. Boaz cared for Ruth and Naomi because their husbands had died. In a similar way, Jesus is our Redeemer. We need help because we sin. Jesus bought our salvation for us by taking our punishment when He died on the cross.*

Key Passage: *Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.*

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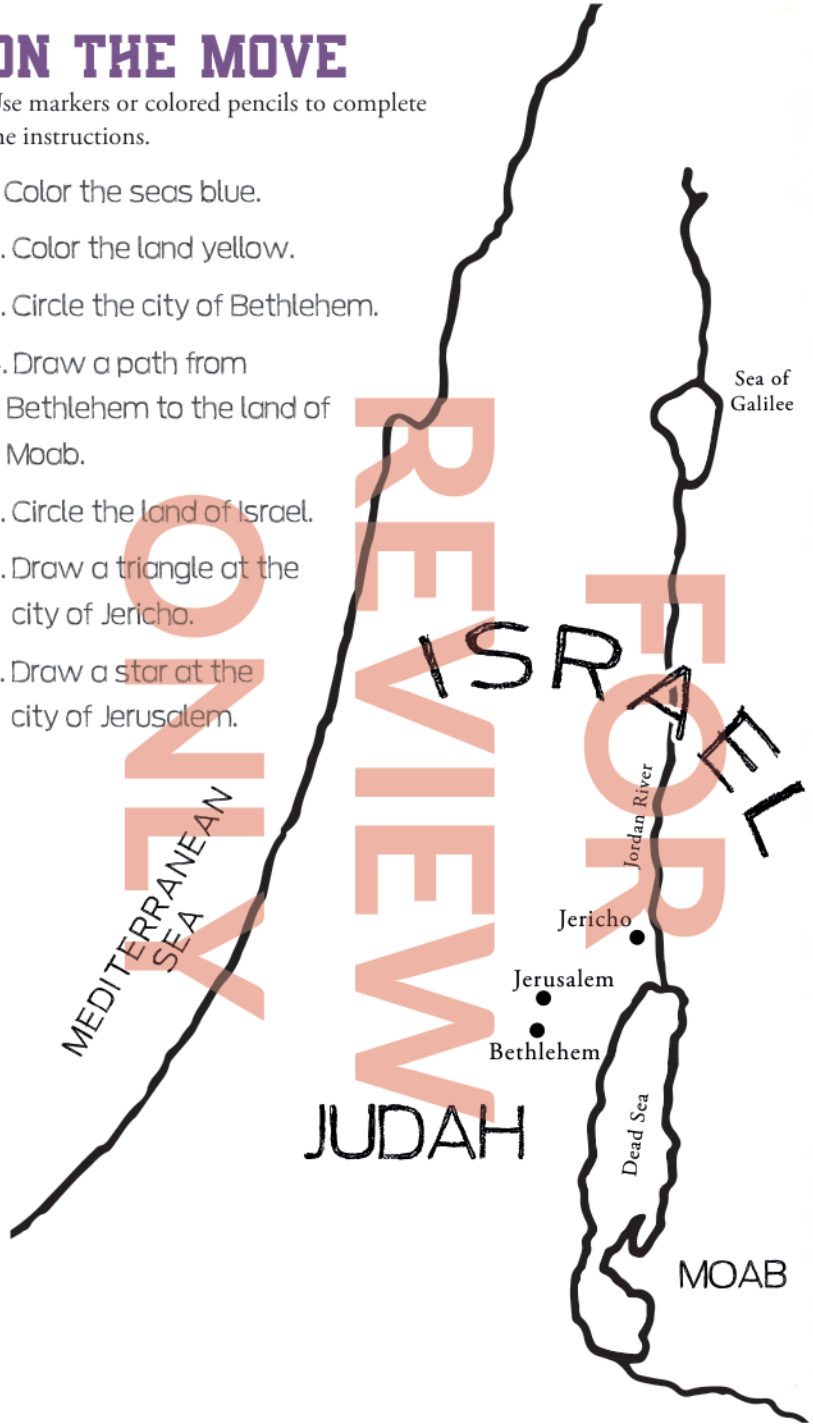
ON THE MOVE

Use markers or colored pencils to complete the instructions.

1. Color the seas blue.
2. Color the land yellow.
3. Circle the city of Bethlehem.
4. Draw a path from Bethlehem to the land of Moab.
5. Circle the land of Israel.
6. Draw a triangle at the city of Jericho.
7. Draw a star at the city of Jerusalem.



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GATHERING GRAIN

Collect the fallen grain. Leave behind any pieces that have a match. Circle the remaining pieces and then rearrange them to discover the main point.

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HOW MUCH?

INSTRUCTIONS: Match each item with how much you think it is worth at the bottom of the page.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

BIBLE STORY: RUTH AND BOAZ

- When their husbands died, Ruth followed her mother-in-law Naomi from Moab to Bethlehem.
- Boaz was a family redeemer for Ruth and married her.
- Boaz and Ruth were ancestors of King David and Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How do you think it felt for Ruth to be redeemed? How should we feel being redeemed by Jesus?
- How has God provided for our family? How can we be more grateful for what He has given us?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Collect items for a homeless shelter or conduct a yard sale and donate the proceeds to one.
- Go further: Volunteer at a local homeless shelter, soup kitchen or local charity.

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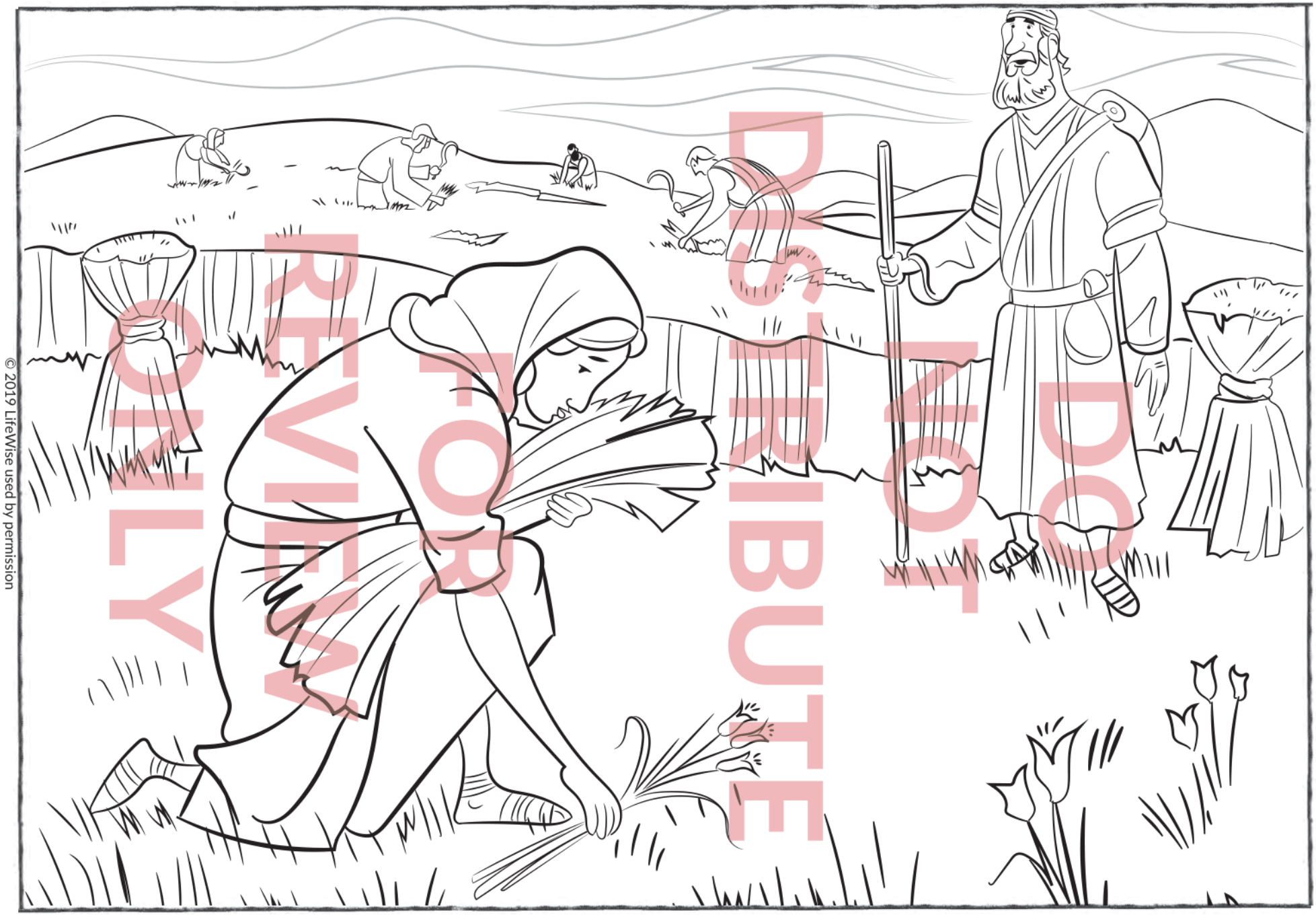

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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GOD PROVIDED A REDEEMER FOR RUTH.

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LESSON 33: ATTENTIVENESS

ELI AND SAMUEL

1 Samuel 1–3

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ELI AND SAMUEL

- 1 Samuel 1–3
- Big Picture Q&A: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.
- Key Passage: Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

JESUS CONNECTION

Samuel used God's words to tell the people what God is like. John 1:1 says that Jesus is the Word. Jesus showed the world what God is like, and He told people to turn away from their sin. Jesus ultimately freed people from the power of sin by dying on the cross and rising again.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

ATTENTIVENESS – Choosing to listen and pay attention to others.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Hannah—an ordinary Israelite during the time of the judges—wanted nothing more than to be a mother, but the Lord had closed her womb (1 Sam. 1:5). Each year when her husband went to Shiloh to worship and to sacrifice to God, Hannah went up to the house of the Lord. One evening, Hannah returned to present herself to the Lord. She wept and prayed, asking God to give her a son and vowing to dedicate him to God. Hannah's cries to the Lord were so fervent that Eli the priest rebuked her because he thought she was drunk.

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"I haven't had any wine or beer; I've been pouring out my heart before the Lord," Hannah explained.

Eli blessed Hannah and said, "May God answer your prayers." God answered Hannah's prayers. Hannah had a son. She named him Samuel, which means "requested from God."

Hannah took Samuel to Shiloh after he was old enough to be weaned (around age 3 or 4) and presented him to Eli. First Samuel 2 records Hannah's triumphant prayer. Hannah glorified God for His sovereignty, then she went home with her husband, leaving Samuel to serve God under the leadership of Eli the priest. Samuel faithfully served God. Hannah visited Samuel each year and brought him a robe.

Now Eli had two sons of his own who were also priests. Eli had trouble controlling his sons. They were wicked men with no regard for God. They took and ate part of the sacrifices that were meant to be offered to God (1 Sam. 2:12–16). Eli rebuked his children, but they did not listen. So God rejected Eli's family.

Review 1 Samuel 3. Note how Samuel responded to God's call: "Speak, for Your servant is listening." Samuel was the prophet Israel needed to give them God's guidance. He became a prophet of God and was

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the last judge of Israel. Help students identify Samuel's role as God's messenger. Help them connect Samuel to Jesus, who came to Earth not only to tell what God is like, but to show what He is like.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time, we learned a story that took place during the time of the Judges. Whom did a woman named Naomi lose? (*Her husband and two sons.*) Who volunteered to care for Naomi after her sons died? (*Ruth.*) How did Ruth find food for Naomi and herself? (*Gleaning in the grain fields.*) What was the name of Ruth's kinsman redeemer? (*Boaz.*) What did Boaz choose to do when he realized that Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi were poor and had no one to care for them? (*Redeem them.*)

Today's Bible story is found in the book of 1 Samuel, but it is part of the Judges stories because a man named Samuel is considered the last of the Old Testament judges. Today we will see how God called Samuel to be a part of His plan.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Telephone Game (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite the class to sit in a circle or line. Whisper short phrases from the main point or big picture question in the ear of the student on your right. He will whisper it to the student on his right, and she will pass it to the student on her right. Continue to pass the message around the circle until it reaches you again. If the message is correct, congratulate the class. If the message is incorrect, say, "Listen again," and repeat the sentence into the ear of the first student. Continue playing as time allows.

- In today's Bible story, someone gave Samuel an important message that he had to tell Eli the priest. We will learn more in our Bible story.

Whose Voice? (Older and Younger Students)

- Position a chair at the front of the room. Choose a volunteer to sit in the chair with her back to the rest of the students. Point to a student in the group. He should call out the name of the volunteer in the chair two times. The volunteer should try to guess who is speaking by replying, "Speak, [*student's name*], for I am listening!" Allow the volunteer a few guesses if necessary. Then choose a new volunteer to take her place.

- Today we are going to hear a story from the Bible about Samuel. Samuel heard someone calling to him, but he wasn't sure who it was. Let's find out what happened.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Isaiah 33:22

The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

Quadrant Shout Out (Older Students)

- Use tape to mark a large *X* on the floor. Form four groups and have each group stand in one quadrant. Show the key passage poster and assign one phrase of the passage to each quadrant. When you point to each group, they will say that quadrant's phrase together. Call out "Left!" or "Right!" to signal the groups to move one quadrant to the left or right. Each group must now say

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the phrase that was assigned to their new quadrant. You might call out "Left two!" or "Right one!" to indicate how groups should move. Repeat the activity to reinforce the key passage.

Key Passage Robe Relay (Younger Students)

- Before the session, borrow two clean child-size bathrobes with pockets. Write two copies of each word from the key passage on separate index cards. Mix them up and place them in the pockets of both bathrobes. Divide the class into two teams and instruct them to line up in single-file order by teams. Hang the bathrobes on the backs of two chairs across from the students. When you say go, the first student in line will run to the bathrobe, put it on, tie it, pull a card out of the pocket, remove the bathrobe and run back to tag the next player in line. Once the students retrieve the key passage cards, instruct them to put the key passage in order.
- Each year, a woman named Hannah made a robe to bring to her son when she and her husband traveled to the tabernacle to make their yearly sacrifices. God called Samuel to share God's plan with the people. The Bible says that everything Samuel told the people about God came true. God is our Judge, our Lawgiver and our King. His words are true!

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How does God accomplish His plan?
A: *God uses people for His glory and our good.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Eli & Samuel | 1 Samuel 1–3

In a hilly country called Ephraim, **a man named Elkanah (ehL-KEYN-ah) lived with his wife, Hannah. Hannah was very sad because she did not have any children.** Hannah wanted to have a family. **Every year, Elkanah went to the tabernacle to make sacrifices to God and to worship Him. Hannah went with him.** Elkanah saw that Hannah was upset. "What's wrong, Hannah?" he asked. "Don't I make you happy?"

Hannah prayed to God, "Lord, if You give me a son, I will dedicate him to You. He will serve You all of his life." A priest named Eli was sitting near the doorpost of the tabernacle. Eli watched Hannah pray. He couldn't hear her, but he saw her lips moving. **Eli thought there was something wrong with Hannah.**

Hannah explained, "I've been pouring out my heart before the Lord."

Eli replied, "Go in peace. May God answer your prayers." Hannah and Elkanah returned home, and **God did answer her prayers. After some time, Hannah gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel.**

When Samuel was no longer a baby, Hannah took him to Eli at the tabernacle. "God answered my prayers!" she said. Hannah pledged Samuel to serve God, and she worshiped God. **Hannah returned home and left Samuel with Eli to serve God.** Every year, Hannah returned with a new robe for Samuel, and God gave Hannah many more children.

Eli was getting old, and his sons served as priests in the tabernacle. Eli heard that his sons were sinning against God. Eli asked his sons why they were sinning, but they did not listen to him. **Samuel,** on the other hand, **grew older and found favor with God and with men.**

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One night, Eli was in his bed and Samuel was lying in the tabernacle when Samuel heard someone speak to him. "Here I am," Samuel replied. He ran to Eli. "Here I am; you called me."

God called Samuel three times, and each time Samuel ran to Eli. "Here I am," he said. Eli finally understood that God was calling to Samuel. He told Samuel how to respond.

Samuel went back to his place and lay down. Then God called a fourth time, "Samuel, Samuel!"

"Speak, for Your servant is listening," Samuel replied. God told Samuel that He was going to judge Eli's family for their sin. The next day, Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what God had said. Eli asked Samuel to tell him what God said, so Samuel did.

As Samuel grew, God was with him. Everyone in Israel knew that Samuel was God's messenger. **God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.**

JESUS CONNECTION

Samuel used God's words to tell the people what God is like. John 1:1 says that Jesus is the Word. Jesus showed the world what God is like, and He told people to turn away from their sin. Jesus ultimately freed people from the power of sin by dying on the cross and rising again.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

ATTENTIVENESS – Choosing to listen and pay attention to others.

Living LifeWise

We can choose to be attentive to the truth God tells us in His Word.

Character Connection

Samuel heard God's voice, which would be very cool. But today, God talks to us through His Word, the Bible. Hearing God means we read His Word and know what it says. That's good, but God wants more than just hearing (Jas 1:22). He wants us to listen to Him, like Samuel did. Listening to God means we read His word, ask Him to help us obey it, and then do as He says. How can we show that we are being attentive to God's Word? [*Take answers.*]

We need to be attentive to God, but it's also important to listen to other people. Who are some people God might want us to listen to this week? [*Take answers.*] In these examples, which actions or responses show that we are listening? Which show that we are not?

- Playing a game while your mom is talking to you.
- Looking out the window while your sister tells you a story.
- Doing what the teacher asked as soon as they finish the directions and say, "Go."
- Starting to do what the teacher asked before they've finished talking.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Hannah asked God to give her something. What was it?

  A son, 1 Sam. 1:11

- What did Hannah promise to do with her child?

  Dedicate him to serve the Lord, 1 Sam. 1:22, 28

- Where did Hannah take Samuel to live when he was a young boy?

  The tabernacle, 1 Sam. 1:24

- What item did Hannah bring Samuel every year?

  A new robe, 1 Sam. 2:18–19

- Why was God angry with Eli's sons?

  They sinned against God, 1 Sam. 2:17

- Who did Samuel think was calling him at first?

  Eli, 1 Samuel 3:4–8

- How many times did God call Samuel?

  Four times, 1 Samuel 3:4–10

- What was Samuel's message to Eli?

  God was going to judge Eli's family for their sin, 1 Sam. 3:13

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

My Name is Samuel (Older Students)

- Invite students to sit in a circle and imagine that they are Samuel from today's Bible story. Begin with the first player. He will make a statement: "My name is Samuel, and ..." then he may provide a detail from the Bible story, such as, "My mom's name is Hannah." If the statement is true, the class should reply, "Hi, Samuel!" If a student shares a false statement, such as, "My name is Samuel, and I live at home," then the class should respond, "You're not Samuel!" Provide Bibles for students to review the Bible story in 1 Samuel 1–3 if they need help remembering details. You may choose to participate too:

  - My name is Samuel, and I serve the Lord. (*Hi Samuel.*)
  - My name is Samuel, and I heard someone speaking at night. (*Hi Samuel.*)
  - My name is Samuel, and I ignored God's voice. (*You're not Samuel.*)
  - My name is Samuel, and I serve with Eli the priest. (*Hi Samuel.*)
  - My name is Samuel, and I am a carpenter. (*You're not Samuel.*)

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Elimination (Older Students)

- Form 2-4 teams. Give each team three objects such as balls or candy. Ask each team a Bible review question. If a team answers correctly, they may take an object from another team. Players may not remove an object from their own team. When a team runs out of objects, they are out. If a team answers incorrectly, allow the next team to answer. To keep teams involved, you may choose to allow a team to avoid elimination if a player can recite the key passage. If your group is large, use review questions from previous sessions to review the judges of Israel.

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Judges Tic Tac Toe Review (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, make large paper *X*s and *O*s. Write each question below on a large colored piece of paper and tape them to a wall to make a tic tac toe board. Divide into two groups. Groups will take turns picking a question to answer. If correct, they can bring up their *X* or *O* to mark that question. To win, teams must answer a line of three questions correctly.

    - Who were the judges? (*The leaders who rescued the people.*)
    - Why did the Israelites need the judges? (*They kept forgetting God and turning to worship idols.*)
    - Name three judges. (*Ehud, Othniel, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Samuel.*)
    - How did Ehud hide his sword from the guards at the palace? (*He was left-handed.*)
    - Who told the judge Deborah he would only lead the Israelite army against Sisera if she would go with him? (*Barak.*)
    - Who gave Samson his power? (*God.*)
    - God sent men from Gideon's army home until only ___ soldiers remained. (*300.*)
    - How did Boaz help Ruth and Naomi? (*He gave Ruth food, protected her and became her family redeemer.*)
    - Why did God call Samuel? (*He had an important message for Samuel to share.*)

- God sent the judges to lead the Israelites and to rescue them from the consequences of their sin, but the judges could not save people from the cause of sin. God had a plan to rescue people from the cause of their sin. God sent Jesus to die on the cross and rise again to rescue us from sin and give us eternal life when we trust in Him.

Impossible Tasks (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite each student to attempt to do one or both of the following tasks. The tasks seem pretty easy, but they are actually impossible to do!

    - Stand against one wall with your ankle, knee, hip and shoulder of one side of your body touching the wall. Your head must also touch the wall. Try to lift your opposite foot off the ground without moving away from the wall. [*Why it is impossible: You would need to move your head and shoulder off the wall to redistribute your weight.*]
    - Sit in a chair with your feet in front of you on the ground and your back touching the back of the chair. Without using your hands or leaning forward, stand up. [*Why it is impossible: With your back straight, your center of gravity is off. You can only put your weight over your knees so you can stand in this position by leaning forward.*]

- That was a challenge, wasn't it? Those tasks were impossible because we are limited by what our bodies can do. Hannah could not have children, and she prayed to God for a son. God answered her prayer and gave Hannah a son, Samuel. God called Samuel to share God's plan.

Answering God (Younger Students)

- Choose one student to be "Samuel," and send Samuel out of the room with an adult volunteer momentarily. Pick another student to be "God." Remind the class that it is a secret. Have the class call Samuel by saying, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel must enter the classroom and find God by going to a student and saying, "Here I am." If the classmate is not God, he must answer, "I didn't call you," like Eli did. If the classmate is God, he must answer by saying, "Samuel!" Then Samuel should respond last saying, "Yes Lord, I'm listening." Samuel gets three chances to find God. If he cannot

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find God after three tries, the student who was chosen as God will tell Samuel. Play again as time allows.

- When God called Samuel, Samuel thought Eli was calling him. He didn't realize that God was calling him because God had never spoken to him before. God didn't speak often to people during the time of the judges. But God spoke to Samuel for the rest of his life and helped him to lead the Israelites well. Samuel was both a judge and prophet to his people.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Who Said That? (Older Students)
  - Answers: *Samuel, 1 Sam. 3:10; Caleb, Num. 13:30; Pharaoh, Exod. 5:2; Cain, Gen. 4:9; Joseph, Gen. 50:20.*
- Which Came First? (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Dear God, thank You for calling Samuel to tell Your people what You are like. Thank You for sending Jesus to show us what You are like. Thank You for revealing who You are to us. Help us to boldly tell others about Your plan to rescue them from sin by sending Your Son Jesus to die on the cross and come back to life again. Thank You God that nothing can stop Your plan to rescue people from sin. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write a few sentences as a prayer to God, asking Him for something you desire.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Does God always give us everything we desire? Why or why not?
- What did Hannah promise God? (See 1 Samuel 1:9-11.)
- Are you willing to listen for God and tell others about Him?



ELI AND SAMUEL

1 SAMUEL 1–3

MAIN POINT: GOD CALLED SAMUEL TO SHARE GOD'S PLAN.

A man named Elkanah lived with his wife Hannah. Hannah was very sad because she did not have any children. Every year, Elkanah went to the tabernacle to make sacrifices to God and to worship Him. Hannah went with him.

Hannah prayed to God, "Lord, if You give me a son, I will dedicate him to You. He will serve You all of his life." A priest named Eli was sitting near the doorpost of the tabernacle. Eli watched Hannah pray. Eli thought there was something wrong with Hannah.

Hannah explained, "I've been pouring out my heart before the Lord."

Eli replied, "Go in peace. May God answer your prayers."

God did answer her prayers. After some time, Hannah gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel. When Samuel was no longer a baby, Hannah took him to Eli at the tabernacle. Hannah returned home and left Samuel with Eli to serve God. Samuel grew older and found favor with God and with men.

One night, Eli was in his bed and Samuel was lying in the tabernacle when Samuel heard someone speak to him.

"Here I am," Samuel replied. He ran to Eli. "Here I am; you called me."

God called Samuel three times, and each time Samuel ran to Eli. "Here I am," he said. Eli finally understood that God was calling to Samuel. He told Samuel how to respond. Samuel went back to his place, and God called, "Samuel, Samuel!" "Speak, for Your servant is listening," Samuel replied. God told Samuel that He was going to judge Eli's family for their sin.

The next day, Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what God had said. Eli asked Samuel to tell him what God said, so Samuel did. As Samuel grew, God was with him. God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.

Jesus Connection: *Samuel used God's words to tell the people what God is like. John 1:1 says that Jesus is the Word. Jesus showed the world what God is like, and He told people to turn away from their sin. Jesus ultimately freed people from the power of sin by dying on the cross and rising again.*

Key Passage: *Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.*

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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WHO SAID THAT?

Match each saying to the person who said it. Look up the Scripture references in your Bible to check your answers!

"Speak, for Your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10)

"We must go up and take possession of the land because we can certainly conquer it!" (Numbers 13:30)

"Am I my brother's guardian?" (Genesis 4:9)

"You planned evil against me; God planned it for good." (Genesis 50:20)

"Who is Yahweh that I should obey Him?" (Exodus 5:2)





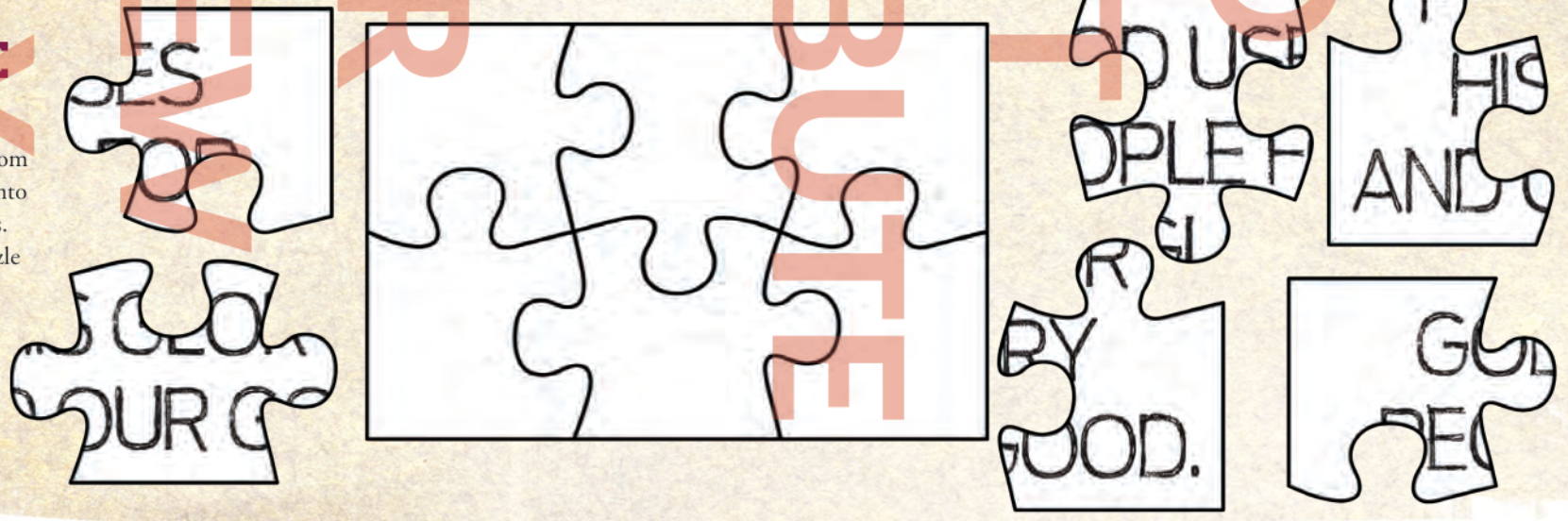






HOW DOES HE DO IT?

Copy the words from the puzzle pieces into their correct places. Complete the puzzle to answer the big picture question: *How does God accomplish His plan?*



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WHICH CAME FIRST?

INSTRUCTIONS: Place the ways we can communicate with others in the order they were invented.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Isaiah 33:22 – The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

BIBLE STORY: ELI AND SAMUEL
- Hannah did not have any children and prayed to God for a son.
- God gave Hannah a son named Samuel, and she took him to live with Eli at the tabernacle.
- God called to Samuel at night and gave him a message.
- God used Samuel to share His plan with the people of Israel.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Read Luke 2. How can kids be used by God?
- How has each family member blessed you?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- If you do not have a regular Bible reading plan as a family, develop one.
- Go further: Pray for couples you know who have not been able to have children. Pray for the kids who need to be adopted.

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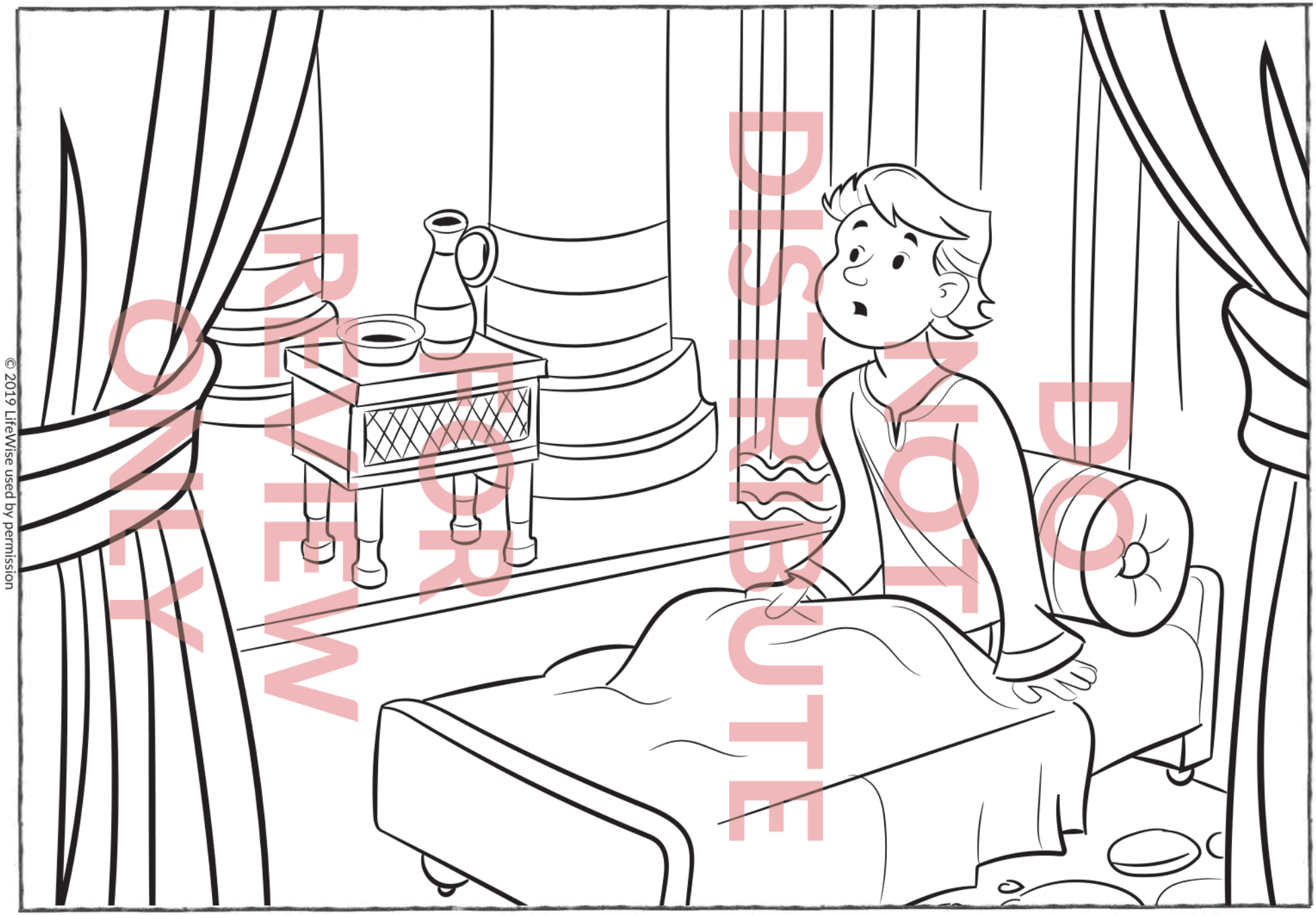

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GOD CALLED SAMUEL TO SHARE GOD'S PLAN.

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LESSON 34: CONTENTMENT

ISRAEL DEMANDED A KING

1 Samuel 8–10

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ISRAEL DEMANDED A KING

- 1 Samuel 8–10
- Big Picture Q&A: Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.
- Key Passage: Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

JESUS CONNECTION

God intended for a heavenly King to rule over Israel, but the Israelites did not trust God's plan. So, God chose Saul to be their king. God had a plan to one day send His Son, Jesus, to rule the entire world. Jesus would be the perfect King who would bring peace and salvation to the world.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

CONTENTMENT – Trusting that God will provide everything I need.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Samuel had judged Israel throughout his lifetime, but he was getting old. So, Samuel appointed his sons, Joel and Abijah, as judges over Israel. But like many sons, Joel and Abijah did not follow the example of their father. They were unfair and dishonest. They disobeyed God and caused problems for Israel.

Until this time, Israel had relied on God to give them judges to lead them. The elders of Israel spoke to Samuel about his sons, and they demanded a king. They pointed out that all the other nations around them had kings. Samuel wasn't happy with their request, so he prayed to God.

God replied, "Give them what they want. They have not rejected you; they have rejected Me as their king." God pointed out that His people had been doing the same thing ever since He brought them out of Egypt: turning from God and worshiping other gods. He told Samuel to warn the Israelites about the consequences of having a king.

So, Samuel explained to the Israelites what rights a king would have. He warned that when they regretted asking for a king—and they would regret it—God would not help them. The people still insisted on having a king, so God told Samuel to appoint a king.

Through a series of events, a young man named Saul came to Samuel. God chose Saul to be the king, so Samuel told Saul about God's plan. Samuel anointed Saul by pouring oil on his head. In Israel, kings were not only crowned, but anointed with a mixture of olive oil, myrrh and other precious spices. Anointing Saul revealed that God had set him apart as His representative and proclaimed the presence of God's Spirit,

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enabling the King to carry out his God-given role. After Saul was anointed, he went back home. Later, Samuel presented Saul to Israel as King.

God knew Israel would want a king, but the kind of king Israel wanted was not the kind of king they needed. They wanted a king like the other nations. The problem was that every human king would fail them. God had a plan to give them Jesus—fully God and fully man. Jesus would be a perfect King who would reign with justice and righteousness forever (Isa. 9:6–7).

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Let's briefly review our Bible history. Who were the Israelites? (*God's people, descendants of Abraham.*) Whom did God call to rescue the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and lead the people in the wilderness? (*Moses.*) After Moses died, who led the people into the Promised Land? (*Joshua.*) What happened after Joshua died? (*Israel forgot God and worshiped idols.*) Whom did God raise up to help His people when they cried out to Him? (*Judges.*) What was the name of the last major judge? (*Samuel.*) When did God first begin speaking to Samuel? (*When he was a boy.*) Up to this point in Israel's history, who was considered king of the people? (*God.*)

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

King for a Day (Older Students)

- Invite the class to stand in a circle. Put a paper crown on one student's head. Invite him to finish the statement "If I were king for a day, everyone would …" with a simple action (*clap their hands, stomp their feet, jump up and down, etc.*). The rest of the class must complete the action. Require students to restate the previous commands before adding a new one. Students should perform all the commands in order, then pass the crown to another player and repeat with a new king.

- Why do you think people would want to be ruled by a king? Why might having a king be a bad thing? In today's Bible story, the people of Israel wanted a king, but Samuel warned them that they would have to do whatever the king said. Let's find out what happened.

What's in Common? (Older and Younger Students)

- List related items on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper. Challenge students to identify what the items have in common. For example:
  - Carrots, hot dogs, cereal (*types of food*)
  - Blue, orange, green (*colors*)
  - Car, train, airplane, bus (*things that go*)
  - Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, Matthew, Mark, Romans (*books of the Bible*)

- Continue to list items the class would be familiar with, such as school staff, local restaurants or popular musicians. End with the names Saul, David, Solomon, Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

- Can you think of what this final group of people have in common? They were kings! For many years, God chose judges to lead the Israelites. But when God's people decided they wanted someone else to lead them, God allowed kings to lead. Sadly, they were not always good leaders.

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If I Were King (Younger Students)

- Use a crown to play a version of Hot Potato. Have the class pass the crown around the circle while music plays. When the music stops, whoever is holding the crown will stand up, put on the crown and say, "If I were king, I would ..." and state one thing they would do as king. Repeat as time allows.
- It's fun to think of all the things we might do if we were king or queen. In today's Bible story, God's people wanted a king. We're going to find out what kind of king God chose for them.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Key Passage Posing (Older Students)

- Prepare large papers with phrases from the memory verse on each ahead of time. Practice the key passage all the way through. Divide students into seven groups, assign them each a phrase and ask them to come up with a pose for that phrase. Line groups up in a circle in order of their phrases. Read the key passage and have each group hit and hold their pose when their specific phrase is said. The funnier the pose, the better.
- Phrases:
  - Proverbs 3:5–6
  - Trust in the Lord
  - With all your heart
  - And do not rely
  - On your own understanding
  - In all your ways know Him
  - And He will make your paths straight

Key Passage Motions (Older and Younger Students)

- Our key passage comes from the book of Proverbs, which contains many wise sayings that Solomon and others wrote down to help people live wisely. Read the key passage aloud together. Teach the students hand motions for the verse. Recite the verses together with the motions until everyone knows them. Or consider using a Scripture memory song for Proverbs 3:5–6 and practice the motions while singing the song.
- Possible Motions (CSB Version):
  - *Trust in the Lord* – open hands and look up
  - *With all* – open arms wide
  - *Your heart* – bring hands on top of heart
  - *And lean not* – put one elbow out horizontal to the floor as if leaning
  - *On your own understanding* – use finger from "leaning" arm to point to your head
  - *In all your ways know to Him* – bow toward the floor
  - *And He will make your paths straight* – stand up, put both arms up straight and bring them down as if making a path

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Big Picture Q&A

Q: Who is our King?

A: *Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Israel Demanded a King | 1 Samuel 8–10

Samuel was a judge over Israel. At this time, Israel had no king, but they wanted a king. **Samuel had two sons, Joel and Abijah.** Because Samuel was getting old, he let his sons be rulers over Israel. There was a problem, though. **Joel and Abijah were not good judges like their father was.** Joel and Abijah were unfair and dishonest.

The leaders of Israel went to Samuel. "You were a good judge," they said, "but your sons have not followed your example. **We don't want them to lead us; we want a king like the nations around us!"**

Samuel wasn't sure how to respond, so he prayed to God. God said, "Samuel, they are not rejecting you; they are rejecting Me as king. Give them what they want, but make sure you warn them what it will be like to have an earthly king."

Samuel explained to the Israelites what rights an earthly king would have. A king could make their sons serve in the army, he could make their daughters work for him or he could take away their fields and servants. **Samuel warned the people that they would regret asking for a king, but the Israelites didn't care. "Give us a king!" they said.**

Meanwhile, a wealthy man named Kish was looking for some of his donkeys that had wandered off. Kish told his son Saul to take a servant with him and search for the missing animals. Saul searched, but he was unable to find the donkeys. He was ready to give up.

"Wait," his servant said. "There is a man of God in this city. Let's talk to him; maybe he knows where we can find the donkeys." Saul and his servant found the man of God—it was Samuel.

"Don't worry about the donkeys," Samuel said. "They have been found."

Samuel invited Saul to have dinner with him. The next morning, Samuel told Saul that God had chosen Saul to be the king of Israel. Saul was surprised because he was from the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel. **Samuel used oil to anoint Saul. "You will be king!" Samuel said.** Samuel gave Saul some instructions and sent him home. The Spirit of God was with Saul.

Some time later, Samuel gathered the Israelites to introduce Saul, their new king, but Saul hid. No one could find him. God said, "There Saul is, hidden among the supplies." The people ran to get Saul, and **Saul stood among all the people. "Long live the king!" they said.**

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JESUS CONNECTION

God intended for a heavenly King to rule over Israel, but the Israelites did not trust God's plan. So, God chose Saul to be their king. God had a plan to one day send His Son, Jesus, to rule the entire world. Jesus would be the perfect King who would bring peace and salvation to the world.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

CONTENTMENT – Trusting that God will provide everything I need.

Living LifeWise

God is always good, so we can be content in our circumstances.

Character Connection

God's people asked for what they wanted. And that was okay. It wasn't a problem for them to ask God for something. It's okay for you to ask God (and adults in your life) for what you want or need. In fact, God wants us to bring our requests to Him because it means we trust He can provide for our needs.

Sometimes, *what we ask for* is a problem. Instead of being content with what God has provided, we want other things that aren't the best for us or won't turn out as perfectly as we think they will. We ask for a puppy, but we don't realize how much work a puppy can be. We ask for a new video game or device, even though we haven't been getting our homework done.

God's people asked for a king "like the nations around them." And *that* was the problem. They already had a king, a good king, the best king of all—God Himself was their King. But they wanted to be like everybody else and have a human king. They didn't trust God to be everything they needed. And He gave them what they wanted, with a warning that they would be sorry in the future. And He was right. Years later, they were sorry they'd asked for a king.

We don't really need everything we ask for. Sometimes, what we want isn't good for us. But we can trust God to provide everything we need. Even when we ask and His answer is "no," we can know that He's always going to do what's best for us.

Sometimes, it's hard to recognize whether what we're asking for is what we want or what we need. Which of these things do you think is a *want*? Which thing is a *need*?

- A new backpack for school when yours breaks
- Candy
- Help on your homework
- God's help to be kind to everyone

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (10–15 MIN)

- Why weren't Eli's sons good leaders?

  They were unfair and dishonest, 1 Sam. 8:3

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- Why did the people want a human king?

  To be like the nations around them, 1 Sam. 8:19

- What did Samuel warn the people about having a king?

  He would require their sons and daughters to serve him and take their possessions and land, 1 Sam. 8:10–18

- What was Saul searching for that led him to Samuel?

  Donkeys, 1 Sam. 9:3–19

- Who told Samuel that Saul would be king?

  God, 1 Sam. 9:16

- What did Samuel do to show that God had chosen Saul as king of Israel?

  Anoint him with oil, 1 Sam. 10:1

- What did God give Saul to help him as king?

  His Spirit, 1 Sam. 10:6

- What did Saul do when he was announced as king?

  Hid, 1 Sam. 10:22

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Trivia Review (Older and Younger Students)

- The book of 1 Samuel is one of the History books in the Old Testament. These books—from Joshua to Esther—tell the history of God's people, the Israelites. Read the following statements about the Bible story one at a time (add other questions if needed). If a statement is true, students should clap. If it is false, they should cross their arms above their heads.

  - The name of Israel's last judge was Eli. (*False; Samuel*)
  - Samuel's sons were bad leaders. (*True; they were unfair and dishonest, 1 Sam. 8:3*)
  - The Israelites told Samuel they wanted a king. (*True, 1 Sam. 8:5*)
  - The Israelites rejected Samuel as their leader. (*False; God, 1 Sam. 8:7*)
  - Samuel said the Israelites would enjoy having a king. (*False; regret it, 1 Sam. 8:18*)
  - Saul was searching for a horse. (*False; donkeys, 1 Sam. 9:3*)
  - Saul went to Samuel for help. (*True, 1 Sam. 9:19*)
  - Samuel used paint to anoint Saul. (*False; oil, 1 Sam. 10:1*)
  - Saul hid from the Israelites. (*True; among the supplies, 1 Sam. 10:23*)
  - Saul was the first king of Israel. (*True; 1 Sam. 10:19–21, 13:1*)

The Best King (Older and Younger Students)

- Work together as a class to compare and contrast God as King with a human king. What qualities does God have that would make Him the best king? What qualities would a human king have that would make him the best king? Highlight God's perfection, power, knowledge, wisdom, love, grace, etc. for the class.

- There is no competition. God is a far better King than any human could ever be. The Israelites lost sight of who God was and began looking at what other nations had. Instead of recognizing the priceless gift they had in God—reigning as their King—and trusting Him with their needs, they

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became discontent. God has given us a priceless gift, too. Jesus wants to reign as King of our hearts and lives. Let's trust Him to always give us what is best at the right time.

Candy Race (Older and Younger Students)

- Place 1–2 large bowls of individually wrapped candy on one side of the room. Form 2-4 teams. Place an empty bowl for each team on the opposite side of the room. Students will line up next to their bowls. At your signal, one student from each team will race to get one piece of candy from the bowl and bring it back to the team's bowl. Then another player will go. Teams should continue until time is up. Do not let them know how much time is left during the race. Instruct teams that if all players, including the one running for candy, are not touching their bowl when the timer goes off, the team will have to give up all they have collected. [*Most students will risk all their candy to get more! The longer they wait to hear the timer go off, the more they will understand the lesson.*] When the timer goes off, teams that were not all touching their bowl must give back all their candy. Play again if time allows.

- Did you feel the game was fair? Discuss their reasoning. Everyone was concerned about getting more candy during the game. But when some students got to keep their candy and others didn't, it didn't feel fair. Sometimes, life doesn't seem fair when others have things that we don't. God wants us to be thankful for what He has given us and trust Him to make us happy instead of things. Make sure each student has a piece of candy before they leave class.

Hiding Saul (Younger Students)

- Use a little plastic figure for this activity. Show the class "Saul." Choose a volunteer to close his eyes or turn his back. Then, give Saul to a student to hide in her closed fist. The other students will hold their fists in a similar manner. Give the volunteer three chances to guess who is hiding Saul in their fist. Play again, choosing a new volunteer to guess in each round.

- God chose Saul to be Israel's first king. This was a big responsibility, and a job that only God Himself could do. Saul was scared to be king, but God gave him His Spirit to help him lead well.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Donkey Roundup (Older Students)
- Find the Differences (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, thank You for sending Jesus to be our King forever. Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross and rising again. Help us to allow You to rule in our hearts and over our lives through the help of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write about a time you felt cared for or safe. Write a few sentences of prayer to God to thank Him for caring for you directly or for putting people in your life to take care of you.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How was demanding a king the same as rejecting God?
- Do you think Saul wanted to be king? Why or why not?
- What does it mean for Jesus to be our King forever?



ISRAEL DEMANDED A KING

1 SAMUEL 8–10

MAIN POINT: GOD CHOSE SAUL AS ISRAEL'S FIRST KING.

Samuel was a judge over Israel. He had two sons, Joel and Abijah. Joel and Abijah were not good judges like their father was.

The leaders of Israel went to Samuel. "We don't want them to lead us; we want a king like the nations around us!"

Samuel wasn't sure how to respond, so he prayed to God.

God said, "Samuel, they are not rejecting you; they are rejecting Me as king."

Samuel warned the people that they would regret asking for a king, but the Israelites didn't care. "Give us a king!" they said.

Meanwhile, a wealthy man named Kish was looking for some of his donkeys that had wandered off. Kish told his son Saul to take a servant with him and search for the missing animals. Saul searched, but he was unable to find the donkeys.

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Samuel invited Saul to have dinner with him. The next morning, Samuel told Saul that God had chosen Saul to be the king of Israel.

Samuel used oil to anoint Saul. "You will be king!" Samuel said.

Some time later, Samuel gathered the Israelites to introduce Saul, their new king. Saul stood among all the people. "Long live the king!" they said.

Jesus Connection: *God intended for a heavenly king to rule over Israel, but the Israelites did not trust God's plan. So God chose Saul to be their king. God had a plan to one day send His Son, Jesus, to rule the entire world. Jesus would be the perfect King who would bring peace and salvation to the world.*

Key Passage: *Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

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DONKEY ROUNDUP

Find and circle the 10 donkeys hidden in the picture. Round up 4 brown donkeys, 3 gray donkeys, 2 red donkeys and 1 white donkey.



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GOD CHOSE A KING |

Find the words hidden in the picture. Then arrange them to form the main point of the Bible story.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____.

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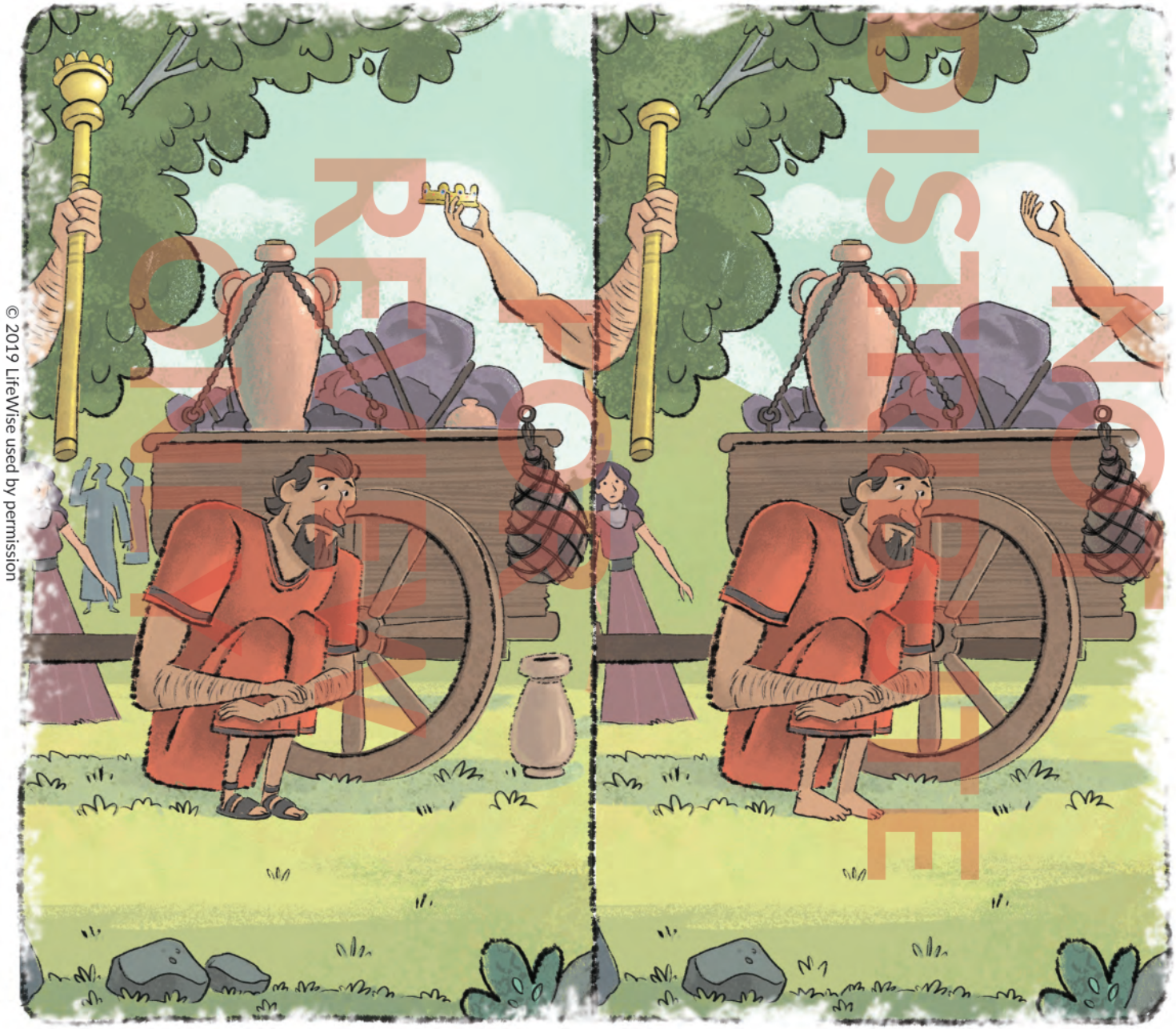
FIND THE DIFFERENCES

INSTRUCTIONS: Find and circle all seven differences between the two pictures.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.

BIBLE STORY: ISRAEL REJECTED GOD

- Israel wanted a king so they could be like the nations around them.
- God warned them what having a king would be like.
- Israel still demanded that God give them a king.
- God chose Saul as Israel's first king.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How was demanding a king the same as rejecting God?
- Why do you think Saul was afraid to be king?
- What does it mean for Jesus to be our King forever?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Make paper crowns and wear them while reviewing the story.
- Play a game of hide and seek, reminding your kids that Saul hid with the supplies.

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GOD CHOSE SAUL AS ISRAEL'S FIRST KING.

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LESSON 35: RESPONSIBILITY

GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING

1 Samuel 13–15

GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING

- 1 Samuel 13–15
- Big Picture Q&A: Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.
- Key Passage: Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

JESUS CONNECTION

King Saul sinned by giving a sacrifice that only the priest was allowed to give. God rejected Saul as king, but He had a plan to send His Son, Jesus. King Jesus gave up His own life as a good and perfect sacrifice so sinners would be forgiven and accepted.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

RESPONSIBILITY – Taking ownership of my choices and behavior, including the consequences.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

By all appearances, Saul was a good choice as king. He was tall, handsome and blessed by God. But Saul forgot that his kingship was from God. Saul made some mistakes that cost him his throne.

In 1 Samuel 13, Saul sinned by burning offerings in Samuel's absence. That moment was an important test for Saul. According to Samuel, the Lord would have permanently established Saul's reign if Saul had obeyed. Instead, God appointed a king who was loyal to Him (1 Sam. 13:13–14).

Saul sinned again when his troops battled the Amalekites. God told Saul to destroy the Amalekites completely. The Amalekites were enemies of God's people (Deut. 25:17–19). But Saul spared Agag the king and kept the best livestock and cattle. They destroyed the worthless things. When Samuel arrived, Saul proudly said, "I have carried out the Lord's instructions!" Samuel asked him about the sheep, the cattle and King Agag. But Saul still insisted that he had obeyed; he planned to offer the sheep and cattle to the Lord as a sacrifice.

