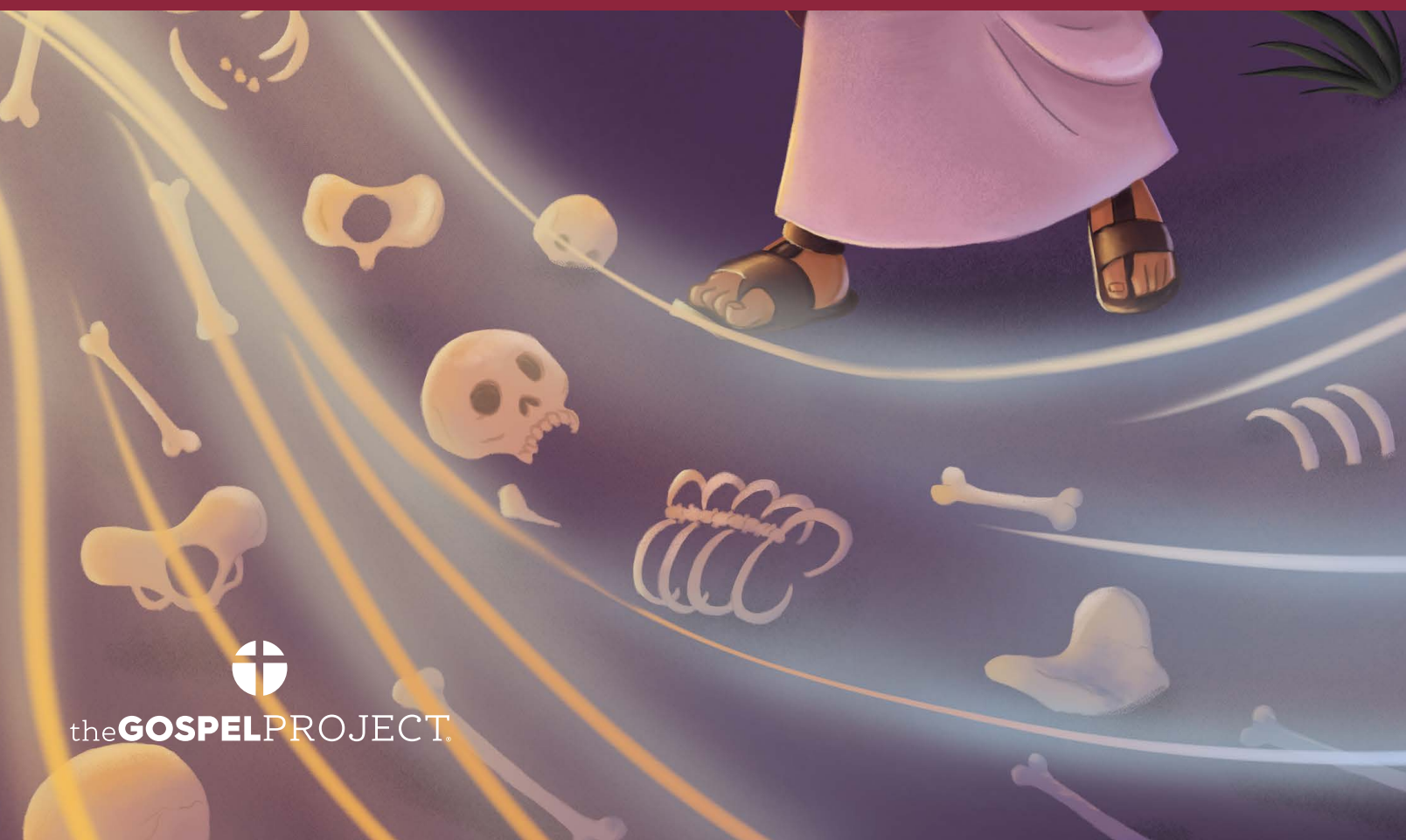


05

DIVISION AND DEFIANCE



OLDER KIDS **LEADER GUIDE**



the **GOSPEL**PROJECT.



**THE GOSPEL PROJECT FOR KIDS:
OLDER KIDS LEADER GUIDE**
VOLUME 5 • DIVISION AND DEFIANCE

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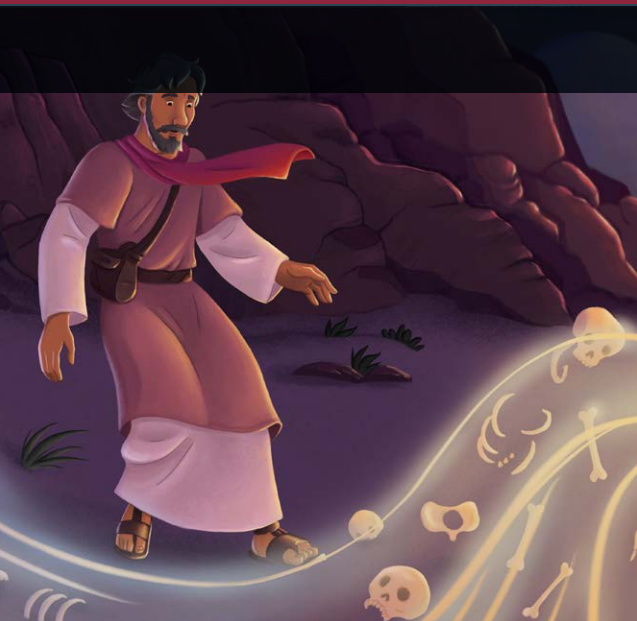
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The Gospel Project for Kids provides bonus Christmas and Easter sessions. These sessions can be accessed through Ministry Grid or gospelproject.com/additionalresources.



SESSION AT A GLANCE



PREPARE

- **Read the Leader Bible Study and Bible story**, including the Christ Connection. For additional help for preparing, visit www.gospelproject.com.
- **Familiarize yourself with the session content**, noting which activity options will work best in your context.
- **Gather and prepare session supplies**, including posters, videos, and activity printables as needed.
- **Contact families and pray for your kids** during the week.



WELCOME

- **Greet kids** as they arrive, **build relationships**, and **help new kids** connect to the group.
- Guide kids to complete the **Activity Page**, and choose one of the **Session Starter Activities** to introduce this week's story.



LEARN

- **Help kids understand the Bible story** and how it relates to God's big story of Scripture. During this portion of the session, focus on what the kids should believe—what God wants our kids to know about the Bible story, Big Picture Question and Answer, and Key Passage.



LOVE

- **Help kids respond appropriately to the Bible story** by growing in their love for God and considering how to apply it to their own lives. During this portion of the session, focus on what the kids should feel—how God wants our kids to respond based on what they believe.



LIVE

- **Help kids find ways to live on mission** and make much of God in response to the Bible story. During this portion of the session, focus on what the kids should do—how God wants our kids to be different based on what they know about God and their growing love for Him.

NOTABLE FEATURES

Suggested Times

Each session is designed to be completed in 60–75 minutes but can be shortened or lengthened as needed.

Story Points

Each session will include a story point for preschoolers and kids that reinforces a key emphasis from the Bible story. Story points will provide a simple, memorable truth for preschoolers and kids to take away from teaching time.

Missions

The missions content is designed to help kids understand God’s ongoing mission to rescue sinners around the world. This content can be customized or replaced with your church’s own missions efforts if desired.

Big Picture Questions and Answers

Big picture questions and answers are designed to help preschoolers and kids learn important doctrines of the Christian faith. Each unit contains a big picture question and answer to help kids understand theological concepts organized around six overarching categories: God, people, Jesus, the Bible, the church, and the Christian life.

Make It Fit

Each session provides flexibility for customization based on the needs and structure of your kids ministry. The Learn portion contains most, or all, of the videos and music, making it ideal for a large group gathering with the Welcome, Love, and Live portions working well for small groups. Alternatively, the entire session can be completed in small groups or as one large group.

QUICK REFERENCE

Here is where you will be able to find all of the resources you will need:

	Additional Resources	Ministry Starter Kit			Digital Subscription
	GospelProject.com	DVD	Files Disc	Music CD	
Activity Printables	✓		✓		✓
Posters			✓		✓
Videos		✓	✓		✓
Music				✓	✓
Activity Pages	Purchase at www.gospelproject.com				✓
Big Picture Cards	Purchase at www.gospelproject.com				✓



VOLUME 5 - DIVISION AND DEFIANCE

The story of the divided kingdom reveals the many warnings God’s people received—warnings to seek repentance from their sinful, idolatrous ways and turn to God. Because God is holy, good, and loving, He promised a new covenant for His people: one forever written on their hearts.

UNIT 13: A TROUBLED KINGDOM

Solomon’s unfaithfulness to God led to a divided and troubled kingdom. Rather than seek the Lord wholeheartedly, the people of Israel and Judah turned to worship worthless idols. Yet, God did not forsake His people. Through the prophet Elijah, God demonstrated His presence, power, and preeminence as the one true God.

How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

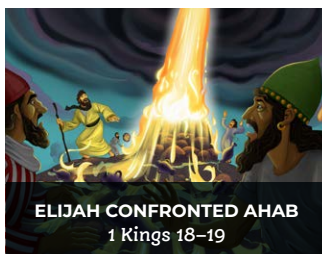
SESSION 1



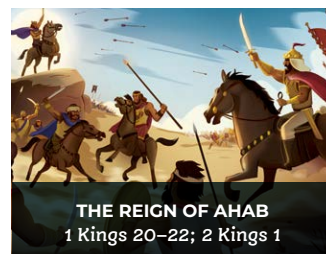
SESSION 2



SESSION 3



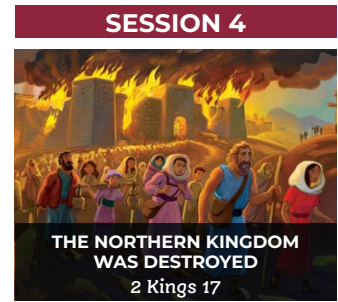
SESSION 4



UNIT 14: THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

Although the Northern Kingdom continued to worship idols, God provided prophets to warn His people—and even foreign nations—to turn away from their sin. While Nineveh repented and was spared God’s judgment, the nation of Israel refused to worship God alone. As a result, God judged Israel’s idolatrous sin by allowing the nation of Assyria to destroy the Northern Kingdom.

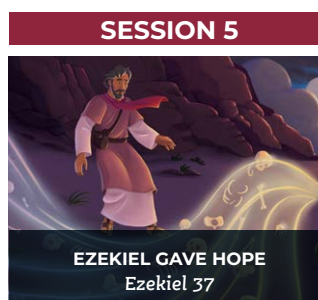
Why do Christians continue to sin? Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.



UNIT 15: THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

The Southern Kingdom of Judah experienced the reign of both good and evil kings. Yet, the people’s allegiance was divided between the worship of God and the idols of foreign nations. God sent prophets to warn the people to turn back to Him, but they did not listen. God disciplined His people by sending them into captivity in Babylon but promised they would one day return home.

What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.



UNIT 13 | SESSION 1

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

1 KINGS 11-13



KEY PASSAGE: 1 Kings 8:60

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Rehoboam rejected good advice, and his foolish pride led to a divided kingdom. Jesus, the truly wise King, unites all who trust in Him and brings them into His kingdom forever.

STORY POINT: Rehoboam's foolish sin divided the kingdom.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

While King Solomon was known for his wisdom, he did not leave his kingdom better than he found it, for when he was old, his heart turned to other gods (1 Kings 11:4). In fact, the kingdom would now be divided because of his unfaithfulness to God. After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king and was confronted with a request from the people to lighten their labor. Rehoboam sought counsel from those who served with his father, and he also asked a group of his peers for advice.

King Rehoboam received wise counsel but then chose to ignore it. The elders who served with his father advised Rehoboam to be a servant to the people and speak kindly to them. Surely this approach would have established trust. Rehoboam, however, disregarded the elders' input and chose to listen to a young group of friends instead. Their suggestion was to tell the people that Rehoboam was even more powerful than Solomon and would make their lives more difficult.

The people didn't appreciate their new king's aggressive posture toward them, and they rebelled against him. Rehoboam's selfish pride resulted in all of Israel except for those living in the cities of Judah to seek Jeroboam as their king. The kingdom was divided, just as God said it would happen.

Rehoboam sought to be served instead of choosing to serve the people. True leadership, however, stems from service. Jesus willingly chose to serve us while we were still far from Him. As Romans 5:8 tells us, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Have you ever completely disregarded sound wisdom or godly advice? Who we listen to matters. As you prepare to teach, pray for God to help you listen to the wise counsel of His Holy Spirit. Remind kids that we can choose to follow God's ways through faith in Jesus. Pray for boys and girls to know the one true God and to look to Christ as the ultimate example of true, selfless leadership.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "The Other Half" activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- bowls of pom-poms in a variety of colors, 1 per group



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- "Twelve Tribes Cards" printables, 4 per pair

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- index cards, 10

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "A Divided Kingdom" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "The Kingdom Divided" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Old Testament Kingdoms Map (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 13, Session 1" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Send Columbus" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- sticky notes



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What are some characteristics of a good leader? What are some characteristics you would not want in a leader? Why are good leaders important?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “The Other Half” activity page.

SAY “In today’s story, we will learn how Solomon’s unfaithfulness to God and **REHOBOAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.**”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: WHAT’S YOUR ADVICE?



Form kids into five groups. Then provide each group with a piece of paper and a pen. Tell kids that you will give them a scenario, and they must provide advice for each scenario. Kids in each group can work together to write down a response. Assign each group one of the following scenarios:

- Someone is being bullied.
- A friend doesn’t want to do their homework.
- A classmate missed the bus to take her home from school.
- A friend doesn’t want to tell his parents about breaking their TV remote.
- Someone only wants to eat sweets.

SAY “Sometimes we may not know the best choice to make, and we need to seek out the advice of others. But we must be careful that the advice we take is good, right, and pleases God. Today, we will learn how Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, needed advice. Let’s get ready to hear who he listened to and if the advice was good or bad.”

OPTION 2: DIVIDE IT UP



Form kids into groups of three or four. Provide each group with a bowl of pom-poms in a variety of colors. On your start, challenge kids to divide up the pom-poms according to their colors, placing each color in its own pile. The last group to finish is out. Repeat, until only one team remains.

SAY “Today, we will learn how the kingdom of God’s people was divided into two kingdoms. We’ll see how **REHOBOAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** As we hear our story, we can be reminded that God is good to punish sin. But we’ll also see how God is kind and gracious to sinners. Even though our own sin separates us from God, He is merciful to provide the way for us to be made right with Him through faith in Jesus.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so glad you’re here to study a story from the Bible. The Bible is full of true stories that help us know God and His plan to save people from sin. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to 1 Kings.]

We’ve learned how Solomon, King David’s son, was a wise king. But Solomon also sinned. He didn’t obey God’s commands, and his heart was turned to worship idols (1 Kings 11:1-4). Because of this, God said He would tear Solomon’s kingdom away from him and give it to his servant (1 Kings 11:11-13). But God also said He would not do this while Solomon was alive. Today, we will see how God’s words came true. After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king. Through our story, we’ll learn how **REHOBAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM**. [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and prepare our hearts to hear God’s Word: ‘Dear God, thank You for Your Word. Please help our hearts be open to receive Your truth and obey Your commands by faith. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ As we study the Bible, we learn big truths about God, people, and the world. Our big picture questions and answers help us learn these truths. Our big picture question is, **How many gods are there?** The answer is, **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.**

In our story today, we will see that King Rehoboam was prideful. Pride can lead us to believe that we are deserving of praise instead of God. But only God deserves worship. As we learn about Rehoboam, we will see how he was not a good king. Jesus is the only perfect King. He came to serve people by laying down His life for our sins. He is alone is the one true God who deserves our worship. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ God’s people, the Israelites, wanted a king. So, God appointed kings to rule over His people. We’ve learned about King Saul, King David, and King Solomon. King David followed God and ruled over God’s people. David’s son, Solomon, followed God at the beginning of his reign but eventually his heart was turned away from following God wholeheartedly. Today, we will see how Rehoboam, King Solomon’s son, sinned and how his sin led to the division of the kingdom. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Kings 11–13. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Kingdom Divided.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

“**Solomon, the King of Israel, started out following God wholeheartedly, but later his heart was turned away from God.** He was unfaithful to God by worshipping idols. **The Lord was angry with him and said, “Since you have not kept my covenant and laws, I will tear your kingdom in two. One tribe will be given to your son, and the rest of Israel will follow another king.”** Later, a servant of King Solomon named Jeroboam was walking down the road when a prophet of the Lord met him. The prophet told Jeroboam that he would be the new king. Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to Egypt, where he remained until Solomon’s death.

After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam (ree huh BOH uhm) became the new king. Jeroboam (jer uh BOH uhm) and the people of Israel came to Rehoboam and said, “Your father Solomon was a very harsh king. We are willing to follow you as our king, if you will be less harsh with us.”

Rehoboam replied, “Come back in three days, and I will give you an answer to your request.” Then Rehoboam brought together the elders who had served his father Solomon. The elders gave Rehoboam very good advice: “Be a servant to the people, and speak kind words to them, and they will be your servants forever.”

Rehoboam did not like what the elders said and rejected their advice. He asked some young men he had grown up with what he should do. These young men said, “Show the people you are in charge! Tell them you are far more powerful than your father Solomon, and their lives will be much harder under your rule.”

When three days had passed, **Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam to hear his reply. He told them, “My father made your work difficult, but I will make your work even more difficult. My father disciplined you; I will discipline you even further.”**

When the people heard Rehoboam’s reply, they rebelled against him. All the tribes of Israel, except for the tribe of Judah, came together and made Jeroboam their king. **Because of Rehoboam’s foolish and prideful sin, the people of God were now divided into two nations. King Rehoboam was king over Judah, and King Jeroboam was king over Israel.**

Christ Connection: Rehoboam rejected good advice, and his foolish pride led to a divided kingdom. Jesus, the truly wise King, unites all who trust in Him and brings them into His kingdom forever. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Invite kids to give a thumbs up when they hear good advice or a thumbs down when they hear bad advice.

Display a Map: Display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map and point to the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Sin always has consequences. What sin did Solomon commit and what was the consequence? [Allow responses.] Solomon sinned against God by not following Him with all of his heart. Solomon worshiped idols and turned away from God. Because of Solomon’s sin, God said the kingdom would be divided. Yet, God also promised that He would not destroy the kingdom because of the promise He made to David: someone from David’s family would always sit on the throne.

Jeroboam and the people were concerned that Rehoboam would be harsh like Solomon, giving them hard labor. What advice did the elders give King Rehoboam? Look at 1 Kings 12:7. [Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 12:7.] They asked him to be a servant-king, someone who would care for the people and speak kindly to them. However, Rehoboam rejected the good advice of the elders and chose to listen to the foolish advice of his friends. Rehoboam wanted to show his power and demand that the people serve him.

What happened because of Rehoboam’s sin? Look at 1 Kings 12:16-17. [Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 12:16-17.] **REHOBAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** The kingdom was divided into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Rehoboam reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah, with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Jeroboam ruled over the Northern Kingdom with the tribes of Asher, Dan, Ephraim, Gad, Issachar, Manasseh, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, and Zebulun.

Rehoboam refused to follow the Lord, and his sin led to God’s words to Solomon being fulfilled. Rehoboam rejected good advice, and his foolish pride led to a divided kingdom. Jesus, the truly wise King, unites all who trust in Him and brings them into His kingdom forever. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Unlike Rehoboam, Jesus shows us what it looks like to be a servant King. Even though Jesus is the King of everyone, He became a man and came to earth to serve people by laying down His life for their sin. Would you like to know more about what it means to trust in Jesus? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 13, Session 1” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. If God knows what we are going to do, why does He give us a choice?
2. How does God help us make wise choices that honor Him?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ Columbus, Ohio, is in the Midwest region of the United States and is home to many college students. But Columbus is also home to many people who have moved there from around the world. Many people who live in Columbus need to hear the good news about Jesus. Only 1 out of 10 people in Columbus are believers. ”

Play the video. Tell kids that the number of churches in Columbus, Ohio, has grown in recent years but more churches are needed to help share the gospel. Pray for the missionaries working in Columbus, Ohio. Pray for more churches to partner with Columbus’ local churches.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Kings 8:60 together.

SAY “ There is no one like our God! Only He is worthy of our worship. ”

Form kids into pairs. Then give each pair a piece of paper, a pen, and some sticky notes. Direct pairs to write the key passage on their paper. Lead one kid from each pair to hold up the paper and lead the other kid to say the key passage aloud. Then direct the kid holding the paper to place a sticky note over one of the words. The other kid will then repeat the key passage with the word covered. Repeat, covering more words. Then invite kids to switch roles.

Lead kids to sing “There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Thank You, Lord, for being the perfect King who loves and cares for Your children. Help us worship You with all of our hearts. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Kings 12. Explain that the books of 1 and 2 Kings record the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah.

Point to the Northern (E5) and Southern (I4) Kingdoms on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Kings 12:15 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “Rehoboam’s sin led to a divided and troubled kingdom but none of this took God by surprise. In fact, it was all part of God’s plan. Even though Rehoboam chose to sin against God and refused to serve his people, God would fulfill His purposes. A divided kingdom and an evil king could not mess up God’s good plan. God would keep His promise to David, and someone from David’s family would always sit on the throne.

We know that God’s promise was fulfilled in Jesus. Even though God’s people sinned, He still kept His promise to send the Savior into the world through the line of David. Now, through faith in Jesus, we are invited to live in God’s kingdom forever.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Why did Rehoboam reject the elders’ good advice?”

Discuss how Rehoboam wanted to display his power as king. He thought that he was too important to serve the people in his kingdom. Rehoboam’s pride and sin caused the people to rebel against his leadership. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 16:18.)

SAY “How can our hearts be ‘divided’? Why does God deserve all our worship?”

Remind kids that King Solomon worshiped God and the idols of other nations. Discuss how we might try to follow God while also having hearts that desire to be popular, gain riches, or idolize sports. Share how God is worthy of all worship because He is the one true God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:6-11.)

SAY “Why is it important that Christ followers have a servant-like attitude?”

Tell kids that Jesus came to serve others and give His life on the cross to save people from sin. When we serve and love others, we display Jesus’ love to those around us. Followers of Jesus recognize His love for them, and out of gratitude, desire to display that same love to others. Share how serving others and putting others first glorifies God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Col. 3:17.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: GO FISH FOR TWELVE TRIBES

Print off four “Twelve Tribes Cards” printables for each pair of kids. Form kids into pairs and distribute scissors to each pair. Invite kids to cut out all 48 cards. Then lead kids to play a game of “Go Fish.” Direct kids to shuffle the cards and pass out four cards each. Kids will take turns asking their partner if he or she has any cards from a tribe they hold. Kids cannot ask for a card they are not holding. If their partner does not have the card, he or she says “Go Fish,” and the kid must draw from the deck. Kids will try to collect as many pairs of tribes as they can. The kid with the most pairs wins.

(Note: The tribe of Levi is not included because they did not have any land in the Northern or Southern Kingdoms.)

SAY “ The twelve tribes of Israel were once united under one king, but **REHOBOAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM**. Jesus, the truly wise King, unites all who trust in Him and brings them into His kingdom forever. ”

OPTION 2: PRIDE OR HUMILITY?



Write the following Bible references on index cards: Proverbs 21:4; Job 35:12; Psalm 10:3-4; Isaiah 13:11; 1 John 2:16; James 4:10; Job 22:29; Psalm 22:26; Matthew 5:5; Philippians 2:7-9. Form kids into 10 groups and distribute an index card to each group.

Lead groups to look up the Bible reference and read it together. Challenge groups to determine if the verse speaks about those who are prideful or those who are humble. Then invite groups to switch cards with another group. Challenge groups to again determine who the verse is speaking to. Invite kids to share what they learned about the verses they read.

SAY “ Rehoboam’s pride was his downfall. God will punish those who are proud and do not seek Him. But Jesus showed us what it looks like to be humble. He laid down His life to serve others and save them from sin, and God exalted Him. Believers can follow the example of Jesus by humbly serving others. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for Jesus, who makes us right with God and takes away our sin. As time allows, lead kids to complete “A Divided Kingdom” on the activity page.

ISRAEL'S EVIL KINGS

1 KINGS 14-15; 2 CHRONICLES 12-13



KEY PASSAGE: 1 Kings 8:60

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The first kings of Israel led the people to disobey God and to worship idols. Israel's kings suffered the consequences of their sin. We all sin when we disobey God and worship other things. Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sin and bring us back to God.

STORY POINT: Israel's kings did evil in God's sight and worshiped idols.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

When we hear the word idolatry, we might think about the golden calf in Exodus 32. While today's story includes King Jeroboam crafting two physical golden calves, it points to the invisible idolatry of the heart. What is idolatry? Idolatry is a sin in which we love and value something else above God.

