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**BIBLE  
FUN  
FACTORY**

**BIBLE LESSONS FOR KIDS** | Volume 10



**THE MAJOR PROPHETS**



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# BIBLE FUN FACTORY

## BIBLE LESSONS FOR KIDS

### MAJOR PROPHETS

Welcome to this series of Bible lessons for students age pre-school to sixth grade. You'll find these Bible lessons introduce children to characters of the Old Testament, making their lives very personal by putting their problems in a modern-day context. The characters introduce principles students can use every day in school, at home, and in the neighborhood, while growing in Christ.

The Major Prophets are often skipped in children's lessons. Jeremiah and Isaiah don't include any stories, and the words of the prophets can be sad, even frightening. Hence this set of five lessons covers rare passages and makes them appealing to children.

**Isaiah** is covered in Lessons 1 & 2, offering special insights on good fears, bad fears, fear of the Lord, and what that means. He also speaks great words about heaven, which will give children a sense that every story on earth can have a happy ending. **Jeremiah** and his words of judgment let kids see in Lesson 3 that even in the darkest of times, God's light shines brighter. **Ezekiel's** captivity is sad, but he experiences incredibly beautiful visions, which teaches that bad things can be the foundation for incredibly good things. Finally, the famous story of the prophet **Daniel** in the lion's den shows God's strength and gives kids confidence!

#### Lessons Included:

- Prophet Isaiah and Fears
- Prophet Isaiah and Gladness
- Prophet Jeremiah and Judgment
- Prophet Ezekiel and Visions of Hope
- Prophet Daniel and the Lion

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# PROPHET ISAIAH AND FEARS

Isaiah, the first major prophet we will celebrate, spoke around 800 B.C. At the time, Assyria was a huge threat to Israel. The Jews faced the Assyrians' rising imperialism with greater terror than Americans faced the Soviets during the Cold War. Assyria was spreading the same spirit of "universalism" that we face worldwide today, and there are parallels in thought: Afraid of rousing Assyrian wrath, the Israelites often went along with beliefs in many gods. Afraid of nuclear holocaust, people today often go along with thoughts like "Jesus was a great prophet and teacher" (while failing to acknowledge his Sonship) so we won't arouse conflicts with non-believing nations. Isaiah spoke directly of Christ, and among other visions he warned Israel not to be worn down by false teachings. **Even when we feel alone, we have more company with Jesus than with a dozen friends who don't believe in His Sonship.**

## MATERIALS LIST

### Lesson

- No materials needed

### Intro Activity, Younger Children

- Coloring paper, one sheet for each child
- Markers and crayons

### Intro Activity, Older Children

- Paper for writing
- Pencils

### Activity, Younger Children

- No materials needed

### Activity, Older Children

- Popsicle sticks, two for each child
- Multi-colored yarn
- Scissors

### Game, Younger Children

- Two blindfolds

### Game, Older Children

- Two blindfolds
- Twenty balled-up pieces of newspaper (the size of baseballs)
- Two small garbage bags

BIBLE READING/STORY:  
ISAIAH 8: 11-19

**Excerpts:**  
**Prophecies Against Peer Pressure**  
**Fear God**

<sup>11</sup> The LORD spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said:

<sup>12</sup> "Do not call [holy]  
everything that these people call [holy];  
do not fear what they fear,  
and do not dread it.

<sup>13</sup> The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy,  
he is the one you are to fear,  
he is the one you are to dread,

<sup>14</sup> and he will be a sanctuary;

<sup>17</sup> I will wait for the LORD.  
I will put my trust in him.

<sup>19</sup> When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? <sup>20</sup> If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

## LESSON (TEACHER WORDS IN BOLD): ISAIAH & “WAIT ‘TIL YOUR FATHER GETS HOME!”

**How many of you have ever acted up when your mom was around? How many of you have heard her say, “Wait ‘til your dad gets home!”**

**How scary is that?**

Let them discuss; some might not have fathers but can bring up equivalents, such as their mom is the scary one or a grandparent.

**Traditionally, the father has been the one to “inspire good behavior” in kids because—while they love him lots, kids fear what Dad will say or do if he finds out.**

**Do you LOVE your dads?** Yes. **Do you FEAR your dads?** Even kids without dads will instinctively understand this in concept, and most will say yes.

**It’s no different with God. He loves us *even more than our parents do*. But he is more than willing to correct us when we do wrong things, and that is simply the fact.**

**Jesus said, Do not fear those who can harm the body. Fear God. Let’s look at what we mean by “fear” when we say “fear God.”**

**Fear can be a very good thing. When you see something on fire, fear tells you to back away so you won’t get burned. When you see fast cars coming, fear tells you not to cross the street just then. At the right moments, fear can keep you from getting seriously hurt.**

**What are some other times that fear is a good thing?** Allow them to think up other examples. Prompts: Don’t walk on the ice; don’t swim in rough seas

**Fear that protects you is good.**

**Fear can also be a not-so-good thing. If someone tells you to do something you know is wrong, and you *fear* saying no, then your fear has brought you a real problem.**

**You should not fear what people can do to you, whether it’s laughing at you or teasing you or something worse. You should not fear people who threaten you. You should not fear people who bully you enough so that you go along with them.**

**Fear that protects you is good. Fear that gets to you do wrong things is bad.**

**When we fear what people can do, we need to rely on God to lead us step-by-step in the right path.**



**What might Isaiah have meant when he said to fear the Lord? Do we want to run away from God and be afraid to pray to him?** No; let them answer in their various ways.

**God is our heavenly... what?** Father

**Do you fear your dad when you do something wrong? Do you love your dad? Does fear of Dad make you love him any less?**

**Fear fire. Fear Mom and Dad. And in the same way you fear Mom and Dad...**

**Fear the Lord. There's only one difference: *God loves you even more.***

## INTRO ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: WHAT DO YOU FEAR?

**Today we're going to talk about good fear and bad fear. We'll be using a list of the six biggest fears of kids, as given by doctors. Pick one that you have felt and draw a picture of you having that fear. Later on we'll talk about whether this is a good fear or a bad fear.**

Have children draw a picture of the fear they battle. Write I FEAR at the top. You can use the list below as prompts if you need to:

### Six Biggest Fears of Kids According to Some Surveys:

- Getting in trouble
- Being alone
- The dark
- Getting punched or kicked
- Falling off bike
- Dogs and getting bitten

## INTRO ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: GOOD FEAR / BAD FEAR

**This week we'll be talking about good fears and bad fears. Here's a list of some of the top fears spoken of these days on the Internet. Give each a number, one to five, five being you're totally scared of it, and one being you don't find it scary at all. Add any other fears you've had at the end.**

Have the list below visible on your screen. Have kids number their paper and rank each fear one to five, five being most scary.

1. Speaking in front of the class
2. Performing on stage
3. Big groups of older kids
4. Getting your fingers slammed in a car door
5. Bugs crawling on you
6. Snakes
7. Being attacked by a wild animal
8. Being trapped in a building on fire
9. Finding ticks on your skin
10. Heights
11. Falling off a roof or out of a tall tree
12. Being laughed at for tripping or falling
13. Being caught at something by a parent or teacher
14. Being sent to the principal's office

Your own:

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## ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: LOOKING AT OUR FEARS

Work with the children's I FEAR pictures from the Intro Activity. Help them understand the difference between a GOOD FEAR and a NOT-SO-GOOD FEAR:

**A GOOD FEAR will protect you from getting injured. A NOT-SO-GOOD FEAR can make your life unnecessarily uncomfortable. Let's look at the picture you drew, and try to see how the fear you show can be good fear or bad fear.**

Have each child bring his picture to the front. Use the prompts below to see how you might help the children see that fear. You can use the suggestions below if the children picked any of the prompts or just use them as a guide in explaining good and bad fear. Go over the ones the children did not draw after you're finished with their drawings.

