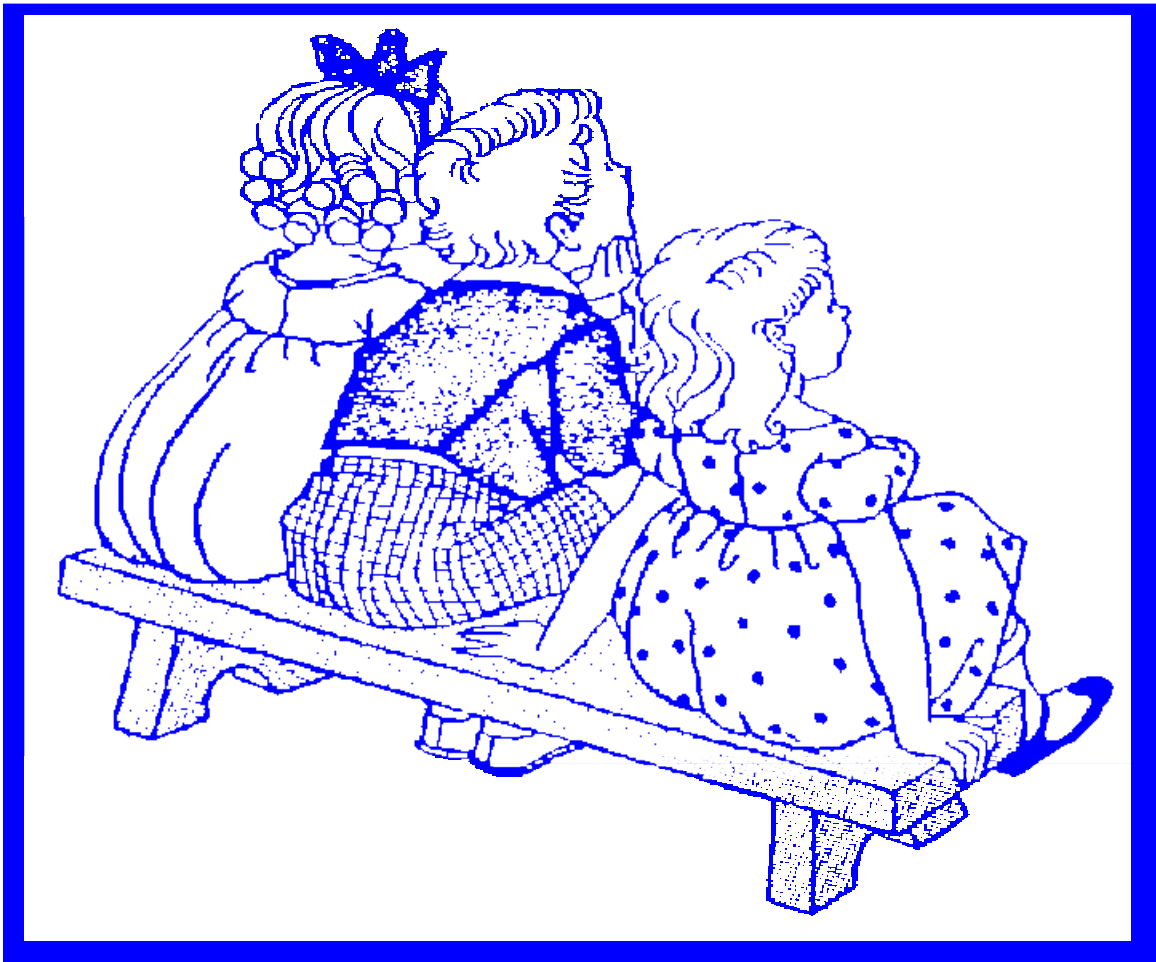


Camelback Bible Church

Children's Church

4-6 Year Olds



Leaders Guide
Year 1

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Age 4-6 Children's Church

2006-2007 Schedule

Date	Lesson	Date	Lesson
Sept 3	Elijah speaks God's Word	Mar 4	Jesus anointed for His death
Sept 10	Elijah raises the widow's son	Mar 11	Jesus teaches on servanthood
Sept 17	Elijah and the prophets of Baal	Mar 18	Jesus teaches on heaven
Sept 24	Elijah and the chariot of fire...	Mar 25	Jesus comfort and commissions ...
Oct 1	Elisha and the Shunammite ...	Apr 1	Easter 1: The triumphal entry
Oct 8	Elisha and Naaman the leper	Apr 8	Easter 2: Jesus' death and resurr.
Oct 15	Elisha defeats the king of Aram	Apr 15	Easter 3: Jesus appears to doubting..
Oct 22	Jonah disobeys God	Apr 22	Jesus explains that He is the only way
Oct 29	Jonah preaches in Ninevah	Apr 29	Jesus teaches Nicodemus
Nov 5	Jeremiah's call	May 6	Jesus is the Good Shepherd
Nov 12	Jehoiakim burns Jeremiah's scroll	May 13	Jesus the Shepherd finds his lost ...
Nov 19	Jeremiah, prophet, persecuted	May 20	Jesus is the Good Shepherd who ...
Nov 26	God's perfect prophet, Jesus ...	May 27	Jesus' sheep hear His voice and ...
Dec 3	The angel tells Joseph what to ...	June 3	God calls Abraham and makes ...
Dec 10	The Wise men seek the newborn..	June 10	Abraham and Lot separate
Dec 17	The Wise men follow the star ...	June 17	God keeps His promises to Abraham
Dec 24	John introduces Jesus	June 24	Abraham offers up Isaac
Dec 31	Jesus reveals Himself to His ...	July 1	Isaac is married to Rebekah
Jan 7	Jesus changes water into wine	July 8	The twins, Jacob and Esau, are born
Jan 14	Jesus and the Samaritan woman	July 15	Jacob steals Esau's blessing
Jan 21	Jesus' second miracle: the Royal..	July 22	Jacob dreams of a ladder ...
Jan 28	Jesus heals a man sick for 38 yrs.	July 29	God sends Joseph to Egypt
Feb 4	Jesus feeds 5000	Aug 5	God cares for Joseph in Potiphar's ...
Feb 11	Jesus walks on water	Aug 12	God raises up Joseph to be a ruler
Feb 18	Jesus heals a man born blind	Aug 19	God saves His covenant people
Feb 25	Jesus raises Lazarus from the ...	Aug 26	God's faithfulness to Jacob ...

Introduction to the 4-6's Curriculum

The curriculum manual you have in your hands is the result of countless hours of prayer and diligent work. The curriculum has been thoughtfully put together as one part of an overall plan designed to lay a solid foundation for our children's faith. It is hoped that God will use it to draw children to Himself and to build them up in their faith until they become His passionate servants dedicated to transforming our world for Christ.

Though much effort has gone into producing this curriculum, it should be noted that this manual is to be your servant, not your master. Nothing will replace your prayerful reading of the lesson Scripture. Nothing can replace your listening to God as you consider the Word and the spiritual needs of your students. Allow this manual to be a help to you, but do not allow it to take the place of God's Spirit.

