

Christian Concepts for Kids

July 2017

Theme:
*Old Testament
History*

Monthly Bible Study & Character-Building
Lesson Plans for Christian Educators
of Elementary-Aged Children



“We learn from Israel’s history that we have a choice. We can obey God or turn from Him and be disobedient. Disobedience has consequences that are not very comfortable.” - Allison Weaver

Message from Karen



Photo by: Grace:
my "bundle of sunshine"
granddaughter

Studying Bible history makes me wonder why these people kept turning away from God.

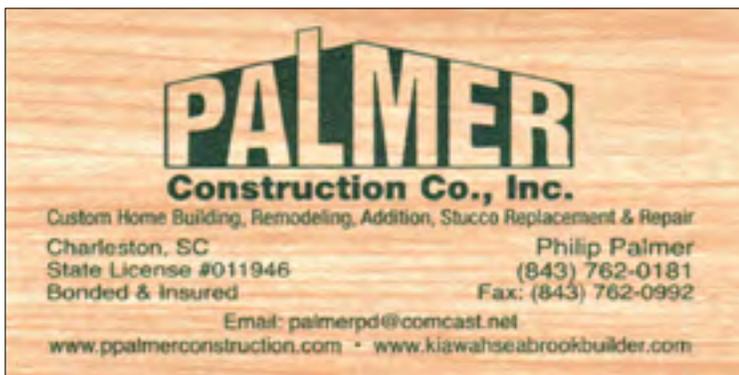
God did so many "WOW" things for them! But that didn't help their long-term relationship with God. I suppose their focus in life changed.

When we look back in our personal history, can we see "WOW" things? If so, what caused our focus to turn away?

There are many verses in the Bible that instruct us to remember. Remember! Put tassels on your clothing. Remember! Teach these words to your children. Remember!

Our brains and hearts need reminders. Reading Bible history is one great reminder!

I think I will follow my grandma's instructions: "Write down your blessings; it will change your attitude when you read them."



Submissions

If you have a lesson, activity, craft, or other item that you would like to submit for consideration for publishing in a future issue, please download the submission form on our website and send it with your submission.

There is no monetary compensation for submissions; but if your submission is selected for a publication, you will be listed as a contributor for the issue in which your submission is published.

We are also accepting submissions for Parent's Corner - A column for parents to send in their funny stories, parenting ideas, or other helpful ideas they want to share.

For consideration for publication in a future issue for Parent's Corner, please download the submission form on our web site and send it with your submission.

You can find the form on our web site: www.ChristianConceptsForKids.com

Theme for
Next Month:

Joshua

Credits

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Just A Thought

Paulette Gobel

Great Quotes

Ravi Zacharias

Barbi Harrison

Thank you! This issue would not be possible without you.

Great Quotes!