Rehoboam had been cruel to God's people, and because of his harsh treatment, ten tribes rejected him as king and sought out Jeroboam to be king of Israel. Rehoboam's domain in Judah was smaller but held an important status because it was the location of the temple.

Jeroboam feared the people would eventually abandon him and return to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. Taking matters into his own hands, Jeroboam led the people to break the law of Moses and worship two golden calves. God was angry with Jeroboam and sent the prophet Ahijah to tell Jeroboam that he had behaved wickedly, that God was going to bring disaster upon his house, and that there would be a new king over Israel.

After Jeroboam, Israel had other evil kings—Nadab and Baasha. Like Jeroboam, they led Israel to turn away from God and worship idols. All three of these kings were eventually judged for their sin.

The first three kings of Israel led the people to disobey God. We all sin by disobeying God. Like Israel's kings, we may turn to other things above the Lord. Is there anything that has become an idol in your heart? As you prepare this week, remember the gift of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that paid the price of our sin. Likewise, remind kids that Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sinful idolatry and bring us back to God. Pray for boys and girls to grasp the weight of our sinful choices to worship other things and the depth of Christ's love to provide salvation.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "What's Idolatry?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- magnets, 1 per group
- magnetic items, 1 per group
- paper plates, 1 per group

Session Starter (Option 2)

- small paper cup
- large, heavy books



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- index cards, 1 per kid

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Walk In Obedience" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Israel's Evil Kings" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- dry erase board and marker (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 13, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Aaron Taylor and Ohio Map Photos" printable

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- index cards



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “ When was a time someone may have asked you to do something you knew was wrong? How did you respond? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “What’s Idolatry?” activity page.

SAY “ When you unscrambled the words, you learned that idolatry is a sin of the heart where someone loves and values something more than God. Today, we will see that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS.** ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: PULLED TOWARD SIN

Form kids into groups of three or four. Distribute a paper plate, a magnet, a pen, and a magnetic object (like a screw or paperclip) to each group. Lead groups to draw a path on their plate, any direction or length they want. Then guide kids to take turns placing the magnetic object at the start of the path. Lead kids to hold the magnet under the plate and move the magnet so that the object follows the path. Allow all kids to have a turn, then lead groups to switch plates and try again. Repeat as time allows.

SAY “ The Bible tells us that our hearts are deceitful and wicked. Like these magnetic paths, we are naturally pulled toward sin and follow the path of our sinful desires. Today, we will see how God’s people followed their sinful desires. **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS.** But with Jesus there is good news! Jesus can change our hearts to follow His ways where we experience His forgiveness, goodness, and love. ”

OPTION 2: CRUSHED UNDER PRIDE



Perform a demonstration to help kids see the effects of pride. Place a small paper cup on a table. Tell kids the cup represents a person. Begin placing large, heavy books one at a time on top of the cup. Tell the kids the books are “pride.” Eventually, the cup will collapse and be crushed by the weight of the books. Discuss how pride always leads to destruction because pride sets itself up against the one true God.

SAY “ Today, we will see how Israel’s evil kings led God’s people to sin by worshiping idols. The kings were prideful and led the people to turn away from God because of their own pride. They wanted people to follow them and their ways. But there is only one true God who is worthy of our worship and devotion. Following idols or the ways of this world will only lead to ruin. But when we follow God and His Son, Jesus, we find true happiness and life. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name]. I’m looking forward to studying the Bible together. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to 1 Kings.]

Last week, we saw how the kingdom of God’s people was divided into the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom was called Israel, and the Southern Kingdom was called Judah. Today, we will learn more about the kings of Israel. We’ll see that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPPED IDOLS.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s go to God in prayer: ‘Dear God, thank You for helping us understand that You alone are to be worshiped because You are the One true God. Help us have hearts that desire to follow You and turn away from idols. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Our big picture question is, **How many gods are there?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.**

God commands His people to worship Him alone because only He is worthy of worship. Everything else will disappoint us because they are not everlasting, perfectly true, fully good, and mighty to save. Today, we will see how Israel’s evil kings led the people to disobey God’s command and worship false gods. But their foolishness can help us remember to worship God alone. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ King Solomon was the last king of the united kingdom. Solomon began his reign following the Lord faithfully, but he eventually allowed his heart to worship idols. After Solomon died, his son, Rehoboam, became king. Last week, we learned that Rehoboam’s foolish sin divided the kingdom. Today, we will see how this division caused many problems and how **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPPED IDOLS.** ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Kings 14–15; 2 Chronicles 12–13. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Israel’s Evil Kings.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

ISRAEL’S EVIL KINGS

“ When God’s people split into two separate kingdoms, King Jeroboam became king over Israel in the north. Unlike King David, **Jeroboam did not keep God’s commands and follow Him with all his heart**, doing what is right. **Jeroboam acted wickedly and made false gods for the people to worship.**

God was angry with Jeroboam. He sent the prophet Ahijah to tell him: “You have behaved wickedly, and **I am going to bring disaster on you. There will be a new king over Israel.** The new king will completely destroy the house of Jeroboam.

Then the kingdom of Israel went to war with the kingdom of Judah. The king of Judah said to the people of Israel, “You have left the LORD your God! **You worship golden calves**, and you banished the priests of the LORD and made new priests. But **we continue to worship God.** We make offerings to Him every morning and every evening. **We are obeying the commandments of the LORD, but you are not. Do not fight against us, because you will not win!”**

God was with the people of Judah because of a promise He had made to King David, and they defeated Jeroboam and the army of Israel. Then the Lord struck Jeroboam, and he died.

After Jeroboam died, his son Nadab became king of Israel. Unfortunately, Nadab was just as evil as his father. Another man named Baasha (BAY uh shuh) attacked and killed Nadab and all his family, just as God said through the prophet Ahijah. Baasha became the new king of Israel. Baasha followed the same pattern as the evil kings who came before him, leading the people away from God to worship idols.

Christ Connection: The first kings of Israel led the people to disobey God and to worship idols. Israel’s kings suffered the consequences of their sin. We all sin when we disobey God and worship other things. Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sin and bring us back to God. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Point back: Remind kids about how Israel worshiped the golden calf after God had rescued them from Egypt. Discuss how Jeroboam’s idolatry was similar and how he even lied and said, “Israel, here are your gods who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

List the kings: Write the names of the kings on a dry erase board.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Jeroboam ruled as king of Israel in the north, but the temple was in the city of Jerusalem in the kingdom of Judah. The temple was where God’s people would go to pray to Him and offer sacrifices. What did Jeroboam do that was evil in God’s sight? Look at 1 Kings 14:9. [Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 14:9 aloud.] Jeroboam rebelled against God’s command and made gods for the people to worship. Jeroboam’s prideful heart was afraid that God’s people would go to Judah to worship at the temple and decide to follow Rehoboam as king.

Jeroboam’s sin had great consequences. What were the consequences? Look at 1 Kings 14:10. [Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 14:10 aloud.] God would bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and the kingdom would be taken away from him. We saw this come true when Jeroboam’s son, Nadab, became king. Baasha killed Nadab and became king in his place. Pride will always come with disaster.

How did the kings of Israel disobey God? [Allow responses.] **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS.** In fact, none of the kings of Israel walked with the Lord and followed His ways. In the books of 1 and 2 Kings, we learn that all 20 kings who reigned over Israel were wicked and turned away from the Lord. From Jeroboam to the last king, Hoshea, all chose to disobey God and His commands. Israel’s kings suffered the consequences of their sin. We all sin when we disobey God and worship other things. Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sin and bring us back to God. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ We may not make golden calves like Jeroboam, but we all sin and turn away from God. But God loves us and sent Jesus to take the punishment our sin deserves. When we repent of our sin and trust in Jesus, we are made right with God and saved from eternal punishment. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 13, Session 2” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. If you have a friend who follows a different religion and thinks many gods exist, is it wrong to tell her about God?
2. Why is telling others about Jesus the best news they could hear?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Aaron Taylor and Ohio Map Photos” printable. Point to Ohio on the map. Tell kids that Aaron Taylor is the church planter and teaching pastor of Living Hope Church in Columbus, Ohio. The church, started in 2018, has been sharing the good news about Jesus with people in the area. Aaron and his church began two local nonprofits and a new ministry center called the Finding Hope Center.

SAY “ The center is a place where families who need help can receive household items like mattresses, bedding, and furniture. The center often helps single moms, immigrants, refugees, and others at no cost. They want to be a place for families to receive needed materials while also providing hope as they tell them about Jesus. Over time, the Finding Hope Center has been able to partner with other organizations like Send Relief to expand their reach and meet the needs of families in their community. ”

Pray for Aaron and his wife, Elizabeth, and their two daughters as they serve at Living Hope Church. Pray for the ministries of Living Hope Church and the Finding Hope Center.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Kings 8:60 together.

SAY “ Our key passage reminds us that God alone is the one true God. When we are tempted to love other things, this passage can help us remember that only God is to be worshiped. ”

Form kids into groups of two or three and distribute a set of index cards to each group. Lead kids to write one word of the key passage on each card. Then direct kids to scramble the cards out of order. When you say “Go,” challenge kids to work together to quickly organize the cards into the correct order. The first team to arrange their cards correctly wins. Repeat as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, only You deserve to be worshiped. Thank You, Lord, for providing Jesus as our Savior. Thank You that He turns our hearts back to You when we sin. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Kings 12. Explain that the temple Solomon built was in Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Remind kids that Jeroboam ruled in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Consider pointing out Bethel (G4), where Jeroboam built one of the golden calves, on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Kings 12:27-30 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Jeroboam became worried that the people would leave his kingdom of Israel and go to the temple in Judah. To solve this problem, Jeroboam created idols for the people to worship without leaving Israel. Jeroboam led the people to turn away from God. Jeroboam’s pride became an idol in his life, and he missed what was really important about worship. Worship wasn’t about a place: worship is about who our hearts love most. **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.** God is to be loved and praised above all else. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What was true about all of Israel’s kings? ”

Remind kids that all of Israel’s kings were evil and led the people to turn away from God. The kings did not remind the people of God’s laws and lead the people in justice. Israel’s kings worshiped idols and did not care for the poor, oppressed, and suffering. God eventually judged the Kingdom of Israel for their sin. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Kings 17:13.)

SAY “ What are ways people try to make themselves great, like Jeroboam? ”

Answers will vary. Remind kids that Jeroboam wanted to remain the great king of Israel, so he built the golden calves to keep people in Israel. Discuss how we can seek to build our own “kingdoms” on this earth rather than live in God’s kingdom. Tell kids that in pride we may want the praise of others, fail to repent of sin, and think we have all the answers. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Jer. 9:23-24.)

SAY “ Why is God better than any idol or anything else in this world? ”

Discuss how God is not only our Creator and King who deserves all worship, but He is also our Rescuer. Tell kids that they were made to know God and be loved by Him. Explain how without God’s plan to send Jesus into the world, die on the cross, and rise again, people would remain dead in their sins. God is better than anything because He alone gives us eternal life and everlasting joy. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 48:17.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: BEWARE THE IDOL



Invite kids to sit in a circle. Provide each kid with a blank index card but give one kid a card with the word *idol* written on it, making sure to place the *idol card* face down. Tell kids not to turn over their card. Choose one kid to be *It*. When *It* taps someone on the head, kids will turn over their card. If the card is blank, *It* will continue tapping heads. When the *idol card* is revealed, the kid with the card will try to tag *It*. If *It* returns to the kid's empty spot without getting tagged, the other kid becomes *It*. If not, the kid remains *It*. Play again, shuffling the cards so no one knows who has the *idol card*.

SAY “ Today, we learned that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS**. When the ‘*idol*’ was revealed whoever was *It* ran away. The Bible teaches us to flee from idols (1 Cor. 10:14). Through Jesus, we can turn away from idols and worship the one true God. God will help believers love Him more than anything else. ”

OPTION 2: BIBLE CUP STACK

Form kids into groups of two or three. Distribute 10 cups and a permanent marker to each group. Assign each group consecutive books of the Bible, making sure each group has a different set. For example, one group may have Genesis through 2 Samuel, while another group has Matthew through Ephesians. Lead kids to write the Bible names on their cups and arrange the cups out of order. When you say “go,” groups will stack their cups in the correct order. The first group to stack their cups correctly receives a point. Lead groups to switch cups and play again. The group with the most points wins.

SAY “ The Bible reminds us that **there is one true God who alone deserves worship**. When we know God’s Word, we are better equipped to recognize idols and be reminded of what is true. I encourage you to make reading God’s Word a habit in your life. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for Jesus who saves us from sin and helps us turn away from idolatry. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Walk In Obedience” on the activity page.

UNIT 13 | SESSION 3

ELIJAH CONFRONTED AHAB

1 KINGS 18-19



KEY PASSAGE: 1 Kings 8:60

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

CHRIST CONNECTION: God sent fire down from heaven to prove that He alone is Lord. God sent the Holy Spirit like flames of fire on Jesus' disciples to empower them to tell others that Jesus is God's Son who saves people from sin.

STORY POINT: God proved He is the one true God by answering Elijah's prayers.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

What is the boldest request you've ever made to the Lord? Have you ever experienced God answer your prayers in a uniquely powerful way? In this week's Bible story, we see how God answered Elijah's prayers.

King Ahab led the people to worship Baal. The prophet Elijah condemned Ahab for leading the people astray and instructed him to gather all the people and prophets of Baal for an epic showdown. The test was simple: both Elijah and the prophets of Baal would offer sacrifices to see if Baal would respond or if God would respond.

The prophets of Baal cried out, danced, and prayed all day with no response or hint of fire on their altar. When Elijah's turn came, he prepared the bull on the altar but took his trust in the Lord a step further by asking for water to be poured on top, saturating it completely. Elijah prayed, "LORD, let it be known that you are God in Israel, and I am your servant. Answer so that this people will know that you, the LORD, are God."

Immediately, fire fell from heaven and completely consumed the offering along with the wood, the stones, and even the water! After the showdown at the altar, Jezebel sought to kill Elijah, and Elijah fled. This time, Elijah's prayer was one of weariness and desperation. Again, God proved faithful to Elijah and answered his prayer. The Lord spoke to Elijah in a whisper and encouraged him, reminding him that the Lord would save those who remained faithful to Him.

The people of Israel knew that the Lord is the one true God when He answered Elijah's prayer and sent fire down from heaven. In the same way, people would know that Jesus is God's Son when the Holy Spirit came down like a dove when Jesus was baptized. Jesus is the Son of God and gave His life up for us.

Remember that God hears and answers the prayers of those who belong to Him. Thank the Lord for His faithfulness to listen and respond to our prayers. Remind boys and girls that through Jesus, we can boldly take our requests to God!



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Find the Way" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- jumbo craft sticks, 1 per kid
- yellow, orange, and red crepe paper rolls



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- mini marshmallows, 12 per kid
- stick pretzels, 4 per kid
- tubs of icing, 1 per table
- red, orange, and yellow candy-coated chocolate pieces
- paper plates, 1 per kid

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "True or False" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Elijah Confronted Ahab" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 13, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Surh Family Photo" printable

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- index cards, 1 per kid



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ When has God answered your prayers? Tell me about it. ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Find the Way” activity page.

| **SAY** “ Today, we will see how God sent a prophet named Elijah to a place called Mount Carmel. At this mountain, **GOD PROVED HE IS THE ONE TRUE GOD BY ANSWERING ELIJAH’S PRAYERS.** ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: FLAMES FROM HEAVEN

Provide each kid with a jumbo craft stick. At the tables, set out yellow, orange, and red crepe paper rolls; glue; and scissors. Lead kids to cut 5 inch strips of crepe paper and glue them to the end of their craft stick to create a fiery flame. Once dry, invite kids to wave their fiery flames in the air.

(Tip: Use these flames as you tell the Bible story by inviting kids to wave them in the air when you share how God sent fire from heaven.)

| **SAY** “ Today, we will see that **GOD PROVED HE IS THE ONE TRUE GOD BY ANSWERING ELIJAH’S PRAYERS.** We’ll learn how God sent fire from heaven to burn up a sacrifice Elijah placed on an altar. ”

OPTION 2: ANSWER ME



Lead kids in some call and response phrases. Share the following calls and responses with the kids, allowing them some time to practice:

- Call out “One, two, three” while kids respond with “eyes on me.”
- Call out “Ready, set?” while kids respond with “you bet.”
- Call out “Peanut butter” while kids respond with “jelly time.”
- Call out “Goodness gracious” while kids respond with “that’s outrageous.”

Mix up the phrases you call out, inviting kids to answer you with the appropriate response. Consider saying the phrases faster each round and inviting kids to be the caller.

| **SAY** “ When I called out a phrase, you answered. Today, we will learn how a prophet of the Lord named Elijah told the prophets of a false god to pray to their false god. But when they called out, they received no answer. However, we’ll see how God heard Elijah’s prayer and answered him, proving He alone is the one true God. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m glad you’re here. Today, we will continue learning about the kings of Israel in the book of 1 Kings. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one and invite kids to turn to 1 Kings.]

Every story in the Bible is true and reminds us that God alone is to be worshiped. In today’s story, we will see how an evil king led God’s people to worship false gods. But **GOD PROVED THAT HE IS THE ONE TRUE GOD BY ANSWERING ELIJAH’S PRAYERS.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray: ‘Dear God, You are greater than anyone and everything. You alone are the one true God. Help us have hearts that trust in You. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ What is our big picture question? [Allow responses.] Our big picture question is, **How many gods are there?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.**

Last week, we learned that the wicked kings of Israel led the people to worship false gods. Today, we will see how another king of Israel named Ahab also led the people to worship idols. Over and over again, the Bible reminds us what is true: God alone is the one true God. In our story, we’ll see how God helped His people see He alone is God through His power and by answering Elijah’s prayer. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ King Solomon and King Rehoboam’s unfaithfulness to God led to a divided kingdom. Do you remember the names of the two kingdoms? [Allow responses.] The Northern Kingdom was called Israel, and the Southern Kingdom was called Judah. [Point to these kingdoms on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map.] Last week, we learned that the kings of Israel did evil in God’s sight and led God’s people to worship idols. Throughout all this, God never left His people. Today, we will see how God answered the prophet Elijah’s prayers and proved that He alone is the one true God. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Kings 18–19. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Elijah Confronted Ahab.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

ELIJAH CONFRONTED AHAB

“After King Baasha, Israel had many wicked kings. One of those evil kings was Ahab. He killed the prophets of God and led the people to worship a false god named Baal. The word of the Lord came to the prophet Elijah and said, “Go and present yourself to Ahab.”

The prophet Elijah came to Ahab and said, “You have ruined Israel because you have abandoned the LORD’s commands and followed Baal instead. Gather the entire nation, and bring the prophets of Baal, too.”

Once everyone had gathered, Elijah said, “How long will you go between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him. But if Baal is God, follow him. Bring two bulls—one for me, and one for the prophets of Baal. We will each prepare them on an altar as a burnt sacrifice. Prophets of Baal, you will call on your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The God that answers with fire is the one true God.”

The prophets of Baal cried out to their false god from morning until noon, **but nothing happened.** Elijah made fun of them, saying, “Maybe your god is taking a walk, or maybe he is sleeping!” They danced and shouted all day, but there was no sound; no one answered; no one paid attention.

Then it was Elijah’s turn. He repaired the altar of the Lord that had been torn down. **He then prepared the bull on the altar and asked that water be poured on top.** So much water was poured that it gathered in a trench around the altar. **Elijah prayed to God: “LORD, today, let it be known that you are God in Israel, and I am your servant. Answer so that this people will know that you, the LORD, are God and you have turned their hearts back.”**

Then the Lord’s fire fell. It completely consumed the burnt offering, the wood and stones of the altar, and even the water gathered in the trench. **The people were amazed, falling facedown and saying, “The LORD, he is God!”**

Ahab told his wicked wife, Jezebel, everything that had happened. Jezebel sent word to Elijah saying she was going to kill him. Elijah ran for his life. When he was far enough away, he prayed and said, “LORD, I have had enough. I’m no better than the prophets before me.”

The next day, the Lord spoke to Elijah. He told Elijah to go out to a mountain. A great wind passed by. Then an earthquake. Then fire. But the Lord was not in any

STORYTELLING TIPS

Use the craft: If kids created the “Flames of Heaven” craft, invite them to wave the fiery flames when you tell how God sent fire from heaven.

Pause the reading: Create a dramatic effect by pausing and remaining silent when you share how nothing happened with the false god.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

of these. Then **there was a soft whisper. In that whisper, God said, “What are you doing here, Elijah? Go and anoint a new king over Israel. I will preserve for myself people who still worship me and who have not bowed down to Baal. Go and anoint a new king and follow me.”** **Elijah obeyed God.**

Christ Connection: God sent fire down from heaven to prove that He alone is Lord. God sent the Holy Spirit like flames of fire on Jesus’ disciples to empower them to tell others that Jesus is God’s Son who saves people from sin. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Israel was a troubled and divided kingdom. Last week, we learned about some of the first kings who ruled over the Northern Kingdom of Israel and how these kings led Israel to worship false gods. Today, we learned about another evil king, Ahab. What did Ahab lead the people to do? Look at 1 Kings 18:18. **[Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 18:18 aloud.]** Ahab abandoned the Lord’s commands and followed Baal, a false god. God sent the prophet Elijah to Ahab to warn him about his wicked ways. Elijah told Ahab that his evil ways were ruining Israel because the people had turned away from the one true God.

Elijah challenged Ahab and the prophets of Baal to meet him on top of Mount Carmel to see who is the one true God. Elijah told the people to choose who they would follow and worship: God or Baal. Then the prophets of Baal prepared their sacrifice on an altar and called out to their false god. What happened when they called out to Baal? Look at 1 Kings 18:26. **[Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 18:26 aloud.]** There was silence. Baal was no god—he wasn’t even alive. Psalm 96:4-5 tells us, ‘For the Lord is great and is highly praised; he is feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens.’

Then Elijah placed his sacrifice on the altar he repaired. He even drenched the entire altar with water. Elijah prayed to God, and the Lord’s fire fell and burned up everything on the altar. What did the people say in response? Look at 1 Kings 18:39. **[Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 18:39 aloud.]** The people fell face down and declared that the Lord is God. **GOD PROVED HE IS THE ONE TRUE GOD BY ANSWERING ELIJAH’S PRAYERS.** ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ God proved He is the one true God. When Jesus was on earth, He performed miracles and spoke truth that proved He is God. After Jesus went back to heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit like flames of fire on Jesus’ disciples to empower them to tell others that Jesus is God’s Son who saves people from sin. When we place our faith in Jesus, we are declaring that He is God and only He can save us from sin. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)



4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 13, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why doesn't God always answer our prayers?
2. Why can we still trust God even when He doesn't answer our prayers how we hope?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Remind kids that Columbus, Ohio, is home to many people who do not know Jesus. Tell kids that Columbus is also home to nearly 70,000 Somali immigrants and refugees. Display the “Surh Family Photo” printable as you tell kids about their work as church planters.

SAY “In 2019, Isaac and Hannah Surh, with the support of two other couples, started a new church in the Columbus area. They met weekly to pray and determine God's will for the new church. They named the church Chroma because it means ‘the intensity of color as it is illuminated by a light source.’ They thought the name showed how important it is for people to show the light of Jesus and share the good news about Him with others. Chroma Church desires that people from all different cultures and backgrounds will trust in Jesus to save them from sin.”

Pray for Isaac and Hannah and Chroma Church as they help people in Columbus learn about the one true God and His Son, Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Kings 8:60 together.

SAY “Our key passage, like our Bible story, reminds us that there is only one true God. Let's practice memorizing our key passage.”

Provide each kid with a Bible and an index card. Invite kids to look up 1 Kings 8:60 and write the verse on their index card. Encourage kids to take their card home and use it to help them memorize the verse and share it with others.

Lead kids to sing “There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Thank You, Lord, that You are the one true God who hears us when we call and responds to our prayers. Help us live to bring You honor and glory. In Jesus' name, amen.”





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Kings 18. Explain that throughout the books of 1 and 2 Kings we are introduced to several prophets, like Elijah, who God sent to warn people of their sin.

Consider pointing out the location of Mount Carmel (D4) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Kings 18:37 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “Elijah had great faith and boldness when he prayed to God. His prayer also revealed a good desire—that the people would know the Lord alone is God. We can pray with boldness and faith as well. While God may not always answer every prayer how we hope, we can pray toward His glory, asking Him to show others that He alone is God. We can ask the Lord to help others turn from their sin and trust in Jesus. God delights in prayers that magnify His greatness.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Elijah had men pour water on the altar three times. Why do you think he did that?”

Discuss how confident Elijah was that God would respond to his prayer because his prayer was for God’s glory. The water only served to show how great and powerful God is—not even water could keep the altar from burning up. Remind kids that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and holy. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 42:8.)

SAY “The people wavered between following God and following a false god. Do people do that today? How?”