"To obey is better than sacrifice ... Because you have rejected the Word of the Lord, He has rejected you as king!" Samuel said (1 Sam. 15:22–23). After they returned to Israel, Samuel never visited Saul again, and the Lord regretted making Saul king.

As you teach, help guide the students to understand that all earthly kings like Saul are imperfect. But we can see how those kings point us to the perfect King, Jesus, who carried out His Father's instructions without fail.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

During our last lesson, we learned that the people asked for a king. Why did they reject God as their king? (*To be like the nations around them.*) What did God say would happen if they chose a human king? (*He would take their sons and daughters as servants, the best of the land and their money in taxes. They would regret their choice.*) Whom did God choose to be the first king of Israel? (*Saul.*) Who anointed Saul to be the king of Israel? (*Samuel.*) Saul was a good king for a while, but as time passed, he began to ignore God's commands. In today's Bible story, we will learn how.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Cause and Effect (Older Students)

- On pairs of index cards, write cause and effect statements. For example, *I ate too many chips and I have a stomachache*. Make a pair for every two students. Use these examples or make up your own.
    - A big snowstorm hits the city. / School is closed.
    - I never brush my teeth. / I have lots of cavities.
    - I stayed up past midnight. / I am so sleepy!
    - I signed up for voice lessons. / I learned how to sing.
    - I disobeyed my parents. / My parents punished me.
    - I ate too many chips. / I have a stomachache.
    - I worked hard studying my spelling words. / I got an A on my test.
    - I didn't bring my coat to school. / I was cold during recess.
    - I said something unkind to my friend. / My friend won't talk to me.
    - I read my Bible every night before bed. / I am learning a lot about God.
    - I didn't pick up my toys. / I hurt my foot on a lego.
    - When my teacher asks me questions, I tell the truth. / My teacher trusts me.
- Shuffle the cards, and distribute one to each student. Challenge the class to find the person with the corresponding cause or effect. When all students pair up, invite them to read their cards aloud.
- These were all examples of cause and effect. Because one thing happened, something else happened as a result. Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about a king who sinned by disobeying God. What do you think happened after that? We will find out soon!

Faithful or Not? (Older Students)

- The word *faithful* means "loyal" or "firm in keeping promises or fulfilling duties." Describe someone in the Bible without using his or her name. Have the students guess until they figure out who it is. Then, ask the class if this person was completely faithful or not.
    - **Moses:** Grew up in Egypt, ran from Pharaoh, was called by God to free His people, performed God's mighty miracles, led God's people to the Promised Land — FAITHFUL
    - **Joshua:** Spied out the land of Canaan, led the Israelites in battles to conquer the land of Canaan, replaced Moses as the next leader — FAITHFUL
    - **Gideon:** Called by God to lead his people in battle against the Midianites, destroyed all the idols in his city at night, asked God for a sign of victory in battle with a dry fleece, defeated the Midianites with 300 men — FAITHFUL

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- **Samson:** set apart before birth to be a Nazarite (not cut his hair, refrain from eating unclean things and drinking grape juice and wine), ate grapes, ate honey from a beehive inside a dead lion's carcass, married a woman who didn't believe in God, used his super strength to defeat the Philistines — NOT FAITHFUL
- **Samuel:** called by God four times at night as a boy, delivered God's messages to the Israelites, led the Israelites in battle, anointed the first two kings of Israel — FAITHFUL

- Today, we will hear about a king who was not faithful to God.

Team Puzzles (Younger Students)

- Before class, collect 2–4 puzzles and swap one piece of each puzzle with one from another puzzle. Try to select pieces that won't be obvious. To play, form 2–4 teams and give each team a puzzle. Challenge teams to complete their puzzle as fast as they can. When teams figure out their last piece does not fit, encourage them to work with other teams to find the right piece. Continue until every team's puzzle is complete.

- Great job working together! Your team was not able to finish its puzzle because it was missing a piece. Puzzles don't work without all the right pieces. Saul looked like the right "fit" as the first king of Israel, but he was missing a very important characteristic. His heart was not completely obedient to God.

Follow the Command (Younger Students)

- Lead the class in a stationary game of Follow the Leader. Instruct them to do what you say, but not what you do. Give verbal commands, but do a different action to confuse the students. Anyone caught not listening to the commands must sit down. Play again as you have time.

- Was it hard to follow the leader's instructions without following their actions? The words we say and the actions we take are very important. When we say we love God, but don't act like it, people notice that our actions don't match up with our words.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Key Passage Echo (Older and Younger Students)

- Write the key passage on a chalkboard or dry erase board. Divide the passage into four sections. Divide the class into group A and group B. When you say a section, group A will echo you loudly, then group B will echo quietly. Work your way through all four sections. Then have the groups switch parts and repeat the verse once more.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Who is our King?

A: *Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

God Rejects Saul as King | 1 Samuel 13–15

Saul was king over Israel. He **gathered an army** and took some of the men into the hill country. **The Philistines, enemies of Israel, were in the land.** Saul's son Jonathan took some other men to destroy a Philistine army camp. The attack made the Philistines mad!

The Philistines came out to fight the Israelites. They had more chariots, more horses and more soldiers. **The Israelites were outnumbered. They were all afraid; some of them hid.**

Saul wanted to ask God for help. He thought if he made an offering to God, they would win the battle. But only the priests were allowed to give offerings to God. Samuel had promised Saul he would come on a certain day to give a sacrifice to God. Saul waited for Samuel, but Samuel did not come. His soldiers started to leave, so **Saul decided to make an offering to God himself.**

Then, Samuel showed up. "Saul, what are you doing?" Samuel asked.

"You hadn't come, and the men were leaving me. **I wanted to ask for God's help before we went into battle against** the Philistines," **Saul replied.**

"You have disobeyed God," Samuel said. Saul was king, not a priest. It was a sin for Saul to make the sacrifice! **"You will not be king much longer. God is going to find someone obedient to be king."**

Some time later, Samuel came to Saul with a message from God. **God wanted Saul to attack the Amalekites. God said to kill all of the people and all of the animals. So, Saul and his army fought the Amalekites. They won, but they did not destroy everything like God commanded. Saul only destroyed the worthless things and things he didn't want.**

God told Samuel, "I regret that I made Saul king because he does not obey Me." **Samuel confronted Saul** and told him what God had said.

"I did obey Him!" Saul argued. "I only saved the best animals to sacrifice to the Lord."

"Does God care more about obedience or sacrifices?" Samuel asked. **"You rejected His instruction, so God has rejected you as king."**

Saul admitted his sin and pleaded for forgiveness. "God has taken away your kingship today, and he is giving it to another king," Samuel said. Samuel left, and **God was sorry He had made Saul the king of Israel.**

JESUS CONNECTION

King Saul sinned by giving a sacrifice that only the priest was allowed to give. God rejected Saul as king, but He had a plan to send His Son, Jesus. King Jesus gave up His own life as a good and perfect sacrifice so sinners would be forgiven and accepted.

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LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

RESPONSIBILITY – Taking ownership of my choices and behavior, including the consequences.

Living LifeWise

God forgives our sin, so we can take responsibility even for our bad choices.

Character Connection

It is tempting (and very common) to not admit when we make a mistake. We might not let someone else take the blame for it, but we probably won't jump up and say we did it. We tend to keep quiet and hope no one saw what happened. Or we come up with all sorts of excuses.

Samuel knew exactly what Saul had done because God knew exactly what Saul had done. Saul gave a bunch of excuses to try to make it seem as if his sin wasn't such a big deal or that he really had a good reason for not obeying completely.

The truth is, God knows us completely, what we do and what's in our hearts, and we can't fake Him out. He has also promised to forgive us for every sinful act and thought because Jesus died for them. So we don't have to hide from God, making excuses like Saul did. We can take responsibility for our choices and actions, the good ones *and* the bad ones, and know that when we do, He will make our relationship with Him completely right again.

Which of these are good responses when we sin or make mistakes and which are just excuses?

- I'm sorry for what I did.
- It was her idea; I just went along with it.
- That piece was loose when I had it, but she actually broke it. So, it's not my fault.
- I heard you call, but I chose not to come. I'll obey right away next time.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Why were Saul's men afraid to fight the Philistines?**

  They were outnumbered, 1 Sam. 13:5–6

- **What was the first mistake Saul made?**

  Offering a sacrifice, 1 Sam. 13:12–13

- **Why was it a sin for Saul to offer a sacrifice?**

  Only the priests could offer sacrifices, 1 Sam. 13:13

- **What other mistake did Saul make?**

  He didn't completely destroy the Amalekites and their things, 1 Sam. 15:8–10

- **What instructions did God give Saul before he attacked the Amalekites?**

  To completely destroy the people and their things, 1 Sam. 15:3

- **What did Saul keep from the Amalekites?**

  The best animals and King Agag, 1 Sam. 15:8–9

- **What did God tell Saul He cared about more than sacrifices?**

  Obedience, 1 Sam. 15:22

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- What did God do after Saul disobeyed Him twice?

  Rejected Saul as king, 1 Sam. 15:26

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Tricky Tasks Game (Older Students)

- Form groups of 3–4 students. Make and print the Tricky Task game board printable for each group. Provide a numbered cube for each group and coins or small objects for each player's game piece. Keep Bibles available as needed. To play the game: Roll the numbered cube and move the number of spaces indicated. Read the task on the space. If you can complete the task, you earn the number of points rolled on the numbered cube. Players will take turns. The player with the most points at the finish wins.

- Saul faced some serious consequences for disobeying God. God rejected Saul as king because of his sin. Saul did not stop being king right away, but God had a plan for someone else to be king. Next time, we will find out who became Israel's next king!

Command, Disobey, Obey (Older and Younger Students)

- The book of 1 Samuel is one of the history books in the Old Testament. These books—from Joshua to Esther—tell the history of God's people, the Israelites. Read each event. If students think it is a command, they should salute. If someone obeyed it, they should stand up. If someone disobeyed it, they should put their head down.

  - Saul's army fought the Philistines. (*Obeyed*)
  - Samuel said, "Wait for me to come to Gilgal and offer a sacrifice to God." (*Command*)
  - Saul waited seven days for Samuel to arrive at Gilgal. (*Obeyed*)
  - Saul's soldiers began to quit, so he sacrificed a burnt offering to God. (*Disobeyed*)
  - God told Saul, "Kill all of the Amalekites—the people and the animals." (*Command*)
  - Saul and his army attacked and killed the Amalekites. (*Obeyed*)
  - Saul saved the best of the Amalekite animals. (*Disobeyed*)

- Saul listened to God's commands but did not fully obey them. Samuel told Saul that obedience would show his love for God more than giving God gifts.

Bible Trivia Review (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, print and cut out the "Consequence Strips." You may also make up your own consequences for the "Leader's Choice" strips. Place the strips in a bowl or bag. Form two teams, making sure each has access to a Bible to look up answers. Ask students the review questions one at a time, alternating between teams. If a player gets the correct answer, award her team a point. If she gets the answer wrong, she must draw a consequence strip and do as it says. If she will not do as it says, award the other team a point.

- There were consequences when you got the question wrong and further consequences if you didn't obey the strip you picked. These consequences were silly and fun, but in life, the consequences of disobedience are often serious or dangerous. Saul's consequence for not obeying God completely was that he lost the kingdom. The Bible teaches that the consequence of our sin is death and separation from God (Rom. 3:23). Jesus died so that we could be with God

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forever. Trusting Jesus gives us eternal life! Our sin still has other consequences, but if we trust Jesus, we don't have to be afraid of being separated from God.

Step by Step Drawings (Older and Younger Students)

- Give each student a piece of paper and a crayon or marker. Read the following instructions:
  - In the center of your paper, write a lowercase letter *d*.
  - Draw a circle at the top of the *d*.
  - Inside the loop of the *d*, draw four circles.
  - Draw three lines coming from the loop and extending outward.
  - Draw two small ovals connecting with the top circle.
  - Draw two small dots inside the top circle.
- Allow students to share their drawings. Drawings should roughly resemble a giraffe! Why is it important to follow instructions? Why might you have trouble following directions? What happens when we don't follow instructions? God gave Saul instructions, but Saul did not obey God. God rejected Saul as king because of his sin.

Follow the Directions (Younger Students)

- Before class, print out the "Follow Directions" printable. Ask the class to keep the pages face-down while you give instructions. Challenge them to follow the list of instructions carefully as fast as they can. Remind them to read the instructions very carefully! Watch to see if the students read and follow the last instruction. Quietly acknowledge those who do. Do not say anything to the others until they reach the last instruction.
- Often, we get carried away and don't follow the directions. Your first task was to read all the instructions before you began. Why is it sometimes difficult to follow directions? Who can help us obey? (*Jesus, the Holy Spirit.*)

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Rejected! (Older Students)
- Useful Things (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, thank You that You do not treat us like we deserve to be treated. We have sinned against You and deserve to be separated from You and punished for our sin. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and rise again, so that You could forgive the sin of anyone who trusts in Him. Thank You that instead of being rejected by You for sinning, we are forgiven and welcomed as Your precious children. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write about or draw a picture of a time you disobeyed God or someone God put in charge over you, such as a parent or teacher. What were the consequences of your actions?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What do you think Saul really cared about with his sacrifice?
- Why is it hard to trust God when we have to wait for things that we want right away?
- Can you think of a King whom God will never reject?

FOLD



GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING

1 SAMUEL 13–15

MAIN POINT: GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE OF HIS SIN.

Saul gathered an army. The Philistines, enemies of Israel, were in the land. The Philistines came out to fight the Israelites. The Israelites were outnumbered. They were all afraid; some of them hid.

Saul wanted to ask God for help. Maybe if he made an offering to God, they would win the battle. But only the priests were allowed to give offerings to God. Saul waited for Samuel, but Samuel did not come. Saul decided to make an offering to God himself.

Then Samuel showed up. "Saul, what are you doing?" Samuel asked.

"I wanted to ask for God's help before we went into battle," Saul replied.

"You have disobeyed God," Samuel said. "You will not be king much longer. God is going to find someone obedient to be king."

Some time later, God wanted Saul to attack the Amalekites. God said to kill all of the people and all of the animals. So Saul and his army fought the Amalekites. They won, but they did not destroy everything like God commanded. Saul only destroyed the worthless things and things he didn't want.

Samuel confronted Saul. "I did obey Him!" Saul argued. "I only saved the best animals to sacrifice to the Lord."

"You rejected His instruction, so God has rejected you as king."

Saul admitted his sin and pleaded for forgiveness. God was sorry He had made Saul the king of Israel.

Jesus Connection: *King Saul sinned by giving a sacrifice that only the priest was allowed to give. God rejected Saul as king, but He had a plan to send His Son, Jesus. King Jesus gave up His own life as a good and perfect sacrifice so sinners would be forgiven and accepted.*

Key Passage: *Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

DISCUSSION

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Rejected!

Cross out every third letter to find out what today's Bible story is about.

G O A D R I E J L E C

S T E M D S O A U K L

A N S K Y I N E G

_____

_____

Main Point Mix-Up

Unscramble the words of today's main point.

God his
of
as rejected
Saul king
sin because



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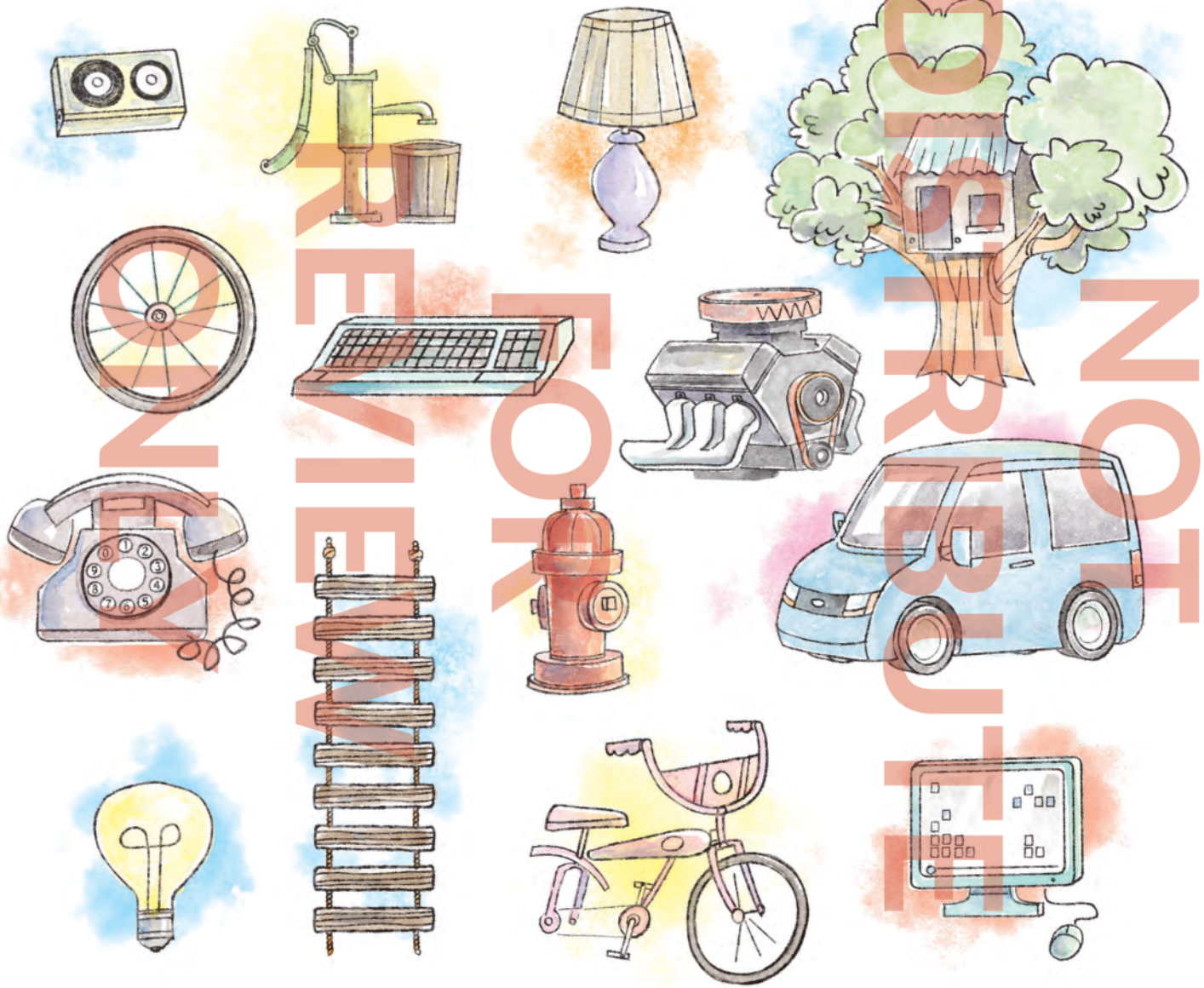
USEFUL THINGS

INSTRUCTIONS: Draw a line from the useful parts to the objects that need them. Not all parts are useful.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.

BIBLE STORY: GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING

- As king, Saul went to war against the Philistines.
- Saul wanted God's help in battle, but did not want to wait for Samuel.
- Saul disobeyed God, offering a sacrifice that only a priest should offer.
- God rejected Saul as king because of his sin.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What do you think Saul really cared about with his sacrifice?
- Why is it hard to trust God when we have to wait for things that we want right away?
- Can you think of a King whom God will never reject?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Play "King of the Hill" with your kids. Talk to them about how God decided to replace Saul with an obedient king.

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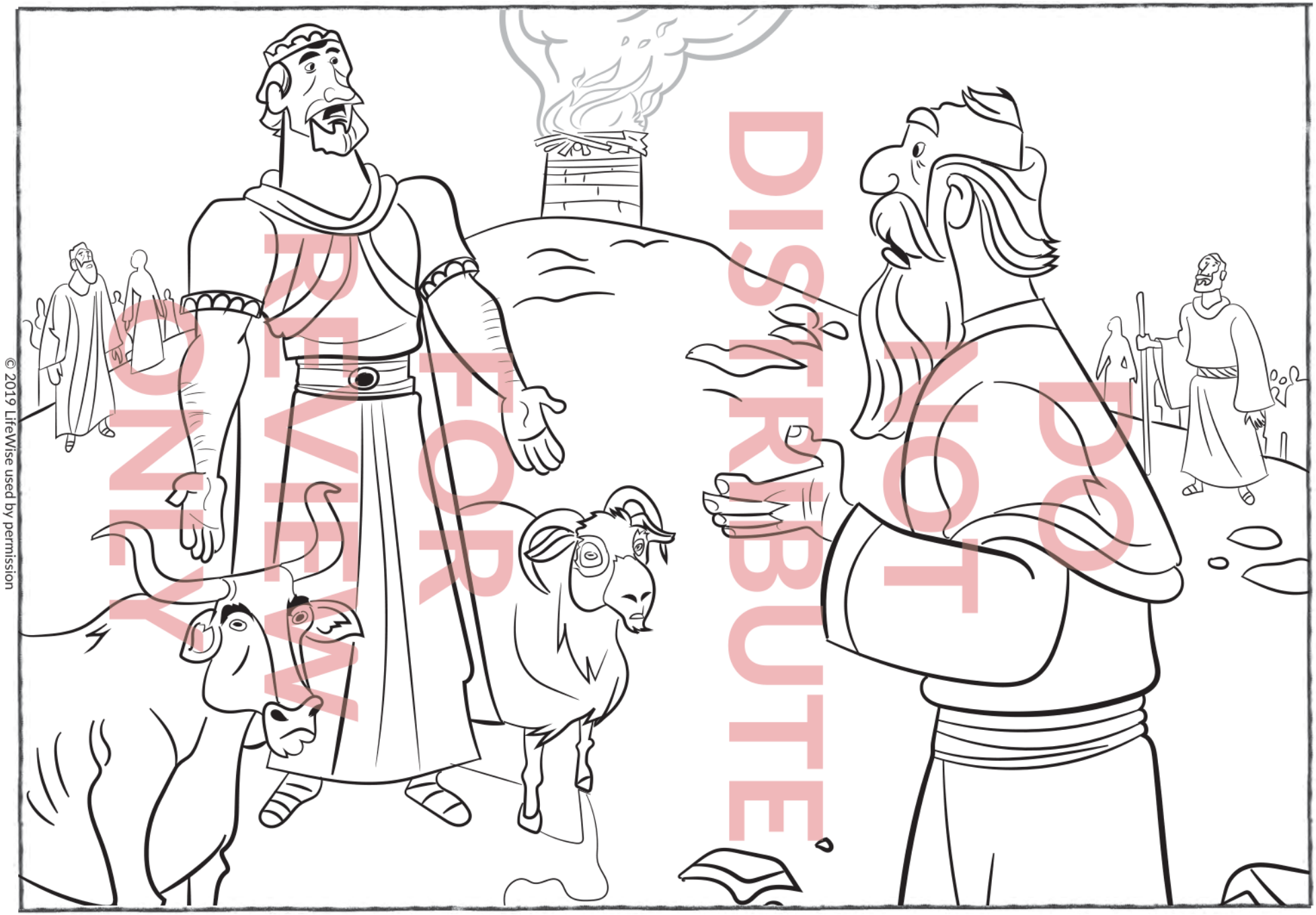

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE OF HIS SIN.

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Do 15 jumping jacks.	Dance in circles for 10 seconds.
Sing “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”	Sit quiet and still for 2 minutes.
Do a somersault.	Leader’s Choice
Give someone on the other team a hug.	Leader’s Choice
Make a fish-face for 10 seconds.	Leader’s Choice
Whistle the theme song of a show you don’t like.	Leader’s Choice

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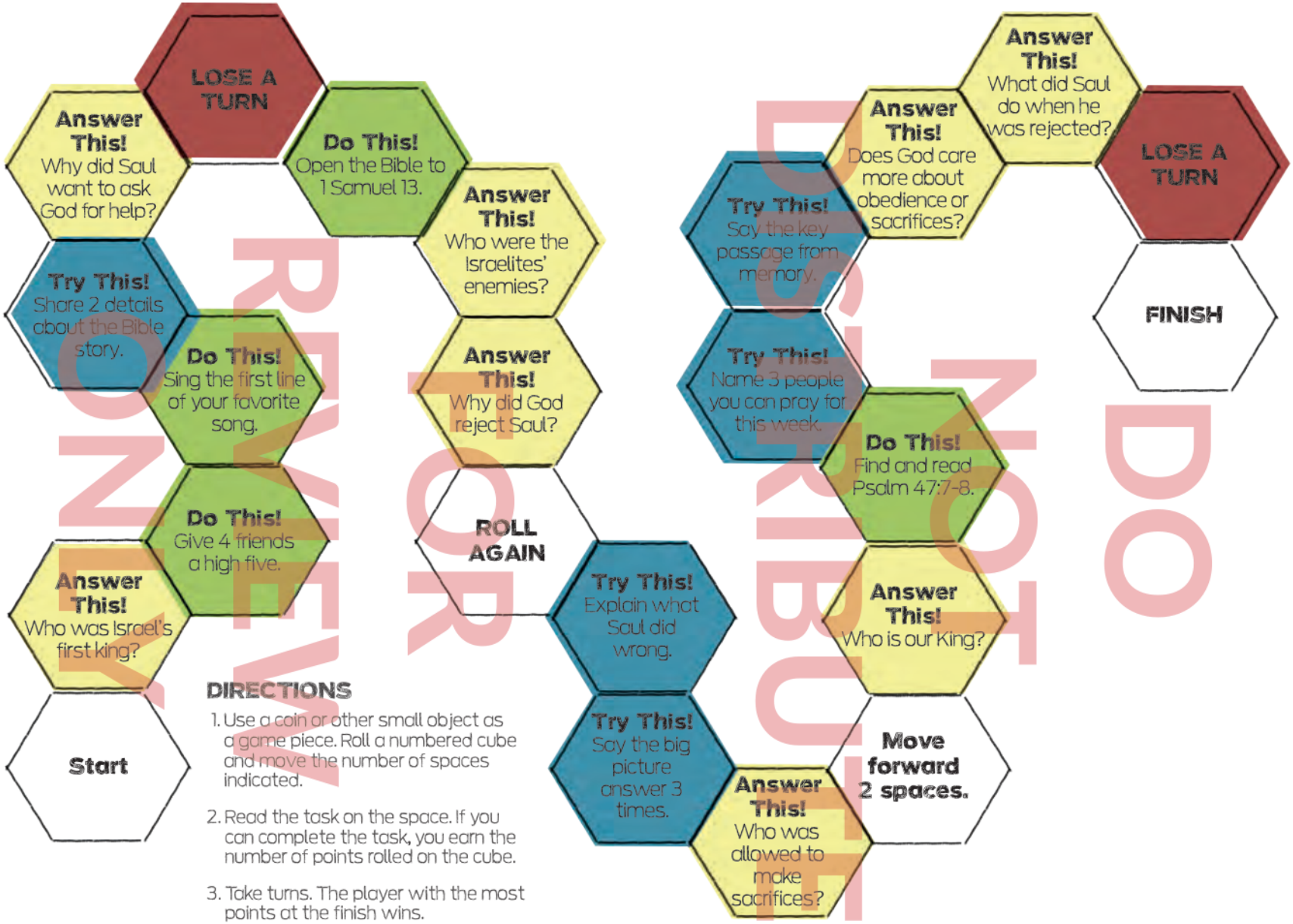

DIRECTIONS

1. Use a coin or other small object as a game piece. Roll a numbered cube and move the number of spaces indicated.
2. Read the task on the space. If you can complete the task, you earn the number of points rolled on the cube.
3. Take turns. The player with the most points at the finish wins.

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

Tricky Task

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

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Follow Directions

Read all steps before you begin.

- Stand up and wave to your teacher.
- Underline the word "wave" in the step above.
- Write the numbers 1–10 on the right side of this paper.
- Circle all the even numbers that you wrote.
- Cross out all the odd numbers that you wrote.
- Draw a box around the word "numbers" each time it appears on this paper.
- Clap your hands together 12 times.
- Stomp each foot one time.
- Say your full name out loud.
- Write your name on the back of this paper.
- Ignore each step above. Do nothing, and wait quietly for your teacher to explain this activity.

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LESSON 36: DISCERNMENT

DAVID WAS ANOINTED AND FOUGHT GOLIATH

1 Samuel 16–17

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DAVID WAS ANOINTED AND FOUGHT GOLIATH

- 1 Samuel 16–17
- Big Picture Q&A: Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.
- Key Passage: Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

JESUS CONNECTION

David was not a big or strong warrior, but he trusted God. God gave David power. When God sent His Son to Earth, Jesus did not look like a strong warrior either. But by dying on the cross and coming back to life, Jesus showed His power to save sinners.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

DISCERNMENT – Being able to recognize what is true and false or right and wrong.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Samuel had anointed Saul as king over Israel, but it wasn't long before Saul's disobedience led God to reject him as king. God sent Samuel to Bethlehem to meet Jesse and his sons. God had chosen one of Jesse's sons to be Israel's king.

Jesse had many sons. Eliab was Jesse's oldest son. When Samuel saw Eliab, he thought, "This must be the one God has chosen!" Eliab was likely tall and good looking. Why wouldn't God choose someone like that? But God doesn't make decisions like people do. Read what God said to Samuel in 1 Samuel 16:7.

Jesse's sons took turns passing before Samuel, one by one. Samuel was probably eager to hear which son God had chosen to be Israel's next king! Abinadab? No, not him. Shammah? No. "The Lord hasn't chosen this one either." Jesse had one more son; his youngest, David, was out tending the sheep. David came in and God said, "This is the one." Samuel anointed David, and the Spirit of the Lord was with David.

David did not become king right away. Saul was still on the throne, and David was still young. One day, David found himself at the battle where the Philistines had gathered to fight the Israelites. The story of David and Goliath is one of the most well-known accounts in the Old Testament. When the Israelites cowered in fear, David—with God's power—stepped up and defeated the enemy with just a sling and a stone.

As you teach this week, help the students relate to the terrified Israelites. Apart from Christ, we are powerless before our enemies of sin and death. None of us would step up like David. Even if we tried, we would fail on our own. David reminds us of Jesus, the greatest hero, who came to save us. When we look to Jesus, He gives us salvation and eternal life.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

A couple of weeks ago, we learned about something the Israelites asked Samuel for. Does anyone remember what it was? (*A king.*) Why did Samuel tell them they shouldn't ask for this? (*God was their perfect King.*) Whom did God choose to be king? (*Saul.*) How did Saul fail as king? (*He disobeyed God.*)

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Clumsy Thumbs (Older Students)

- Before class, cover a chocolate bar with at least three layers of wrapping paper. Make sure it is covered completely. Have the class sit in a circle and place oven mitts and the candy bar in the middle. Give one player the numbered cubes to roll. If the numbers rolled add up to five, the player should put on the oven mitts and try to open the present. If not, pass the cubes until a player rolls a sum of five. As soon as another player's roll adds up to five, the first player must stop unwrapping and let the player who rolled a sum of five put on the mitts and try to unwrap the bar. The first player to completely unwrap the present wins.

- Did wearing oven mitts make unwrapping easier or more difficult? Today's Bible story is about someone who went to battle without any armor because wearing heavy armor would have made fighting more difficult. Let's find out what happened.

Line Up (Older and Younger Students)

- Challenge the class to line up from tallest to shortest without talking. Students may motion with their hands to communicate. Then instruct them to line up from oldest to youngest. Ask the class if the oldest would make a good king. What about the youngest? Why or why not? You may choose to place a paper crown on the head of the youngest student.

- Today we are going to hear a Bible story about Israel's second king. No one would have guessed that God would choose the youngest son in a family to be Israel's king. Let's find out more.

Strongman Competition (Younger Students)

- Create several obstacles in the room for the class to complete. Keep records and congratulate students on their efforts. Possible choices:
  - Tape a long strip of masking tape to the floor. Invite students to jump as far as they can. Mark how far each student can jump.
  - Give each student a sticky note. Tell them to write their name on the note. Guide them to jump up and stick it as high as they can on the wall.
  - See how many large books each student can carry.
  - See how many students can hold a plank position for 60 seconds or longer.

- We often reward people who are the fastest or strongest. While being fast or strong is great, God looks at people's hearts when choosing good leaders to accomplish His plans. That means God looks at the way we treat others and the way we love God.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Memory Verse Walk (Older Students)

- Show the key passage poster. Have the girls read it, then the boys. Challenge them to say the verse from memory. Guide the class to stand in a circle with a volunteer in the middle. Have students begin walking in a circle. The volunteer will say the first word of the key passage and point to a student in the circle who will say the next word. The volunteer will continue pointing to students until the whole verse has been said. If a student does not know the next word or says an incorrect word, instruct everyone to stop walking and say the verse together up to the point they left off. Then resume walking and saying words one at a time until the class can recite the key passage. Play again as time allows.

Funny Voice (Younger Students)

- Invite the class to read the key passage together using their best "Game Show Host" voice. Read the key passage multiple times, each time trying out different styles of voices. Students may give suggestions for voices they want to try.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Who is our King?

A: *Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

David Was Anointed and Fought Goliath | 1 Samuel 16–17

Saul was the king of Israel, but he disobeyed God. So **God was going to give Israel a new king**, a better king. **God told Samuel to visit a man in Bethlehem named Jesse. God said one of Jesse's sons would be Israel's next king.** So Samuel visited Jesse and his eight sons.

Jesse's oldest son was tall and handsome. *This must be the one God chose to be king*, Samuel thought. **"Samuel, he's not the one," God said. "Do not pay attention to what he looks like. You look at what you can see on the outside, but I see the heart."**

One by one, Jesse's sons approached Samuel, but God had not chosen them. "Do you have any more sons?" Samuel asked.

"Yes," **Jesse said. "My youngest son, David, is in the field taking care of the sheep." Jesse sent for David.**

When David arrived, God told Samuel, "He's the one!"

Samuel poured oil on David's head to show God had chosen him to be the king. The Spirit of the Lord was with David, and Samuel went back home.

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Now Saul was bothered by an evil spirit. Saul's servants thought Saul might feel better if he listened to beautiful music. One of Saul's officials knew that Jesse's son, David, could play the harp. David came to Saul and whenever Saul felt troubled, David played his harp and Saul felt better.

At this time, the Philistines—enemies of Israel—got ready for war. King Saul got his army ready to fight. The Philistines had a great warrior named Goliath. He was over nine feet tall. Goliath shouted at the Israelites, "Send me your best man, and we'll fight one-on-one." But none of the Israelites wanted to fight Goliath. They were afraid of him. David's brothers were in Israel's army, and David brought them food. **David saw Goliath and watched the Israelites run away in fear. So David volunteered to fight.**

"You don't stand a chance against Goliath," Saul argued.

"As a shepherd, I have killed wild animals," **David explained. "The Lord has rescued me from wild lions and bears and He will rescue me from the hand of this giant."**

Saul offered his armor to David, but it was too heavy. **David** took off the armor and **chose five smooth stones from a nearby stream. David was armed with only the stones and a slingshot.**

Goliath made fun of David because he was just a boy. **"You come to fight with a spear and sword," David replied, "but I come to fight in the name of God!** You have insulted Him, and **God always wins His battles!"**

David ran toward Goliath. He **slung a rock and hit Goliath in the forehead. Goliath fell face-down, and David killed him.**

JESUS CONNECTION

David was not a big or strong warrior, but he trusted God. God gave David power. When God sent His Son to Earth, Jesus did not look like a strong warrior either. But by dying on the cross and coming back to life, Jesus showed His power to save sinners.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

DISCERNMENT – Being able to recognize what is true and false or right and wrong.

Living LifeWise

God doesn't judge based on how something looks, and He helps us to be discerning, too.

Character Connection

We can only see what people or situations look like from the outside. But God looks deeper. He knows what's really going on. Samuel didn't think that David looked like the best choice for the next king, but God saw his heart. Goliath looked big and strong and unbeatable to the Israelites, but David knew that God was more powerful than the giant.

Our tendency will always be to make decisions based on how something looks. But when we live God's way, He helps us live with discernment. We can ask Him to help us look deeper than just the outside of

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things. Because of Him, we can make wise choices and think about what's really going on, no matter what things look like on the outside.

Do the following situations show discernment or not? Explain.

- You are not allowed to stay after school to play basketball, so you pout and act grumpy all day.
- She was my best friend, but then she said really mean things about me to someone else. Now she wants to be my friend again. I don't know if that's wise.
- Even though I prayed for something and God didn't give it to me, I can trust that He is good and will never lie to me.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Why did God choose a new king?

  Saul disobeyed God, 1 Sam. 15:26

- How many sons did Jesse have?

  Eight, 1 Sam. 16:10–11

- What was God looking at when He chose a new king?

  The heart, 1 Sam. 16:7

- How did Samuel show that God had chosen David to be king after Saul?

  He poured oil on David's head, 1 Sam. 16:13

- What instrument did David play for Saul?

  The harp or lyre, 1 Sam. 16:23

- Why did David visit his brothers in the army?

  To bring them food, 1 Sam. 17:17–18

- Why didn't David wear Saul's armor?

  It was too heavy for David, 1 Sam. 17:39

- How many stones did David pick up to fight Goliath?

  Five, 1 Sam. 17:40

- What was David trusting in to rescue him from Goliath?

  God's power, 1 Sam. 17:37

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Whom Would You Choose? (Older Students)

- Give each student a piece of paper and a pencil. Explain that you will announce a task. Students must find someone in the room they would choose to complete the task. The chosen person should sign his name on the other player's paper.

- Whom would you choose to …
  - Guide you up a mountain?
  - Help you with your homework?
  - Play on your basketball team?
  - Make your lunch?

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- Be the class president?
- Sit next to in church?
- Pray with you?
- Ride bikes with?

- God chose someone unlikely to be Israel's next king. David did not become king right away, but his defeat of Goliath made him famous. People celebrated David's victory over the Philistines.

Trivia Review (Older Students)

- Does anyone remember what book of the Bible contains the story of David and Goliath? (*1 Samuel.*) Divide the class into two groups. Have one group turn in their Bibles to 1 Samuel 16 and the second group to 1 Samuel 17. If time is short, give each group a copy of the Bible story script in this lesson. Remind the class that the Bible story contained two parts: David was anointed and David fought Goliath. Encourage each group to create a short skit to act out their part of the story. Provide paper and pencils if students want to write a script or to make simple props such as a container to pour oil from or a stone to sling at the giant's head. Allow groups to work for several minutes, and then invite them to retell the Bible story by acting it out. Ask each group specific questions about their part of the Bible story.

  - David was anointed (1 Samuel 16)
    - What people were present? (*Samuel, Jesse, Jesse's eight sons, Saul, Saul's servants, 1 Sam. 16:4–5, 12, 14*)
    - What surprised you about this story?
    - Why did Samuel pour oil over David? (*Samuel anointed David to show that God had chosen him to be king, 1 Sam. 16:12–13*)
    - Which brother would you have expected to be king?

  - David fought Goliath (1 Samuel 17)
    - What people were present? (*Goliath, the Philistines, the Israelites, King Saul, David, David's brothers, 1 Samuel 17:1–2, 13, 17*)
    - What surprised you about this story?
    - What weapons did David use to fight Goliath? (*A sling and a stone, 1 Sam. 17:50*)
    - Whom would you have expected to win the battle?

Slingshot Practice (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, write *Goliath* on a piece of paper. If your ceiling is high enough, tape the Goliath sign 9 feet, 9 inches up the wall. If you do not have a high enough ceiling, tape the sign as high on the wall as possible. Make and/or bring in slingshots. Prepare paper wads for your class. Give each student an opportunity to take turns shooting paper wads at the sign and see if anyone can hit the target.

- The Bible says that Goliath was 9 feet, 9 inches tall—and he was strong too! David was just a young boy. God gave David power to defeat Goliath with just a sling and a stone.

Trivia Review (Younger Students)

- Briefly review the Bible story. Write the answer to each review question on a piece of clear tape attached to a rock. For less advanced classes, put a picture that answers the question with the written answer on the rock. Mix up the rocks and pile them in front of the class. You may instruct

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the students to work together to find the correct rock or select a different volunteer for each question to go through the pile and find the correct rock.

- Does God look at our appearances or our hearts? (*Our hearts, 1 Sam. 16:17*)
- How did David serve Saul? (*David played his harp, 1 Sam. 16:23*)
- Who did David believe would win the battle against Goliath? (*God, 1 Sam. 17:36, 45–47*)
- What weapon did David use to defeat Goliath? (*A slingshot and stones, 1 Sam. 17:49*)
- Who defeated our biggest enemy for us? (*Jesus conquered sin and death for us, 1 Cor. 15:55–57*)

Act It Out (Younger Students)

- Gather any props needed to act out the story ahead of time. Act out the story using the bold words from the Bible story script. Assign the students parts, have them listen as you read the story and act out their part. If time allows, change roles and act out the story again.

- Isn't it amazing how God can take a small boy and rescue the whole nation from their enemy? God saw David's faith and love for Him and chose him to do something impossible, through God's power.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Facing a Giant (Older Students)
- Size Up Goliath (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, thank You for Your Word. We praise You for giving David victory over Goliath and saving the Israelites from their enemies. Thank You for sending Jesus to save us from sin, death and Satan by His dying on the cross and rising from the dead. Help us to rely on Your perfect power instead of our own. We love You! Amen.

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Journal Page

Draw a picture of or write about what you would do if you were king over a country. How do you feel knowing that Jesus is our King forever? How can you show you trust Him?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think God chose David—a smaller, younger man?
- How did David know he could beat Goliath?
- Can you think of someone else who defeated a giant enemy on behalf of His people?

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DAVID WAS ANOINTED AND FOUGHT GOLIATH

1 SAMUEL 16–17

MAIN POINT: GOD GAVE DAVID POWER TO DEFEAT GOLIATH.

God was going to give Israel a new king. God told Samuel to visit a man in Bethlehem named Jesse. God said one of Jesse's sons would be Israel's next king. Jesse's oldest son was tall and handsome.

"Samuel, he's not the one," God said. "Do not pay attention to what he looks like. You look at what you can see on the outside, but I see the heart."

One by one, Jesse's sons approached Samuel, but God had not chosen them.

Jesse said, "My youngest son, David, is in the field taking care of the sheep." Jesse sent for David.

When David arrived, God told Samuel, "He's the one!" Samuel poured oil on David's head to show God had chosen him to be the king.

At this time, the Philistines—enemies of Israel—got ready for war. King Saul got his army ready to fight. The Philistines had a great warrior named Goliath. Goliath shouted at the Israelites, "Send me your best man, and we'll fight one-on-one." But none of the Israelites wanted to fight Goliath.

David saw Goliath and watched the Israelites run away in fear. So David volunteered to fight.

David explained, "God will keep me safe."

David chose five smooth stones from a nearby stream. David was armed with only the stones and a slingshot.

"You come to fight with a spear and sword," David replied, "but I come to fight in the name of God! God always wins His battles!"

David slung a rock and hit Goliath in the forehead. Goliath fell facedown, and David killed him.

Jesus Connection: *David was not a big or strong warrior, but he trusted God. God gave David power. When God sent His Son to Earth, Jesus did not look like a strong warrior either. But by dying on the cross and coming back to life, Jesus showed His power to save sinners.*

Key Passage: *Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

DISCUSSION COPY

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FACING A GIANT

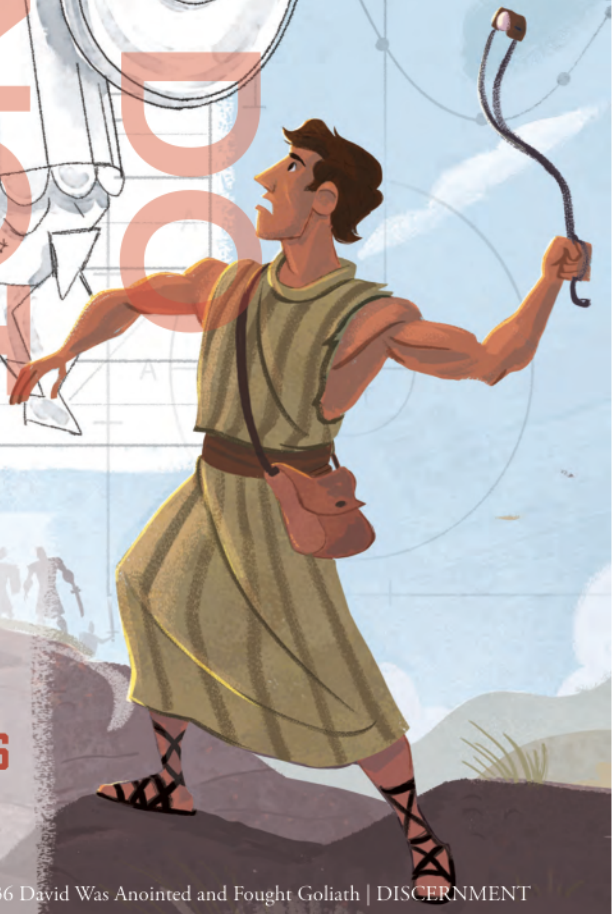
Use the scale to draw a picture of yourself next to Goliath. Goliath was more than 9 feet tall!

9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
FEET



- height
- weight
- speed





THE GOLIATH QUIZ

Connect each question with the correct answer. If you need help, look up the Scripture in your Bible.

1. Whom did Samuel anoint to be king? (1 Samuel 16:13)
2. What people fought against Israel? (1 Samuel 17:1)
3. What did David use to kill Goliath? (1 Samuel 17:49)
4. Who gave David power to defeat Goliath? (1 Samuel 17:45-46)
5. Who is our King? (John 18:37)

A ROCK
DAVID
GOD
THE PHILISTINES
JESUS

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SIZE UP GOLIATH

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the scale to draw yourself next to Goliath.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.

BIBLE STORY: DAVID WAS ANOINTED AND FOUGHT GOLIATH

- Samuel went to find the king who would replace Saul.
- David was the youngest of his brothers, an unlikely candidate for king.
- David trusted God more than weapons or armor.
- God gave David power to defeat Goliath.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do you think God chose David—a smaller, younger man, to fight Goliath?
- How did David know he could beat Goliath?
- Can you think of someone else who defeated a giant enemy on behalf of His people?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Go online to find instructions to make a slingshot or sling. Talk to your kids about how David points us to Jesus.

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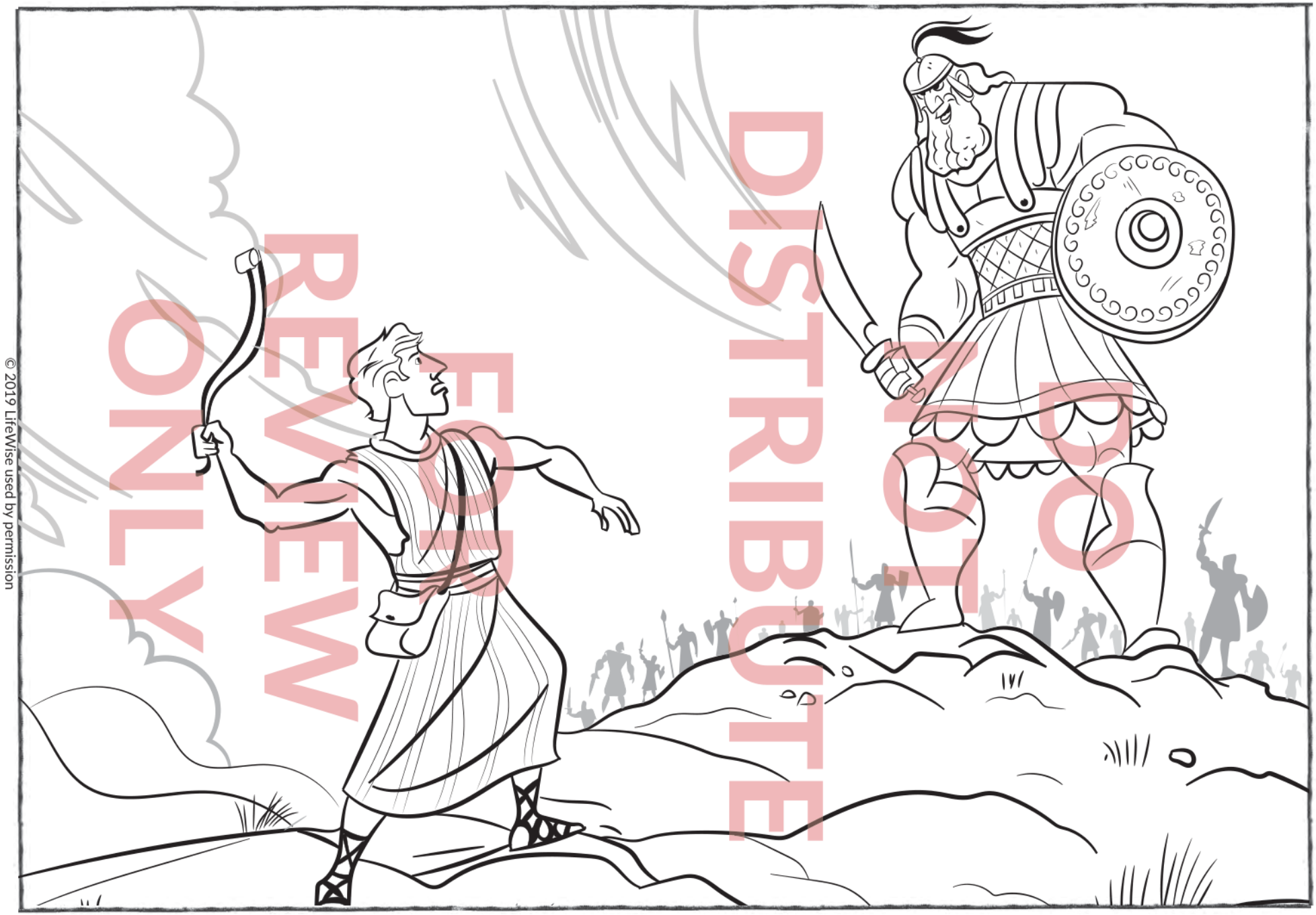

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GOD GAVE DAVID POWER
TO DEFEAT GOLIATH.

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LESSON 37: TRUSTWORTHINESS

GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO DAVID

2 Samuel 7, 11–12

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GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO DAVID

- 2 Samuel 7, 11–12
- Big Picture Q&A: Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.
- Key Passage: Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

JESUS CONNECTION

God promised David that every future king of Israel would come from David's family, and David's kingdom would last forever. God kept His promise by sending His Son, Jesus, to be one of David's descendants. Jesus is our King who will rule over God's people forever.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

TRUSTWORTHINESS – Being able to be relied upon.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Things were not looking up for David. Saul had tried multiple times to kill him, and he had to flee for his life, leaving behind his good friend Jonathan. But God had appointed David to be king, and God was faithful. Leading up to 2 Samuel 7, Jonathan was killed in battle against the Philistines. Saul fell on his own sword, and David became king of Israel. Then David moved the ark of God to Jerusalem.

David settled into his palace, and God gave him peace from his enemies. When David looked around, something didn't seem right. He was living in a majestic palace while the ark of God was in a tent! David was determined to build God a temple. That night, God gave the prophet, Nathan, a message for David. "Have I ever asked you to build Me a house?" God said. "Since I brought the Israelites out of Egypt, I have dwelled in a tent."

God reminded David that he used to be a shepherd, but God had made him a king! God promised to give the Israelites a place to stay so they wouldn't need to move around anymore. God promised to give them rest from their enemies so they could stop fighting.

Though God denied David's desire to build God a house, God promised to make a house for David: a dynasty of his descendants and an everlasting kingdom.

As you teach students about God's covenant to David, help them understand the significance of David's everlasting kingdom. God's promise to David was ultimately fulfilled by his most significant descendant, Jesus Christ: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His Kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1:32–33).

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Some time later, David tried showing kindness to the Ammonites. The Ammonites were no strangers to the Israelites. They often fought over the region of Gilead, which stretched east of the Jordan River. When David sent his men to talk with the Ammonites, they humiliated the Israelite ambassadors (see 2 Sam. 10:5). Thus began a war between the Israelites and Ammonites. Although David was supposed to lead his soldiers in war, he sent the commander of his army to fight the Ammonites and decided to stay home.

One evening, David looked from his rooftop and saw Bathsheba bathing. He inquired about her and found out that she was the wife of Uriah, one of David's elite soldiers. Her married status alone made her off-limits to David, but he nevertheless called for her and slept with her.

David probably assumed his sin would go unnoticed, until Bathsheba told him she was pregnant. With Uriah gone to war, it was obvious the baby was not her husband's.

David had a plan. He called Uriah home from the battle and encouraged him to be with his wife. But Uriah refused. Uriah didn't think it was fair for him to be with his wife while other men were at war.

Plan B: David instructed his army commander to position Uriah in the most violent part of the battle so he would be killed. This time, David's plan worked. Uriah was killed, and David took Bathsheba as his wife.

God knew David's sin and sent Nathan the prophet to confront David. David's confession is recorded in Psalm 51. David knew making sacrifices would not be enough to please God and pay for his sin. God wanted David's heart to change so he would not want to sin again.

Like David, we need more than a changed lifestyle to be made right with God; we need new hearts. Jesus died to satisfy God's wrath against sin so that we could be made alive in Him.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Several lessons ago, we learned that God's people, the Israelites, demanded a king. Who was the true king of Israel? (*God.*) Who was chosen as Israel's first king? (*Saul.*) But then God rejected Saul as king. Why did God reject Saul as king? (*He disobeyed God.*) Whom did Samuel anoint as the next king of Israel? (*David.*) Later, David fought a giant named Goliath. How was David—a boy—able to defeat Goliath? (*God gave David the power to defeat him.*)

After David killed Goliath, he became popular, and King Saul was jealous. Saul wanted to kill David, but Saul's son, Jonathan, was David's friend. Jonathan warned David about his father's anger. David left and was on the run from Saul for many years. Then one day, Saul and his son Jonathon were both killed in a battle. The people found David and asked him to become their king. David accepted and was crowned the second king of Israel.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Hidden Ball Game (Older Students)

- Gather the class around a table. Sit at the table and position a table tennis ball on the table. Show students three cups. Turn the cups upside-down. Move the ball under one of the cups. Lift the cup to remind the class where the ball is. Tell them to watch closely. Quickly mix around the cups without lifting them off the table. After several seconds, stop. Challenge students to guess where the ball is. Lift up each cup to see if they are right. Play again as time allows. You may also allow students to take turns moving the cups.