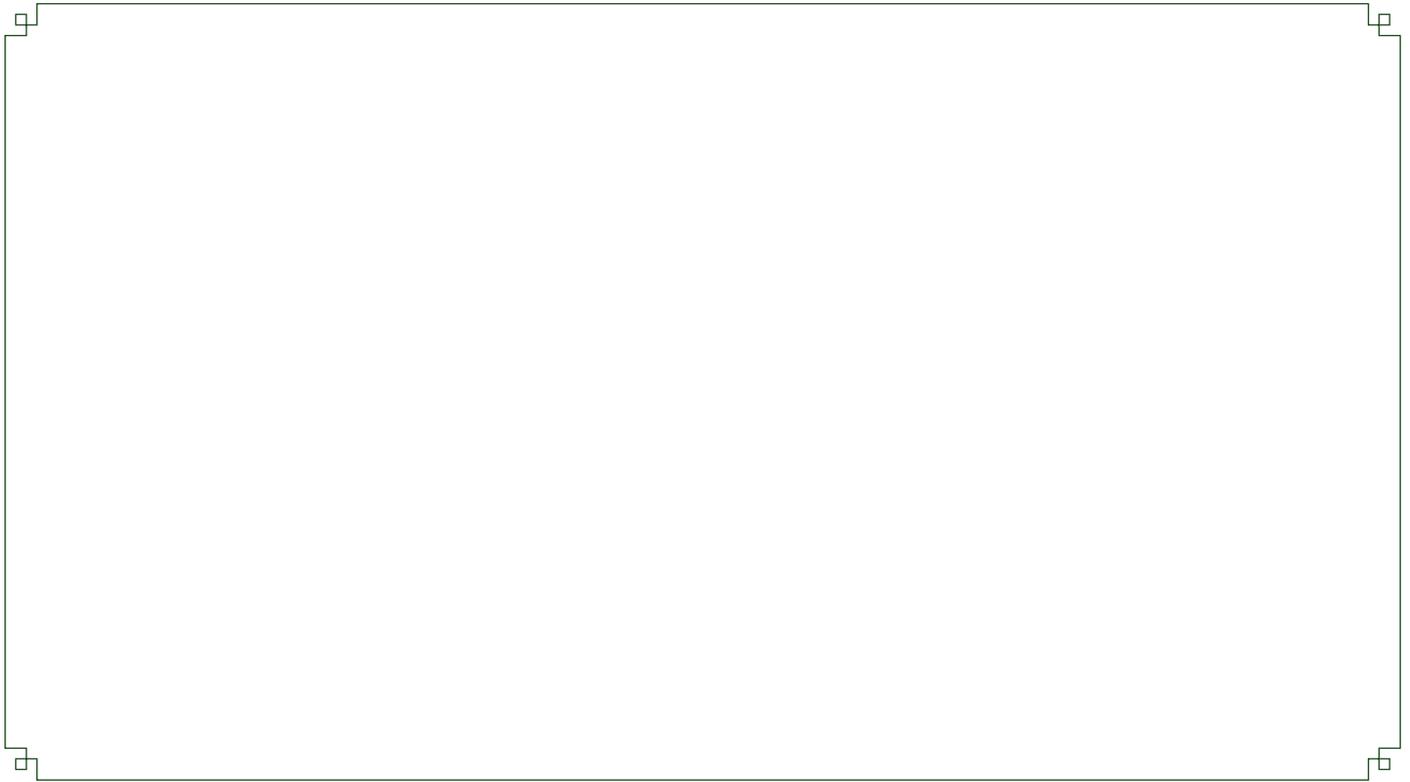
"Over the years I have discovered that praying with people can sometimes do more for them than preaching to them." - Ravi Zacharias

"GOD opens doors that need to be opened and closed doors that need to be closed.... I'm grateful for the discernment and for the veils to be taken off my eyes to see the truth instead of seeing things the way I wished them to be.... Grateful to be teachable." - Barbi Harrison

Devotional Doodles

God's View

Draw a picture of God's view of your History with Him



The Challenge!

Can YOU memorize these verses?

James 1:5-8 (NKJV)

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Acts 13:21-22 (NKJV)

“And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’”

Find the Words

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| L | O | V | E | O | D | X | Y | S | S |

Blessing

Judges

Chronicles

Obedience

Ruth

Ezra

Love (3)

Samuel

Nehemiah

Joshua

Kings

Esther

Verses taken from: The New King James Version. (1982). (Ac 13:21-22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Family Fun Activity: Picture Fun Game

Family game time is a great way to spend time together as a family. It's also a great time to open discussions, ask questions, and guide your children in life choices.

The Picture Fun Game can be a discussion-starter. Because you choose the categories and words, it is a great way to get your children's perspective and knowledge about topics that are important to you.

Making the Game!

Items Needed:

- General: Markers and Crayons, Scissors, and a Bag (one that is not see through)
- Per Family Member: 5 Index Cards and a Pen or Pencil

Instructions:

- The bag may be decorated to indicate the Picture Fun Game will be inside.
- Index cards will be cut in half.
- Each family member will choose a category for his or her set of cards.
- On each half-sheet of index cards, each family member will write one or two words that fit in their category.
- Cards will be placed in the bag and mixed together.

Variations:

- All family members will choose several categories and each family member can choose words that fit in any of the categories.



Let's Play! Picture Fun

Items Needed:

- 1 Picture Fun Game (see instructions "Let's Make Our Game!"), White Board with Erasable Markers or Copy Paper with Markers and Crayons

Instructions:

- Choose one player to start the game.
- The first player will pull a card from the bag and not show it to anyone.
- He or she will draw a picture on the white board or paper that represents the word.
- The other family members will try to guess the word on the card based on the drawing.
- The family member that guesses correctly wins and is the next to choose a word and create a drawing.