As you teach a lesson or simply assist the children during an activity keep the following in mind:

- Make prayer central to your ministry. We are seeking to do no less than change the human heart. This is not something that can be accomplished by human means. Only the power of God's Spirit can perform this work. Thus, devote yourself to fervent prayer, recognizing your need of grace to minister, and the children's need of grace to respond to God.
- Make the Word of God central to your ministry. It is a fact that the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to transform the human heart. Thus, we must be committed to proclaiming that Word trusting in its efficacy to do a mighty work. Sharing other stories and illustrations in order to explain the text is fine, but the Word of God must be at the heart of your proclamation.
- Call the children to respond. We are not simply having a storytelling time with the children. We are doing spiritual work. After you have told the story or even as you tell it, call the children to respond. Appropriate applications include a call to repentance, faith, obedience and love.
- Set forth before the children a mighty God. Though our God is portrayed as a Father, He is also "wholly other". There is none besides Him and there is none like Him. Help the children understand that we serve a great and majestic God. A grand view of God will be a great gift the children can take with them all their lives.
- Set forth before the children the Lord Jesus Christ. Our mission according to Colossians 1:29 is to "present every man (child) complete in Christ". Jesus is the focus of our entire Bible and it is He into whose image we are all being conformed. Keep Jesus central to your lesson. Take every opportunity to point the children to His person and works, for it is in seeing Him that we are transformed. No other topic can claim to have this effect on us.

Outline of the Curriculum

Year 1 : The first quarter of the curriculum covers the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and Jeremiah culminating with a lesson on The Prophet, Jesus Christ. The middle two quarters focus on the life of Christ as related to us through the apostle John. Jesus' birth, early and later ministry, death and resurrection are the main areas of study. The final quarter is dedicated to the study of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph as children are introduced to the beginnings of God's great redemptive plan.

Year 2: The first quarter of the curriculum covers various good kings (Saul, David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah) culminating with a lesson on The King, Jesus Christ. The middle two quarters focus on the life of Christ. Topics include the birth, parables, miracles, death and resurrection of Christ as well as our need to follow Him. The final quarter takes the children a little further into God's redemptive plan by examining various leaders and judges (Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, and Zerubbabel).