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- Did you have a hard time following the hidden ball? I tried hard to hide it from you. Do you think we can hide things from God? Today we are going to hear a Bible story about a time David tried to hide his sin from God. Let's find out what happened.

One on the Throne (Older Students)

- Arrange chairs in a circle, one chair per player. Make one chair a "throne" (a larger chair or a chair draped with a streamer or blanket). Play music while the class walks around the chairs, outside of the circle. Stop the music at random. When the music stops, players should sit down. Call on the player on the throne to tell about a promise he made or that someone made to him. Ask if he (or the person who promised) was able to keep the promise.

- Today we are going to hear a story from the Bible about a covenant, or promise, God made with King David. Can you think of any other times in the Bible when God made a promise? [*Take responses.*]

Who Am I? (Older Students)

- Before class, write on separate index cards the names of several people from previous Bible stories. [*Examples: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, Samuel.*] Explain that a student will draw a card, but she will not say the name aloud. The group may ask yes or no questions to guess the name she drew. Play as many rounds as time allows.

- Each story in the Bible shows us God's plan to send Jesus to rescue us from our sin. God revealed more to people about His plan over time. Today, we will learn what God revealed to King David.

Musical Chairs (Younger Students)

- Set up chairs in a circle, one fewer than the number of players. Designate one chair as the throne (use a larger chair or decorate one). Play musical chairs according to the traditional rules until the only chair left is the throne.

- Great job, everyone. What's different about this last chair? It's a throne. God made a promise to David in today's story, and it had to do with a throne. Listen carefully to see what God promised David in our story.

Walking Dizzy (Younger Students)

- Before class, tape a straight line on the floor at least 4–5 feet long. Invite students to take turns trying to walk on the line while dizzy. They should hold a bat upside-down and spin quickly in circles while you count to ten. The top of the bat must touch the ground and the player's forehead must stay on the smaller end while they spin. Then they will try to walk the taped line.

- Just like you kept stepping off the line, David found himself stepping away from God and making some bad choices. Each step he took only made things worse. Do you think God stopped loving him? We'll learn more during the Bible story.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

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Seek and Order (Older Students)

- Write the words of the key passage on separate index cards and hide them around the room ahead of time. When you say "go," the class should search the room and collect the cards. When they collect all the cards, challenge them to work together to arrange the cards in the correct order. Show the key passage poster to check their work. Lead the class to say the key passage aloud a few times. If time allows, mix up the cards and instruct students to arrange them again.

Ball Pass (Younger Students)

- Guide the class to stand or sit in a circle. Give the ball to one student, instructing him to say the first word of the key passage and pass the ball to the next student, who will say the second word and pass the ball. Continue passing the ball and saying one word until the entire passage is complete. Encourage the class to help each other if they stumble. For a competitive challenge, use a timer as the key passage is said. Play again to see if the class can beat their original time.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Who is our King?

A: *Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

God Was Faithful to David | 2 Samuel 7, 11:1–12:14; Psalm 51

God chose David to be king of Israel, and God gave His people a time of peace. **One day, David was talking with Nathan the prophet.** David said, "I live in a palace of nice cedar wood. But the ark of God sits inside a tent! It hardly seems fair. Shouldn't God have a nicer house than I do?" **David wanted to build a temple for the ark of God. He told Nathan his plans.**

"God is with you. Do what you want!" Nathan said. But God did not want David to do whatever he wanted. God wanted David to do what God wanted. **That night, God gave Nathan a message for David.** This is what God told Nathan to say to David:

"David, are you going to build a house for Me to live in? Think about what I have done for My people. I brought them out of Egypt. I gave them leaders to guide them. The entire time I have been with them, My house has been a tent. **Did I ever ask anyone to build a temple for Me?**

"You used to be a shepherd, David. Don't you remember? **But I made you a king.** I helped you defeat your enemies, and My people now live peacefully in their own land. **I promise you, David, that you and your descendants will be kings. When you die, one of your sons will be king.** He will be a strong king, and no one will be able to take his kingdom away from him. **He will build a house for Me.** I will love him, and I will never leave him. When your son dies, his son will be king. **The king will always be someone in your family."**

Nathan told David everything God said. **David went into the tent he had set up for the ark of the Lord. He sat down and prayed.** "Lord God, I don't deserve anything You have done for me, and You promise to do so much more! **God, You are so great! There is no one like You!** You chose the Israelites to be Your own people. You rescued them from slavery in Egypt. **God, please keep Your promises to me and my descendants. I am confident You will keep Your promises because You are trustworthy."**

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Time passed after God made a covenant with David. **David was still the king of Israel.** As king, David's responsibilities included leading the army in battle. **One spring, David sent out the army,** and he put Joab in charge of them. **David stayed in Jerusalem.**

One evening, David looked out from the roof of his palace and saw a beautiful woman named Bathsheba. Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah, one of the best warriors in David's army. David sent his messengers to get **Bathsheba,** and she **came to see David in his palace. Even though Bathsheba was not his wife, David acted like she was. Later, Bathsheba told David that she was going to have a baby; the baby would be David's.**

David knew what he had done was wrong. David should not have a baby with someone who was not his wife. So David made a plan to make sure no one found out that Bathsheba's baby was his.

David called Uriah home from the battle and told him to go spend time with his wife. But Uriah didn't think it was fair for him to relax at home while the other men were at war. He **slept on David's doorstep and refused to see his wife.**

David's plan was not working, so he made up another plan. This time, he **instructed Joab, who was leading the army, to send Uriah into the hardest part of the battle so he would be killed.**

So Joab sent Uriah to the most dangerous part of the battle, and **Uriah was killed.** David took Bathsheba into his house to be his wife, and she had a baby boy.

God knew what David had done, and He was not happy with David. God sent Nathan the prophet to talk to David. Nathan told David a story about a rich man who had many animals. When a traveler came, the rich man did not offer his own animal. Instead, he took a poor man's lamb—the only lamb he had—and gave it to the traveler to eat.

David was angry. "The rich man should die!" he said.

"You are the man!" Nathan said. God had given David a position of great power, but David killed Uriah to take his wife.

David realized he had sinned against God. David deserved to die. "You won't die for this," Nathan assured David, "but God will punish you. Your son will die instead."

David confessed his sin and prayed, "God, create a clean heart for me." David realized he could try to please God with sacrifices, but that wouldn't be enough to pay for his sin. **God wanted David's heart to change so that he would not want to sin again.**

JESUS CONNECTION

God promised David that every future king of Israel would come from David's family, and David's kingdom would last forever. God kept His promise by sending His Son, Jesus, to be one of David's descendants. Jesus is our King who will rule over God's people forever.

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LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

TRUSTWORTHINESS – Being able to be relied upon.

Living LifeWise

Because God always keeps His promises to us, we can be trustworthy to do what God asks us to do.

Character Connection

David wanted to build God a temple. He called it a house. But God had a different house in mind—a covenant with David. God promised David that one of his sons would be king (unlike Saul), that *his* son would be king after him, and that there would always be a descendant of David's on the throne … forever.

God's covenant with David was amazing. And David was very grateful. But David didn't just wait for God to do this big thing. He didn't just dream about this future son or try to make God's promise come true. He trusted God to handle it, and he went on doing the work God had given him—ruling over God's people. God is perfectly trustworthy. He always does what He says He'll do, so we can rely on Him fully. We can leave the big details of our future in God's hands and ask him to help us obey Him and make us trustworthy, too.

Trustworthy people aren't always perfect (no one is, except God!), but they can be relied on to do what they say or to do the right thing. What is the trustworthy thing to do in these situations?

- You find the answer key to tomorrow's test.
- The cashier doesn't charge you for your entire order.
- You realize that a classmate overheard you and your friends talking about them.
- The teacher has to step out of the room while the class is working.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **What did David want to do for God?**

  Build Him a temple, 2 Sam. 7:2

- **Who did God say would be the one to build God a temple?**

  David's son, 2 Sam. 7:12–13

- **What promise did God give to David?**

  Someone in the family line of David would always be king, 2 Sam. 7:16

- **Who was Bathsheba?**

  Uriah's wife, 2 Sam. 11:3

- **Who was Uriah?**

  One of David's best soldiers, 2 Sam. 11:3

- **How did David sin by inviting Bathsheba to the palace?**

  He treated another man's wife like his own wife, 2 Sam. 11:4

- **How did David have Uriah killed?**

  David ordered Joab to send Uriah to the hardest part of the battle, 2 Sam. 11:15–16

- **How did David respond to Nathan's story about the poor man's lamb?**

  David was angry, 2 Sam. 12:5

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- When Nathan told David about his sin, what did David do?

  Repent of his sin, 2 Sam. 12:13, Ps. 51

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Sheep Snatch (Older Students)

- Arrange chairs in a large circle. Position three cotton balls ("sheep") on each chair and give each student a plastic spoon. When you say "go," students should try to collect other players' sheep. They may only carry one sheep on their spoons at a time. When a player retrieves a sheep, he should carry it back and drop it into his own chair. [*Point out that a player may return to his chair to find it empty!*] Students should collect as many "sheep" as they can until time is called. Allow the class to play for several minutes. If the game gets too chaotic, call for everyone to stop. Count the sheep to see who has the most. Then reset the game and play another round.

- Nathan told David a story about a rich man, a poor man, and some sheep. Which man had only one sheep? (*The poor man.*) Which man had many sheep? (*The rich man.*) Invite students to retell the story that Nathan shared. How did David react to Nathan's story? What was the story actually about? [*Take answers.*]

Swat Trivia (Older Students)

- Write the following answers on separate index cards (one set per team): *a palace, a tent, Nathan, shepherd, Egypt, forever, Jesus, descendants*. Attach the cards to a focal wall in a grid. Form two teams and have students line up in front of one set of answer cards. Give the first player on each team a fly swatter. Students should stand a foot or two from the wall. Ask a question about the Bible story. The first player to swat the card with the correct answer gets one point. Give the answer's Bible reference and award another point if the player can locate the verse within 30 seconds. Ask the player to read the verse aloud. The first players will pass the fly swatters to the next players and move to the back of the line.

  - What kind of house did David live in? (*A palace, 2 Sam. 7:2*)
  - What did the ark of God sit in? (*A tent, 2 Sam. 7:2*)
  - What prophet spoke with David? (*Nathan, 2 Sam. 7:4,17*)
  - God had rescued the Israelites from slavery in what country? (*Egypt, 2 Sam. 7:6*)
  - What was David's job before he was king? (*Shepherd, 2 Sam. 7:8*)
  - God said Israel's future kings would be David's what? (*Descendants, 2 Sam. 7:12*)
  - God said that David's kingdom would last how long? (*Forever, 2 Sam. 7:13*)
  - God kept His promise by sending whom? (*Jesus, Matt. 1:1*)

Who Am I? (Older and Younger Students)

- Print and cut apart the "Who Am I?" cards printable. Post signs in the four corners of your classroom with the separate names of the Bible characters: Bathsheba, Uriah, David, Nathan. Read aloud the three sentences on their cards. Tell the class to stand up. After you read what someone in the Bible story said, students should move to the corner of the person who said those words.

- Read the following, pausing to allow students to move between the volunteers.

  - I am pregnant." (*Bathsheba, 2 Sam. 11:5*)

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- "My master Joab and his soldiers are camping in the open field. How can I enter my house?" (*Uriah, 2 Sam. 11:11*)
- "The rich man should die!" (*David, 2 Sam. 12:5*)
- "You are the man!" (*Nathan, 2 Sam. 12:7*)
- "You will not die, but your son will die." (*Nathan, 2 Sam. 12:13–14*)
- "God, create a clean heart for me." (*David, Ps. 51:10*)

Clean Pennies (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite students to clean pennies by following these steps:

  - Mix salt and vinegar in a bowl until the salt dissolves.
  - Use a spoon to dip a penny into the liquid for 10 seconds and then pull it out. What do you see?
  - Submerge all the pennies in the liquid. You may gently stir them. After 5 minutes, remove the pennies and rinse them in water.
  - Lay the pennies on a paper towel to dry.

- These pennies were dirty! But by washing them in salt and vinegar, you helped restore them. Do you know what *restore* means? It means "to bring back to or put back into an earlier or original state." You restored these pennies by making them shiny again! Who was restored in today's Bible story? (*David.*) Who restored David? (*God.*)

Hidden Ball (Older and Younger Students)

- Place three red cups on a smooth surface, like a table or tile floor. Place a table tennis ball under one cup. Slowly switch the cups around, mixing their order. The first time, go slowly enough that the class can easily follow the cup with the ball. Let someone guess which cup is hiding the ball. Lift the cup to reveal whether he is correct or incorrect. Play again, increasing the speed and difficulty and selecting a new student to guess with each round. Play a final round using clear plastic cups the students can see through.

- While you do the exercise, talk about the following concepts: Sometimes we try to hide our sin, like David. We may switch things around or try to distract others from noticing our mistakes or bad choices. However, no matter how fast we might move or how well we think we've hidden our sin, God can see right through us, like you saw through the clear cups. We cannot hide our sin from God, and apart from Jesus, our sin separates us from Him. However, Jesus died to restore us to God! We don't have to be afraid of punishment if we trust in Jesus. We can confess our sin openly, knowing that God will forgive and restore us.

Bible Trivia Review (Younger Students)

- Read the following statements, and have the students stand up if it is true or crouch down if it is false.

  - David and the people of Israel were in a time of war. (*False; God had given His people peace, 2 Sam. 7:1*)
  - God told David he should build Him a temple. (*False; God told David his son would do it, 2 Sam. 7:13*)
  - God promised David that someone from his family line would always be king. (*True, 2 Sam. 7:16*)

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- David led his army at war. (*False; he stayed in Jerusalem, 2 Sam. 11:1*)
- David thought Bathsheba was not married. (*False; he knew she was Uriah's wife, 2 Sam. 11:3*)
- David called for Bathsheba to see him at the palace. (*True, 2 Sam. 11:4*)
- Bathsheba became pregnant with David's baby. (*True, 2 Sam. 11:5*)
- David told Uriah everything that happened with Bathsheba. (*False; David tried to trick Uriah, 2 Sam. 11:6–8*)
- David arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle. (*True, 2 Sam. 11:15*)
- David repented because he was afraid of punishment. (*False; David repented because he understood that his sin damaged his relationship with God, Ps. 51*)
- God forgave David when he repented of his sin. (*True, 2 Sam. 12:13*)

Prayer Sticks (Younger Students)

- Provide popsicle sticks, markers, stickers and Ziploc bags for students. God made a promise to David to bless David's family. God wants to bless our families too. One way God can bless our families is through us. We can pray for our families and the people we love. Today we're going to make prayer sticks to remind us to pray for our families. Show the class how to write the name of a family member or loved one on a stick. Students may decorate the stick with stickers or draw images to remind them of their loved one. They may also decorate a bag or cup to hold the sticks.
- Each day, pull out one stick and pray specifically for that person. God hears your prayers and knows exactly what your loved ones need. You can be part of God's plan to bless your family.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Word Choices (Older Students)
- Alpha-baa-t Words (Older Students)
  - Life Events answers: *1. David was anointed and fought Goliath. 2. David and Jonathan became friends. 3. God made a covenant with David. 4. David sinned and was restored.*
- The Line of David (Younger Students)
- Herd Words (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Invite a few students to close in prayer by saying thank-you sentences to God for always keeping His promises. Then, close in prayer. God, You are faithful even when we are not. We confess that we need a Savior. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to rescue us from sin and death. Thank You for Your grace. Like David, we ask You to give us clean hearts. Help us to love You like we should. Please forgive us for our sin, Lord. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write about other people in your family who trust in Jesus. What have you learned from them? You may also list family members you would like to pray for.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why did David want to build a temple for God?
- Why do you think God stopped David from building a temple?
- How do you think David felt, knowing about God's promise to send the Messiah through David's family?

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GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO DAVID

2 SAMUEL 7, 11-12

MAIN POINT: GOD PROMISED THAT JESUS WOULD COME FROM DAVID'S FAMILY.

God chose David to be king of Israel. One day, David was talking with Nathan the prophet. David wanted to build a temple for the ark of God. He told Nathan his plans.

"God is with you. Do what you want!" Nathan said. That night, God gave Nathan a message for David.

"David, are you going to build a house for Me to live in? Did I ever ask anyone to build a temple for Me? You used to be a shepherd, David. But I made you a king. I promise you, David, that you and your descendants will be kings. When you die, one of your sons will be king. He will build a house for Me. The king will always be someone in your family."

Nathan told David everything God said. David went into the tent he had set up for the ark of the Lord. He sat down and prayed.

"God, You are so great! There is no one like You! Please keep Your promises to me and my descendants. I am confident You will keep Your promises because You are trustworthy."

Jesus Connection: *God promised David that every future king of Israel would come from David's family, and David's kingdom would last forever. God kept His promise by sending His Son, Jesus, to be one of David's descendants. Jesus is our King who will rule over God's people forever.*

Key Passage: *Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

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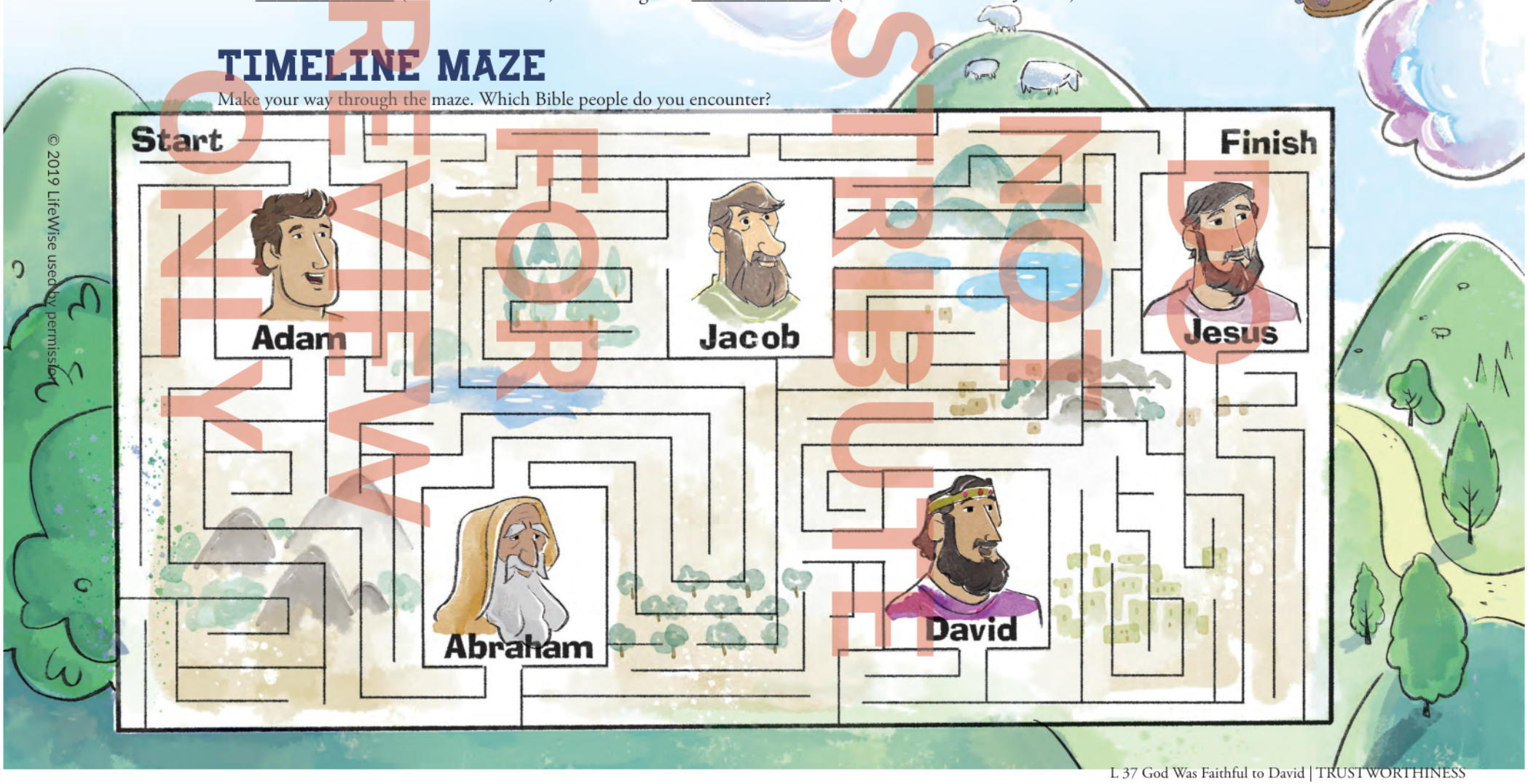
WORD CHOICES

Choose the correct words to complete the story. If you need help, read 2 Samuel 7:11-13.

"The Lord Himself will make _____ (a house / breakfast) for you. When your time comes and you _____ (play / rest) with your fathers, I will raise up after you your _____ (pet / descendant), … and I will establish his _____ (kingdom / schedule). He will build a _____ (tower / house) for My name, and I will establish the _____ (chair / throne) of his kingdom _____ (forever / for 50 years)."

TIMELINE MAZE

Make your way through the maze. Which Bible people do you encounter?



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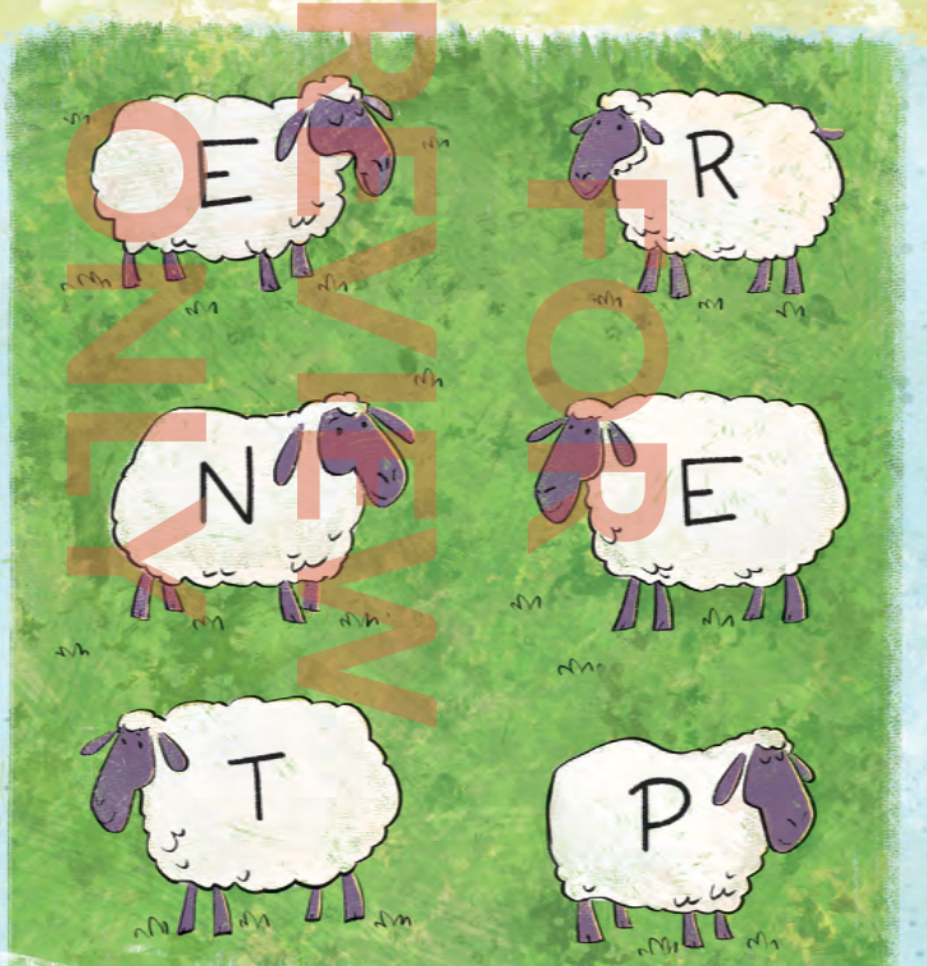
ALPHA-BAA-T WORDS

How many words can you create using the letters on the sheep?
What is the longest word you can create?



LIFE EVENTS

Number the events in the order they happened in David's life.



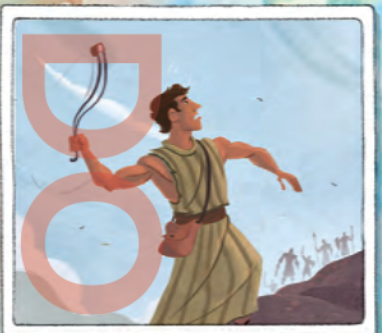
David and Jonathan became friends.



David sinned and was restored.



God made a covenant with David.



David was anointed and fought Goliath.





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- I was the king of Israel.
- I sinned against God.
- I prayed and asked God to change my heart.



Who am I?
David

- I was a beautiful woman.
- I was the wife of Uriah.
- I became David's wife.



Who am I?
Bathsheba

- I fought in the Israelite army.
- I was the husband of Bathsheba.
- I died in the hardest part of the battle.



Who am I?
Uriah

- I was a prophet of God.
- I told David a story about a lamb.
- I told David he had sinned against God.



Who am I?
Nathan

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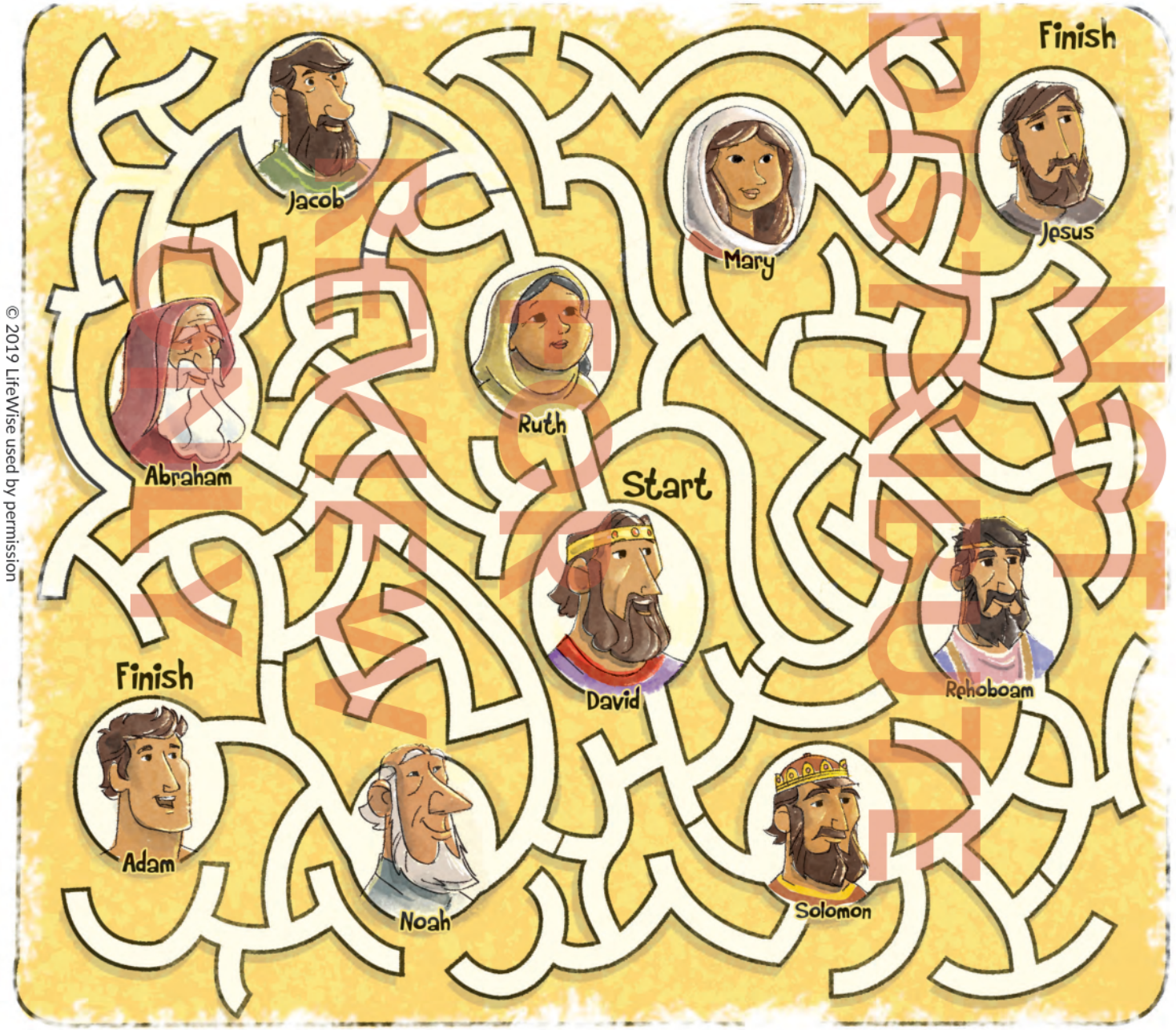
THE LINE OF DAVID

INSTRUCTIONS: Trace David's family back to Adam and forward to Jesus. You will pass through pictures of David's family.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever and He rules over the world.

BIBLE STORY: GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO DAVID
- God gave David's kingdom peace.
- David wanted to build a temple for God.
- God told David not to build a temple, but that David's son would build it instead.
- God promised that Jesus would come from David's family.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Why did David want to build a temple for God?
- Why do you think God stopped David from building a temple?
- How do you think David felt, knowing about God's promise to send the Messiah through David's family?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Work with your kids to do some research about your family tree.
- Pray for family members who don't know Jesus.

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GOD PROMISED THAT JESUS WOULD COME FROM DAVID'S FAMILY.

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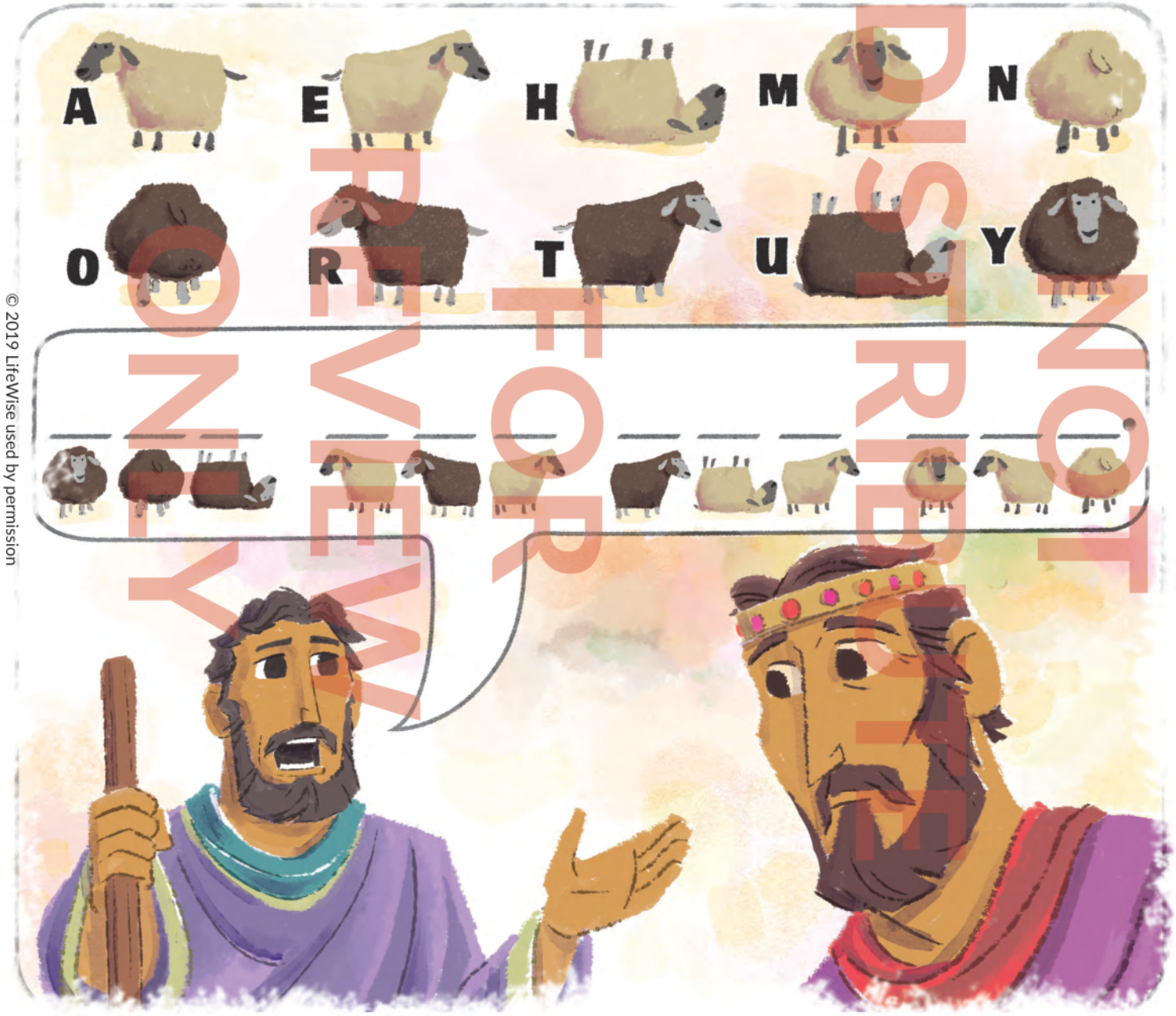
HERD WORDS

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the sheep code to find out what Nathan told David!



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KEY PASSAGE:
Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever and He rules over the world.

BIBLE STORY: GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO DAVID

- David stayed in Jerusalem during a war.
- David sinned with a woman who was married.
- In hopes of covering his sin, David had her husband killed in battle.
- God used Nathan to reveal David's sin.
- God forgave David when he repented of his sin.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why is sin still bad even if you don't get caught?
- What ways can sin harm us or our relationships?
- How can we be sure God will forgive us of our sins?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Make mini sheep with toothpicks, corks and cotton balls. Talk to your kids about the story Nathan told David.

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GOD FORGAVE DAVID WHEN HE REPENTED OF HIS SIN.

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LESSON 38: TEACHABLE

SOLOMON ASKED FOR WISDOM

1 Kings 2:1–4, 10–12; 3:1–15

SOLOMON ASKED FOR WISDOM

- 1 Kings 2:1–4, 10–12; 3:1–15
- Big Picture Q&A: Where does wisdom come from? Wisdom comes from God through His Word.
- Key Passage: Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

JESUS CONNECTION

Solomon was a wise king who wanted to do God's plan. God planned to give His people a greater and wiser king—His Son, Jesus. Jesus completely trusted God with His life. Jesus surrendered His own life to die on the cross for our sin.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

TEACHABLE – Being willing to change my mind and actions as I learn.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

David's sin with Bathsheba yielded difficult consequences, but God showed David and Bathsheba that He still loved them. After the death of their first son, Bathsheba gave birth to Solomon. Nathan, the prophet whom God had used to confront David concerning his sin, gave Solomon a second name: *Jedidiah*, which means "beloved of the Lord." God chose Solomon to be king (see 2 Sam. 12:24–25; 1 Chron. 22:9–13).

Early in Solomon's life, God appeared to him in a dream. "What should I give you?" God asked. Solomon's response set him apart from many other kings. His God-honoring qualities were apparent. First, Solomon humbly acknowledged his lack of experience in leading God's people. Then, he said, "Give Your servant an obedient heart to judge Your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" (1 Kings 3:9).

If you were a king or queen and God offered to give you anything you asked for, what request would you make? Ask the students you teach what they would ask for if they could receive anything their hearts desired. One might assume that a king would ask for power or for victory over his enemies. Perhaps he would ask for riches or to live a long life. Solomon asked for none of these. Instead, he asked God to make him wise. God was pleased with Solomon's request, and He agreed to give Solomon a wise and understanding heart.

Solomon's heart was surrendered to God. God created people to do His will. Jesus was greater than Solomon (Matt. 12:42). He completely trusted God with His life. Jesus surrendered His own life to die on the cross for our sins so that God could bring us back to Himself.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

In the last few classes, we learned about a young boy who defeated a giant! Can anyone tell me his name? (*David.)* How was David able to defeat such a huge enemy? (*God's power working in him.)* What promise did God make to David after God made him king of Israel? *(Someone from David's family would always reign as king.)* David was king for 40 years. Before David died, God chose his son Solomon to become the third king of Israel.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

A Strange Request (Older Students)

- Guide the class to sit in a circle. Prompt the first player to begin by saying, "Teacher, teacher! May I have an apple?" You should reply, "Yes, you may." The next player should repeat the phrase and ask for something else: "Teacher, teacher! May I have [*object*]?" If the object begins with a vowel, respond: "Yes, you may." If it begins with a consonant, reply: "No, you may not." Continue around the circle. Challenge the class to keep guessing and try to figure out what types of things to ask for.

- Did you figure out the secret? Today we are going to hear a Bible story about something Solomon asked God to give him. I wonder what it was!

Reference Book Race (Older Students)

- Bring several reference books to class: an atlas, thesaurus, Bible, encyclopedia and dictionary. Name and describe the books and what the purchase of each is to your class. Form two teams. Instruct teams to line up at one side of the room. Position reference books at the other side of the room. Call out a question. The first player on each team should run to the book where the answer could be found. Award a point for each correct book choice.

- Examples:
  - What is the capital of Texas? (*Atlas*)
  - What is another word for *happy*? (*Thesaurus*)
  - Where did the Statue of Liberty come from? (*Encyclopedia*)
  - How can a person be saved from sin? (*Bible*)
  - What does the word *quiddity* mean? (*Dictionary*)

- Great job! There are lots of good sources to find information. But do you know where wisdom comes from? That is what we will find out today.

Ask For Anything! (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite the class to write down or draw something they want most. Some younger children may need help writing or spelling. It can be something they wish they owned, something they wish would happen, or something they wish they could change. When the students finish, collect the papers and place them in the bag/bowl. Pull them out one at a time and read the requests. Consider praying for the anonymous requests, if appropriate.

- Sometimes, we might feel like we never get what we want. Other times, we might feel like we are getting exactly what we want. Today, we are going to learn about Israel's next king, King Solomon. God gave him the chance to ask for anything! Listen carefully to hear what Solomon chose.

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Follow the Leader (Younger Students)

- Select one student to be the leader. Encourage her to choose fun motions while leading her friends around the room. The class should fall in line behind the leader, copying her exact motions. After a minute, allow another student to be the leader.

- In the past several sessions, we learned about the first two kings of Israel: Saul and David. Today we will learn about the next king and leader of God's people: David's son, Solomon. We will find out what he did to be a good leader.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Key Word Drawings (Older Students)

- Before the session, label six pieces of poster board with a key word from the passage: *trust*, *heart*, *lean not*, *understanding*, *know*, *straight*. Show the key passage poster. Lead the class to read it aloud together.

- Form six groups and give each group markers and a piece of poster board. Invite students to make drawings for their keyword to help them memorize the key passage. As they work, you provide definitions to guide their drawings:

    - *Trust* – believing God will keep His promises
    - *Heart* – with everything we are and have
    - *Lean not* – don't depend or rely on
    - *Understanding* – your own wisdom
    - *Know* – understand who He is
    - *Straight* – lead you in the right direction

- For small or large classes, give each student a paper divided into six sections. Instruct them to write the verse in six separate parts (or have it printed on the paper ahead of time), one part in each section (1. Trust in the Lord 2. With all your heart. 3. And lean not 4. On your own understanding 5. In all your ways know Him 6. and He will make your paths straight.) Instruct students to draw a picture for the keyword underlined in each section.

Hunt and Order (Younger Students)

- Before class, write out the key passage on sticky notes, one or two words per note, and stick them in various locations around your space. When you say go, the class should hurry to find the sticky notes and bring them back to you. Once students retrieve all the sticky notes, they will work together to put the key passage in the correct order and read it aloud.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Where does wisdom come from?

A: *Wisdom comes from God through His Word.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Solomon Asked for Wisdom | 1 Kings 2:1–4, 10–12; 3:1–15

David was old. He **had been the king of Israel for many years, and now his son Solomon was going to be king.** God had promised David that Israel's king would always be someone from his family. **Before David died, he gave Solomon some instructions.**

"Be strong and brave, Solomon," **David said. "Obey God, and you will be successful. God will keep His promise that every king of Israel will come from our family." When David died, Solomon became the king of Israel.**

One night, God appeared to Solomon in a dream. God said, "Solomon, ask for anything you want, and I will give it to you."

Anything? A king might have asked to live a long life or to have lots of riches. Solomon could have asked God to give him victory over all his enemies. But Solomon did not ask to be rich or to have a long life. Solomon wanted to be a good king, so he asked for something even better.

Solomon prayed, "God, I am young, and I do not know very much about being a king. **Please make me wise and obedient to You. Help me know the difference between right and wrong. Help me lead Your people well."**

God was happy with Solomon's request. God said, "I will give you wisdom. In fact, I will make you more wise and understanding than anyone who has ever lived. No one in the future will ever be as wise as Solomon."

Then God said, "Because you asked for wisdom, I will also give you what you did not ask for: long life, riches and honor. You will be greater than any other king during your lifetime."

Solomon woke up and realized God had spoken to him in a dream. Solomon praised God and offered sacrifices to worship Him.

JESUS CONNECTION

Solomon was a wise king who wanted to do God's plan. God planned to give His people a greater and wiser king—His Son, Jesus. Jesus completely trusted God with His life. Jesus surrendered His own life to die on the cross for our sin.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

TEACHABLE – Being willing to change my mind and actions as I learn.

Living LifeWise

God knows everything, so we can choose to be teachable.

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Character Connection

We often think we're supposed to know everything … or at least act like we do. It's okay not to know things, especially about how to live. We won't always know the right thing to do. Which means we have two options: pretend or ask for help. [*Optional discussion questions: What does it look like when we pretend to know something we don't? Is it hard or easy to ask for help?*]

As much as we don't like not knowing, it's a great opportunity to grow. Asking for help means we're teachable, and God loves a teachable heart. He wants us to recognize that we need Him and ask for His help, just like Solomon did.

God is the best source for the answers to our big questions, better than our friends or Siri. Like Solomon, we can ask God to help us know what *He* wants us to do and read the Bible to learn what that looks like. Best of all, God doesn't want us just to know what to do; He also gives us the power to live His way every day.

For each situation, I'll give two responses and designate a side of the room for each answer. Move to the side that you think shows a teachable heart.

- **Your friend kindly tells you that it's mean to tease a classmate the way you do. Do you:**
  - Ask your friend to explain what you did and apologize to the classmate.
  - Shrug your shoulders and go back to what you were doing.
- **The gym teacher reminds you to be a team player during basketball. Do you:**
  - Quickly dribble to the net and shoot because you know you can score.
  - Pass the ball to a teammate who is closer to the hoop.
- **You get a spelling test back from the teacher, and most of your answers are wrong. Do you:**
  - Ask the teacher to help you find the correct spellings.
  - Throw your test in the trash.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Who became the king of Israel after King David died?**

  Solomon, 1 Kings 2:12
- **Who chose Solomon to be the third king of Israel?**

  God, 1 Chron. 22:9
- **What advice did David give to Solomon when he became king?**

  Be strong and brave and obey God, 1 Kings 2:2–3
- **How did God speak to Solomon?**

  In a dream, 1 Kings 3:5
- **What did Solomon ask God for?**

  Wisdom to lead God's people, 1 Kings 3:9
- **How did God feel about Solomon's request?**

  God was pleased, 1 Kings 3:10

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- How did God reward Solomon?

  Gave him long life, riches, honor and peace from his enemies, 1 Kings 3:13–14

- Can anyone ask for wisdom or only kings?

  God gives wisdom to anyone who asks, James 1:5

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Knowledge or Wisdom? (Older Students)

- What do you think is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Explain that *knowledge* is "something learned, or the state of having information." *Wisdom* is "good sense or judgment; knowing what is best." Position a tape line in the center of the floor. On one wall, post a piece of paper that says *Knowledge*. On the opposite wall, post a sign that says *Wisdom*.

- Tell the class that you will read a statement. If students think it is a piece of knowledge, they should run to that wall. If they think it is a piece of wisdom, they should run to that wall. Between each statement, guide the class to return to the center.

  - The sky is blue. (*Knowledge*)
  - Trouble comes to those who do wrong. (*Wisdom, Prov. 11:8*)
  - Right living leads to life. (*Wisdom, Prov. 11:19*)
  - It isn't good to favor those who do wrong. (*Wisdom, Prov. 18:5*)
  - A gentle answer turns away anger. (*Wisdom, Prov. 15:1*)
  - Ladybugs live 2 to 3 years in the wild. (*Knowledge*)
  - A foolish person turns their back on their parent's correction. (*Wisdom, Prov. 15:5*)
  - The Greek alphabet has 24 letters. (*Knowledge*)
  - A piano has 88 keys. (*Knowledge*)
  - It is better to have respect for the Lord and have little than to be rich and have trouble. (*Wisdom, Prov. 15:16*)

- Having knowledge is good. It's important to learn more all the time, and there are many ways to learn—through school, other people, books, TV, the internet, etc. It's what we do with the knowledge we have that makes us wise or unwise. True wisdom, or knowing the right thing to do, comes from God.

Out of Order (Older and Younger Students)

- Break the Bible story into separate parts. For a visual aid, copy pictures from a children's Bible. Retell the story out of order. Have students tell you what happened first, second and so on.

  1. Solomon became king of Israel.
  2. Solomon gave 1,000 offerings to God at Gibeon.
  3. God spoke to Solomon in a dream.
  4. God told Solomon to ask Him for anything.
  5. Solomon asked God for wisdom to lead His people.
  6. God blessed Solomon with wisdom, riches and honor.

Fill in the Blank (Older and Younger Students)

- I'm going to say a sentence and leave out a word. When I pause, you fill in the blank. Read the following sentences, pausing for students to fill in the missing words:

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- Solomon was the son of King _____. (*David*)
- God said Solomon could ask for _____. (*Anything*)
- Solomon asked God for _____. (*Wisdom*)
- Solomon asked God for wisdom to lead God's _____. (*People*)
- Solomon thanked God by giving Him _____. (*Sacrifices*)

Bible Trivia (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams. One student from each team will come forward. Ask a Bible review question. Once you have finished the question, a student may buzz or ring in to respond. If he is correct, he receives a point for his team. If not, his opponent may answer to steal the point for her team. The team with the most points wins.

Even Greater (Older and Younger Students)

- Encourage the class to mingle around the room. When you call "partner up," students should find a partner. If you have an odd number of players, allow a group of three. Call out a category like "number of siblings." The partner with the greater number remains in the game, and the other partner is out. Play additional rounds with categories such as age, number of pets, etc., until only one student remains.
- Solomon was a wise king, but God had a plan to send someone even greater than Solomon (Matt. 12:42). Solomon wanted to do God's will; Jesus completely trusted God and gave up His life to rescue people from sin. Jesus is greater than Solomon.

What's the Wisest Choice? (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, write several scenarios on index cards. Invite students to choose an index card to read for the class. Discuss with the group which are wiser choices, and why. Example scenarios:
  - You hear your mom call, but you are in the middle of watching your favorite TV show. What do you do?
  - You have some money saved for the Salvation Army, but you also want to buy the cool new game that just came out. Where does your money go?
  - You have a big game tomorrow and need your rest, but an awesome movie on TV won't end until late at night. What do you do?
  - Your dad asks you to do a chore that you really dislike doing. What do you say?
- Where does wisdom come from? Wisdom comes from God through His Word. We have to make hard decisions all the time. But God knows what's best for us. As followers of Christ, our choices show people how much we love and want to obey God. Our choices can point people to God or turn them away from Him.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- What Would You Do? (Older Students)
- Words of Wisdom (Younger Students)

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Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father God, in Matthew 6:33, Jesus tells us that when we put Your Kingdom first and do what You want us to do, You will provide what we need. Help us to trust You like that. Give us wisdom so we can live for Your glory. We love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write about what you would like to ask God for and why. Then pray and ask Him! God hears our prayers. (See 1 John 5:14.)

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What do you think would have happened if Solomon had not asked for wisdom?
- Why do you think Solomon did not ask for the other things God gave him?
- What do you think would happen if we asked for wisdom, too?

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SOLOMON ASKED FOR WISDOM

1 KINGS 2:1-4, 10-12; 3:1-15

MAIN POINT: SOLOMON ASKED GOD FOR WISDOM TO LEAD GOD'S PEOPLE.

David had been the king of Israel for many years, and now his son Solomon was going to be king. Before David died, he gave Solomon some instructions.

David said, "Obey God, and you will be successful. God will keep His promise that every king of Israel will come from our family." When David died, Solomon became the king of Israel.

One night, God appeared to Solomon in a dream. God said, "Solomon, ask for anything you want, and I will give it to you."

Solomon prayed, "God, please make me wise and obedient to You. Help me know the difference between right and wrong. Help me lead Your people well."

God was happy with Solomon's request. God said, "I will give you wisdom."

Then God said, "Because you asked for wisdom, I will also give you what you did not ask for: long life, riches and honor."

Solomon woke up and realized God had spoken to him in a dream.

Jesus Connection: *Solomon was a wise king who wanted to do God's plan. God planned to give His people a greater and wiser king—His Son, Jesus. Jesus completely trusted God with His life. Jesus surrendered His own life to die on the cross for our sin.*

Key Passage: *Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

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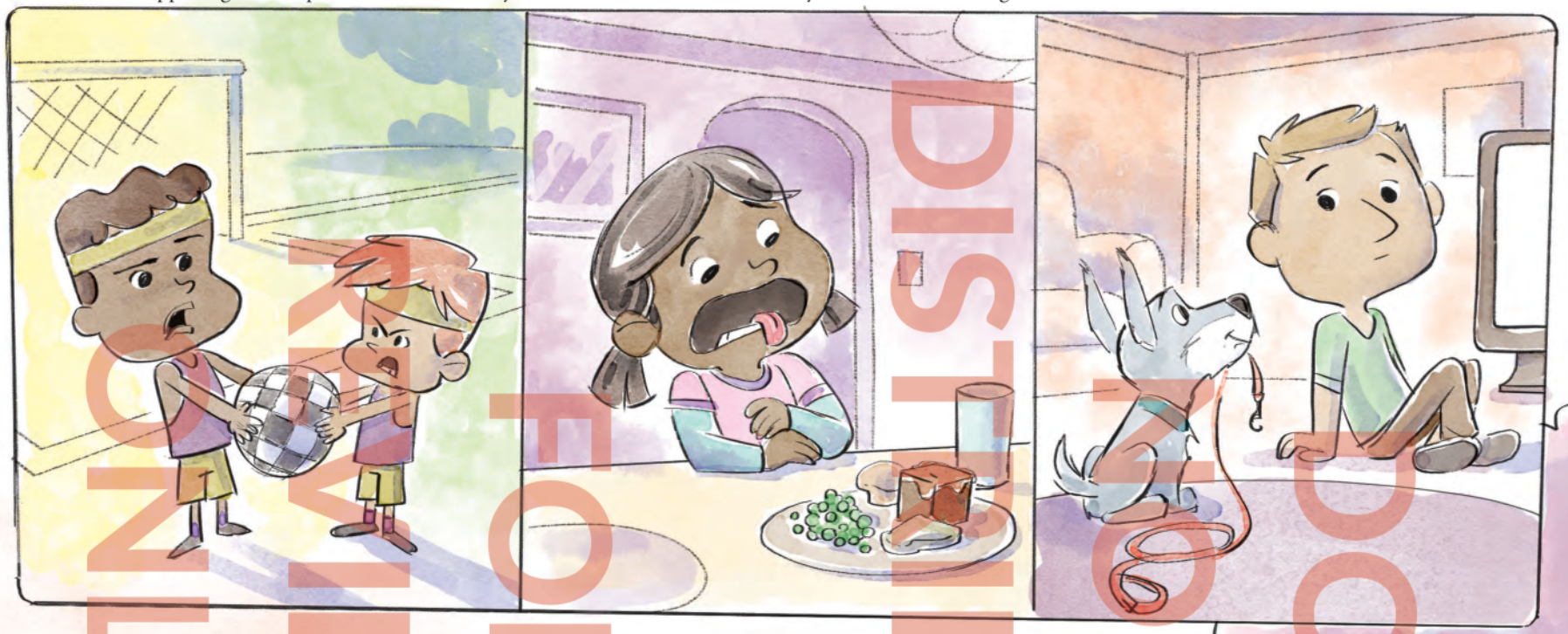
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Determine what is happening in each picture. What should you do in each scenario? How do you know what the right choice is?



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A BETTER WAY

Work from left to right. Color in the correct word in each column to complete the Bible story's main point.

Solomon	helped	angels	for	wisdom	and	race	his	house.
David	tried	God	from	knowledge	through	lead	their	people.
Samuel	asked	friends	about	questions	or	swim	God's	sheep.
Moses	called	enemies	by	ideas	to	follow	our	kingdom.

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WORDS OF WISDOM

INSTRUCTIONS: Fill in the blanks of these common sayings with the missing words. Circle the ones that are from the Bible.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Where does wisdom come from? Wisdom comes from God through His Word.

BIBLE STORY: SOLOMON ASKED FOR WISDOM

- Solomon became king after his father, David, died.
- God told Solomon to ask for anything he wanted.
- Solomon decided to ask for wisdom instead of power, money or long life.
- God gave Solomon wisdom to lead His people.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What do you think would have happened if Solomon had not asked for wisdom?
- Why do you think Solomon did not ask for the other things God gave him?
- What do you think would happen if we asked for wisdom, too?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- With your kids, make up hand motions for your favorite proverbs from scripture.