Share how people can divide their life into “church stuff” and “other stuff.” Discuss how we can think we are following God because we go to church, but then throughout the week, we don’t live for God or even think about Him. Encourage kids to remember that God is worthy of every part of our lives. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Kings 18:21.)

SAY “Jezebel hated Elijah because he stood against her wicked ways. Why do some people hate Christians? Why is the world against the good news of Jesus?”

Remind kids that the evil in the world hates Jesus because He is light. Evil loves the darkness because they do not want their wickedness exposed by the light. But Jesus came to rescue people from the darkness and forgive their sin. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is brought into the light and made right with God. Tell kids that just as God came to Elijah and comforted him, God will never leave Christians no matter what they face. The Holy Spirit prays for them, helps them, and strengthens them. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 3:17-21.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: EDIBLE ALTAR



Provide kids with the food items and a paper plate. Direct kids to take the 12 marshmallows and build them into a square or rectangle on the plate by using the icing to stick the marshmallows together. Next, guide kids to coat one side of the pretzel sticks with icing and stick them to the top of the marshmallows. Place an animal cracker on top of the pretzels to represent the “bull” from the story. Pause here until everyone has completed the previous steps. Then direct kids to grab a handful of red, orange, and yellow candy-coated chocolate pieces. When you say, “then the Lord’s fire fell,” lead kids to drop the candies on their “altar.” Invite kids to take their edible altar home and retell the story.

SAY “ When the prophets of Baal cried out to their false god, nothing happened. But **GOD PROVED HE IS THE ONE TRUE GOD BY ANSWERING ELIJAH’S PRAYERS.** We worship God alone because He is the one true God who sent Jesus to save us from sin. ”

OPTION 2: PRAYER PROMPT



Provide kids with an index card. Invite kids to title their card, Prayer Prompt. Then invite kids to write the letters P, R, A, and Y along the side of the card. Next to the P kids will write Praise. Next to the R kids will write Repent. Next to the A kids will write Ask. Then next to the Y kids will write Yield or Your Will.

Tell kids this acronym helps us remember how we can pray to God. Consider inviting kids to write a Bible reference next to each letter to demonstrate each part of the prayer. For example, you might choose to use Psalm 30:4; Isaiah 55:7; 1 Peter 5:7; and Matthew 6:10. Encourage kids to use their card to help them remember ways they can pray to God.


SAY “ God heard and answered Elijah’s prayer. God hears and will answer our prayers in His timing and for His purposes. God wants us to talk with Him, and He is happy when we depend on Him through prayer. He is all-powerful and uses prayer to change our hearts and help us live for Him. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His greatness and power. As time allows, lead kids to complete “True or False” on the activity page.



UNIT 13 | SESSION 4

THE REIGN OF AHAB

1 KINGS 20-22; 2 KINGS 1

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Kings 8:60

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Ahab was a disobedient, greedy, and stubborn king who refused to lead Israel in the ways of the Lord. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, always obeyed God and laid down His life for us. Anyone who follows Him will dwell with God forever.

STORY POINT: Ahab was an evil king, and God brought judgment on him.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Have you ever heard the expression “you reap what you sow”? Perhaps you feel the burn of those words as you think of times you made a hasty decision or took matters into your own hands, only to later watch things fall apart. In today’s text, Ahab made a series of poor choices which ultimately led to his demise.

First, the Lord gave King Ahab victory over the Arameans—not once, but twice—to remind Ahab that He is the Lord. When Israel won the second battle, they captured Ben-hadad, but Ahab disobeyed God and agreed to a treaty, releasing Ben-hadad.

Second, a man named Naboth owned a vineyard that caught Ahab’s interest. In his greed, Ahab and his wife Jezebel developed a wicked scheme to take Naboth’s vineyard. Their deception turned murderous when hired men lied about Naboth, saying he had cursed God and the king. Naboth was falsely convicted and sentenced to death.

A few years later, Ahab wanted to go to war against the Arameans once again. Ahab’s false prophets supported his decision, but Micaiah, a prophet of the true God, advised against it, since going to war against Aram would fail. Once again, Ahab acted stubbornly and went to war anyway. During the battle, he was struck by an arrow and died.

While God showed Ahab patience and gave him many warnings, Ahab ultimately refused to repent. Like Ahab, we can be greedy and stubborn. In our sin, we rebel against God and act according to our flesh. The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus (Romans 6:23). Jesus lived a perfect life and died in the place of sinners so that we might be forgiven and be made right with God.

Encourage boys and girls to see that because Christ laid down His life for us, we can escape the punishment we deserve because of our sin. Teach kids that when we believe in Jesus and repent of sin, Christ removes our unrighteousness and changes our hearts so that we desire to follow God and His ways.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "The Wrong Kind of King" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- pom-poms, 100 per group
- paper cups, 1 per kid



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- cotton balls, 1 per kid
- petroleum jelly

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ball

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "The Shepherd King" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "The Reign of Ahab" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 13, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Surh Family Photo" printable

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- cardstock



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “What makes someone a bad ruler or king? What makes someone a good ruler or king?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “The Wrong King of King” activity page.

| **SAY** “Today, we’ll see that **AHAB WAS AN EVIL KING, AND GOD BROUGHT JUDGMENT ON HIM.**”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: TAKE IT!

Form kids into groups of four and invite them to sit in a circle. Place 100 pom-poms in the center of each circle. Then give each kid a small paper cup. On your start, direct kids to place their cup over the pom-poms, trying to gather as many pom-poms as they can. Continue until all the pom-poms are gone. Guide kids to count how many pom-poms they took. The kids who gathered the most from each group will go on to play in the next round. Repeat, until there is only one winner.

| **SAY** “What does it mean to be greedy? [Allow responses.] To be greedy means to have a selfish desire for something, especially wealth or power. Just like you kept trying to take more and more pom-poms, we’ll see how King Ahab had selfish desires for wanting more. Ahab abused his power and led others to suffer. We’ll learn how **AHAB WAS AN EVIL KING, AND GOD BROUGHT JUDGMENT ON HIM.**”

OPTION 2: BATTLE READY!



Tell kids that you will call out specific commands that signal an action they will need to perform. Practice the following commands and actions:

- Attention (Kids will stand with one hand saluted at their temple.)
- Forward, march (Kids will march in place.)
- Eyes right (Kids will turn their head to the right.)
- Parade, rest (Kids will stand with their feet apart, bring both of their arms behind their back, and interlock their hands.)

Then direct kids to listen to the appropriate command and perform the correct action. Increase the speed as kids become more comfortable with the commands. Kids who do not perform the correct action will be out. Play several rounds as time allows.

| **SAY** “Those serving in battle must know the commands of their leaders and follow the commands. Today, we will see how God commanded Israel to fight their enemy. God was going to use the battle to show that He is the one true God. But even though Israel won the battle, we’ll see how King Ahab chose to disobey God’s commands.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m glad you’re here. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one and invite kids to turn to 1 Kings.]

Last week, we saw how King Ahab and his wife Jezebel led the people to worship false gods. In today’s story, we’ll learn how King Ahab continued to disobey God and act wickedly. **AHAB WAS AN EVIL KING, AND GOD BROUGHT JUDGMENT ON HIM.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray: ‘Dear God, You are worthy of our obedience. We can trust You always do what is right and good. Help us see that Jesus is the perfect King. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “We have been asking the question, **How many gods are there?** What is the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.**

In our story, we will see how God allowed King Ahab and the army of Israel to have victory over their enemies. Israel’s enemies did not worship God. Rather, they followed false gods. But God allowed His people to win so that everyone would know that He is the Lord. Even when Israel was disobedient, God remained faithful to them and worked in ways to show He alone is God. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “We’ve seen how Israel had wicked kings—Jeroboam, Nadab, and Baasha—who led the people to worship idols. Later, King Ahab became king over the kingdom of Israel. Ahab was even more wicked, leading the people to turn away from God and follow Baal, a false god. But God was faithful to His people, wanting them to see that He alone is God. So, the Lord sent the prophet Elijah to confront Ahab and the prophets of Baal. Through Elijah’s prayer, God sent fire from heaven, proving He is the one true God. Today, we will see how the wicked ways of Ahab were coming to an end as God would bring judgment on him. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Kings 20–22; 2 Kings 1:1. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Reign of Ahab.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE REIGN OF AHAB

“ King Ahab was at war with King Ben-hadad of Aram, a nation to the northeast of Israel. **A prophet of the Lord came to Ahab and said, “This is what the LORD says, ‘Do you see Ben-hadad’s huge army? Watch this: I am handing it over to you today so that you may know I am the LORD.’” Ahab led the men to battle. Israel won, but Ben-hadad escaped.**

Ben-hadad’s servants told him that Israel had only won because they had fought in the hills. They believed that if they went to war with Israel in the plains, that they would be able to defeat them. **The prophet of God came to Ahab again and said, “Because the Arameans have said that the LORD can’t win unless the battle is in the mountains, I will hand their huge army over to you. You will win, and you will know that I am the LORD.”** The Israelites camped in front of them like two little flocks of goats, while the Arameans filled the landscape. **Israel won the battle, and they captured Ben-hadad.**

Ben-hadad offered to make a deal in exchange for his life. Ahab knew he was supposed to defeat the Arameans, but he disobeyed. He agreed to receive the land the Arameans took from Israel in exchange for Ben-hadad’s release.

Sometime later, Ahab decided he wanted a vineyard that belonged to a man named Naboth. Naboth refused to sell this land, and Ahab was mad, because he was greedy and wanted that land. **Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, said to him, “Now, exercise your royal power over Israel. For I will give you the vineyard of Naboth.” Then Jezebel hired men to lie about Naboth. They said that Naboth had cursed God and the king, a crime punishable by death. Naboth was killed, and Ahab took his vineyard.**

A few years later, Ahab wanted to go to war against the Arameans again because they still had some of Israel’s land. He asked his false prophets, and they all agreed it was a good idea. But **the prophet of the true God, Micaiah, told Ahab the truth. Going to war against Aram would fail, and the king would die. Micaiah said, “I saw all of Israel alone scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD said, ‘They have no one to lead them.’”** King Ahab was stubborn and **decided to go to war anyway. He was struck by an arrow during the battle, and he died,** just as the prophet of the Lord said.

Christ Connection: Ahab was a disobedient, greedy, and stubborn king who refused to lead Israel in the ways of the Lord. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, always obeyed God

STORYTELLING TIPS

Use dramatic voice: Vary the tone and volume of your voice as you tell the story to create dramatic effect.

Emphasize it: When you tell kids how Israel was like sheep without a shepherd, remind kids that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Share how Jesus takes cares of His followers and willingly laid down His life to save people from sin.



| and laid down His life for us. Anyone who follows Him will dwell with God forever. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Even though Ahab was evil, God gave him victory in battle against some of his enemies. God allowed King Ahab and Israel to conquer Ben-hadad’s army so that people would know that God is the one true God. Despite Ahab’s victory, he disobeyed the Lord by releasing Ben-hadad. Later, Ahab was so greedy that he killed a man named Naboth just so he could have his vineyard. What did the Lord think of Ahab’s actions? Look at 1 Kings 21:20-21. [Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 21:20-21 aloud.] God told Ahab that he had done what was evil in His sight and that Ahab would be punished for his evil deeds. Ahab did not take God’s warning seriously.

Later, the prophet Micaiah warned Ahab not to go into battle against the Arameans. Did Ahab listen to Micaiah’s warning? Look at 1 Kings 22:30. [Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 22:30 aloud.] No, Ahab ignored Micaiah and went into battle. Because of Ahab’s stubborn disobedience, he was struck by an arrow and died. God will not allow evil to continue forever. He will always punish evil.

AHAB WAS AN EVIL KING, AND GOD BROUGHT JUDGMENT ON HIM.

Ahab was a disobedient, greedy, and stubborn king who refused to lead Israel in the ways of the Lord. Even the prophet Micaiah said they were like sheep without a shepherd. The people of Israel were left to wander without a good king to lead them to follow God. But Jesus is the perfect King. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, always obeyed God and laid down His life for us. Anyone who follows Him will dwell with God forever. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Like Ahab, we are all sinners and deserve to be punished for our sin. But out of God’s love for us, He sent Jesus to rescue us. Jesus willingly laid down His life and took the punishment we deserve for our sin. We don’t have to be punished, like Ahab, when we trust in Jesus. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 13, Session 4” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why is death a consequence for sin, even though we were not the ones who sinned in the first place?
2. Why did Jesus take the punishment we deserve for our sin?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Surh Family Photo.” Remind kids that the Surh family started a church in Columbus, Ohio, called Chroma Church. Tell kids that the church desires to reach the nations by ministering to the many different people groups living in the Columbus area. They want their church to be diverse, just like heaven will be with people from all nations.

SAY “ Chroma Church is under the leadership of Pastor Isaac Surh. The church is passionate about diversity and justice. They want to help people who are not treated fairly or who are in need. Chroma Church hopes to share the gospel with many people in Columbus, including the Somali people. More than 500 independent Somali businesses are part of the diverse local culture in the Columbus area, including retail shops, restaurants, and specialized trades. ”

Pray that God will use Chroma Church to be a light in the darkness and be able to offer help to people who are experiencing injustice, poverty, and poor treatment. Pray for Chroma to be a church for people of many different ethnicities.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Kings 8:60 together.

Distribute a piece of cardstock and a pen or marker to each kid. Direct kids to fold their cardstock into a fan. Write the reference and three or four words of the key passage on each fold of the fan. Share how kids can close their fans to practice saying the key passage from memory. Or if they need help remembering the key passage, kids can open their fans to see the words.

SAY “ I hope you will use your fans to help you remember the key passage and the truth that God is the one true God. ”

Lead kids to sing “There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Thank You, Lord, for sending Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Thank You that through Him we can be saved and forgiven. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Kings 22. Explain that the Bible is divided into sections within the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament is divided into books of the Law, History, Poetry, Minor Prophets, and Major Prophets. Tell kids that 1 Kings is in the History division.

Consider pointing out the location of Aram (B9) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Tell kids that the people of Aram are the descendants of Shem, Noah's son (Genesis 10:22). Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Kings 22:17 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ The prophet Micaiah said that Israel had no one to lead them. Ahab, and all of Israel’s kings, were evil and did not truly care about the people. Ahab was concerned about himself and his power. He didn’t seek to lead the people to what is best: following and worshiping God.

When Jesus came to earth, He had compassion on people and said they were also like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36). Much like the people under Ahab’s rule, Jesus saw how the people were lost in their sin. Jesus came to seek out the lost sheep and show them that He is the Good Shepherd who had come to lay down His life to save them from sin. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ How can God bring judgment on people? ”

Tell kids that God is holy and hates sin. He will not let sin go unpunished. For those who trust Jesus as their Savior, Jesus paid the price for their sin. But those who do not trust Jesus as Savior will be punished for their sins. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 9:27-28.)

SAY “ Why should we take God’s Word seriously? ”

Remind kids that God always keeps His Word. He kept His Word to bring judgment on Ahab’s sin. Because of this truth, it is important to listen to what He has said. Today, God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible. This is why we spend time each week studying His Word together. The Bible reminds us that God has made the way to save us from sin through His Son, Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 46:9-10.)

SAY “ How is Jesus the perfect King? ”

Tell kids that Jesus is the King who always obeyed God and who sought the good of others. Jesus never did anything out of selfishness or greed, like Ahab. He is the perfect King who rules with justice, righteousness, and peace. Jesus is the only King who saves those who trust in Him from the punishment their sin deserves. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 9:6-7.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: SAVE THE SHEEP!

Form kids into groups of four or five. Direct each group to line up at one end of the room. At the other end of the room, opposite each team, place a cotton ball for each kid. The cotton balls will be the “sheep.” Allow kids to place some petroleum jelly on their nose. At your start, direct one kid from each team to run to their “sheep,” and without using their hands, pick up the “sheep” using the jelly on their nose. Kids will run back to their team, and the next kid will run to get a “sheep.” Repeat, until one team is the first to save all the “sheep.” Play again, switching up teams.

SAY “Ahab was not a good king who was willing to care for his people. He was disobedient, greedy, and stubborn. **AHAB WAS AN EVIL KING, AND GOD BROUGHT JUDGMENT ON HIM.** But Jesus is the perfect King who always obeyed God. He came to seek and save those who are lost in their sin. When we trust in Jesus, we are saved from the judgment we deserve.”

OPTION 2: BOOKS OF THE BIBLE TOSS



Direct kids to form a circle. Give one kid a ball and challenge her to say the first book of the Bible. Then direct her to toss the ball to the kid on her right who will say the next book of the Bible. Lead kids to keep tossing the ball and saying the books of the Bible in order. If a kid does not know the book that comes next, offer hints. Or consider hanging up the Books of the Bible Poster for kids to refer to. Continue until kids have said all the books of the Bible. For an added challenge, encourage kids to say the books as quickly as possible to see how fast the group can get through all the Bible books.

SAY “In our story, we saw how God sent prophets to speak His Word and warn Ahab. Today, God speaks to us through His written Word, the Bible. When we read our Bibles, we learn about God and His plan to save people from sin. Reading the Bible helps us to follow His commands through faith in Jesus. Those who trust in Jesus will be saved from judgment and will have eternal life.”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His Word and the hope we have because of Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “The Shepherd King” on the activity page.

ELISHA THE PROPHET

2 KINGS 2; 4-5



KEY PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 13:4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why do Christians continue to sin? Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Elisha spoke the truth of God and performed miracles. Jesus taught with the authority of God and performed miracles as well. Elisha was a prophet, but Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior.

STORY POINT: God spoke through the prophet Elisha and gave him power to perform miracles.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

As Elijah's time on earth was coming to an end, God appointed Elisha as a new prophet to His people. Elisha asked Elijah if he could inherit a double portion of his spirit. To this Elijah replied, "If you see me being taken from you, you will have it." Elisha looked on as Elijah was taken up to heaven, and by God's grace, Elisha received his request.

How did Elisha's ministry point others to the one true God? Through miracles, God displayed His power through Elisha, confirming that he was a prophet. God also revealed his wisdom and truth by speaking through Elisha.

Through the many miracles Elisha performed, we not only see the power of God over His creation, but also His care and provision for people. From making bad water drinkable to healing Namaan—a commander from an enemy army—Elisha's miracles pointed people to recognize the one true God. Only the Lord could raise a dead boy to life and miraculously meet the needs of the widow who was in debt. God's spirit was on Elisha, empowering him to be a light to the people of Israel.

Elijah and Elisha were both special prophets, performing miracles and being messengers of God's truth. But there is One greater than Elisha and Elijah. Jesus not only performed miracles and taught with authority; He is also the true Light of the world who saves people from sin. Help boys and girls understand that when we follow Jesus, we receive the Holy Spirit who empowers us to be more like Jesus and shine like lights in the world, proclaiming to all that He is the one true God.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Decode It" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- clear jars, 1 per group
- oil
- salt canister
- water
- food color vials, 1 per group

Session Starter (Option 2)

- robes or over-sized button-down shirts, 3



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- air-dry clay

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- dry erase board
- dry erase marker and eraser

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Miracle Marvels" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Elisha the Prophet" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- salt, oil, and water (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 14, Session 1" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Missions in Iran" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- dry erase board and marker



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What is a talent someone has that impresses you? Do you know someone who can sing or draw really well? Maybe you know someone who is really good at basketball.”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Decode It” activity page.

SAY “Today, we will learn about another prophet God raised up to speak to His people. The prophet’s name was Elisha.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: SALT, OIL, AND WATER



Form kids into groups of three or four. Lead kids to pour ½ cup of water into their glass jar. Then direct kids to pour ½ cup of oil into their glass jar. Add 10 drops of food color throughout the oil. Then guide groups to slowly add salt to the oil spots that contain food color, observing how the salt will pull the food color and oil into the water. Allow kids to continue adding salt. Then direct groups to clean up by pouring the contents of the jar into a sink. Lead kids to clean up any mess with a paper towel.

SAY “In our Bible story, we will see each of these substances: salt, oil, and water. We’ll learn how the prophet Elisha performed miracles and how these substances were a part of different miracles. **GOD SPOKE THROUGH THE PROPHET ELISHA AND GAVE HIM POWER TO PERFORM MIRACLES.**”

OPTION 2: ROBE RELAY



Form kids into three teams. Move half of the kids from each team to one end of the room. Give each team at the other end of the room a robe or an over-sized button-down shirt. Challenge teams to compete in a relay where one kid from each team will put on the robe, run to their teammate at the other end of the room, take off the robe, and hand it to their teammate to put on. Teams will relay back and forth until one team is the first to have all the kids wear the robe.

SAY “Today, we will see how the prophet Elijah’s time on earth was coming to an end. God had called Elisha to serve as a prophet after Elijah. Elisha looked up to Elijah and wanted to be a prophet like him, serving God powerfully like Elijah had done. We’ll learn how Elijah left his robe, and when Elisha took it up, the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha. Let’s learn how **GOD SPOKE THROUGH THE PROPHET ELISHA AND GAVE HIM POWER TO PERFORM MIRACLES.**”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m glad you’re here to learn more about our great God. The stories we read from the Bible are true and help us learn about God. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will be in the book of 2 Kings. [Assist kids in finding 2 Kings.]

God had many prophets in the Old Testament. A prophet was someone who spoke God’s words to the people. One of the prophets we’ve learned about was Elijah. He was the prophet who confronted the false prophets of Baal. Today, we’ll learn that Elijah’s time on earth was coming to an end, and God called a new prophet named Elisha. **GOD SPOKE THROUGH THE PROPHET ELISHA AND GAVE HIM POWER TO PERFORM MIRACLES.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and ask God to help us receive His truth: ‘Dear God, thank You for Your faithfulness to Your people. Please help us have hearts that trust in You and Your Son, Jesus. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ We have a new big picture question to learn: **Why do Christians continue to sin?** What do you think the answer is? [Allow responses.] The answer we’ll learn is, **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.** Let’s say that together one more time: **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.**

Every person will struggle with sin, even Christians. Yet, Christians will not be punished for their sin because they have trusted in Jesus, who was punished in their place. Because Christians have been given a new heart, we want to turn away from sin and not follow our sinful desires. God sent the prophets, like Elisha, to His people so they also could turn away from sin. The prophets told the people to repent and trust God. Today, we’ll see how Elisha spoke God’s words and helped others know the one true God. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ After the kingdom was divided, evil kings ruled in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. We’ve learned how Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, and Ahab led the people to worship idols. But God was faithful to His people, and He sent prophets to tell them to turn away from their sin. One of those prophets was Elijah. Through Elijah’s prayer, God showed the people that He is the one true God by sending down fire from heaven. Today, we will learn about another prophet, Elisha, whom God called to speak His words and perform miracles. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Kings 2:1-22; 4:1-37; 5:1-15. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Elisha the Prophet.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

ELISHA THE PROPHET

“Elijah was a powerful prophet to Israel, but **God had a plan for another man to be a prophet after Elijah. That man’s name was Elisha** (ih LIGH shuh). Elijah went on a journey, and Elisha refused to leave his side. When they came to the Jordan River, Elijah rolled up his robe and struck the water. The river parted, and they crossed on dry ground.

Elisha asked Elijah if he could receive twice as much of Elijah’s spirit. Elijah replied, “if you see me taken away from you, then you will have it.” As they continued walking, **a chariot of fire with horses of fire separated the two men, and Elijah was taken up into heaven in the whirlwind.**

Elisha picked up the robe Elijah left behind and walked back to the Jordan River. He struck the water, and it parted. Elisha crossed over. Everyone who saw it said that the spirit of Elijah had rested on Elisha. From that moment on, Elisha performed many miracles.

In the city of Jericho, the water was not good to drink or water plants. Elisha asked for a bowl of salt and threw some into the spring. The water was healed!

Another day, a widow cried out to Elisha, saying “My husband has died, and now I don’t have enough money to pay the people I owe. I will lose everything if I can’t pay them.” Elisha told her to borrow lots of empty containers from all her neighbors and pour into them a small jar of oil she had. The oil kept pouring out until all the containers were filled. She could sell the oil and pay back her debts.

When Elisha would pass through the town of Shunem, a woman who lived there would invite him to eat some food and rest. One day, as he was heading toward her town, the woman rushed out to him to tell him that her only son had died. When Elisha arrived at the house, he prayed and laid down on top of the boy’s body. Then Elisha got up and bent over the boy. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes!

On another occasion, a commander of the Aramean army, Namaan, had a skin disease. He heard from a servant girl that there was a prophet in Samaria who could heal him. He sent word to Elisha, who replied with these instructions: “Go wash seven times in the Jordan River and your skin will be clean.” Namaan followed these instructions, and his skin was clear of the disease. Namaan said, “I know there’s no God in the whole world except in Israel.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Invite kids to hold up seven fingers when they hear the number “seven” said in the story.

Use props: Hold up salt, oil, and water when you mention them in the story.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Elisha performed all these miracles and more as the prophet of God!