Purpose of Children's Church

Each ministry in our Children's Ministry has a distinct purpose. The focus of our Children's Church ministry is to teach children about worship and to prepare them for meaningful worship in the adult service by the seventh grade. In our lessons we focus much on the character of God, the person of Christ, and the nature of the church as it relates to God's plan of redemption. Furthermore, we teach hymns and choruses used in the adult service so that our children will have common experiences with this body of believers. We desire that our children share a common core of songs and experiences with the rest of this body. We believe this builds community.

May God's blessing be upon you as you labor, according to His power, to bring the blessings of the gospel to His dear children!

Camelback Bible Church

Children's Ministry Statement on Passion

Statement of Passion: Our passion and mission is to “present every child complete in Christ” by proclaiming Christ through teaching, community life and service rendered to the community and through the community to the world.

- *To present every child complete in Christ* – A child who is becoming complete in Christ is one who is learning to love the Lord, his God, with all his heart, mind, soul and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37). He is learning to put his whole confidence in God, is growing in obedience (Psalm 78:7), and is progressively living by the power of Christ that is resident in him.
- *Proclaiming Christ through teaching* – The people of God have always had the God-given mandate to pass on the tradition of the faith. (Deuteronomy 6:7f, Psalm 78:5-6, Ephesians 6:4) This tradition includes the story centered in Christ found in the O.T. and N.T., and the doctrinal truths that surround that story.
- *Proclaiming Christ through community* – The message of Christ must not only be heard, but also it must be experienced. Precept, as well as example, is essential to Christian formation. The body of Christ has an integral role in demonstrating to children what a Christ-centered lifestyle and community looks like.
- *Proclaiming Christ through service rendered to the community and through the community to the world* – The message of Christ must not only be learned and experienced within a community, but also each child must live out this Christ-centered life within the community and in the world. There is no being “complete in Christ” where the life is not characterized by self-sacrificial service. The righteous man of the O.T. was the one who performed his duty as it related to his fellow man.

Ministry Distinctions

- *The importance of the family is to be held in tension with the importance of the community.* Though we believe that parents have the primary role in raising their children for the Lord (Deut. 6:4-9, Eph 6:4), this view should not be held in neglect of the contribution that the community must make. God has so designed His church that no child will come to be complete in Christ without a vital integration into the community of faith.
- *An effective ministry to children cannot be conceived of apart from an effective ministry to parents.* Though the church can design marvelous programs for children, its work will never be truly effective unless there is a significant effort to work with parents as well. Home life and community life must both be faithfully demonstrating the gospel.
- *All ministry is to be rooted in Biblical truth.* We believe that all ministry philosophy and practice must find its foundation in biblical truth. Though

- findings in the social sciences may offer insight, a truly Christian ministry must never adopt ideas and practices without determining if they are biblically compatible.
- *All ministry must seek to promote a grand view of God.* Though the God of the Bible is desirous of entering into relationship with man, it should never be forgotten that He is “wholly-other”; that He is holy. Portraying a majestic view of God will engender an appropriate reverence as well as an accurate view of humanity and its need of coming to God in repentance and faith.
- *All ministry must be clearly Christ-centered.* Since Christ is the central figure of all Scripture and since it is our goal to “present every man complete in Christ”, Jesus Christ needs to be the focus of all ministry. Effort should be made to avoid focusing on any other topic that would take us from coming to know the crucified Christ.



CHILDREN'S CHURCH

MUSIC FOR YEAR 1 - FALL QUARTER

LESSONS 1 - 4

THEME: God spoke through Elijah

MEMORY VERSE SONG:

Hebrews 1:1a "In the past God spoke ... through the prophets."

HYMN

The Doxology (Teach tune 2)

CHORUS

Great is the Lord

ADDITIONAL SONGS

(These match the curriculum, but are optional)

Make a Joyful Noise

Let the Little Children Come

Behold, What Manner of Love

CHILDREN'S CHURCH AGES 4-6 YEARS YEAR 1 CURRICULUM, FALL

Lesson 1

Title: The Prophet Elijah Speaks God's Word
Text: I Kings 17:1-16
Theme: Prophets spoke the message of God to His people. God's word, through His prophets, had the power to accomplish what He spoke.

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to explain what a prophet is.
2. Relate three amazing things that happened in today's story because of God's powerful word.
3. Understand that God's message to us today is found in the Bible and thank Him for it.
4. Desire to learn from God's message in the Bible so he can obey it.