- **Getting in trouble**—Getting in trouble is a good fear if it keeps you out of trouble—away from things your parents, teachers, or principal might not approve of. It's a bad fear if it makes you sneaky. You want always to be honest.
- **Being alone**—Fear of being alone generally means you feel unsafe in the universe. That is a fear you need to work to change with the Lord's help. If you are never alone, you can't experience imagination and all the wonderful places your own mind can take you. You won't be able to feel the presence of the Lord come down to love you because that happens most often when you are alone.
- **The dark**—First, we need to understand that the love of God is brighter than any darkness. Being alone in the dark gives us a chance to experience that. We can sense things more closely when our sight has been cut back. It's a very fun exercise to call upon God in the dark and feel his closeness and his angels' closeness also. Still, it helps us to remember that there's nothing in the dark that's not there in the light.
- **Getting punched or kicked**—Fear of pain can be a good thing or bad thing. You never want to start a fight. But you don't want to give up your right to be right and do right due to fear of pain.
- **Falling off bike**—Fear of skinning your knees is another fear of pain, and it can be a good thing or a bad thing. You can use it to learn to ride your bike slowly and properly—and use knee pads at first, or training wheels. That kind of fear becomes a bad thing if

it prevents you from reaching out into our beautiful world—from learning to ride a bike until you're older.

- **Dogs and getting bitten**—It's good to listen to your fears about animals until you know the rules—like never run from a dog and never put your face in a dog's face. However, dogs can be loving, loyal friends to you, and you don't want to lose out on a great friend due to fear.

## ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: UNDERSTANDING GOOD FEARS AND BAD FEARS

**Let's look at the list of fears you were working on before the lesson. How many of you had some fears you rated as a five?** Most children should have at least one.

**Some fears are good for us. God gives them to us to keep us safe. But some fears prevent us from experiencing good things. Those fears we want to overcome. Almost every fear on your list has a time when it will serve you and a time when it will work against you—and your relationship with God.**

Have students take turns citing the fears they ranked highest as well as ones they added.

First, identify whether the fear is “rational,” such as being hit by a car, or irrational, such as a phobia, fear of the dark, or fear of spooks. Rather than try to dissuade a child from a phobia (it is rarely successful), have them make a God's Eye to remind them that God is always watching and available to talk to.





To start a God's eye, hold the two Popsicle sticks perpendicularly. Take the end of the yarn, brace it with your thumb, and wrap it around both sticks, creating an X, until the angles are secure. Tie a knot. Then move the yarn clockwise, stopping at each quarter marked by the Popsicle stick, and wrap the yarn once around the stick before continuing on. Stop when you run out of time or yarn.

**Isaiah 41:10 says, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." When something seems scary this week, let's remember that God is right there with us. Let's try to pause and really feel his presence until we totally believe in it.**

## GAME, YOUNGER CHILDREN: BRIDGE OF FEAR: GETTING ACROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE

**Let's pretend there are two bullies on a bridge. They don't want to let you through. But your home is on the other side, and you have to cross.**

Blindfold two children and have them link hands over their heads, like a "London Bridge" pose. Make them stand with their feet as far apart as possible. Explain that these are the bullies on the bridge. The goal is for children to sneak up on them and pass through before they can lower their hands and catch them.

Let everyone try to get through them. Those who are caught go to the left. Those who get through go to the right.

**Let's pause and talk about this. Why do you think the bullies are blindfolded? What is that like in real life?** People who bully are, at least temporarily, blind to the strength and power of God that Isaiah talked about.

**Do we try to fight bullies? Is that godly?** No. We try to get past them with as little upset as possible.

**Does God want us to fear bullies?** No—or only so far as we can prevent ourselves from getting hurt.

**Who does God want us to fear?** Him.

**What kind of fear should we have of God? The kind that makes us afraid to pray to him?**

No. The kind that knows he is strong enough to protect us.

**Sometimes, we have no problem or only a small problem getting past a bully.** Point to the children who made it through.

**Other times, we have to call on the Lord.** You, as teacher, go between the two students. Take both their hands and pull them to the side. Tell the other students who were caught to pass through the spot where they stood; it is safe now.

Everybody wins.

## GAME, OLDER CHILDREN: STEP BY STEP: PASSING THE BULLY BY

Give two children a bag of balled-up pieces of newspaper. Squash each piece well to make a fairly hard ball. Have the kids help if you didn't have time beforehand. Each should have about twenty "balls." Those two children are the bullies

Line all the other children up against one wall. Their goal will be to run, one at a time, across the room to the other wall without being hit by a "ball." The two "bullies" will be in the center, wearing blindfolds.

When you say "Go!" one child will try to run to the other side without being hit by any balls. He can go around one side or the other. He can run like mad or he can tiptoe. Have the assistant collect the balls each time and return them to the blindfolded children

Any child who gets hit by a ball has to stay to the left. Any child who doesn't get hit gets to stay to the right.

After all have tried: **Let's look at the circumstances. Why are the two kids in the center blindfolded? What does that symbolize?** Bullies are "blind." Bullies do not have the light of God, at least while they're bullying. They can stop us temporarily.

**How did you feel was the best way to get past a bully? To run like mad and not care how much noise you made or to tread quietly?** Let them talk about what was right for them. The right answer depends a lot on each child's temperament.

**Those who got caught, they represent how sometimes our fears can really stop us. What do we have to do next?** Call upon God to help us.

Take the bags of balls away from the bullies. Take all the children who got tagged with a ball and lead them across the passage where they could have been tagged.

**And what do we do with bullies? Do we forgive them?** Yes. (Bring the bullies along to the winner's wall also).

## CLOSING PRAYER

**Father, thank you for always being here to help us with our fears. Help us to know you are pleased when we use a good fear. Help us to overcome our not-so-good fears. Help us to know that fearing you doesn't mean to stay away.**

**Amen.**

# PROPHET ISAIAH AND GLADNESS

We're back to the major prophet Isaiah for a second week. While he, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel often spoke of the doom approaching the ancient nation of Israel, they spoke of God's rich promises for those who love him. Isaiah spoke some of the greatest prophecies of the Bible concerning joy for those who love God. **In spite of our hard times, a better way has come (Jesus) and a better world will return with him when he comes again. We should look forward every day to being a part of that.**

## MATERIALS LIST

### Lesson

- Flashlight
- Lamp from home that uses a bright light bulb
- Extension cord, if needed to plug it in and get it close to where you're leading the lesson

### Intro Activity, Younger Children

- Coloring paper, one sheet for each child
- Markers and crayons

### Intro Activity, Older Children

- Paper
- Pencils

### Activity, Younger Children

- Red plastic cups
- Clear plastic cups
- fake flame votive candles from a craft store

- Adhesive tape or white craft tape
- Black craft tape or gaffer's tape
- Scissors
- Stick glue
- Black Sharpie Pen

### Activity, Older Children

- Blindfolds, one for each child
- Coloring paper
- Marker pens & crayons

### Game, Younger Children

- Masking tape
- Two bouncy balls
- Two student chairs

### Game, Older Children

- Crawl-through tube (if available)
- Other objects to create an obstacle course (at least four obstacles total)



## BIBLE READING / STORY: ISAIAH 55

### Excerpts: Be Glad

<sup>1</sup> "Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
come, buy and eat!

<sup>2</sup> Why spend money on what is not bread,  
and your labor on what does not satisfy?  
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,  
and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

<sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while he may be found;  
call on him while he is near.  
Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him,  
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

<sup>8</sup> "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,"  
declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> "As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup> As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

<sup>11</sup> so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire

and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

<sup>12</sup> You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn bush will grow the pine tree,  
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the LORD's renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
which will not be destroyed."