Christ Connection: Elisha spoke the truth of God and performed miracles. Jesus taught with the authority of God and performed miracles as well. Elisha was a prophet, but Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ After Elijah prayed to God at Mount Carmel, and God proved He is the one true God, Elijah ran away because Jezebel wanted to kill him. During this time, God sent Elijah to find the prophet who would eventually take his place. God sent Elijah to Elisha, and Elisha began serving under Elijah (1 Kings 19). In our story, we learned that it was time for Elijah to go be with God. What did Elisha want before Elijah left? Look at 2 Kings 2:9-10. [Ask a volunteer to read 2 Kings 2:9-10 aloud.] Elisha wanted a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. Elisha wanted to be a great prophet like Elijah. Elijah said Elisha would receive this request if he saw Elijah taken from him.

Did Elisha see Elijah taken away? Look at 2 Kings 2:12. [Ask a volunteer to read 2 Kings 2:12 aloud.] Yes, Elisha watched as Elijah was taken up to be with God. Then Elisha picked up Elijah’s robe, struck the water of the Jordan River, and the water parted. Those who witnessed this act recognized that Elijah’s spirit now rested on Elisha.

Elisha performed many miracles as God’s prophet. What were some of the miracles he performed? [Allow responses.] Elisha made bad water good, helped a woman multiply her oil supply, raised a dead boy to life, and healed Naaman’s skin disease. Naaman wasn’t even an Israelite but was an Aramean. **GOD SPOKE THROUGH THE PROPHET ELISHA AND GAVE HIM POWER TO PERFORM MIRACLES.** Through Elisha, God showed that He cares for people of every nation and wants them to know He is the one true God. What did Naaman say after he was healed? Look at 2 Kings 5:15. [Ask a volunteer to read 2 Kings 5:15 aloud.] Naaman said that he knew there’s no God in the whole world except the God of Israel.

Elisha reminds us of Jesus. Elisha spoke the truth of God and performed miracles. Jesus taught with the authority of God and performed miracles as well. Elisha was a prophet, but Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Elisha was given power from God to perform miracles, but Elisha had no power to save people from their sin. Only God can do this! The greatest miracle ever is the miracle of salvation through faith in Jesus. Jesus died on the cross and was raised to life three days later, paying the penalty for our sin and giving us eternal life when we trust in Him. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)



4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 14, Session 1” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Are there still miracles occurring today? If so, what do they look like?
2. The Bible says that the same power used to raise Jesus from the dead lives in Christians. How can God’s power help you become more like Jesus?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ Dr. George and Joan [Jo-ann] Braswell served as missionaries in Iran from 1968 to 1974. Iran is a country in the Middle East. The main religion in Iran is Islam. George and Joan wanted the people of Iran to know the one true God and His Son, Jesus. Through his position as a professor, Dr. Braswell was able to tell his students about Jesus. ”

Play the missions video. Mention that Dr. Braswell said he first had an interest in teaching people from a different country and religion about Jesus while he was in college. Joan said she enjoyed meeting and getting to know people of different cultures while she spent a summer in Europe. Later, George and Joan strongly felt God calling them to be missionaries when they took a group of high school students to a conference about missions. Dr. Braswell had many opportunities to tell the students he taught about the one true God who sent His Son, Jesus, to save people from their sins. Pray more missionaries will go to Iran to tell others about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write the key passage on a dry erase board, making sure to start each new line with one of the “you must” statements. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Deuteronomy 13:4 together.

SAY “ Our key passage contains commands Moses gave the Israelites after they left Egypt. Moses wanted God’s people to remember to worship Him alone. ”

Invite kids one at a time to circle what the verse says they must do (there are six in this verse). Then lead kids to read the verse aloud together. Next, erase one of the “must do’s” and invite kids to say the key passage. Repeat, until all six “must do’s” are erased.

Lead kids to sing “Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for Your faithfulness and for Your Word. Help us follow You and worship You alone. Amen. ”





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 2 Kings 5. Tell kids that the name Elisha means God saves. Discuss how every miracle Elisha performed demonstrated that he was a prophet of the one true God, the only God who can save people from sin.

Consider pointing out the location of the Jordan River (F6), where Naaman washed seven times, on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Kings 5:13 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “Naaman was a leper, a disease that was incurable in those days. When he first heard the instructions given by Elisha, to wash seven times in the Jordan River, he didn’t want to do it. Naaman thought Elisha could just wave his hand, and Naaman would be healed. But Naaman’s servant encouraged him to ‘wash and be clean.’ Naaman didn’t need to do any great act; he simply needed to believe and obey the words that came from God’s prophet.

We don’t have to perform any great act to be saved from our sin. God will wash us and make us clean when we trust in His Son, Jesus. We have no power to take away our sin. Instead, we trust in Jesus who alone can take away our sin.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “How did Elisha’s miracles show that God is the one true God?”

Discuss how Elisha had no power on his own. God called Elisha to be a prophet, and He gave Elisha power to perform miracles. Each miracle showed that God has power over life and death and that He cares for people. Jesus’ miracles also showed He has power over life and death and cares for people. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Deut. 32:39.)

SAY “How did these miracles show that God cares for people?”

Remind kids that each miracle performed by Elisha was done to help people. Elisha made the bad water good so the people of Jericho could drink. He helped the woman pay off her debts by multiplying the oil. He raised a boy to life. He healed diseases. God’s words and power were displayed through Elisha, showing God cares for people. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 46:4.)

SAY “How does Elisha point us to Jesus?”

Tell kids that Elisha’s ministry was like a shadow of what Jesus would come to do. Like Elisha, Jesus performed miracles. Jesus is the perfect Prophet because He is the Word of God and shows us what God is like. Jesus showed His love for people by laying down His life to save them from sin. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 1:1-3.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: JARS OF CLAY

Provide each kid with a baseball-sized lump of air-dry clay. Guide kids to gently roll it into a ball. Next, tell kids to stick their thumb into the center of the ball of clay, pushing a little more than halfway down. Then, with kids' thumb still in the clay, direct them to use their other fingers to push the clay into their thumb, pinching it. Kids will rotate the ball of clay until they've pinched all sides. Repeat, pinching the sides while also gently pulling the sides upward to create height. Continue until the desired jar shape is created. Allow kids to take their jars home to dry. Kids can paint their jars when fully dry. Kids can use their jars to store items. Then read 2 Corinthians 4:7.

SAY “ God used Elisha to show His great power, including a miracle that allowed a widow to multiply her oil from a small clay jar. The Bible tells us that we are like clay jars, and when we trust in Jesus, God can use us to show others His power. Christians desire to use their lives for God’s glory. ”

OPTION 2: PICTURE IT



Form kids into two teams and play a draw-and-guess game. Choose different items from the story for kids to draw such as a tornado, bowl of salt, Jordan River, jar of oil, robe, etc. Invite a kid from one team to begin and assign her an item to draw on a dry erase board. Allow 30 seconds for kids on her team to guess. If they guess correctly, award a point. If not, allow the other team a chance to guess and receive a point. Play as time allows. The team with the most points wins.

SAY “ Today, we learned that **GOD SPOKE THROUGH THE PROPHET ELISHA AND GAVE HIM POWER TO PERFORM MIRACLES.** We also saw that Elisha reminds us of Jesus. Jesus taught with the authority of God and performed miracles as well. Elisha was a prophet, but Jesus is the Son of God. The greatest miracle any of us can experience is the forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for His power to save us from our sin. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Miracle Marvels” on the activity page.

JONAH, PROPHET TO NINEVEH

JONAH



KEY PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 13:4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why do Christians continue to sin? Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jonah spent three days in a fish so that the people of Nineveh could hear God's message, turn from sin, and be saved. Jesus was in the tomb for three days so that we could hear and trust the gospel, turn from sin, and be saved.

STORY POINT: God sent Jonah to Nineveh to tell the people to turn from their sinful ways.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Jonah was a prophet sent by God to confront the people of Nineveh regarding their sinful ways. Jonah, however, did not immediately obey God’s command. In fact, Jonah traveled in the opposite direction and boarded a boat to Tarshish. Have you ever been given clear directions from God, but ignored them out of fear or selfishness?

Because of Jonah’s disobedience, the Lord sent a powerful storm on the sea, and the men on the boat feared for their lives. Knowing the storm was due to his disobedience, Jonah asked his shipmates to throw him overboard. As they threw him into the sea, the storm ceased.

In His mercy, the Lord sent a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and for three days and nights, Jonah lay entombed in the belly of the fish. Then, upon the Lord’s command, the fish spit Jonah onto dry land. God again said to Jonah, “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach the message that I tell you.” This time, Jonah obeyed.

Jonah walked about the great city proclaiming, “In forty days Nineveh will be demolished!” The people of Nineveh believed God’s message. In sackcloth and with fasting, the people repented and earnestly called out to God. Because of their repentance, God did not destroy Nineveh.

As we read further, we learn how Jonah grew angry over God’s mercy displayed toward Nineveh. The same storm-tossed man who had received mercy from the Lord would rather experience death than see his enemies live. Ironically, disobedient Jonah prayed for God’s grace in his own life, but desired for others to perish in their sin.

While Jonah did not care for the people of Nineveh, God did. The people believed Jonah’s message from God and were saved. Like the Ninevites, we cannot save ourselves. But God can. When we are confronted with our sin, we have a choice to ignore it or do as the Ninevites did and repent. God sent Jesus so we could repent of sin, trust in Him, and be saved.

This week, point boys and girls to the gift of Jesus. Thank God for Jesus’ death and resurrection and share how we too can believe, turn from our sin, and be saved. While we all are born far from God, Jesus bridges the gap. Just like God the Father, Jesus is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (Jonah 4:2).



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Before and After" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- box (fish decoration optional)
- balls, 2

Session Starter (Option 2)

- world map or globe
- index cards, 5–10



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- world map (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- plastic cups, 1 per kid
- 18 inch long yarn pieces, 1 per kid
- balloons, 1 per kid
- decorative items such as googly eyes, stickers, fish tails, etc. (optional)

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Greater than Jonah" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 14, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "George and Joan Braswell Photo" printable
- world map

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Have you ever had to do something you didn’t want to do? What was it? Did you end up doing it, or did you keep avoiding it?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Before and After” activity page.

SAY “Today, we will see how a prophet named Jonah didn’t want to do something God called him to do.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: SWALLOWED UP

Before the session, consider decorating the open end of a box as a fish’s mouth. Form kids into two teams. Line up each team, about 4–5 feet away, on either side of the box. Provide the first kid on each team with a ball. When you say “go,” challenge kids to toss the ball into the “fish’s mouth.” If the kid makes it in, award his or her team a point. Continue playing until every kid has had a turn. The team with the most points wins. Play again, leading kids to stand a little further away from the box.

SAY “Today, we will learn how **GOD SENT JONAH TO NINEVEH TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO TURN FROM THEIR SINFUL WAYS.** However, Jonah chose to disobey. As a consequence, we’ll see how God sent a powerful storm to stop Jonah from fleeing. We’ll learn how the storm threatened Jonah’s life, but God was merciful to save him by sending a great fish to swallow him.”

OPTION 2: THE NATIONS



Before the session, write the names of 5–10 countries on one side of individual index cards. On the other side, write a couple of facts about the people of that country. For example, for Thailand, you may write how the official language of the people is Thai and how many people in the country are Buddhist. Display a world map or a globe. Invite volunteers to draw an index card. Then invite kids to read the information on the card and find the country on the map. Continue until every card has been drawn.

SAY “In the Old Testament, one of the nations of the world was called Assyria, and its capital city was Nineveh. The people of Nineveh did not worship God. In fact, they were considered enemies of God and His people. Today, we will learn how God is holy and will punish those who do not trust in Him and continue in sin. However, we’ll also see how God is merciful and calls all people to repent. Out of His love and mercy, God called Jonah to preach against Nineveh, warning them to turn from their evil ways.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m excited to share a story from the Bible with you. It’s important to remember that the Bible is God’s true Word. In fact, the story we will hear was even taught by Jesus when He was on earth (Matthew 12:39-41). Today, we will be in the book of Jonah. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Assist kids in finding Jonah.]

As we’ve learned about the kings of Israel, we’ve also learned about some of the prophets God called to share His words with the people. Today, we will learn about another prophet named Jonah. **GOD SENT JONAH TO NINEVEH TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO TURN FROM THEIR SINFUL WAYS.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and ask God to help us receive His truth: ‘Dear God, thank You for Your mercy and Your desire to save people from their sin. Please help us turn from sin and trust in Jesus. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Our big picture question is, **Why do Christians continue to sin?** What is the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.** Let’s say that together one more time: **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.**

Even God’s prophets continued to struggle with sin while they were on earth. In our story, we’ll see how Jonah sinned and was disobedient to God’s command. Only Jesus was perfectly sinless. But even if we struggle with sin, we don’t have to let sin rule over us. Through faith in Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome sin. And we have hope: those who trust in Jesus will one day no longer struggle with sin. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ We’ve seen how the Northern Kingdom of Israel had evil kings—Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, and Ahab—who led the people to turn away from God. In His mercy, God sent prophets like Elijah and Elisha to remind the people to turn from sin and worship Him. The prophets spoke God’s words and performed miracles to show the people that God is the one true God. Today, we will learn how **GOD SENT JONAH TO NINEVEH TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO TURN FROM THEIR SINFUL WAYS.** ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Jonah. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JONAH, PROPHET TO NINEVEH

“ God told Jonah to preach to the great city of Nineveh, because their sin against God was great. Jonah immediately got up to try to flee from the Lord’s presence. He did not want to go to Nineveh, so he boarded a boat to Tarshish.

The Lord sent a great storm on the sea. Jonah knew the storm was because of him and that if his shipmates would throw him overboard, the sea would calm down and they would live. The sailors picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the waves stilled, and the wind stopped.

The Lord sent a large fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah prayed and thanked God for sending the fish to save him. Then the Lord commanded the fish to spit Jonah up on dry land. God said again to Jonah, “Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach the message that I tell you.” This time, Jonah obeyed.

When Jonah got to Nineveh, he walked around the city and shouted, “In forty days, Nineveh will be destroyed!” The people of Nineveh believed what God said through Jonah. They fasted and dressed in sackcloth, from the rich to the poor. Even the king fasted and put on sackcloth, saying, “Each of us must turn from our evil ways. Who knows? Maybe God will turn from his anger, and we will not die.” God saw the actions of the Ninevites and did not destroy them.

This made Jonah very angry. He prayed to God and said, “God, this is why I ran away from Nineveh! I knew that you are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.”

Jonah traveled outside the city and sat down to see if God would change his mind and destroy the city after all. God caused a large plant to grow up to give him shade. Then God caused the plant to die, so that the sun beat down on Jonah’s head. Jonah was angry.

God said, “You cared about the plant, which you did not plant or grow. Can’t I care about a city full of people who don’t know right from wrong?”

Christ Connection: Jonah spent three days in a fish so that the people of Nineveh could hear God’s message, turn from sin, and be saved. Jesus was in the tomb for three days so that we could hear and trust the gospel, turn from sin, and be saved. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Read it: Invite a kid to read Exodus 34:6-7 when you tell how Jonah knew God is gracious and compassionate. Remind kids that these were words God declared about Himself to Moses. Share how God will punish sin, but He also shows grace and forgiveness to those who repent of sin.

Use movement: Perform motions and movements that correspond to the story as you tell it.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “**GOD SENT JONAH TO NINEVEH TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO TURN FROM THEIR SINFUL WAYS,** but Jonah ran away instead. God's plans cannot be stopped. How did God intervene in Jonah's disobedience? Look at Jonah 1:14-17. **[Ask a volunteer to read Jonah 1:14-17.]** God sent a storm which made the sea rage. As such, Jonah was tossed into the sea rather than be allowed to flee to Tarshish. Yet, in God's mercy, He saved Jonah by sending a great fish to swallow him.

While Jonah was in the belly of the fish, he prayed to God. What did Jonah say about God's saving grace? Look at Jonah 2:7-9. **[Ask a volunteer to read Jonah 2:7-9.]** Jonah said that God heard his prayer and saved him from death. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Jonah spent three days in the belly of the fish, but God did not leave Jonah. God saved Jonah's life and reminded Jonah of His faithful love.

Jonah finally obeyed God's command and went to Nineveh. Jonah warned the people of God's judgment on sin. The Ninevites, believing Jonah's words and hoping God would be merciful, chose to repent of their sin. God saw they turned from their evil ways, and He showed mercy. Why did Jonah become angry? Look at Jonah 4:2. **[Ask a volunteer to read Jonah 4:2.]** Jonah knew God was gracious, compassionate, and slow to anger. The Ninevites were Israel's enemy, and Jonah wanted God to punish them. God tried to help Jonah understand His grace and compassion through the plant, which at first provided shade and then died. Jonah was concerned for the plant, even though he didn't plant it. But Jonah didn't care for the people in Nineveh whom God made in His image. God cared for them, and in love, showed them mercy when they repented. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “Jonah spent three days in a fish so that the people of Nineveh could hear God's message, turn from sin, and be saved. Jesus was in the tomb for three days so that we could hear and trust the gospel, turn from sin, and be saved. Have you repented of your sin? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 14, Session 2” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How do you repent?
2. Why do Christians continue to repent of sin?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Point to Iran on a world map. Display the "George and Joan Braswell Photo" as you tell the kids about the missionaries and about life in Iran.

SAY “Dr. George and his wife, Joan, were missionaries in Iran from 1968 to 1974. At the time the



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Braswells lived in Iran, people mostly traveled on camels, motorcycles, and motorbikes. Now Iran has many options for transportation, including: buses, trains, taxis, and subways. Common foods in Iran include: lamb, rice, yogurt, bread, and fruit. Also, tea is an important part of the Iranian culture. Iranians drink tea after each meal and in between meals. They put sugar cubes in their mouths and sip the tea through the cube. ”

Discuss how missionaries learn about the people and the culture when they travel to a new country. Share how learning about the culture is one way missionaries can form relationships with people and find common interests. Pray for missionaries in Iran, asking God to help them form relationships and share the gospel with those they meet.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Deuteronomy 13:4 together.

SAY “ God is the one true God and worshiping Him is what is best for us. The commands in our key passage are not burdens but are ways we show that we love God and have experienced His love in our lives. ”

Invite kids to create motions for each of the action verbs in the key passage such as follow, fear, keep his commands, listen, etc. Then invite kids to say the key passage while performing the motions they created.

Lead kids to sing “Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for loving us. We know we are sinners, so thank You for sending Jesus to save us. Please help us turn away from sin and help us follow You. Help us obey Your commands. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Jonah 2. Remind kids that Jonah boarded a boat to travel from Joppa (F9) to Tarshish. Then after being spit out by the fish, Jonah went to Nineveh (E11). Tell kids that the book of Jonah is in the Minor Prophets division.

Consider comparing the Old Testament Mediterranean Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where this story took place. (Tip: Using a world map, locate the areas in and around modern-day Mosul, Iraq [E11].) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Jonah 2:6-9 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Even after disobeying God, Jonah experienced God's mercy. Inside the belly of a fish, Jonah experienced God's saving grace. God saved Jonah so he could go and preach to Nineveh.

Yet unlike Jonah, who was disobedient, Jesus willingly obeyed God by laying down His life. Then He was placed in the tomb. Jesus compared Jonah's experience in the belly of the fish to the three days He would spend in the tomb. Jesus is greater than Jonah, because His perfect obedience to follow God's plan to die for people's sin provides us with the only way to be forgiven of sin. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ God showed mercy to the sailors, Jonah, and Nineveh. How is God merciful to us? ”

Tell kids that when God shows mercy, He is not giving a punishment we deserve. Remind kids that we all deserve death because of our sin. Through Jesus, God shows mercy to sinners who deserve punishment for sin. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 2:4-5.)

SAY “ How can we show mercy to others? ”

Share how God desires for His people to demonstrate mercy to others because they have received His mercy through Jesus. Jonah was angry that his enemies received mercy, but the Bible tells us that God desires that we show mercy even to our enemies. Tell kids that we can show mercy by being quick to forgive, keep no record of wrongs, and show kindness even when others wrong us. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Luke 6:35-36.)

SAY “ How did you see God's patience in today's story? ”

Discuss how God was patient with Jonah when he ran away and when he was angry. God was patient with Nineveh, delaying His judgment by giving them 40 days to repent of their sins. Share how God is patient, but we shouldn't take His patience for granted. God provides us with opportunities to turn from sin and trust in Jesus. We don't need to delay seeking His forgiveness. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 2:3-5.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: JONAH POP CUP

Before the session, cut the bottom out of a plastic cup. Then poke a hole near the lip of the cup. Create a cup for each kid. Provide kids with a cup. Guide kids to thread the yarn through the hole near the lip of the cup. Then guide kids to tie a knot in the yarn, so the yarn stays in place. Direct kids to crumple up a small piece of paper into a ball. Lead kids to wrap the yarn around the ball several times, and then tie the yarn securely to the ball.

Next, cut off the top of the balloon. Stretch the balloon over the bottom of the cup. Invite kids to decorate the cup as a fish and draw a stick figure on the ball to represent Jonah. Once assembled, kids can maneuver the cup, trying to get "Jonah" inside the cup. Then kids can pop "Jonah" out by pulling back on the balloon.

SAY “Jonah was swallowed by a great fish because of God’s mercy. While in the belly of the fish, Jonah prayed to God and remembered how God alone provides salvation.”

OPTION 2: TURN AROUND



Review today’s Bible story by playing a true or false game. If the statement is true, kids will step forward. If the statement is false, kids will remain in place. Consider using the following statements or create your own:

- Jonah tried to run away to Bethel. (false, Nineveh)
- The storm stopped when Jonah was thrown into the sea. (true)
- Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days. (true)
- Jonah said God would destroy Nineveh in 60 days. (false, 40 days)
- God showed mercy to the people of Nineveh. (true)
- God sent a cloud to give Jonah shade. (false, plant)

SAY “GOD SENT JONAH TO NINEVEH TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO TURN FROM THEIR SINFUL WAYS. When we repent of sin and trust in Jesus, we are saved.”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for His mercy and salvation. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Greater than Jonah” on the activity page.

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

HOSEA



KEY PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 13:4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why do Christians continue to sin? Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Israel was not faithful to God, but God was faithful to Israel, just as Hosea loved his wife even when she didn't love him. God is faithful to save all sinners who repent and trust in Jesus.

STORY POINT: God warned and showed His love to Israel through the prophet Hosea.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Although God had been faithful to the people of Israel, they were not faithful to God. The Israelites continued to disobey God, following worthless idols and acting wickedly. Israel even turned to other nations during times of trouble, trusting in the power of men over God. God warned Israel of their unfaithfulness and showed His faithful love through the prophet Hosea.

Though Israel was far from Him, God wanted to show a picture of His great love and relentless pursuit of His people through Hosea's life. God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer, explaining that she would not be faithful to him. Yet, God told Hosea to remain committed to her.

Hosea obeyed God and married Gomer. As God said, she was unfaithful to Hosea and left their family. In the same way, the Israelites were unfaithful to God, worshiping idols, acting corruptly, and loving violence. However, God's love did not relent, and He promised a day when He would forgive and restore them (Hosea 14:4-9).

To show the Israelites the depth of His love, God told Hosea to show love to Gomer, even though she had chosen a life of adultery (Hosea 3:1). Again, Hosea obeyed God. He paid the debts Gomer owed and brought her back home to their family.

On the cross, Jesus paid our debt of sin, restoring our relationship with God so we might be with Him forever. When we repent and turn to Jesus, He brings us into His family. Even when believers act unfaithfully, Jesus continues to be faithful and show unending love.

Encourage boys and girls to ask Jesus for forgiveness and praise Him for His unfailing love. God promised to be faithful to Israel, and He continues to be faithful to us. Point children to God's promises to Israel and the way these words of hope echo into Jesus' promises to followers of Christ to heal them, love them, and not be angry with them (Hosea 14:4).



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Search It" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- half-sized chenille craft stems, 2 per kid
- pony beads or other small beads

Session Starter (Option 2)

- index cards, 9



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ball

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- poster paper

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Old or New?" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Hosea, Prophet to Israel" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 14, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- 5-by-5-inch piece of cardboard, 1 per kid
- various spools of yarn
- 7 inch long strips of ribbon

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- inflated balloon



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What would you do if a friend said that he or she didn't want to be your friend anymore? How would that make you feel?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Search It” activity page.

SAY “Great job finding all the words! In our story today, we will see how Hosea, a prophet, was sent to search for his wife and bring her back.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: CROSS RING

Lead kids to take a half-sized chenille craft stem and place three pony beads on each side of the middle, leaving space between each set of three beads. Tell kids to take another half-sized chenille craft stem and twist it around the space between the beads. Then place two pony beads on each side of the chenille craft stem you just twisted. Tie off any extra chenille craft stem behind the beads. Push the beads on the first chenille craft stem toward the middle. The beads should make a cross shape. Lead kids to wrap the remaining ends of the first chenille craft stem around their finger to create the ring. Cut off any excess chenille craft stem.