Idea:

- After each word has been guessed, open a discuss about the word or category. Asking children what they know about each one is a great way to gauge their understanding and open discussions.

Just a Thought

Grumbling Against God's Anointed

Written by: Paulette Gobel

Priests and pastors do not have easy jobs. Most are on call every day, if not every night. In smaller churches, they may do everything from singing in the choir to managing sound systems to cleaning. The pay is not often great. Perhaps not all are called by God, but it seems to me that most are. Why would they serve in a hard and often thankless job if not?

Some are easy to love, some are gifted speakers, and some are gifted with love for the people they lead. All are human and can make mistakes, and have "off" days and family problems. Even though pastors and priests are anointed and gifted by God, they are not perfect and we should not expect them to be. They deserve our love, support, and forgiveness if needed.

In Numbers chapter 16 we read about the Kohathites' rebellion against Moses and Aaron. They were Levites whose duties involved the ark, table, lampstand, alters, sanctuary utensils, and screen. They had a "favored position" among the Israelites. That was not enough for them. They challenged Moses' leadership. "Why do you exalt yourself above the Lord's assembly?" they asked Moses. Moses did not react. He took it to the Lord. The ground opened up and swallowed the 250 who led the rebellion. Then a plague started among the people, and Moses intervened on their behalf. Still, 14,700 died.

God takes it seriously when we come against His appointed leaders. Since He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, there is no reason to think He has changed His mind.



July's Theme: "Old Testament History"

In This Issue . . .

Old Testament History

Lesson: "Old Testament History" gives the names and an overview of the history books in the Old Testament.

Craft: "Old Testament History" Poster

Indoor Activity: Story Objects

Outdoor Activity: Follow the Leaders

Joshua, Judges, and Ruth

Lesson: "Joshua, Judges, and Ruth" discusses God's work through nations and people who are willing to listen to and obey Him."

Craft: What's Growing?

Indoor Activity: Bible Drill

Outdoor Activity: Go the Distance

Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles

Lesson: "Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles" gives a capsule view of the nation of Israel from living under judges with God as their King, through godly kings and ungodly kings, to their captivity in Babylon.

Craft: Growing a King

Indoor Activity: Mixed Messages

Outdoor Activity: Kick the Ball Relay

Ezra and Nehemiah

Lesson: "Ezra and Nehemiah" discusses the people who heard God and helped lead some of the Israelites back to the Promised Land after their years of captivity were over.

Craft: Light Your World Lantern

Indoor Activity: Silly Story

Outdoor Activity: Are You Ready?

Esther

Lesson: "Esther" tells the story of Esther, who listened to God and saved her people.

Craft: Count Your Blessings Journal

Indoor Activity: All Mixed Up

Outdoor Activity: Catch the Character

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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Lesson: Old Testament History

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available. Ask for volunteers to read: 1 Samuel 8:1-22.

Lesson

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Do you think you would be blessed if you heard and listened for God's instructions?
- What if you also obeyed His instructions?
- Reading Bible history, we see blessings coming with listening and being obedience.

Say:

- There are twelve Bible-books that are considered Old Testament history.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Can you list the twelve Old Testament history books? *If needed, hint that Joshua is the first one. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Ester*

Say:

- These share parts of Israel's history.
- We can read about close to seven hundred years of the nation's history.
- When we read Joshua, we learn that Joshua led the Israelites as they took over and settled in the Promised Land.
- These people were the young generation of Israelites who had escaped from Egypt, wandered in the desert for forty years, and were finally going to take over and settle in the land.
- Israel's history take us through judge-leaders that followed Joshua.
- When the people of Israel decided that wanted an end to judge-leaders; they wanted ruling kings like other nations.
- They were turning away from God as their ruler.
- God gave them what they asked for along with a warning, but they would not listen.

Read: 1 Samuel 8:1-22

Say:

- Kings Saul, David, Solomon, and many others are mentioned in these history-filled books.
- Reading the twelve books of Old Testament history we learn about obedience and disobedience, the united kingdom of Israel and the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
- Bible history shares the story of these two divided nations: Israel in the north and Judah in the south.
- Continuing in the history the northern nation of Israel was destroyed by Assyria and the southern nation of Judah was taken over by Babylon.
- During the take-over, the Israelites were taken captive and taken to the foreign land of Babylon.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Why do you think God allowed another nation to take over Israel, which caused them to loose their land and be taken captive?