## LESSON (TEACHER WORDS IN BOLD): ISAIAH & "WAIT 'TIL JESUS COMES BACK!"

Before you begin the lesson, make sure the lamp with the light bulb that you brought from home is plugged in and close by you.

**How many of you like to write stories or draw pictures that tell about a story? What did you write about in the intro activity?** Let a couple of them read their few paragraphs. To younger children: **What story did you draw a picture of in the Intro Activity?** Let some of them tell what story they drew.

Millions of different stories have been written.

**Sometimes in the middle of a story, you just can't stand not knowing what will happen and you hurry to get to the end. Some stories don't end very happily.**

**Have you ever read a sad story or seen a sad movie? Did you ever wish the ending was different?** Let them discuss.

**A "character" is a person in a story. Did you ever read a story where you loved one or two of the people in it and wished they were real? So they could be your friends?** Let them cite examples.

**Stories are only reflections of real life. *Real life* is only a reflection of the greatest place ever--heaven. Did you know that we are involved, right now, in the greatest story that will ever be told?**

Hold up a Bible. **This contains pieces of God's story. The Bible shows us bits and pieces of the lives of important people in the story. It doesn't show us all the details in the *whole* story. *We're in* the whole story, which is up in heaven, and it's in a book called *The Book of Life*. We are characters in that book, in the greatest story ever told.**

**Do you ever feel sad after something bad happens? Tell of a time when something made you really unhappy.** Let them bring up some examples.

**These are the suspenseful chapters in *The Book of Life*—things that happen in sad times. We wonder...will we be able to get through? Will everything work out okay? Let me tell you how *The Book of Life* will describe us.**

Turn down the lights and make the room as dark as possible. If you're in an area where you can't dim lights, put everyone under a big blanket. Bring up your flashlight and read:

**This is how the story goes:**

**God made man so he could love us. But some men didn't want to be loved. They turned away from God and went and did their own thing. They lied, stole, cheated, and started many wars. God missed his friendship with men, and his heart was breaking.**

**So he sent his only begotten Son, Jesus, into the world. Jesus spoke of God's love. He said that whoever should believe on him could have God back, could have all of God's love, and could live in heaven forever.**

**But most men didn't want to listen. They captured him, tied him up, beat him, and killed him on a cross.**

**Even then, God and his Son decided, "We will forgive them. They don't know what they're doing..." and with that, the Son died. And it was a very, very dark chapter.**

**And yet some men knew the truth: Death had not really gotten the Son. He arose from the grave, appeared to some, and was gone.**

Turn out the flashlight, prepared to say: **That isn't the end. Because someday... he's coming back.**

Turn on the lamp, hold it over your head so the bulb lights the room. **Only this time... in another form.**

**The Good News, the news talked about by the Prophet Isaiah, is that *we already know the ending. When Jesus returns, it is a very, very happy ending. Man will return to God and love him with all their hearts.***

Lower the lamp and read again:

<sup>12</sup> You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn bush will grow the pine tree,  
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the LORD's renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
which will not be destroyed."

**THE END. So whatever we struggle with today, we can know that story is not over. If we love God and believe on his Son, *who surely does live in heaven*, we can be part of that someday.**

**Who wants to believe?** Let them decide, raise hands. Put the lamp down and join hands with them.

**Father: Help us to be yours, to be loved by you, until we get to the very end. Thank you for always giving us light along with way.**

You can leave the lamp on for the rest of the activities if you wish.

## INTRO ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: MAKE YOUR OWN STORY

**Today we're going to talk about stories. What is your favorite story?**

Have children draw a picture of their favorite story. If they are not readers, then they can think of a cartoon or DVD they like to watch and draw a picture from that story.



## INTRO ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: SILLY STORIES

**Today we'll be talking about one of the greatest stories told. Here's your chance to make up your own story. Since the greatness comes later in the lesson, you can make this silly if you want. Just finish a little story that starts like this:**

It started out like any other morning. But as soon as I got on the school bus...

## ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: JESUS BRINGS THE LIGHT

**The prophet Isaiah spoke of the happy ending to our story on earth, which we Christians believe will happen when Jesus returns. He brought light in the darkness when he lived on earth. Then he was killed, came up from the grave, and went on up to heaven in a cloud in front of the disciples. He said the next time he came it would be in a cloud, only this time he'd destroy darkness altogether.**

**Today we're going to make lighthouses, a great source of light, because they are a symbol of the light that Jesus brings to us until that great day comes.**



Photo by PBS Parents

Help students put the three stripes of white tape around the red plastic cup; that is the hardest part. (If you hold the cups down, they should be able to wrap strips around it. Use the stick glue to get the votive candle to stick to the top of the red cup. Cut black squares of tape for the door and two or three windows. Stick the clear cup on top, but do not glue it on. The cup can be removed to turn the candle on and off. Write on the bottom JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE.

## ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: GOD'S WORD DOES NOT GO OUT EMPTY

**There's one part of the Scripture reading from Isaiah we have not discussed yet. It's this one:**

**<sup>10</sup> As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,**

**<sup>11</sup> so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**

**Each time we read something from God's word, we have a chance to understand ourselves and the world—God's story—a little bit better. It's as if the word of God opens our eyes. We can see what we mean by drawing ourselves.**

Blindfold everyone. You can use bandanas, discarded neckties, or even toilet paper. Set a piece of paper in front of each child and have them draw a self-portrait. Get them to include details: shoes and socks, jewelry, etc, just by feeling and guessing what color crayon they have.

Have them take off the blindfolds and show everyone. After they've had a good laugh, have them turn the paper over and repeat the exercise, only this time, able to see.

**How much harder was it to draw yourself blindfolded?** Lots

**How much more accurate were you when you could see?** Lots

**One purpose God accomplishes when his word goes out is that it enables us to see ourselves more clearly—how much we mean to him and how important it is for us to spend time with him daily. Let’s make a vow to listen to God and pay more attention to his word and what he says. We’ll be able to see ourselves more clearly and draw up better plans for our lives!**

## GAME, YOUNGER CHILDREN: OBSTACLE RELAY

Have the students form two teams and stand on one side of the room. Place two balls in the middle of the floor, about a third of the way to the other wall. Place two chairs about two-thirds of the way to the other wall. Tape the students’ ankles together, using masking tape. When you say “Go!” a student from each team will hop to the bouncy ball, pick it up, and bounce it three times, then hop to the chair and put the ball in the chair. He will then continue to the other wall, and touch it. Finally he will hop back, pick the ball up out of the chair, and place it back on the floor where he found it. He will then hop back to the beginning, where the next teammate will begin the course.

When everyone finishes:

**How is this obstacle course like our lives?** Life can be hard sometimes, like the course.

**When Jesus comes back, he will take away hardship. Until then, we have to keep working at “the race” he has set before us. It’s not always easy. What are some things that Jesus has asked us to do as part of the “race” of our lives? Think Ten Commandments?** Not lie, cheat or steal...honor our parents...love one another...treat others like we would want to be treated...love God.

**How is the tape around our legs like us in this life?** When we get to heaven, we will be much stronger and more graceful and able to do more stuff with our heavenly bodies.

**God gave us prophets like Isaiah to help us understand what is coming and what we need to do next, even though it is hard. And what happens at the end of the race? Does Isaiah’s story have a good ending?**

Yes; God helps us finish the “race of life” and the next world will be awesome.

## GAME, OLDER CHILDREN: OBSTACLE COURSE

Turn over chairs, introduce crawl-through tubes, and include tables. Create an obstacle course the kids have to run through to reach the New World. Explain to them that the wall opposite where they started is “God’s New World” as promised by Isaiah, and the goal is to get there. Have at least four obstacles.