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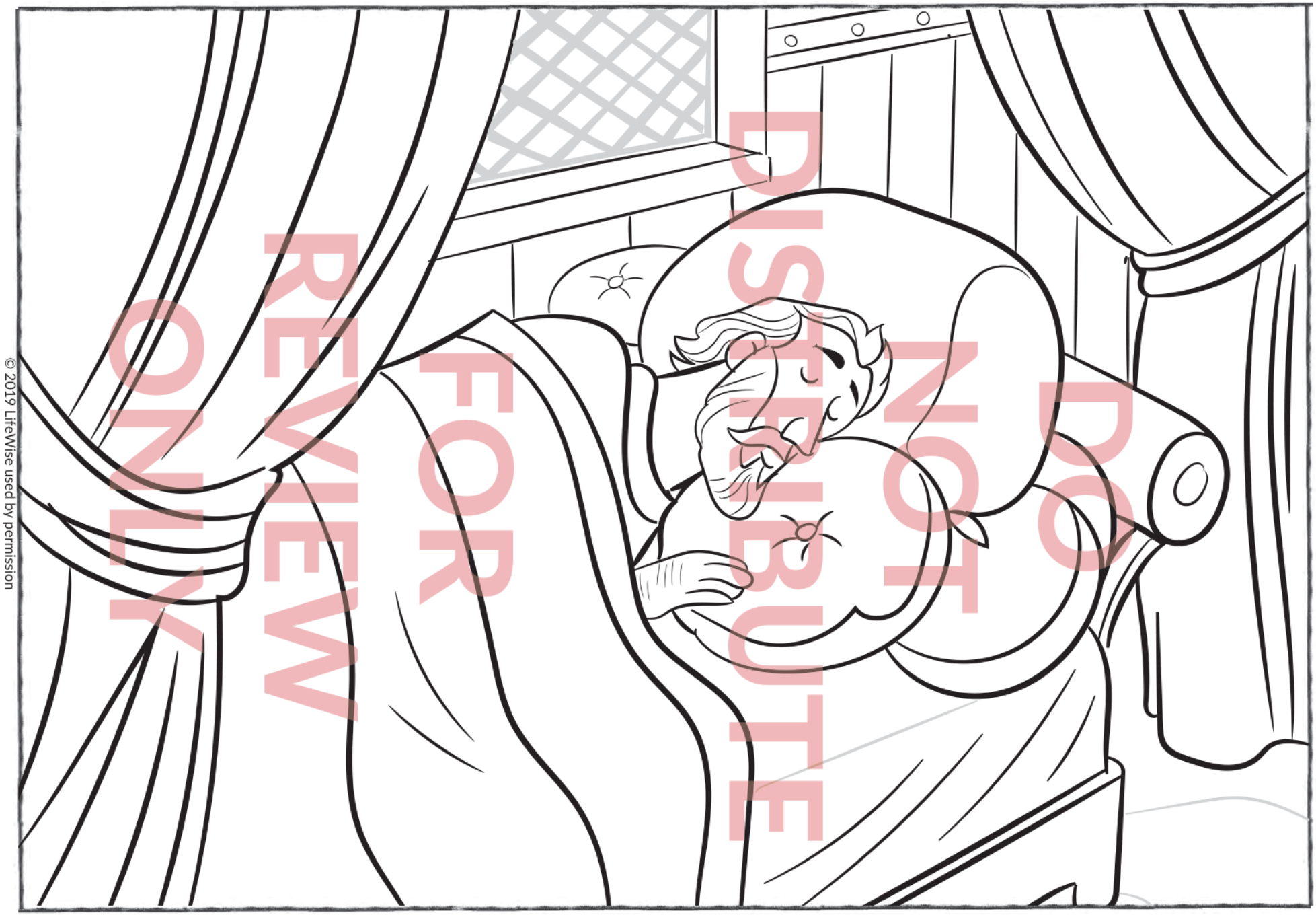

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

SOLOMON ASKED GOD FOR WISDOM TO LEAD GOD'S PEOPLE.

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LESSON 39: WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

SOLOMON STRUGGLED TO FOLLOW GOD

1 Kings 6–8, 11–12

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SOLOMON STRUGGLED TO FOLLOW GOD

- 1 Kings 6–8, 11–12
- Big Picture Q&A: Where does wisdom come from? Wisdom comes from God through His Word.
- Key Passage: Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

JESUS CONNECTION

King Solomon failed to lead God's people perfectly. God's people needed a better king, a perfect king! Through David's family, God would send His own Son, Jesus Christ, to be a perfect King over God's people forever. Jesus brings His people together and leads them back to God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

WHOLEHEARTEDNESS – Complete dedication in everything I do.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

When David was king, he wanted to build a temple for God, but God did not allow him to. "When your time comes and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7:12–13). God said King David's son would build the temple.

King Solomon began to gather materials to build the temple. He ordered cedar and cypress timbers from Lebanon. He gathered 30,000 men from all of Israel as laborers to excavate stone and prepare the timbers for the temple's construction.

The temple was impressive. The entire interior was cedar. King Solomon had everything covered with gold. In all, it took seven years for the temple to be completed. Inside the temple was furniture and accessories, like those in the tabernacle (see 1 Kings 7:48–50).

The time came to dedicate the temple. All of the Israelites gathered in Jerusalem. The priests brought the ark of the Lord to the Most Holy place, and a cloud filled the house of the Lord. God's glory filled the temple.

Solomon prayed and praised God for keeping His covenant with David. He recognized that God is not confined to a temple. "Even Heaven, the highest Heaven, cannot contain You, much less this temple I have built" (1 Kings 8:27). Solomon's prayer and speech was followed by a great offering to God.

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The temple was where God met with His people, and it gave God's people a more permanent place to worship Him. The priests followed specific instructions to approach God on behalf of His people. Jesus changed everything when He died for our sins on the cross. By taking our sin upon Himself, Jesus made the way for sinners to come to God.

King Solomon loved God. He received wisdom from the Lord and was dedicated to building His temple. But early on, we see hints that Solomon's heart was not completely devoted to God. He married foreign wives who turned Solomon's heart away from God (1 Kings 11:4).

Solomon gradually abandoned what he had believed. Israel had a history of turning away from God, and Solomon was no exception. God was angry with Solomon. He had warned him twice not to turn to false gods. God planned to punish Solomon's sin by taking the kingdom away from his family.

God was going to take the kingdom from Solomon's son Rehoboam—all but Judah. God graciously left one tribe for Rehoboam, keeping the promise He made to David (2 Sam. 7:16).

God raised up enemies against Solomon. He set apart one of Solomon's servants, Jeroboam, to become leader over ten tribes of Israel. Parts of the tribe of Benjamin followed Jeroboam, and some followed Rehoboam. When Solomon died, all of Israel gathered to make Rehoboam their new king. They asked Rehoboam to lighten the burden of service Solomon had given them, but Rehoboam refused. In fact, he promised to make their work even harder.

Israel rebelled against Rehoboam and made Jeroboam king. Only the tribe of Judah stayed completely with Rehoboam. So the kingdom was divided into two kingdoms—the Northern Kingdom was called Israel (ruled by Jeroboam), and the Southern Kingdom was called Judah (ruled by Rehoboam).

Every king failed to lead God's people perfectly. God had a plan to send them a better king, a perfect king. God would use the house of David—the single tribe He reserved for Rehoboam—to bring into the world His Son, Jesus, to become King over all of God's people forever and lead them back to God.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Let's review our Bible story from our last class. Who did God choose to be king after David? (*Solomon.*) How did God speak to Solomon? (*In a dream.*) God told Solomon he could ask for anything he wanted and God would give it to him. What did Solomon ask for? (*Wisdom.*) God was so pleased that Solomon didn't ask for money, long life and honor that He gave those gifts to Solomon anyway. Now think back several lessons. What did God promise David that his son would do for God? (*Build God a temple.*) Today we will learn more about Solomon and the things that were most important to him as king of Israel.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Endurance Challenge (Older Students)

- Guide the class to spread out around the room. When you say "go," each student should move into a plank position. Give instructions, if needed: Lay on your stomach with your hands flat on the floor by your shoulders and your toes on the floor. Straighten your arms to lift your body, keeping your back totally straight. Only your hands and toes will touch the floor. Hold that position as long as you can. Time how long students can hold the plank position. When a student tires, he may drop out.

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- Good try, everyone! Doing anything for a long period of time can be difficult. It requires *endurance*, "the ability to withstand hardship, adversity or stress." In the Bible story, we are going to hear about a king whose love for God did not endure; he turned away from God and faced some serious consequences.

All But One (Older Students)

- Give each student a paper bag containing 12 pieces of individually wrapped candies. Instruct students to find a partner and play a round of Rock, Paper, Scissors. The winner may collect all of his opponent's candies except for one. Switch partners and play again. If a player loses two rounds in a row, he will keep his piece to continue playing. Allow the class to play several rounds with a new partner each time. Who can collect the most candy? When time runs out, collect all the candies and give one piece to each student to keep.

- Today we are going to hear a Bible story about a king who lost all the tribes he ruled—except for one!

Audible Blueprint (Older and Younger Students)

- Who knows what a blueprint is? It is a set of plans for how to construct a building. I'm going to give you an audible blueprint. Without looking at your neighbor's paper, listen carefully to the instructions and do exactly what I say. Then we'll compare your finished drawings. Read the following instructions. Feel free to add or change steps to adapt to the ability of the group.
  - Draw a large rectangle.
  - Draw a triangle on top of the rectangle.
  - Draw a small rectangle inside the first one. Draw it in the middle on the bottom.
  - Draw three squares inside the large rectangle.
  - Draw a small rectangle coming out of the top of the Triangle.

- What do you think our blueprint is for? (*A house.*) You all had the same instructions, so why did your drawings come out differently? (*Answers will vary.*) Today we are going to hear that God gave His people specific instructions to build a very important building.

Is More Better? (Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to stand in a circle and hold hands. Designate one student to start the game by gently squeezing the hand of the student on his right. Students will continue the squeeze around the circle until it reaches the first student, who will call out, "Time!" Measure how long it takes the squeeze to go around the circle. Then, form several smaller groups of two or three students. Time how long it takes to play the game in smaller groups. Then, guide the class to spread out and clasp their own hands to play the game alone.

- When we first made smaller teams, it seemed better because we could finish the squeeze chain faster. However, it wasn't much fun playing alone. Today, we will learn about a kingdom that was divided, and it wasn't good for them either!

Divided Heart (Younger Students)

- Before class, cut out a large paper heart. Give the heart to a student and tell her to tear off a piece of the heart and keep it, then pass the rest to another child. Continue until each child has a piece of the heart. Allow the children to try to put the heart back together like a puzzle. You may choose to give them clear tape or clear contact paper to use.

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- Even when we tape the paper heart back together, it still doesn't look the same as it did before, does it? We're going to learn today what happened to King Solomon when he allowed his heart to be divided.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Separating the Message (Older Students)

- Before the session, write the key passage on a long piece of paper with no spaces between the words; let the letters run together. Make multiple copies, one for each group of three or four students. Challenge the groups to tear or cut the paper to separate the letters and gather the words of Proverbs 3:5–6. Encourage them to draw lines with a pencil to separate the words before they cut them. Show the key passage poster for the class to check their work. Then, lead them to say the key passage aloud together. If time remains, mix up the separated words and invite students to rearrange them in the correct order.

Building Project (Older and Younger Students)

- Show the key passage poster and practice saying it together. [*If your group made keyword posters during the last lesson, have volunteers hold up the posters as the class says the key passage. Remove the key passage poster and challenge the class to say Proverbs 3:5–6 using only the keywords as prompts.*] Write phrases of the key passage on pieces of tape and apply them to blocks before class. Invite students to construct a building, arranging the blocks so the words of the key passage are in order.

Key Passage Cover-Up (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, write the key passage on a poster board or a dry erase board. Make sure each word is spaced so that you will be able to cover one or two words with sticky notes. Invite students to read the key passage together and then cover one or two words with sticky notes. Lead the class to say it again, covering more words with each subsequent round until the key passage is completely covered.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Where does wisdom come from?

A: *Wisdom comes from God through His Word.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Solomon Struggled to Follow God | 1 Kings 6–8, 11–12

Solomon became the king of Israel after his father, David, died. God made Solomon very wise. **Solomon began to build a temple for the Lord.** The temple was to replace the tent where God had met with His people for hundreds of years—ever since God led the Israelites out of Egypt. **Solomon ordered thousands of workers to help build the temple.** The workers cut cedar logs and stone blocks. They laid a foundation and built the outside of the temple.

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God blessed the temple and made a promise to Solomon: "If you obey My commands, I will keep the promise I made to David. I will live among the Israelites, and I will not abandon My people."

The construction of the temple took seven more years. The craftsmanship was remarkable! The cedar paneling inside the temple was carved with ornamental gourds and flower blossoms. Solomon overlaid everything on the inside of the temple with pure gold. He also hired men to make bronze furnishings for the temple, such as bronze bowls for holding water.

Now that the temple was complete, it was time for Solomon to move the ark of God from its place on Mount Zion to the new temple in Jerusalem. Solomon gathered the leaders of Israel. **As the priests moved the ark, its holy utensils and the tent of meeting, King Solomon and everyone who had gathered sacrificed sheep and cattle to the Lord.**

The priests put the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy place in the temple. When the priests came out of the temple, a cloud filled the temple. God's glory was in the cloud. Solomon turned to speak to the Israelites. "Praise God!" he said. **"God promised David that his son would build a temple. God kept His promise!"**

Solomon stood and prayed with his hands spread out toward Heaven. "There is no God like You!" he said. Then, Solomon thought about the future. He knew Israel would sin and make God angry again. Solomon asked for forgiveness, and he asked God to hear their prayers.

When Solomon had finished praying, he turned toward the Israelites and encouraged them to love and obey God. The people offered sacrifices to God. When they returned to their homes, they were joyful because God was good to them.

King Solomon loved God, but he did not love God with his whole heart. Solomon had hundreds of wives, and many of them were from other nations. **Over time, Solomon's wives turned him away from God. Solomon began to worship the false gods that his wives worshiped.** Solomon even built shrines where his wives could worship the false gods.

This made God angry. God said to Solomon, "Since you have done this, I will take the kingdom away from you. You will be king the rest of your life, but when your son becomes king, he will lose everything except for one tribe."

Now God planned to make Solomon's official, Jeroboam (JER uh BOH uhm)**, the king of most of Israel. When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam** (REE huh BOH uhm) **became king. The people told Rehoboam, "Your father, Solomon, made us work too hard. We will gladly serve you if you make our work easier."**

Rehoboam thought about it and asked his friends for advice. Then, he **replied, "My father, Solomon, did not make you work hard enough! I'll make you work even harder!"** This was not the response **God's people** were hoping for. They **did not want to serve a king like Rehoboam, so they made Jeroboam king. Only the tribe of Judah remained under Rehoboam's rule.**

Rehoboam did not like being king of only one tribe. He planned to attack the northern kingdom of Israel, but God sent a prophet to stop him. The prophet had a message from God: "Do not fight them; the people of Israel are part of your family. I am the Lord, and I am in control of what is happening." So Rehoboam went home.

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Now Jeroboam was the king of Israel. When the people of Israel traveled to Jerusalem to worship God at the temple, Jeroboam worried that they would start thinking of Rehoboam as their leader. So **Jeroboam made two golden calves and made an announcement to the northern tribes. "It is very inconvenient for you to travel all the way to Jerusalem to worship at the temple," he said. "Look! These golden calves are the gods who brought your ancestors out of Egypt. You can worship them."**

What Jeroboam did was a sin! Those calves did not lead God's people out of Egypt; God led His people out of Egypt. Jeroboam also built forbidden shrines and celebrated made-up festivals so Israel would seem like a better place to live than Judah. **Jeroboam led all the people in worship to the false gods.**

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JESUS CONNECTION

King Solomon failed to lead God's people perfectly. God's people needed a better king, a perfect king! Through David's family, God would send His own Son, Jesus Christ, to be a perfect King over God's people forever. Jesus brings His people together and leads them back to God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

WHOLEHEARTEDNESS – Complete dedication in everything I do.

Living LifeWise

God will help us live wholeheartedly His way, instead of living our own way.

Character Connection

[*If possible, show a picture of Solomon's temple.*] The temple Solomon built was a big deal. It was 90 feet long by 30 feet wide by 45 feet high. That's three school buses long, one school bus wide and as tall as a 3-story building. And it took seven years to finish!

Solomon's temple was an amazing gift for God. God was pleased with it. But do you know what God wants even more than for us to do stuff for Him? He wants us to live His way with all our hearts. Solomon built the temple that way. But he did not live the rest of his life that way. In other areas, he lived the way he wanted to. And his sin, his choice to live his own way, divided the kingdom in two.

God doesn't want us to live just doing whatever we think is best. He wants us to live His way, in every area of life and with all our hearts. But we can't live God's way wholeheartedly any more than Solomon could. That's why God gives us His Holy Spirit to live inside us. With His help, we really can live God's way wholeheartedly.

Which of these options is the wholehearted way in each situation?

- You don't like the game for the week in gym class. Should you stay by the wall and try not to participate or join in anyway?
- The homework is boring. Do you skim over what you're supposed to read or do your best to read it all carefully?
- Your room is a mess, and you are supposed to clean it. Do you actually put things where they go or just pile stuff in corners so the middle looks clean?

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- What did the temple replace?

  The tabernacle

- How long did it take to build God's temple?

  Seven years, 1 Kings 6:38

- What did the priests place inside the Most Holy Place?

  The ark of the covenant, 1 Kings 8:6

- What happened when the priests left the Most Holy Place?

  God's glory filled the temple, 1 Kings 8:10–11

- What did God say He would do because Solomon turned away from Him?

  Take away most of the kingdom from Solomon's son, 1 Kings 11:11–13

- Why didn't God take all of the kingdom from Solomon's son?

  To honor His promise to David that someone from David's line would always rule as King, 1 Kings 11:12–13

- What mistake did Rehoboam make?

  Made the people work harder, 1 Kings 12:14–15

- Why didn't Rehoboam fight Jeroboam to get the northern tribes back?

  God told him not to; it was His plan to split the kingdom, 1 Kings 12:23–24

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Twelve Tribes Game (Older Students)

- Make sets of cards by writing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel (*Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, Naphtali, Manasseh, Gad, Ephraim, Dan, Benjamin, Reuben, Judah, Simeon*) on index cards four times. (One set totals 48 cards.) Form groups of two to five players; each group needs its own set of cards. For a game of two players, mix up the cards and give each player 7 cards. For three or more players, give each player 5 cards. Stack the remaining cards face-down between all the players. The object of the game is to create pairs of matching tribe names. The first player should ask another player for a specific card. For example, "Do you have the tribe of Asher?" or "Do you have the tribe of Reuben?" If the player has the card, he must give it to the player who asked for it. If he does not have the card, he should ask the big picture question: Who gives us wisdom? The first player should respond, God gives us wisdom through His Word. She will draw a card from the pile and play passes to the next student. When a player has a match, she may lay down her pair face-up on her turn. Then she should draw cards from the pile to always keep 5 or 7 cards in hand. Students may play until they run out of time or cards. The player with the most pairs wins.

- These tribes made up the nation of Israel. But God divided Israel into two kingdoms because Solomon sinned. What were the names of the two kingdoms? (*The Southern Kingdom of Judah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel.*) God took the kingdom from Rehoboam—except for one tribe. [*See 1 Kings 12:20.*] God graciously left Rehoboam one tribe—the tribe of Judah—to keep the promise He made to David, that his kingdom would last forever.

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Gradual Changes (Older and Younger Students)

- Give each student a crayon and a piece of paper. On the far left side of the paper, they should draw a happy face. On the right side, they should draw a sad face. Encourage the class to draw additional faces in between to show the transition between smiling and frowning. Demonstrate by slowly changing your smile to a frown.

- Solomon loved God, but he did not love God with his whole heart. Over time, Solomon turned away from God and worshiped false gods. The change did not happen overnight; it was gradual. Even though Solomon was not faithful to God, God was faithful to keep His promise to make David's kingdom last forever. Through David's family, God would send His own Son, Jesus, to be a perfect King over God's people forever.

Cotton Ball Throw (Older and Younger Students)

- Before the session, use a marker to divide a piece of construction paper into six sections, numbered 1–6. Place the paper on the floor. Provide a small bowl of water and cotton balls. Form three teams. One player from each team will stand at the front of the room, several feet from the construction paper. The first player will dip a cotton ball in the water and toss it at the paper. The cotton ball should leave a wet spot where it first lands. Ask a Bible review question. Allow any member of the team to give the answer. If he answers correctly, award his team the number of points in the box where his cotton ball first landed. If he is incorrect, award no points. Allow the other teams' players a turn. Then play a new round with three new players. The team that earns the most points wins.

Paper Wad Trivia (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, write Bible review questions on pieces of paper and crumple them to make paper wads. Mix up the paper wads. Briefly review the Bible story. Form two teams. Call one team *Israel* and the other *Judah*. Invite the two teams to stand against opposite walls. Scatter the paper wads in the center of the space between the two teams. When you say "Go," the first player from each team will race to the pile of paper wads. The student who reaches the pile first must grab a paper wad, open it and give the question to the teacher to read. If he cannot answer the question, his opponent may try. The player who answers correctly wins a point for his team. Continue until each student has a turn to play. The team with the most points wins.

Block Stack (Younger Students)

- Before class, write the review questions on index cards and tape them to blocks. Invite students to read parts of the Bible passage to briefly review the Bible story. Have them take a block, one at a time, and read the question aloud or have the teacher read the question for them. If the student answers correctly, use his block to start or add to a tower. If he gets it wrong, he must return it to the block pile.

Heart Puzzles (Younger Students)

- Help each student draw a large heart on a piece of paper. Encourage them to write the main point in their heart drawing. Allow them to cut their papers into 8 to 10 puzzle pieces. Give students zip-top bags to take their puzzle home.

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- Sin breaks our hearts and makes it impossible for us to love and obey God. But God didn't want our hearts to stay broken. God sent Jesus to put our hearts back together and fill them with the Holy Spirit, who helps us love and obey God.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Temple Quiz (Older Students)
  - Answers: *1. B; 2. B; 3. A; 4. C; 5. A.*
- Make it Whole (Older Students)
- What Did He Build? (Younger Students)
- Half and Half (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, we come to You aware of the consequences of our own sin. We can hear Solomon's story and think he was foolish to turn from You, but we know that we are just like him. We are all sinners who have turned from You. Thank You for not leaving us in our sin. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to rescue us and give us eternal life. We love You, God. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write a few sentences describing how you feel knowing that you are never alone. Remember, God dwells with His people!

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What's the difference between a temple and our church buildings?
- Where does God live now?
- Why can we now approach God directly, without a priest or a temple?

FOLD



DISCUSSION GUIDE DO NOT DISTRIBUTE

SOLOMON STRUGGLED TO FOLLOW GOD

1 KINGS 6–8, 11–12

MAIN POINT: GOD CHOSE SOLOMON TO BUILD A TEMPLE WHERE HE WOULD DWELL WITH HIS PEOPLE.

Solomon began to build a temple for the Lord. Solomon ordered thousands of workers to help build the temple.

God blessed the temple and made a promise to Solomon: "If you obey My commands, I will keep the promise I made to David. I will live among the Israelites, and I will not abandon My people."

The construction of the temple took seven more years. The craftsmanship was remarkable!

Now that the temple was complete, it was time for Solomon to move the ark of God from its place on Mount Zion to the new temple in Jerusalem. As the priests moved the ark, its holy utensils and the tent of meeting, King Solomon and everyone who had gathered sacrificed sheep and cattle to the Lord.

The priests put the ark of the covenant in the most holy place in the temple. When the priests came out of the temple, a cloud filled the temple. God's glory was in the cloud.

Solomon turned to speak to the Israelites. "God promised David that his son would build a temple. God kept His promise!"

Solomon stood and prayed with his hands spread out toward Heaven. "There is no God like You!" he said.

When Solomon had finished praying, he turned toward the Israelites and encouraged them to love and obey God.

Jesus Connection: *Because God is holy, only the priests could approach God—and only if they followed specific instructions. Ordinary people had no direct access to the holy presence of God. Jesus changed all that. By His death on the cross, Jesus took away our sin. We can approach God intimately and individually when we trust Jesus as Lord and Savior.*

Key Passage: *Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

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TEMPLE QUIZ

Put a check mark next to each correct answer.
Look up the Scripture references to see if you are right!

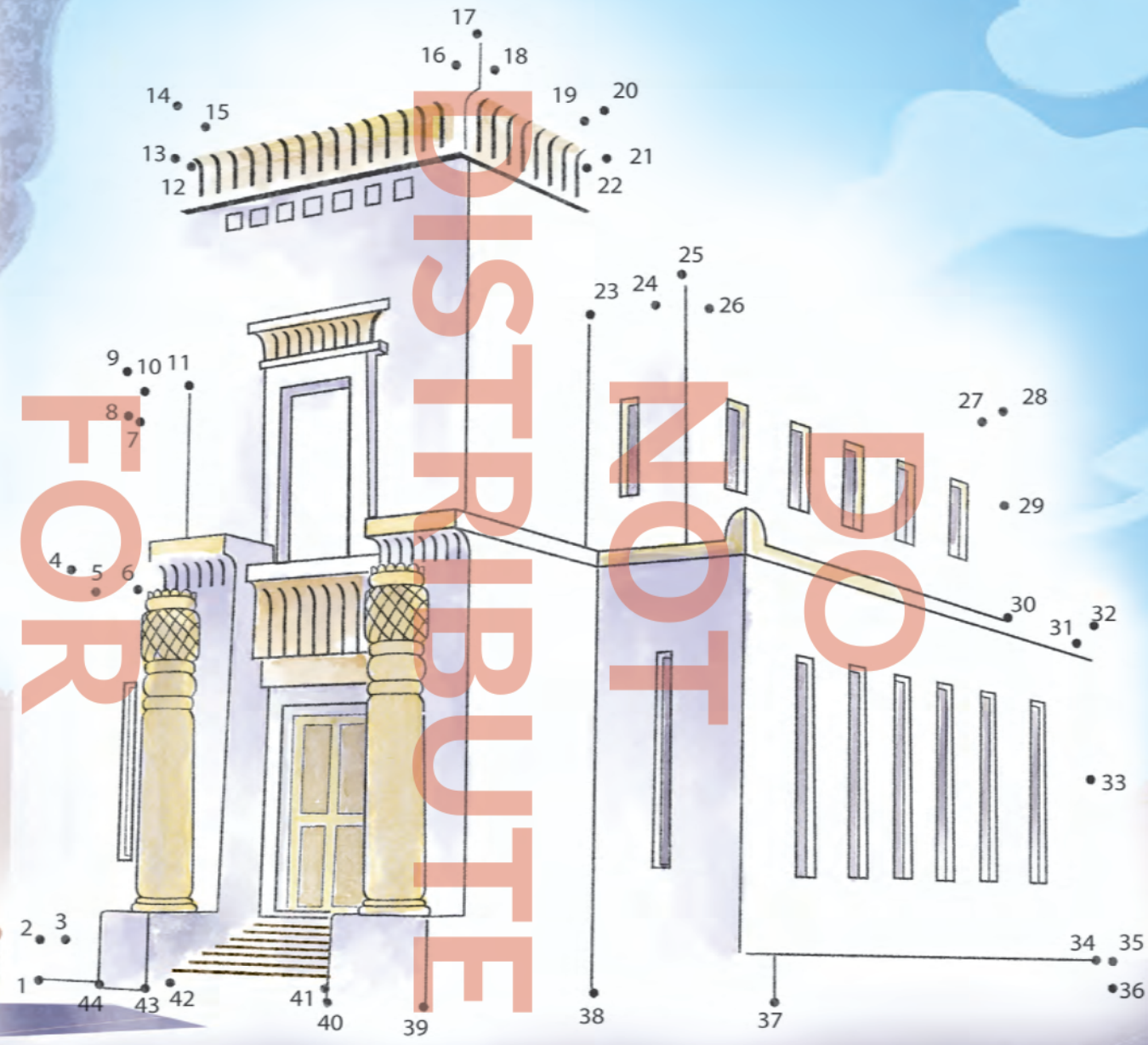
1. How many years after the Israelites left Egypt did Solomon build the temple? (1 Kings 6:1)
   - [ ] A. 48 years
   - [ ] B. 480 years
   - [ ] C. 4,800 years

2. How tall was the temple? (1 Kings 6:2)
   - [ ] A. 15 feet
   - [ ] B. 45 feet
   - [ ] C. 450 feet

3. Where was the temple located? (1 Kings 8:1)
   - [ ] A. Jerusalem
   - [ ] B. Jericho
   - [ ] C. Bethlehem

4. What filled the temple? (1 Kings 8:11)
   - [ ] A. water
   - [ ] B. fire
   - [ ] C. the glory of the Lord

5. How did the people feel about having a temple? (1 Kings 8:66)
   - [ ] A. joyful
   - [ ] B. afraid
   - [ ] C. confused



SOLOMON BUILT IT

Connect the dots to discover what Solomon built.

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MAKE IT WHOLE |

Can you complete the pictures? Draw the missing half of each object.











THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

After the Israelites took over the Promised Land, the land was divided among the 12 tribes—the families of the sons of Jacob.



Rehoboam was the king of the Southern Kingdom (Judah).

Color these tribes yellow:
- Judah
- Benjamin
- Simeon



Jeroboam became the king of the Northern Kingdom (Israel).

Color these tribes red:
- West & East Manasseh
- Naphtali
- Ephraim
- Issachar
- Zebulun
- Reuben
- Asher
- Gad
- Dan

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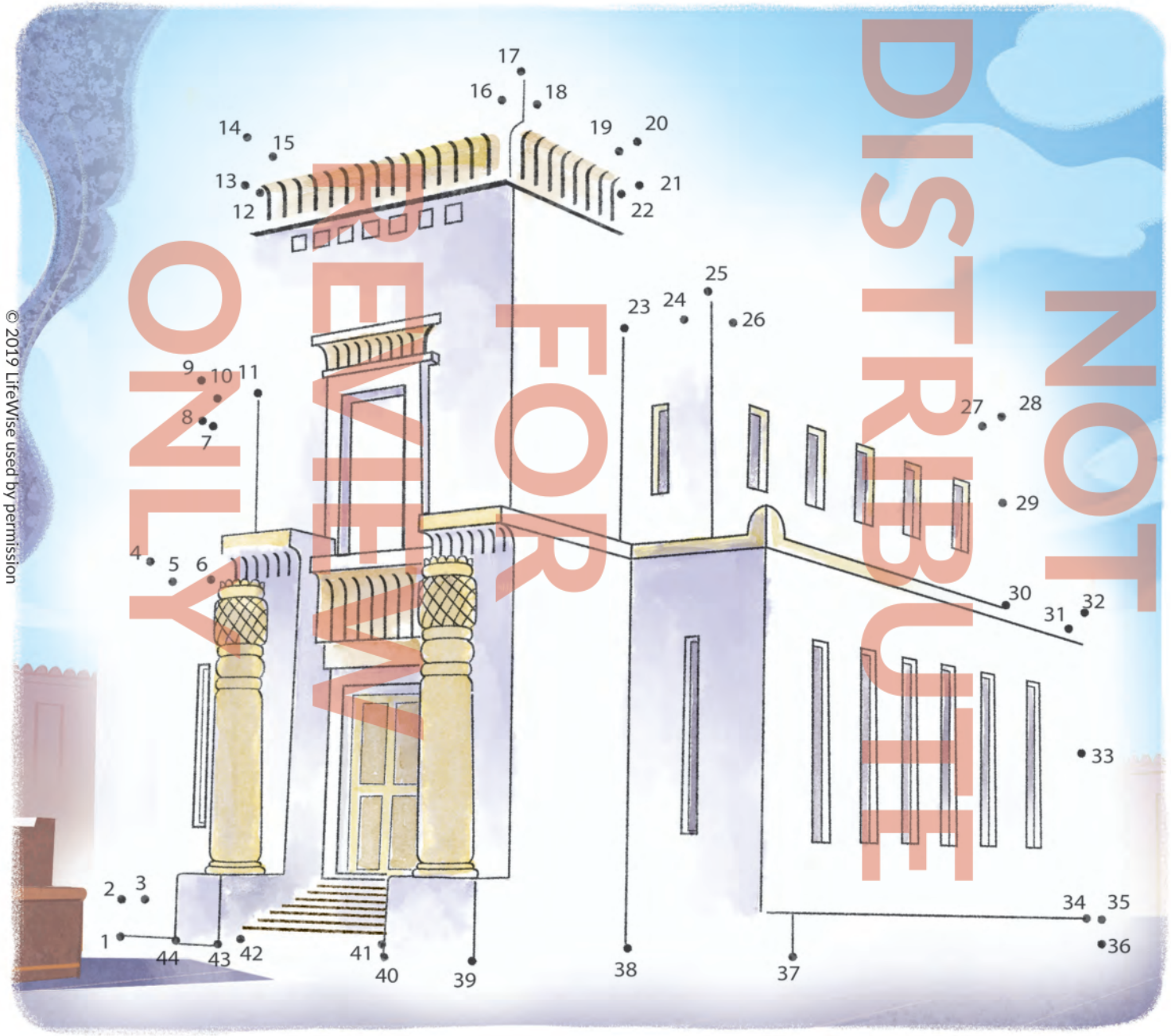
WHAT DID HE BUILD?

INSTRUCTIONS: Connect the dots in numerical order to complete the picture and learn what Solomon built.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Where does wisdom come from? Wisdom comes from God through His Word.

BIBLE STORY: SOLOMON STRUGGLED TO FOLLOW GOD

- Solomon began building God's temple.
- Thousands of people worked on the temple until it was finished.
- Solomon prayed and dedicated the temple to God.
- God filled the temple with His glory and lived with His people.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What's the difference between a temple and our church buildings?
- Where does God live now?
- Why can we now approach God directly, without a priest or a temple?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Build a house of cards, and then knock it down. Talk to your kids about Jesus' promise to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. (John 2:19-22) Rebuild the house of cards and explain what Jesus meant.

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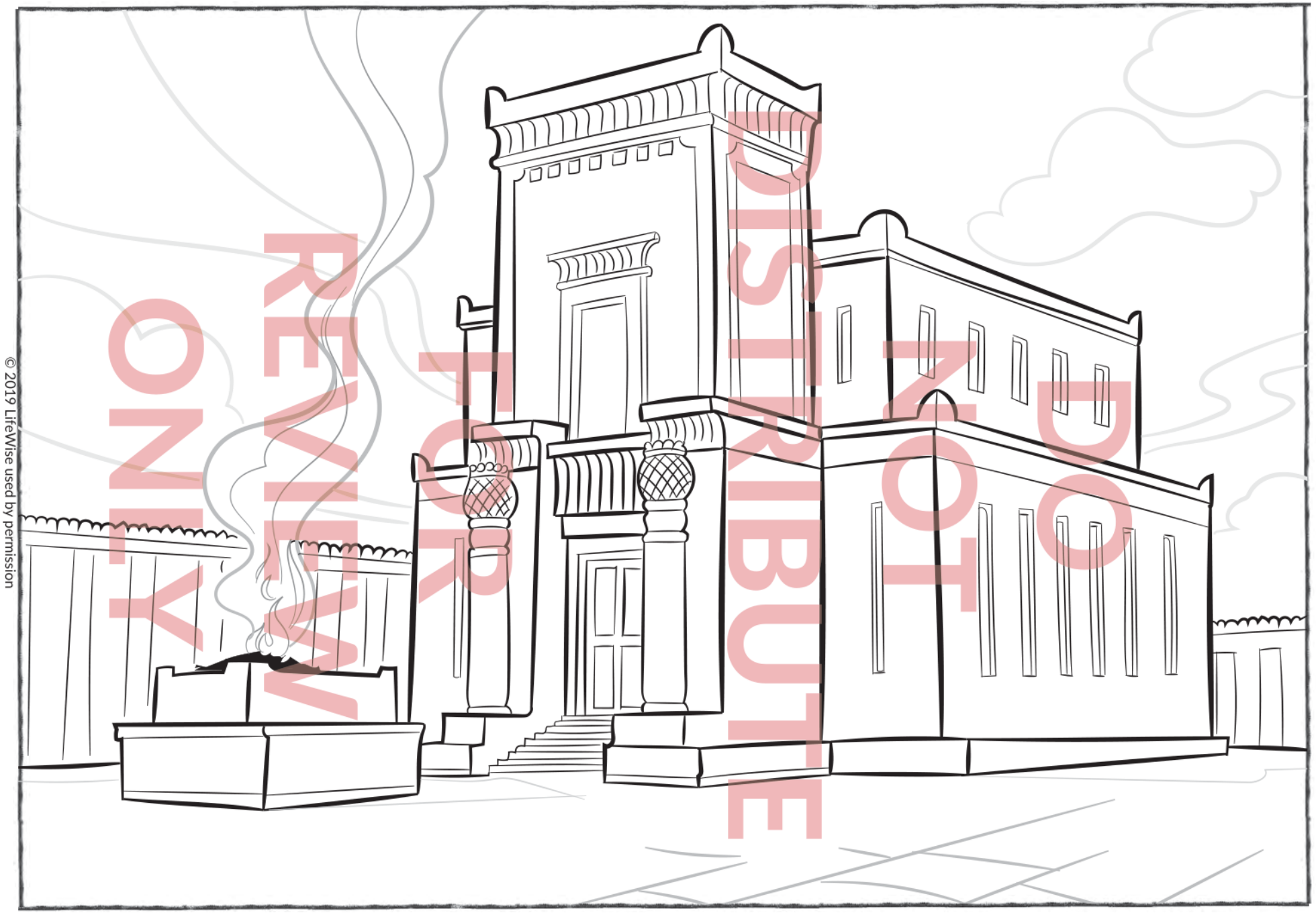

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

GOD CHOSE SOLOMON TO BUILD A TEMPLE WHERE HE WOULD DWELL WITH HIS PEOPLE.

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HALF AND HALF

INSTRUCTIONS: Look at the half pictures below and try to complete them by drawing the missing half.







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KEY PASSAGE:
Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Where does wisdom come from? Wisdom comes from God through His Word.

BIBLE STORY: SOLOMON STRUGGLED TO FOLLOW GOD

- Solomon had wives who turned his heart away from God.
- God was angry because of Solomon's sin.
- Solomon's son promised the people hard work, not rest.
- God divided Israel into two kingdoms.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What happens if we trust God just half the time?
- What changed about God's love for Solomon when he stopped obeying God?
- David and Solomon both made big mistakes; can you think of a King who never sinned?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Use a knife or a saw to cut some things in half. Show your kids the inside of the objects. Explain how Jesus unites us with God and each other.

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

GOD DIVIDED ISRAEL INTO TWO KINGDOMS BECAUSE SOLOMON SINNED.

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LESSON 40: HUMILITY

JOB

Job 1-42

JOB

- Job 1-42
- Big Picture Q&A: Where does wisdom come from? Wisdom comes from God through His Word.
- Key Passage: Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

JESUS CONNECTION

Job suffered and wanted a mediator—someone to bring him to God. This reminds us of Jesus, who suffered even though He had never sinned. Jesus is our Mediator. He suffered to pay the price for our sins and put an end to suffering on Earth. Jesus brings us to God when we trust in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

HUMILITY – Refusing to think of myself as more important than I am.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The story of Job helps believers see God alone is all-powerful, sovereign and good. Job's story is one all people can relate to, as everyone will suffer in his or her lifetime. God's dialogue with Job reveals His characteristics clearly.

Have you ever in your life commanded the morning or assigned the dawn its place (Job 38:12)? God is all-powerful! Does the eagle soar at your command and make its nest on high (Job 39:27)? God is sovereign. Who provides the raven's food when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food (Job 38:41)? God is good.

Throughout all of Job's suffering, Job never turned away from God. Listen to Job's response to God's questions: "I am so insignificant. How can I answer You?" (Job 40:4). Job didn't understand his suffering, but he understood who God is.

While the book of Job speaks volumes to the problem of human suffering, it is also an important picture of how a suffering person should relate to God. Though Job sometimes doubted God, he never turned away. Job's suffering actually brought him closer to God.

Pray that you will help the students you teach understand the story of Job and its implications. Point them to the true suffering servant, Jesus, who was truly innocent yet suffered greatly so that we could be brought closer to God in both our suffering and our joy.

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Job reminds us that following Jesus will be worth it. God is good, present and in control. We can trust Him when we don't understand the pain we have to endure. At the cross, God used the ultimate pain to bring about the ultimate good: our future and final salvation from sin.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

During our last class, we learned about King Solomon, who wrote a lot about wisdom but sometimes had trouble acting wisely himself. Do you remember what Solomon built for God? (*A temple.*) How many years did it take to finish? (*Seven.*) What were some ways that Solomon chose to disobey God? (*Many wives, worshiping idols and building temples for false gods.*) How did God deal with Solomon's sin? (*God warned him that He would take the kingdom from his son Rehoboam.*) Who became the king of the Northern ten tribes of Israel? (*Jeroboam.*)

Even though the Bible contains a lot of short stories, all the stories work together to tell one big story—the story of how God rescued people from sin through His Son, Jesus! Job probably lived in the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—sometime between Noah and the flood and when Moses led God's people out of Egypt. We are studying the book of Job because it is part of the Bible's wisdom literature, or writing that teaches the right way to think about life.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Good or Bad Advice? (Older Students)

- Give each student one piece of paper. Have them write down one good piece of advice someone has given them or that they have given another person (e.g., don't forget to study for your test tomorrow). Collect the papers. Read a scenario from the list below, followed by two or three pieces of advice from students. Ask the class to evaluate whether the advice is good or bad advice for the situation. Scenarios:
    - You hurt your foot at soccer practice.
    - You got a C on your science test.
    - You saw a bully being mean to your sibling.
    - Your friend is having a bad day and is sad.
- Some of the advice wasn't very good because you didn't understand the problem when you wrote down your advice. In the Bible story today, Job's friends don't understand the whole situation when they give him advice about God. Some of their advice was good, but most of it was really bad.

Special Powers (Older and Younger Students)

- Give the class paper and colored pencils. Invite them to draw a picture of a superhero. Ask them to consider which power would be most valuable: being able to do anything, being in charge of everything or being able to always do the right thing. Allow students to share their drawings with the group.
- Today's Bible story is about a man who learned that God is all three of those things! No one is like Him!

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What's Wrong? (Younger Students)

- This game is like 20 Questions. You will pretend to have a sickness or problem, such as the flu, strep throat, a broken bone, a big test, a lost pet, etc. The class must ask yes-or-no questions to try to figure out what is wrong with you. Every time a student asks a question that requires a "yes" answer, follow your yes with "but I still trust God."

- Wow, you were great at figuring out what was wrong with me. Even though I had problems, what did I keep telling you? (*I still trusted God.*) In today's lesson we are going to learn about a man named Job who had some pretty hard things happen to him. Let's see what Job learned about God through his suffering.

Good or Bad Advice? (Younger Students)

- Prepare two large papers. Write "Good Advice" on one and "Bad Advice" on the other and hang them on opposite walls. Have the class stand in the middle of the classroom. Read one pair (the scenario and piece of advice) from the list below. Students must show whether they think it is good or bad advice by walking to that side of the room.

  - **S:** You hurt your foot badly at soccer practice.
    A: Shake it off and go play outside.
  - **S:** You got a C on your science test.
    A: Ask the teacher to explain the answers you didn't understand.

  - **S:** You saw a bully being mean to your sister or brother.
    A: You give your sibling a hug and talk to an adult about the problem together.
  - **S:** Your friend is having a bad day and is sad.
    A: You should tease and pick on your friend to try to make them feel better.
  - **S:** You have a lot of homework due tomorrow.
    A: You should watch tv until it is almost time for bed and then start your homework.

- Some of the advice wasn't very good. If anyone gave you that kind of bad advice, I hope you wouldn't listen. In the Bible story today, Job's friends don't understand the whole situation when they give him advice about God. Some of their advice was good, but most of it was really bad. Job had to do what was right by not listening to his closest friends.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Passage Mix-Up (Older and Younger Students)

- Write words or phrases of the passage on individual cards and scramble them on the board or floor. Invite one student at a time to place one card in the correct spot by exchanging two cards (the card that was replaced goes where the correct card originally was). Call new volunteers up to exchange a card until each card is in the correct spot.

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Big Picture Q&A

Q: Where does wisdom come from?
A: *Wisdom comes from God through His Word.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Job | Job 1–42

Job (JOHB) **was a wealthy man who loved God and wanted to follow God's plan. One day, Satan came before God.** God asked Satan if he had noticed Job. "No one else on Earth is like him," God said. Job was an honest man. He feared God and turned away from evil.

"Job only follows You because You protect him and bless him," Satan said. "If You take away everything Job has, he will not follow You anymore."

So God gave Satan permission to take away everything Job had, but Satan was not allowed to hurt Job. Satan sent men to steal Job's animals. He caused Job's children to die. In one day, Job lost all of his wealth and his children. But Job continued to follow God.

Satan came to God again. He said, "If Job gets sick, he will not praise You anymore." So God gave Satan permission to make Job sick, but God did not let Satan kill Job. Job became ill with sores all over his skin.

"Do you still have faith in God?" Job's wife asked. "Curse God and die!" But Job said, "That's foolish. How can we accept good things from God and not trouble?"

Three of Job's friends came to visit Job. Their names were Eliphaz (EL ih faz), Bildad and Zophar (ZOH fahr). **Job's friends did not comfort Job. They said, "Job, you must obey God. If you do what is right and stop sinning, God will give you back everything you lost."**

"I haven't done anything wrong," Job said. Job wished he had someone to talk to God for him. He wanted answers because he did not understand why he was suffering. **Finally, a man named Elihu** (ih LIGH hyoo) **came to speak to Job. "God is greater than man," Elihu explained.** "He is not silent. **God always does what is right."**

Then God spoke to Job through a whirlwind. God asked Job, "Were you there when I made the earth? Are you the one who told the sea where to stop? Did you decide when the sun would rise or when snow would fall? Did you put the stars in the sky? Can you tell the eagles when to fly in the sky?"

God helped Job understand that God is all-powerful, sovereign and good. Job could not completely understand God's plans, but he could trust God. God is in control. Job was sorry for doubting God.

God gave back to Job everything he had lost—and much more! Job had 10 more children, and he lived 140 more years. Job got to see his grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow up before he died.

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JESUS CONNECTION

Job suffered and wanted a mediator—someone to bring him to God. This reminds us of Jesus, who suffered even though He had never sinned. Jesus is my Mediator. He suffered to pay the price for my sins and put an end to suffering on Earth. Jesus brings me to God when I trust in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

HUMILITY – Refusing to think of myself as more important than I am.

Living LifeWise

God is all-powerful and good, so we can respond humbly to Him.

Character Connection

Hard things like sickness, loss and loneliness are a real part of life. Sometimes, when we're hurt or scared or don't understand, we struggle. We get sad or angry. We want to throw a fit, too. God knows how we feel and invites us to come to Him. We can be honest with Him, just like Job was.

Like Job, we also can choose how we respond to hard things. We might try to fix things our our way. Some people do throw a fit and demand that God fix it all and do what they want. Sometimes people stop believing in God because of hard things. But God showed Job how to respond to hard things with humility.

Responding with humility means we remember that we are not God. Yes, we are important to God. He loves us, thinks of us, and sent Jesus to die for us. But only He is God. He is good, knows everything and has a perfect plan He has promised to complete. Having humility means reminding ourselves that God will handle every difficult situation in the best possible way. Instead of demanding our way or that God fix things, we choose to trust that He is still in control and ask His Spirit to walk with and comfort us in every situation.

Which of these ideas show a humble attitude toward God, even in hard things?

- Choosing to thank God for a beautiful sunset after a very bad day.
- Writing down a Bible verse to remind you that God cares for you when you get some bad news.
- Refusing to read your Bible or pray because your friend was mean to you and it hurt.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Before Job suffered, was Job a rich man or a poor man?**

  A rich man, Job 1:3

- **What kind of man was Job?**

  An honest man, who feared God and turned from evil, Job 1:1

- **Who caused bad things to happen to Job?**

  Satan, Job 1:12–19

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- **What did Satan think would happen if Job had everything taken from him?**

  He'd curse God, Job 1:11

- **What did God refuse to give Satan power over?**

  Job's life, Job 2:6

- **What did Job's friends tell Job to do?**

  Obey God and stop sinning, Job. 4:7–8, 8:5–6, 11:14–15

- **How did Job respond to his three friends?**

  Said he was innocent

- **What did Job learn about God?**

  He is all-powerful, sovereign and good, Job 38:12, 41; 39:27

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

God Is … (Older Students)

- Before class, write the three bold headings in large print on separate papers and fasten them to a white board or wall. Write down references on separate cards and distribute them to students. Encourage students to find the verses in their Bibles. Assist as needed. When students find the verses, call on them to read their verse aloud, one at a time. The class should decide together whether the verse describes God as all-powerful, sovereign or good. For younger students, use two verses per character trait instead of four, or have the teacher read a verse aloud and have students decide what the verse describes. Have a student put the correct card with the Bible verse and a few key words written on the board under the correct trait.

  - **All-Powerful:** Having complete, unlimited power or authority (Job 38:12; Jeremiah 10:12; Luke 1:37; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 1:19)
  - **Sovereign:** In a position of high authority and power or in control (2 Chronicles 29:11; Job 42:2; Psalm 103:19; Psalm 115:3)
  - **Good:** Right, kind (Job 38:4; Psalm 25:7; Psalm 34:8; Psalm 100:5; Romans 8:28)

- Job learned that God is all-powerful, sovereign and good. Even in his suffering, Job praised God. He trusted that God was in control of everything. We can trust God too.

Tic Tac Toe (Older and Younger Students)

- Write the nine questions below on large colored cards and hang in a grid on a board or wall. Make up five *X* and five *O* cards. Form two teams. Teams may choose any question on the board to answer. To win, a team must get a tic tac toe by answering three questions in a row. In order to put their *X* or *O* card on the board, the team must answer the question correctly. Questions:

  - What did God say about Job? (*No one on Earth was like Job*)
  - Why did Satan think Job followed God? (*Because Job had a good life*)
  - Who caused bad things to happen to Job? (*Satan*)
  - Who told Job to curse God and die? (*Job's wife*)
  - Who came to visit Job? (*Three friends*)
  - What did Job's friends tell Job to do? (*To obey God and stop sinning*)
  - How did God speak to Job? (*In a whirlwind*)
  - What does it mean that God is sovereign? (*God is in control*)

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- ✧ Why did Job submit to God? (*He knew he could trust God*)

Whirlwind in a Bottle (Older and Younger Students)

- ✦ How did God speak to Job in our Bible story today? (*Through a whirlwind.*) A whirlwind is a small windstorm of rapidly rotating air. Invite students to help you make a whirlwind in a bottle. If your group is large, you may choose to provide supplies to build multiple whirlwinds.

    1. Fill a bottle ¾ full of water. If desired, add three drops of dish soap and a couple drops of food color to make the whirlwind more visible.
    2. Line up the mouths of both bottles and tape them together securely.
    3. Turn the bottles so the one with water is on top. Swirl them quickly in a circular motion.
    4. Allow students to take turns swirling the bottle.They may need to make a few attempts to get the motion right.

- ✦ When God spoke to Job, Job learned that God is all-powerful, sovereign and good. Even though he didn't completely understand his suffering, he knew he could trust God.

Follow the Command (Younger Students)

- ✦ Lead the class in a stationary game of Follow the Leader. Instruct them to do what you say, but not what you do. Give them verbal commands, but demonstrate another action to confuse them. Anyone who is caught not listening to the commands must sit down. Play another round if you have time.

- ✦ Was it hard to follow the leader's instructions without following their actions? The words we say and the actions we take are very important. When we say we love God but don't act like it, people notice that our actions don't match up with our words.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ✦ The Story of Job (Older Students)

- ✦ The Heavens Declare (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, life can be hard, but we know You are all-powerful, sovereign and good. Help us trust You in the good times and the bad times. Give us hearts that want to know and love You so that we lean on You to help us through difficulties. Thank You for Jesus, who never sinned but still suffered and died to pay the price for our sin. Thank You that He rose again. We love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write a letter to yourself that you can read when you are suffering. Write things you know to be true about God.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Who is always in control, even in hard times?
- How can we know that God is good?
- How do you think Job felt after God spoke with him?



JOB

JOB 1–42

MAIN POINT: JOB LEARNED THAT GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL, SOVEREIGN AND GOOD.

Job was a wealthy man who loved God and wanted to follow God's plan. One day, Satan came before God.

"Job only follows You because You protect him and bless him," Satan said. "If You take away everything Job has, he will not follow You anymore."

So God gave Satan permission to take away everything Job had, but Satan was not allowed to hurt Job. Satan sent men to steal Job's animals. He caused Job's children to die. In one day, Job lost all of his wealth and his children. But Job continued to follow God.

Satan came to God again. He said, "If Job gets sick, he will not praise You anymore." So God gave Satan permission to make Job sick, but God did not let Satan kill Job. Job became ill with sores all over his skin.

Three of Job's friends came to visit Job. Job's friends did not comfort Job. They said, "Job, you must obey God. If you do what is right and stop sinning, God will give you back everything you lost."

"I haven't done anything wrong," Job said.

Finally, a man named Elihu came to speak to Job. "God is greater than man," Elihu explained. "God always does what is right."

Then God spoke to Job through a whirlwind. God helped Job understand that God is all-powerful, sovereign and good. Job could not completely understand God's plans, but he could trust God. God is in control. Job was sorry for doubting God.

God gave back to Job everything he had lost—and much more!

Jesus Connection: *Job suffered and wanted a mediator—someone to bring him to God. This reminds us of Jesus, who suffered even though He had never sinned. Jesus is our Mediator. He suffered to pay the price for our sins and put an end to suffering on Earth. Jesus brings us to God when we trust in Him.*

Key Passage: *Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

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THE STORY OF JOB

Find and circle the following words.

children
control
curse
doubt
eagles
earth
Elihu
faith
good
Job
powerful
Satan
sea
sin
sky
sovereign
stars
suffering
trust
wealth
whirlwind

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

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GOD IS ...

Unscramble the key words from the Bible story main point.
Then match each word with its definition.



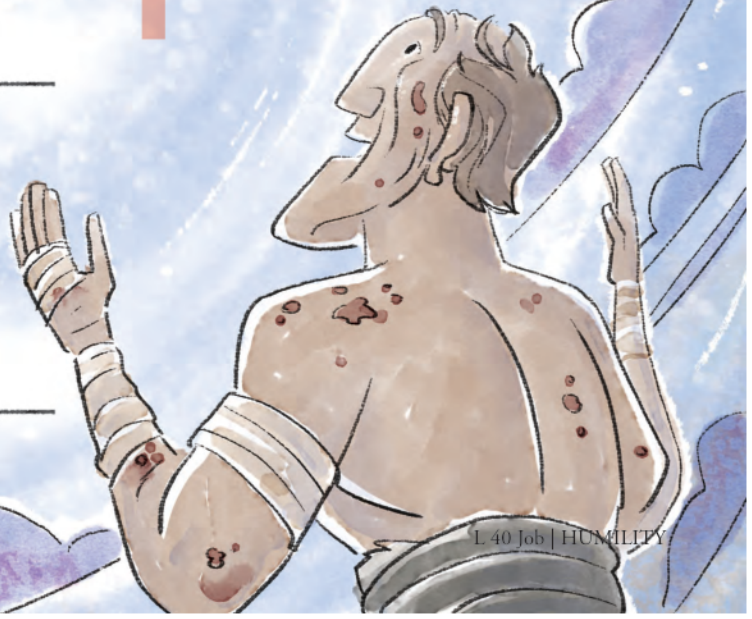
having the highest power or authority. God is above all things and in control of all things.

right, kind, loyal; the opposite of bad. God always does what is right, for His glory.



having complete, unlimited power or authority. God can do all things.