Memory Verse: *Hebrews 1:1a* In the past God spoke . . . through the prophets.

1. Teacher Direction:

This lesson begins a unit on Old Testament prophets, one of God's gifts to His people. Before the canon of Scripture was completed in written form, God sent prophets to bring His messages to His people. The words of a prophet were the very words of God Himself, words bearing great power and authority. God sometimes gave His prophets the ability to perform miracles as evidence that they had come from God. Although the Old Testament Jews were often resistant to the message of the prophets, God requires submission to His word as spoken through His prophets. This unit will introduce the children to four specific Old Testament prophets, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah and Jonah and will climax with a lesson on Christ, God's True Prophet. When God gave the Lord Jesus Christ, He gave the perfect prophet, who not only *spoke* the Word of God but actually *was* Himself the Word of God.

2. Introduction

Ask the children to imagine that they are at home with Mom. Dad is at work when he suddenly remembers something very important that Mom will need to know today. Dad can't leave his office, so he picks up the phone to call home but the phone is not working. How would Dad get his very important message to Mom? (He could send someone else to give his message to Mom.)

Ask how God gets messages to us today. (Through the Bible.) The Bible took hundreds of years to write; before it was finished, how do you think God sent messages to His people? Explain to the children that He sent His messengers, called prophets. In our Bibles, we have many stories about God's prophets and we have many of the messages God sent through them, written down as part of our Bibles. You might show the children where Isaiah begins in your Bible and where Malachi ends, pointing out that

all the pages in between were messages from God's prophets that were written down and became part of the Bible.

3. Bible Story

When God sent prophets, He sent them with messages from Himself to His people. When Bible prophets spoke, they were speaking God's word. God's word is powerful. Whatever God says will happen always happens. As I tell this story listen for two amazing things that happened exactly as God said they would happen through the prophet Elijah.

God sent Elijah to His people because His people were doing what was wrong. God's people were worshiping an idol, Baal, instead of worshiping God. Baal was just a statue, but King Ahab and his wicked Queen Jezebel said that Baal controlled the rain and made food grow in the fields. They taught the people that they must sacrifice and pray to Baal if they wanted rain to fall so food would grow. So God sent Elijah to King Ahab with a message. "God says there will be no rain at all, anywhere in Israel, for three years, until I say the word." (At this point, you could show a healthy plant you had brought from home along with one that is drooping from lack of water. Discuss what would happen to the plants that give us food if there were no rain for three years.) Three years is a long time! If I were to say there would be no rain for three years, no one would believe me. I couldn't keep it from raining just by saying so. Elijah, however, was speaking God's word, which is powerful. Whatever God says will happen always happens.

King Ahab was not at all happy about the message God had sent him through Elijah. God told Elijah he should go hide where Ahab would not find him. "Go hide by the brook Cherith," God told Elijah. At least there, by a brook, Elijah would have water to drink, even if there were no rain. But what would Elijah do about food there by the brook, he may have wondered. God told him, "I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there." Ask the children if they know what ravens are and listen to their answers. Ravens are large black birds that eat whatever they find. They don't share. But God had commanded the ravens to bring food to Elijah without eating it themselves. God's word is powerful and the ravens obeyed it. Elijah went to live by the brook and twice every day, ravens would bring food to him. Finally, though, because no rain was falling, the water in the brook grew more and more shallow until one day there was no water left. Now what would Elijah do?

God told Elijah he should go to a city where he would find a mother and her son. There was no father. God told Elijah this mother would provide for him. So Elijah went to the city. When he arrived there, he met a woman who was gathering sticks to make a fire. He asked for some water to drink. The woman turned to go get the water, but then Elijah said, "While you're getting the water, please bring me a little bread to eat." At that, the woman turned back to Elijah. "I have no bread," she said. "I have no food at all. All I have left is one handful of flour and a few drops of oil. I'm going to mix it together, make a fire with these sticks, and make one last little bit of bread for my little boy and me. It will be our

last meal.”

“Don’t be afraid,” Elijah told the mother. “Do what you have said, only, first, go make a little cake of bread for me. Then you can go make more for yourself and for your son. Because this is what God says, ‘The flour in your bowl will not be used up and the oil in your jar will not be gone until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.’” (As an illustration here, you could show a piece of pita bread, which would be similar to the kind of bread the woman would have been making. Have a bowl with a handful of flour in it and ask how many pieces of pita bread you could make from that much flour. Dump out the flour, as though you were making bread with it and show the children that now the bowl is empty.) **The woman did as Elijah said. She made him a little bread cake first, then she went to her flour bowl to see if there was any more for bread for herself and her son. When the woman turned the bowl upside down, more flour came out, enough to make more bread. And that happened for her day after day, as long as there was no rain, just as God has said through Elijah.**

Because God is the Lord of all, all things obey His powerful word. God requires people to obey His word, too. Ahab and Jezebel and all of God’s people should have seen that Elijah was God’s prophet and it was God’s word that Elijah was speaking. They should have obeyed God and stopped worshipping Baal.