Break children into two groups. Have them run a relay through the obstacle course. Once the child reaches the wall (New World), her next teammate in line can begin her way through the course.

If a child goes through a part out of order, he has to start from the beginning all over again.

Once everyone reaches the New World:

**How is this obstacle course like our lives?** It can be hard to find the right way.

**What would happen if you didn’t know where the New World was? If I had not told you where to go?** We wouldn’t have been able to finish the race.

**God gave us prophets like Isaiah to help us understand what is coming and what we need to do next. And what happened at the end of the race? Did it have a good ending?**

Yes; everyone was told where to go, and so everyone reached the New World, even though it was hard.

## CLOSING PRAYER

**Father, thank you for providing the great ending. It helps us go through hard things, knowing we will be with you someday.**

**Amen.**

# PROPHET JEREMIAH AND JUDGMENT

The prophet Jeremiah received his calling some 50 years after Isaiah was silenced, around 623 B.C. During the time of his prophesying, Jerusalem was taken into captivity by King Nebuchadnezzar, and the Israelites were enslaved. Jeremiah warned over and over again of this invasion, brought on by the idolatry of Israel, but it was to no avail. It was a very dark time. **But even in the darkest of times, God loves shines in his promises, as we can see through the sayings of Jeremiah.**

## MATERIALS LIST

### Lesson

- No materials needed

### Intro activity, younger children

- Doll
- List of consequences, one copy for teacher

### Intro activity, older children

- Writing paper
- Pens or pencils

### Activity, younger children

- Construction paper sheets, folded into three columns, one for each child
- Markers and crayons

### Activity, older children

- List of common mistakes, one copy for each child
- Teacher's list of common mistakes, one copy for teacher
- Pencils

### Game, younger children

- Vaseline
- Cotton balls, three for each child
- Building blocks, dozen or so

### Game, older children

- Snack prizes

BIBLE READING/STORY:  
LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH 3: 21-32

<sup>22</sup> Because of the LORD's great love we are not [completely beaten],  
for his [love] never fails.

<sup>23</sup> They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

<sup>24</sup> I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;  
therefore I will wait for him."

<sup>25</sup> The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,  
to the one who seeks him;

<sup>26</sup> it is good to wait quietly  
for the salvation of the LORD.

<sup>27</sup> It is good for a man to bear the yoke  
while he is young.

<sup>28</sup> Let him sit alone in silence,  
for the LORD has laid it on him.

<sup>29</sup> Let him bury his face in the dust—  
there may yet be hope.

<sup>30</sup> Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him,  
and let him be filled with disgrace.

<sup>31</sup> For men are not cast off  
by the Lord forever.

<sup>32</sup> Though he brings grief, he will show compassion,  
so great is his unfailing love.

## LESSON (TEACHER WORDS IN BOLD): JEREMIAH & GOD'S CONSEQUENCES

**Before the reading, we tried to discuss consequences of actions, if we were the parents. We'll get back to that, but for the moment, let's be kids again. How many of you have ever been sent to your room or have been 'grounded' by your parents? Most everyone should confirm. What did you do that got you in that sort of trouble?** Let them give examples.

**It's funny: I don't hear too many of you saying, "I didn't do anything to cause that! I was falsely accused!" Sometimes we're falsely accused, but generally speaking, if we get sent to our rooms, there's a reason, right? Nobody is perfect.**

**God is kind of like the fairest of fair parents. He knows everything, so he doesn't falsely accuse. But if we're doing something wrong, he will correct us.**

**In the time of Jeremiah, people were melting down silver, making idols out of them, and bowing down and saying prayers to those idols. Do you know what that's like, for God our parent? It's sort of like if we had really great parents, and yet we ran away from home. And let's say we went to the next town and found a couple of people who weren't very great parents. Let's say they let their kids do whatever they wanted, and they let their kids get spoiled and play in the street and yell at other kids and eat all the junk food they wanted. And let's say we saw that and thought, "Gee, I'd like to move in with them! No rules!" And we tried to move in with them. How would our parents feel? Really hurt.**

**Would our parents simply let us stay with those people?** No.

**What would they do?** They would come get us and bring us back.

**And what if we told them, "But you're just not as much fun?"** They would still try to bring us back.

**And would they be right or wrong?** They would be right.

**And what if we kept doing this 'running away' thing because we didn't like rules and just wanted to have fun? Would they get mad? Yes. Would they feel very hurt?**

**And what might they do to keep us at home?** Talk with us, plead with us, or eventually give out some punishments.

**In the time when Jeremiah was a prophet, Judah, the tribe of Israel he came to, was behaving like this. The people would get bored or would want to do bad things, but did**



**not feel bad or fear any consequences. So they would decide they could worship some other god who didn't have any rules. So God let them be captured by a very mean country, Babylon, until they learned their lesson.**

**Some things have really not changed since the Babylonians captured Judah. The people of Judah thought that God didn't give out punishments. They thought God didn't care enough. Today, some people think it's horrible when a minister says, "You were doing a wrong thing, and God corrected you." They think only a mean and nasty God corrects.**

**Our parents correct us. When we get to be parents, we will correct our children. God corrects all of us...why?** Because he loves us like a parent and wants us to do the right things.

Discuss the three scenarios from the Intro Activity and try to find collective consequences that everyone agrees on. This will be a stretch for some, as they don't like having consequences themselves, and they are not mature enough yet to fully put themselves in someone else's shoes without it being a struggle. But encourage them to think. If it helps, use a doll, and pretend the doll is the child, and they're dishing out consequences to the child. Continue doing the same with the rest, listed below:

- 1. Cheated on a test in school. Consequence:**
- 2. Took Dad's car keys and started the car, though he wasn't old enough to drive, put the car in gear, and ran it into the garage door. Consequence:**
- 3. Left the oven on, forgetting about a TV dinner while talking on a cell phone, and started a fire that dad was able to put out with the kitchen extinguisher. (No damage—just a lot of panic struck in all.)**
- 4. Forgot to walk the dog after school, so you (as parent) were faced with a puddle of pee when you got home from work.**
- 5. Took an important phone message from one of your customers at work, forgot to write it down, and hence, caused you to miss a hundred-dollar sale.**

**How does it feel to be the parent instead of the child?** hard, a lot of tough choices, a lot of responsibility.

**Can you understand that when kids make bad choices, it affects their parents too?** Yes.

**So, if parents give out corrections or punishments, is it just because they're mean?** No; they're looking out for their kids. **Doesn't this actually mean they love their kids?** Yes.