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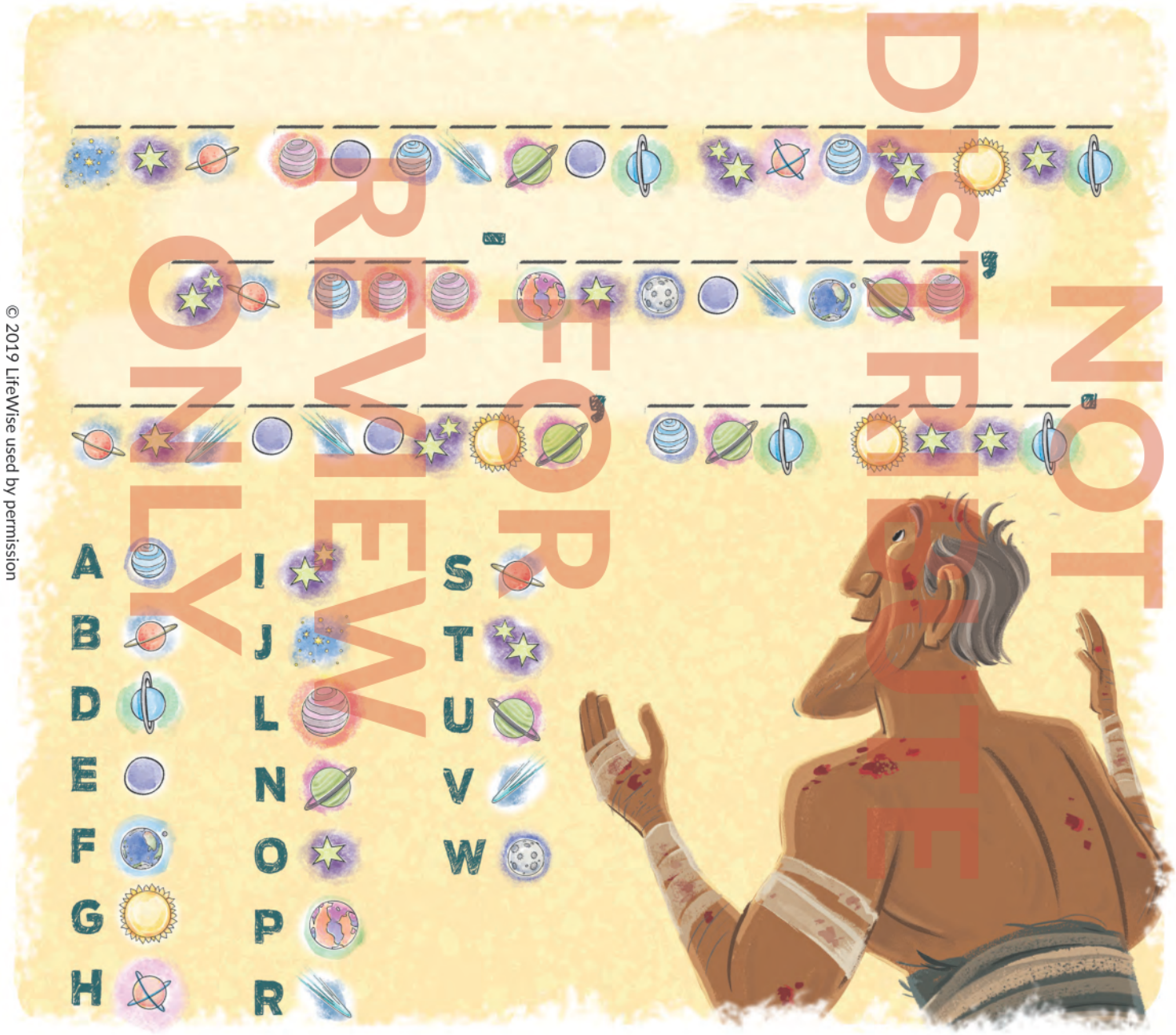
THE HEAVENS DECLARE

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the key below to match the planets and stars with their letters to figure out today's main point.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Where does wisdom come from? Wisdom comes from God through His Word.

BIBLE STORY: JOB
- Job was righteous and wealthy.
- God allowed Satan to take everything from Job.
- Job didn't understand what was happening and questioned God.
- God reminded Job that He is all-powerful, sovereign and good.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Who is always in control, even in hard times?
- How can we know that God is good?
- How do you think Job felt after God spoke with him?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Find a way for your family to help someone who is less fortunate. Volunteer at a soup kitchen, or run a clothing drive.
- Talk to your family about how God's goodness flows from Jesus through us!

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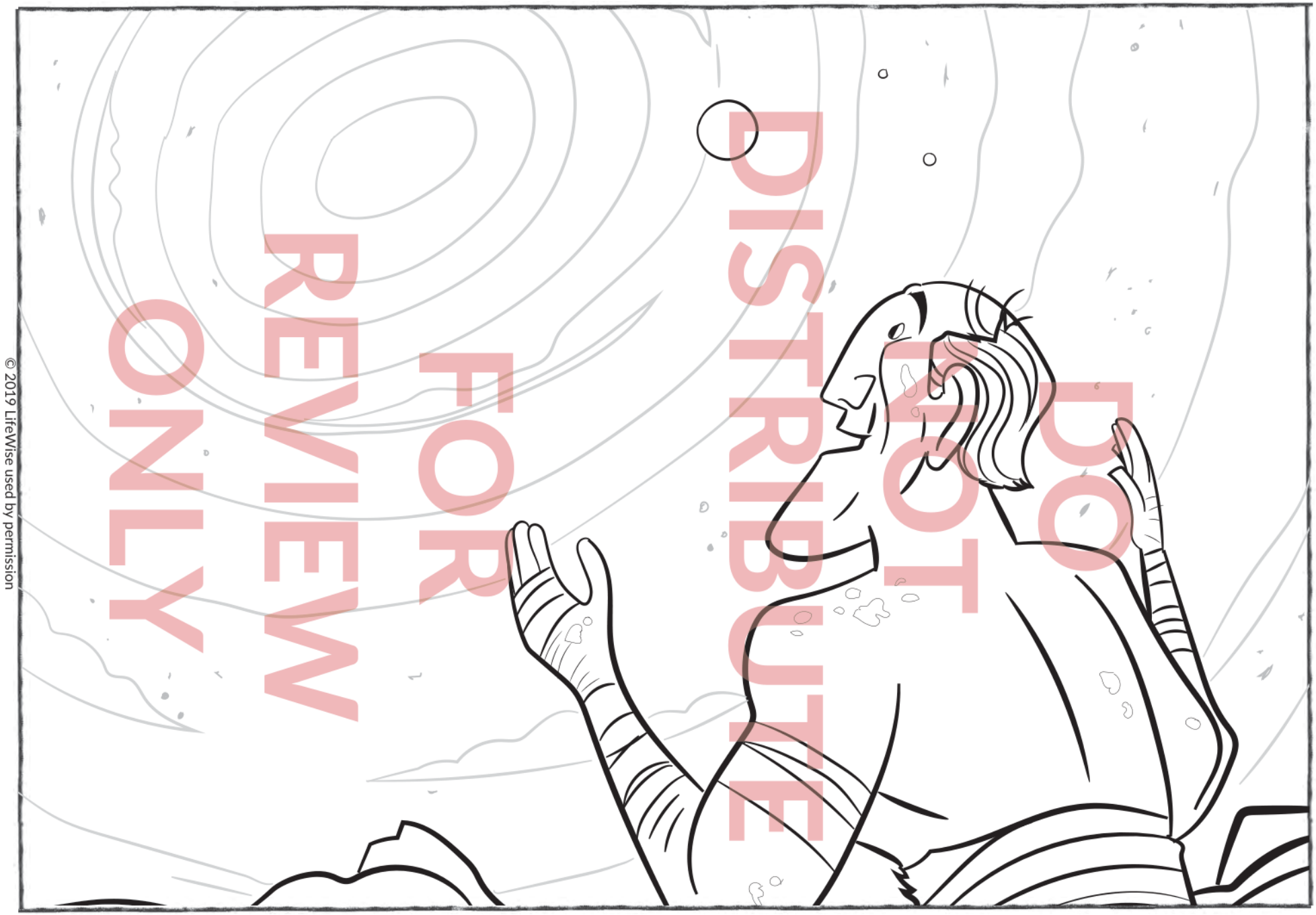

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

JOB LEARNED THAT GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL, SOVEREIGN, AND GOOD.

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LESSON 41: LOYALTY

ELIJAH CONFRONTED KING AHAB

1 Kings 18

ELIJAH CONFRONTED KING AHAB

- 1 Kings 18
- Big Picture Q&A: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.
- Key Passage: Hebrews 1:1–2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

JESUS CONNECTION

The people who worshiped the false god Baal danced and cried and cut their bodies to show that they loved Baal. But the one true God is not like the false gods. Instead, He showed His love for us by sending His Son, Jesus. Jesus bled and died to rescue us from sin when we trust in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

LOYALTY – Choosing to stay with someone, even when it costs me.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

King Ahab was an evil king. In fact, "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (1 Kings 16:33). The things that Ahab did made God angry. God wanted His people to be faithful to Him, but King Ahab led them away from God.

God chose Elijah to get Ahab's attention. In 1 Kings 17, Elijah told Ahab that a drought was coming. God prevented rain in the land for three years. For Ahab, a man who worshiped Baal—the false Canaanite god of rain and fertility—the drought sent a strong message about the one true God.

When God was ready to send rain on the earth, Elijah appeared to Ahab and instructed him to gather the Israelites and the prophets of the false gods at Mount Carmel. Elijah challenged the people to choose: Follow God or follow Baal. They couldn't do both.

Elijah set up a challenge to prove who is the one true God. He faced off against the prophets of Baal. Each group prepared a bull on an altar and called on its deity to send fire from Heaven. The prophets of Baal called and cried and cut themselves, but Baal did not answer.

Elijah poured water on and around his altar. He called to God, and God sent fire from Heaven. Everything was burned up. The prophets could not deny that the God of Elijah is the one true God, and God sent a great rain to end the drought.

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The false god Baal had no power. As you teach students this week, emphasize that only God—the one true God—has power to help His people and to save them. And He saves them through His Son, Jesus, whose name means "the Lord saves."

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

In our last class, we learned about a man named Job, who loved God and did what was right. What did Satan say Job would do if everything good in his life was taken away? (*Sin against God.*) What happened to Job? (*His children died, his servants and animals were taken and he became very sick.*) How did Job respond to suffering? (*He was sad and asked God questions, but did not blame Him.*) What did Job learn about God? (*God is much greater than him and He had a plan. Job could trust God.*)

Before our lesson on Job, we learned that God split the kingdom of Israel because of King Solomon's sin. Jeroboam was chosen to lead the 10 northern tribes, and Rehoboam led the tribe of Judah. Jeroboam made idols for the people of Israel to worship and encouraged the people to serve false gods. God sent many prophets to warn the people about their sin, but the people would not listen. They kept chasing after sinful things, like false gods.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Only God (Older Students)

- Ask the class to think of things that only God is capable of doing. Allow them to share. [*Examples: creating and sustaining life, making the sun rise and set, etc.*] These are all great examples of things only God can do. He is more powerful than anyone or anything in all creation! Today, we will hear about an amazing miracle God did to show that He is the one true God.

True or False? (Older Students)

- You will read a few statements, some true and some false. If the statement is true, the class should stand up. If it is false, they should remain seated. After each statement, guide students to sit down. Say statements such as the following:
  - The human body contains 206 bones. (*True*)
  - There are 100 books in the Bible (*False; 66*)
  - Texas is the largest state in the U.S. (*False; Alaska*)
  - Applesauce was the first food eaten in space by an American astronaut. (*True*)
- We know that some things in life are true and some aren't. Today we are going to learn that there is only one true God. Only He deserves worship, and it is foolish to trust in anything other than Him.

Which Would You Choose? (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, put a long tape line on the floor to divide the room in half. Ask the class "would you rather" questions and offer two choices. If they choose the first option, they should move to the right side of the room. If they choose the second option, they should move to the left side of the room. Students may not choose both options.
- Would you rather …
  - Climb a tall mountain or scuba dive to the bottom of the ocean?
  - Eat a whole pizza or eat a whole cake?

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- Be able to speak every language or be invisible?
- Never have to go to school or never have to do chores?
- Go to the zoo or go to a museum?
- Be able to teleport to anywhere in the world or be able to fly?

- In today's Bible story, Elijah told the prophets of Baal to make a choice. Elijah said, "Make up your minds! If you believe the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." Either God was the one true God or Baal was. The people had to choose whom they would worship; they couldn't worship both God and Baal!

Real or Fake? (Younger Students)

- Before class, print and cut out the "Real or Fake?" cards. Students will take turns drawing a card and describing or acting out the animal on the card. Once the class guesses the animal, they must decide if it is a real animal or a make-believe one.

- In our Bible story, we will learn that the Israelites began to worship a make-believe god called Baal. Baal had no power to help them. Today, we will learn that the one true God defeated the prophets of Baal.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Hebrews 1:1–2

Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

Funny Voices (Older and Younger Students)

- Show the key passage poster and lead the class to read the verses aloud. Challenge students to say the key passage in different voices. [*Examples: a robot voice, a deep voice, a high voice, etc.*]

- In Bible times, God often spoke to His people through prophets, like Elijah. A prophet told God's message to the people. Our key passage says that God speaks to us "in these last days" (which means the time after the Messiah has come) in a different way. How has God spoken to us? (*By His Son.*) The prophets told people about God and the coming Messiah. God's Son, Jesus, is the promised Messiah. He became a human and came to Earth to show us what God is like. When we know Jesus, we know God.

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Big Picture Q&A

Q: How many gods are there?
A: *There is one true God who alone deserves worship.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Elijah Confronted King Ahab | 1 Kings 18

Ahab was the king of Israel. He was an evil king. **He led the Israelites away from God, and the Israelites worshiped a false god named Baal** (BAY uhl)**. The things King Ahab did made God angry, so God**

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caused a drought. The drought would show King Ahab and all the people that God—not Baal—is powerful and in control of all things.

A drought made life very hard. **For three years, no rain fell in the land.** The lakes and rivers dried up. People could not grow crops in the fields. **Finally, God was ready to send rain.**

God sent a prophet named Elijah to give a message to King Ahab. "You have caused this trouble by disobeying God and worshiping false gods," Elijah told him. Then Elijah invited King Ahab, the Israelites and the prophets who worshiped Baal to gather at Mount Carmel.

Elijah told the people, "Make up your minds! If you believe the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." Elijah set up a challenge to show who the one true God is. The prophets of Baal set up an altar for their false god. They prepared a bull and put it on their altar.

"You call to Baal and ask him to send fire to your altar," Elijah told the people. "I will call on the Lord. The God who answers by fire is the one true God."

From morning until noon, the prophets of Baal cried out to Baal. "Answer us!" they said. But no one answered. The prophets danced and cried and cut their bodies. Still, no one answered.

Then the people gathered around Elijah. He dug a trench around his altar, prepared a bull, and put it on a pile of wood. Elijah had four jars of water poured on the wood. Then he asked for more water. Everything was wet. The water ran down the altar and filled the trench.

Elijah prayed to God, "Lord, answer me so that these people will know that You, Lord, are God." God sent fire from the sky. The fire burned up the bull, the wood, the stones and the dust! It burned up the water in the trench. There was no doubt that the Lord is the one true God.

The men who had worshiped Baal fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" Then Elijah commanded the people to kill all the prophets who led the people to worship Baal. **The sky grew dark with clouds, and God sent a great rain. The Lord ended the drought and proved that He is the one true God.**

JESUS CONNECTION

The people who worshiped the false god Baal danced and cried and cut their bodies to show that they loved Baal. But the one true God is not like the false gods. Instead, He showed His love for us by sending His Son, Jesus. Jesus bled and died to rescue us from sin when we trust in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

LOYALTY – Choosing to stay with someone, even when it costs me.

Living LifeWise

God never gives up on us, and He will help us to be loyal, too.

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Character Connection

Do you have a favorite sports team? What do we call someone who changes their favorite team to the one that's winning? (*A fair weather fan.*)

The opposite of "fair weather" is being loyal. Loyalty means sticking with a team or a person, never giving up on them, even when it costs us. Being loyal wasn't easy for Elijah. The people of Israel had turned to idols, the king and queen didn't like him, and he had to face off against 450 prophets, but Elijah stayed loyal to God. And later, when Elijah was too tired and upset to go on, God didn't give up on him either. He helped Elijah get through his discouragement.

Being loyal isn't always easy, but it's important. We can be loyal to our friends and to God, even if it costs us. Being loyal to one friend might cost us popularity or invitations to parties. Choosing to stick with God may mean getting teased or called names. But God is as powerful today as He was in Elijah's day. He never gives up on us, and He will help us to be loyal to Him and to others every day.

What might it look like to be loyal in these situations? There is more than one right answer.

- Your brother is getting bullied on the bus.
- You made the football team, and the other players invite you to eat at their lunch table instead of with your two best friends.
- A classmate is purposely left out of a game on recess by the other kids.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Which prophet stood up to King Ahab and the prophets of Baal?**

  Elijah, 1 Kings 18:1

- **Why did God keep it from raining for three years?**

  The people worshiped idols instead of God, 1 Kings 18:18

- **What challenge did Elijah present to King Ahab and the prophets of Baal?**

  The God who sent fire from Heaven to burn their sacrifice was the true God, 1 Kings 18:22–24

- **What did Elijah and the prophets of Baal each build?**

  An altar, 1 Kings 18:23

- **What did Elijah pour over the wood on his altar?**

  Water, 1 Kings 18:33

- **What did the prophets of Baal do to convince Baal to send fire from Heaven?**

  Pray, cry, dance and cut themselves, 1 Kings 18:26–29

- **How did God show that He is the one true God?**

  When Elijah prayed, God sent fire from Heaven that burned up the bull, altar and water, 1 Kings 18:38, 45

- **What did Elijah do to the prophets of Baal?**

  Kill them, 1 Kings 18:40

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Woo-Hoo (Older Students)

Ask the following review questions. Invite the class to shout "woo-hoo" if the answer is the one true God or one of His prophets and "womp-womp" if the answer is Baal or one of his prophets.

- Whom did evil King Ahab worship? Womp-womp (*The false god Baal, 1 Kings 18:18*)
- Who gave Elijah the words to speak? Woo-hoo (*God, 1 Kings 18:1*)
- Whom did Ahab blame for the drought? Woo-hoo (*Elijah, 1 Kings 18:17*)
- Who danced, shouted and cut their bodies to get their god's attention? Womp-womp (*Prophets of Baal, 1 Kings 18:26–28*)
- Who sent fire to burn the altar, defeating the prophets of Baal? Woo-hoo (*The one true God defeated the prophets of Baal, 1 Kings 18:38*)

Which Prophet? (Older and Younger Students)

- Form three groups of students. The first group will represent Moses, the second will represent Elijah and the third will represent Jesus. Each group should hold a sign with that prophet's name on it. As you read the following statements, the group(s) representing the person(s) you are describing should stand up. Standing groups must explain why they are standing. Provide Scripture references; If they get stuck, look up the verses in the Bible and read them aloud for the class.
  - This prophet led the Israelites out of Egypt. (*Moses, Exod. 3:10*)
  - This prophet called fire from God to burn up an altar (*Elijah, 1 Kings 18*)
  - This prophet is also God the Son! (*Jesus, John 1:1–3*)
  - God used this prophet to split a body of water so people could cross on dry land. (*Moses and Elijah; Exod. 14:16; 2 Kings 2:8*)
  - This prophet fed people who had no food. (*All three: Exod. 16:4; 1 Kings 17:14–15; Mark 6:41–42*)
  - This prophet died. (*Moses and Jesus: Deut. 34:5–7; Luke 23:44–46*)
  - This prophet rose from the dead! (*Jesus, Matt. 28:5–7*)
  - This prophet ascended into Heaven. (*Elijah and Jesus: 2 Kings 2:11; Acts 1:9*)
- Moses, Elijah and Jesus were all prophets! Of course, Jesus is so much more than a prophet. He is also God the Son! Each prophet received messages directly from God. God used prophets to perform incredible miracles and feats of power to show the people that they really were His messengers. Jesus' miracles showed that He is God the Son.

Building Relay (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Give each player at least one block. Teams must use the same number of blocks. Position a piece of tissue paper next to each team. Then explain the rules of the game: The first player will carry a block to the other side of the room, set it down and race back to tag the next player on his team. Players will take turns carrying one block to the other side of the room and stacking it on top of or next to existing blocks. When a team has moved all of its blocks, the last player should carry the tissue paper to the wooden "altar" and position it on top. When she returns to her team, they should sit down.

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- Who sent fire from the sky? (*The Lord, the one true God.*) The one true God defeated the prophets of Baal. When Elijah called out to God, God answered. God has done a truly amazing thing for us. In some ways, we were all like the prophets of Baal at one time, worshiping other things that had no power over the sin in our lives. Those things may not be statues, but anything we love more than God—friends, activities, entertainment or even ourselves—is an idol. Worshiping these things is a sin. God has made the way for us to be free from our sin. He sent His Son, Jesus, to Earth to live a perfect life in our place. When we put our faith in Jesus, God graciously forgives our sin and sees us as if we were perfectly obedient like Jesus. That is such good news!

Key Word Charades (Older and Younger Students)

- Write the following keywords on separate index cards: king, fire, rain, dance, water, God. Form two teams and play a game of charades using the keyword cards. One player will act out the word for his team. If his team can guess the word in 60 seconds, award one point. Then, the other team will take a turn.

- Today, we learned that there is one true God who alone deserves worship. God displayed His amazing power over the false god Baal.

Drip, Drip, Drop (Older and Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to sit in a circle. Choose a volunteer to walk around the circle, gently tapping each student on the head and saying "drip." When he taps a student and says "drop," she must chase him around the circle, trying to tag him before he sits in her seat. If he is caught, he must sit at the "altar" (the middle of the circle). If he makes it to the empty seat, she sits at the "altar." Choose two new students to be the walker and chaser.

- Elijah wanted to show God's power, so he drenched his altar with water before praying for God to light it on fire. Why did Elijah do that?

Build the Altar (Younger Students)

- Provide two piles of 12 blocks each. Divide the class into two teams. Take turns asking teams Bible review questions. If the team answers correctly, they can stack one block to make their team's altar.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- How Many Quiz (OlderStudents)
  - Answers: *1. D; 2. E; 3. G; 4. N; 5. O; 6. R; 7. T; 8. U*
  - Order of Events answers: *3, 2, 4, 1*

- Set of 12 (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for revealing Yourself to us through Your Word. Every time we read Your Word, we see evidence that points us to the one true God, and we pray that we would worship You alone because only You are worthy! Thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior and King. We pray all this in His holy name. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write about or draw a picture of at least one way you can worship God.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How did the prophets of Baal try to get Baal's attention?
- What do we have to do so that God will listen to us?
- What other enemies has God defeated for us?

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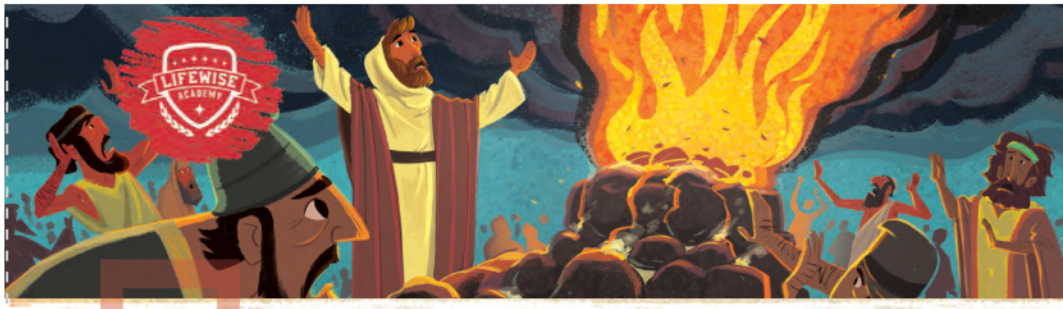

ELIJAH CONFRONTED KING AHAB

1 KINGS 18

MAIN POINT: THE ONE TRUE GOD DEFEATED THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

Ahab was the king of Israel. He led the Israelites away from God, and the Israelites worshiped a false god named Baal. The things King Ahab did made God angry, so God caused a drought. For three years, no rain fell in the land. Finally, God was ready to send rain.

God sent a prophet named Elijah to give a message to King Ahab. "You have caused this trouble by disobeying God and worshiping false gods," Elijah told him. Then Elijah invited King Ahab, the Israelites and the prophets who worshiped Baal to gather at Mount Carmel.

Elijah told the people, "Make up your minds! If you believe the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." Elijah set up a challenge to show who the one true God is. The prophets of Baal set up an altar for their false god.

"You call to Baal and ask him to send fire to your altar," Elijah told the people. "I will call on the Lord. The God who answers by fire is the one true God." From morning until noon, the prophets of Baal cried out to Baal. "Answer us!" they said. But no one answered.

Then the people gathered around Elijah. He dug a trench around his altar, prepared a bull and put it on a pile of wood. Elijah had four jars of water poured on the wood. Then he asked for more water. Everything was wet.

Elijah prayed to God, "Lord, answer me so that these people will know that You, Lord, are God." God sent fire from the sky. The fire burned up the bull, the wood, the stones and the dust!

The men who had worshiped Baal fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" The sky grew dark with clouds, and God sent a great rain. The Lord ended the drought and proved that He is the one true God.

Jesus Connection: *The people who worshiped the false god Baal danced and cried and cut their bodies to show that they loved Baal. But the one true God is not like the false gods. Instead, He showed His love for us by sending His Son, Jesus. Jesus bled and died to rescue us from sin when we trust in Him.*

Key Passage: *Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.*

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HOW MANY? QUIZ

Circle the answer to each question. Then write the letter of the answer in the corresponding numbered space to answer the big picture question.

1. How many letters are in the alphabet?
   S = 20 N = 25 D = 26

2. How many keys are on a piano?
   E = 88 T = 50 R = 100

3. How many months are in a year?
   B = 14 G = 12 E = 10

4. How many feet are in a mile?
   N = 5,280 O = 10,500 M = 300

5. How many states are in America?
   A = 25 E = 40 O = 50

6. How many ounces are in a cup?
   R = 8 L = 80 Y = 800

7. How many minutes are in an hour?
   B = 100 W = 30 T = 60

8. How many legs are on a spider?
   U = 8 N = 6 F = 4

HOW MANY GODS ARE THERE?

There is ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ who alone deserves worship.
5 4 2 7 6 8 2 3 5 1

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THE ORDER OF EVENTS

Number the events in the order in which they happened in today's Bible story.



Elijah prayed to God, "Lord, answer me so that these people will know that You, Lord, are God."



From morning until noon, the prophets of Baal cried out to Baal. But no one answered.



God sent fire from the sky. The men who had worshiped Baal fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!"



Elijah set up the challenge to show who the one true God is.

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SETS OF 12

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the items that usually come in sets of 12.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

BIBLE STORY: ELIJAH CONFRONTED KING AHAB

- Ahab was an evil king of Israel who worshiped a false god, Baal.
- Elijah challenged Baal's prophets to a showdown.
- Baal could not light his prophets' altar because Baal is not real.
- The one true God defeated the prophets of Baal by burning up Elijah's altar.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why did the prophets of Baal hurt themselves and dance around?
- What do we have to do so that God will listen to us?
- What other enemies has God defeated for us?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Build a fire in a fire pit. Discuss with your family how God lit Elijah's altar. Remind them that God burned up even the stones.

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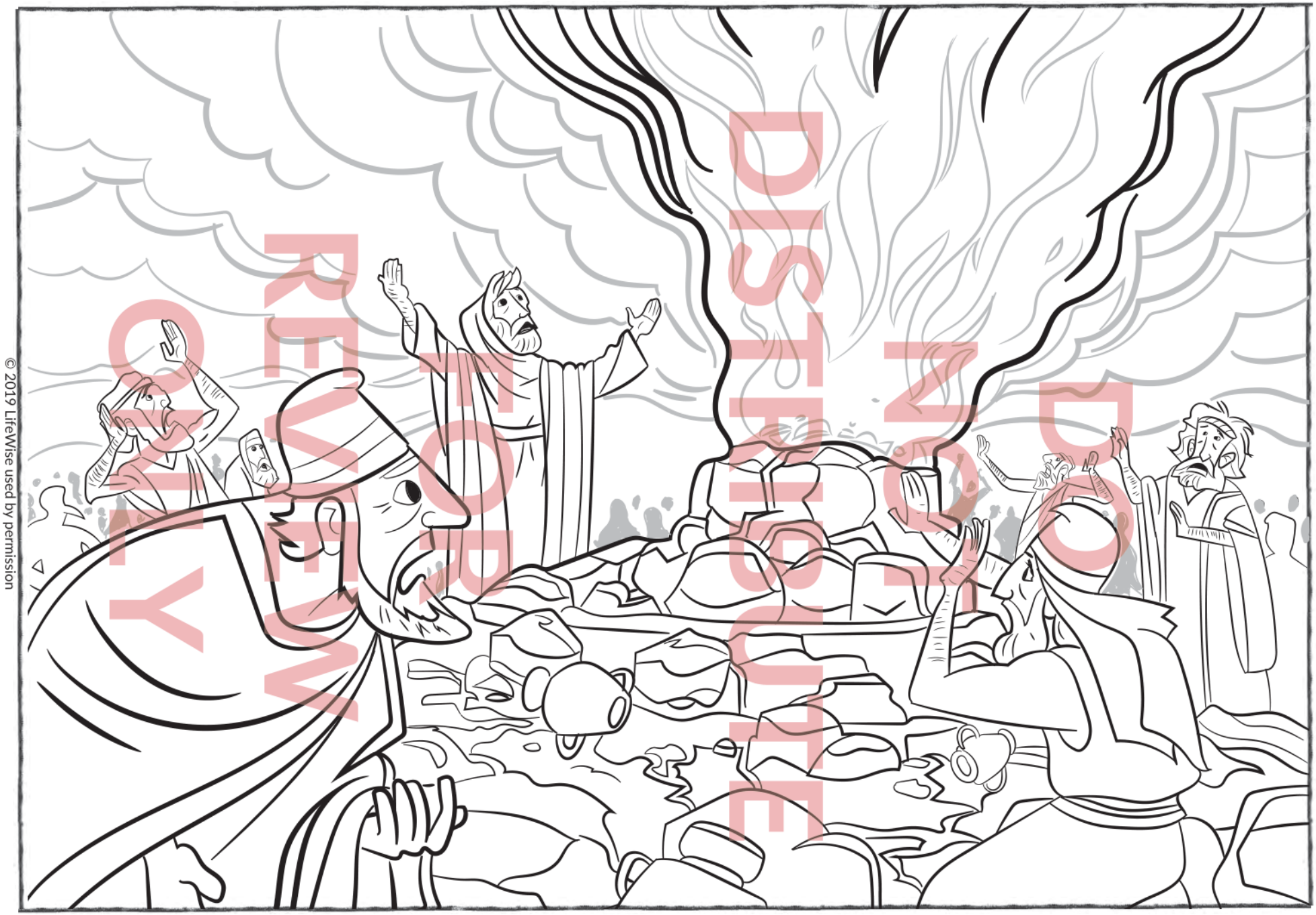

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THE ONE TRUE GOD DEFEATED THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

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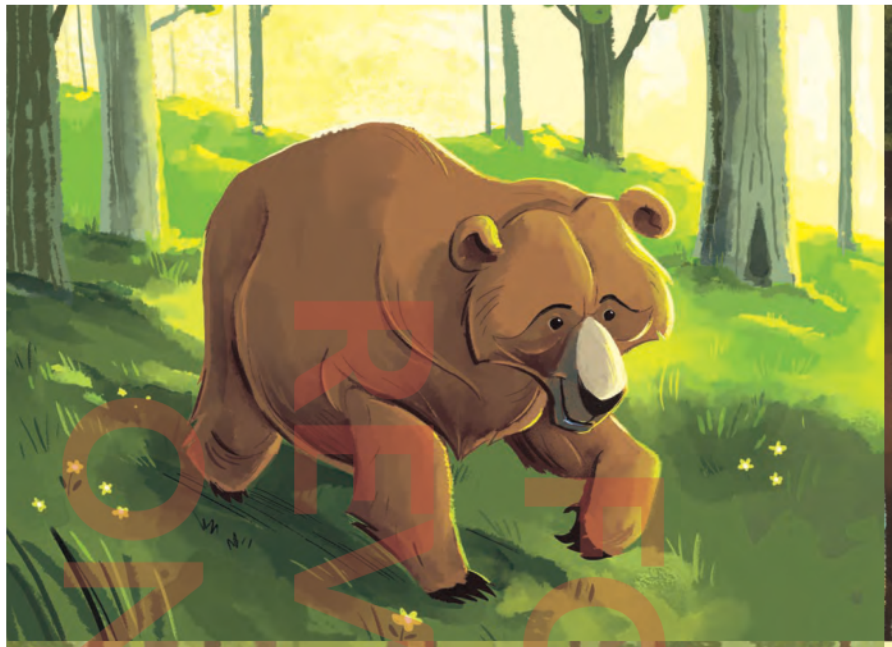







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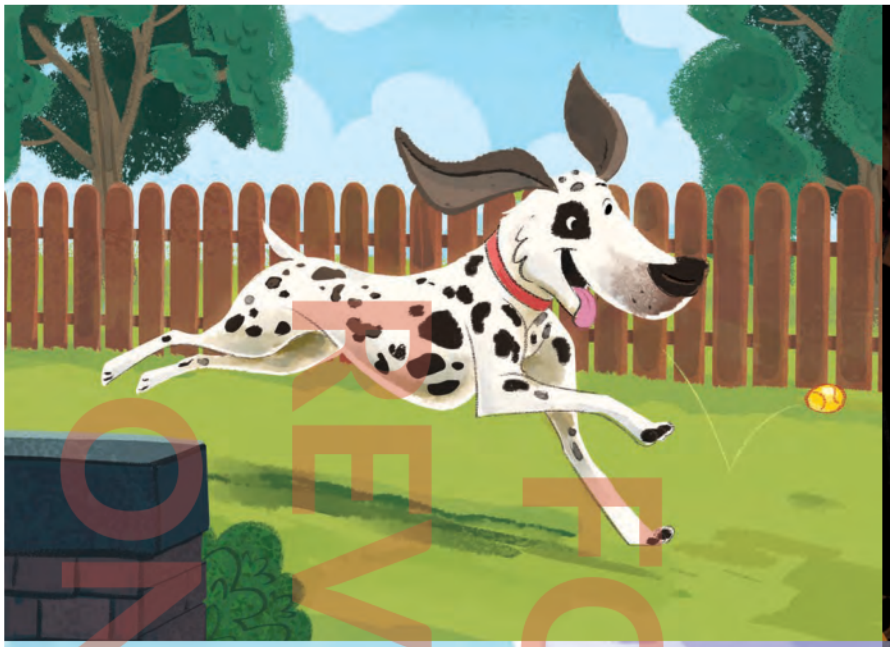







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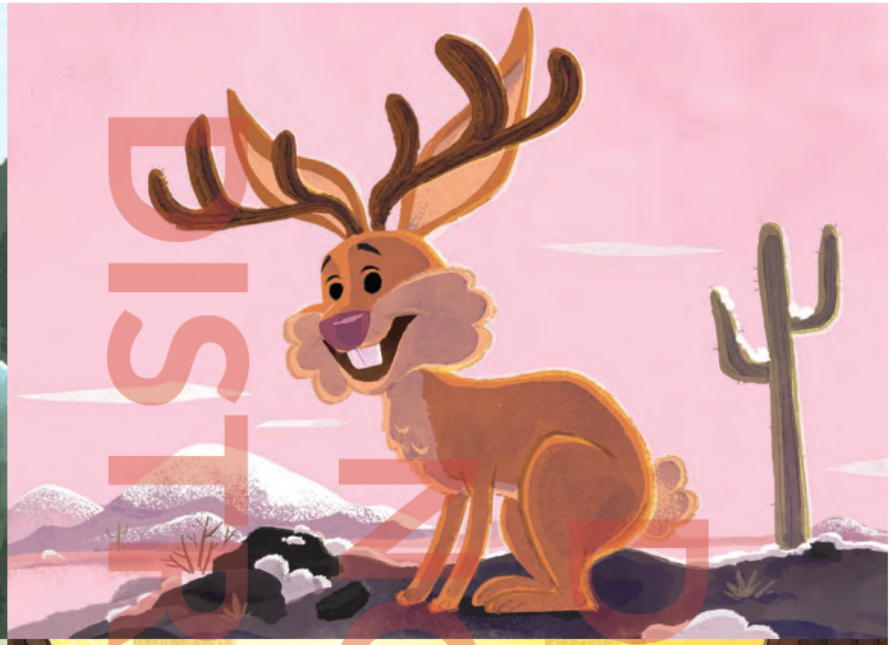





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L 41 Elijah Confronted King Ahab | LOYALTY

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LESSON 42: PERSEVERANCE

ELIJAH RAN FROM JEZEBEL

1 Kings 19

ELIJAH RAN FROM JEZEBEL

- 1 Kings 19
- Big Picture Q&A: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.
- Key Passage: Hebrews 1:1–2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

JESUS CONNECTION

As a prophet of God, Elijah faced enemies who wanted to hurt him. Elijah's life points forward to Jesus, the greatest Prophet, who was hated and killed for sharing and teaching God's Word.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

PERSEVERANCE – Refusing to give up even when things are hard.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The prophet Elijah had just witnessed God's great display of power over the false god Baal. God had sent fire from Heaven and then ended a long drought with a great rain. Elijah must have felt a sense of victory; the evil King Ahab could not deny the one true God. But trouble awaited Elijah in the form of Ahab's wife, Jezebel.

When Jezebel heard what happened at Mount Carmel, she threatened to kill Elijah. Elijah ran away and hid in the wilderness. What a change Elijah experienced! He went from a man faithfully and confidently praying for God's glory to be displayed at Mount Carmel to a man begging the Lord to take away his life (see 1 Kings 19:4).

God was merciful to Elijah. An angel of the Lord brought Elijah food and drink while he rested. Then, Elijah traveled to Horeb for a personal encounter with God. Horeb—another name for Mount Sinai—was a familiar place in the history of Israel. It was the place where God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites and where Moses met with God.

After the events in 1 Kings 18, Elijah might have expected a grand display of God's presence, but what he experienced was just the opposite. The Lord was not in the wind. The Lord was not in the earthquake. The Lord was not in the fire. God revealed Himself to Elijah in a voice, a soft whisper.

Elijah's circumstances were difficult, but God didn't leave him. God gave him Elisha, a friend and successor. God assured Elijah that he was not alone; there were 7,000 people in Israel who had not turned to worship Baal.

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God's prophets suffered, but their lives and messages pointed forward to the ultimate prophet, priest, and king—Jesus Christ—who suffered for the sins of the world. Jesus was hated and killed, but His death and resurrection brought victory for God's people.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time, we heard the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Why did God keep the rain from coming for three years? (*The people worshiped idols.*) What kind of a contest did Elijah and the prophets have? (*They built an altar and asked their god to send fire to burn up the sacrifice.*) How did the Lord prove to Israel that He was the one true God? (*God sent fire from Heaven that burned up the sacrifice, wood, altar and water in the trench surrounding the altar. Then, God sent the rain.*) What did God tell Elijah to do to help the people worship Him alone? (*Kill the prophets of Baal.*)

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Fear Factor (Older Students)

- Have the class sit in chairs in a circle. Choose one player to stand in the middle and remove her chair. Prompt the middle player to name something that might be scary. Students who agree that the thing is scary should stand up and move to the chair of someone else who stood. The player in the middle should also find a seat. The student left without a chair moves to the middle of the circle. Play multiple rounds as time allows. If the size of the room or time constraints don't allow for moving chairs to a circle or rectangle, use masking tape on the floor to mark spots for students to sit or stand.

- Different people are scared of different things, but God is more powerful than any of them. Nothing is scary to God, and He can protect us from the things we are afraid of. Today, we will hear how God reassured Elijah when he was afraid.

Key Word Guess (Older Students)

- Before class, print and cut out the Key Word Guess cards. One at a time, students will draw a card and describe the key word to the class without using the restricted words.

- In our story today, one of God's prophets was in danger for saying things God told him to say. We will find out what happened to God's prophet Elijah soon!

Guess the Voice (Younger Students)

- In our Bible story today, Elijah has to listen carefully for God's voice. Let's play a game to listen for our friends' voices.

- Form two teams. Blindfold the players on the first team or have them turn toward the wall and close their eyes. Display the key passage poster or give a Bible to a player on the second team. Prompt one of the players from the second team to read aloud Hebrews 1:1–2. If the first team can determine who read the passage, award them one point. Play again, allowing several players to take a turn reading the key passage. Then, switch roles: blindfold the second team and have the first team take turns reading the key passage.

- Just like in our game, we often have to rely on senses other than sight to learn about God. We can't see Him, but He reveals Himself and speaks to us in other ways, like through His Word.

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Key Word Pictures (Younger Students)

- Write the following keywords on separate index cards: *angel*, *bread*, *water*, *cave*, *mountain*, *wind*, *earthquake*, *fire* and *whisper*. Form two teams. Show a keyword to one player on each team and invite the players to draw a picture of the key word without talking. The first team to guess the keyword earns a point. Play additional rounds with new players taking turns drawing the key words.

- In our Bible story today, we will hear how Elijah was afraid, but God comforted him and reminded him that God is always in control.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Hebrews 1:1–2

Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

The Wave (Older Students)

- Show the key passage poster and read it aloud together several times. Instruct the class to stand shoulder to shoulder. Explain that students will make a wave as they say the passage. The first student will hold up his arms as he says the first word. As he puts his arms down, the second student will raise her arms and say the second word. Continue down the line until the class completes the key passage. If the class is small, have them pass the wave down to one end and then back to the first player. Play several times to help students memorize the verse.

Finish It Off (Older and Younger Students)

- Begin saying the passage all together. Then, start the class off and have them say the last few words on their own. Keep repeating, leaving them to say longer portions of the verse, until they can say the entire verse on their own.

Key Passage Flip (Younger Students)

- Before class, print the Key Passage Flip Cards onto heavyweight paper and cut them out. Distribute one flip card to each student. Invite the class to complete the key passage at each level. Ask them not to peek at previous levels when they move on to the next. They should keep the card folded and flat against a surface to avoid peeking.

- God is our ultimate source of truth. In the Old Testament, God chose people to speak on His behalf, people we call prophets. Jesus is the perfect Prophet with God's complete message of salvation. And now God speaks to us through the Bible. The Bible is the written record of God's words and will.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How many gods are there?

A: *There is one true God who alone deserves worship.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Elijah Ran From Jezebel | 1 Kings 19

Elijah was a prophet. He knew that God was powerful. **God had shown King Ahab and all the people that He is the one true God. King Ahab told his wife, Jezebel, what had happened at Mount Carmel, and Jezebel was angry. She sent a message to tell Elijah that she planned to kill him.**

Elijah ran far away into the wilderness where Jezebel could not find him. **He prayed to God, "Lord, I've had enough. Take my life."** Then, Elijah lay down under a broom tree and fell asleep.

God sent an angel to help Elijah. The angel touched Elijah and said, "Get up and eat." Elijah got up and saw a loaf of baked bread and a jar of water. **He ate and drank and lay down again.**

A second time, the angel came and touched Elijah. "Get up and eat," the angel said. "This journey will be hard." Elijah ate and drank. **The food gave him strength to travel 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb** (HOH reb), the mountain of God.

When Elijah got to the mountain, he spent the night in a cave. The Word of the Lord came to Elijah. **God said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"**

"Lord, I've done my best to obey You," Elijah replied, "but Your people have not obeyed You! I am the only one left who serves You and now they are trying to kill me!"

"Go out and stand on the mountain," God said. A strong wind rushed by the mountain, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake, there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, there was a voice—a soft whisper.

Elijah hid his face and stood at the opening of the cave. **"What are you doing here, Elijah?" a voice asked again.**

"Lord, I've done my best to obey You," Elijah repeated, "but Your people have not obeyed You! I am the only one left and now they are trying to kill me!"

The Lord promised Elijah that he was not alone. There were 7,000 people in Israel that did not serve Baal. The Lord told Elijah to anoint three men as leaders—Hazael (HAZ ay el) would be king in the land of Aram (A ruhm), Jehu (JEE hyoo) would be king in the land of Israel and Elisha would be a prophet after Elijah. **Elijah obeyed God.** He found Elisha plowing a field, and Elisha left his work to follow Elijah and serve him.

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JESUS CONNECTION

As a prophet of God, Elijah faced enemies who wanted to hurt him. Elijah's life points forward to Jesus, the greatest Prophet, who was hated and killed for sharing and teaching God's Word.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

PERSEVERANCE – Refusing to give up even when things are hard.

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Living LifeWise

Focusing on who God is helps us persevere in hard times.

Character Connection

Sometimes, our perception, or the way we see things, can be very wrong.

Option 1: [*Show pictures of The Rock, Shaquille O'Neal and Yao Ming side-by-side.*] We think of Dwayne Johnson as really big, but when we see him next to others, our perception changes.

Option 2: Have you ever driven through a big city? When you're far away, the buildings look small. But when you drive right by them, they're huge. We don't alway see things as they really are.

Elijah gave up because his perception was off. When the queen sent him a letter that she was planning to kill him, Elijah started to see his problems as very big and his God as very small. He was so scared that, instead of persevering, he ran away, got very sad and complained. God gently reminded Elijah of His power and presence, which helped Elijah keep living God's way.

Sometimes, we think our problems are bigger than God, too. God doesn't show us fires and earthquakes, but when we read the Bible, we can hear His words and remember what He's done for us. And when we focus on Him instead of our problems, He empowers us to keep on living His way just like He did for Elijah.

What do we know about God that could encourage us to persevere when we experience the following problems:

- You gave 110% effort on your math worksheet and got most of the answers wrong.
- Your family doesn't have enough money to pay for all of the things you want and need.
- You worked hard practicing your soccer skills all summer but haven't been able to score a single goal.
- Your parents don't believe in God and they tell you that reading your Bible is a waste of time.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Who tried to kill Elijah?**

  Jezebel, King Ahab's wife, 1 Kings 19:2

- **What did God's angel tell Elijah to do when he was discouraged?**

  Eat and sleep, 1 Kings 19:5–7

- **What did God provide for Elijah to eat?**

  Bread and water, 1 Kings 19:6

- **How long did Elijah travel before reaching Mount Horeb?**

  40 days and 40 nights, 1 Kings 19:8

- **What did Elijah see and hear before the Lord passed by him?**

  A powerful wind, an earthquake and fire, 1 Kings 19:11–12

- **How did God speak to Elijah?**

  A whisper, 1 Kings 19:12

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- How many people in Israel did not worship Baal?

  7,000, 1 Kings 19:18

- What did God tell Elijah to do?

  Anoint a new king of Aram and Israel and choose a prophet to take Elijah's place, 1 Kings 19:15–17

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Board Race (Older Students)

- Divide the class into two teams. Instruct teams to stand in a single-file line. When the teacher asks a question, the first person in line will race to the board and write the correct answer on the board. A different player should race each time. Ask the review questions below. [*For students who have difficulty writing, ask A and B multiple choice questions and have them answer with the letter.*]

  - Who tried to kill Elijah? (*Jezebel, 1 Kings 19:2*)
  - Who did God send to help Eljiah? (*An angel, 1 Kings 19:5*)
  - How many days and nights did Elijah travel before reaching Mount Horeb? (*40, 1 Kings 19:8*)
  - How did God speak to Elijah? (*A whisper, 1 Kings 19:12*)
  - Elijah thought he was the only one who worshiped whom? (*God, 1 Kings 19:14*)
  - How many people in Israel did not worship Baal? (*7,000, 1 Kings 19:18*)

Find the Leader (Older and Younger Students)

- Have the class sit in a circle. Teach them the motions and sound effects for four motions. Then, select one student to be Elijah. Have Elijah step out of the classroom. While he is gone, choose a student to be the secret leader. The leader will do one of the four motions with sound effects: 1) move his arms from side to side while making wind noises; 2) bend his knees and shake himself around while making earthquake noises; 3) stick both his arms above his head, wiggling his fingers and making fire noises, or; 4) place his hands on either side of his mouth and make whisper noises. He can switch between actions at will. The other students must immediately follow the leader without giving away who it is. When the game begins, Elijah must stand in the middle of the circle and has three guesses to find the leader.

- In our story, Elijah witnessed a mighty wind, an earthquake, a fire and a soft whisper. Although these were all mighty displays of God's power, God chose to speak to Elijah in a soft whisper.

Jezebel Tag (Older and Younger Students)

- Select one student to be Jezebel. Jezebel's job is to catch as many of the other students as possible. Students who are tagged must sit down. Another child will be selected in secret to be Elijah. Only that student and the teacher should know who Elijah is. If Jezebel tags Elijah, the game ends immediately, and Jezebel wins. If Elijah is able to tag Jezebel, the game ends, and Elijah wins. Play additional rounds as time allows, choosing a new Jezebel and Elijah.

- If space is limited, consider playing Jezebel Mafia:
  - Students will sit in a circle and close their eyes while the teacher walks on the outside of the circle and chooses Jezebel by tapping someone on the head one time. Elijah is chosen by tapping someone on the head twice. The teacher will tell everyone to open their eyes.

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Elijah moves to the middle of the circle. Elijah's goal is to determine who Jezebel is as quickly as possible.

- Jezebel "kills" the prophets (the other students) by secretly winking at them. When a prophet is killed, that player should lie down. Elijah has three chances to guess where Jezebel is.

- Jezebel was so angry at what Elijah had done she wanted to kill him! Elijah ran for his life, but God kept Elijah safe. God revealed Himself to Elijah in a whisper, giving Elijah instructions, and Elijah obeyed. God takes care of His people, and He is the one true God who alone deserves worship.

Pantomime (Younger Students)

- Invite students to perform the different actions they hear as you briefly retell the story using the bold words in the Bible story section.
  - Elijah ran.
  - Elijah slept.
  - Elijah ate.
  - Elijah traveled to Mount Horeb.
  - Elijah heard wind, saw fire, felt an earthquake and heard a whisper.
  - Elijah went to find Elisha.
- After going through the story, just say the action words above and increase the speed. See how fast you can get through the actions that summarize the story.

Do What I Do (Younger Students)

- Help students find partners. Each pair will stand facing each other. The older student in each pair will be the leader first. The leaders may make faces, move their hands, stomp their feet or do any other actions they would like. Their partners should attempt to mimic every move. After a while, switch leaders so every student has a chance to lead.

- Elijah was told to find a man named Elisha. Elisha was God's choice to take over as a prophet after Elijah. Soon after Elijah found him, Elisha began to follow Elijah to learn from him and serve him. Jesus had a group of disciples who followed Him and obeyed Him, too. When Christians want to train new leaders, we do a similar thing! We find people who love God and are willing to learn. We spend time with them to show them how to teach and serve God. We help them learn to do it. Soon they become leaders too, just like Elisha was ready to be a prophet after spending time learning from Elijah.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- God Was In It (Older Students)
- Hidden Pictures (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for speaking to us through Your Word. Help us to listen to Your voice this week as we read the Bible. Make us aware of Your presence when we feel sad, alone or afraid. Give us hearts that want to worship You alone. We love You, Lord. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write about something you are afraid of. Then write something you know is true about God that could help you when you feel scared.



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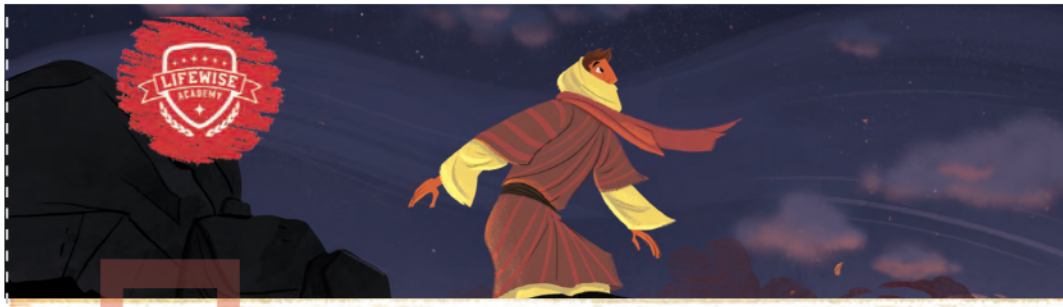
FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How would you expect God to reveal Himself—in a fire, in the wind, in an earthquake or in a whisper? Why?
- What other ways has God revealed Himself to people?
- How can we know that God cares for us when we feel afraid or discouraged?



DISCIPLE PROOF

ELIJAH RAN FROM JEZEBEL

1 KINGS 19

MAIN POINT: GOD REVEALED HIMSELF TO ELIJAH IN A WHISPER.

God had shown King Ahab and all the people that He is the one true God. King Ahab told his wife Jezebel what had happened at Mount Carmel, and Jezebel was angry. She sent a message to tell Elijah that she planned to kill him.

Elijah ran far away. He prayed to God, "Lord, I've had enough. Take my life."

God sent an angel to help Elijah. The angel touched Elijah and said, "Get up and eat." He ate and drank and lay down again.

A second time, the angel came and touched Elijah. "Get up and eat," the angel said. "This journey will be hard." The food gave him strength to travel 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb.

When Elijah got to the mountain, he spent the night in a cave. God said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

"Lord, I've done my best to obey You," Elijah replied, "but Your people have not obeyed You! They are trying to kill me!"

"Go out and stand on the mountain," God said. A strong wind rushed by the mountain, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake, there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, there was a voice—a soft whisper.