Say:

- This nation let their relationship with God slowly slip away.
- These people didn't put their focus on God, listen for or hear His instructions, so they didn't obey His instructions.
- They turned away from Him, disobeyed Him, and were punished.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Do you think God decided not to have anymore plans?

Say:

- No, God always has a plan!
- These history-books reveal God's plan to rebuild the City, the Temple, and His relationship with His people.

Final Thought:

God is still in the history-making business. God still wants us to stand up and help others. God still speaks to and works through His people. God still brings up people who will accomplish His plans. What are some ways are you listening for God's directions?

Activities: Old Testament History

Craft: “Old Testament History” Poster

Items Needed:

- General: Poster Boards, Tape, Crayons or Markers, Miscellaneous Decorations, Old Magazines, Glue, Construction Paper, Pencils, Erasers, and Scissors
- Per Child: 1 Sheet of White Paper and 1 Poster Board

Instructions:

- Give each child the supplies.
- They will each use the supplies to decorate their posters in a way that explains Old Testament History.
- Tell them to use the white paper to draw what they want, make changes, and get it as close to perfect as they can.
- When they each know how they are going to decorate their poster, they will use their white paper drawings as a guide to put their creations on the poster boards.
- Each child should write the title “Old Testament History” on his or her poster.
- When they have finished their posters, each child will tell everyone about his or her poster.
- Each child will find a special spot on the wall to decorate the room with his or her poster.



Indoor Activity: Story Objects

Items Needed:

- General: 1 Bag and Random Objects (3 to 5 for each child - items such as: paper clip, toy car, piece of candy, a cup, pen, a small book, etc.)

Prior to Activity:

- Place random objects in the bag.

Instructions:

- Choose one child to start the game.
- Without looking in the bag, he or she will choose five objects from the bag and place them on a table.
- He or she will choose a child to make up a story that includes all of the objects on the table.
- After telling the story, the objects will be returned to the bag and without looking, the story teller will choose five objects, place them on the table, and choose someone to tell the story.
- This will continue until all of the children have had a chance to choose objects and tell a story.

Outdoor Activity: Follow the Leaders

Instructions:

- Divide the children into two groups.
- Choose two children to be “The Leader” for their respective groups.
- The groups will stand in side-by-side lines with a space between the groups.
- The leaders will stand in front of the other children, facing them.
- The children in one group will follow their group leader and do everything that he or she does.
- The children in the second group will follow both leaders and do everything that each leaders does.
- Allow this to continue for several minutes.
- Choose a new leader for each group.
- Group one will follow both leaders while group two will follow only one.
- After both groups have taken a turn trying to follow both leaders, open a discussion about how hard it is to follow more than one leader.
- Ask if the command to have no others gods but our God makes more sense now.
- Choose more leaders and allow them to try again.

Lesson: Joshua, Judges, and Ruth

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available. Ask for volunteers to read: Ruth 1:6-15 and Ruth 1:16-18

Lesson

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- How many history-books are in the Old Testament? *Twelve*
- Can you name the first three? *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*

Say:

- Joshua and Judges teach us about the beginning of a nation.
- This new nation was ruled by judges who were military rulers.
- Some of these judge-rulers heard, listened, and obeyed God, and some didn't.
- These two books show how God worked with and through a new nation.
- God also works with and through average people.
- The third history-book is a historical picture of God working with and through an average person.
- She wasn't a king's wife.
- She wasn't well known, although she is now.
- She wasn't even an Israelite!
- This average girl got married, lived with her Israelite husband, his parents, her brother-in-law, and his wife.
- Generations of families living together was normal during this time period.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What do you think they may have talked about as they sat around eating dinner together.?
- What fun things do you think they did together?

Say:

- Sometimes things in life take a turn.
- This happened to Naomi and her two daughters-in-law: Ruth and Orpah!
- Their lives changed!
- Naomi's husband died ten years before and now both of her sons were dead.

- Being a widow was very hard, so when a husband died, the woman would often go live with her family.
- Naomi encouraged both of her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, to return to their families.
- Orpah listened to Naomi's council and returned to her family.

Read: Ruth 1:6-15

Say:

- Ruth made a different choice.