**So if God corrects you for something...what does that say about his feelings for you?** He really cares.

## INTRO ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: PRETENDING WE'RE MOM OR DAD

**Let's play house. You're the parent. This is the child.** Put a doll or stuffed toy on top of the table. **I'm going to tell you what your child did. I want you to think of what the consequence should be for your child.**

**Remember, we are trying to be loving and fair, but we want the consequence to make your child not want to do that again.**

As children arrive, let them take turns being the parent and deciding what the consequence should be. They can compare with others and see if they have the same or different consequences after you present the three bad behaviors:

- 1. Your child is supposed to ask before going outside to play. He felt that you would say no because it was after dinner. So he sneaked outside and stayed out until dark. Consequence:**
- 2. Your child fed his vegetables to the dog after you spent 20 minutes chopping and cooking them so they would taste good. Consequence:**
- 3. You see a lump in your child's pocket after coming out of the store. You feel around and find a brand new pack of gum. You didn't buy it for him.**

**Consequence:**

## INTRO ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: BEING THE PARENTS

**Today we'll be talking about actions having consequences. Let's pretend we're parents, and we have kids. We're going to set rules, like responsible parents do, so our kids don't drive us crazy and turn out to be an embarrassment to us and a problem to themselves.**

**Let's start with three things that kids have been known to do.**

Have the following scenarios visible on your screen with three things on it that kids are known to have done. Tell the kids to try to be fair, loving and effective in what the consequences would be if their own kids did these. Consequences could be grounding, taking away a privilege, taking away an object, or something else. They should write down their consequence. What would it be if their child

- 1. Climbed out the bedroom window at midnight and went to hang out with kids whose parents didn't care they were out.**  
**Consequence:**
- 2. Fed his vegetables to the dog after you spent 20 minutes chopping and cooking them so they would taste good.**  
**Consequence:**
- 3. Took ten dollars from your wallet without asking and, when questioned, blamed one of his sisters before being caught.**  
**Consequence:**

## ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: GOD HAS CONSEQUENCES TOO

**One of the ways God corrects us for doing wrong is letting us suffer the natural consequences of our actions. Let's think of the natural consequences God has let us suffer when we did any of the following:**

**Went out in the cold without our hats and gloves, because we were being lazy and didn't want to take the time to put them on.** God let us catch a cold.

**Kept telling our parents at night that we'd brushed our teeth, but we just didn't feel like it and weren't honest.** God let us get a cavity and get drilled at the dentist.

**Put our hand over a flame because we wanted to see what it felt like, even though our parents told us never to do that.** God let us get burned.

**Kept picking the cat up, even though the cat kept meowing to be put down.** God let the cat scratch us.

Give each child a piece of paper. Fold it into three columns. Help them write at the top of each column:

Column #1: WHAT I DID:

Column #2: WHAT THE CONSEQUENCE WAS:

Column #3: WHAT I LEARNED:

They can draw a picture of their action and can fill in the blanks. Help those who don't write yet.

## ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

**Often times, when God is doling out consequences for actions, he uses what we call “the natural consequences of our actions” to serve as the correction.**

Make visible on your screen the List of Common Mistakes Kids Make (see next page). Tell kids to fill in what the natural consequence of each action is, and what God wants us to learn from it.

A teacher’s answer sheet follows the list so that you can guide the answers.

## COMMON MISTAKES KIDS MAKE & GOD’S NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Name the natural consequences of the following actions:

1. Lighting matches
2. Playing rough inside (roughhousing)
3. Staying up too late on a school night
4. Forgetting to brush your teeth night after night
5. Hanging out with bad kids
6. Eating too much junk food
7. Watching too much television
8. Being mean to other kids
9. Not cleaning your room for weeks
10. Copying someone else’s homework
11. Forgetting to put the milk away
12. Gossiping about someone
13. Watching horror flicks, especially before bed
14. Listening to depressing music all the time
15. Lying to your parents (and getting caught)

*Note to teachers: We are including this list because, while some consequences are very obvious, others are things not often considered.*

## Mistake & Natural Consequences God Allows:

1. Lighting matches: *can get burned*
2. Playing rough inside (rough housing): *can get injured or break something*
3. Staying up too late on a school night: *can't learn in school the next day*
4. Forgetting to brush your teeth night after night: *can get cavities and have to get your teeth drilled*
5. Hanging out with bad kids: *can get blamed for things they do*
6. Eating too much junk food: *can develop a weight problem or a health problem*
7. Watching too much television: *can affect your ability to read and get things done*
8. Being mean to other kids: *can find people being mean to you; can find that people don't invite you to parties or get-togethers*
9. Not cleaning your room for weeks: *you have to live in a pigsty*
10. Copying someone else's homework: *can't pass the test*
11. Forgetting to put the milk away: *next day you find your cereal is in sour milk*
12. Gossiping about someone: *people don't trust you with their secrets*
13. Watching horror flicks, especially before bed: *can't get to sleep*
14. Listening to depressing music all the time: *find yourself depressed*
15. Lying to your parents (and getting caught): *parents can't trust you.*

**Your parents are busy people! Look out for yourself, don't get into bad habits and find out that God is being the parent (through natural consequences of actions)**

## GAME, YOUNGER CHILDREN: COTTON BALLS & CONSEQUENCES

First try to get kids to remember the names of the Major Prophets' books by repeating the names with them several times:

**Isaiah**

**Jeremiah**

**Lamentations of Jeremiah**

**Ezekiel**

**Daniel**

**If you can say the names of the books by yourself, you get to play the next game without a building block on your back, which means you have one less thing to worry about. Who wants to try?**

As each child tries to repeat the books...if they can repeat them all, they get a high-five. If they can't, hand them a building block.

Line up cotton balls against the wall, three for each child. Have the children line up in front of their three cotton balls. Talk as you go along:

**How many of you have been told to do something by your parents, and you simply forgot to do it? Sometimes the things your parents tell you to do—get out your school clothes, fold your laundry—seem pointless to you. But you're supposed to do it anyway, and you're supposed to remember. It's like memorizing the Major Prophets. It may seem pointless to you. It may seem unfair to have to do something you don't want to do. But even if it's simply forgetting something, actions can have consequences. So those of you who got a building block, just be prepared to use it. Consequences are merely part of life.**

Dab the end of each child's nose with Vaseline. Have them get down on all fours. The object will be to get the cotton ball stuck to the Vaseline on the end of their noses. Then they will have to "carry" the cotton ball on their noses to the opposite wall while crawling on their hands and knees. *They may not touch the cotton balls with their hands! They have to touch them using their noses.*

Those who have a building block must crawl with the building block on their backs while doing all of this. They may pick up the building block with their hands, but not the cotton. If the cotton ball drops off, they have to stick their nose down to it to get it again.

The first person to get all three cotton balls to the opposite wall wins.

**Sometimes doing all the things our parents and teachers want us to do feels like a crazy race. We're supposed to remember not to forget, but how do you remember if you've forgotten? We talked earlier about how hard it is to be an adult, but we adults are very aware: It can be very hard to be a kid!**

## GAME, OLDER CHILDREN: SMACKS & CONSEQUENCES

**Consequences often seem unfair. Someday, God will explain everything. But in the meantime, we can't see the big picture and we try to accept that life isn't always comfortable. It's like the game of hand-smack. The fastest person wins, and we don't understand why some of us are faster than others. Let's play.**

Divide the children into pairs. Have one partner hold his hands out, palms up. The other partner puts his hands gingerly on top of his partner's hands, palms down.

The goal is for the person whose hands are underneath to quickly reach around and smack the tops of the partner's hands before the partner can move his hands away.

If he succeeds, his hands stay on the bottom, and he can continue to try to smack his partner's hands. If he fails, his hands become those on top, and his partner gets a chance to try to smack his hands.

He only needs to make contact with one hand for a smack to be considered a hit.

A miss is if neither hand makes contact.

The winner is the person whose hands are on the bottom for the most rounds after five minutes are up.

**How many of you like that game?** You should get a mixed review. **How many of you feel that the tops of your hands are sore?** Some will confirm. **Are your hands sore because you were lazy and not really trying?** No! **So how is that fair? You did your best, and you still have sore hands.**

**Our point is that life requires us to do things that some people are better at. We often get beaten. But in the overall scheme of things, God will make sure we get our just rewards in his good time!**

Give out snack prizes—to the sore-handed people first, and then everyone else.