SAY “Did you know that wedding rings symbolize commitment between a husband and a wife? They remind each person about the promise they made to be faithful and love one another. Today, we will learn about a wife named Gomer, who was not faithful to her husband, Hosea. We'll see how their relationship symbolized Israel's relationship with God. Your cross rings can remind you of God's faithfulness through Jesus, who died so we can be with God forever.”

OPTION 2: PAY IT BACK



Before the session, write the following dollar amounts on nine index cards: \$20, \$0, \$5, \$15, \$10, \$20, \$5, \$15, \$10. Tape the cards, face down, on a wall in a 3x3 grid. Form kids into two teams.

Tell kids they have a debt of \$50. Each team will work together to choose three cards, trying to receive an amount of at least \$50 in total from the three cards to pay back their debt. Choose which team will go first. If a team's three cards add up to at least \$50, they receive a point. Play again, as time allows, and consider increasing the debt owed.

SAY “Today, we will hear learn about a woman named Gomer who was unfaithful to her husband Hosea. But Hosea showed love to Gomer and paid her debt so she could return home. Gomer's marriage was like a picture of Israel's unfaithfulness to God. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** All people have been unfaithful to God because we are sinners. We all owe a debt we can never pay back. But in His love, God sent Jesus to pay the debt for us. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m happy you are here today to study God’s Word. Today, we will be in a book called Hosea. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Assist kids in finding Hosea.]

Over the past few weeks, we have learned about Israel’s wicked kings and some of the prophets God sent to warn His people about their sin. Today, we will learn about another prophet named Hosea. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and ask God to help us receive His truth: ‘Dear God, thank you for loving us even though we sin and don’t show love to You. Help us know and trust in Your faithfulness and give us the desire to be faithful like You. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ What is our big picture question? [Allow responses.] **Why do Christians continue to sin?** What is the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.** Let’s say that together one more time: **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.**

In our story, we will be reminded how God’s people continued to sin against Him, even though God was always faithful to them. God provided for Israel, cared for them, and displayed great patience, but Israel continued to turn away from Him. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** Through Jesus, God has showed us His perfect faithfulness and how we can be forgiven of our sin. When we trust in Jesus, we have the hope of one day being sinless like Him. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Although the Northern Kingdom continued to worship idols, God provided prophets to warn His people—and even foreign nations—to turn away from their sin. God sent Elisha to speak His words and perform miracles, proving that God is the one true God. Then God sent to Jonah to Nineveh to preach against their sin. While Nineveh repented and was spared God’s judgment, the nation of Israel refused to worship God alone. Today, we will see how God sent Hosea to warn Israel of their unfaithfulness to Him and remind them of His faithful love. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Hosea. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Hosea, Prophet to Israel.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

“ Israel was not faithful to God. They worshiped other gods, sinned by disobeying Him, and looked to other nations to help them in times of trouble.

God wanted to show His people a picture of how much He loved and wanted to be with them, even though they had been unfaithful to Him. He spoke to His prophet Hosea, saying, “Go and marry a woman who will not be faithful to you, and be committed to her.”

Hosea followed God’s direction and married a woman named Gomer. They had three children together. Sadly, Gomer was not faithful to Hosea and left the family.

Gomer’s unfaithfulness to Hosea was like Israel’s unfaithfulness to God. Israel had taken the grain, oil, silver, and wine that God had given to them, and had used it to worship Baal. They pursued false gods and looked to other nations to save them. **But God still loved Israel and forgave them for their lack of faithfulness.**

To show Israel how much He loved them, **God told Hosea to go get Gomer back. “Show love to Gomer, even though she hasn’t shown love to you, just as I have loved the Israelites.”**

Hosea obeyed God. He paid back what Gomer owed others and brought her back to live with him, and she agreed.

Hosea pled with the Israelites to come back to God, just as Gomer had come back to Hosea. Hosea reminded Israel of how God had loved Israel like a child, providing and caring for their every need. **But he also told the people that there would be consequences for their sin. He said, “Come, Israel, return to the LORD, for you have stumbled in sin. Repent and turn away and return to the LORD. Ask him for forgiveness and praise him. No one else can save us but God.”**

Through Hosea, God promised to be faithful to Israel. God also said that one day His people would seek the Lord their God. “I will heal them,” said God, “I will love them. I will not be angry with them anymore.”

Christ Connection: Israel was not faithful to God, but God was faithful to Israel, just as Hosea loved his wife even when she didn’t love him. God is faithful to save all sinners who repent and trust in Jesus. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Tell kids that when they hear the word “unfaithful,” they should make an exaggerated sad face. When they hear the word “faithful,” they should make an exaggerated happy face.

Define it: Tell kids that the word *faithful* means steadfast, dedicated, dependable, and worthy of trust.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Long before the kingdom was divided, God had chosen and called Abraham. Through Abraham’s family came the nation of Israel. God made a covenant, or promise, to be Israel’s God. Over the generations, Israel’s disobedience grew and grew, but God continued to be faithful. The book of Hosea is centered on Israel’s disobedience and unfaithfulness toward God. But **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** How did God demonstrate His faithfulness to an unfaithful people through the prophet Hosea? Look at Hosea 1:2. [Ask a volunteer to read Hosea 1:2 aloud.] God told Hosea to marry a woman who would not be faithful to him. Gomer, Hosea’s wife, left their family. Through Hosea and Gomer, God was helping His people see what they were like: they were unfaithful to God.

How was Israel unfaithful to God? Look at Hosea 4:1-2,12-13. [Ask a volunteer to read Hosea 4:1-2,13-14 aloud.] God said His people showed no truth, no faithful love, and no knowledge of God. They cursed, lied, murdered, stole, and turned away from God. They worshiped idols and made sacrifices to false gods. But even with all their disobedience and unfaithfulness, God still loved His people. He wanted to be with them and forgive them.

How did Hosea demonstrate God’s love for Israel? Look at Hosea 3:1-5. [Ask a volunteer to read Hosea 3:1-5 aloud.] God told Hosea to go find Gomer and show her love, even though she had left him. Hosea paid Gomer’s debt and brought her back to live with him, telling her that she must be faithful to him. God acted the same way toward His people. He had shown them faithful love, no matter their unfaithfulness. While they had consequences for their sin, God continued to help His people and care for them.

Like Israel and Gomer, we are all unfaithful to God. We sin and go astray. But God is faithful to save all sinners who repent and trust in Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the debt we owe because of our sin. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven and safe with God forever. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Think about your life. How have you shown unfaithfulness to God? In what ways have you let sin lead you away from God? God has never stopped loving you and has made the way for you to be forgiven. Through faith in Jesus, God will forgive our sin and give us eternal life. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 14, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why does God forgive us even though we don’t deserve it?
2. How does Jesus’ perfect, sinless life get credited (or given) to us?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ Dr. George and Joan Braswell were missionaries in Iran from 1968 to 1974. Dr. Braswell was the only Christian professor at a Muslim university. This opportunity to teach at the university opened up doors for Dr. Braswell to build relationships with many Muslim people and share the good news about Jesus. ”

Share how Joan had an opportunity to share about the country of Iran with elementary students. Joan explained that people in Iran often work with looms to weave beautiful carpets. Tell kids that carpets from Iran are known as Persian rugs. Share how these looms can be quite large because they make carpets to fill a room.

Invite kids to practice weaving by creating a "loom" from a 5-by-5-inch piece of cardboard. Cut slits at the top and bottom of the cardboard equal distance apart. Then lead kids to take yarn and tape the end of the yarn to the back of the "loom." Kids will then bring the yarn through the first slit, turn the "loom" over, and bring the yarn down to the matching slit at the bottom. Repeat, wrapping the yarn through all the slits. Next, weave 7 inch long strips of ribbon in an under-and-over pattern across the "loom." Repeat, weaving until the desired length is achieved.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, post an Allergy Alert Poster for kids who may have a latex allergy. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Deuteronomy 13:4 together.

SAY “ In our story, we learned that Israel did not follow the Lord, fear Him, or love Him. But God never stopped loving His people. Hosea reminds us of God's faithful love and how He was still working to send a Savior to rescue people from sin. ”

Form two teams and instruct each team to stand on one side of the room. You may use tape to mark the middle of the room. Then toss an inflated balloon to one team and challenge them to bop the balloon back and forth with the other team. Lead kids to say the words of the key passage each time they bop the balloon. Challenge teams to say the entire key passage without the balloon hitting the floor.

Lead kids to sing “Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for being patient with us. Thank You for Your faithfulness, even when we sin and mess up. Please help us remain faithful to you. In Jesus' name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Hosea 9. Explain that Hosea is part of the Minor Prophets, which means it is a short book when compared to the Major Prophets, not that it is less important.

Consider pointing out the location of Israel (E5) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Hosea 9:3,7 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud. Use these verses to point ahead to next week's session.

SAY “ The story of Hosea reminds us of God's faithful love to Israel. Like Hosea was faithful to an unfaithful wife, God never abandoned His people, who continually sinned against Him. However, God is just and will punish sin. Hosea prophesied about the coming exile—the time when the people of Israel would be taken from their land and be held captive in Assyria. The exile would serve as a punishment, but it would also be a time for Israel to repent and remember God's faithfulness. Even though Israel would be sent away, God would continue to bring about His promise to bring the Savior into the world. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Is every person unfaithful to God? Why? ”

Tell kids that yes, every person is unfaithful to God. We all sin, choosing to reject God and His ways. Discuss how we sometimes willfully disobey God, knowing what is right but choosing to do what is wrong. Share how we also sin by not being able to perfectly live up to God's standards, even when we try our very best. Remind kids that through Adam and Eve, sin has spread to all people. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:12.)

SAY “ How can we be faithful to God? ”

Discuss how we can only be faithful to God by trusting in Jesus, who was always faithful. Tell kids that we will never be perfectly faithful until Jesus returns, but through Jesus, we are counted as righteous because His faithfulness is given to us. Remind kids that the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and helps us to follow God's ways. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Thess. 5:23-25.)

SAY “ How has God shown faithfulness to you, even when you've sinned? ”

Answers will vary. Remind kids that God is faithful, and He has shown perfect faithfulness through Jesus. Discuss how God's promises will never fail. Those who have trusted in Jesus as Savior and Lord can know that God will accomplish everything He has promised: salvation from sin, eternal life, peace, joy, wisdom, provision, goodness, and so on. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 1:9.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: RETRIEVE IT



Choose one kid to be the guard. Form kids into two teams. Place the guard at one end of the room and give him a ball to guard. At the other end of the room, tell teams to line up single file. Then send one kid from each team to get the ball away from the guard. If the kid gets the ball, award a point to her team. If the kid is tagged, she is out. Repeat, sending kids from each team until all kids have had a turn. Play again, choosing a new kid to be the guard.

SAY “ Your team's goal was to retrieve the ball from the guard. In our story, we learned how God sent Hosea to get his wife back. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** This reminds me of how God sent Jesus to seek and save sinners. We all have been unfaithful to God, but in His love, God sent Jesus to warn us about sin and to save us from the punishment we deserve because of our sin. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven forever. ”

OPTION 2: FAITHFUL FOREVER

Write the word Faithful on a poster paper. Form kids into four groups and assign each group two letters from the word Faithful. Provide each group with several papers and instruct them to cut the papers into heart shapes. Invite groups to write a character trait of God or a promise of God on their papers that match their assigned letters. For example, for the letter F, kids may write forgiving. Or for the letter I, kids may write infinite or indwells believers with His Spirit. Lead groups to tape the hearts next to the letters.

SAY “ God showed faithful love to His people, even when they sinned against Him. In love, God sent the prophet Hosea to warn the people of their sin and to tell them to return to Him. God shows us faithful love through His Son, Jesus. Because of Jesus, believers can experience God's promises and know He will always be with them. God desires that we share His faithfulness with others through the gospel story. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His faithfulness and for sending Jesus to save us from our sin. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Old or New?” on the activity page.

THE NORTHERN KINGDOM WAS DESTROYED

2 KINGS 17



KEY PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 13:4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why do Christians continue to sin? Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The kingdom of Israel was destroyed because of their sin. We all sin against God and deserve death, but God sent Jesus to die in our place. Because of Jesus, those who trust in Him will never be removed from God's presence.

STORY POINT: God judged Israel's sin, and Assyria destroyed the Northern Kingdom.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Hoshea was an evil king in the long line of the evil kings of Israel. In Hoshea's ninth year as king, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, put Hoshea in prison, and moved all the Israelites to Assyria. The kingdom of Israel was officially destroyed.

Why was Israel destroyed? Although God had been patient, the Israelites witnessed their kingdom crumble because of their unrelenting sin. God had freed Israel from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh and brought them out of the land of Egypt. The Lord loved the people of Israel, performed many miracles, and commanded them to worship Him alone. The people of Israel were meant to be set apart as the Lord's people, but they worshiped false gods and lived like the nations around them.

Through the prophets, God repeatedly warned the Israelites to repent and turn back to the one true God, but the people did not listen. The Lord warned the people, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commands and statutes according to the whole law I commanded your ancestors" (2 Kings 17:13). The Israelites, however, did not listen. Instead, they rejected God and His covenant and followed worthless idols.

As the people ignored God's warnings, He became angry. God judged Israel's sin and allowed Assyria to destroy the Northern Kingdom. He rejected them and cast them out of His presence. The king of Assyria moved the people of Israel out of their land and brought foreigners to live in Israel's land and cities.

The kingdom of Israel was destroyed because of the Israelites' sin. God's gracious patience lasted for years, but the people failed to repent and seek the Lord wholeheartedly. Like Israel, we sin, and all sin deserves death. Those who fail to repent and trust in Christ will be separated from God forever. Yet, the unfailing love of the Lord has provided the way for people to be forgiven and live with God forever. Those who trust in Christ will escape God's punishment of sin. They will not only find forgiveness but also receive the Holy Spirit who empowers them to live for God.

As you prepare for this week's session, pray for boys and girls to see their need for Jesus. Pray also that you would be able to clearly communicate the gift of the Savior, thanking God for sending Jesus to restore what we have broken through our sin and disobedience. Rejoice together in the fact that Jesus died and rose again so that we might be saved from certain destruction!



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Message in a Maze" activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- painter's tape
- construction paper in 8 different colors



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- alarm clock
- smoke detector
- timer

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Captivity Crossword" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "The Northern Kingdom Was Destroyed" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- past Bible Story Picture Posters (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 14, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- world map

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- dry erase board
- dry erase marker and eraser



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Have you ever moved to a new city? If so, what was it like? What do you think is the hardest part about moving to a new place?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Message in a Maze” activity page.

SAY “Today, we will learn how **GOD JUDGED ISRAEL’S SIN, AND ASSYRIA DESTROYED THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.**”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: JUDGE JUSTLY



Tell kids that to be just means to act in ways that are morally right and fair. Choose one kid to be the “judge.” Form the remaining kids into two groups. Assign one group to be the “prosecutor.” They will try to prove guilt. Assign the other group as the “defender.” They will try to prove innocence. Provide the groups with a scenario, such as a kid was accused of cheating on a test by a teacher. Provide details for kids, such as the kid usually does poorly on tests, finished the test quickly, was more attentive in class, didn't do the homework prior to the test, and was seen studying in the library. Allow each group time to develop their case. Then give each group two minutes to present their case to the judge. Finally, invite the judge to announce a guilty or innocent verdict.

SAY “God is always a just Judge because He is perfectly good and fair. He always does what is right. While God is patient, He will judge sin. Today, we will see how **GOD JUDGED ISRAEL’S SIN, AND ASSYRIA DESTROYED THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.**”

OPTION 2: CAPTIVE!

Use painter's tape to create eight squares on the floor, large enough to fit 4 or 5 kids standing inside. If space is limited, create less squares. Tape a different color sheet of construction paper to each square (yellow, blue, green, purple, red, orange, black, and white). Choose one kid to be it. Guide it to face away from the squares and close his eyes. When you say “Go,” invite kids to choose a color square to stand in. It will then call out a color. Kids standing in that square are “taken captive” and are out. If no kids are in the square, play continues. Play as time allows, removing a color square each round until only two squares remain.

SAY “Today, we will learn how God judged Israel's sin and allowed the nation of Assyria to destroy Israel. When the Assyrian king invaded Israel, he also took the people captive and brought them to Assyria.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m excited to see you and study God’s Word with you. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will be in the book of 2 Kings as we learn how the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the nation of Assyria.

As we have learned, God sent prophets to His people warning them over and over again of their sin. But the nation of Israel did not repent; they continued to worship idols and rebel against God. In our story, we’ll see how **GOD JUDGED ISRAEL’S SIN, AND ASSYRIA DESTROYED THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and ask God to give us ears to hear and hearts that believe His words: ‘Dear God, You are good and always do what is right. You are right to judge sin. Help us turn away from our sin and remember that through Jesus we can be forgiven of our sin. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Why do Christians continue to sin? What is the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.** Let’s say that together one more time: **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.**

The people of Israel were God’s chosen people, and He loved them. But Israel continued to sin and follow after false gods. God gave them many chances to turn back, even sending His prophets to warn them of the consequence of their sins. Yet, they continued in their sin. Like the Israelites, we are all sinners, and even when we become part of God’s family, sin remains a temptation. But we have hope: one day, God will make believers sinless like Jesus! ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ God had done so much for His people. He saved them from slavery in Egypt, gave them a good land, fought their enemies, and made His presence known through the temple. But Israel continued to turn away from God and worship worthless idols. God provided prophets to warn His people to repent of their sin. Last week, we learned how Hosea was a prophet to Israel and how his marriage to Gomer was a picture of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God. Today, we will learn how the nation of Israel would suffer the consequences of their sin. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Kings 17:1-24. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Northern Kingdom Was Destroyed.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE NORTHERN KINGDOM WAS DESTROYED

“ King Hoshea (hoh SHEE uh) was another evil king in the long line of evil kings of Israel. He would also be the last.

In Hoshea’s ninth year as king, the king of Assyria captured Samaria in Israel, put King Hoshea in prison, and moved all the Israelites to Assyria. The kingdom of Israel was destroyed. This happened because of the sin of the Israelites.

God brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, freeing them from slavery. He performed powerful miracles for them and took care of them. He gave them instructions, including a commandment to worship Him alone.

But instead of worshiping God alone, they worshiped other gods. They acted like the people who once lived in the land the Lord gave them. They created altars to other gods and burned incense to them on every high hill and under every green tree. **They did evil things, just like the nations who lived there before them.**

God warned His people over and over through prophets. He said, “Turn from your evil ways. Keep my commandments and the law sent to you through the prophets.” But the people did not listen. They were stubborn like their ancestors. They rejected God and the covenant He made with the people at Mount Sinai. **They followed worthless idols.**

As the people ignored God’s warnings over and over, God became very angry. He rejected them, removed them from His presence, and handed them over to the nation of Assyria. The king of Assyria moved all the Israelites out of the land and brought in foreign people to live in Israel’s cities.

The kingdom of Israel was destroyed. Only the tribe of Judah remained.

Christ Connection: The kingdom of Israel was destroyed because of their sin. We all sin against God and deserve death, but God sent Jesus to die in our place. Because of Jesus, those who trust in Him will never be removed from God’s presence. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Use Bible posters: Hold up past Bible Story Picture Posters as you review God’s past actions for His people.

Active listening: When you teach how the people were stubborn and did not listen, invite kids to place their hands over their ears.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ The Northern Kingdom of Israel had wicked kings. No king led the people in the ways of the Lord or encouraged them to do what is right in His eyes. In fact, they did the opposite. The kings led the people to worship idols, to be unjust toward their neighbors, and to act violently. Who did God send to warn His people about their sin and the consequences that would come if they did not repent? Look at 2 Kings 17:13. **[Ask a volunteer to read 2 Kings 17:13 aloud.]** God warned Israel through His prophets—men like Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and Hosea. The prophets told God's people to turn from their evil ways and worship Him alone.

Even though the people heard the prophets' warnings, they did not repent. What happened because Israel continued to sin? Look at 2 Kings 17:6. **[Ask a volunteer to read 2 Kings 17:6 aloud.]** **GOD JUDGED ISRAEL'S SIN, AND ASSYRIA DESTROYED THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.** The king of Assyria invaded the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He took the Israelites captive and moved them to Assyria.

How did God feel about Israel's sin? Look at 2 Kings 17:18. **[Ask a volunteer to read 2 Kings 17:18 aloud.]** God was angry at their sin and removed them from His presence. God is right to be angry at sin because He is holy and sin is always wrong. The right punishment for sin is death. We all sin against God and deserve death, but God sent Jesus to die in our place. Because of Jesus, those who trust in Him will never be removed from God's presence. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Israel was stubborn and did not turn from their evil ways. God's Word warns us today to not be stubborn and harden our hearts (Hebrews 4:7). The Lord invites us to repent of our sin, trust in Jesus, and be forgiven. Those who trust in Jesus will never experience the punishment their sin deserves. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 14, Session 4” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How can we not be afraid of the coming judgment?
2. Why is important not to delay trusting in Jesus?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Remind kids that Dr. George and Joan Braswell were missionaries to Iran from 1968–1974. **[Point to Iran on a world map.]** Tell kids that missionaries who travel to different countries often have to learn the language of the people. Ask kids if they can speak more than one language or if they know any words of a different language.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

SAY “ Before Dr. Braswell and Joan left for Iran, they were given the opportunity to study the Iranian language called Farsi. The Braswells were originally going to study Farsi in the United States, but they decided to learn the language in Iran. While beginning their mission work in Iran, they also started to learn Farsi so they could share the gospel in the language of the Iranian people. ”

Invite kids to say “Salâm” (Sah lõm), which means hello in Farsi. Pray for God to send more missionaries to Iran to share the good news of Jesus with the Iranian people.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Deuteronomy 13:4 together.

SAY “ Moses gave these words to God's people. But Israel did not follow God, fear Him, keep His commands, listen to Him, worship Him, or remain faithful to Him. However, through the Holy Spirit, Christians can receive help to do all of these things. ”

Write the key passage on a dry erase board. Say the key passage aloud together. Then erase one word and lead kids to say the passage with the missing word. Repeat, until every word has been erased.

Lead kids to sing “Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for loving us even when we don't love You. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for our sin and giving us the opportunity to trust in Him for salvation. Please help us not give into our sin nature but follow You instead. In Jesus' name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 2 Kings 17. Tell kids that 2 Kings 17 gives us the last details of the Northern Kingdom of Israel before it was destroyed. Share how the remaining chapters in 2 Kings detail the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Consider pointing out the location of Samaria (F10) and Assyria (D11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Kings 17:23 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ The Lord's warnings through His prophets came true: Israel was destroyed because of their sin. God's words always come true, and He will punish sin. If people choose to turn away from God and continue living in sin, not only will they be held captive to sin, but they will suffer eternal death as the punishment for their sin. But there is freedom in Jesus! When we trust in Jesus, God saves us and invites us into His family forever. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What are the consequences of sin? ”

Guide kids to see that sin has consequences. When we make sinful choices, it still hurts us and those around us. The punishment of sin is eternal death and separation from God forever. Remind kids that Jesus took the punishment for sin when He died on the cross so that anyone who trusts in Him will be saved.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 4:17-18.)

SAY “ Read Revelation 3:19-20. What is the discipline of God meant to lead us to do? ”

Share how God's discipline is an act of love and is meant to lead people to repentance. When we face consequences for our sin or have our sin revealed, it is an opportunity to seek God's grace and forgiveness in Jesus. Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus will live with Him forever. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 3:11-12.)

SAY “ How does the Bible help us see our sin and repent of it? ”

Tell kids that the Bible is living and active. God uses His Word to reveal what is in our hearts and expose our sin. When we read Scripture, God's true words help us see Him and His Son, Jesus, and how they are perfect. The more we see God's perfection and holiness in Scripture, the more clearly we can see how we fall short of His glory. As we see our sin, we can repent of it, trusting God will forgive us through faith in Jesus.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 4:12.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: ALERT!

Display the alarm clock, smoke detector, and timer. Hold up each item one at a time and ask kids how the item alerts us to something. For example, the timer might alert you to let you know your food is done cooking in an oven. Additionally, you could talk about other alert sounds we may hear, such as a fire alarm, tornado siren, doorbell chime, police siren, and so forth. Emphasize how these sounds are often loud so we don't ignore the alert.

Invite a kid to read Mark 1:15 aloud.