4. Application

Help the children to see that God gives His message to us today in the Bible. When they come to Sunday School and to children’s church, they are hearing God’s message so they can obey it. Encourage them to come gladly to hear God’s word. Encourage them to work hard at learning their memory verses. When they do these things, they are learning what God has to say to us.

During the prayer time, encourage the children to thank God for giving us His word, through the prophets and now through the Bible. Encourage them to ask God to help them to learn and obey what His word says.

5. Review Questions

- A. What do we call men who spoke God’s messages before the Bible was finished? (prophets)
- B. What was the name of the prophet in today’s story? (Elijah)
- C. When a prophet spoke, whose words was he really speaking? (God’s)
- D. What was one amazing thing that happened because God said it would? (There was no rain for three years.)
- E. Why did God cause there to be no rain in Israel for three years? (Because the people were worshipping Baal or an idol.)
- F. How did God provide food for Elijah when he lived by the brook? (Ravens fed Elijah.)
- G. What amazing thing happened for the mother of the little boy because God said it would? (Her oil and flour never ran out.)

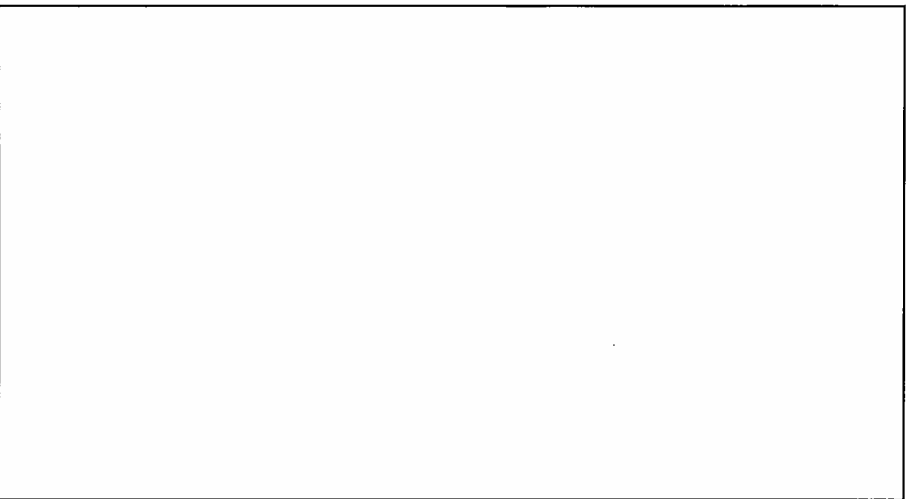
- H. What did Elijah tell the woman to do *first* with her handful of flour? (Make him some bread.)
- I. How does God give us His messages today? (through the Bible)
- J. What should we do with the message God has given us in the Bible? (Learn what it says and obey it.)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

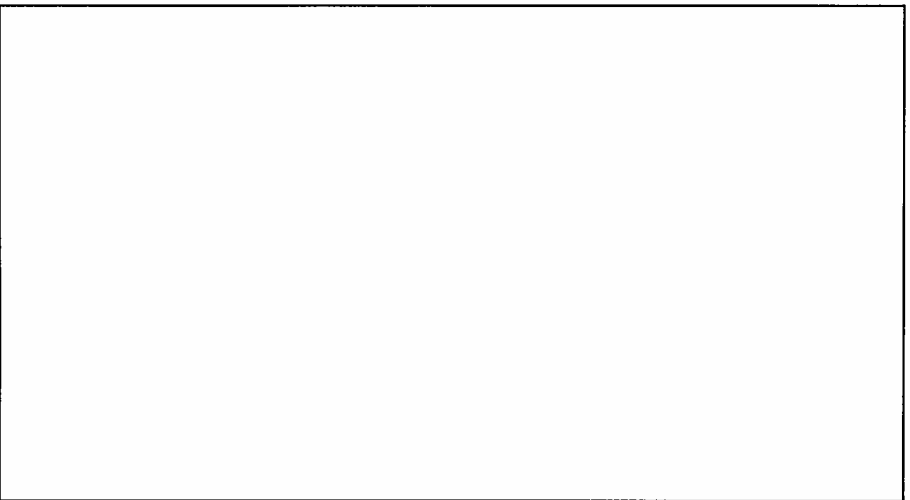
A. Using the attached “God’s Powerful Word Caused---” paper, students illustrate each of the three things God’s word caused in today’s story. They could do this simply by drawing, or they could tape or glue items under each heading. Under “No rain,” students could tape a small piece of brown, wilted grass or weed you have brought from home; under “Ravens who brought food to Elijah” children could draw Elijah and ravens, then glue little crumbs of bread in the birds’ claws *or* they could draw Elijah, then glue black construction paper birds you have pre-cut (these could be simply a number of black V’s--like birds flying in the distance); under “Enough flour for Elijah and for the widow’s family”, children could draw a bowl, then glue a little flour inside it. As the children work, emphasize how amazing each of these three things is: day after day with no rain for three years, wild birds bringing food to a man, and a little bit of flour being used every day and never running out. Stress that God is so powerful that He makes amazing things like these happen--just by saying they will.