## CLOSING PRAYER

**Father, thank you for correcting us when we start to go the wrong way. Without you, we could go totally the wrong way. We appreciate your fatherly care.**

**Amen.**

# PROPHET EZEKIEL AND VISIONS OF HOPE

Ezekiel began to prophesy in 592 B.C., only seven years after Jeremiah was silenced. He prophesied as a captive in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had invaded Jerusalem five years earlier, and both Major Prophets Ezekiel and Daniel were among the 10,000 people captured. Ezekiel's visions were stunning in their detail and beauty and are thought to have been a gift from God to help ease the trauma of captivity. Ezekiel's vision of the wheel spinning in the air was so vivid that some people today believe it was a UFO. Most, however, feel **the wheel spinning is merely an embodiment of God's power, a sign that he is willing to help us come out victorious, even when our circumstances look grim.**

## MATERIALS LIST

### Lesson

- No materials needed

### Intro Activity, Younger Children

- Drawing paper, one sheet for each child
- Crayons or marker pens

### Intro Activity, Older Children

- Paper
- Pencils

### Activity, Younger Children

- Pictures drawn from the Intro Activity
- Piece of string at least six-feet long
- Shorter pieces of string, one-foot long, one for each child

- Clothespins that open and shut, enough to hang a drawing by every child
- Crayons
- Markers

### **Activity, Older Children**

- Paper
- Pencils

### **Game, Younger Children**

- Red construction paper to create Jesus' heart
- Scissors to cut the image in eight pieces

### **Game, Older Children**

- 12 sheets of paper to write the scripture verse on in parts
- Masking tape
- Bible

## BIBLE READING/STORY:

# EZEKIEL 1:15

<sup>15</sup> As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. <sup>16</sup> This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like [crystals], and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. <sup>17</sup> As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not turn about as the creatures went. <sup>18</sup> Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around.

<sup>19</sup> When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. <sup>20</sup> Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. <sup>21</sup> When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

<sup>22</sup> Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome. <sup>23</sup> Under the expanse their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. <sup>24</sup> When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.

<sup>25</sup> Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. <sup>26</sup> Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. <sup>27</sup> I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. <sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

# LESSON (TEACHER WORDS IN BOLD): EZEKIEL: HARD TIMES BRING GREAT REWARDS

*Note: Show students these or other photos of these heroes as you are telling their stories.*

When Ezekiel started seeing visions of God's power, such as the Wheel of Time and the four creatures, he had watched his kingdom fall to ruins, and he'd been taken as a captive to another country. He missed his homeland and his family and their way of life.

Fortunately, we Americans have not lived through an invasion by another country. We've not had bombs dropped on all our cities or bad guys running our government. But we often know individuals who have been through very trying experiences who come out stronger, more powerful, more spiritual, more courageous.

Let's look at some children who went through some stuff and came out stronger:

When HARRIET TUBMAN was a little girl in the 1800s, she was a slave. When she was five years old, she was given to a woman who whipped her until she ran away. Later, she was owned by a man who threw an iron at a slave, and Harriet blocked the vicious slave owner from chasing the slave. The iron hit her in the head, and she lay close to death for many weeks. The experience of slavery inspired her to help slaves run away when she turned 29. She made about 20 trips into the South and led many slaves to freedom in the north. She never lost a single "passenger" on what they called the Underground Railroad, which is actually paths to freedom through swamps and woods, with stops at the homes and churches of people who helped the runaway slaves.

Because she'd suffered slavery when she was your age, she knew how important it was to help others get away.



**When HELEN KELLER was 19 months old, she ran a high fever and came out of her illness unable to see or hear. With the help of a great teacher, she not only grew up to read Braille in several languages, but she also went to Radcliffe, the women's Harvard. She also was an author and speaker and a great inspiration to many people.**

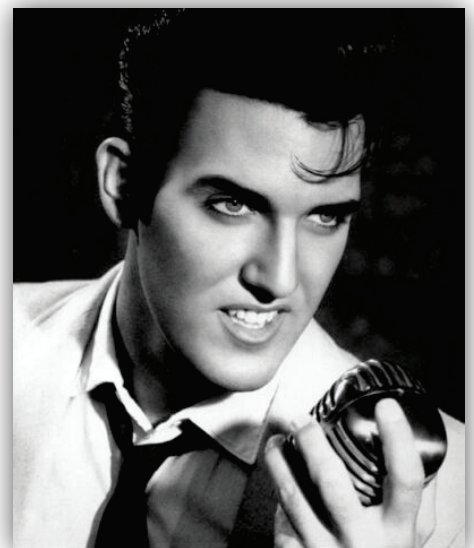
**In spite of being deaf and blind when she was your age, she persisted, and over 100 years later, almost every American knows Helen Keller's name.**

**ELVIS PRESLEY was born in a two-room house, and lived in a series of boarding houses as a child after his family moved to Memphis. His music teacher once told him he couldn't sing. He had a C average in school. At age ten, he took fifth place in a singing contest, but was considered too shy to perform publicly. He got picked on in school, and some of the tougher kids called him a mama's boy.**

**After poverty and so many put-downs about himself and his talent, he went on to be known as The King of Pop and is still considered the most famous of all American singers.**

**God often allows very difficult things to happen to us. However, the Apostle Paul noted in Romans 8:28, "All things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose."**

**For Ezekiel, his hardship brought him extra spiritual sensitivity, and probably allowed him to become a prophet of God. For us, our hardships will make us mighty warriors for God's cause. When something very stressful happens, of course you feel anxious, sad, or disappointed. But rejoice, because God is using that hardship. He has special plans for you so that when you are older, the hardship will have made you much, much stronger a person.**



## INTRO ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: GOOD TIMES COME OUT OF BAD TIMES

**The Apostle Paul said, “All things work together for the good of those that believe.” That means even bad things can work out to be good things! Today we’ll be talking about the Prophet Ezekiel, who went through a lot of sad things, and then became a prophet who would be famous forever.**

Have each student draw a picture of something sad or bad that happened to them. Have them share it with all the students when they arrive. Discuss how good results could come of those bad things, and that they’ll learn about that in the lesson.

## INTRO ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

**Today we’ll be talking about the Prophet Ezekiel, who prophesied after Babylon invaded Israel and many Israelite people were captives in Egypt. He brings to mind the Apostle Paul saying, “All things work together for the good of them that believe.”**

**Here is a list of the most common bad things that have happened to kids, according to Internet surveys. Try to think of good that could come of those things and write them down:**

Have the following list of “Statistically Most Stressful Events in Childhood” available on your screen. Explain that stress is an individual sensation, and that the following events may be more stressful to some than to others. For example, a child with a military parent who has to move often will not be as stressed by having to move. Ask kids to use their imaginations to provide examples of how these things can make people stronger:

### **Stressful Things that Have Happened to Kids...**

#### **What Good Things Can Follow?**

- Having to Move:
- Parents Splitting Up:
- Getting an Illness:
- Loved One Passing Away:
- Having to Live in Poverty:
- Being Made Fun Of:

Discuss the answers with them before the lesson.



## ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: MAKING GOOD OUT OF BAD

Run a string from one side of the room to the other. Brace it, as you will hang pictures from it later.

Using the pictures drawn during the Intro Activity, have the child turn the paper over. Have them draw the image of the one of the heroes mentioned in the Lesson (use the pictures provided in the lesson for them to copy).

Put at the top of that picture: **All things work together for good.**

Punch a hole in the top center and run a string through the hole. Post everyone's pictures to dangle from the line you ran across the room.

Blow on the pictures or open a window and let the breeze blow them. The children will see that on some, the hero person is facing front, and on others, their own drawing of their trying circumstance is facing front.