"What are you doing here, Elijah?" a voice asked again.

"Lord, I've done my best to obey You," Elijah repeated, "but Your people have not obeyed You! They are trying to kill me!"

The Lord told Elijah to anoint three men as leaders. Elijah obeyed God.

Jesus Connection: *As a prophet of God, Elijah faced enemies who wanted to hurt him. Elijah's life points forward to Jesus, the greatest Prophet, who was hated and killed for sharing and teaching God's Word.*

Key Passage: *Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.*

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GOD WAS IN IT

Figure out which path Elijah can take. Discover how God revealed Himself to Elijah in today's Bible story.



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MAIN POINT PATH

Trace a path through the word maze by moving your pencil over the letters in today's main point: **God revealed Himself to Elijah in a whisper**.

G	O	D	R	H	R
A	F	N	E	C	E
V	E	M	V	E	P
M	I	H	D	A	S
S	B	O	E	L	I
E	I	J	A	H	H
L	L	E	D	I	W
F	T	O	P	N	A

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HIDDEN PICTURES

INSTRUCTIONS: Using the image bank as a guide, find and circle the six hidden images.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

BIBLE STORY: ELIJAH RAN FROM JEZEBEL

- Queen Jezebel wanted to kill Elijah for defeating Baal.
- Elijah ran and hid in a cave.
- God revealed Himself to Elijah in a whisper.
- God told Elijah who would be the next leaders of Israel.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do you think God revealed Himself in a whisper, instead of the fire, wind or earthquake?
- What are other ways God has revealed Himself to people?
- How can we know that God cares for us when we feel afraid or discouraged?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Make a "telephone" by poking a hole in the bottom of two plastic cups. Thread a length of string through both holes, tying knots in each end to secure it. Hold the string taut to share whispers across a room.

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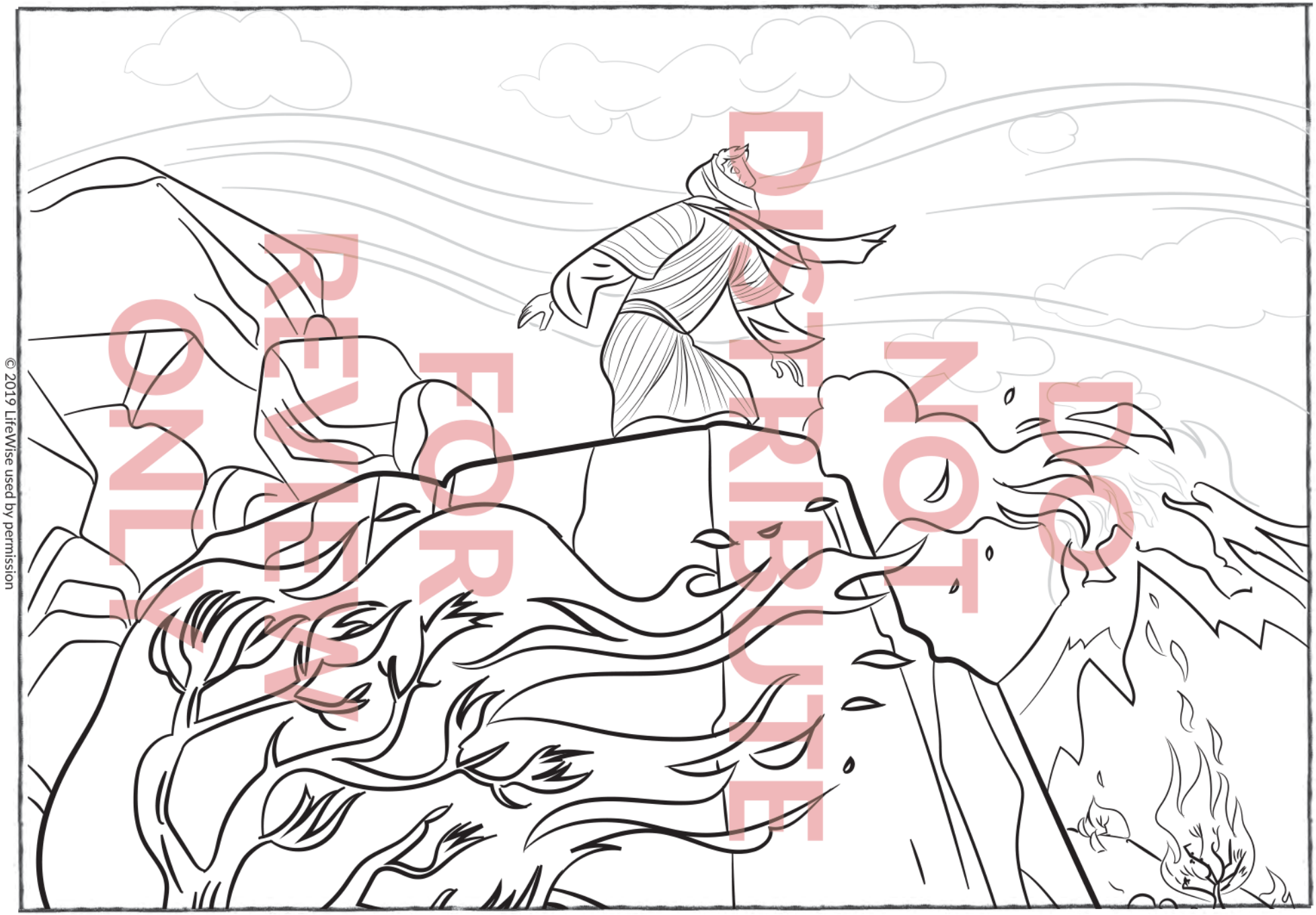

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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GOD REVEALED HIMSELF TO ELIJAH IN A WHISPER.

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_____ ago ____ ____ to the _____

by the _____ at _____ times and

in _____ ways. In these ___ days,

He has ____ to us by __ Son.

_____ 1:___ (HCSB)

4

Long ago God spoke to the fathers

by the _____ at different times and

in different ways. In these last days,

He has _____ to us by His Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (HCSB)

1

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Hebrews 1:1-2 (HCSB)

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_____ ago ____ ____ to the _____

by the _____ at _____ times and

in _____ ways. In these ___ days,

He has _____ to us by __ Son.

_____ 1:___ (HCSB)

4

LIFEWISE ACADEMY

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Key Word Guess Cards

Instructions: Print and cut apart. Use as directed in the leader guide.

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by the _____ at _____ times and

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He has _____ to us by His Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (HCSB)

2

_____ ago God _____ to the _____ by

the _____ at _____ times and

in _____ ways. In these ___ days,

He has _____ to us by His Son.

_____ 1:1-2 (HCSB)

3

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by the _____ at _____ times and

in different ways. In these ___ days,

He has _____ to us by His Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (HCSB)

2

_____ ago God _____ to the _____ by

the _____ at _____ times and

in _____ ways. In these ___ days,

He has _____ to us by His Son.

_____ 1:1-2 (HCSB)

3

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_____ ago, at _____ times and in _____
ways, _____ _____ to our _____ by
the _____, but in these _____ days
he has _____ to us by _____ Son.
_____ 1:_____ (ESV)

4

Long ago, at many times and in many
ways, God spoke to our fathers by
the _____, but in these last days
he has _____ to us by his Son.
Hebrews 1:1-2 (ESV)

1

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1

Long ago, at many times and in many
ways, God spoke to our fathers by
the _____, but in these last days
he has _____ to us by _____ Son.
Hebrews 1:1-2 (ESV)

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_____ ago, at _____ times and in _____
ways, _____ _____ to our _____ by
the _____, but in these _____ days
he has _____ to us by _____ Son.
_____ 1:_____ (ESV)

4

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Long ago, at _____ times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the _____, but in these _____ days he has _____ to us by his Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (ESV)

2

_____ ago, at _____ times and in _____ ways, God ____ to our _____ by the _____, but in these _____ days he has _____ to us by his Son.

_____ 1:1-2 (ESV)

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Long ago, at _____ times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the _____, but in these _____ days he has _____ to us by his Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (ESV)

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_____ 1:1-2 (ESV)

3

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1

____, who at _____ times and in

_____ manners _____ in time _____

unto the _____ by the _____,

Hath in these ____ days _____ unto us

by ___ Son.

_____ 1:___ (KJV)

4

God, who at sundry times and in

divers manners spake in time past

unto the fathers by the _____,

Hath in these last days _____ unto us

by his Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (KJV)

1

Hebrews 1:1-2 (KJV)

by his Son.

Hath in these last days _____ unto us

unto the fathers by the _____,

_____ manners _____ in time _____

____, who at _____ times and in

4

_____ 1:___ (KJV)

by ___ Son.

Hath in these ____ days ____ unto us

unto the _____ by the _____,

divers manners spake in time past

God, who at sundry times and in

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2

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divers manners spake in time past

unto the fathers by the _____,

Hath in these ____ days _____ unto us

by his Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (KJV)

3

_____ 1:1-2 (KJV)

by his Son.

Hath in these ____ days _____ unto us

unto the _____ by the _____,

_____ manners _____ in time _____

God, who at _____ times and in

2

God, who at _____ times and in

_____ manners _____ in time _____

unto the _____ by the _____,

Hath in these ____ days _____ unto us

by his Son.

_____ 1:1-2 (KJV)

3

God, who at _____ times and in

divers manners spake in time past

unto the fathers by the _____,

Hath in these ____ days _____ unto us

by his Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (KJV)

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In the _____ _____ _____ to our _____

through the _____ at _____ times and in

_____ ways, but in these _____ days

he has _____ to us by ___ Son.

_____ 1:_____ (NIV)

4

In the past God spoke to our ancestors

through the _____ at many times and in

various ways, but in these last days

he has_____ to us by his Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)

1

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In the _____ _____ _____ to our _____

through the _____ at _____ times and in

_____ ways, but in these _____ days

he has _____ to us by ___ Son.

_____ 1:_____ (NIV)

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he has_____ to us by his Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)

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Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)

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In the ____ God _____ to our _____

through the _____ at ____ times and in

_____ ways, but in these _____ days

he has _____ to us by his Son.

_____ 1:1-2 (NIV)

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In the past God spoke to our ancestors

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he has _____ to us by his Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)

2

In the ____ God _____ to our _____

through the _____ at ____ times and in

_____ ways, but in these _____ days

he has _____ to us by his Son.

_____ 1:1-2 (NIV)

3

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LESSON 43: FORGIVENESS

ELISHA AND NAAMAN

2 Kings 5

ELISHA AND NAAMAN

- 2 Kings 5
- Big Picture Q&A: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.
- Key Passage: Hebrews 1:1–2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

JESUS CONNECTION

Naaman was sick with a skin problem. His disease went away when he trusted God's instruction from Elisha and washed in the river. All people have a sin problem that leads to death. We all need a Healer. When we trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives our sin and heals us.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

FORGIVENESS – Letting go of a grudge against someone who has wronged us.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Everyone gets sick at some point in his or her lifetime ... often many times! Illness is probably no stranger to the students you teach. In today's Bible story, Naaman—a commander for the Syrian army—was really sick. He had leprosy, a skin disease that was likely disfiguring and isolating. Without a cure, Naaman would face great suffering. But help came from an unlikely source: a young slave girl.

The people of Israel and Syria were often at odds with one another. The Syrians sometimes attacked the cities in Israel and plundered them. They took what they wanted, including people to work as slaves. The young slave girl who served Naaman's wife had been taken from her home in Israel.

As an Israelite, the girl knew about the one true God. She was familiar with God's prophets, including Elisha, who had performed miracles to help and heal people. The girl told her mistress that Elisha the prophet could heal Naaman. So the king of Syria sent a letter to the king of Israel, asking him to cure Naaman of his leprosy. But the king of Israel had no power to heal Naaman. The power to heal comes only from God.

Elisha called for Naaman. But what happened next was not at all what Naaman expected. Naaman expected Elisha to call upon the name of God, wave his hand over Naaman and miraculously heal him. Instead, Elisha instructed Naaman to go wash in the river. Naaman was upset! He could have washed in a river back home! But Naaman's servant urged him to wash. He did, and God healed him.

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Not all sick people will be healed on this side of Heaven, but our physical maladies are symptoms of an even greater illness: sin. Jesus' death and resurrection provided healing—forgiveness and eternal life—for those who trust in Him.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last week, we learned about Elijah running away from Jezebel. Why was he so afraid? (*Jezebel threatened to kill him, and she had killed many of God's other prophets.*) Whom did God send to strengthen Elijah? (*An angel.*) Where did God send Elijah? (*Mount Horeb.*) How did God speak to Elijah? (*As a gentle whisper.*) What did God tell Elijah to do next? (*Choose God's new leader for Aram and Israel and a new prophet to replace Elijah.*)

The Book of 2 Kings is about Elisha's ministry and many kings of Judah and Israel. Israel had been at war with the nation of Aram. Aram defeated Israel in battle, and some of the Israelites were forced to be slaves in Aram. The top army commander in Aram was Naaman. We will learn more about Naaman in today's Bible story.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Elisha Says (Older and Younger Students)

- Play a variation of Simon Says. Guide the class to stand. Explain that you will give commands (jump up and down, touch your toes, etc). If you begin by saying "Elisha says," they should obey the command. If you do not say "Elisha says," students should not listen to the command. If they do, they are out.

- Was it easy or hard to follow my directions? Today, we will hear a Bible story about a man who did not want to follow the prophet Elisha's directions, but he needed to follow them exactly to be healed!

Play Dough Creations (Older and Younger Students)

- Give each student a lump of play dough or clay to form simple animal shapes. As students work, talk about what they are making. Discuss God's power over creation.

- Creating new things using your imagination is fun, isn't it? What animals did you make? [*Allow volunteers to display their creations.*] Very cool! Let me ask you something. Can this play dough animal tell me what to do? Does it have power over me? Of course not! I made it, so I'm the one who has power over it. God has created all of us, and He has power over all that He has made. Today, we are going to hear a story about a miracle. Miracles can't be explained by natural laws. In today's Bible story, God showed His power by healing a man who was sick.

Would You Rather? (Older and Younger Students)

- Instruct your class to stand in the middle of the room. Using the following statements as a guide, ask them questions about what they would rather do. Students may move to one side of the room or the other to show their choice. Would you rather...
    - Get one penny every day for a year or $3.65 all at once?
    - Swim in a pool or in a lake?
    - Have no nose or no tongue?
    - Be good at soccer or good at baseball?

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- Be a singer or a dancer?
- Be healed of a disease or continue living with it?

- Naaman was given very specific instructions for how to be healed from his disease, but he didn't want to obey them at first! Would you rather stay sick than obey instructions?

Rough Skin (Younger Students)

- Fill a large shallow bucket with sand and a regular-sized bucket with water. Allow students to dip their hands in water and then bury their hands in sand. Ask them to pull out their hands and describe what the sand feels like. Let them wash off the sand in the first bucket.

- Leprosy causes the nerves in the skin to stop working. If you had leprosy, eventually you wouldn't be able to feel pain in your fingers and toes. If you accidentally touched something hot or sharp, you might not know you hurt yourself! Over time, your skin would become damaged and rough. Naaman had leprosy, but he wanted to be cured. Let's see what happened.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Hebrews 1:1–2

Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

Back and Forth (Older Students)

- Form two teams and have them stand shoulder to shoulder across from each other. Practice the verse together. Instruct the first team to say the first word of the passage, the second team to say the second word, the first team to say the third word and so forth until the class says the entire passage. Challenge the teams to see how quickly they can say the key passage.

Sign Language (Older and Younger Students)

- Go online to find sign language motions for the following seven key words: *God*, *spoke*, *fathers*, *prophets*, *Son*, *heir*, *universe*. Teach the signs to your class, and then say the key passage together seven times, increasing in speed each time.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How many gods are there?

A: *There is one true God who alone deserves worship.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Elisha and Naaman | 2 Kings 5

When Elisha was a prophet in Israel, the Israelites were attacked by people from the land of Aram. The enemy army took things from the cities. They even took people from Israel to be servants in Aram. **Naaman (NAY muhn) was the commander of the army in Aram. He was good at his job, but Naaman was sick. He had leprosy, a serious skin disease.**

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One captured Israelite girl was taken to be a servant to Naaman's wife. **The servant girl saw that Naaman was sick, and she wanted him to be healed.**

"A prophet in Samaria could heal Naaman," she told Naaman's wife. Samaria was a city in Israel. **Naaman heard what the little girl said, and he went to talk to the king of Aram. The king agreed to send Naaman to Israel**, and he gave him a letter for the king of Israel. The letter read, "I have sent you my servant Naaman for you to cure him of his skin disease."

When **the king of Israel** read the letter, he **was upset. "Am I God?** Do I have the power to give life and take it away? **Why does this man think I can cure a skin disease?"** The king of Israel could not heal Naaman. The power to heal comes only from God.

Elisha the prophet heard the king was upset, and he called Naaman to his house. Naaman arrived and stood at the door. He was ready to be healed! **But** what happened next was not what Naaman expected. **Elisha didn't come to the door. Instead, a messenger told Naaman, "Go wash seven times in the Jordan River."**

Wash in the river? Naaman could have done that at home! Had he traveled all the way to Samaria for nothing? **Naaman was angry. He had hoped Elisha would call on the name of the Lord, wave his hand over Naaman's skin and heal him.**

Naaman started to leave, but his servants encouraged him to do what Elisha said. So Naaman went to the Jordan River. He **dipped himself in the river seven times. Then, Naaman's skin was healed!**

Naaman and all the people with him went to Elisha. **Naaman said, "I know that the God of Israel is the one true God."**

JESUS CONNECTION

Naaman was sick with a skin problem. His disease went away when he trusted God's instruction from Elisha and washed in the river. All people have a sin problem that leads to death. We all need a Healer. When we trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives our sin and heals us.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

FORGIVENESS – Letting go of a grudge against someone who has wronged us.

Living LifeWise

Because we know that God is in control, we can forgive those who hurt us.

Character Connection

When someone hurts us, it is very hard to forgive them. It's even harder to forgive them so completely that we are willing to go out of our way to help them or be nice to them. That's what the slave girl in today's story did, and it's one of the most surprising parts of the whole story.

That girl was alone in a foreign land working as a slave. But she still trusted God. Despite her circumstances, the servant girl still believed God was in control. She knew God could heal Naaman, and

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even though she could have kept that information to herself, she didn't. She could've said, "It's okay to let him suffer because look what he did to me." But she didn't. She let go of her right to hold that grudge and chose to live God's way. And as a result, Naaman was healed.

God forgives us all of our sin because of Jesus. And He helps us forgive others the same way (Eph. 4:32). And when we choose to forgive others who hurt us, God can use that to reveal Himself to them in powerful ways so they come to know Him, too. Forgiveness isn't easy, but it can have powerful and positive results.

Which of these statements are reasons the Bible gives for why we should forgive others?

- Because God has forgiven us (*Ephesians 4:32*)
- Because it makes us better people if we forgive others. (*No*)
- Because Jesus shed His own blood to pay for our forgiveness (*Ephesians 1:7*)
- Because we deserve it. (*No*)

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Who was the prophet to Israel in the story?

  Elisha, 2 Kings 5:8
- Where did Naaman travel to see Elisha?

  Samaria, 2 Kings 5:3
- Why wasn't the king of Israel able to heal Naaman?

  Only God can heal, 2 Kings 5:7
- Where did Naaman go when the king said he could not cure the leprosy?

  To Elisha's home, 2 Kings 5:8–9
- What did Elisha tell Naaman to do?

  Wash in the Jordan River seven times, 2 Kings 5:10
- Why was Naaman angry?

  He thought Elisha would heal him personally and the rivers in Aram were better than the Jordan and he could have easily washed there, 2 Kings 5:11–12
- What happened when Naaman finally decided to obey?

  He was healed, 2 Kings 5:14–15
- How did Naaman respond when he was healed?

  He worshiped God as the one true God, 2 Kings 5:15

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Raft Review (Older and Younger Students)

Use masking tape to make two outlines of large rafts on the floor. Tape a large letter *A* in the first raft and *B* in the second raft. Give two possible answers to each question. Have the students "swim" to the raft they think is correct and sit inside it.

- What army was Naaman the commander of? **A. Aram;** B. Philistine
- What was wrong with Naaman? A. He was blind; **B. He had leprosy**

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- Who told Naaman about Elisha? A. One of his soldiers; **B. A servant girl**
- Where did Naaman go first when he got to Israel? **A. The king of Israel;** B. Elisha
- Who told Naaman to go wash in the river? A. Elisha; **B. A messenger**
- Why was Naaman angry? **A. Elijah didn't come to heal him;** B. The river was dirty
- How many times did Elijah say to wash in the river? **A. 7;** B. 3
- What river was Naaman supposed to wash in? A. The Nile River; **B. The Jordan River**
- Who encouraged Naaman to listen to Elisha's instructions? **A. His servants;** B. Gehazi
- What did Naaman do after he was healed? A. Serve the king of Israel; **B. Worship the Lord**

Double Hot Potato (Older and Younger Students)

- Direct the class to sit in a circle. Pass out two balls of different colors. Instruct them to pass the balls in opposite directions as you play a song. Stop the music at random intervals and choose a color. Whoever is holding the color of the ball chosen must answer a Bible review question. If he doesn't know the answer, he must ask the person with the other ball, share the answer and spin in a circle seven times. Once he has answered and completed spinning, he must sit down. Restart the music and continue playing the game.

Find A Group (Older and Younger Students)

- Tell the class you will call out a category. They will need to form a group with anyone else who fits in their category. Suggestions: eye color, birth month, number of siblings, hair color. End with "guilty of sin."

- Although we are all different, we have something in common with someone else. Maybe it's our eye color, birthday or the number of people in our family. But there is one thing that we all have in common. We are all guilty of sin. None of us are innocent. Who is the only person that is innocent? Jesus. Sin is like an illness or a disease. It is like a sickness that we suffer from. We need a cure to be healed of our sin, and only Jesus can provide what we need.

Water Washing Relay (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams and instruct them to line up at one side of the room. Place a shower curtain or small tarp on the floor. Position a bucket of water across from each team on the tarp. Stack washcloths for each player next to each team's bucket. Students will take turns running to the bucket, dipping their hand completely into the water and out seven times and then racing back to tag the next player.

- In today's Bible story, who had to wash in the river seven times? (*Naaman.*) What happened when Naaman washed in the river? (*God healed Naaman's skin disease.*) Naaman was sick with a skin problem. His disease went away when he trusted God's instruction from Elisha and washed in the river. All people have a sin problem, and the Bible says we deserve to die because of our sin. We can't heal ourselves and make our sin go away. We all need a Healer. God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus, to die the death we deserve. Jesus never sinned. When we trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives our sin and heals us.

Jumpin' Jordan River (Younger Students)

- Use two yard sticks or jump ropes to represent the banks of the Jordan River by laying them parallel on the ground a few feet apart. Instruct the class to line up single-file on one side of the "river." Students will take turns jumping into the middle of the river, hopping seven times in the

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middle and then hopping out on the other side. Time the students to see how fast the whole class can get through the river. Play additional rounds, spacing the "banks" further apart.

- Elisha told Naaman to wash in the Jordan River seven times. When Naaman decided to obey, God healed his skin disease! He began to worship the one true God because only God could heal him so easily and so completely. When we trust in Jesus, He forgives us completely of our sin. Only the one true God can do that. We worship Jesus because He is the one true God.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Hidden Pictures (Older Students)
- Before and After (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, no words can explain how wonderful You are. Naaman did not deserve to be healed, but You healed him. You show us the same love through Jesus. We do not deserve to be forgiven, but You forgive us. Help us to love and follow You. Amen.

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Journal Page

Think about someone you love who is sick or perhaps an unbeliever. Write a prayer for that person to be healed or to trust in Christ and rely on Him for everything he or she needs.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think the servant girl told Naaman about Elisha?
- Why was Naaman upset about Elisha's instructions?
- How can we be forgiven and healed of our sin?

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ELISHA AND NAAMAN

2 KINGS 5

MAIN POINT: GOD HEALED NAAMAN'S SKIN DISEASE.

Naaman was the commander of the army in Aram. He was good at his job, but Naaman was sick. He had leprosy, a serious skin disease.

A servant girl saw that Naaman was sick, and she wanted him to be healed.

"A prophet in Samaria could heal Naaman," she told Naaman's wife. Naaman heard what the little girl said, and he went to talk to the king of Aram. The king agreed to send Naaman to Israel.

The king of Israel was upset. "Am I God? Why does this man think I can cure a skin disease?"

Elisha the prophet heard the king was upset, and he called Naaman to his house. But Elisha didn't come to the door. Instead, a messenger told Naaman, "Go wash seven times in the Jordan River."

Naaman was angry. He had hoped Elisha would call on the name of the Lord, wave his hand over Naaman's skin and heal him.

Naaman started to leave, but his servants encouraged him to do what Elisha said. So Naaman dipped himself in the river seven times. Then Naaman's skin was healed!

Naaman said, "I know that the God of Israel is the one true God."

Jesus Connection: *Naaman was sick with a skin problem. His disease went away when he trusted God's instruction from Elisha and washed in the river. All people have a sin problem that leads to death. We all need a Healer. When we trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives our sin and heals us.*

Key Passage: *Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.*

DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOLD

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NAAMAN'S CHANGE

Use the words from the word bank to fill in the missing details of the Jesus Connection.

_____ was sick with a skin problem.

His disease went away when he trusted _____ instruction from Elisha and washed in the _____.

All people have a _____ problem that leads to _____.

We all need a _____. When we trust in _____ as Lord and Savior, God _____ our sin and heals us.

WORD BANK

river, Jesus, Healer, Naaman, sin, God's, death, forgives

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HIDDEN PICTURES

Find the following pictures hidden in the scene below.



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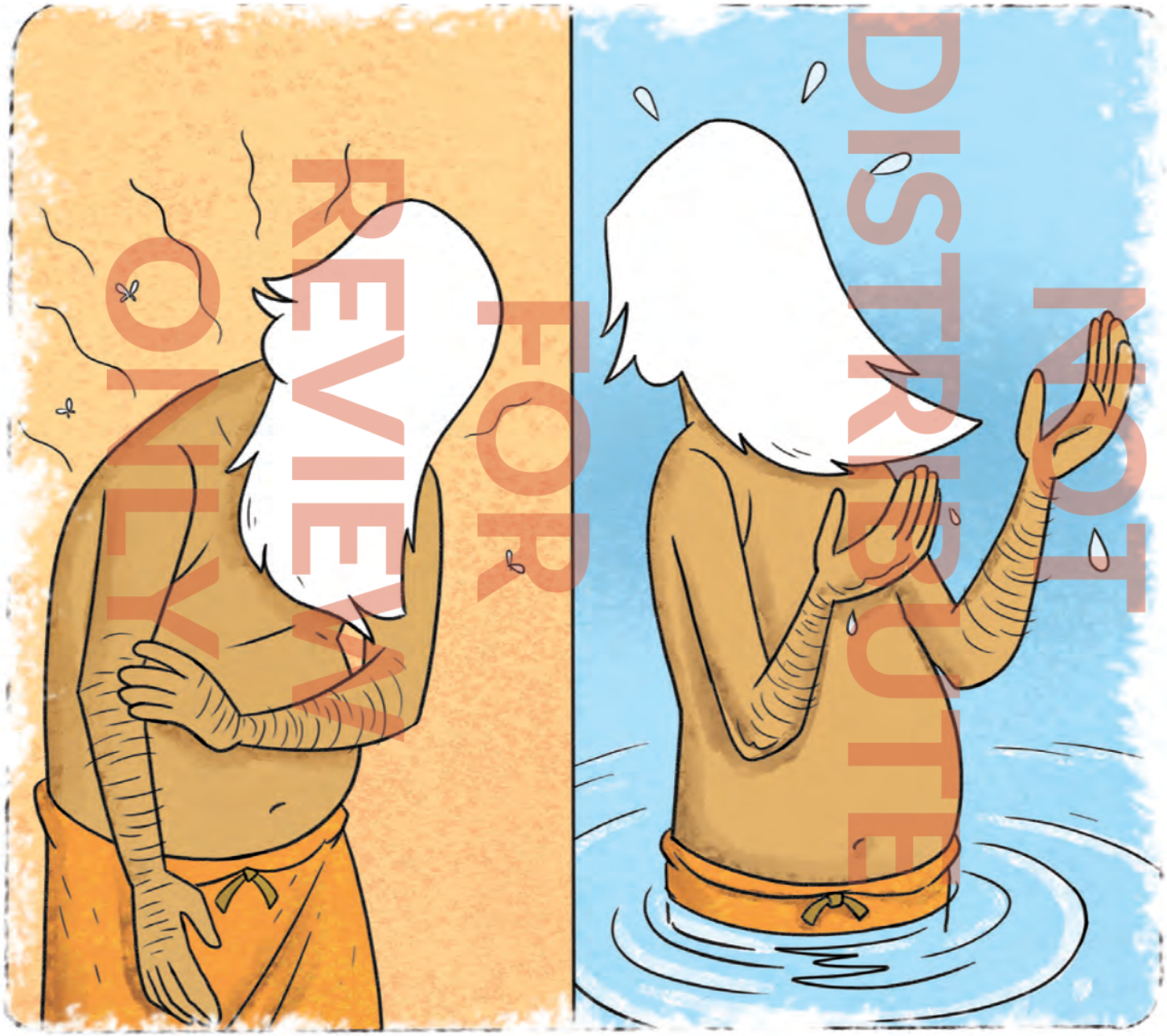
BEFORE AND AFTER

INSTRUCTIONS: Add leprosy sores and a sad face to the Naaman on the left. Add a happy face to the Naaman on the right.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

BIBLE STORY: ELISHA AND NAAMAN

- Naaman suffered from leprosy.
- Naaman's servant girl told him about Elisha.
- Elisha's instructions for healing disappointed Naaman.
- Naaman finally obeyed, and God healed Naaman's skin disease.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do you think the servant girl told Naaman about Elisha?
- Why was Naaman upset about Elisha's instructions?
- How can we be forgiven and healed of our sin?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Ask your church leadership about any sick or elderly people in your congregation who may be home bound. Plan an outing with your family to visit them, bring them a meal or pray over them for healing.

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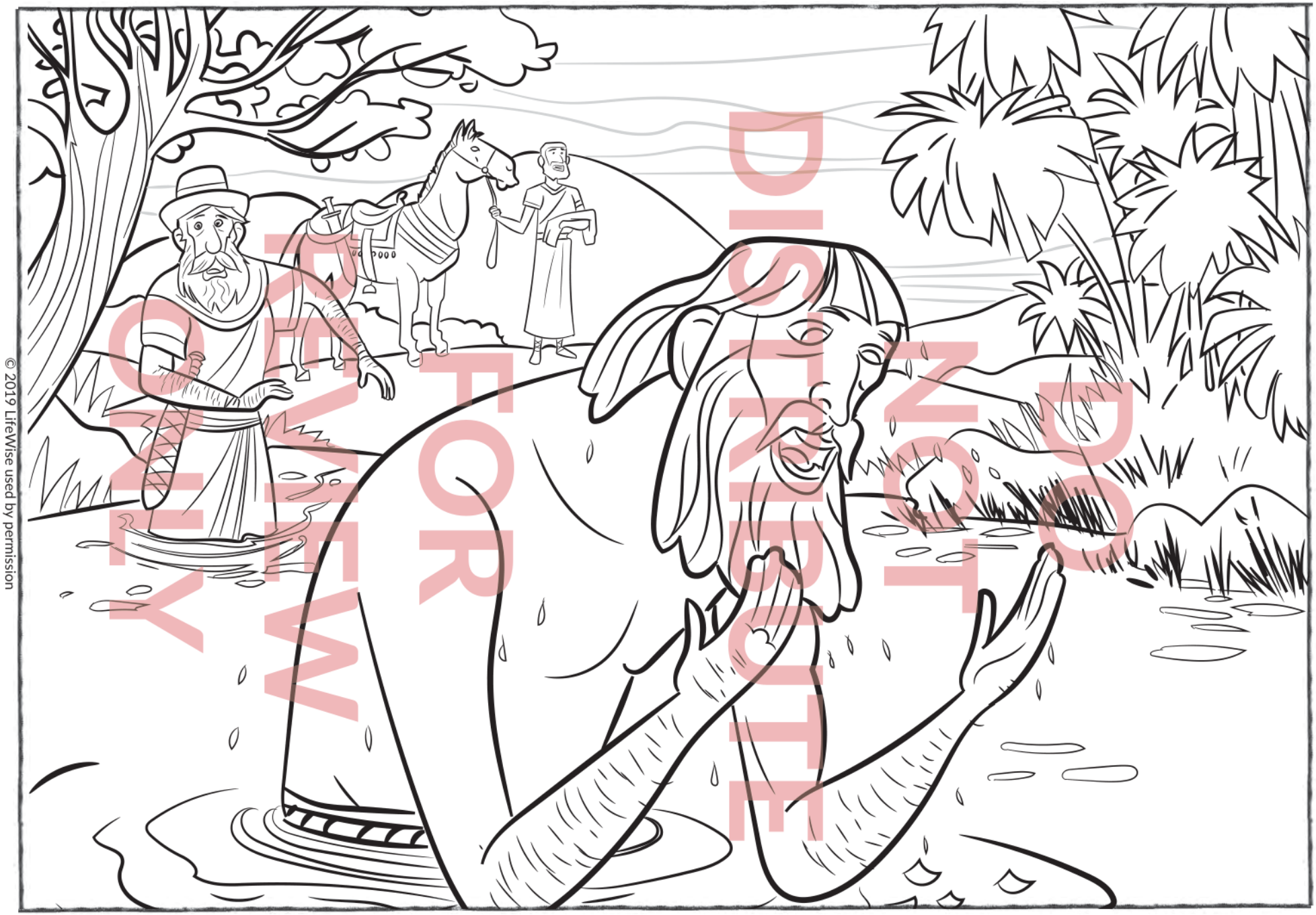

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

GOD HEALED NAAMAN'S SKIN DISEASE.

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LESSON 44: AVAILABILITY

ISAIAH'S CALLING

Isaiah 6, 53

ISAIAH'S CALLING

- Isaiah 6, 53
- Big Picture Q&A: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.
- Key Passage: Hebrews 1:1–2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

JESUS CONNECTION

God planned all along that Jesus would die on the cross for my sin. Seven hundred years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote that this would happen! Jesus is the Servant who suffered so that those who trust in Him would be forgiven.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

AVAILABILITY – Being ready and willing to do my part.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

King Uzziah's death marked the end of an era. His reign had been long and prosperous. Uzziah became king when he was 16, and he reigned over Judah for 52 years.

Uzziah had listened to the prophet Zechariah; he feared God, and God made him prosper. But Uzziah's pride got the best of him (see 2 Chron. 26:16). God struck Uzziah with leprosy. Then, Uzziah died.

Under Uzziah's leadership, God's people had turned away from the promises of God and trusted in the promises of the world around them. God had promised to bless the entire world through Abraham's family, but God's people were rebellious. Instead of blessing, they set themselves up to receive God's judgment.

But God's plans and promises were not thwarted. God sent the prophet Isaiah to preach a message of hope. Even though God was going to correct His people through judgment, His purpose was one of grace through which God would receive glory. God planned to send a Messiah who would bring salvation to the world.

Isaiah 6 opens with Isaiah worshiping in the temple. Then, God gave Isaiah a vision. Isaiah saw God sitting on a throne. Yes, in the year that King Uzziah died, God was sitting on the throne. God was reigning over the universe. The magnitude of God's holiness made Isaiah realize the magnitude of his own sin. His response? "Woe is me!"

God extended His grace to Isaiah. He took away Isaiah's guilt. God passed over Isaiah's sins because He was going to send Jesus to pay for them. In His death on the cross, Jesus paid for the sins—past, present

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and future—of those who would trust in Him. When we trust in Jesus, God says to us the words Isaiah heard: "Your guilt is taken away. Your sin is atoned for."

The Book of Isaiah contains four Servant songs—poems about the servant of God (see Isa. 42:1–4, 49:1–6, 50:4–9, 52:12–53:13).

In these poems, the prophet Isaiah describes God's plan of redemption. We see a vision of the promised Messiah, the innocent substitute who would suffer for the sake of sinners. Through Jesus, God brings sinners back to Himself.

The fourth and final Servant song is found in Isaiah 53. In this passage, Isaiah provides an answer to these questions: How can a just God justify the ungodly? How can He declare innocent those who are guilty? How can He treat bad people as though they are good? How can He love people like us?

A just God can't just look the other way. He doesn't say, "Don't worry about it" or, "No big deal." That's cheap grace. Sin against a big God is a big deal. God didn't just forgive our sins, He dealt with them. And this grace was costly. The price? God's own Son.

Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecies of a Suffering Servant. People assumed God had cursed the Suffering Servant for His own sins. But no—Jesus was sinless. So, why did He suffer? Isaiah wrote that He was pierced because of *our* transgressions and crushed because of *our* iniquities. His punishment is what brought *our* peace. The Suffering Servant died the death we deserve. When we trust in Jesus, our sins are wiped away—paid for by His blood—and His righteousness is credited to us.

When Christ's work on the cross was finished, God rewarded Him. "For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—of those who are in Heaven and on Earth and under the earth—and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9–11).

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Over the past few lessons, we've learned about the kings and prophets in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. God's people were living in sin, and God kept sending messengers to tell them to repent, or turn away from sin. Do you remember the name of the prophet who proved there was only one God by having God send fire from Heaven? (*Elijah.*) How did God speak to Elijah when he was most afraid? (*In a whisper.*) God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's ministry. What is the name of the army commander that came to Elisha to be healed? (*Naaman.*) What did Naaman want to be healed from? (*Leprosy.*) What instructions did Elisha give to Naaman so he would be healed? (*He should dip himself in the Jordan River seven times.*)

Today, we will learn about Isaiah, another prophet of God who had a message for the people in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. God spoke to Isaiah and even gave him glimpses of the future. Isaiah lived about 700 years before Jesus came to Earth, but the book of Isaiah records predictions about the Messiah that came true!

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

I Am Ruined! (Older Students)

- Prepare a slip of paper for each player. One paper should have a red circle. On the rest of the papers, draw a green circle. Fold each paper in half and distribute them to the students. Explain

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that the class should move around the room. One player should approach another player and discreetly show each other their papers. Then, they will re-fold their papers and move on. If a player sees a green circle, she should count to 10 and then shout, "Hurray!" If she sees a red circle, she should count to 10 and then shout, "I am ruined!" or, "Woe is me!" and sit down. Continue until only the player with the red circle remains. If your group is large, use more than one red circle.

- In today's Bible story, the prophet Isaiah found himself in God's presence. He exclaimed, "Woe is me! I am ruined!" We will find out why.

Prediction (Older Students)

- Remind the class that in Bible times, God's prophets often told people what was going to happen in the future. Explain that sometimes prophecies hinted at what would happen. Tell the class that you will describe an event, one hint at a time. Students should try to predict what event will happen.
    - People sing. People give presents. People eat cake. (*Birthday party*)
    - People are outside. People light a fire. People sleep in tents. (*Camping trip*)
    - It is cold. People stay inside. Something falls from the sky. (*Snowstorm*)
- Today, we are going to hear about a prophecy given by Isaiah. Isaiah talked about something that would happen hundreds of years in the future.

Alike and Different (Older and Younger Students)

- Give each student a piece of paper and a pencil. Collect a variety of common household or classroom objects. [*Examples: spoon, book, clock, towel, pencil, pillow, etc.*] Display three or four items at a time. Challenge the class to list what the items have in common. Then, instruct them to list what is different about the items. Allow students to share their lists and affirm their observations. Then, show three or four different items and play again.

- In today's Bible story, God is called "holy, holy, holy." The word *holy* means "set apart." How is God different from us? Let's find out!

Hot Coals (Younger Students)

- Use a black ball or paper wad to play "Hot Potato" with your class. Play a song of your choice, starting and stopping the music while students pass the "coal." Whichever student has the coal when the music stops is out. Play again as you have time.

- In our story today, a *seraph*—a heavenly being that serves God—touched a hot coal to Isaiah's mouth. This represented God forgiving Isaiah's sin. We aren't using real coal, and it definitely isn't hot, but as we pass around our pretend coal, let's imagine what it would have been like for Isaiah to be in the presence of God.

The Messenger (Younger Students)

- Choose four volunteers. These volunteers will be the messengers. Invite the remaining class to close their eyes and bow their heads. Invite each volunteer to quietly choose one student and whisper, "I have a message for you." Once the volunteer has chosen a student, they should go back to the front of the room. Invite the students to open their eyes. Each student who was chosen should guess who had a message for them. Play again if time allows.

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- In today's story, God chose a special messenger to go and speak to the people in Judah.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Hebrews 1:1–2

Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

Coal Scramble (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, use chalk or a gel pen to write one word of the key passage on separate sheets of black paper. Crumple the paper to look like lumps of coal. Scatter them around the room. Challenge the class to collect them, open them and put the words in the correct order.

- Isaiah saw the holy God in His glory. The seraph touched a hot coal to Isaiah's lips to represent his sins being forgiven. Then, God gave Isaiah a message for His people. Jesus died so that we could be forgiven of our sins, and He gave us a message for the whole world! Jesus is the Word of God, who perfectly shows us who God is.

Ball Pass (Older and Younger Students)

- Direct the class to sit in a circle. While holding a ball, say the first word of the key passage and pass the ball to the student next to you. He must say the next word and pass the ball to the following student, who will say the next word. Continue until the class says the whole key passage. Collect the ball back and start again.

- Our key passage reminds us that God used prophets like Isaiah to prepare the world for His Son. But now that Jesus has come, we have God's final words in the Bible! We learn about Jesus in the Bible, God's story about Him.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How many gods are there?

A: *There is one true God who alone deserves worship.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Isaiah's Calling | Isaiah 6, 53

After King Solomon died, the tribes of Israel split and formed two kingdoms: the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The people in these kingdoms looked to their kings to protect them and take care of them. At this time, the king of a land called Assyria was trying to take over the world.

When Uzziah was the king of Judah, he was mostly a good king. The people felt safe. When Uzziah died, the people of Judah were upset and afraid.

In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah was worshiping God in the temple when he had a vision. Isaiah saw God sitting on a throne. God's robe was long; its edges filled the temple.

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Seraphim—heavenly beings—stood above Him, and they each had six wings. **They called out: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord; His glory fills the whole earth."**

When the seraphim spoke, **the foundations of the doorways shook, and the temple filled with smoke. Isaiah was in the presence of God! He said, "I am ruined! I am sinful. I do not deserve to be in the presence of the King, the great and holy God."**

Then, one of the seraphim flew to Isaiah. The seraph had a burning coal from the altar in his hand. He touched Isaiah's mouth and said, "Now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed and your sin is wiped away."

Then, Isaiah heard God's voice: "Whom should I send? Who will go for Us?" Isaiah said, "Here am I! Send me."

"Go," God said. God told Isaiah an important message for the people. This was God's message: "You will listen, but you will not understand. You will look, but you will not really see. If your eyes and ears and minds worked, you would turn from your sin and be healed."

Isaiah asked, "How long should I preach to people who won't listen?"

God answered Isaiah, "Preach until the cities are destroyed and no one lives in them. I am going to send the people far away."

Then, God explained that He would bring some of the people back to Judah. These people were part of Abraham's family. **God was going to keep His promise to Abraham through them. He would send the Messiah through their family to be a blessing to all the nations.**

Many years had passed since God made these promises to Abraham. Some of the people didn't trust God's promises anymore. So, **God sent the prophet Isaiah to tell the people God's plan: a Messiah was coming, someone who would be Israel's Savior. Isaiah said the Messiah would be a servant who would suffer and be a sacrifice to rescue them from sin.**

Isaiah told about the future as if it had already happened. God's plan was like nothing anyone expected. **Isaiah said that God's Servant grew up in God's presence. There was nothing special about Him; no one noticed Him. People didn't even like Him.** They ignored Him and stayed away. **God's servant suffered. He knew what it was like to be sick and to hurt.**

"We saw Him and turned away," Isaiah said. "We looked down on Him and didn't care about Him."

But the way people treated the servant didn't stop Him from doing what God sent Him to do. "He carried our sicknesses and pains. **We thought God was punishing Him because He had sinned. But no—He took the punishment for our sins!** It was our failures that hurt Him. **He took the punishment we deserved, and He has healed us.** We are the ones who disobeyed God and wandered away from God like lost sheep. But instead of punishing us, God punished Him!"

Isaiah said the Messiah was beaten and treated badly, but He did not open His mouth or say anything. He had an unfair trial and then was led away to be killed. **Some people thought He was getting what He deserved, but no one realized His death was for them, to save them.** He took the punishment they deserved. He had not done anything wrong. He never hurt anyone or said anything that was not true, but He was punished like a criminal.

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"But this was God's plan all along!" Isaiah said. "By giving up His life as an offering for sin, the Suffering Servant gave life to many, many people. He took their guilt, and they can be righteous by His righteousness." **And this is how God proved that what the Messiah did had worked—He did not stay dead. God brought Him back to life.**

Isaiah said that when all this happens, the Messiah will see all the good that came from His suffering, and He will be glad He suffered. "Then, God will reward Him with great honor because He willingly died for people who were against God," **Isaiah said. "He was counted guilty like a sinner. He took the punishment sinners deserve, and He asked God to welcome those who had turned away from Him."**

JESUS CONNECTION

God planned all along that Jesus would die on the cross for our sin. Seven hundred years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote that this would happen! Jesus is the Servant who suffered so that those who trust in Him would be forgiven.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

AVAILABILITY – Being ready and willing to do my part.

Living LifeWise

God has a perfect plan, so we can choose to be available to do whatever He has for us to do.

Character Connection

Most of us aren't willing to volunteer unless we know what the plan is. That's not necessarily a bad thing. It's unwise to let just anyone tell you what to do or dare you into following their orders. That can get us into a lot of trouble. But God is not like that. We can be available to serve Him because He is always good and His plan is perfect.

Being available to serve God means we follow the plans and commands He's given us in the Bible. It means being willing to help others and share God's rescue plan (that Jesus died to save us) with them. And it means trusting God to show us the purpose and plan He has for each of us and doing it to the very best of our ability.

Every day, we can refuse to be available to God by doing what we want and not following His Word. Or we can choose to be available to serve Him by asking God to help us live His way and doing whatever He has for us to do.

Which of these options for each example show someone being available?

- Someone calls from another room that they need help with something.
  - You pretend you didn't hear and hope someone else answers.
  - You pause your game and go see what they need.
- The gym teacher needs someone to be "it," but no one volunteers.
  - You raise your hand even though you don't love the game.
  - You elbow your friend and try to get him picked.

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- The teacher says that, after lunch, the class will be studying for tomorrow's test.
  - You make sure to have your book, a pen and paper ready to go after lunch.
  - You only get out what she asks you to get out when she asks you to get it.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- What did the seraph do to show God had cleansed Isaiah?

  Touched a coal to his lips, Isa. 6:6–7

- What did God call Isaiah to do?

  Take God's message to the people of Judah, Isa. 6:7–9

- How long would Isaiah preach to the people?

  Until there are no more people to hear, Isa. 6:11–12

- How did Isaiah say the Servant would appear to the people around Him?

  Like an ordinary man, not special or beautiful, Isa. 53:2

- In what way would the Servant suffer?

  By taking our sickness, pain and sin and die for us, Isa. 53:4–8

- How did Isaiah describe the people?

  Like sheep that have gone astray, Isa. 53:6

- Would the Servant protest or complain about His suffering?

  No; remain silent, Isa. 53:7

- Why would the Servant suffer?

  To take the punishment for sin so many people could be forgiven, Isa. 53:11–12

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Evidence Match (Older Students)

- Print and cut apart the Evidence Match Cards and distribute them to the class. If you have more than 14 students in your class, have students work in pairs or small groups. Provide Bibles and guide the students to find and read their assigned Bible verse. Call on students with verses from Isaiah to read their verses aloud individually. For each Isaiah card, challenge students to identify which New Testament passage describes Jesus fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy. If a student thinks she has the matching card, she should read her New Testament passage aloud.

- Isaiah lived about 700 years before Jesus came to Earth. God said the Messiah would be a suffering servant. Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy in His life, death and resurrection. God had planned all along to send a Messiah to rescue people from sin, and Jesus is God's plan to bring salvation to the world.

Story Read-Through (Older and Younger Students)

- Form three groups. Assign one role to each group; *Seraphim*, *Isaiah* and *the Lord*. Read through the story, stopping when you get to each spoken part. The teacher will read the lines and do the motions. The students will copy the motions. For older classes, read through the script two or three times and ask each group of students to learn their part and say it.

- Suggested shortened lines:

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- **Seraphim:** "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!" (*Hands up*)
- **Isaiah:** "Woe is me! I am unclean!" (*Hands over face, kneel down*)
- **Seraphim:** "Your sin is forgiven." (*Hands on mouth*)
- **God:** "Whom will I send?" (*Hands with palms up, asking question*)
- **Isaiah:** "Here I am, send me!" (*One hand up*)
- **God:** "Go!" (*Point with hand*)
- **Isaiah:** "For how long?" (*Hand over forehead*)
- **God:** "Until the people are gone." (*Use hand and count down with fingers*)
- **Isaiah:** "The Messiah is coming." (*Jump up and down*)
- **God:** "He will be punished for your sin." (*Pretend to hammer a nail into each wrist with opposite fist*)

Isaiah saw the holy God in His glory. At first, Isaiah was terrified! God's presence was so perfect, bright and beautiful that it made Isaiah especially aware of his sin. But God chose to use Isaiah despite his sin! God showed He forgave Isaiah when the seraph touched the hot coal to Isaiah's lips. We cannot enter God's presence as sinners. And since we all have sinned, we are all separated from God. That's why we need Jesus. Jesus never sinned. He died on the cross to take our sin away. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, making the way for us to be with God. When we trust Jesus, our sins are forgiven. That means we can be in God's presence, and we get to spend eternity with Him. God can use us to do all kinds of wonderful things too, just as He used Isaiah.

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True or False (Older and Younger Students)

Before class, cut red and green construction paper into small rectangles, approximately 3 by 4 inches. Prepare one red card and one green card per student. Explain that you will say a sentence about the Bible story. If the sentence is true, students should hold up the green cards. If it is false, they should hold up the red cards.

- Isaiah was the prophet who had a vision of God. (*True, Isa. 6:1*)
- King Uzziah was sitting on the throne in Isaiah's vision. (*False; God, Isa. 6:2*)
- The seraphim were calling out praises to God. (*True, Isa. 6:3*)
- When Isaiah saw God, he said, "I'm perfect just like God!" (*False; "Woe is me, for I am ruined!" Isa. 6:5*)
- One of the seraphim touched a burning coal to Isaiah's lips. (*True, Isa. 6:6*)
- God told Isaiah to preach to Israel about the one true God, even though the people wouldn't listen. (*True, Isa. 6:9*)
- There are many gods. (*False; There is one true God who alone deserves worship.*)
- Isaiah said the Servant would appear very handsome to the people around him. (*False; an ordinary man, not special or beautiful, Isa. 53:2*)
- Isaiah described the people as sheep. (*True; sheep that have gone astray, Isa. 53:6*)
- The Servant would demand that God stop His suffering. (*False; remain silent, Isa. 53:7*)
- The Servant would suffer as a punishment for his own sin. (*False; to take the punishment for sin so many people could be forgiven, Isa. 53:11–12*)
- God was surprised when the Messiah suffered. (*False; it was God's plan, Isa. 53:10*)

For a more active game, divide the class into two teams. Have one student from each team stand on opposite sides of the room. Laminate the red and green construction paper ahead of time and

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place it in the middle of the room on a chair or desk. Ask the students a question. Students must race to the middle and get the correct color to answer the question.

Coal Pass (Older and Younger Students)

- Crumple two pieces of black construction paper to resemble "coal." Form two teams. Give each player two craft sticks or unsharpened pencils. Demonstrate how to use the sticks to hold the coal. Instruct each team to stand in a line. Give the coal to the first player in line. Explain that teams will race to move the coal to the end of the line using only their sticks. Students may not use their hands to pass the coal.

- Isaiah saw the holy God in His glory. When Isaiah saw God's perfection, he was overcome by his own sin. He knew he was not worthy to be in God's presence. God does not tolerate sin, but instead of punishing us, God made the way for us to come to Him and be forgiven. In the story, one of the seraphim came to Isaiah and touched his lips with a hot coal saying that his sins were atoned for, or forgiven. God forgives our sins when we put our faith in Jesus.

Here I Am (Older and Younger Students)

- Select one student to be the first guesser. The student must stand with his eyes closed and his back turned to the rest of the class. Silently select another student to be the caller. Allow students to spread around the room. The guesser will call out, "Who will go?" The caller must answer, "Here I am," in any voice he or she wishes. The guesser will open his eyes and make one guess about who called out. If the guesser is right, they may continue as the guesser.

- In our story today, God asked who would go and share His message with the people. Isaiah volunteered for this difficult job, saying, "Here I am, send me."

Lost Sheep (Younger Students)

- Select one student to be *It*. She will close her eyes and count aloud to 30 while the rest of the class finds places to hide. Then, she must find the hidden students and lead them to the center of the room. The students in the center of the room will count to 10 silently and then try to hide again. If a wandering student is tagged before finding a hiding spot, he must return to the middle and begin counting again. The goal is for *It* to get the entire class in the middle at once.

- Isaiah explained that people wander away from God like sheep. God sent a suffering servant to lead God's lost sheep back to Him.

Activity Page & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Isaiah's Calling (Older Students)
- Isaiah Said It (Older Students)
- Coal and Robes (Younger Students)
- King or Servant (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for giving us Your Word, where we find evidence of Your amazing love for us. Father, You are the Almighty God. Thank You for loving us even though we are born sinners. Thank You for sending Jesus to suffer in our place so we could find forgiveness for our sin. Help us to trust You each day. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write about what God might be calling you to do or where He might be calling you to go in order to tell people about Him.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why did Isaiah feel so afraid standing before God?
- What do you think God's glory looks like?
- How does this story remind us of Jesus? How does Jesus take away our sin?

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FOLD



ISAIAH'S CALLING

ISAIAH 6, 53

MAIN POINT: ISAIAH SAW THE HOLY GOD IN HIS GLORY.

In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah was worshiping God in the temple when he had a vision. Isaiah saw God sitting on a throne. God's robe was long; its edges filled the temple. Seraphim—heavenly beings—stood above Him. They called out: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord; His glory fills the whole earth."