B. Review Game. Use the review questions to play the following game or another game of your choice. Divide the children into two teams. Choose one child on each team to be Elijah. The rest of the children on the team are ravens. Ask the review questions, alternating teams. When a child answers a question correctly, he takes a piece of “bread” (pre-cut from paper) to the “Elijah” for his team, then returns to his place. Go through all the questions, inserting “Say today’s memory verse” every now and then in place of a question. If you want a winner, the team whose Elijah has the most bread when all the children have had a turn is the winning team.

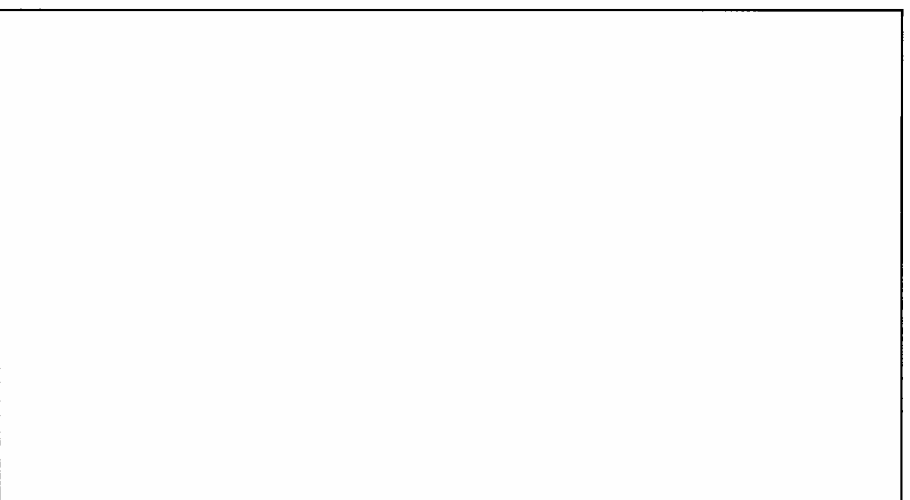
GOD'S POWERFUL WORD CAUSED ...



if not to rain.



raven's to bring Elijah food.



enough flour for Elijah and
the widow's family.

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH AGES 4-6 YEARS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM; FALL**

Lesson 2

Title: Elijah Raises the Widow's Son

Text: I Kings 17:17-24

Theme: In Bible times, God gave the power to do miracles to His messengers so the people would know they had come from Him.

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace, children will be able to

1. Explain why some people in the Bible could work miracles.
2. Recount today's story of Elijah raising the dead boy back to life.
3. Identify Jesus as the greatest worker of miracles of all times.
4. Give thanks that Jesus is the One God had promised to send.

Memory Verse: *Hebrews 1:1a* *In the past, God spoke . . . through prophets.*

1. Teacher Direction

A common misconception is that, in Bible times, *everyone was always* performing miracles. Actually, the Bible describes very few miracle workers. Moses, Elijah and Elisha, the Lord Jesus, and the apostles are the primary miracle workers. Moses had been sent by God to lead His people out of slavery. Elijah and Elisha were prophets sent by God in a time of general apostasy. Jesus, of course, was the long-promised Messiah and the apostles were especially appointed to interpret the events and teachings of the Messiah. Each of these individuals was uniquely sent by God for a specific purpose. Therefore, He gave to them the ability to perform miracles. The miracles attested to their special status as sent by God.

When God sent Elijah, the Israelites were trying to combine the worship of God with the worship of other gods, especially Baal. God sent Elijah to call them to repent and to serve God alone. In this lesson, we see Elijah raising a dead child to life. This was evidence that Elijah was one of God's prophets and God was speaking through him.