Read: Ruth 1:16-18

- Ruth freely chose loving and caring for her mother-in-law!
- She was not an Israelite, but she chose to love and worship the God of Israel.
- The books of Bible History are filled with people who heard God, listened, and followed His instructions.
- There are those who failed to hear, listen, or follow His instructions.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions after each choice.*

- What possible outcomes could come from: listening, not listening, following, and not following.?
- What are ways to hear God speaking to us? *Reading our Bible, The Holy Spirit in Prayer, Pastors and Preachers, Bible Teachers, Family Bible Study Time*

Say:

- When we hear and listen God's instructions, we know that we have a choice: obey or not!
- Anytime we are obedient to God, we are blessed.

Final Thought:

The first three history-books in the Bible share God working in nations' and in peoples' lives. Joshua and Judges focus on the nation and leaders that rose up and led the people. Ruth allows us to see God working in the lives of ordinary people and blessing them when they love and obey God and love others.

Activities: Joshua, Judges, and Ruth

Craft: What's Growing?

Items Needed:

- General: Glue and Markers or Crayons
- Per Child: 1 Sheet of White Paper and 1 Seed (large seeds like lima beans work well for this)

Instructions:

- Each child will glue the seed to the bottom of the paper.
- The children will each draw what they believe will grow if the seed were planted in the ground.
- They will draw other things that may be around what is growing. (other plants, bugs, animals, people, bean pole, etc.)
- Have each child explain their drawing to everyone.
- While they are working open a discussion about God's plans for different kinds of seeds and for each other..



Indoor Activity: Bible Drill

Items Needed:

- Per Child: 1 Bible

Instructions:

- Have the children line up side by side and facing the leader.
- Each child will hold the Bible upside down with the spine facing up.
- The leader will call out a book, chapter, and verse from the Bible; they will flip over their Bibles and search for the verse.
- When they find the verse, they will step forward.
- The first child to find the verse wins a point.
- The child with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Variation:

- The search can be for a certain book or chapter, depending on age and experience.

Outdoor Activity: Go the Distance

Items Needed:

- Per Child: 1 Sheet of Paper

Instructions:

- Each child will receive a sheet of paper.
- Allow five minutes for the children to make paper airplanes.
- The children will stand in a line side-by-side and when the leader shouts "Go!" the children will toss their airplanes, flying all of them in the same direction.
- The child whose plane goes furthest wins.

Variations:

- Child whose plane comes closest to hitting a certain mark wins. For example: closest to a tree or picnic table.
- Child whose plane makes it closest to a circle or spot on the ground wins.

Lesson: Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available. Ask for volunteers to read: 1 Samuel 8:1-22 and Acts 13:21-22

Lesson

Say:

- Pretend you are outside and you hear a noise.
- You can choose to listen to the sound to understand what it is, or you can ignore it.
- If you hear that it is your grandma calling you for dinner, it's your choice to obey or not.
- We can choose to hear God, listen so we can understand, and obey.
- We can also choose not to.
- Israel's history tells us a lot about a nation that was in transition - slowly moving away from God.
- This nation moved away from prophet-judges that heard God, so they knew what to do.
- The nation declared they wanted to be like other nations!
- They wanted a king!
- God, knowing this is a bad idea gave them what they asked for along with a warning.

Read: 1 Samuel 8:1-22

- The nation got to experience a prophet-king.
- Saul heard God!
- But . . . much of the time, he didn't follow God's commands.
- The nation went through a tough time under Saul.

Ask: *Allow time for comments and discussions.*

- Do you think this tough time caused them to turn back to God?

Say:

- The nation listened to God's commands and both David and Solomon were anointed and became kings.

- The nation obeyed and things were good again!
- Even though King David was a sinner like everyone else, he heard God and did what He said.

Read: Acts 13:21-22

Say:

- King David was a man after God's heart; he wanted what God wanted.
- The nation's history continues with more kings, some hearing, listening, and obeying and some disobeying and turning away from God.
- This nation began slowly turning away from God again.
- The end of these history books tell us about the end of the nation.
- The once united nation of Israel was divided into two smaller divided nations: Israel in the north and Judah in the south.
- Reading these books, we see Israel being destroyed, Judah being taken over, and the people being taken into captivity, and forced to live in Babylon.
- They began as slaves in Egypt, went into the Promised Land, and now they were slaves in Babylon.