**Life is a journey of “hills and valleys” or “good times and hard times.” Sometimes we’re struggling; other times we’re winning. We can’t always tell what phase we will be in next. We can feel like we’re being blown by the wind and things are really out of our control. But we can rest assured as did the Prophet Ezekiel: Good times will come again!**

## ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: WHEN LIFE SEEMS UNFAIR

**For Ezekiel and those in exile, life must have seemed unfair, even though Ezekiel explains that he prophesied because the people of Israel had done wrong. Their invasion was scary, and their captivity was humiliating, and they must have felt they’d had enough. But God promised them that someday there would be a new world with no suffering. He wanted them to know he still had great plans for them.**

**Sometimes our lives seem unfair. We ought to remember that God can fix things; God can make things better—in this world and the next. Psalm 37:1-3 says,**

**<sup>1</sup> Do not fret because of evil men  
or be envious of those who do wrong;**

**<sup>2</sup> for like the grass they will soon wither,  
like green plants they will soon die away.**

**<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD and do good.**

**Let's think of that while reading the following story. We want you to write your own ending, showing how God can fix things:**

Read the story below:

### **Abby and the New Markers**

Abby had been asking her mom to buy multi-colored gel markers. A lot of her friends had them, and the markers were fun and also helped them study better. "They're expensive," her mom said. She was out of work, and the family was watching every dollar. But on Abby's birthday a few days later, beside her cake was a present. When she opened it, it was her gel markers.

"Thanks, Mom!" She offered her mother a big hug.

The next day in school, Abby laid the markers on the floor in front of her locker while she put away her coat, having every intention of putting them in her pencil case. Once in homeroom, she gasped. She'd left the markers on the floor in the busy corridor. When she went back, lo and behold, no markers! She ran into each of the four sixth-grade homerooms, asking if anyone had seen or taken them. No one confessed.

"How will I ever tell this to Mom?" she groaned to her friend Jena later that day.

"It gets worse," Jena said. "Did you see that Tracy Spurlock is sporting marker pens? I'm totally sure she didn't have them yesterday."

Tracy Spurlock was a loud girl, and most kids were afraid of her. Abby was hesitant to ask the teacher to question Tracy. However, imagining her mother's face when she told her, she went ahead with it. Tracy had an elaborate story of how she'd had the markers at home since the summer and she'd totally forgotten about them until yesterday.

The teacher let it go, and Abby went back to her seat, not wanting to look at Tracy, who was probably embarrassed and looking for revenge. But she couldn't help it. Abby glanced at Tracy, who was looking back. When Tracy seemed sure the teacher wasn't looking, she held up a gel pen and stuck her tongue out at Abby, laughing silently.

Depending on the attention span of your students, you can ask them to write their own ending to the story, or they can simply tell it after giving it some thought.

(Use the back if you want!)

## GAME, YOUNGER CHILDREN: FINDING JESUS

Before class starts, cut a good-sized heart out of red construction paper, then cut the heart into eight pieces. Hide them around the room.

**There are eight pieces of a puzzle hidden around the room. Let's see if we can find them and put the puzzle together.**

After finding all the pieces and forming the heart:

**Especially when we're going through a hard time, it might feel like Jesus isn't watching or Jesus' love has left us and we have to find him. It's sort of like us finding pieces of the puzzle.**

**When we pray very hard, we can feel Jesus again. It makes us aware of his love and his presence.**

**This picture of Jesus' big heart is like the permanence of his love. There's no way to erase it. And if it gets cut up—if we sin or go away from God's will-- it can be put back together. Jesus doesn't change at all. Circumstances make it hard to *feel* his love sometimes, but it is always there.**

**Jesus always stays the same. He always wants to help us and be there for us.**

## GAME, OLDER CHILDREN: FINDING GOD IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

Shuffle your twelve sheets of paper with Proverbs 3:5&6 on them. Tape a sheet of paper to every child's back. This game is designed for 12 children, but if you have fewer, tape two CONSECUTIVE sheets to some children's backs. If you have more, let those without a sheet be the organizers.

The sheets should have written out the following scripture: *(Don't number the pages!)*

- |                   |                     |                        |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Trust in       | 5. Lean not on      | 9. acknowledge him     |
| 2. The Lord, with | 6. your own         | 10. and he will        |
| 3. All your       | 7. understanding    | 11. direct your paths. |
| 4. heart, and     | 8. in all your ways | 12. Proverbs 3:5 & 6   |

Give only this instruction: **By looking on each other's backs, get yourselves in order so that the saying can be read from left to right.**

They will have no idea how to do this at first and will feel frustrated, not being able to see what is on their own backs. They should figure out that the person wearing the Scripture goes either first or last, and that person can see everyone else's back to put people in an order that makes sense. They may also figure out that if they open the Bible to that passage, they will have a reading to go by, even if it is a different translation (this one is NIV), and they can put themselves in order easily. This is an exercise in organization, listening, and cooperating.

When they are in order:

**This game is a little like our relationship with God. Sometimes it's hard to see the whole message that he's giving us. We have to work with others and we really have to WANT to know what he's saying. But if we listen and we're diligent, he will give us direction.**

## CLOSING PRAYER

**Father, thank you for being with us in hard times. Thank you for your love and your hope for a wonderful future with you for all eternity.**

**Amen.**

# PROPHET DANIEL AND THE LION

The most famous story told of Daniel is being put in the lions' den. The lions were supposed to devour Daniel, as told in Daniel 6, but his belief in God saved him. **God is able to do amazing things to protect those whom he loves—including providing angels of protection and causing huge wild animals to act tame.**

## MATERIALS LIST

### Lesson

- Aluminum pie tins from Intro Activity
- Flashlight
- Two index cards with lines written on them (see Lesson)
- Dark marker for writing out lines to be read

### Intro Activity, Younger Children

- Pie tins, one for each child
- Crayons
- Markers
- Optional: if your markers do not produce well on the aluminum pie tins, include the following:
  - Paper
  - Scissors
  - Stapler

### Intro Activity, Older Children

- Pie tins, two for each child
- Hole puncher
- Three-foot lengths of string, one for each child
- Crayons, at least two for each child

## Activity, Younger Children

- Paper plates, one for each child
- Rotini (spiral) noodles, several boxes
- Three-inch lengths of yarn: brown, gold, and orange, six altogether for each child
- Brown, black, gold, and orange crayons and markers
- Craft glue
- Construction paper, one sheet for each child

## Activity, Older Children

- Craft store key rings, one for each child
- 1 1/2-foot strands of yarn, four brown, four gold, and four orange for each child
- Optional: beads for tying off end of braid

## Game, Younger Children

- Masking tape, at least 12 feet to mark off playing field
- Blindfold

## Game, Older Children

- No materials necessary

## BIBLE READING/STORY: DANIEL 6

### Daniel in the Den of Lions

#### Verses 1-13 paraphrased for children:

After the nation of Judah had been taken into captivity by Babylon, there were still some Jews and some of their prophets who believed in God and prayed to him every day.

King Darius, who had some evil Babylonian priests as friends, signed a decree for them saying that if anyone in the kingdom was caught praying to God for the next 30 days, that person would be thrown into the lions' den to be devoured by lions. Daniel heard about this and refused to stop praying to God. He even prayed with his window wide open, so that the priests could see. That got him arrested and brought before Darius, who had no choice but to throw Daniel in with the lions. But he liked Daniel and was sorry he had been duped into signing the decree.

#### Daniel 6: 14-23

<sup>16</sup> So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

<sup>17</sup> A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. <sup>18</sup> Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

<sup>19</sup> At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. <sup>20</sup> When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

<sup>21</sup> Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! <sup>22</sup> My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."

<sup>23</sup> The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.



# LESSON (TEACHER WORDS IN BOLD): DANIEL: GOD CAN OFFER AMAZING PROTECTION

**Let's pretend we're in a boat about to sink. Someone be the lightning.**

Hand a flashlight to a volunteer among the kids. **Everyone be the thunder.** Hand out aluminum pie plates with storm drawn on from the Intro Activity. Have everyone flash and bang for a while. Have everyone heave and sway like they're in a big storm.