2. Introduction

Ask the children what their parents would do if a knock came at the door and a voice called, "Open up; this is the police." If they say their parents would open the door, point out that sometimes people lie and say they are policemen so they can get in when they really are not. Parents would not want to let in people like that. On the other hand, policemen have authority and we must do what they say, so if the man really is a policeman, parents would want to open the door. How could their parents know for sure? (Real policemen would show a badge.)

Review from last week: **What was a man with a message from God called?** (a prophet) **Were the people to listen to prophets and obey them?** (Yes.) **Why?** (Because they spoke God's words.) **But what if someone was really *not* sent from**

God? What if he was just making up a message and *saying* it was from God, like someone at the door saying he's a policeman when he is not? How could the people know? What was the prophet's "badge" that showed he spoke with God's authority? In Bible times, one of the ways you could tell God had sent a person with God's message was that the person was able to perform miracles. A miracle is some amazing thing that does not usually happen and that ordinary people cannot make happen. Ask the children if they can think of any examples of miracles from the Bible.

3. Bible Story

What was the name of the prophet in last week's story? (Elijah) Who fed Elijah by the brook? (God sent ravens to feed him.) When the brook dried up, who did Elijah stay with? (The mother of a little boy.) While Elijah was still staying with the mother and her son, the little boy became sick. He grew worse and worse and finally, he stopped breathing. He had died. The poor, sad mother turned to Elijah for help. Elijah took the boy from her arms and carried him up to his own bedroom. Elijah lay the boy on his bed and began to pray for him. Elijah prayed for the boy over and over. The Bible tells us, "The Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the life of the child returned to him." Delighted, Elijah picked up the boy and carried him back downstairs to his waiting mother. At first, when Elijah said to her, "See, your son is alive," she must have thought it was too good to be true. But when she looked and saw for herself, she was filled with joy. This was an amazing miracle!

How could that have happened? I couldn't bring a dead person back to life, could you? How could Elijah do that? Was he magic? No, he was an ordinary human being just like us, but God worked through him to bring the boy back to life. God made Elijah able to raise a dead child to life so that it would be clear to everyone that God had sent Elijah and his message was a message from God. That is what the mother said at the end of this story. The Bible tells us that she said, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is true."

Do you know who, in the Bible, performed the most miracles? (Jesus) God sent prophets like Elijah and made some of those prophets able to perform miracles. He also made some of the apostles in the New Testament able to perform miracles, but no one performed as many miracles as Jesus did. That's because when God sent Jesus He was sending the best messenger of all--He was sending His own Son. Elijah and the other prophets had important messages from God, but Jesus came with the most important message. Jesus came to save us from the sin that keeps people away from God. God made it very clear that Jesus was the Savior He had sent because God gave Jesus the power to perform not just a few miracles, but many, many miracles. Elijah raised one boy from the dead, but the Bible tells us of several people Jesus raised from the dead. Even more of a miracle, Jesus rose from the dead Himself. No one else has ever done that. Jesus is clearly sent to us from God. We must be especially careful to believe what He says and to receive Him as the Savior He is.

4. Application

During the prayer time, children can thank God for sending Jesus and for having Him do so many miracles, so people would know He was the Savior God had promised. They can praise Jesus for rising from the dead, the greatest miracle of all. They can also praise Him for bringing us the most important message from God of how to be saved from our sin.

5. Review Questions

- A. What was a prophet? (One who had a message from God.)
- B. What was one way people could tell that a person who said he had a message from God really was a prophet? (He could do miracles.)
- C. What miracle did Elijah perform in today's story? (He raised the widow's dead son back to life.)
- D. What did the woman say when this happened? (That she could see Elijah came from God and spoke God's word.)
- E. Who performed more miracles than anyone else in the Bible? (Jesus)
- F. Why would that be? (Jesus was God's most important messenger or Jesus was God's Son or Jesus was the Savior God had promised to send.)
- G. What miracle did Jesus do that no one else has ever done? (He rose from the dead Himself.)
- H. If we know from Jesus' miracles that He really is the Savior God had promised to send, what should we do? (Believe in Him and obey Him.)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

A. Call for volunteers to come up and act out well-known miracles of Jesus for the other children to guess. Miracles you could use would be: healing a sick person, raising a dead girl, healing a lame man, feeding 5000 hungry people from a boy's small lunch, healing a lame man, calming a storm, walking on water, healing a paralyzed man. Another option would be for you to draw these on the board for the children to guess. As you consider with the children these many amazing things Jesus did, emphasize how they show us that Jesus came from God. The people who saw these miracles and we who know about them from the Bible are to believe in Jesus as the One God had promised to send.