Final Thought:

The Samuel-books, Kings-books, and Chronicles-books cover Israel transforming from a judge-ruled land into a kingdom ruled by kings. These books show us the ups and downs in obedience and disobedience, faithful and unfaithful, great relationship with God and poor relationship with God. These books are a good reminder that God blesses obedience and punishes disobedience.

Activities: Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles

Craft: Growing a King

Items Needed:

- General: Newspapers, Paint Brushes, Craft Paint, Water Cups (to rinse brushes), 1 Roll of Paper Towels, Tape, Potting Soil, and Water in Container
- Per Child: 1 Rubber Band, 1 Apron, 1 Canning Jar or Empty Soup Can (use cans without sharp edges), and Grass Seed (rye or fescue works well)

Instructions:

- Have the children put on aprons and spread newspaper over the table.
- Give each child a can, and have the children decorate the cans to look like King David's face.
- They will each use construction paper to create a crown for King David and glue it around the top edge of the can.
- Explain that they will be growing his hair.
- The children will put soil in the cans, filling them up to about one half inch from the top of the cans.
- They will spread the seeds over the soil and moisten the soil with water.
- Using the rubber band, secure a paper towel to the top of each pot, so the children can carry the pots without spilling the soil.
- Tell them to place their plants in sunny spots, take off the paper towels, and sprinkle water on the seeds each day.
- Explain that they should see some growth within the first week and that they can cut the "hair" if they think it is too long.



Indoor Activity: Mixed Messages

Instructions:

- The children will sit in a circle.
- Choose one child on opposite sides of the circle to be the messengers.
- Each messenger will think of a message to share.
- One messenger will pass his or her message around the circle to the right and one messenger will pass his or her message around the circle to the left.
- Each child in the circle will share the message with the child next to him or her in the correct direction.
- This will continue until the everyone has heard the message.
- The last child to hear the message will repeat it out loud.
- Each messenger will share the original message with everyone.
- Each messenger will choose another child to be the new messengers.

Outdoor Activity: Kick the Ball Relay

Items Needed:

- 2 Balls (beach balls work well)

Instructions:

- Divide the children into two teams.
- Have each team line up at the start line.
- One child on each team will move as fast as they can while kicking the ball to the finish line and back to the start line.
- When the child returns to the start line, the next child in line will take a turn kicking the ball to the relay line and back.
- This will continue until all of the children have had a turn.
- The first team with all of the members back at the start line wins the game.
- If there is an uneven number of children, one child on the team that is short one person will take two turns.

Lesson: Ezra and Nehemiah

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available. Ask for volunteers to read: Exodus 1-3 (optional - for further study) and Nehemiah 2:1-10

Lesson

Say:

- The books of Ezra and Nehemiah take place after Israel had slowly, over many years turned away from God, lost their country to enemies, and were taken captive.
- They were living in another country, similar to the time the Israelites were slaves in Egypt.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What can you tell me about the story of Moses the Israelites, and Egypt? *God told Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt and bring them to the Promised Land.*

If There's Time:

- For further study, read Exodus chapters one through three.

Say:

- Now, these people were in Babylon and Persia after being taken captive.
- After many years, God wanted them to go back to the Promised Land.
- In Ezra and Nehemiah, we meet Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah.
- These men heard, listened to, and followed God's commands.
- And they became part of Israel's recorded history!
- These books tell us about three separate groups of people who returned to their home land.
- We can read about Zerubbabel, who led the first group, and whose job it was to rebuild the temple.
- In Ezra, we learn of the priest and prophet, Ezra, and his leading the second group.
- We learn about God wanting Ezra to help draw the nation closer to God.
- Ezra heard, listened, and obeyed as he led the Israelites.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Can you tell me the name of the person who led the third group of people back to the Promised Land? *Nehemiah*

Say:

- In the book of Nehemiah we meet a cupbearer for the King of Persia.
- His name was Nehemiah and he had a desire that he could not stop thinking about; one that would not go away.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Can you tell me what desire could affect him so much?

Say:

- Let's see what the Bible says.

Read: Nehemiah 2:1-10

Say:

- God gave Nehemiah the desire to go to Jerusalem which was part of the land that used to the nation of Israel.
- He was to go and rebuild the wall.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Is a desire that won't go away a cool way for God to speak?
- How could Nehemiah know the desire was from God?

Say:

- The desire was helping God's people.
- It was helping God do what God does so well!
- Drawing His people closer.
- Nehemiah led a third group of people to Jerusalem and they rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem.
- Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah got to help and become part of God's plan!