The foundations of the doorways shook, and the temple filled with smoke. Isaiah was in the presence of God! He said, "I am ruined! I am sinful. I do not deserve to be in the presence of the King, the great and holy God."

Then one of the seraphim flew to Isaiah. The seraph had a burning coal from the altar in his hand. He touched Isaiah's mouth and said, "Now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed and your sin is wiped away."

Then Isaiah heard God's voice: "Whom should I send, and who will go for Us?"

Isaiah said, "Here am I! Send me."

"Go," God said.

God told Isaiah an important message for the people.

Isaiah asked, "How long should I preach to people who won't listen?"

God answered Isaiah, "Preach until the cities are destroyed and no one lives in them. I am going to send the people far away."

Then God explained that He would bring some of the people back to Judah. God was going to keep His promise to Abraham through them. He would send the Messiah through their family to be a blessing to all the nations.

Jesus Connection: *Isaiah had a vision of God's glory and realized his own sin. God forgave Isaiah's sin. Like Isaiah, when we see how holy God is, we see how sinful we are. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take away our sin. We can find salvation only in Him.*

Key Passage: *Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.*

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ISAIAH'S CALLING

Answer each question or complete each sentence about Isaiah's calling. Look up each Scripture reference in your Bible to find the answer.

1. Which king of Judah had died? (Isaiah 6:1) _____
2. Isaiah saw God sitting on a _____. (Isaiah 6:1)
3. How many wings did each seraph have? (Isaiah 6:2) _____
4. The seraphim said that the Lord is _____. (Isaiah 6:3)
5. The seraphim said that God's glory fills the whole _____. (Isaiah 6:3)
6. The seraph touched Isaiah's mouth with a _____. (Isaiah 6:6-7)
7. God forgave Isaiah's _____. (Isaiah 6:7)
8. What did the voice of the Lord ask? (Isaiah 6:8) _____

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Find and circle the three times the word *holy* appears in the word search.

L	H	H	L	O	O
H	Y	O	L	Y	H
Y	O	L	O	H	L
O	L	Y	H	O	H
H	O	L	Y	L	L
L	Y	H	L	Y	O



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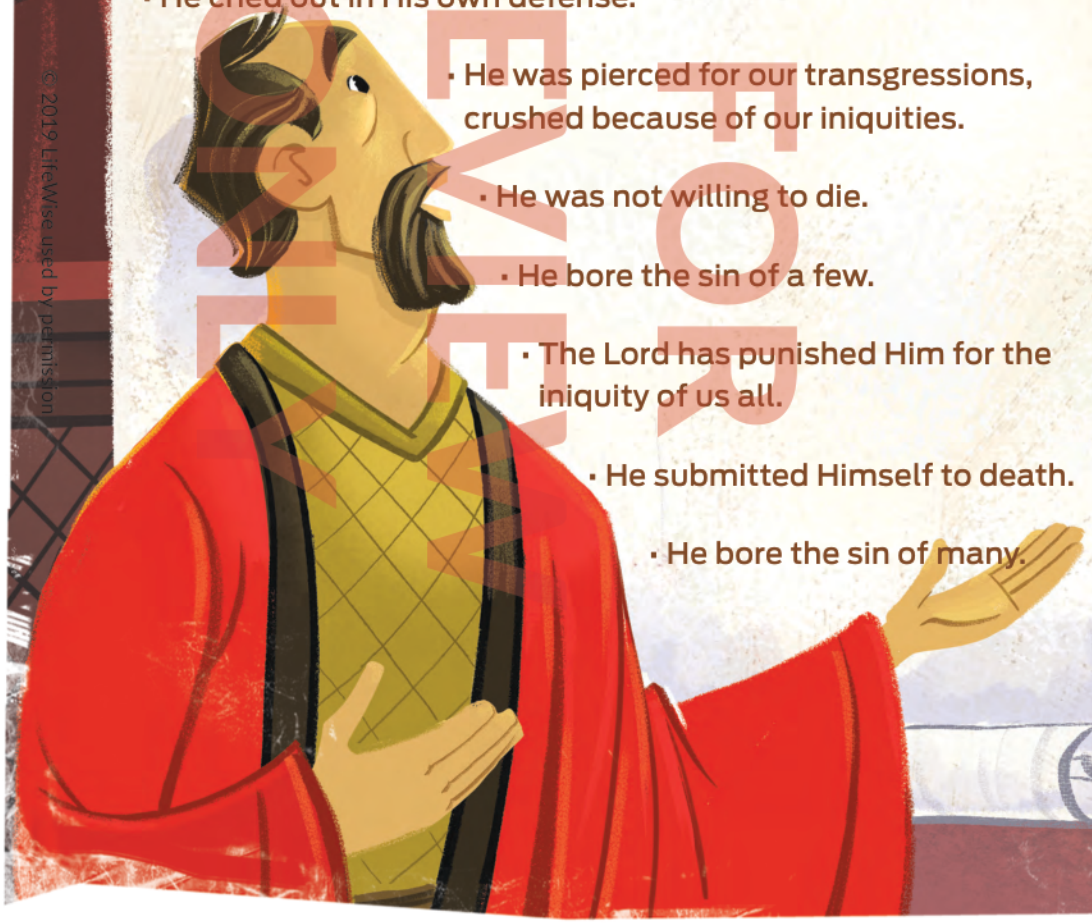
ISAIAH SAID IT

Cross out the statements that Isaiah did not say about the Messiah. Circle the statements he did say.

Read Isaiah 53 in your Bible to check your answers.

- He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains.
- He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth.
- He fought hard for His freedom.
- He cried out in His own defense.
- He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities.
- He was not willing to die.
- He bore the sin of a few.
- The Lord has punished Him for the iniquity of us all.
- He submitted Himself to death.
- He bore the sin of many.



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PROPHET OR NOT?

Cross out the names that are **not** names of Old Testament prophets. Then unscramble the underlined letters in the prophets' names to discover whom the prophet Isaiah spoke about.



God's servant Isaiah wrote about



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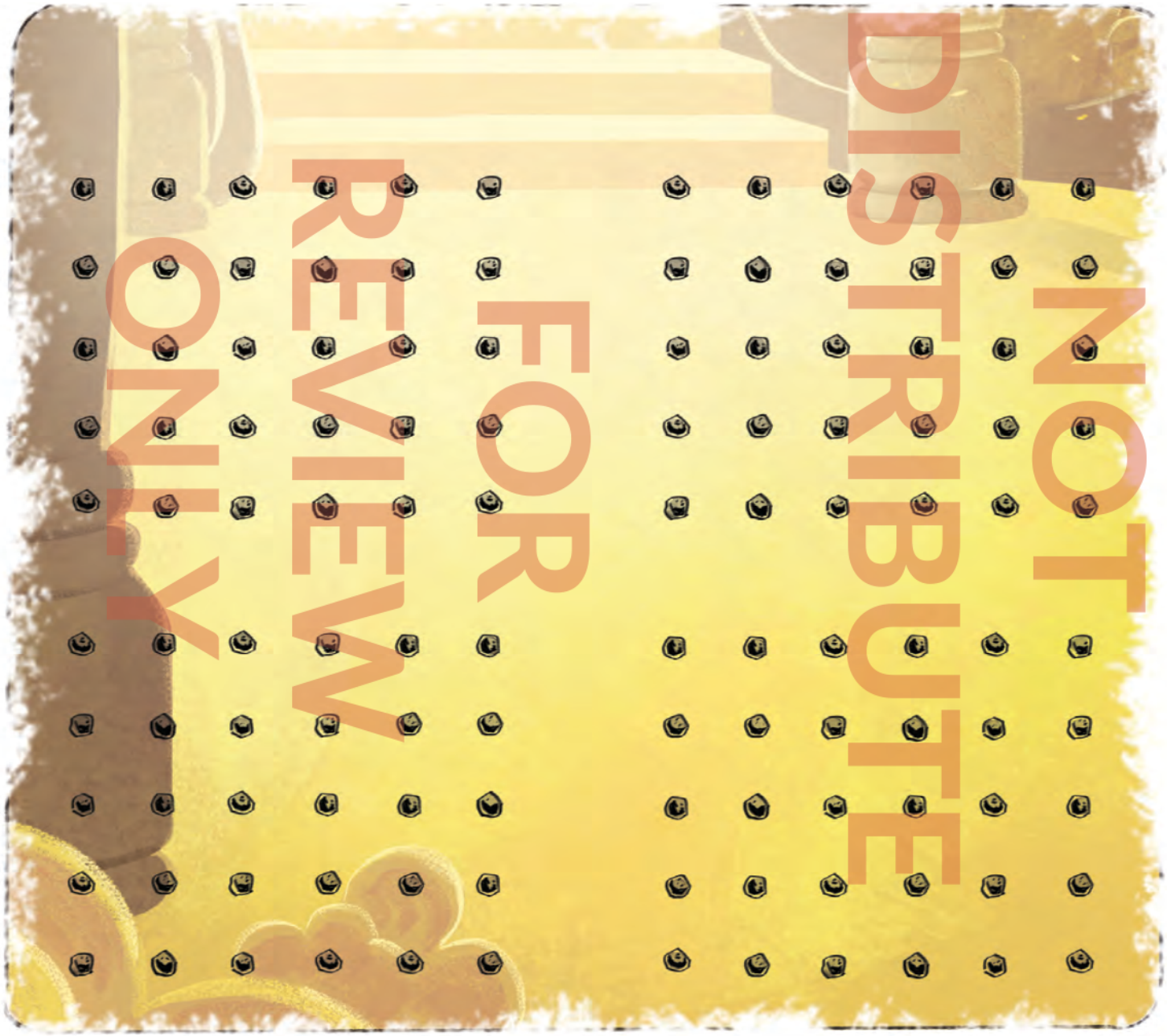
COAL AND ROBES

INSTRUCTIONS: Play with a friend. Take turns drawing lines between dots. If you complete a box, mark it with your initials.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

BIBLE STORY: ISAIAH'S CALLING

- Isaiah saw the holy God in His glory.
- Seeing God's glory reminded Isaiah of his sin.
- One of the seraphim touched a hot coal to Isaiah's lips, and God forgave his sin.
- God gave Isaiah a special mission to preach to God's people.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why did Isaiah feel so afraid standing before God?
- What do you think God's glory looks like?
- How does this story remind us of Jesus?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Work together as a family to plan a time to share the gospel with people. Ask your church leadership about family outreach opportunities that may be coming up soon.

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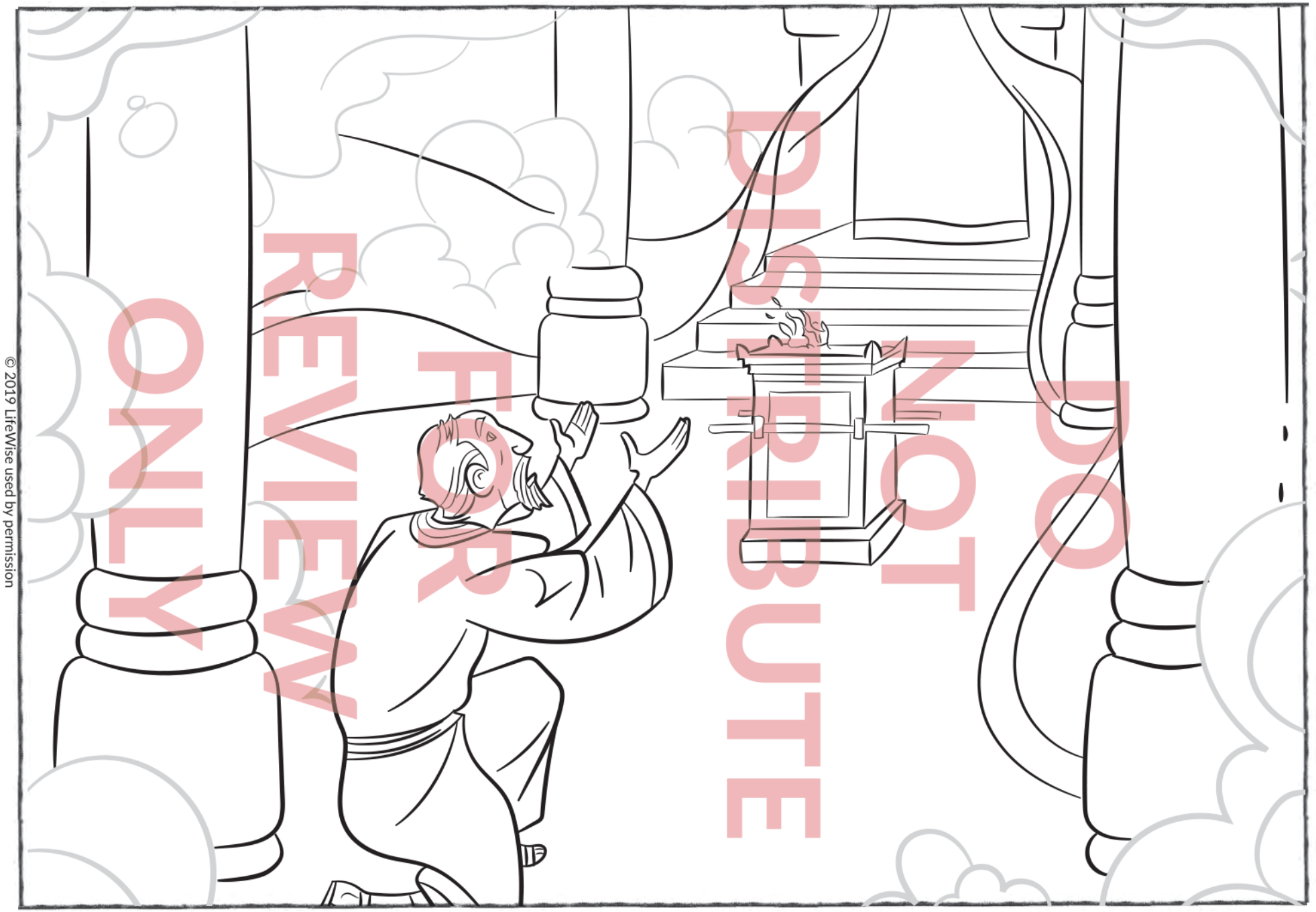

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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ISAIAH SAW THE HOLY GOD IN HIS GLORY.

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KING OR SERVANT

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the item in each pair that a king would use. Draw a box around the one a servant might use.

















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KEY PASSAGE:
Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

BIBLE STORY: ISAIAH'S CALLING

- Isaiah was given a special message about the coming Messiah.
- The Messiah would be punished for the sins of other people.
- Isaiah compared the Messiah to a sheep about to be killed.
- God said the Messiah would be a suffering servant.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why was the Messiah punished for other people's sin?
- Who is the Messiah? How do we know?
- Why do you think people reject(ed) Jesus?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Talk to your kids about situations where people make predictions (before sports games, about the weather, etc.). Explain the difference between those and Isaiah's prophecies.

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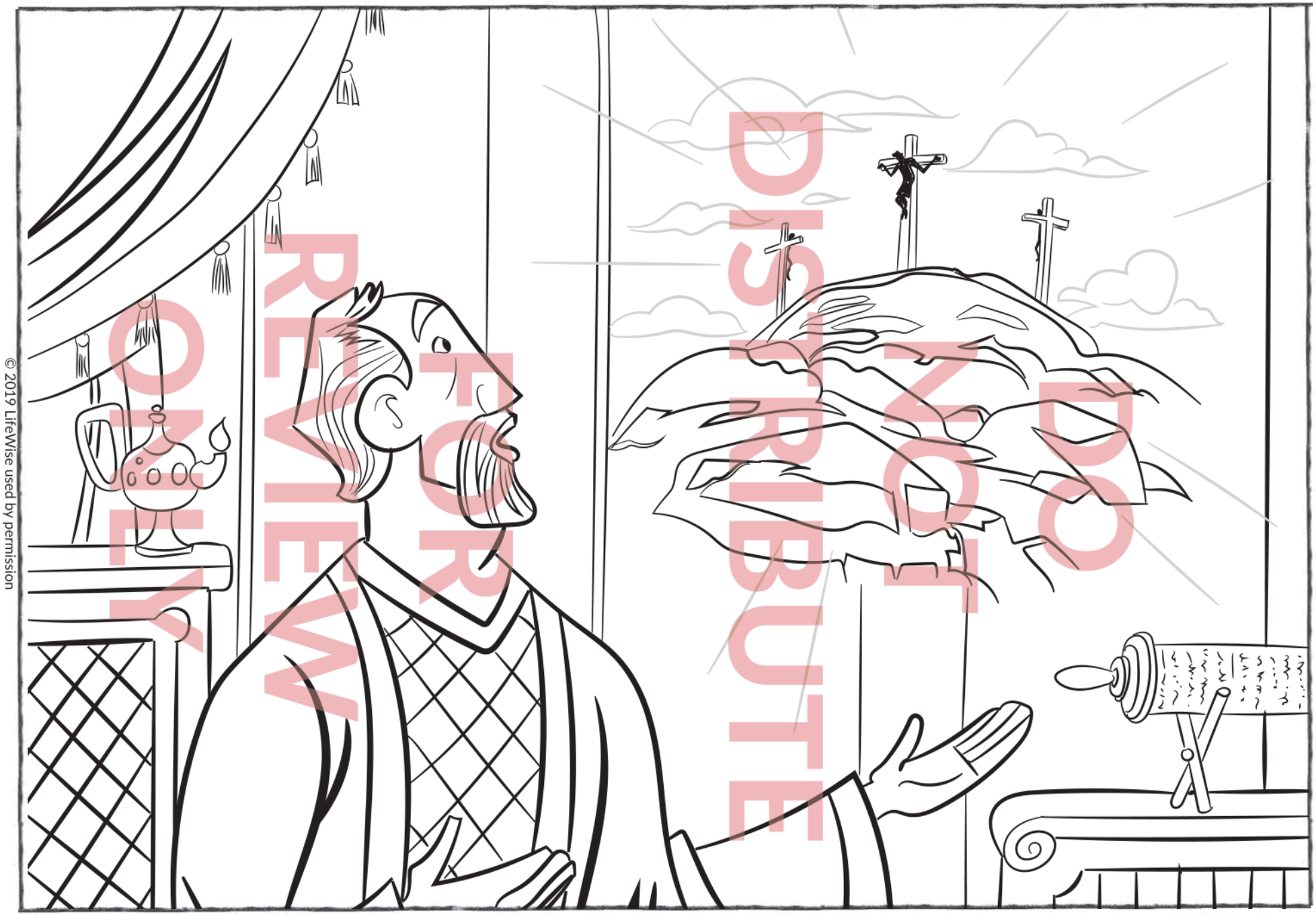

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GOD SAID THE MESSIAH WOULD BE A SUFFERING SERVANT.

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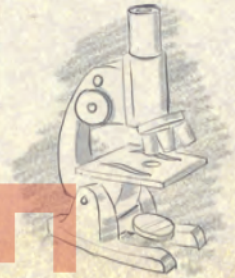
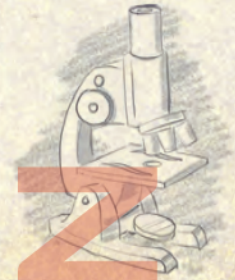
ISAIAH
53:1



ISAIAH
53:3



ISAIAH
53:4



ISAIAH
53:5



ISAIAH
53:7



ISAIAH
53:9A



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ISAIAH
53:9B



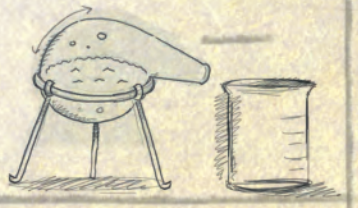
JOHN
12:37-38



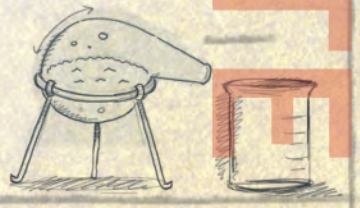
LUKE
4:28-29



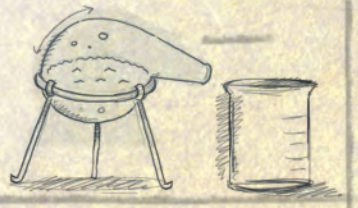
MATTHEW
8:16-17



LUKE
23:33



MATTHEW
27:12-14



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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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Evidence Match Cards

Instructions: Print and cut apart. Use as directed in the leader guide.

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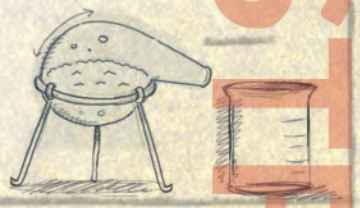
MATTHEW
27:57-60



JOHN
18:38



ANSWERS:

Isa. 53:1 (John 12:37-38)
Isa. 53:3 (Luke 4:28-39)
Isa. 53:4 (Matt. 8:16-17)
Isa. 53:5 (Luke 23:33)
Isa. 53:7 (Matt. 27:12-14)
Isa. 53:9a (Matt. 27:57-60)
Isa. 53:9b (John 18:38)



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LESSON 45: WISDOM

HEZEKIAH, JUDAH'S FAITHFUL KING

2 Kings 18–19

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HEZEKIAH, JUDAH'S FAITHFUL KING

- 2 Kings 18–19
- Big Picture Q&A: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.
- Key Passage: Hebrews 1:1–2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

JESUS CONNECTION

Hezekiah prayed that God would save His people from their enemies so that everyone would know that He is the one true God. God answered Hezekiah's prayer. Jesus also prayed for His people to be saved. God answered Jesus' prayer. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus brought glory to God by rescuing people from sin and death.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

WISDOM – Knowledge and skill for doing life God's way.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

He's a chip off the old block. Like father, like son. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. These idioms exist because sons tend to look and behave like their fathers. When it came to Hezekiah and his father, Ahaz, however, the two were far from similar.

When Ahaz was king of Judah, he did not respect God, God's law or God's prophets. He worshiped idols. Ahaz "did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God" (2 Kings 16:2). He led the people away from God, provoking God's wrath and anger.

Hezekiah, on the other hand, "did what was right in the Lord's sight just as his ancestor David had done." Hezekiah destroyed the places of idol worship and cleansed the temple (see 2 Chron. 29). The Lord was with Hezekiah, and Hezekiah prospered.

Hezekiah was a faithful king who led the people of Judah to worship God like they were supposed to, but even good kings are sinners. His wealth and success led to pride. How did Hezekiah react when God said everything in his palace would be carried off to Babylon? "Who cares? I'll be dead by then."

Jesus is our faithful King who never sinned. Check out some of these definitions for the word *faithful*: "strict or thorough in the performance of duty;" "true to one's word, promises or vows;" "steady in allegiance or affection;" "loyal;" "constant;" "reliable, trusted or believed;" "adhering or true to fact, a standard or an original;" "accurate."

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Jesus completed His work—the redemption of sinners. He said on the cross, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). Jesus is faithful over God's house as a Son (Heb. 3:6). His obedience is steadfast (Isa. 50:4–10). "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13:8). One day, Jesus will return to make all things the way they are supposed to be (Rev. 1:1–6).

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We have been learning about some of the kings and prophets of Israel and Judah. In our last class, we learned about the prophet Isaiah. Before God called Isaiah, what did he see a vision of? (*God seated on His throne.*) What did God ask Isaiah to do? (*Go and give the people a message.*) Whom did Isaiah tell the people about? (*The suffering Servant.*) Today, we will learn the story of King Hezekiah. Hezekiah's father was King Ahaz, an evil king whose heart was far from God. Ahaz did not respect God, God's laws or God's prophets. Hezekiah was very different from his father. He was faithful to God and desired to follow Him and serve Him with his whole heart.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Outnumbered (Older Students)

- Form two teams; one team should have at least twice as many players as the other. Instruct the teams to kneel on opposite sides of a table. Give each player a drinking straw. Also give each player on the larger team a ping pong ball. The larger team should use their straws to blow the balls toward the smaller team. The smaller team should defend themselves by blowing the balls back. If the larger team gets all the balls past the smaller team, reset the game and play again.

- The larger team won because they outnumbered the smaller team! Today, we will hear about a king who trusted God to protect His people even when they were outnumbered by their enemies.

Faithful or Not? (Older and Younger Students)

- Describe someone in the Bible without using his or her name. Have the students guess until they figure out who it is. Then ask the class if this person was faithful or not.

    - **Cain:** Farmer, gave God a sacrifice God didn't accept, killed his brother, wandered the earth—NOT FAITHFUL
    - **Abraham:** Left his home for a new land, God changed his name, God gave him a son at 100 years old, God promised him a family bigger than the stars in the sky—FAITHFUL
    - **Esau:** A twin, red hair, gave up his birthright for a bowl of stew, planned to kill his brother after his blessing was stolen—NOT FAITHFUL
    - **Pharaoh:** Made the Hebrew people work as slaves, allowed God to send plagues, sent his army after the Hebrews, lost his army in the Red Sea—NOT FAITHFUL
    - **Joseph:** God gave him special dreams, was sold as a slave by his brothers, became the second in charge of Egypt, saved many countries from starvation—FAITHFUL

- The word *faithful* means "loyal" or "firm in keeping promises or fulfilling duties." Today, we will hear about a king who was faithful.

Collect the Change (Younger Students)

- Hide several coins throughout the room. Ask the class to find as much money as they can.

- Today, we will learn about a king who looked for money anywhere he could find it.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Hebrews 1:1–2

Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

Sticky Note Challenge (Older and Younger Students)

- Show the key passage poster and lead the class to read it aloud together. Then, cover two words with sticky notes and challenge the class to read the verse aloud, supplying the missing words from memory. Continue covering up two words at a time, allowing students to say the key passage in its entirety each time.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How many gods are there?

A: *There is one true God who alone deserves worship.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Hezekiah, Judah's Faithful King | 2 Kings 18–19

The Southern Kingdom of Judah had many kings. **When King Ahaz died, his son Hezekiah became king.** Hezekiah was not like his father. Ahaz had been a bad king, but Hezekiah did what was right. **Hezekiah trusted God and obeyed His commands.**

One day, the Assyrians attacked the Northern Kingdom of **Israel.** The Assyrian army destroyed the kingdom **and made the people in the capital city go to Assyria.**

A few years later, the Assyrians came to Judah. Hezekiah was afraid. He did not trust God to protect His people. Instead, Hezekiah sent a message to the king of Assyria. Hezekiah said, "Please go away. I'll give you as much money as you want."

The king of Assyria demanded 11 tons of silver and 1 ton of gold. Hezekiah didn't have that much money! So, he collected the silver from God's temple and from the palace. He took the gold off the doors and doorposts in the temple and gave it to the king of Assyria.

But the king of Assyria did not go away. His large army and some of his leaders went to talk to Hezekiah. "Whom are you trusting to protect you?" they asked. **"Our armies are stronger than yours. You should just give up now," they said.**

Hezekiah sent a message to Isaiah the prophet. "Pray for us!" Hezekiah said. **"Ask God to protect us!"**

Isaiah responded, "God says: 'Do not be afraid. The king will go back to his country, and he will be killed there.'"

The Assyrians made fun of Hezekiah for trusting God. The king sent him a letter that said, "Do you really think that God will protect you?" **Hezekiah went to the temple**. He spread out the king's letter **and**

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prayed. He said, "God, please save us from Assyria so that everyone on Earth will know that You are the one true God."

Then, Isaiah came to Hezekiah with a message. God had heard Hezekiah's prayer. God was not going to let Assyria attack Jerusalem. God said, "I will defend this city and rescue it for My sake and to keep the promise I made to My servant David—that his kingdom would not be destroyed."

That night, the angel of the Lord went into the camp of the Assyrian army and killed thousands of them. The next morning the king of Assyria went home. He was killed there, just as God had said.

JESUS CONNECTION

Hezekiah prayed that God would save His people from their enemies so that everyone would know that He is the one true God. God answered Hezekiah's prayer. Jesus also prayed for His people to be saved. God answered Jesus' prayer. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus brought glory to God by rescuing people from sin and death.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

WISDOM – Knowledge and skill for doing life God's way.

Living LifeWise

God gives us His wisdom so we know how to live well and make good choices.

Character Connection

What's something you've learned how to do? How did you learn to do it? [*Take answers.*] Sometimes, we just try something and hope it works. But usually, to do a new thing, we ask someone for help. We take lessons or watch videos because we need a teacher.

We can learn how to do many things by asking other people. But true wisdom, knowing how to live God's way, only comes from God. God is the perfect Teacher. He promised to generously give us wisdom when we ask (Jas 1:5). In fact, He gave us the whole Bible to teach us wisdom.

But knowing the right thing to do and actually doing it isn't the same thing. Hezekiah knew to go to God for help, but sometimes he tried to fix things on his own. Getting wisdom is a good thing, but living wisely is even better. And God has given us what we need to do both. His Word teaches us wisdom, and His Spirit helps us live wisely every day.

Can you think of any wisdom from the Bible that would help you in these cases?

- Your brother calls you an unkind name.
- Your friends begin telling mean stories about another student.
- You want to go to church, but you aren't sure how you will get there.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- What was the name of the faithful king in the story?

  Hezekiah, 2 Kings 18:1

- Hezekiah was king over what kingdom?

  Judah, 2 Kings 18:1

- Which country tried to invade Judah?

  Assyria, 2 Kings 18:17

- Where did Hezekiah get the gold and silver to give to the Assyrian army?

  God's temple and the royal palace, 2 Kings 18:15

- What did Hezekiah ask Isaiah to do?

  Pray for him, 2 Kings 19:1–4

- What did the Assyrians do to scare the people of Judah?

  Make fun of them, send them a threatening letter, 2 Kings 18:28–35, 19:9–14

- Hezekiah prayed that God would save his people so that the world would know what?

  That God is the one true God, 2 Kings 19:19

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Prayer Journals (Older Students)

- Give each student four sheets of white paper and one sheet of construction paper. Stack the white paper on top of the construction paper and fold all the papers in half so the construction paper becomes the cover of a small book. Staple along the folded edge to secure the pages in place. Prompt students to write *My Prayer Journal* on the front. Allow them to decorate the outside of the journal and list on the first page a few things they would like to pray for. Encourage the class to take home their prayer journals to record prayer requests or to write out prayers to God. Remind them to review past prayer requests and make a note if God answers their prayers.

- In today's Bible story, we heard how God answered Hezekiah's prayer. God might not always answer our prayers right away or in the way we hope, but we can trust that He knows what is best. God does everything for His glory and our good.

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Bible Wheel (Older Students)

- Draw a large circle on the board and separate it into six equal pieces. Place two different colored magnets on the same section. Write a name of the Bible character previously studied in each section: *Solomon, Job, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Hezekiah*. Divide students into teams. Teams will roll a numbered cube and move their magnet the correct number of spaces. Ask the team a question corresponding to the character they land on. Award one point for each correct answer.

  - Solomon
    - How did God speak to Solomon? (*In a dream*)
    - What did Solomon ask God for? (*Wisdom*)
    - Why did Solomon ask for wisdom? (*To lead God's people well*)
    - What else did God give Solomon because he asked for wisdom to lead God's people? (*Money, honor, long life, peace in his kingdom*)
    - How long did it take Solomon to complete the temple? (*Seven years*)

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- What did Solomon do that angered God? (*Worshiped idols, didn't follow all God's commands)*
- Why did God promise to leave one tribe with Solomon's son? (*Because of His covenant with David*)

✧ Job

- What kind of man was Job? (*An honest man who feared God*)
- Who caused bad things to happen to Job? (*Satan*)
- Who told Job to curse God and die? (*Job's wife*)
- What did Job's friends tell Job to do? (*To obey God and stop sinning)*
- How did God speak to Job? (*In a whirlwind*)
- What was the first thing Job lost? (*His animals*)
- Why did Job submit to God? (*He knew he could trust God*)

✧ Elijah

- Whom did Elijah stand up to? (*King Ahab and the prophets of Baal*)
- What did Elijah and the prophets of Baal each build? (*An altar*)
- What did Elijah pour over the wood on his altar? (*Water*)
- What did Elijah ask God to do to show he was the one true God? *(Send fire from Heaven)*
- Why did Elijah run away? (*Queen Jezebel tried to have him killed*)
- What did God provide for Elijah to eat? (*Bread and water, 1 Kings 19:6*)
- How long did Elijah travel before reaching Mount Horeb? (*40 days and 40 nights, 1 Kings 19:8*)
- How did God speak to Elijah? (*In a whisper*)

✧ Elisha

- Whom did God send to choose Elisha as the next prophet? (*Elijah)*
- How did Naaman hear about Elisha? (*An Israelite servant girl told him*)
- What did Elisha tell Naaman to do to get rid of his leprosy? (*Wash in the Jordan River seven times)*
- Why was Naaman angry at Elisha? (*He thought Elisha should come out to him and heal him*)
- What happened when Naaman finally decided to obey Elisha? (*He was healed and chose to worship God, 2 Kings 5:14–15*)
- Where did the power to heal Namaan come from? (*God, 2 Kings 5: 7*)

✧ Isaiah

- What did Isaiah see in a vision? (*God in the temple)*
- What kind of angels did Isaiah see in the vision? (*Angels with six wings, or seraphim*)
- Why was Isaiah so upset and afraid? (*He knew he was a sinner*)
- What did the seraph do to show God had cleansed Isaiah? (*Touched a coal to his lips*)
- What did God call Isaiah to do? *(Take God's message to the people of Judah*)
- How long did God say Isaiah would speak to the people? (*Until there are no more people to hear*)
- How did Isaiah describe the people? (*Like sheep that have gone astray)*

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- Hezekiah
  - How was Hezekiah different from his father Ahaz? (*He wanted to obey God*)
  - Hezekiah was king over what kingdom? (*Judah*)
  - Why was Hezekiah afraid of Assyria? (*They destroyed the kingdom of Israel*)
  - What did Assyria demand Hezekiah give them if they didn't want to be attacked? (*A lot of silver and gold*)
  - Where did Hezekiah get the gold and silver to give to the Assyrian army? (*God's temple*)
  - What did Hezekiah ask Isaiah to do? (*Pray for him*)
  - How did God answer Hezekiah's prayer? (*God saved Jerusalem and killed many of the Assyrian soldiers*)
  - Whom did God send to protect Hezekiah and the people? (*The angel of the Lord*)

Walking Blind (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, use masking tape to create a pathway around the room. Help students choose partners. Blindfold the first partner and challenge the second partner to lead him along the pathway without straying from the line. The second partner may not touch the first; he may only give careful directions to guide his partner. When a partner finishes the course, switch roles and complete the course again.
- Sometimes it's hard to trust God when we are scared, especially when we can't see Him. But we read in the Bible that He will take care of us because He loves us. God showed His love by sending Jesus! God receives all the glory when we put our faith in Jesus. God loves us and saves us so we can have a relationship with Him. God made the way for us to come to Him by sending Jesus to take the punishment that our sin deserves.

Wisdom (Older and Younger Students)

- Tape two signs, labeled "God's wisdom" and "World's wisdom," on opposite sides of the room. The class will stand in the middle. When you read a piece of advice, students will walk to the sign they think matches the advice. Return to the middle of the room each time.
  - If someone bullies you it is best to just give them what they want. Then, they will leave you alone.
  - When you don't understand the teacher's directions, the best idea is to pretend you understand so you won't look silly.
  - If you are afraid, you should ask God to help you, and then tell someone safe.
  - If someone is mean to you, you should beat them up to make them afraid of you. Then, they won't be mean again.
  - If you break something that's not yours, the best thing to do is be honest, tell the person and say you are sorry.
  - If someone doesn't believe in God, you should pray that God changes their mind.

Mystery Grab Bag (Younger Students)

- Gather the following objects and place them in a large bag: *small Gideon Bible, coin, letter, mini army figure, crown, angel, praying hands, temple*. If these objects are hard to find, print and laminate pictures of the objects. Keep the bag closed so the students cannot see the objects before choosing. Divide the class into two teams. Have a person from each team take turns drawing from

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the bag and explain one way that item relates to the story. Use a timer and allow them 30 seconds to give you an answer. If they answer correctly, their team earns a point.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Make the Cut (Older Students)
- Letter to the King (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for saving us through Jesus when we call on His name. We thank You for giving us a way to talk to You and listening to us when we pray. Help us learn to turn to You first when we face difficult times. Amen.

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Journal Page

List things that might be idols in your own life. Consider what you spend the most time doing, what you think about the most, and what takes priority in your life.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why was Hezekiah afraid of the Assyrians?
- What did Hezekiah do when he needed help and protection?
- Whom can we trust to protect and help us?

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HEZEKIAH, JUDAH'S FAITHFUL KING

2 KINGS 18–19

MAIN POINT: GOD ANSWERED HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER.

When King Ahaz died, his son Hezekiah became king. Hezekiah trusted God and obeyed His commands.

One day, the Assyrians attacked Israel and made the people in the capital city go to Assyria.

A few years later, the Assyrians came to Judah. Hezekiah was afraid. He did not trust God to protect His people. Instead, Hezekiah sent a message to the king of Assyria. Hezekiah said, "Please go away. I'll give you as much money as you want."

But the king of Assyria did not go away. His large army and some of his leaders went to talk to Hezekiah. "Our armies are stronger than yours. You should just give up now," they said.

Hezekiah sent a message to Isaiah the prophet. "Pray for us! Ask God to protect us!"

Isaiah responded, "God says: Do not be afraid. The king will go back to his country, and he will be killed there."

Hezekiah went to the temple and prayed. He said, "God, please save us from Assyria so that everyone on Earth will know that You are the one true God."

Then Isaiah came to Hezekiah with a message. God had heard Hezekiah's prayer. God was not going to let Assyria attack Jerusalem.

That night, the angel of the Lord went into the camp of the Assyrian army and killed thousands of them. The next morning, the king of Assyria went home. He was killed there, just as God had said.

Jesus Connection: *Hezekiah prayed that God would save His people from their enemies so that everyone would know that He is the one true God. God answered Hezekiah's prayer. Jesus also prayed for His people to be saved. God answered Jesus' prayer. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus brought glory to God by rescuing people from sin and death.*

Key Passage: *Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.*

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TAKE A LOOK

Look closely at the two pictures. Can you spot the 10 differences?





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MAKE THE CUT

Follow these instructions to cross out the words that are not part of the secret message:

- X. Cross out words that are colors.
- X. Cross out words that begin with the letter B.
- X. Cross out words that have less than three letters.
- X. Cross out words that begin and end with the same letter.

GOD	YELLOW	ANSWERED	HEZEKIAH'S	AT	RED	PRAYER
AND	SAVED	BRING	THAT	HIS	BREAD	A
BLUE	PEOPLE	EASE	ORANGE	BALL	FROM	GREEN
BIKE	TO	THEIR	ENEMIES	WOW	PINK	OR

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LETTER TO THE KING

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the icons to help you fill in the blanks in the letter to learn what the king of Assyria wrote to Hezekiah.

To: _____ Hezekiah,



No matter what God _____, you cannot trust Him.



He will not save _____. No other gods were



able to save the other _____ or their



lands from _____. I _____ all of





their lands. I will _____ Jerusalem as well.



From: _____ Sennacherib of Assyria



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KEY PASSAGE:
Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

BIBLE STORY: HEZEKIAH, JUDAH'S FAITHFUL KING

- The Assyrians came to capture Jerusalem.
- Hezekiah tried to pay the Assyrians to go away.
- They refused and sent a threatening letter to Hezekiah.
- Hezekiah prayed for help, and God answered Hezekiah's prayer.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why was it bad for Hezekiah to try and pay off the Assyrians?
- What did the Assyrians trust in?
- In whom should we trust?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Take time as a family to write letters of encouragement to each other and the leaders of your church. Talk to your kids about the most encouraging news, the gospel of Jesus.

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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GOD ANSWERED HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER.

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LESSON 46: LOVE

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

Hosea 1–14

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HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

- Hosea 1–14
- Big Picture Q&A: What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.
- Key Passage: Joel 2:13 – Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.

JESUS CONNECTION

God used Hosea's unfaithful wife to show the people of Israel that they were unfaithful to Him. God gave Hosea a deep love; Hosea was willing to buy back Gomer even after all she had done. God's love is deep, and it never gives up. He goes after His people and loves them back to Himself.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

LOVE – Choosing to support and care for others whether or not they deserve it.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

God sent the prophet Hosea to speak to Israel a message of God's hatred toward sin and of His coming judgment. God also sent Hosea to bring a message of love—a love that never gives up. God used Hosea's own life to show Israel what a never-gives-up kind of love looks like.

God told Hosea to marry a prostitute. He told Hosea that his wife would not be faithful to him. She would give birth to children who were conceived with other men. Still, Hosea obeyed God. He chose Gomer as his wife. Just as God said, Gomer was not faithful to Hosea. She went after other lovers. Can you imagine Hosea's grief each time he found his wife with another man?

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It would have been easier for Hosea to throw up his hands and say, "Enough! I'm done with you!" God's people were no different than Gomer. They were spiritual adulterers. Their hearts chased after other lovers. They loved and worshiped idols, people and things that were not the one true God.

It would have been easier for God to throw up His hands and say, "Enough! I'm done with you!" But God's love never gives up. He gave Hosea a love for his wife that compelled him to buy her back from the slave market after all she had done. In the same way, God sought after His unfaithful people even after all they had done. God paid a high price—the life of His Son, Jesus—to bring them back to Himself.

Remember to present the story of Hosea in an age-appropriate way. God used Hosea's unfaithful wife to show the people of Israel that they were unfaithful to Him. God gave Hosea a deep love; Hosea was willing to buy back Gomer even after all she had done. God's love is deep, and it never gives up. He goes after His people and loves them back to Himself.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last class, we learned about King Hezekiah. At first, Hezekiah didn't completely trust God because he was afraid. What was he afraid of? (*The Assyrian army.*) How did he try to get rid of the Assyrians in his own power? (*He gave them gold and silver from the temple.*) When Assyria didn't leave, what did Hezekiah realize he needed to do? (*Pray for God's help.*) How did God protect Hezekiah and his people? (*He sent the angel of the Lord to attack Assyria.*)

Today, we will begin learning about the Minor Prophets in the Bible. These books are in the Old Testament. The prophets brought God's messages to His people. Just like every Bible story we have heard, today's story shows us God's great love for us and His plan to save and rescue us from our sins.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

God Is ... (Older Students)

- Instruct the class to think of words that describe God. Invite students to share their words. Challenge students to think of words others have not yet mentioned.

- Those were some great words to describe God. We could sit here all day and never fully describe our mighty God. Our big picture question is, "What is God like?" The Bible story today shows us that God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.

I Love ... (Older and Younger Students)

- Place chairs in a circle (or use pieces of tape on the floor), with one spot fewer than the number of players. Have one volunteer stand in the middle. All the other students will sit. The volunteer will call out "I love ..." and name something or someone she loves. Anyone else who loves the same thing must stand and find a new seat while the volunteer also tries to sit in an empty chair. Whoever is left without a chair will be the next volunteer in the middle. Play as time allows.

- What do you think it means to love someone? Sometimes, we use *love* to mean *really like*. But love is more than just liking something a lot. Today, we are going to learn about God's love by what happened to a husband whose wife did not love him.

What Do You Love? (Older and Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to stand in the middle of the room. Offer them a series of choices. Each time, they should rush to the side of the room you designate for each option.

    - Pizza or ice cream?
    - Video games or playing outside?
    - Reading books or listening to music?
    - New clothes or new toys?
    - Math or Reading?
    - Science or History?
    - Football or soccer?

- You can tell what a person values—what they love—by what they choose to spend time or effort on. We all are called to love God most, but we don't always spend our time or effort in a way that shows we actually do love God most. Hosea married a woman who did not love him. Her example showed the way Israel acted toward God. We'll learn more about it in a few moments.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Joel 2:13

Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.

Four Corners (Older Students)

- Display the key passage poster and read Joel 2:13 aloud. Form four groups and assign each group a phrase of the key passage. Point to each group to say its part of the key passage in order. Reassign phrases and repeat the activity a few times.

Motions (Older and Younger Students)

- Show the key passage poster and read Joel 2:13 together. Invite the class to make up motions for each key word or phrase of the verse. For example:
  - *Return to the LORD your God*—Point both thumbs over your shoulders.
  - *He is gracious and compassionate*—Hug yourself and sway side to side.
  - *Slow to anger*—Move arms outward in a slow, wave-like motion.
  - *Rich in faithful love*—Hold both hands over your heart.
- Our key passage is a great description of God. It reminds me of our big picture question. Let's answer the question again. What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.

Heart Cut-Outs (Younger Students)

- Before class, make enough heart cutouts for each student and write one or two words of the key passage on each heart. Mix up the hearts and give one to each student. Instruct them to line up so the words are in the correct order. Then, have them say their word or phrase one at a time.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What is God like?

A: *God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Hosea, Prophet to Israel | Hosea 1–14

God gave the prophet Hosea instructions for his life. God wanted to send a message to His people through Hosea. **God said, "Marry a woman who will not be faithful to you, and be a father to her children."**

God was going to use Hosea's life to show His people in Israel what His love for them was like. **Hosea's wife would love other men instead of Hosea, just like the people of Israel loved and worshiped other gods instead of the one true God.**

God was asking Hosea to do something very difficult. It is hard to love someone who doesn't love you back! But **Hosea obeyed God. He married a woman named Gomer.**

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Gomer had three children: Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah (LOH roo HA muh), and Lo-ammi (lo AM igh). Each child's name had a special meaning. *Jezreel* was the name of a city, so this name was a warning to Israel that they would be defeated by their enemies.

Lo-ruhamah, which means "No Mercy," let Israel know that God was not going to show them mercy anymore. They would get the punishment their sin deserved. *Lo-ammi*, which means "Not My People," told the Israelites that they were no longer God's people.

Gomer was not faithful to Hosea. She often ran away. In the same way, God's people turned away from Him. They worshiped false gods. God told Hosea to go after his wife. So, Hosea found Gomer. She had become a slave. Hosea paid to get her back and took her home.

"Stop being unfaithful," Hosea said. **Even though Gomer had not loved her husband like a wife should, Hosea loved her anyway. God gave Hosea a love that would never give up. God wanted the people of Israel to hear about Hosea and his wife and understand that Israel was no different than Gomer. The Israelites did not love God like they should, but God loved Israel anyway. God loves with a love that never gives up.**

Hosea warned the Israelites that God was going to judge them for their sin. Hosea pleaded with Israel to turn back to God. "Come, let us return to the Lord," he said. "Let us strive to know the Lord."

God still loved Israel. He was going to punish the people for turning away from Him, but He would keep the promise He made to Abraham. Because one day, despite their disobedience, Jesus would be born into Abraham's family line. **Just as Hosea paid a high price to get back his wife who did not love him, God had a plan to get His people back at an even greater cost.** He sent his Son, Jesus, to pay the price for our sin through His death on the cross so that we are able to come back to God.

JESUS CONNECTION

God used Hosea's unfaithful wife to show the people of Israel that they were unfaithful to Him. God gave Hosea a deep love; Hosea was willing to buy back Gomer even after all she had done. God's love is deep, and it never gives up. He goes after His people and loves them back to Himself.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

LOVE – Choosing to support and care for others whether or not they deserve it.

Living LifeWise

God doesn't give up on us, and He helps us love others the same way.

Character Connection

Sometimes, other people will do things that make us mad or sad or upset. They might hurt us or lie to us. And we can't keep them from doing any of that. But we can decide to love them anyway.

Hosea's wife made him very sad and upset. She hurt his feelings and did all kinds of things that broke his heart. And God's people did all those same things to God. His heart was broken, just like Hosea's. But God

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loves His people, so He never told them "That's it! I'm done with you." He kept loving them. He asked Hosea to keep showing love to his wife. And He asks us to do the same with our friends and classmates and family and neighbors.

It is never easy to love someone who's hurt us. And love doesn't mean pretending it never happened or letting a person hurt us again. Loving God's way means choosing not to give up on the person who hurt us and keep doing what's best for them, no matter what. That's how God loves us, and God helps us to love others that way, even when someone hurts us.

In these examples, which way is God's way to love? How do you know?

- **Someone destroys the Lego creation you spent the last week building.**
  - You scream at that person and kick them out of your room.
  - You tell that person you're upset and ask them to be more careful with your things.
- **Your best friend makes fun of you behind your back, and it isn't the first time.**
  - You tell her that real friends don't make fun of each other and forgive her, but find other friends to play with.
  - You tell her you don't want to be friends any more and ignore her all the time.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **What was the name of the woman Hosea married?**

  Gomer, Hos. 1:3
- **What did the names of Hosea's children mean?**

  God rejected them as His people and punished them for their sin, Hos. 1:4–9
- **How were the people of Israel like Gomer?**

  Turned away from Him, Hos. 1:2, 3:1
- **What did God tell Hosea to do when Gomer left?**

  Go find her, Hos. 3:1
- **What did Hosea have to do to bring Gomer home?**

  Pay money, Hos. 3:2
- **What did God warn Hosea about?**

  God would punish the people, Hos. 2:9–13
- **What did Hosea tell the Israelites to do?**

  Return to the Lord, Hos. 12:6
- **What did God do to show His never-giving-up love for us?**

  Sent Jesus to take our punishment by dying on the cross

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Reverse Charades (Older Students)

- Before class, write expressions of love on separate sheets of paper. Choose a student to be the guesser. Guide him to stand with his back to the group. Show the rest of the class a sheet of paper that describes what they should act out. Instruct the guesser to turn around. The rest of the class

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should silently act out the expression of love. If desired, students may work with a partner to act out the expression. The guesser should try to figure out what they are doing. Allow a minute or two for the guesser to guess. Before playing another round, discuss these questions: 1. How does God show us that expression of love? 2. How can we show love to others in this way?

- Expression suggestions:
  - Encouraging someone
  - Helping or serving someone
  - Spending time with someone
  - Listening to someone
  - Warning someone of danger

- God loves people when they do not deserve it. God loved the Israelites even though they had turned away from Him. He sent Hosea to warn them to turn back to God and to show them what God's love is like. We can show God's love to others by doing some of the things we acted out, even if they have not been loving to us.

God's Love Never Gives Up (Older Students)

- Give each student a pencil or pen and three pieces of paper. Think of the worst thing you have ever done. What was the next worst? Or the third worst? Write those three things on your pieces of paper, and then crumple them up. Lead students to hold onto their paper wads and sit in a circle. Position a trash can in the middle of the circle.

- In today's Bible story, Hosea's relationship with Gomer reminds us of God's relationship with the people of Israel and with us. Even though God's people were unfaithful and loved other things more than God, God still loved them. We have sinned and loved other things more than God, too. But God still loves us. God sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sin and bring us back to Him. That's amazing love! So, as you hold some pretty bad things in your hand, remember nothing that we do will cause God to stop loving us. He loves us so much He wants to rescue us from our sins.

- Invite the students to take turns tossing one paper wad into the trash can. Guide them to say today's main point together: *God loves people when they do not deserve it.* Play three rounds to discard all the paper, repeating the main point each time.

Bible Story Matching Game (Older Students)

- Before class, print the "Bible Story Matching Game" onto heavyweight paper and cut out the cards. For larger groups, you may need more than one set. Give each student a Bible. Help them find the book of Hosea. Encourage them to play the matching game in groups of three or four and to find where the person's name is mentioned in the Bible. Each of Gomer's three children will have an explanation of his or her name while the people will be matched to their actions.

- God used Hosea's family to tell His people that they did not love Him the way they should. Hosea warned the Israelites that God would judge them for their sin. Hosea pleaded with Israel to turn back to God. Just like Hosea paid a high price to get back his wife, God had a plan to get His people back even at a great cost. Instruct students to open their Bibles to John 3:16. What price did God pay to rescue people from sin? (*God gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.*) Just as Hosea's love for Gomer never gave up, God's love for us

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never gives up either! God sent Jesus to show His love for us. Jesus gave up everything—even His own life—to rescue us from sin.

Immediate Obedience (Older and Younger Students)

- Write out a series of commands that seem silly on index cards. The commands must be something everyone in the class can do (*e.g., take off your shoes, jump up and down five times, sit down, crawl under your desk, find a Bible, do 10 jumping jacks, spin around three times, etc.*). Have students stand by their desks. Read one command. Watch to see who is able to obey the command fastest. Students must obey the exact command, though. Whoever is the fastest can come up and help you call the next task.

- God asked the prophet Hosea to do something very hard, and He expected Hosea to obey immediately. As hard as this was, God asked him to do it so Hosea and the people would understand just how much He loved them and wanted them to turn back to Him. When God asks us to obey His word, He wants us to obey right away, like Hosea, because we love God.

Hot Potato (Younger Students)

- Have the class sit in a circle. Pass a ball (or a heart if you can find one) around the circle to music. Randomly stop the music. Ask the student who has the ball a Bible review question.

Love God Pictionary (Younger Students)

- Prepare index cards ahead of time listing ways that we can show we love God. Have students choose a card and draw it out on the board. For younger classes, provide some simple examples of drawings on the index card that they can copy on the board. The rest of the class will guess the answer.

    - Read the Bible
    - Pray to God
    - Obey what the Bible says
    - Tell other people about God
    - Go to church
    - Thank God
    - Be kind to other people
    - Help others

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Hosea's Search (Older Students)

- Looking For Love (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, Your love never gives up. Thank You for loving us even when we don't deserve it. Father, help us to love others who have been unloving to us. Give us a love that never gives up. Help us to show Your love to the world by loving others well. Thank You for Jesus. We love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write a thank-you note to God for loving you even though you are a sinner.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think it is sometimes hard to love other people?
- What are some ways God shows His love for us?
- How do you feel knowing that God never stops loving us?

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HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

HOSEA 1–14

MAIN POINT: GOD LOVES PEOPLE WHEN THEY DO NOT DESERVE IT.

God gave the prophet Hosea instructions for his life. God said, "Marry a woman who will not be faithful to you, and be a father to her children."

Hosea's wife would love other men instead of Hosea, just like the people of Israel loved and worshiped other gods instead of the one true God.

Hosea obeyed God. He married a woman named Gomer. Gomer was not faithful to Hosea. She often ran away. In the same way, God's people turned away from Him. They worshiped false gods. God told Hosea to go after his wife. So Hosea found Gomer and paid to get her back.

Even though Gomer had not loved her husband like a wife should, Hosea loved her anyway. God gave Hosea a love that would never give up. God wanted the people of Israel to hear about Hosea and his wife and understand that Israel was no different than Gomer. The Israelites did not love God like they should, but God loved Israel anyway. God loves with a love that never gives up.