SAY “ God's prophets were like an alert, warning people to repent. But the people ignored them. So, **GOD JUDGED ISRAEL'S SIN, AND ASSYRIA DESTROYED THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.** When Jesus came to earth, He also told people to repent of their sin. Unlike the prophets, who had no power to save people, Jesus can! The good news is that Jesus Christ came to take the punishment we deserve and save us from our sin. Today, don't ignore God's voice to repent and believe. ”

OPTION 2: CHAIN BREAKER



Form kids into groups of three or four and provide each group with two pieces of paper, scissors, and a stapler. Challenge kids to form the longest paper chain they can using the sheets of paper. Tell groups to count how many paper links are on their chain. Invite groups to line up their paper chains on the floor to see whose is the longest. Congratulate that group. Add up all the paper links from each group's count. Then staple the chains together to form one long chain. Emphasize how our sins are greater than the length of the chain. Next, guide two leaders to hold the chain, stretching it as far as it will go. Lead kids to run through and break the chain.

SAY “ In our story, God's people were taken captive because they kept sinning against God. The Bible teaches us that sin enslaves us like a chain wrapped around our hearts. God sent Jesus to rescue us from sin and free us from its power. Jesus breaks the chains of sin and gives us new life with God forever. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for sending Jesus to rescue us from our sin. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Captivity Crossword” on the activity page.

UNIT 15 | SESSION 1

JUDAH'S GOOD KINGS

2 KINGS 18-19; 2 CHRONICLES 14-24



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Judah's good kings led the people to God and away from sin. Yet when they died, the people returned to their sinful ways. Jesus is our good King who died and rose again, and always leads us to God and away from sin.

STORY POINT: Judah's good kings worshiped God.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Good kings and evil kings—both were seen throughout the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Depending on who was king, the people would either be led to worship the one true God or led the opposite direction toward idolatry and wickedness.

King Asa sought to do what was good in the eyes of the Lord and removed the places of idol worship. He commanded the people of Judah to worship and obey God. But once Asa died, Ahaziah became king and led the people to once again turn to idolatry. When he died, his mother Athalia made herself queen by force. She ruled as queen for six years and did evil in God's sight.

The priest Jehoiada planned to overthrow the evil queen. His men captured her and made one of Athalia's young sons, Joash, king. Following Jehoiada's lead, Joash tore down the temple of Baal and restored worship in the temple to God alone.

After Joash came King Hezekiah. He also sought to do what was right in the sight of the Lord. After cleaning out the temple so the people could worship, Hezekiah invited Judah and Israel to celebrate the feast of the Passover. Afterward, everyone went back to their towns and destroyed their places of worship to false gods.

When the king of Assyria came to attack Judah, King Hezekiah prayed to God, and Judah was saved. God sent an angel to destroy the Assyrian army.

The last good king of Judah was Josiah. King Josiah was only eight years old when he came into power, but he also did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Under his rule, the people renewed their covenant with God and remained faithful to Him.

The good kings of Judah led the people to worship the one true God. The Lord raised up kings who would lead Judah to turn away from idolatry and keep His commands. Judah would serve God under the rule of the good kings but returned to their sinful ways after the good kings died. Yet, despite the people's inconsistent worship of the Lord, God proved faithful to preserve His people. The line of Judah would one day give rise to the King of kings, who would make the way for people to worship God in spirit and truth.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "The Southern Kingdom" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- index cards, 10
- paper crowns, 2

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ball
- music
- timer (optional)



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- map
- GPS device
- compass

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- dry erase board and marker
- index cards, 3 per group

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Connect It" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Judah's Good Kings" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- dry erase board and marker (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 15, Session 1" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "North African and Middle Eastern Peoples Intro" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- construction papers, 1 or 2 per kid
- stickers
- stapler



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What is something good you have seen someone do for someone else? Did it encourage you to do something good for someone? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “The Southern Kingdom” activity page.

SAY “Judah was in the Southern Kingdom, and the capital of Judah was Jerusalem. Today, we will learn about some of the kings of Judah who ruled from Jerusalem.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: MATCH THE KING

Before the session, write the following names and Bible references on individual index cards: Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:20), Nadab (1 Kings 15:25), Baasha (1 Kings 15:33), Ahab (1 Kings 16:29), Hoshea (2 Kings 17:1), Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:23), Asa (1 Kings 15:9), Joash (2 Kings 12:18), Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1), Josiah (2 Kings 23:28). Create two paper crowns and label one Israel and the other Judah. Tape the crowns to a wall.

Form kids into five groups and give each group two cards and tape. Distribute Bibles to groups and invite them to look up the references on their cards. Next, direct kids to determine if the name on the card was a king of Israel or Judah. Lead kids to tape their cards under the correct crown on the wall. Review the correct answers.

SAY “We've learned about the wicked kings of Israel: Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Ahab, and Hoshea. Today, we will learn about Judah's good kings: Asa, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah. We'll see how **JUDAH'S GOOD KINGS** WORSHIPED GOD.”

OPTION 2: GET RID OF IT



Guide kids to form a large circle. Play music and direct kids to toss a ball around the circle. Tell kids that when the music stops, whoever has the ball will be out. Explain that their goal is to get rid of the ball as quickly as possible before the music stops. Play as time allows.

Consider playing an alternative version where kids work together to get the ball around the circle in 30 seconds or less. The last kid with the ball will toss it outside the circle before time runs out.

SAY “In this game, the goal was to get rid of the ball. Today, we will learn about Judah's good kings and how they had a goal: to get rid of idol worship among the people. The kings of Judah weren't 'good' because they were sinless. Rather, they were good because they wanted to turn away from sin and worship God alone. We'll see how these kings led God's people to do what was right in His eyes.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m excited you’re here. If you have a Bible with you, will you hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, as we learn about Judah’s good kings, we will be in the Old Testament books of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

In our story, we’ll see how **JUDAH’S GOOD KINGS WORSHIPED GOD**. [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray: ‘Dear God, thank You for helping us to do what is right and good. Please help us remember that You alone are worthy of worship. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ We have a new big picture question to learn: **What is God like?** What do you think God is like? [Allow responses.] God is so great! We could spend forever learning more about Him and what He is like. To help us summarize what God is like, we will learn the answer: **God is holy, good, and loving.**

When we say God is holy, we mean He is without sin. God is good because He always does what is right and true. And God is loving because He cares about us and has demonstrated His love through Jesus, who died for our sins. When we learn about what God is like, we recognize how only He is worthy of worship. Only God is holy, good, and loving all of the time. Today, we will see how Judah’s good kings understood how God alone is to be worshiped. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ We’ve learned how the Northern Kingdom of Israel was led by wicked kings. Not one king led the people to worship God and turn away from sin. God gave His people many opportunities to return to Him, but the people of Israel continued to reject God. What happened because they did not repent? [Allow responses.] Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians, and the people were taken captive to Assyria. The only kingdom that remained was the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Today, we will learn how **JUDAH’S GOOD KINGS WORSHIPED GOD** and led the people away from idolatry. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Kings 18–19; 2 Chronicles 14–24. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Judah’s Good Kings.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JUDAH’S GOOD KINGS

“ The Southern Kingdom of Judah had several good kings that led the people to follow God, worship Him, and turn away from sin.

King Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of God. He removed the places that the people worshiped false gods. He commanded the people of Judah to worship God and obey His laws. Asa rebuilt the altar that was in front of the Lord’s temple. Asa and the people of Judah promised to seek the Lord with all their heart and all their soul.

When an enemy army came, Asa prayed, saying, “Lord, we are counting on you to help us. You can give us victory.” The Lord answered his prayer, and Asa was loyal to God his entire life.

Years later, a wicked king named Ahaziah (ay huh ZIGH uh) became king over Judah. When Ahaziah died, his mother, Athaliah (ath uh LIGH uh), made herself queen by force. One of Ahaziah’s young sons, Joash, was hidden from Athaliah by his sister. Athaliah ruled as queen for six years and did evil in God’s sight.

The priest Jehoiada (jih HOY uh duh) made a plan to overthrow Queen Athaliah. They captured her and placed a crown on Joash’s head, making him king. Under the leadership of Jehoiada the priest, Joash tore down the temple of Baal and brought back the proper worship of God in the temple. Throughout the time the priest Jehoiada instructed him, **Joash did what was right in the Lord’s sight.**

Many years after Joash, Hezekiah became king over Judah. He did what was right in the Lord’s sight just as his ancestor David had done. One of his first acts as king was to clean out the temple so the people could worship and make sacrifices to the Lord. The people brought so many sacrifices that the priests needed help to prepare all the offerings.

Hezekiah invited Judah and Israel to celebrate the feast of the Passover. They enjoyed praising God and feasting so much that they celebrated for two weeks! After the feast, everyone went back to their towns and tore down the altars and places of worship to false gods.

After this, the same king of Assyria who had destroyed Israel came to attack Judah. The Assyrians said, “Do you think your God will save you? All the other kingdoms we defeated thought so, too.” **King Hezekiah prayed to God, and God**

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Tell kids to give a thumbs up when they hear how the kings led the people to do what was right.

List them: Write the names of Judah’s good kings on a dry erase board when you mention them in the story.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

sent an angel to destroy the Assyrian army. Judah was saved!

The last good king of Judah was Josiah. Even though he was only eight years old when he became king, he did what was right in the eyes of God. He smashed and tore down the places of idol worship. As he was cleaning out the temple, he found the book of the law from Moses. When Josiah heard the words of the law, Josiah was sad, because the nation was not obeying God's commands. **Josiah read the words of the law to all the people at the temple. Then Josiah and the people promised to keep the commands found in the book of the law.** The people renewed the covenant with God and stayed faithful to God while Josiah was alive.

Christ Connection: Judah's good kings led the people to God and away from sin. Yet when they died, the people returned to their sinful ways. Jesus is our good King who died and rose again, and always leads us to God and away from sin. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ The Southern Kingdom of Judah had wicked kings like Israel, but unlike Israel, they had several good kings. What did the good kings of Judah have in common? [Allow responses.] **JUDAH'S GOOD KINGS WORSHIPED GOD.** They led the people to know God's commands and follow His ways. The good kings of Judah helped the people understand that God alone is to be worshiped.

How did each king show they worshiped God? [Allow responses.] Asa removed idols, rebuilt the altar of the Lord's temple, and trusted in God to save His people from their enemies. Joash repaired the temple so the people could worship God in it. Hezekiah cleaned out the temple and led the people to celebrate the Passover again. Josiah tore down places of idol worship and read God's laws to the people so they could know His commands.

Judah's good kings led the people to God and away from sin, but when the kings died, the people fell back into idol worship. Jesus is our good King who died and rose again. Jesus always leads us to God and away from sin. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Unlike the kings of Judah, we have a king that never dies. King Jesus defeated death when He rose from the grave. When we trust in Jesus, we have the power to turn away from sin and obey His good commands. Jesus changes our hearts so we desire to only worship God. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 15, Session 1” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Is there anything we can do to be good enough for God?
2. How does trusting in Jesus help us want to turn away from sin?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Point to Northern Africa and the Middle East on a world map.

SAY “ In Northern Africa and the Middle East, there are more than 800 different people groups present. Many of the people groups are unreached people groups, where people have never heard about Jesus and there are no churches or missionaries to help the people hear about Him. ”

Play the missions video, which helps kids see the culture and people of Northern Africa and the Middle East. Note: There is no narration for this video. It is meant to show snapshot images of the people and cultures of North Africa and the Middle East. Ask kids to name some animals they saw in the video. Then ask kids what some of the people were doing in the video.

Tell kids that many countries in this part of the world have governments that are hostile to the gospel and will not allow missionaries to openly tell people about Jesus. Explain that missionaries have to be cautious and creative when trying to reach people for Jesus. Tell kids that missionaries have started sharing the gospel through digital and online platforms in these dangerous places. Pray for missionaries serving in Northern Africa and the Middle East, asking God to give them boldness, courage, and peace. Pray the people in this region will have curiosity about Christ and be open to hearing the gospel.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

Provide each kid with one or two pieces of construction paper. The number of papers will vary based on the circumference of each kid’s head. Demonstrate how to cut zig zags across the top of their paper to make a crown shape. Before taping or stapling their crowns in a circle, direct kids to write out the key passage on their crowns. Then invite kids to decorate their crowns using stickers and markers.

SAY “ Our key passage serves to remind us that God is good. We made crowns to remember that God is a good King who always leads us to what is right. ”

Lead kids to sing “The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for providing Jesus as the perfect King who always does what is right and good. Please help us to turn away from sin and follow Your ways. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 2 Chronicles 15. Tell kids that 2 Chronicles primarily focuses on the kings of Judah, retelling their stories from 1 and 2 Kings.

Consider pointing out the location of Judah (14) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Chronicles 15:12-15 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ After Asa removed the idols of the land and rebuilt the altar of the temple, the people made sacrifices to God and worshiped Him. Asa led the people to make a covenant with God, promising to seek God with all their heart and soul. They genuinely desired God, and God was with them.

Like Asa removed the idols and led the people in worship, Jesus removes the guilt of sin from our lives and leads us to worship God rightly. When we trust in Jesus, our desires change. We want to obey God. We want to love God above everything else. God will be with followers of Jesus and help them live for Him. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Why were the kings in our story considered good? ”

Tell kids that the four kings were good because they led the people to worship God and turn away from sin. Share how they weren't sinless—only Jesus is sinless—but they did seek to do what was right in God's eyes. Share how God was faithful to give His people good kings who ruled rightly. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 25:8-12.)

SAY “ Josiah became king at eight years old and followed God's ways. What does this tell us about who can follow God and His ways? ”

Encourage kids to understand that people of all ages can follow God and obey His commands. Share how God does not show partiality. Anyone can turn to Him, repent of sin, and follow His ways. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Tim. 4:12.)

SAY “ Why do you think the people returned to their sinful ways after each good king died? ”

Discuss how the good kings were able to set a good example, but they were unable to change the people's hearts. Tell kids that we all need God to change our hearts because we are sinful. When we trust in Jesus, God changes our hearts so that we desire to turn away from sin. While Christians will still sin, they recognize their sin, repent, and ask God to help them live for Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ezek. 11:19.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: TOOLS OF NAVIGATION

Display the following navigation tools: map, GPS device, compass. Hold up each item and ask kids how the tool is used. Offer explanations if kids are unsure. Discuss how these tools help guide us to the location we want to go. Share how they can also help us avoid places we don't want to go.

Invite kids to take turns holding the compass. Emphasize how the compass always points to the earth's North Pole. Challenge kids to work together to use the compass to find the directions of north, south, east, and west in your room.

SAY “ Navigational tools, like compasses, guide people in the right direction. The good kings of Judah guided people in the right direction because **JUDAH'S GOOD KINGS WORSHIPED GOD**. When we look to Jesus and His Word, we can be guided in the right direction too. Jesus will always lead us to what is good and best. He is our perfect King who guides us to life in Him. ”

OPTION 2: GOD IS...



Write the following Bible verses on a dry erase board: Exodus 34:6; Leviticus 11:45; Psalm 25:8; 1 Samuel 2:2; Matthew 19:17; 1 John 4:9-10. Then provide kids with three index cards and lead them to write holy, good, and loving on individual cards. Challenge kids to look up the Bible references and determine which reference matches each card. Kids can write the reference on the corresponding cards. Review the answers.

(Exodus 34:6, loving; Leviticus 11:45, holy; Psalm 25:8, good; 1 Samuel 2:2, holy; Matthew 19:17, good; 1 John 4:9-10, loving)

SAY “ **What is God like? [Allow responses.]** **God is holy, good, and loving.** The good kings of Judah recognized what God is like and how only He is worthy of worship. As we learn about God through His Word, our hearts can desire to love Him above everything else. In Jesus, we see how God is holy, good, and loving and how He has made the way for us to be holy, good, and loving like Him. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

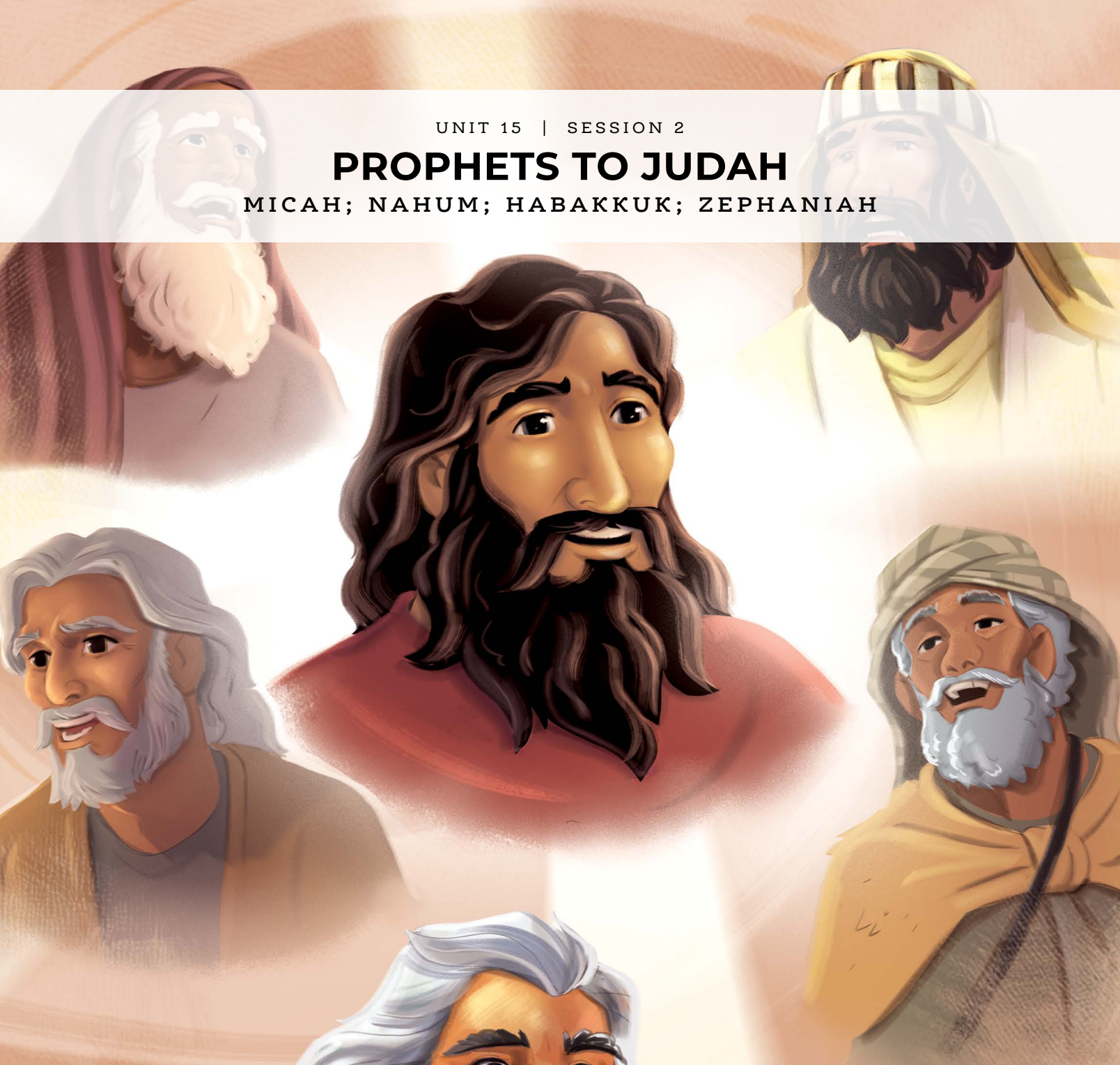
Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His holiness, goodness, and love. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Connect It” on the activity page.

PROPHETS TO JUDAH

MICAH; NAHUM; HABAKKUK; ZEPHANIAH



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

CHRIST CONNECTION: God sent prophets to His people to warn them to repent of their sin and turn to God. Jesus gave the same message, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” When we trust in Jesus, we are restored to a right relationship with God and have the hope of eternal life.

STORY POINT: God sent prophets to tell the people to repent of their sins.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

While the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been destroyed by Assyria, the Southern Kingdom of Judah remained. During the years prior to Babylonian captivity, God continued to send prophets to Judah who called the people to repent of their sin. Even though the prophets pronounced the impending captivity, they also offered hope to the people: God would restore His people and provide salvation.

The prophet Micah spoke to the leaders of Israel regarding their ill-earned wealth. Micah called the leaders of Israel to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Micah also shared a message of future hope: one day, God would send a new King who would be born in Bethlehem and rule over the restored people of God.

Nahum was another prophet sent to testify to God's judgment on sin. Nahum described how God would judge Assyria for its bloodshed, evil, and injustice. Nahum's message was a reminder to be faithful to God and a warning to not act like other evil nations, like Assyria.

Zephaniah begged the people to turn away from sin while there was still time. He showed that God will judge all the evil nations along with Judah.

Habakkuk spoke directly to God, asking Him why He would not stop the violence and sin of the people of Judah. God told Habakkuk that He will indeed judge the people and will bring destruction to the nation through Babylon. While Babylon would destroy Judah, Habakkuk also said he would celebrate in the Lord. Even in desolation and despair, God's people could rejoice in the hope of salvation.

God sent prophets to share the message of judgment, repentance, and restoration. Jesus willingly took on our judgment so we could turn from our sin and be restored to Him. When we trust in Jesus we are restored to a right relationship with God.

This week, encourage kids to see God's goodness through His Word. Like the prophets to Judah proclaimed a message of hope, the Word of God shares good news: Jesus died and rose again to save people from sin and death. Rejoice in the God of salvation.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "A Common Message" activity page



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "The Prophets to Judah" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 15, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- world map

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- sticky notes



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- cardboard box
- "Shadow Puppets" printable
- craft sticks
- flashlight
- parchment paper
- strong tape

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- index cards, 24

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Forgiveness through Jesus" activity page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “ How would you share an important message with friends? Would you tell them in person, call them on the phone, write them a letter, or share another way? Why? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “A Common Message” activity page.

SAY “ Today, we will see how the prophets of Judah had an important message to share with God’s people. God sent prophets to tell His people to repent of their sin. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: WHAT’S THE MESSAGE?

Form kids into four groups and provide each kid with a piece of paper and a pencil. Assign a message 8–10 words long for each group to write on their papers, making sure each kid writes one or more words of the message on his or her paper. For example, if the message is *Jesus is God’s Son who died for our sins*, and the group has five kids, four kids would write two words each and one kid would write one word on his or her paper.

Next, place each group in a corner of the room. Tell kids to fold their paper into a paper airplane. Then direct groups to toss their paper airplanes to a group you assign them. Once the group receives the paper airplanes, they will work together to unfold the papers and place the words in the correct order to determine the message. Invite groups to read the message they received aloud.

SAY “ Today, we will learn how God had a message to send to His people. **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS.** Let’s get ready to learn more about these prophets. ”

OPTION 2: BAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS



Challenge kids to respond with a message of good news for every message of bad news you share. For example, when you say, “The dentist said you have a cavity,” the good news may be, “The cavity can be filled so your tooth can be saved.” Consider using the following examples, or create your own:

- “The dentist said you have a cavity.”
- “Your dog ran away.”
- “You have the flu.”
- “You forgot your homework at home.”
- “We are all sinners who deserve death.”

SAY “ It gives us hope when we receive good news in response to bad news. The Bible shares bad news with us: we are all sinners who deserve death. But the Bible also responds with good news: Jesus died and rose again to save us from sin. Today, we will learn how God sent prophets to share bad news with His people: they sinned and would face consequences for their sin. But the prophets also shared good news: God would send a perfect King who would restore His people. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m excited you’re here. If you have a Bible with you, will you hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will learn about prophets God sent to His people. We’ll be in the books of Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. [Invite kids to find each of these books in their Bible.]

In our story, we’ll see how **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray: ‘Dear God, thank You for warning people of their sin. Help us turn away from sin and follow You. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Do you remember the big picture question we learned last week? [Allow responses.] **What is God like?** What was the answer we learned? [Allow responses.] **God is holy, good, and loving.**

Today, as we learn how **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS,** we’ll clearly see how God is holy, good, and loving. God’s holiness does not tolerate sin. He will punish sin because He is holy. We also see how God is good and loving because He graciously warns people of their sin. He doesn’t ignore their sin but helps people see their need to repent and be saved. God is also good and loving because He has provided the way for people to be saved from their sin. As the prophets preached a message of repentance, they also shared hope: one day, a new King would be born who would save people from their sins. Faith in King Jesus is the only way to be saved from sin. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ God alone is to be worshiped because only He is worthy of worship. God commanded His people, the Israelites, to worship Him alone. But they did not worship God wholeheartedly. They turned to idols like the nations around them. After the kingdom split into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, God’s people were led by many wicked kings who did what was evil. Last week, we learned that Judah had some good kings who did what was right in God’s eyes. Yet, when the good kings died, God’s people returned to worshiping idols. God even sent prophets to warn His people to turn away from their sinful ways. Eventually, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the people were exiled to Assyria. Today, we will learn how God continued to send more prophets to tell the people of Judah to repent of their sins. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Micah; Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Prophets to Judah.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

PROPHETS TO JUDAH

“ God loved His people so much that He sent messengers, or prophets, who called the people to repent of their sin so they could be restored to a right relationship with God.