Final Thought:

These two books of the Bible begin with the Israelites in the foreign land. God spoke to some leaders who listened and obeyed. They became part of Israel's history and more important they became part of God's plan to bring His people close to Him.

Activities: Ezra and Nehemiah

Craft: Light Your World Lantern

Items Needed:

- General: Scissors Tape or Staples
- Per Child: 1 Sheet of Yellow Construction Paper and 1 Sheet (of any other color) Construction Paper

Instructions:

- Ask the children to cut a 1 1/2-inch strip off the long side of the NON-YELLOW paper and a 2-inch strip off the long side of the yellow paper.
- Fold the ends of the non-yellow paper to the middle, overlapping the ends, and cut half circles on the folded edges as shown in the first picture (so that circles will be cut out when opened).
- Roll the yellow sheet into a cylinder shape and staple or tape together.
- Wrap the non-yellow piece around the yellow cylinder shape and staple or tape.
- Have the children use the strip that they cut from the non-yellow piece to make a handle for the lantern.
- Staple the handle onto the lantern.

See Images on Next Page



Indoor Activity: Silly Story

Items Needed:

- Per Child: 1 Sheet of Paper and 1 Pencil or Pen

Instructions:

- Each child will write their name and the first sentence of a story on a sheet of paper.
- The paper will be folded so the sentence can't be seen and it will be passed to the right.
- Each child will write another sentence of his or her story.
- The paper will be folded again and passed to right.
- Each child will write another sentence, fold the paper, and pass it to the right.
- This will continue until the fourth or fifth sentence is written, depending on the space on the paper.
- Each paper will be returned to the original person and they will read the silly story.

Outdoor Activity: Are You Ready?

Items Needed:

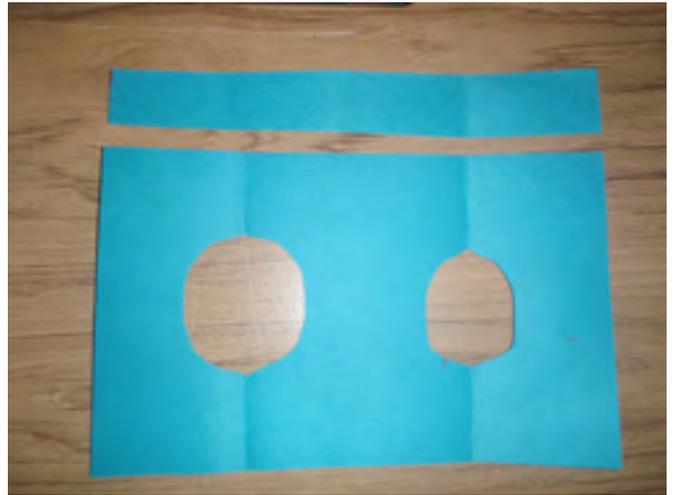
- 5 or 6 Blown-Up Balloons (have extra not blown-up in case some pop)

Instructions:

- Divide the children into two teams.
- Each team will line up side-by-side, far enough apart so they can stretch their arms out and touch the fingertips of the child next to them.
- The first child in each line will bat the balloon toward the second child in line.
- The second child will bat it to the third child and on down the line.
- When it gets to the end of the line, they will bat it back the other way to get it back to the first child in line.
- The first team to bat their balloon to the end of the line and back wins the game.

Variation:

- Once the balloon is in motion, the children cannot move their feet.
- They need to think about how they want to stand before the game starts and they need to be ready.
- If a child moves his or her feet, the balloon goes back to the first child in the line and the team must start over again.



Lesson: Esther

Prior to Lesson

Have a Bible available. Ask for volunteers to read: Esther 9:18-32

Lesson

Say:

- Esther is a book that tells a history-story about the Israelites living in Babylon and Persia.
- They had turned their backs on God, lost their country, were taken captive, and forced to live in these foreign lands.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What do you think life was like for the Israelites?

Say:

- Israelites who were living in the foreign land were called exiles.
- After some time, life was easier because there were less restrictions.
- Some of the Israelites were allowed to leave and go back to their homeland.
- The books of Ezra and Nehemiah cover three groups of people who returned.
- Although many returned, some of the Israelite exiles remained in these foreign lands that was now their home.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- What do you think it was like after they had been living in the land with less restrictions?