Hosea warned the Israelites that God was going to judge them for their sin. Hosea pleaded with Israel to turn back to God.

God hated their sin but, just like Hosea paid a high price to get back his wife who did not love him, God had a plan to get His people back no matter what the cost.

Jesus Connection: *God used Hosea's unfaithful wife to show the people of Israel that they were unfaithful to Him. God gave Hosea a deep love; Hosea was willing to buy back Gomer even after all she had done. God's love is deep, and it never gives up. He goes after His people and loves them back to Himself.*

Key Passage: *Joel 2:13 – Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.*

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HOSEA'S SEARCH

Circle the key words in the puzzle.

M	L	N	B	F	D	E	M	L	P	L	G
T	E	Z	U	B	V	G	O	U	C	E	E
I	E	Z	N	O	O	R	I	H	Q	S	M
S	R	H	L	L	U	F	H	T	I	A	F
R	Z	A	P	H	L	O	A	M	M	I	R
A	E	Y	A	O	V	Q	O	S	V	E	E
E	J	M	P	G	R	R	B	F	T	D	M
L	A	S	I	N	P	P	U	U	L	O	O
H	A	E	S	O	H	F	R	N	K	F	G
S	S	H	T	E	S	N	K	E	K	O	G

HOSEA
PROPHET
FAITHFUL
LOVE
JEZREEL
LO-RUHAMAH
LO-AMMI
ISRAEL
GOMER
PROMISE
SIN
RETURN

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NEVER GIVE UP

Use the key to decode the secret message about God's love.

A	D	E	G	H	I	L	N
O	P	R	S	T	U	V	W

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LOOKING FOR LOVE

INSTRUCTIONS: Find and circle the six differences between the unloving and loving versions of the picture below.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Joel 2:13 – Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.

BIBLE STORY: HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

- God asked Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman.
- Hosea loved his wife, even though she did not love him.
- Hosea's family showed the way God always pursues His people.
- God loves people even when they don't deserve it.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What are some times it is hard to love other people?
- What are some ways God shows His love to us?
- How do you feel knowing that God never stops loving us?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Make heart-shaped sugar cookies with your family to pass out to your neighbors. Explain the gospel through the story of Hosea. Help your kids prepare a response to people confused by heart cookies outside of Valentine's Day.

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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GOD LOVES PEOPLE EVEN WHEN THEY DON'T DESERVE IT.

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Hosea

Gomer

Lo-ruhamah

Lo-ammi

Jezreel

God

Israel

loved His people despite their sin and planned to buy them back with a Rescuer

was unfaithful to God and refused to obey Him

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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Bible Study Matching Game Cards

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

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means "No Mercy" because God would no longer show mercy to Israel

means "Not my people" because God would no longer consider Israel His people

the name of a city; a sign that God would overthrow Israel

married a woman who was not faithful to him but loved her anyway and paid to get her back when she ran away

did not love her husband the way a wife should; kept running away from him, despite the fact that he loved her

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LESSON 47: COMPASSION

JONAH, PROPHET TO NINEVEH

Jonah 1–4

JONAH, PROPHET TO NINEVEH

- Jonah 1–4
- What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.
- Key Passage: Joel 2:13 – Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.

JESUS CONNECTION

God called Jonah to go to his enemies and call them to turn away from their sin, but Jonah refused. Instead, he ran away. Later, God sent Jesus to His enemies to call us to repentance. Jesus willingly obeyed. Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from sin.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COMPASSION – Love in action; showing I care by helping someone who is suffering.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Jonah is not primarily about Jonah and a big fish. While those elements are important, Jonah's account centers on the compassion of God, not only for the people of Israel, but for people throughout the earth—even Israel's worst enemies!

God spoke to Jonah: "Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because their wickedness has confronted Me" (Jonah 1:2). God is the judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25), and He is sovereign over all the nations. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, and the rulers of Nineveh were notoriously evil and cruel. No wonder Jonah ran the other way!

No one can flee from God's presence (Ps. 139:9–10). Through a storm and some time in the belly of a fish, God got Jonah's attention. Jonah went to Nineveh. For three days, Jonah walked around the city. His message to the Ninevites was brief: "In 40 days, Nineveh will be demolished!"

The people of Nineveh immediately repented, and God withheld His judgment. He passed over their sins and did not demolish the city. How did Jonah react? "Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious" (Jonah 4:1).

God rebuked Jonah and prompted him to examine his heart. He left Jonah—and the reader—with a question to consider: "Should I not care about the great city of Nineveh?" (Jonah 4:11).

Jesus is greater than Jonah (Matt. 12:41). Jesus came calling all sinners, Jews and Gentiles, to repentance. He didn't only bring a message; He truly loved us. He submitted to God's will with joy and laid down His own life for our sins. God shows His mercy in the gospel, forgiving those who trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. God sends us out, like Jonah, to share the good news of salvation.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We are learning about some of God's prophets. Does anyone remember what a prophet is? (*God's messengers to His people.*) What difficult thing did God ask Hosea to do? (*Marry a woman who would be unfaithful to him.*) Why did God ask Hosea to marry someone who wouldn't love him? (*To help the Israelites understand that they had not shown love to God and left Him to serve idols.*) What did God want His people, the Israelites, to do? (*Return to God.*) Today, we will learn about the prophet Jonah. God asked him to do something just about as difficult as Hosea.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Doing Things the Hard Way (Older Students)

- Use furniture and other items around the room to form a simple obstacle course. Demonstrate how the class should move through the course. Allow them to complete the course individually. Then, form pairs. Gently tie the partners' middle legs together to run a three-legged race. Challenge them to move through the obstacle course again. When students finish, talk about which was easier—going through the course alone or with someone else.
- Today, we are going to hear a story about Jonah. God called Jonah to do an important job. Jonah could have obeyed God, but he chose to do things the hard way. He tried to run away from God and ended up in the belly of a big fish!

Immediate Obedience (Older and Younger Students)

- Write out a series of commands that seem silly on index cards. They must be something everyone in the class can do (*e.g., take off your shoes, jump up and down five times, sit down, crawl under your desk, find a Bible, do 10 jumping jacks, spin around three times, etc.*). Have students stand up by their desks. Read one command. Watch to see who is able to obey the command fastest. Students must obey the exact command, though. Whoever is the fastest can come up and help you call the next task.
- Do we always obey immediately? No! We do not! Today, we will learn about a man named Jonah, who did not obey God immediately or joyfully. I can't wait to hear what happened next!

Belly of a Fish (Younger Students)

- Before class, create a makeshift fish belly by placing dark blankets over a tent, table or large box. Open a can of tuna and place it in a closed container. Invite the class to come into the belly of the fish. Take the lid off the container of tuna. Ask questions that prompt students to think about what it would have been like for Jonah in the belly of the fish: How did it smell? Feel? Sound? What did Jonah see? How might it have been difficult or scary for Jonah?
- In the story today a man named Jonah is swallowed by a big fish for three days. Even though this was very difficult for Jonah, he was thankful. Let's read the story and learn why.

Run Away Jonah Song (Younger Students)

- Sing this song to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down."

  Jonah runs and hides from God (*cover eyes*)
  Where is he? (*hand above eyes, searching*)

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Can you see? (*put hands around eyes like binoculars*)
Jonah runs and hides from God (*cover eyes*)
But God forgives him. (*put hands to heart*)
In the belly of a fish (*plug nose with fingers*)
Jonah prays (*praying hands*)
Three whole days (*hold up three fingers*)
In the belly of a fish (*plug nose*)
God forgives him. (*put hands on heart*)

KEY PASSAGE & ACTIVITY (5 MIN)

Joel 2:13

Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.

Fishing Relay Race (Older Students)

- Before class, cut out fish shapes in two colors of construction paper. Write each word of the key passage on the fish to create two complete sets, one in each color. Scatter the fish on one side of the room. Display the key passage poster and read Joel 2:13 together. Form two teams, and assign each team a color. Using a fishing net, the first player on each team will pick up a fish, put it in the net and carry it to the other side of the room. They will leave the fish and hand off the net to the next player in line. Once all of their fish have been moved, the entire team should go and arrange the fish in order, referring to the key passage poster if necessary. Lead students to say the verse aloud again.

Pass the Net (Younger Students)

- Before class, cut fish out of paper or cardstock. Write one or two words of the key passage on each fish. Put all the fish in a fishing net. Pass the net while playing the Newsboys song "In the Belly of a Whale." Stop the music randomly. The student holding the net when the music stops should draw out a fish and put it in the correct order. For classes that struggle to read, have most of the fish already on the board or floor in the correct order. When students draw a fish out, help them sound it out the word and find the correct place in the sentence.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What is God like?
A: *God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh | Jonah 1–4

God told the prophet Jonah, "Go to the great city of Nineveh. Tell them to stop doing evil things." Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. The people there were enemies of God's people. **Jonah did not go to Nineveh. He got on a boat heading the other way!**

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God sent a terrible storm, and the sailors were afraid! They cast lots, like flipping coins or tossing dice, to figure out who caused this trouble. The lot fell on Jonah. **They asked Jonah, "Who are you? What are you doing here?"**

Jonah replied, "I am a Hebrew. I worship the one true God who made everything."

What had Jonah done to make God angry? **The sailors did not know what to do, so Jonah told them to throw him into the sea. When they did, the storm stopped.** When the sailors saw this, they worshiped the one true God.

God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. **Jonah prayed and thanked God for sending the fish to save him. Then, the fish vomited Jonah onto dry land.**

God said to Jonah, "Go to Nineveh and preach My message."

So, Jonah went. He walked around the city shouting God's message: "In 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed!" The people turned from their evil ways. Everyone put on sackcloth and did not eat. Even the king repented. **God decided not to destroy Nineveh.**

"I knew it!" **Jonah said. "I knew You are a gracious God. You show mercy to people. You are slow to anger, and You are loving. I knew You would decide to not destroy Nineveh. I am so mad!"**

"Is it right for you to be angry?" God asked. Jonah left Nineveh and made a shelter where he could still see the city.

God taught Jonah a lesson. He provided a plant to shade Jonah from the sun. Jonah was glad to have the plant. **But the next day, God sent a worm. The worm attacked the plant, and the plant died. Then, God sent a dry east wind. Jonah was so hot, he almost fainted.** "I want to die," Jonah said.

God asked Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"Yes!" Jonah said. "It is right. I'm so angry, I could die."

God said, "You cared about the plant, but you did not take care of it or make it grow. It only lasted one day. But Nineveh is a big city with thousands of people. I created them and care about them. Aren't they more important than a plant?"

JESUS CONNECTION

God called Jonah to go to his enemies and call them to turn away from their sin, but Jonah refused. Instead, he ran away. Later, God sent Jesus to His enemies to call us to repentance. Jesus willingly obeyed. Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from sin.

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LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

COMPASSION – Love in action; showing I care by helping someone who is suffering.

Living LifeWise

Knowing that God shows compassion to us helps us show compassion to others.

Character Connection

Compassion is the desire to help someone who is hurting. Sometimes we are eager to help, like giving donations at Christmas or helping an abandoned puppy or hugging our friend who is upset.

Other times, we don't feel like showing compassion. Jonah didn't feel like it. He didn't like the Assyrians who lived in Nineveh. They were violent people who'd hurt his own nation of Israel. He didn't think they deserved to be shown compassion. But God didn't see it that way. God saw them as people He loved and wanted to help. So, in compassion, He sent Jonah to warn them and give them a second chance.

It isn't our job to decide whether or not someone deserves compassion. Like Jonah, God calls us to help others, even when it's not easy. For us, compassion may mean stopping to help the mean kid when he falls down on the playground. Or caring enough to listen to the girl who wouldn't let you sit with her friends at lunch. Or inviting a classmate to join your team even though he never picks you for his team. Compassion isn't easy, but it is God's way, and He always gives us the strength and love to live His way.

How could you show compassion in these situations?

- Your grumpy, elderly neighbor is trying to carry groceries into his house when one bag breaks and the groceries spill everywhere.
- A classmate who called you names under her breath all day is now upset in the corner during indoor recess.
- Your grandpa hasn't called or come to see you for years, but now he's sick in the hospital, and your dad invites you to come along and visit him.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Where did God tell Jonah to go?**
  Nineveh, Jonah 1:2
- **How did God stop Jonah from running away?**
  Sent a terrible storm, Jonah 1:4
- **What did Jonah tell the sailors to do with him?**
  Throw him into the sea, Jonah 1:12
- **What happened when Jonah was thrown into the sea?**
  The storm stopped, Jonah 1:15
- **How did God rescue Jonah?**
  Sent a big fish to swallow him, Jonah 1:17
- **What happened after Jonah prayed to God from inside the fish?**
  It vomited Jonah onto dry land, Jonah 2:10

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- What message did Jonah tell the people in Nineveh?

  Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days, Jonah 3:4

- When God saw the actions of the Ninevites, what did He do?

  God forgave them, Jonah 3:10

- How did Jonah feel when God showed mercy to the Ninevites?

  Angry, Jonah 4:1

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Circles of Compassion (Older Students)

- Before class, print the worksheet "Circles of Compassion." Guide students to think about who in those circles might need to see God's mercy and love this week.

- Jonah was called to leave his people to warn people of another country about God's anger at their sin. The Bible tells us that Jonah did not want to go. Jonah didn't want his enemies to be forgiven! But God showed mercy to the Ninevites. God loves us and wants to forgive even the people we don't want to forgive. Use this circle booklet to help you remember to pray for people and to love them like God does.

God's Mercy (Older Students)

- Display a large piece of paper on a focal wall. Label the left side of the paper *Jonah* and the right side *Ninevites*. Distribute Bibles and help everyone find the book of Jonah. Explain that Jonah is in the Old Testament, in the division of the Minor Prophets. Show students how to use the table of contents if they struggle to find Jonah.

- In today's Bible story, we learned that God showed mercy to the Ninevites. The Ninevites were not just sort-of-bad people; they were very bad! Other nations were afraid of the Ninevites. God would have been right to destroy them, but He showed them mercy by sending Jonah to warn them. God not only showed mercy to the Ninevites; He showed mercy to Jonah too. Let's list ways God showed mercy to Jonah and to the people of Nineveh.

  - Jonah
    - God provided a big fish to swallow Jonah.
    - God gave Jonah another chance to go to Nineveh.
    - God provided shade for Jonah.

  - Ninevites
    - God sent Jonah to warn the Ninevites to turn back to God.
    - God decided not to destroy the city of Nineveh.

Command, Disobey, Obey (Older and Younger Students)

- Read each event. If students think it is a command, they should salute. If someone obeyed, students should stand up. If someone disobeyed, they should put their heads down.
- Review statements:

  - Jonah 1:1–2, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. ©
  - Jonah 1:3, Jonah headed for Tarshish. (D)
  - Jonah 1:4, God created a storm. ©

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- Jonah 1:11–12, Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea. ©
- Jonah 1:13, The sailors tried to row to land. (D)
- Jonah 1:14–15, They threw Jonah in the sea. (O)
- Jonah 3:1–2, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh again. (C)
- Jonah 3:3–4, Jonah went to Nineveh. (O)
- Jonah 3:5–6, The Ninevites repented. (O)

- The story of Jonah contains some obedience, but a lot of disobedience. Jonah's experience shows us how much God loves people—even disobedient people! When Jonah disobeyed God, God would have been right to allow Jonah to die in the storm and choose another messenger who would obey. Instead, God had mercy on Jonah and sent a fish to swallow Jonah. God gave Jonah another chance to obey! God also would have been right to destroy Nineveh for their sin, just like He said He would. Nineveh was a very evil city. But instead, God showed mercy to the Ninevites. He sent them a messenger to warn them. He gave them a chance to obey Him, and they did. We are also disobedient and sinful. We deserve death. Instead of giving us death, God sent us Jesus so that we have a way to be forgiven. God shows us mercy by giving us the opportunity to turn back to Him.

Scene Drawings (Older and Younger Students)

- Provide paper and markers for the class to draw scenes from today's Bible story. You may allow students to choose what to draw or assign events from the story. Decide if you want them to work independently or in pairs or small groups. When students finish, invite them to share their scenes with the rest of the group, in the order that they happened. Guide them to explain what is happening in the scene.

    - Suggested Scenes: *God telling Jonah to go to Nineveh, Jonah going in the opposite direction of Nineveh, Jonah on the boat during the storm, Jonah being thrown into the water, Jonah inside the fish, Jonah being spit out onto dry land, Jonah going to Nineveh, Jonah speaking to Ninevites, the Ninevites repenting, Jonah sitting angrily under the tree.*

- Sometimes, when we call something a story, we think it's just made up. But Jonah's story really happened! Everything in the Bible is true. The story of Jonah tells us how God showed mercy to the Ninevites. The Ninevites deserved to be punished, but God forgave them when they repented and turned away from their sin. We all have sinned, and our sin separates us from God. But God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus, to die the death we deserve. He gives forgiveness and eternal life to those who trust in Jesus. Now that is very good news!

Run Away Jonah (Younger Students)

- Have students form a circle, facing away from the middle with their hands behind their backs. One child will be "God" and stand on the inside of the circle with a piece of paper rolled up like a scroll. Have the class chant: "Jonah, Jonah disobeyed. God forgave him anyway." The child playing God will pick Jonah by placing the scroll in his hand. When *Jonah* feels the scroll in his hand, he must run around the outside of the circle and try to reach his spot before he is tagged by *God*. [*God may not tag Jonah until after he has left the circle.*] If *God* catches *Jonah*, *Jonah* will join the circle again, and *God* will have one more turn to pick another *Jonah*.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- True or False (Older Students)

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- Answers: *1. true; 2. false, Jonah got on a boat; 3. true; 4. false, 40 days; 5. false, the people listened to Jonah; 6. true; 7. false, Jonah was angry; 8. false, God provided a plant*

- Run, Run, Run (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, we praise You for being such a powerful, awesome God. You are compassionate, slow to anger and full of love. We see these truths in the story of Jonah and the Ninevites. Father, help us to return to You and make You first in our lives. We need You more than we can know. We thank You for sending Jesus as the ultimate show of Your love and mercy. Help us trust in Him and live for You.

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Journal Page

Write about a time you did not receive what you deserved but received mercy instead. Then write a one-sentence prayer, thanking God for His mercy toward sinners.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think Jonah sailed away from Nineveh?
- Why did God show mercy to the Ninevites?
- In what ways does God show mercy to us?

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JONAH, PROPHET TO NINEVEH

JONAH 1–4

MAIN POINT: GOD SHOWED MERCY TO THE NINEVITES.

God told the prophet Jonah, "Go to the great city of Nineveh. Tell them to stop doing evil things." Jonah did not go to Nineveh. He got on a boat heading the other way! God sent a terrible storm, and the sailors were afraid! They asked Jonah, "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

Jonah replied, "I am a Hebrew. I worship the one true God who made everything." The sailors did not know what to do, so Jonah told them to throw him into the sea. When they did, the storm stopped.

God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah prayed and thanked God for sending the fish to save him. Then the fish vomited Jonah onto dry land. God said to Jonah, "Go to Nineveh and preach My message." So Jonah went. He walked around the city shouting God's message: "In 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed!"

The people turned from their evil ways. God decided not to destroy Nineveh.

Jonah said. "I know You show mercy to people. You are slow to anger, and You are loving. I knew You would decide to not destroy Nineveh. I am so mad!"

"Is it right for you to be angry?" God asked. Jonah left Nineveh and made a shelter where he could still see the city.

God taught Jonah a lesson. He provided a plant to shade Jonah from the sun. But the next day, God sent a worm. The worm attacked the plant, and the plant died. Then God sent a dry east wind. Jonah was so hot, he almost fainted.

God asked Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"Yes!" Jonah said.

God said, "You cared about the plant, but you did not take care of it or make it grow. It only lasted one day. But Nineveh is a big city with thousands of people. I created them and care about them. Aren't they more important than a plant?"

Jesus Connection: *God called Jonah to go to his enemies and call them to turn away from their sin, but Jonah refused. Instead, he ran away. Later, God sent Jesus to His enemies to call us to repentance. Jesus willingly obeyed. Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from sin.*

Key Passage: *Joel 2:13 – Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.*

DISCIPLE

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TRUE OR FALSE?

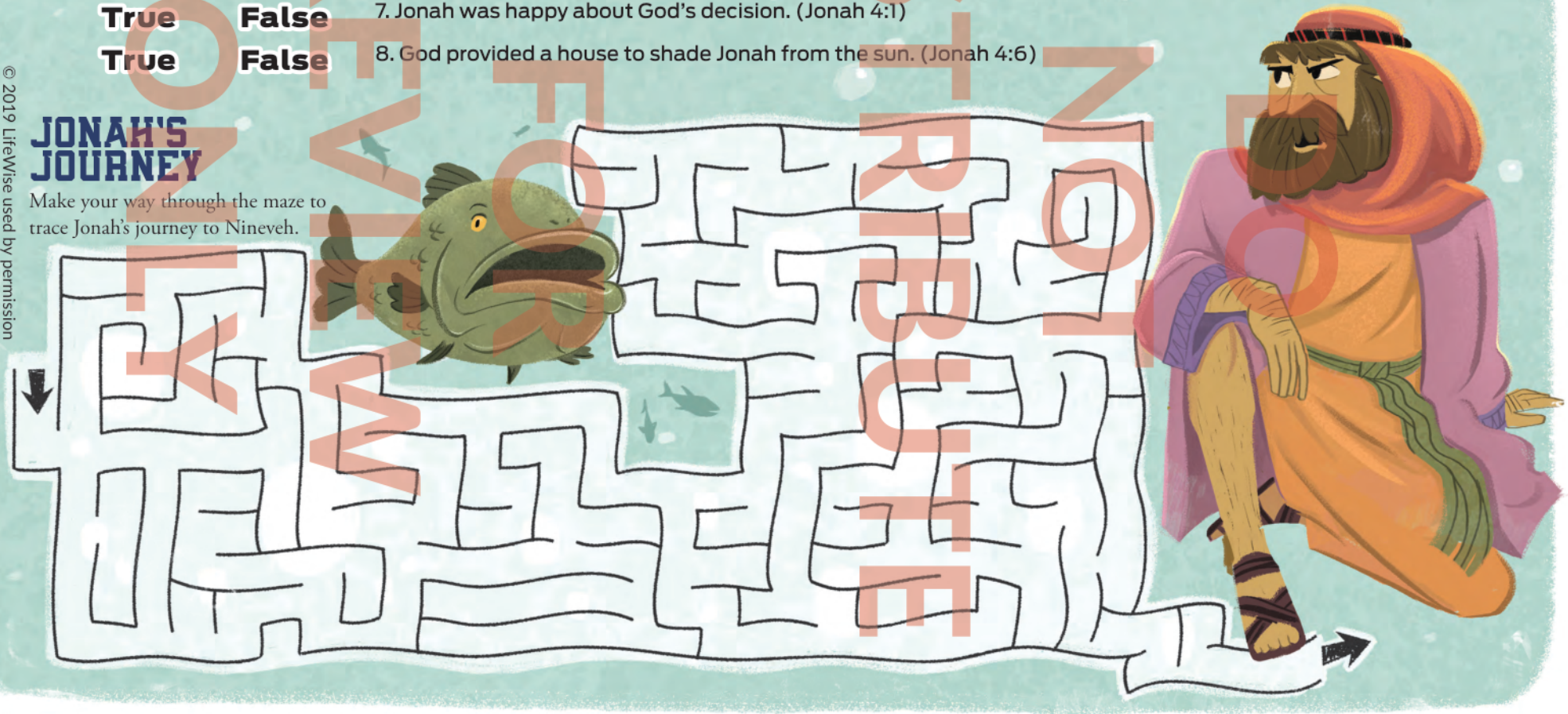
Circle whether each statement is true or false. Check your answers by looking up the Scripture reference in your Bible.



True	False	1. God told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh. (Jonah 1:1-2)
True	False	2. Jonah got on an airplane heading the other way. (Jonah 1:3)
True	False	3. God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah. (Jonah 1:17)
True	False	4. Jonah told the people on Nineveh, "In 80 days, Nineveh will be destroyed!" (Jonah 3:4)
True	False	5. The people of Nineveh ignored Jonah. (Jonah 3:5)
True	False	6. God showed mercy to the Ninevites. (Jonah 3:10)
True	False	7. Jonah was happy about God's decision. (Jonah 4:1)
True	False	8. God provided a house to shade Jonah from the sun. (Jonah 4:6)

JONAH'S JOURNEY

Make your way through the maze to trace Jonah's journey to Nineveh.



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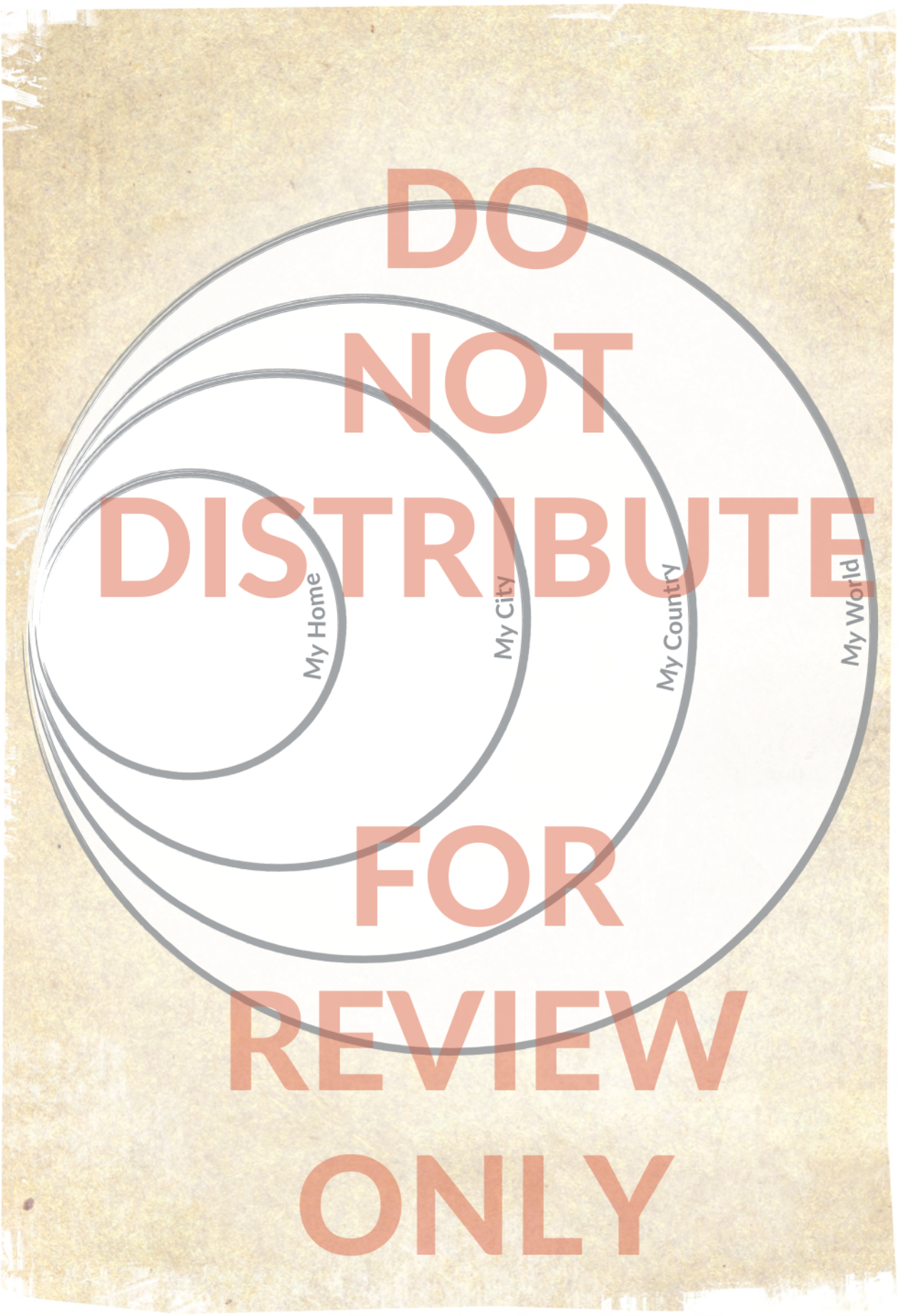
Circles of Compassion

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

L 47 Johah, Prophet to Nineveh | COMPASSION



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RUN, RUN, RUN!

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the animal in each pair that moves faster. Draw boxes around the animals you could outrun.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Joel 2:13 – Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.

BIBLE STORY: JONAH, PROPHET TO NINEVEH

- God sent Jonah to warn Nineveh about their sin.
- Jonah ran the opposite direction.
- God used a giant fish to get Jonah back on track.
- Jonah was angry because God showed mercy to the Ninevites.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do you think Jonah sailed away from Nineveh?
- Why did God show mercy to the Ninevites?
- What ways does God show mercy to us?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Plan a family outing to an aquarium. See who can find the biggest aquatic animal in the tanks. Talk to your kids about how God used a giant fish to save Jonah and give him a second chance to obey. Explain how Jesus saves us so we can obey, too.

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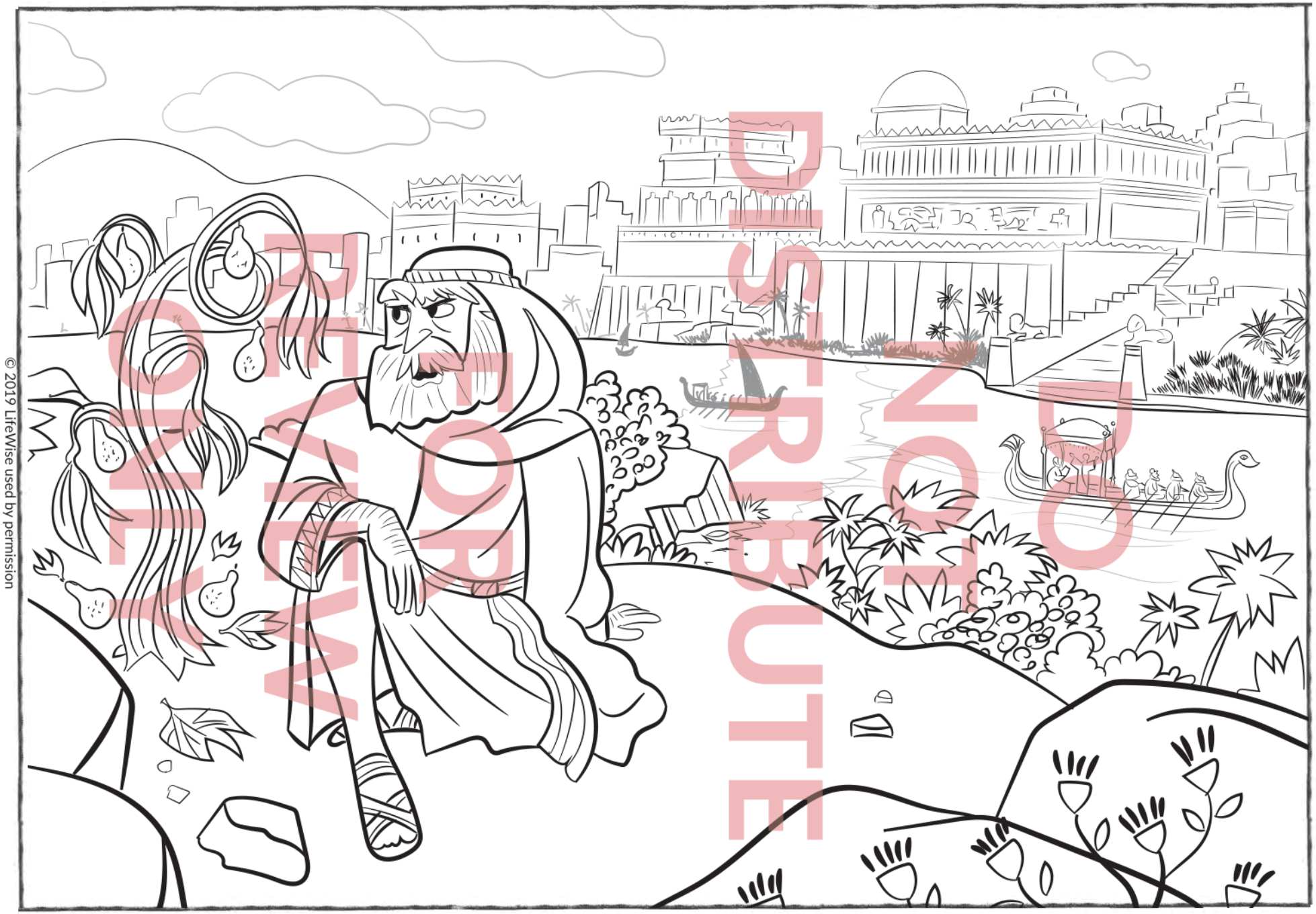

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GOD SHOWED MERCY TO THE NINEVITES.

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LESSON 48: MERCY

JOEL, PROPHET TO JUDAH

Joel 1–3

JOEL, PROPHET TO JUDAH

- Joel 1–3
- Big Picture Q&A: What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.
- Key Passage: Joel 2:13 – Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.

JESUS CONNECTION

Joel warned God's people about the Day of the Lord—a day when God will judge His enemies, free His people and make the world right again. Those who trust in Jesus will escape God's punishment for sin. Jesus was punished in our place, and we share in His righteousness.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

MERCY – Choosing not to punish someone who deserves to be punished.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The prophet Joel spoke to the Southern Kingdom of Judah at a time when the nation faced a crisis. The land had been invaded by locusts; swarms of the insects had devastated the plants. Judah was also affected by a severe drought. Joel looked back on these events and announced that these were not mere natural disasters—the Lord was judging the people for their sin.

In Deuteronomy 28, God told His people, "If you do not obey the Lord your God by carefully following all His commands and statutes I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overtake you ... You will sow much seed in the field but harvest little, because locusts will devour it" (vs. 15, 38). That is exactly what happened.

These disasters were a wake-up call. Joel told the people to repent. He told them to fast. He told them to gather and repent together, crying out to God and asking Him to show them mercy. Then, Joel looked ahead to the future. In essence, he said, "You think this is bad? This is only the beginning!"

God's judgment of Judah was not over. The Day of the Lord was coming, a day when God would show His strength through an invading army. For those who were not right with God, this was bad news. God's power would be against them. So Joel implored them, "Return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster" (2:13).

God had pity on His people and promised to restore them. God would rather forgive His people than punish them. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for sins so people could be right with God. An ultimate Day of the Lord is coming, and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

The last few classes, we have been talking about the prophets. Does anyone remember what a prophet is? (*God's messenger to the people.*) Can anyone name one of the prophets we've talked about and where they were sent? (*Elijah, Israel; Elisha, Israel; Isaiah, Judah; Jonah, Nineveh; Hosea, Israel.*) Jonah wasn't sent to his own people. Instead, he was sent to tell his enemies to repent. Why didn't Jonah want to give God's message to the Ninevites? (*God would not punish them if they repented.*) How did God give Jonah a second chance? (*God sent a large fish to swallow Jonah.*) When Jonah gave the message to the Ninevites, how did they respond? (*They repented and were sorry for their sin against God.*)

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Warning Signs (Older Students)

- Distribute paper, markers and other supplies. Invite the class to design warning signs that no one could miss. Suggest that students write *WARNING* on their papers and use colored tape and bright colors to make the sign stand out. When the class is finished, allow volunteers to share their creations.

- A *warning* is a notice of danger before it happens. Talk about places students might find warning signs. Today's Bible story is about the prophet Joel and the warning he gave to the people of Judah. We will find out today what he said.

Bugs (Older and Younger Students)

- Create a brief slideshow of amazing bugs. Invite the class to talk about their favorite and least favorite bugs. Discuss how bugs can be helpful (ladybugs help protect gardens) or harmful (mosquitoes bite and transmit diseases). In the Bible story we will hear today, the land of Judah was attacked by swarms of locusts. This was a warning from God! Let's learn why God was warning His people.

Locust Sounds (Older and Younger Students)

- Find a picture or short video clip of a swarm of locusts to show your class. Discuss how locusts make sounds and how groups of them can be quite loud. Invite one student to quietly rub the palms of her hands together. Then, add a few students to the first. Invite students to participate until the whole class is quietly rubbing their hands together.

- The prophet Joel talked about locusts that had swarmed over all of Judah. A locust is a kind of grasshopper that travels in huge groups called swarms and eats plants and crops that people grow for food. We'll hear more about them in our story today!

Locust Tag (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, cut a green pool noodle in half. Have the class stand in a circle. Select one student to be the locust. He will stand in the middle of the circle. The locust will hold the two halves on his head like antennae and use them to tag other students. If a student is tagged, she must follow the locust, swarming with him and helping him tag the remaining class. Play until all players become part of the swarm.

- The prophet Joel talked about locusts that had swarmed over all of Judah. A locust is a kind of grasshopper that travels in huge groups called swarms and eats plants and crops that people grow for food. We'll learn more about them in our story today.

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Nature's Warning Signs (Older and Younger Students)

- The American Museum of Natural History states, "In the natural world, many different animal species use bright colors and patterns to advertise the fact that they would make a horrible snack. Certain colors may signal that an animal is poisonous or venomous. It's awesome being yellow. Or red. Or orange, black and white. These warning colors are good for both predators and prey and can be seen in a variety of species, ranging from moths to mammals, across the animal kingdom."
- For a visual aid, show a 2-minute video about animal species at the American Museum of Natural History: https://www.amnh.org/explore/news-blogs/on-exhibit-posts/animal-colors-warning
- God has given these creatures warning signs to save the life of the animal itself and the other animals around it. In today's Bible story God sent a sign to warn the people of Judah. We will find out more about what that sign was in a minute.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5-10 MIN)

Joel 2:13

Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.

Word For Word Relay (Older Students)

- Form two teams. Divide the white board or a large piece of paper in half. Direct each team to get in a single file line on each side of the board. The first player of each team will write the first word of the Bible verse on their side of the board. Then, they will hand the marker to the next student and go to the end of the line. The second student will write the second word, and so on. The first team to complete the verse wins.

Hunt and Order (Younger Students)

- Provide the heart cutouts from LWL 46 (Hosea) or write one or two words from the key passage on a heart cutout for each student. Number the hearts in order and assign each student a number as well. Hide the hearts around the room. Instruct the class to look for the hearts. They should pick up their number and no other. If they find another student's number, they can help them. Once students find all the numbers, they will say their words in order.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What is God like?

A: *God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Joel, Prophet to Judah | Joel 1–3

The people of Judah were in trouble! There was a drought in the land; no rain fell for a long time. The people had ignored God and did not obey His commands. God had told His people many years before what would happen if they turned away from Him, and now these things were actually happening.

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The land of Judah had been attacked by a great swarm of locusts! When one swarm left, another swarm of locusts came. **The locusts ate the plants in Judah.** They destroyed everything in the fields. The apple trees, fig trees and pomegranate trees died.

God gave the prophet Joel a message to tell the people in Judah. Joel said, "Listen up! Has this ever happened to you before?"

No, there had never been a swarm of locusts like this in Judah before. But God had sent locusts before somewhere else. Some of the people might have remembered hearing the stories about God's people in Egypt. **When God led Moses to rescue His people, God sent locusts to punish the Egyptians for their sin. Now, God was judging the people of Judah for their sin.**

Joel told the people to ask God to forgive them. "Gather all the people and cry out to God," Joel said. **"God's day of greater judgment—the Day of the Lord—is coming!" Joel said that for those who do not trust in God, the Day of the Lord will be terrible!**

Next, Joel told the people what that day would be like. God was going to send a strong army to take over Judah. Everything would be burned up by fire. Everyone would be very afraid, and no one would be able to survive!

"Turn back to God before it is too late!" Joel said. "God is gracious and merciful. He does not get angry easily. **God would rather forgive you than punish you.** Turn from your sin. Maybe God will bless you!"

Now God's message gave them hope for the future. "I will send rain," God promised. "The plants will grow, and the animals will have water to drink. **Then, I will give My Spirit to everyone. Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

"I will bring Judah and Jerusalem back together, but a final day of judgment is coming. I will judge those who turn away from Me. I will punish the enemies of My people. **You will know that I am your God. I will forgive those who turn from their sin, and I will be with My people forever."**

JESUS CONNECTION

Joel warned God's people about the Day of the Lord—a day when God will judge His enemies, free His people and make the world right again. Those who trust in Jesus will escape God's punishment for sin. Jesus was punished in our place, and we share in His righteousness.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

MERCY – Choosing not to punish someone who deserves to be punished.

Living LifeWise

Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we can receive God's mercy.

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Character Connection

To owe someone means there is a debt to be paid. Sometimes it's little, like replacing my friend's pencil that I broke. Sometimes it's big, like having to pay back a loan to the bank. Sometimes, it's because we've done something bad and now we have to face the punishment. We need to make it right.

Because of sin, we all have a debt to God. We owe Him because He is perfectly holy, and our sins keep us from Him. But we cannot make that debt right. None of us can ever be good enough to pay the sin-debt that we owe to God. That's why Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is such good news. He paid our debt. He covered what we owe. And when we put our trust in Him, God shows us mercy. He withholds the punishment we deserve because Jesus paid it for us.

That kind of mercy changes us. It fills us with gratitude to God. It frees us from being afraid of punishment. It motivates us to live God's way. It's something we want to share with others. God helps us to show His mercy to others.

How could you show mercy in these situations by not punishing someone who deserved it?

- Your sister lost your favorite toy or piece of clothing.
- Your aunt promised you a fun day and then canceled at the last minute.
- A classmate made some bad choices and the whole class had to miss time at recess.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Why were the people in the land of Judah in trouble?**

  There was a drought, Joel 1:20

- **What insect invaded Judah?**

  Locusts, Joel 1:4

- **What did Joel tell the people of Judah to do?**

  To ask God to forgive them, Joel 1:13–14

- **What day did Joel say was coming?**

  God's day of greater judgment—the Day of the Lord, Joel 2:1

- **What is God like?**

  God is slow to anger, merciful and loving, Joel 2:13

- **What did Joel say would happen to the enemies of God's people?**

  God will judge those who turn away from Him and punish His people's enemies, Joel 3:2, 19

- **What did God promise to give to His people?**

  His Spirit, Joel 2:28

- **Who will be saved?**

  Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, Joel 2:32

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

A Changed Heart (Older Students)

- Provide scissors and construction paper. Guide students to cut out a heart shape.

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- Read Joel 2:11–13 aloud. God warned His people to repent before the Day of the Lord. He wanted the people to change their hearts and return to Him. God wants us to have a heart for Him, to love Him more than anything else. He wants us to tear away anything that does not honor Him, that we might be tempted to love more than God (*video games, sports, friends, etc.*). God loves us and wants us to return to Him.

- Provide tissue paper and invite students to think about tearing away those things that separate us from God as they tear the tissue paper into small pieces and glue the pieces to their heart shapes. When the glue dries, allow students to use markers to write Joel 2:13 on the back of their hearts.

Good News and Bad News (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, print and cut out the Good News, Bad News cards:
  - **Joel 1:6–7 –** The land of Judah will be invaded by a fierce enemy. (*Bad*)
  - **Joel 1:10–12 –** The enemy will ruin the land and crops. (*Bad*)
  - **Joel 1:15–16 –** There will be no more food or happiness. (*Bad*)
  - **Joel 2:1–2 –** The day of destruction is close. (*Bad*)
  - **Joel 2:10–11 –** Darkness will come and God will bring a great army. (*Bad*)
  - **Joel 2:12–13 –** If the people repent, God may have mercy on them. (*Good*)
  - **Joel 2:18–19 –** God will forgive them and give them food. (*Good*)
  - **Joel 2:21–24 –** God will restore the land. (*Good*)
  - **Joel 2:25–27 –** God will repay the people for the years of plague by giving good things. (*Good*)
  - **Joel 2:32 –** Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (*Good*)
  - **Joel 2:28 –** God will pour out His Spirit on all people. (*Good*)

- Remind the class that the book of Joel is in the Minor Prophets in the Old Testament. It follows the books of Daniel and Hosea. Divide the white board or focal wall in half. Label one side *BAD NEWS* and the other side *GOOD NEWS*. Call for older students to read each passage aloud (in younger classes, the teacher or adult volunteers should read the passages) and have students decide if it describes good news or bad news. Invite the students to tape each card in the appropriate column.

- God warned His people to repent before the Day of the Lord. Joel's message from God contained bad news, but it also contained promises for those who trust in the Lord. Joel warned God's people about the Day of the Lord—a day when God will judge His enemies, free His people and make the world right again. Those who trust in Jesus will escape God's punishment for sin. Jesus was punished in our place, and instead we share in His righteousness.

Thief In the Night (Older and Younger Students)

- Place a blindfold on a player sitting on the floor. Heap a pile of suckers, fake coins or other "treasure" in front of the player, and give him or her a rolled-up newspaper or magazine to use to guard their treasure pile. The other players will form a circle around the seated player. Each player must try to quietly steal from the treasure pile without getting tagged by the blindfolded player. When the blindfolded player suspects someone is trying to take their stash, they call out, "Thief, thief!" and have to tag the player trying to steal from them. The blindfolded player must remain seated. If a player gets tagged, they must return the treasure to the pile. If they are not tagged, they can keep what they get. The winner is the person who has the most treasure! If no one gets

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any treasure before they are tagged, the blindfolded player is the winner. Make sure everyone gets a piece of treasure after the game is over.

- The Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 that "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." We will not expect it. God wants us to accept Jesus as our Savior, turn away from sin and listen carefully to His Word so we will be ready when Jesus returns.

Rend Your Heart (Younger Students)

- Distribute a piece of paper to each student and tell them to draw a large heart on the page. Depending on individual skill level, you may need to draw the heart. Give each student a half sheet of red tissue paper. Invite the children to tear the tissue paper into bits and glue the bits to the heart shape on their paper. Help them write the big picture question and answer at the bottom of the paper. (*What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.*) Then, read aloud Joel 2:13 from your Bible.

- God wanted the people to have broken hearts about their sin and turn back to Him. God warned His people to repent before the Day of the Lord. God's love came to us in Jesus, who lived perfectly and died in our place. God was willing to send His Son to save us! Instead of punishing us, He showed His grace and mercy.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Coming Soon (Older Students)

- How Long Until … ? (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, we come before You so thankful for Your mercy toward us. Thank You for being a patient and compassionate God who wants to forgive. Thank You for Jesus, who takes away our sin. Give us a sense of urgency to share the gospel with others so they too may find forgiveness and eternal life. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write a short message you could tell a friend who doesn't know the gospel, the good news about Jesus.

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What did Joel say the Day of the Lord would be like?
- What did God promise to do for the people of Judah?
- What promises has God given us for our future? (See John 10:28; 14:2-3.)

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FOLD



JOEL, PROPHET TO JUDAH

JOEL 1–3

MAIN POINT: GOD WARNED HIS PEOPLE TO REPENT BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD.

The people of Judah were in trouble! There was a drought in the land; no rain fell for a long time. The people had ignored God and did not obey His commands. The land of Judah had been attacked by a great swarm of locusts! The locusts ate the plants in Judah.

God gave the prophet Joel a message to tell the people in Judah. Joel said, "Listen up! Has this ever happened to you before?"

No, there had never been a swarm of locusts like this in Judah before. But God had sent locusts before somewhere else. When God led Moses to rescue His people, God sent locusts to punish the Egyptians for their sin. Now God was judging the people of Judah for their sin.

Joel told the people to ask God to forgive them. "God's day of greater judgment—the Day of the Lord—is coming!" Joel said that for those who do not trust in God, the Day of the Lord will be terrible!

Next, Joel told the people what that day would be like. God was going to send a strong army to take over Judah.

"Turn back to God before it is too late!" Joel said. "God is gracious and merciful. God would rather forgive you than punish you."

Now God's message gave them hope for the future. "I will send rain," God promised. "Then I will give My Spirit to everyone. Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

"You will know that I am your God. I will forgive those who turn from their sin, and I will be with My people forever."

Jesus Connection: *Joel warned God's people about the Day of the Lord—a day when God will judge His enemies, free His people and make the world right again. Those who trust in Jesus will escape God's punishment for sin. Jesus was punished in our place, and we share in His righteousness.*

Key Passage: *Joel 2:13 – Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.*

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COMING SOON!

Write the date when you think each event will happen.

You will drive yourself to school. _____

You will get your first job. _____

You will get married. _____

People will travel to Mars. _____

Jesus will return. _____

LOCUST FOCUS

Unscramble the words and phrases on the locusts to form the main point of the story of Joel.

_____

_____

_____

_____.



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HOW LONG UNTIL ... ?

INSTRUCTIONS: Imagine it is the circled date. Count how many days until the given holiday, and write the numbers in the blanks.



How many days until Christmas? ☐



How many days until Independence Day? ☐



How many days until Valentine's Day? ☐



How many days until St. Patrick's Day? ☐

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KEY PASSAGE:
Joel 2:13 – Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful and loving.

BIBLE STORY: JOEL, PROPHET TO JUDAH
- Judah had been living in sin.
- God sent locusts to get His people's attention.
- Joel warned about the Day of the Lord.
- God warned His people to repent before the Day of the Lord.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Why did God want His people to repent before the Day of the Lord?
- How can we be prepared for the Day of the Lord?
- Will the Day of the Lord be scary for people who trust in Jesus? Why not?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Go online to find instructions to make a sundial. Work with your family to create one, and use it to time how long it takes for something to occur. Talk to your kids about why we wait eagerly for Christ to return.

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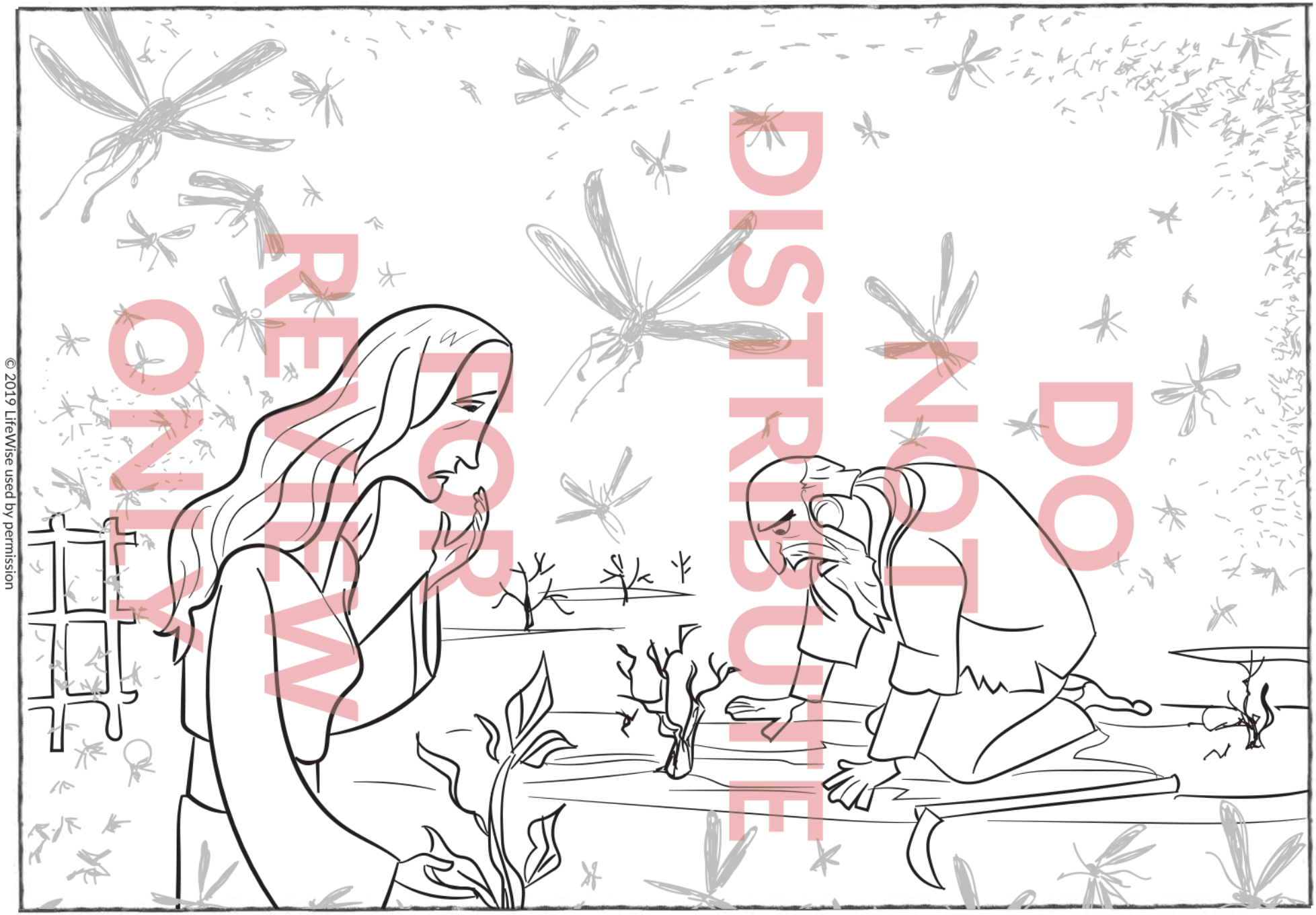

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GOD WARNED HIS PEOPLE TO REPENT BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD.

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JOEL 1:6–7

THE LAND OF JUDAH WILL BE INVADED BY A FIERCE ENEMY.

JOEL 1:10–12

THE ENEMY WILL RUIN THE LAND AND CROPS.

JOEL 1:15–16

THERE WILL BE NO MORE FOOD OR HAPPINESS.

JOEL 2:1–2

THE DAY OF DESTRUCTION IS CLOSE.

JOEL 2:10–11

DARKNESS WILL COME AND GOD WILL BRING A GREAT ARMY.

JOEL 2:12–13

IF THE PEOPLE REPENT, GOD MAY HAVE MERCY ON THEM.

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JOEL 2:18–19
GOD WILL FORGIVE THEM AND GIVE THEM FOOD.

JOEL 2:21–24
GOD WILL RESTORE THE LAND.

JOEL 2:25–27
GOD WILL REPAY THE PEOPLE FOR THE YEARS OF PLAGUES BY GIVING GOOD THINGS.

JOEL 2:32
EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.

JOEL 2:28
GOD WILL POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT ON ALL PEOPLE.

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