The prophet Micah said that God was going to judge the wicked leaders of His people. They had become rich by stealing from others. **Micah warned that God would send foreign nations to destroy Israel, and called the people to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Micah’s message also included hope—he said that God would one day send a new king from the line of David,** who would be born in Bethlehem and rule over the restored people of God.

Years later, God gave a message for the prophet Nahum to share. The main message of Nahum’s writings is this: “God is slow to anger and great in power. He will not let the wicked go free.” Nahum comforted God’s people and gave them hope by showing that God will punish their enemies, the evil nations and empires that love violence. Nahum’s message was also a warning to not act like these nations, and to remain faithful to God.

Zephaniah was another prophet. He saw that the nation of Judah was going to be judged for worshiping idols and that God would send a great nation to destroy the city of Jerusalem. **Zephaniah begged the people to turn away from sin while there was still time, so that they might be spared from God’s righteous anger against sin.** Zephaniah said that God will also judge all the evil nations and Judah because they acted like these evil nations.

The prophet Habakkuk was also sent to the people of Judah. Habakkuk spoke directly to God, asking Him why He would not stop the violence and sin of the people of Judah. God responded by saying He would gather the army of Babylon to destroy Judah. **God shared that even though this disaster would come, the righteous will live by faith in Him. Habakkuk ends his message by pleading for God to be merciful to His people. Even though God’s judgment would come, Habakkuk said: “I will celebrate in the Lord; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!”**

Christ Connection: God sent prophets to His people to warn them to repent of their sin and turn to God. Jesus gave the same message, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” When we trust in Jesus, we are restored to a right relationship with God and have the hope of eternal life. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Share it: Tell kids that God sent more than just four prophets to Judah. Share how Joel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were also prophets to Judah.

Emphasize it: Emphasize how Jesus is the only perfect Prophet because He is the Word of God made flesh who always spoke truth and obeyed God.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Like the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the Southern Kingdom of Judah turned away from God and worshiped idols. The people of Judah acted wickedly and did not love justice and mercy. They did not walk with God and follow His ways. But God loved His people, and **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS**. Who were the four prophets in our story? [Allow responses.] Today, we learned about Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk. Each prophet spoke God's words to the people, reminding them to turn away from sin.

God is just, and He will not allow evil to go unpunished. What did the prophet Micah say about God's coming judgment? Look at Micah 3:9,12. [Ask a volunteer to read Micah 3:9,12 aloud.] The prophet Micah said that Judah's leaders were evil and unjust. Because of their sin, Jerusalem would be destroyed. The prophet Nahum also said God would judge the evil nations who hurt Israel. But what did Nahum say about those who trust in God? Look at Nahum 1:7. [Ask a volunteer to read Nahum 1:7 aloud.] God is good, and He cares for and protects those who trust in Him.

Zephaniah and Habakkuk also gave messages of God's coming judgment on the people's sins. But they also gave the people hope. Though the nation of Babylon would come to destroy Jerusalem and take the people captive, God promised to restore His people. He promised a day when they would be rescued. What did Zephaniah say God would one day do? Look at Zephaniah 3:16-18. [Ask a volunteer to read Zephaniah 3:16-18 aloud.] God would be among His people, like a warrior who saves. He would bring His people back from Babylon. Habakkuk also trusted in God's salvation, even though judgment would come. Habakkuk said, 'I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.'

Like the prophets' message of repentance, Jesus gave the same message, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.' When we trust in Jesus, we are restored to a right relationship with God and have the hope of eternal life. We don't need to fear judgment. Instead, we can rejoice in the God of our salvation. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS**, but the people's continued sin eventually led to judgment. God is patient and loving, but He is also just. Jesus' death on the cross showed God's love toward sinners because Jesus took our place. Jesus' death also showed God's justice for sin because Jesus experienced judgment for sin, even though He was sinless. Have you put your faith in Jesus? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 15, Session 2” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why were there multiple prophets in the Old Testament?
2. How does the Bible help us see our sin and need for Jesus?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Share how a woman named Rose desired to share Jesus with the people who lived in an area known as the Horn of Africa. **[Point to the Horn of Africa on a world map.]**

SAY “ Rose told the leadership at her church that she wanted to be a missionary to the people in Africa. The church's leadership knew they could not send her alone or provide all of her financial needs. Rose's pastor recruited 15 other churches across Mexico and Panama to support Rose as a missionary to the Horn of Africa.

When Rose arrived in Africa, she began to work with farmers who tend livestock. The farmers live in a harsh environment that is very dry. The area they live in also has no running water or electricity. But despite the difficult environment, Rose is committed to sharing Jesus. The people Rose shares the gospel with can often be hostile to the gospel. But, by God's grace, some have trusted in Jesus. ”

Pray for Rose as she shares the gospel with people who don't always want to hear it. Pray for the churches who support the mission work in the Horn of Africa.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

SAY “ God is good! Even though sin deserves punishment, God is good to everyone because He has provided people with the way to be saved from sin and death through His Son, Jesus. ”

Cover one word of the Key Passage Poster with a sticky note. Lead kids to say the key passage aloud. Continue covering words, one at a time, until every word is covered. Repeat, saying the key passage aloud each time.

Lead kids to sing “The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for Your loving kindness toward us. We are sinners in need of Jesus. Thank You for the Bible, which helps us see our sin and our need of Jesus. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to the Table of Contents. Point out the books of the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel) and the books of the Minor Prophets (the 12 remaining books). Invite kids to find the books of the Minor Prophets from the Bible story: Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk.

Consider pointing out the location of Judah (14) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Micah 6:8 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ The prophet Micah reminded the people of Judah to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. All the prophets told the people to turn away from sin and follow God. The people of Judah acted like the nations around them, rather than like God. God called His people to follow Him and show others what He is like by the way they live. Instead, the people acted wickedly and worshiped idols.

Today, believers in Jesus are called to show others what God is like. Through faith in Jesus, we live to bring God glory and help people recognize that **God is holy, good, and loving.** ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What was the similar message the prophets told the people of Judah? ”

Remind kids that **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS.** Share how each prophet warned of God's judgment on sin, both for Judah and also for the nations. Discuss how God is just and holy; He will punish sin. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Thess. 1:8-9.)

SAY “ Did the prophets share any message of hope? What? ”

Discuss how God also promised hope for His people, even though they would face judgment. Through the prophets, God shared that His people would be restored to their homes and that the Messiah would come to save those who trust in Him. Tell kids that salvation is available to those who repent and trust in Jesus, the promised Messiah. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Zech. 9:9.)

SAY “ What sins do you need to repent of? Pray, ask God to reveal any sin, and repent of it. ”

Allow time for kids to sit in silence, praying to God. Then discuss how repentance is an act of God's grace as He shows us our sin so we can confess it and be forgiven. Encourage kids to continually confess sin to God, asking Him to help them turn away from it and follow Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 32:5.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: RETELL THE STORY

Before the session, create a shadow puppet theatre by using a cardboard box. Tape parchment paper over the open end of the box to create a “screen.” Cut a large square on the box opposite the parchment paper, so the puppets can fit through. On a side of the box, cut a hole just big enough for a flashlight to go through. Place a tablecloth on a table. Then place the theatre on the table. Kids will stand behind the box to perform the show.

Print a copy of the “Shadow Puppets” printable. Cut out the puppets. Glue each shadow puppet to a craft stick. Then cut out the script into strips. Assign a kid to each role in the story and provide the kids with the script strips for their role. Invite kids to retell the story by reading the script while holding up the corresponding puppet.

SAY “**GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS.** God sent Jesus to tell us to repent of our sins and trust in Him for salvation.”

OPTION 2: MINOR PROPHETS



Before the session, write the names of the 12 Minor Prophets on individual index cards. Create two sets. Shuffle each set of cards and place them facedown in two piles at one end of the room. Place a Bible next to each pile. Form kids into two teams. Invite a kid from each team to a pile of cards. When you say, “go,” challenge kids to pick up a card and find the book in the Bible. When the kid finds the book, she will close the Bible, run back to her team, and another kid will go to the pile of cards. Play continues until one team is the first to find all 12 books.

SAY “These 12 books are not less important, but because they are shorter, they are referred to as the Minor Prophets. God used many prophets to tell His people to turn away from sin. God is just, but He is also kind to offer forgiveness. He wanted His people to listen to His words and repent. Jesus is our perfect Prophet, who not only shared a message of repentance but is the only way for people to be saved.”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His kindness and salvation through Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Forgiveness through Jesus” on the activity page.

GOD PROMISED A NEW COVENANT

JEREMIAH 17; 31



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Like God's people, we all have sinful hearts that do not obey God or love Him rightly. Through Jesus' death on the cross, God made a new covenant. Those who trust in Jesus have their sin forgiven and have the law written on their hearts.

STORY POINT: God promised His people a new covenant and forgiveness of sin forever.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The prophet Jeremiah was a priest sent to speak the word of the Lord to His people. Jeremiah taught plainly about sin and how our disobedient hearts cannot be trusted. Jeremiah predicted God's judgment on Judah's sins through the nation of Babylon. Yet, Jeremiah also declared how God would make a new covenant with His people.

The people of Judah faced the same problem we face today: sin. Their failure to abide by and uphold the law was a constant reminder that they were sinful and fell short of God's standards. Jeremiah told the people that those who put their trust in mankind are cursed because men are sinful and imperfect. He also said that people cannot save themselves. But Jeremiah shared good news. He told the people that the person who trusts in the Lord will be strong and healthy, like a tree planted by water (Jeremiah 17:8).

Through Jeremiah, the Lord spoke of His everlasting love toward His people. He shared the promise of gathering His people, watching over them, and turning their mourning into joy. God promised His people a new covenant and eternal forgiveness of sin.

The old covenant required complete obedience to the law; yet no one can be justified by the law (Galatians 2:16). In His grace, God did what we cannot do. He promised a new covenant which would be accomplished by Him. Jesus is the fulfillment of the new covenant; He fulfilled the requirements of the law on our behalf. As Paul wrote, "For what the law could not do since it was weakened by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering" (Romans 8:3).

Forgiveness that lasts forever only comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:11). As you prepare to teach on God's promise of a new covenant, take time to thank Him for His forgiveness in your life. Remind boys and girls of how God changes believers' hearts to hearts that love and obey Him.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Can You Trust It?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- dry erase boards, 2
- dry erase markers, 2
- erasers, 2

Session Starter (Option 2)

- heart-shaped papers with sentences printed in size 1 or 2 font, 4
- magnifying glasses, 4



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- items or pictures of items that are considered outdated such as a floppy disk, a rotary phone, vintage can opener, bread box, VCR, etc.

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Better Promises" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "God Promised a New Covenant" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 15, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- world map

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- dry erase board
- dry erase marker



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “ If you could make anything that you own brand new again, would you? What would you choose to make new? Maybe a toy, bike, or art supplies. ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Can You Trust It?” activity page.

SAY “ Today, we will learn how God promised to provide the way for people's hearts to be made new and for sin to be forgiven. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: SINFUL HEARTS ERASED



Before the session, draw hearts on two dry erase boards, making sure the total number of hearts equals the total number of kids. Form kids into two equal teams. Challenge teams to send one kid at a time to write the word SIN in a heart. The team to have all kids fill every heart with SIN wins.

Then repeat the challenge, but this time direct teams to compete erasing each SIN. The team to erase all the SIN wins.

SAY “ We all have sinful hearts. Unfortunately, unlike our game, we cannot just erase our sin. There is nothing we can or cannot do to take our sin away. Thankfully, God has provided the way for sin to be erased forever. Today, we will learn how **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE A NEW COVENANT AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN FOREVER.** ”

OPTION 2: DO YOU SEE AND UNDERSTAND?

Before the session, in size 1 or 2 font, print the sentences, *Our hearts are deceitful, and we cannot understand them. But God knows our hearts.* Print four copies. Cut the papers into heart-shaped pieces. Form kids into four groups and ask groups to read their sentences aloud. The font should be small enough that kids cannot read the sentences.

Then give each group a magnifying glass. Invite kids to use the magnifying glass to read their sentences. Discuss how the magnifying glass helped them see so they could begin to understand what was on the paper.

SAY “ Today, we will learn that our hearts cannot always be trusted because they are sinful. We don't always understand why we have certain desires or behave the way we do. But God always knows our hearts. He doesn't need a magnifying glass to be able to see and understand what is in our hearts. We'll learn that when we look to Jesus and trust in Him, God forgives our sin and gives us new hearts that want to follow Him. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m excited you’re here. If you have a Bible with you, will you hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today’s Bible story has some good news! As we study from the book of Jeremiah, we will learn about a good promise God made and how that promise is for us today. [Invite kids to find Jeremiah in their Bible.]

As we hear our Bible story, we will learn that **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE A NEW COVENANT AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN FOREVER.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] As we have seen, God’s people continued to sin and couldn’t take away their sin on their own. But God had a plan. Through a Messiah, Jesus, God was going to make the way for people to be forgiven and have hearts that desired to love and follow God. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ What is God like? [Allow responses.] **God is holy, good, and loving.** The Bible is a book about God, and throughout the Bible, we continually see how God is holy, good, and loving. He always does what is right and shows that He loves His creation.

Today, we will see how God’s promise to provide a new covenant displayed His holiness, goodness, and love. A holy God must punish sin, but through the new covenant, sin would be forgiven because Jesus would take the punishment for sin. God’s forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus shows His goodness and love. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ We’ve learned about some of the prophets God sent to Israel to warn them of their sin, yet the people did not listen. Eventually, the Northern Kingdom was destroyed, and the people were taken captive to Assyria. Judah, the Southern Kingdom, was all that remained of God’s people. While Judah had some good kings who led the people to worship God, after the good kings died, the people returned to worshipping idols. God sent prophets to Judah to tell them to repent of their sin. Today, we will learn about another prophet, Jeremiah, who told God’s people to repent and also shared the hope of a new covenant. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Jeremiah 17:1-10; 31:31-34. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Promised a New Covenant.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

GOD PROMISED A NEW COVENANT

“ Before Babylon came and attacked Judah, God sent a prophet named Jeremiah to speak His words to God’s people. Jeremiah said, “The sin of the people of Judah is like words carved into a stone—it can’t be simply wiped away.”

Jeremiah shared more of God’s words, saying, “The person who trusts in other people is cursed, because people are sinful and imperfect. People cannot save themselves. **The person who trusts in the LORD, however, will be strong and healthy, like a tree planted by water.**”

Through Jeremiah, God also said, “Our hearts are deceitful, and we cannot understand them. **But God knows our hearts,** and God is trustworthy. He gives each person what they deserve according to their character.”

Even though people have sinful, deceitful hearts, Jeremiah shared how God promised to make a new covenant with His people. Jeremiah said, “**Look, the days are coming when I will make a new covenant with my people.** It will be different from the old covenant I made with them when I freed them from Egypt. They broke that covenant, but they will not be able to break this one. **I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. All my people will know me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive them and never remember their sin.**”

Christ Connection: Like God’s people, we all have sinful hearts that do not obey God or love Him rightly. Through Jesus’ death on the cross, God made a new covenant. Those who trust in Jesus have their sin forgiven and have the law written on their hearts. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Review it: Review the old covenant God made with His people at Mount Sinai. Tell kids that under the old covenant God’s people were commanded to obey all of God’s laws. Share how the old covenant displayed guilt because no one could perfectly obey God’s laws.

Recite it: Invite kids to recite Jeremiah 31:34 with you.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Jeremiah was a prophet to Judah during the reign of the last five kings of Judah: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Last week, we learned that Josiah was a good king who destroyed idols and led people to worship God. Yet, the Bible tells us that despite Josiah's godly leadership, God's people would still be punished for their sin (2 Kings 23:26-27). Jeremiah prophesied about this punishment, telling the people of Judah that God would send the nation of Babylon to destroy Judah and take the people captive (Jeremiah 25:8-9).

The people could not remove their sin or change their sinful hearts. Jeremiah said their sin was like words carved into stone. What did God say was wrong with the people's hearts? Look at Jeremiah 17:9. [Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 17:9 aloud.] God spoke through Jeremiah and said the people's hearts were deceitful. He said people cannot understand their own hearts because their hearts can't always be trusted. Our hearts lead us away from God because they are sinful.

But God gave the people hope. What did God promise His people, despite their sin? Look at Jeremiah 31:31,34. [Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 31:31,34 aloud.] **GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE A NEW COVENANT AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN FOREVER.** The old covenant required people to obey all of God's laws and follow it perfectly! But no one can be perfect because all people are sinful. However, the new covenant would be accomplished by God. By God's grace He would forgive their sin. He would give them new hearts that desire to obey Him.

Who came to earth to fulfill the new covenant? [Allow responses.] Jesus, God's sinless Son, came to earth, died on the cross for sin, and rose again. Jesus' death paid the price we deserve for our sin. Through Jesus' death on the cross, God made a new covenant. Those who trust in Jesus have their sin forgiven and have the law written on their hearts. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Like the people of Judah, we have sinful, deceitful hearts. We can never remove our sin. But by faith in Jesus, we can be forgiven of our sin. God changes believers' hearts to want to love Him and obey His commands. Those who trust in Jesus will live with God forever. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 15, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How can God be in all believers' hearts at the same time?
2. How can Christians show others that Jesus has changed their heart?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Point to the country of Libya on a world map as you tell kids about a man named Youcef who lives in Libya. Share how Youcef became a Christian after a friend gave him a copy of the New Testament to read.

SAY “ While Youcef was reading the New Testament, he learned about Simon of Cyrene and how he carried Jesus' cross on the way to Golgotha. As Youcef began to learn more about Simon of Cyrene, he found out that Simon was from the city of Cyrene in Libya.

Youcef wrote a book about his research. Since many people of North Africa are oral learners, he hopes to make his book into a movie so more people in North Africa will hear the gospel message. He hopes more people will believe the truths of the Bible and trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. ”

Pray for Youcef as he continues to share the hope of the gospel with the people of North Africa. Pray for the people of North Africa and that they would trust in Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, on a dry erase board, write the words of the key passage in random order all over the board. Then add in words that are not found in the key passage. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

SAY “ Our key passage reminds us that God is good and merciful. We don't deserve the forgiveness given to us through the new covenant, but in His mercy and goodness, He did. ”

Invite a volunteer to come to the dry erase board, find, and circle the first word of the key passage. Repeat for the remaining words. Play again as time allows, adding in new words in each time.

Lead kids to sing “The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for Your goodness and grace. Thank You for providing the only way to be saved from sin and death. Help us trust You and live for Your glory. In Jesus' name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Jeremiah 31. Tell kids that Jeremiah is known as the "weeping prophet" because he was so sad over Judah's sin and the coming judgment of God. Tell kids that the book of Jeremiah does give hope: God's love is forever and a new covenant would be made.

Remind kids that Jerusalem was the capital city of Judah. Consider pointing out Jerusalem (H5) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read Jeremiah 31:33 or ask kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ God promised that, through the new covenant, His words would be written on His people's hearts. This doesn't mean that those who trust in Jesus have God's words literally written on their hearts. Rather, it means that Christ followers love God's commands and obey them. Following God's commands doesn't save people, but it does show that believers have been transformed by God's saving grace. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Why do Christians desire to obey God's commands? ”

Share how believers have changed hearts and now recognize God's love for them through Jesus. They rightly see how God's commands are for their good and how following God's commands shows they love God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 119:127-128.)

SAY “ Have you ever heard the saying ‘trust your heart?’ Is this good advice? What does the Bible say about trusting our heart? ”

Remind kids that our hearts are deceitful, and we can't always trust them. Our hearts sometimes lead us to think that what we want or desire is good when it really isn't. Share how God does change our hearts to want to obey Him, but we must ultimately rely upon the Word of God and the Holy Spirit for true understanding. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Mark 7:21-22.)

SAY “ Why is the new covenant good news? ”

Discuss how under the new covenant people can find forgiveness of sins. Share how under the old covenant, God required complete obedience to every one of His laws. The bad news is that we can never obey God perfectly. We are sinners who fall short of His perfect standards. However, under the new covenant, Jesus perfectly obeyed the law for us. Now, when we trust in Him, we not only find forgiveness of our sin, but we are counted as if we lived perfectly like Jesus. Through faith in Jesus and the Holy Spirit, Christians obey the law to love God and people, but not as a way to be saved. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Gal. 3:23-24.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: OLD VS. NEW

Bring in items or pictures of items that are considered outdated such as a floppy disk, a rotary phone, vintage can opener, bread box, VCR, etc. Display the items or pictures. Ask kids if they know what each item is or what it was made to do. Then discuss examples of items that have replaced them.

SAY “ Many of these items were replaced because new and better items came along. The old covenant required perfect obedience, which was impossible. We learned how God promised a new and better covenant. When Jesus came, He fulfilled the new covenant by dying on the cross for our sin. The new covenant has better promises: forgiveness of sin forever and new life in Jesus. ”

OPTION 2: WRITTEN ON OUR HEARTS



Provide each kid with a lump of play dough or modeling clay. Direct kids to shape the play dough into a heart. Then using the eraser end of a pencil, invite kids to write a word on the heart from the Bible story such as new or Jeremiah or forgive. Consider providing kids with stamps for clay or various items to make different imprints. Allow kids to reshape their play dough and create various imprints.


SAY “ God knows our hearts. Even though people have sinful hearts, Jeremiah shared how God promised to make a new covenant with His people. Jeremiah said that in the new covenant, God would put His teaching on people's hearts. Before Jesus brought the new covenant, the people knew God's laws but their hearts had not been made new. But now, those who trust in Jesus are given new hearts that have the power to obey God rightly. Believers don't just know God's laws but have hearts that want to love and obey God. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for how He fulfilled the new covenant through Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Better Promises” on the activity page.



UNIT 15 | SESSION 4

JUDAH WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE

2 CHRONICLES 36

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The people of Judah continued to sin and were destroyed by Babylon. Even though God was patient, all sin deserves judgment. God's patience is meant to lead us to repentance. Those who repent and trust in Jesus will escape God's judgment.

STORY POINT: The people's consequence for disobeying God was exile to Babylon.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Growing up, you likely learned that disobedience has consequences. The people of Judah learned that the consequence for their disobedience to God was exile to Babylon. Despite their sin and unfaithfulness, God had been very patient with His people and was slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Not only had God sent the prophets to warn and encourage the people, but He also gave them good kings to help set an example. Still, the people continued to sin and worship idols. In today's text, the people of Judah once again find themselves in the hands of evil kings.

King Jehoahaz, son of the final good king, Josiah, was dethroned by King Neco of Egypt after only three months of ruling. King Neco made his brother, Jehoiakim, king in his place. Jehoiakim, however, was captured by King Nebuchadnezzar eleven years later. Next came his son, King Jehoiachin. He also did evil in the Lord's sight and was quickly replaced by Zedekiah.

King Zedekiah ruled over Judah for eleven years. He is described as a hard and stubborn man who refused to turn to the Lord (2 Chronicles 36:13). In the same way, the people and priests became more and more unfaithful to God.

Because of the sin of the people and their disregard for the many warnings they received, God allowed the Babylonians to destroy the nation of Judah. The Babylonians took all the treasures from the temple and palace and burned them down. This all came to pass just as God had said through the prophet Jeremiah. God's people were captured and taken to Babylon. Yet, hope remained: after 70 years, God promised to rescue and restore His people to their land.

When we disobey God, we also face consequences. For those who have not trusted in Jesus, the consequence is eternal death in hell. The good news is that Jesus bore the consequences for all who trust in Him. The Bible shares how Jesus "bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). Our sin has been paid for by His death and defeated by His resurrection.