Say:

- The story of Esther gives us a window into their world.
- The setting for this book is during the same time as the book of Ezra.
- The events in Esther take place between the first group of exiles returning, led by Zerubbabel and the second group that was led by Ezra.
- In this book we meet Esther, who saves the Israelites from enemies while still living in Persia.
- This history-story is an example of God placing individual people where He needs them and allowing each person to help accomplish His purpose and will.

- Esther, an Israelite, was chosen to be queen.
- Esther's cousin, Mordecai saved the king when he reported of a plot to kill the king.
- After some time passed, the king learned how Mordecai had saved his life.
- Each of these events and the timing was guided by God.
- God's plan, His placing people in the right place, and His perfect timing saved the Jewish people!
- After this, the Jewish people lived peacefully in this foreign land.
- They also began celebrating the Feast of Purim as a reminder of how the people were saved.

Read Esther 9:18-32

Say:

- Throughout the Bible we see that God speaks to people who will listen and obey.
- He raised up leaders to save people, to move people from one location to another, to warn people of their wrong doing, and to draw people closer to God.
- Through Ester's obedience, the Israelite people were saved and they found peace in the land.

Ask: *Allow time for discussions.*

- Do you hear and listen to what God is saying?
- What are ways we hear God's instructions and plans? *Reading our Bible, The Holy Spirit in Prayer, Pastors and Preachers, Bible Teachers, Family Bible Study Time*
- Do you follow His instructions and plans?

Say:

- God guides His people and wants us to listen and obey.
- When we do He blesses our obedience.

Final Thought:

The book of Esther shares God's love for His people. We see that He gets the attention of ordinary people, puts them where He wants them, and gives them the courage to be obedient. This book is a great reminder that when we hear what God is saying, listen to Him, and follow His commands, we can be part of His amazing plans!

Activities: Esther

Craft: Count Your Blessings Journal

Items Needed:

- General: Colored Pencils or Markers, Miscellaneous Decorations, and Glue
- Per Journal: 1 Sheet of Construction Paper, Book Pages (10 sheets of white copy paper sewn down the middle), and 1 Box of Crayons (optional)

Mission Alert:

- This makes a great mission project!

Instructions:

- Each child will fold the pages on the sewn line.
- They will wrap the construction paper around the book pages
- The construction paper will be glued to the first page of the front and the last page of the back of the journal pages to create a cover.
- Each child will decorate the cover and give the journal a title, such as “Count Your Blessings” or “Our Family Blessings”.
- On the inside cover of the journal, each child will write his or her name and a note to the person who will receive the journal.
- On the first page, each child will write “The Blessing of Jesus” and draw a picture related to Jesus, a blessing for everyone.

Loving Others:

- Journals may be given to someone you love to fill in the remaining pages with his or her blessings.
- A box of crayons is a great item to add to the journal when gifting it to someone.

Every Town Has People to Love:

- widows and widowers, those who have just had surgery, nursing home residents, local EMTs firemen or policemen, deployed military members or their children, church members, etc.



Indoor Activity: All Mixed Up

Items Needed:

- 1 Pack of Index Cards and Pens or Pencils

Instructions:

- Divide the children into two teams.
- Have the children choose a Bible verse. (Both teams should use the same verse, so each team has the same number of cards to arrange.)
- On one index card, have each team write the book, chapter, and verse.
- On the other index cards, each team will write one word of the verse on each index card.
- They will mix up the cards and swap cards with the other team.
- The first team to arrange the cards in the correct order wins the game.
- Open a discussion about how reading the Bible helps us seek God's heart and know His will.

Variation:

- To make the game harder, the children will write the reference and words of one Bible verse on one side of the cards and another Bible verse on the opposite side of the cards.

Outdoor Activity: Catch the Character

Items Needed:

- 1 Beanbag

Instructions

- Have the children stand in a circle.
- Give one child a beanbag.
- The child with the beanbag will throw it to another child in the circle.
- Each time the beanbag is thrown to another child, that child will catch it and name a person from the Bible.
- He or she will then throw the beanbag to another child in the circle who will name another person from the Bible.
- Encourage them to throw the beanbag to child who has not caught the beanbag, so everyone will get a chance to play.
- After playing for a while, they can name Bible books, Bible stories, something they learned about today's lesson, something they know about Jesus, etc.