**Keep banging but more quietly! We need to hear people talk, too.** Get children to slow their pace like they're beating a small tambourine.

**God loves to work when there's a doubter...so long as we believe with all our hearts! Who wants to be the doubter?** Hand the volunteer an index card with lines on it. Have him recite the lines as everyone else heaves and sways and makes lightning in the pretend wind of the giant storm.

The doubter should read: **There's no such thing as God! We're all going to die! Ahhh!!!!**

**Who wants to be the believer like Daniel?** Give the volunteer an index card with lines on it. Have him recite the lines as everyone else heaves and sways.

The believer should read: **Is that what you really believe?? How would you like to change your mind? Because God is willing to show you. Lightning, stop! Thunder, stop!**

**Don't just automatically stop!! Remember: God made you. You're the lightning and thunder!! You're not supposed to stop lightning and thundering just because a human being tells you to.** Continue to encourage the lightning and the thunder, and for them to pay no attention. Encourage everyone to heave and sway. Turn back to the believer.

**How is it that a believer gets miraculous things to happen? Do things happen just because the believer says they should? What else do they need besides their own voices??**

While the lightning and thunder continues ominously, bring the class around to the point: They need God's intervention.

**The believer believes, but it's God who intervenes! Believer, instead of speaking to the lightning and thunder, speak to God!**

Encourage the Believer child to pray to God, to make up his own words about making the storm at sea stop.

Once, he does, get up.

**When a believer believes, God comes along.** Take the pie tins from the students. Take the flashlight from the lightning person. **He does what nobody else can do.**

Let everyone get quiet. Put the pie tins and the flashlight out of the reach of all. Sit back down in the silence.

**God is willing to do great things to make a doubter believe. God did great things for Daniel, and King Darius believed. He did many great things through his Son Jesus Christ, and today millions of Christians believe. Remember as you go about your business this week: If somebody doubts, ask God for an opportunity to show him how to believe. And when the opportunity comes, pray for God to do good things for the person. You might have to talk to that person. You might have to stand quietly in defense of your God. But if you do what God tells you, special things can happen.**

## INTRO ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

**Today we'll be talking about how God is powerful enough to stop wild animals from biting. He's strong enough to calm the winds and rain on the seas.**

**Later on, we're going to need lots of lightning to show how God works. Let's make some while we're waiting.**

Give each child a pie tin and some markers. Show them how to draw lightning bolts and wind lines on the pie tin with markers. Tell them to draw rain and clouds on it and whatever else they want that relates to a storm.

If your markers do not produce well on aluminum, have them draw their items on paper, cut them out, and staple them to the pie tins.

## INTRO ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: FIERCE, WILD, SCARY

**Today we'll be talking about the Prophet Daniel and special miracles. Whatever storms are going on in your life, God is big enough to defeat them in his own way and time. Let's make a storm while we're waiting for everyone else.**

Give every student two pie tins. Show them how to

1. Punch eight holes in the outer rim of each plate with the hole puncher.
2. Put the pie tins together, deep sides facing out, so that the holes line up.
3. Stick inside two crayons each as noisemakers.
4. Run the twine in and out of the holes until the pie tins are tied shut together
5. Tie off *tightly* with a bow that can be undone later
6. Shake the pie tin! Make thunder!

## ACTIVITY, YOUNGER CHILDREN: DANIEL'S LION

**Lions can be fierce. But lions can be tamed by God, even though they're huge and frightening. We're going to make one of Daniel's lions which was tamed by God.**

*Photo from Pinterest*

Give each student a paper plate. Have them:

- Color the lion's face (face of the plate, not including the rim) either brown or flesh or yellow or gold.
- Make a zigzag line of craft glue on a two- to three-inch portion of the rim of the paper plate.
- Lay rotini noodles side by side (adjusted to the circular shape of the plate) in the portion just covered with glue and press down.
- Continue around the rim of the plate until it is entirely covered with rotini noodles.
- Draw eyes, nose, and smile of the lion onto the plate with markers.



## ACTIVITY, OLDER CHILDREN: CHARMED LION KEY CHAINS

Take up one child's set of yarn strands for braiding. Hold it up.

**Today we're going to work with some symbols. What are symbols?** Symbols are things that mean something else—something bigger and more important. (Make sure they're not thinking "cymbals!")

**These strands of "lion-colored yarn" symbolize fierce, wild energy, like lions have. It looks like a fierce mane if you shake it back and forth.** Demonstrate

**Loop all the strands through the key ring, bringing the ends together so the strands are equal lengths and the key ring is in the center. Tie a knot.** Hold it up.

**The key ring is like God. His circle of love never breaks. Whatever wild things are going on in our lives, we only need to give them to him. Once we do, he ties a knot between us and him. We can't get away from him and his circle of love.**

Find a child to hold the ring and begin to braid the strands.

**The braiding symbolizes God and how he can tame anything...you, me, a wild lion. All we have to do for our own "taming," or "salvation," is give him our hearts.**

Tie off the end of the braid with a knot or beads. Hold up the product.

**With us and God together, we can be tame, pretty, AND useful. Make your own key ring now. And if your parents gave you a house key, put it on there and remind yourself that God wants to "braid" his love in with your daily activities.**

## GAME, YOUNGER CHILDREN: DANIEL'S IN THE LION'S DEN!

Lay down two strips of masking tape going from wall-to-wall which will mark off your playing field. It should run the length of the room and be about six feet wide.

Pick one child to be the lion. Put him in the center of the room. Blindfold him.

Have all the other students line up on one end of the room. The object is for each child is to get to the opposite wall without being tagged by the lion.

Have the first child prepare to run. Say **Daniel's in the Lion's Den!** The child should take off and can either be fast or sneaky. The lion has to listen and use his "lion's instincts" and try to tag that child.

If he tags her, she goes into captivity, meaning she has to sit on the floor beside the playing field. If she gets past, she stands by the other wall, safe.

Once all the children have tried, speak to the ones who are in captivity. **You're not eaten yet! The Lord can save you still...run on three!** Grab hold of the lion so he can't tag. **One...two...three!**

**Lions are not people and don't need salvation. They don't understand about God, so it's like they move on blind instinct. That's why we blindfold the lion. We don't see lions in our real life, but we see hard circumstances sometimes. We have to run past them without getting hurt. And even when we get in trouble, God is there to help us all!**

## GAME, OLDER CHILDREN: TAMING LIFE'S LIONS

Hopefully you won't have any girls in skirts, which is rare these days. If you do, have them stand off to the side for the first part of the game.

Make a space in the middle of the floor with lots of room. Tell the kids to try standing on their hands. Let them keep trying and see who can stand on their hands the longest without falling. Give them each five or six tries.

**How would you like to double the amount of time you could stand on your hands just with one little trick?** Most should say yes.

Divide the students into pairs. Have one do a handstand and the other hold that person's feet so they can't fall.

**Now that you have a spotter, let's you and your spotter try to go from one side of the room to the other on your hands.** Have all children move to a starting point. One child in each pair should do another handstand; have the partner hold his feet. Tell them to proceed across the floor, from start to finish, and see who makes it. Applaud for those who make it.

**In life sometimes, we're a little like lions. We feel big and awkward and like we could hurt somebody—kick somebody in the head. But God comes along to help us. Sometimes**

**his help comes through another person—a friend to help and guide us. Sometimes his help comes like it did with Daniel—he sends angels to help out.**

**With God’s help, we’re able to do things in a “tame” and fantastic way. We can do many things we certainly couldn’t do without him!**

## CLOSING PRAYER

**Father, thank you for showing us through Daniel how strong and big you really are. Help us to put our hope in you when things go wrong. We know if we are patient, you will bring better times.**

**Amen.**