As you prepare this week, remember that we serve a God who is faithful to keep His word. Pray for boys and girls to understand the consequences of their sin, so they can experience the gift of Jesus' forgiveness and eternal life.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Add It Up" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- paper cups, 1 per kid

Session Starter (Option 2)

- paper crowns, 4
- music



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- plastic cups, 25–30 per team

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Order the Events" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Judah Was Taken Captive" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Old Testament Mediterranean Map or modern-day map (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 15, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "A Moment of Vast Opportunity" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "The Lord Is Good (Psalm 145:9)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- sticky notes



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ When have you been patient with someone? When has someone been patient with you? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Add It Up” activity page.

| **SAY** “ God was patient with the people of Judah, giving them time to repent. But eventually, they were taken captive to Babylon for 70 years. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: DESTROY IT

Form kids into two teams. Line up each team at one end of the room. At the opposite end of the room, place paper cups in a row. Make sure to have a paper cup for each kid. On your start, challenge groups to send one kid to stomp on the first paper cup, “destroying” it. When the kids run back to their team, the next kid will go. Repeat, until one team is the first to “destroy” all their cups.

| **SAY** “ The cups in this game are like the city of Jerusalem in our story. God was patient with His people, giving them time to repent. But because God’s people continued to sin, God allowed the nation of Babylon to destroy Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem. **THE PEOPLE’S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEYING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.** However, we’ll see how God did not abandon His people. Even though their sin was great, God would keep His promise to rescue them and bring the Messiah into the world. ”

OPTION 2: REMOVE THE KINGS



Create four paper crowns. Lead kids to sit in a circle and begin playing music while they pass the crowns around. When the music stops, the kids holding a crown are out. When the group becomes less than five kids, play with only two paper crowns until one kid is the winner. (For smaller groups, play the game with fewer crowns such as two or three.)

| **SAY** “ Today, we will see how the last four kings of Judah were wicked. We’ll learn that God allowed the nation of Babylon to attack Judah. During these different sieges by the King of Babylon, each of these last four kings of Judah were removed as king. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I am happy to see you today. Did you bring your Bible with you? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Let's open our Bibles to the book of 2 Chronicles. [Assist kids in finding 2 Chronicles in their Bible.] As we hear our story, we will learn how Judah was taken captive by the nation of Babylon.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah had some good kings, but they also had many wicked kings. The people worshiped the idols of other nations and turned away from God. Even in their sin, God was patient. But eventually, God punished His people for their sin. In our story, we'll see how **THE PEOPLE'S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEYING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON**. [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let's pray: 'Dear God, help us hear Your Word and turn away from sin. Please give us hearts that love You and want to follow You. In Jesus' name, amen.' ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Let's review our big picture question: **What is God like?** [Allow responses.] **God is holy, good, and loving.**

Even through God's judgment on sin, we can see how God is holy, good, and loving. God's holiness will always mean that sin must be punished. And God is good to punish sin. It would be wrong for God to allow evil and sinfulness to never be punished. In His love, God disciplines His children so they will turn away from their sin and trust in Him. Today, as we learn about the consequences Judah faced for their sin, we can remember how Jesus faced the punishment we deserve for our sin. Jesus shows us God's holy, good, and loving character. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ We have already learned how the Northern Kingdom was destroyed, and the people were taken captive to Assyria. Judah, the Southern Kingdom, was all that remained of God's people. While God sent prophets to Judah to tell them to repent of their sin, the people remained stubborn and did not repent. The prophets said God would judge their sin by sending the nation of Babylon to destroy Judah. Today, we will see that **THE PEOPLE'S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEYING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON**. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Chronicles 36. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Judah Was Taken Captive.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JUDAH WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE

“**Even though the people of Judah continued to sin**, God gave them chance after chance to turn from their sin and return to Him. **He sent prophets to warn and encourage them.** He gave them good kings who did what was right and set good examples. **But God's people did not listen.** They hated God's words and mocked His prophets. The people continued to sin and worship idols.

Josiah was the last good king of Judah. His son, Jehoahaz (jih HOH uh haz) was only king for three months before God allowed the king of Egypt to take him away. The king of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother, Jehoiakim (jih HOY uh kim), king over Judah.

Jehoiakim did evil in the sight of God. So, God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to attack him and take him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the riches of God's temple to Babylon.

Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin (jih HOY uh kin), became king in his place. He did evil in the sight of God and was only king for three months. **Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and brought him to Babylon.** Nebuchadnezzar told Jehoiachin to bring even more riches from God's temple. **Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah (zed uh KIGH uh), Jehoiachin's brother, king over Judah.**

Zedekiah also did what was evil in the sight of God. He did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah. **Under Zedekiah's leadership, the people became more and more sinful like the other nations.** They dishonored the Lord's temple in Jerusalem.

Because the people continued to sin and rebelled against God, God allowed the Babylonians to destroy the nation of Judah. Their army attacked and conquered them. They took all the treasures from God's temple and from the king's palace. They burned the temple and the palaces and tore down the wall of the city. **King Nebuchadnezzar took the people who survived the attack to Babylon to be servants. Jeremiah had warned God's people about this, and now his words had come true. God said the people would be captives in Babylon for 70 years.**

Christ Connection: The people of Judah continued to sin and were destroyed by Babylon. Even though God was patient, all sin deserves judgment. God's patience is meant to lead us to repentance. Those who repent and trust in Jesus will escape God's judgment. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Display a map: Point to Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Or, point to Iraq on a modern-day map.

Vary your tone: Fluctuate the tone of your voice as you tell the story to emphasize God's judgment, but also the hope God promised His people.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ The people of Judah continued to rebel against God and His ways. The last four kings of Judah were evil. Who were the last four kings of Judah? [Allow responses.] Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah led the people to worship other gods and do what was wrong in God’s eyes.

Despite all of God’s warnings, God’s people did not listen. Because God is just, He will punish sin. First, God punished King Jehoahaz by allowing the king of Egypt to remove Jehoahaz as king.

The Bible reminds us that those who set themselves up against God will be humbled (Isaiah 2:12). After the king of Egypt made Jehoiakim king of Judah, who did God send to attack Judah? Look at 2 Chronicles 36:6. [Ask a volunteer to read 2 Chronicles 36:6 aloud.] God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to attack Judah and take Jehoiakim to Babylon.

Eventually, King Jehoiachin was also taken to Babylon. Finally, Nebuchadnezzar attacked and destroyed Judah during the reign of Zedekiah. What happened to the city of Jerusalem and the people of Judah? Look at 2 Chronicles 36:19-20. [Ask a volunteer to read 2 Chronicles 36:19-20 aloud.] The walls, temple, and palace of Jerusalem were destroyed. **THE PEOPLE’S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEYING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.**

In His love, God disciplined His people. Even though God was patient, all sin deserves judgment. God’s patience is meant to lead us to repentance. Those who repent and trust in Jesus will escape God’s judgment. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ We all deserve punishment for our sin, but through Jesus, we don’t have to face the punishment we deserve. God made the way for us to be right with Him through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Anyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved (Romans 10:13). ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 15, Session 4” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How can we know that God will always be there for us, even when we sometimes feel He isn’t?
2. Why is trusting in Jesus the only way we can be with God forever?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Play the missions video, explaining how many people in North Africa and the Middle East need to hear the gospel. Invite kids to point out how the cultures in the video may be similar or different to their own.

| **SAY** “ In the video, you may have noticed how the land of Northern Africa and the Middle East



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

is desert-like. The video also pointed out how many people in North Africa and the Middle East are Muslim or Jewish. A woman named Vera is a missionary to this area and is working to share the gospel with people who are Muslim. However, she faces some challenges. Oftentimes the people are not interested in hearing about Jesus. There is also the threat of persecution for people who are Christians. And it can be difficult to reach people who live in remote, desert areas. Vera needs the wisdom of God to best know how to work among the people and build relationships that will allow the people to be open to hearing the good news about Jesus. ”

Pray for Vera as she continues to build relationships with the Muslim people. Ask God to open the hearts of the people of North Africa and the Middle East so that they will be willing to trust in Jesus and be forgiven of sin.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

SAY “ God is good all the time! Even when the people of Judah faced consequences for their sin, God was good. His discipline is meant to lead people to repentance so they can find forgiveness of their sin. Also, He is good to punish sin because He is just. ”

Form kids into groups of two or three. Give each group a set of sticky notes. Direct groups to write a word of the key passage on each sticky note. Then guide kids to find a place on a wall or on the floor where they will scramble the words out of order. When you say "go," challenge kids to put the words in the correct order.

Lead kids to sing “The Lord Is Good (Psalm 145:9).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Your only Son to die for our sins. Thank You for making the way for us to be set free from sin and death. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 2 Chronicles 36. Explain that Babylon in the Bible is an area of the world now known as the country of Iraq. Remind kids that the stories in the Bible are true and happened in real places.

Consider pointing to Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Chronicles 36:20 or have the kids follow along as you read.

SAY “ **THE PEOPLE’S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEYING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.** All sin is disobedience to God, and God will punish sin. The good news of the gospel is that God has given us the way to be saved from His judgment of sin! When we put our trust in Jesus, we don’t have to fear God’s judgment. We can give thanks to God because Jesus took the punishment we deserve. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** “ What is the ultimate consequence people face for sin if they don't trust in Jesus? ”

Tell kids that the Bible tells us that the punishment for sin is eternal death in hell. Discuss how sin deserves eternal punishment because it is disobedience to an eternal God. Discuss how everyone will experience God’s justice in one of two ways. Those who do not trust in Jesus will face eternal death in hell. Those who do trust in Jesus will be forgiven and receive eternal life in heaven because Jesus took the punishment they deserve.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 25:46.)

| **SAY** “ Why was it loving for God to not ignore the people's sin? ”

Lead kids to understand that it is because God loved the people of Judah that He disciplined them. Remind kids that God gave the people of Judah lots of chances to turn back to Him.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 2:4.)

| **SAY** “ How did God's promise to bring the people home after 70 years give them hope? ”

Discuss how God is always true to His words. Just as He said that He would punish the people for their sin, and it happened, God also promised that He would restore them to their home in Judah. Share how God's promises are meant to give us hope as well. We can trust that one day, Jesus will come again to bring His people to their forever home with Him.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 10:23.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: AND THE WALLS FELL...

Form kids into two teams and provide each team with 25–30 plastic cups. Lead kids to form the cups into a wall. They can choose the height and width of their wall. Direct each team to sit behind their wall. Then give each kid a piece of paper to crumple into a ball. On your start, challenge kids to throw the paper ball at the wall, trying to knock it down. After each kid has thrown his or her ball, award a point to the team who knocked down the most cups. Repeat, until one team is the first to knock down all the cups.

SAY “ Today, we learned that when Babylon attacked Jerusalem, they tore down the walls. The walls were an important structure that offered safety to the city. We’ll see later how the people returned to rebuild the walls. But the picture of the walls falling down reminds us of how the sin in our heart can become like a wall when we continue to disobey God. However, through faith in Jesus, the wall of sin is destroyed, and through the Holy Spirit, we can rightly love and obey God. ”

OPTION 2: GOD IS HOLY



Form kids into groups of two or three and provide each group with a piece of paper. At the top of the paper invite kids to write Be Holy. Provide each group with a Bible and direct them to read 1 Peter 1:15-16. Tell kids that to be holy like God means to live in ways that show others what He is like. To be holy means to follow God’s ways rather than the world’s ways. Challenge groups to write down ways they can be holy like God. Then invite groups to share what they wrote. Or, invite groups to pick one thing they wrote and act it out in front of the class.

SAY “ God’s people were called to be set apart and represent Him to the world. Yet, His people failed to be holy, and they were punished. **THE PEOPLE’S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEYING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.** Today, God still commands Christians to be holy and live in ways that glorify Him. However, now God’s people have the Holy Spirit who gives them power to obey God and changes them to be like Jesus. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God because Jesus took the punishment we deserve. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Order the Events” on the activity page.

EZEKIEL GAVE HOPE

EZEKIEL 37



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

CHRIST CONNECTION: God breathed life into dead bones in front of Ezekiel. The apostle Paul said that we are dead in our sins, but God gives us new life in Him when we trust in Jesus. God will forever be the God of all people who trust in Jesus.

STORY POINT: God promised to restore the land to His people and be their God forever.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Have you ever had a lingering question or been in a difficult situation in which you knew only the Lord could truly answer or provide clarity? God presented an interesting question to the prophet Ezekiel amid a dire setting. The Spirit of God took Ezekiel to a valley of bones and asked him, “Son of man, can these bones live?” Ezekiel replied, “Lord God, only you know.” (Ezekiel 37:3).

God then instructed Ezekiel to speak to the bones, saying, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Lord God says to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live” (Ezekiel 37:5). Ezekiel did as God said, and as the prophet was speaking, the bones began to rattle and reconfigure into human bodies. After that, God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the breath, commanding it to breathe life into the dead bodies. Ezekiel did as he was instructed, and the beings came to life.

Ezekiel’s prophecy was a picture of the people of Israel. They were like dead bones with no hope, but God would give them life. God would make the way for those dead in their sin to have life resurrected.

Then God had Ezekiel take two sticks—one for Israel and one for Judah. He told Ezekiel to take the sticks in front of all the people and join them to make one stick. Through this imagery, God was demonstrating how He was going to take the Israelites out of the nations where they were scattered and bring them into their own land. God was going to unite His people and give them one King to rule over them.

Ezekiel reminded the people of the promise God had made to David hundreds of years before. The new King would come from the family of David, and He would have the power to raise dead, sinful people to life.

Without Jesus, we are like the dead bones with no future hope. We are dead in our sins. But by faith in Jesus Christ, we are made alive (Ephesians 2:1-5). God’s promise to Ezekiel remains true: King Jesus will unite all who trust in Him, and through the Holy Spirit we will walk in His ways.

Thank God for the hope we have because of Jesus. Remind boys and girls of the new life Jesus gives to those who trust in Him. As you point boys and girls to the God who can make dead bones come to life, pray for each kid to understand that nothing is too difficult for God.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "New Life" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- plastic sandwich baggy, 1 per kid
- straws, 1 per kid
- paper plates, 1 per kid



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- plastic water bottle
- 1 cm round balls of aluminum foil, 15–20
- inflated balloon
- piece of wool

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Spell It Out" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Ezekiel Gave Hope" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- play dough (optional)
- container filled with dry beans (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 15, Session 5" Questions from Kids video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "The Lord Is Good (Psalm 145:9)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- note cards



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ Did you ever have anything you love break? What was it? Were you able to fix it? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “New Life” activity page.

| **SAY** “ Today, we will learn how the prophet Ezekiel gave the people of Judah living in Babylon hope through God's promise to bring them home and give them new life. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: FILL WITH BREATH

Provide each kid with a plastic sandwich baggy and a straw. Instruct kids to place their straw inside the baggy but with one end of the straw sticking out. Direct kids to seal their baggy shut with the straw sticking out. Tape may be needed to ensure the baggy remains sealed. Then lead kids to blow air through the straw into the baggy.

When the baggy is filled with air, guide kids to quickly remove the straw and seal the baggy completely shut. Provide each kid with a paper plate. Tell kids to place their baggy on the floor at one end of the room. Direct kids to wave their paper plate, creating “wind” to push their baggy across the room.

| **SAY** “ Today, we will learn how God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel to give His people hope. Even though they were like dry, dead bones, God would speak and breathe new life into them. **GOD PROMISED TO RESTORE THE LAND TO HIS PEOPLE AND BE THEIR GOD FOREVER.** ”

OPTION 2: SPEAK, HEAR, LIVE



Assign each of the following words a motion: speak (hold hands around your mouth), hear (place one hand by your ear), live (raise both arms above your head). Invite kids to practice each of the motions for the words. Then call out each word in random order, directing kids to perform the appropriate motion. Add in other random words from time to time like “pray, walk, or love.” If kids perform the wrong action or do an action for a random word, they are out. Play as time allows, inviting kids to be the caller.

| **SAY** “ In our Bible story, we will see how God first spoke to dry bones, called the dry bones to hear the word of the Lord, and then caused breath to enter the dry bones so they would live. This is also what God does in the lives of those who trust in Jesus. God sends someone to speak and share the gospel, people hear and believe, and God causes them to be made alive in Christ. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name]. I look forward to sharing a story from the Bible with you. Did you bring your Bible with you? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Let's open our Bibles to the book of Ezekiel. [Assist kids in finding Ezekiel in their Bible.]

Today, we will learn how the prophet Ezekiel gave God's people hope. While the people were captive in Babylon, God spoke through Ezekiel to share good news: **GOD PROMISED TO RESTORE THE LAND TO HIS PEOPLE AND BE THEIR GOD FOREVER.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Through this promise, God would also make the way for His people to have new life. We'll see how God is able to take dead, sinful people and give them new life in Jesus. Let's pray: 'Dear God, thank You for Your words that bring life. Please help us to hear and believe what You say so we might live through Jesus. Amen.' ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ What is God like? [Allow responses.] **God is holy, good, and loving.** As we finish learning our big picture question and answer, we can remember that only a holy, good, and loving God can provide the way for people to be forgiven of their sin and be made new in Jesus. Through our story, we will learn how God is good and loving to give His people hope: God would bring them home, give their sinful hearts new life, and be their God forever. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ At this point on our timeline, both Israel and Judah have been destroyed by foreign nations. The king of Assyria attacked Israel and took the people captive. Then over a hundred years later, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Judah and took the people captive in Babylon. But God loved His people and wanted to restore them. Long before Israel or Judah sinned against God, He had promised to send a Savior who would give people new hearts and new life. Today, we will see how God spoke through Ezekiel to remind the people of this hope. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Ezekiel 37. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Ezekiel Gave Hope.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

EZEKIEL GAVE HOPE

“Ezekiel was a priest and a prophet. While God's people were captives in Babylon, God called Ezekiel to give them hope. The Spirit of God led the prophet Ezekiel to the middle of a valley full of bones. God said to him, “Ezekiel, can these bones live?”

Ezekiel replied, “Only you know, LORD God.”

God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones and say, “Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! ‘I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’”

While Ezekiel was saying these words, he heard a rattling sound, and the bones came together into the shape of people. Then, muscle and skin grew over the bones. They looked like people, but they were not alive; they were not breathing.

God said to Ezekiel, “Say to the breath: ‘Come from the four winds and breathe into these dead people so they may live!’” Ezekiel did so, and the breath entered them, and they came alive!

God explained to Ezekiel that this was a picture of the people of Israel. They were like dried up bones, without hope, but God would put His Spirit into them, and they would live and live in their own land. God said, “I have spoken, and I will do it. This is the declaration of the LORD.”

Then God told Ezekiel to take two sticks and write “Israel” on one, and “Judah” on the other. God told Ezekiel to take the sticks in front of all the people and join them into one stick, and then to say, “This is what God says: ‘I am going to bring all my people from the nations where they have gone. I will gather them and make them one nation again, and one king will rule over them, a descendant of King David. They will no longer worship idols, and they will follow my laws and obey Me. They will be my people, and I will be their God. My dwelling place will be with them. And when I make my home with them forever, all the nations will know that I make Israel holy.’”

Christ Connection: God breathed life into dead bones in front of Ezekiel. The apostle Paul said that we are dead in our sins, but God gives us new life in Him when we trust in Jesus. God will forever be the God of all people who trust in Jesus. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Make noise: Fill a container with dry beans and shake it when you share how Ezekiel heard a rattling sound.

Demonstrate it: Hold up two “sticks” made from play dough when you share how this is a picture of God's people. Then join the two sticks together, showing how God will unite His people.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Ezekiel was brought to a valley full of dry bones. God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones. What did God tell Ezekiel to say? Look at Ezekiel 37:4-6 [Ask a volunteer to read Ezekiel 37:4-6 aloud.] God told Ezekiel to tell the bones to hear the word of the Lord, that He would cause breath to enter them, and they would live. Only God can make something dead come alive. In Genesis, we learned how God formed Adam from the dust and breathed life into him. In our story, God breathed life into old, dried-up bones. This is a message of hope for all people because all people are dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1-2). We all need to hear the good news about Jesus to be forgiven and be made alive.

What other hope did Ezekiel give the people? Look at Ezekiel 37:21-22. [Ask a volunteer to read Ezekiel 37:21-22 aloud.] Ezekiel also gave the people hope because **GOD PROMISED TO RESTORE THE LAND TO HIS PEOPLE AND BE THEIR GOD FOREVER**. One day, God would gather His people and unite them as one nation. This is also a picture of what God does for those who trust in Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, we become part of His family and we are all joined together through Jesus.

Ezekiel also reminded the people about God's promised Messiah. What did Ezekiel say about the Messiah? Look at Ezekiel 37:24. [Ask a volunteer to read Ezekiel 37:24 aloud.] The Messiah would come from the family of David and be their king. Then the people would follow God and His ways. In Jesus, the promised Messiah, we are made alive through the Spirit and have the power to follow God's commands. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ God breathed life into dead bones in front of Ezekiel. The apostle Paul said that we are dead in our sins, but God gives us new life in Him when we trust in Jesus. God will forever be the God of all people who trust in Jesus. Have you trusted in Jesus for forgiveness of sins and new life? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 15, Session 5” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What does it mean to be raised to life again?
2. New life in Jesus means we want to follow His commands. How are you obeying His commands?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Remind kids that many people in North Africa and the Middle East are Muslim or Jewish. Tell kids that these religions do not believe in Jesus as God's one and only Son sent to save people from sin.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

SAY “ Missionaries in North Africa and the Middle East have a heart for those who do not know Jesus. They desire to display God’s love to others so they can know what God is like and how He loves them. Missionaries share the gospel to offer hope: though people are dead in their sins, by faith in Jesus they can be made alive! Romans 10:14 reminds us how people cannot believe in Jesus if they have never heard about Him. Just as Ezekiel shared God’s words, missionaries go and share the good news of Jesus so people may hear and believe. ”

Pray for missionaries serving in North Africa and the Middle East. Pray the people living in those areas will hear and believe the good news about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write each word of the Key Passage on individual note cards and hide them in the room. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

SAY “ God is good, and He promised to gather His people from all the places they had been scattered and reunite them. Every one who trusts in Jesus is united to Him and will live with Him forever. ”

Challenge kids to gather the scattered note cards. Then lead kids to place the note cards in the correct order of the key passage.

Lead kids to sing “The Lord Is Good (Psalm 145:9).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Thank You, Lord, for Your love for us. Thank You for making the way for us to be made alive in Jesus and have the hope of living with You forever. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Ezekiel 37. Explain to the kids that the book of Ezekiel was written by the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel was also a captive of Babylon. Tell kids that the book of Ezekiel is in the Major Prophets division of the Old Testament.

Consider pointing to Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Ezekiel 37:27 or have the kids follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ God promised to be with His people forever. When we trust in Jesus, we are promised life with God forever. Even now while we wait for Jesus to return, we have the promise of God's presence. Through the Holy Spirit, God indwells believers. No matter where we are or what we're doing, God is with Christians. One day, when Jesus returns, God will gather those who have trusted in Jesus and they will be with Him forever. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What does it mean to be 'dead in sin'? How can people dead in sin be made alive? ”

Guide kids to discuss how sin separates people from God, and since all life comes from God, we have no life apart from Him. Share how life comes from the Spirit of God. Tell kids that when we hear and believe the gospel, the Spirit makes us alive in Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 10:17.)

SAY “ How did this story remind us of God's faithfulness to His promises? ”

Share how God promised to bring His people home, and He did. Tell kids that 70 years after being taken to Babylon, God's people were allowed to go back to Jerusalem. Share how God also fulfilled His promise to send a perfect King to His people—Jesus. Remind kids that through faith in Jesus people will receive new life with God forever. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 2:4-8.)

SAY “ Did this Bible story give you hope? How? ”

Answers will vary. Discuss how the Bible shares bad news: we are all sinners. But the Bible also shares good news and hope: people can be saved from their sin through faith in Jesus. Encourage kids to think about the hope we have because Jesus lived a perfect life for us and died in our place. Challenge kids to share the hope of the gospel with someone this week. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:5.)





LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: RATTLING FOIL

Fill a plastic water bottle with 15–20 small 1 cm round balls of aluminum foil. Take an inflated balloon and rub the sides of the water bottle, demonstrating how nothing happens to the aluminum foil. Then rub an inflated balloon on a piece of wool. Move the balloon along the sides of the water bottle and watch as the aluminum begins to "dance and rattle" in the bottle. Don't touch the bottle with the balloon. Invite kids to come and try the demonstration.

SAY “ Today, we learned how the Lord showed Ezekiel a valley of dry bones. When Ezekiel spoke God's words, Ezekiel heard a rattling sound, and the bones came together into the shape of people. They looked like people, but they were not alive; they were not breathing—similar to how the aluminum foil was moving, but it's not really alive. When God's breath, or His Spirit, entered the bones, they came alive. We can hear the gospel, but until we trust in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit, we'll remain dead in our sins. ”

OPTION 2: MADE ALIVE



Write the following Bible references on a dry erase board: Ephesians 2:4-5; John 6:63; Colossians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:22. Form kids into four groups and assign each group a Bible reference. Direct kids to read their Scripture. Then discuss what they learned about being made alive from the verse. Invite kids to think about questions such as, "Why are we all dead in sin?" "Who gives life?" "Can we do anything in our own efforts to make ourselves alive?" "How does God forgive us of our sins?"

SAY “ In our story, we learned that **GOD PROMISED TO RESTORE THE LAND TO HIS PEOPLE AND BE THEIR GOD FOREVER.** This was a future promise for His people. When we trust in Jesus, God promises new life. And that new life begins now. While we won't be without sin until Jesus returns, we can live in the new life God gives us through His Spirit. When we hear God's words, the Spirit gives us the power to obey, showing that we have been made alive in Jesus. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for the hope we have because of Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete "Spell It Out" on the activity page.



THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR US

The gospel is the good news—the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use these prompts to share the gospel with your kids.



Ask: “Who is in charge at home?” Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



Ask: “Have you ever done something wrong?” Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



Ask: “What is the best gift you’ve ever received?” Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: “Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.” Read Romans 10:9-10.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

The Gospel Project is designed to help your kids **LEARN** the gospel story of Scripture, **LOVE** the Author and Subject of that gospel story, and then **LIVE** out their part in this ongoing gospel story.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

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