B. You might make a miracle museum today. Encourage each child to choose one story of a miracle he remembers from the Bible and illustrate it. As children finish, they could tape their pictures up somewhere in preparation for a "tour" of the museum by the whole class. During the tour, you could briefly mention who performed each miracle, pointing out how that person was one of God's spokesmen and how the people to whom he came were responsible to pay attention to his message and obey it. If you have time, before taping them up, children could group the pictures according to who worked the miracles, so there would be a section of Moses' miracles, a section of Jesus' miracles, etc.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH AGES 4-6 YEARS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM: FALL

Lesson 3

Title: Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
Text: I Kings 18:1-46
Theme: God is the only true God. We are to worship and serve Him alone.

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace, students will

1. Be able to tell today's story.
2. Know that Elijah's message from God was that He alone is God and the people must worship nothing else in addition to Him.
3. Thank God for parents (or friends?) who bring them to church and are training them to worship God.

Memory Verse: *Hebrews 1:1a* *In the past, God spoke . . . through the prophets.*

1. Teacher Direction

Idolatry has been an issue for God's people in every age. The idols change, but it seems that we are always trying to worship God *and*. Although much could be said about the idols of this age and the many ways in which twentieth-century Americans (even children) try to serve them and God at the same time, at this young age we will only be trying to accomplish two things with today's lesson. (1) Children need the Old Testament background of Israel's continual temptation to worship idols *and* God as foundation for understanding the whole concept of idolatry. (2) Children need to understand that God is a jealous God who will not share His glory with anyone or anything else. This was the primary message God sent to the Israelites through Elijah.

2. Introduction

Children at this age may not know what an altar was or what it was for. You could begin this lesson by building a model altar while they watch. Bring from home a small flat board or tile and "stones" made of Play-doh. Demonstrate how the stones would be piled up to make an altar, explaining that *real* stones, large ones, would have been used and the real altar would have been much larger. Use toothpicks or small twigs to show how wood would have been placed on the altar and, on top of that, the calf or sheep that was to be offered as a sacrifice. Since a sacrifice was offered by burning it, ask what else would still be needed for your altar. (Matches, or some way to start a fire.) Ask them what would happen if someone were to get the sacrifice all ready, then pour gallons and gallons of water all over it.

3. Bible Story

In Bible times, what was a messenger with a message from God called? (A prophet.) Why did God make some of the prophets able to do miracles? (To show

they were really from God and their message was from God.) **What is the name of the prophet our stories have been about? (Elijah) Through Elijah, what did God say would not happen for three years? (It would not rain.) Why was that? (Israel's king and queen, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, were teaching the people to worship Baal, who was an idol.) During those three long years of no rain, Ahab and Jezebel and the Israelites surely prayed to Baal for rain. After all, he was supposed to be in charge of rain. But there was never any answer, because Baal was not a real god. Finally, after the three years, Elijah wanted to show the Israelites who is the true God and who it is that answers prayer. Elijah called all the Israelites to come together on a mountain called Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal were to come also.**

When everyone had gathered, Elijah said to God's people, "How long will you keep trying to worship both God and Baal? If the Lord is God, obey Him; but if Baal is God, serve him." The people did not answer. So Elijah went on. "I am the only prophet of God here, but there are 450 prophets of Baal. Let us each have an animal to offer as a sacrifice. We will cut our sacrifices in pieces and lay them on wood on the altars, but we will not set fire to either sacrifice. The prophets of Baal will ask Baal to set their sacrifice on fire, and I will ask the Lord to set my sacrifice on fire. The God who answers by sending fire to burn His sacrifice is truly God." The people said this was a good idea, so the contest began.

The prophets of Baal started first. They cut up their sacrifice, laid it on the wood of the altar, and began to ask Baal to set it on fire. Of course, he did not answer, because he is not real. Then, trying to get Baal's attention, the prophets began to jump and dance around the altar as they prayed. By lunch time, there had still been no answer, so Elijah began to tease the prophets of Baal. "Call louder," he suggested. "Maybe Baal's busy, or maybe he's away on a trip. He could be asleep and, if you just call loud enough, you'll wake him up." Of course, Elijah knew the true God doesn't sleep, doesn't go away, doesn't become too busy to hear prayers. He knew that Baal was not the true God. Baal's prophets tried harder then. They tried to get his attention by cutting themselves with knives as they kept jumping about and calling on Baal to hear them. All day long until evening, Baal's prophets tried to get him to answer their prayers. No fire fell from heaven to set Baal's sacrifice on fire. "But there was no voice," the Bible tells us, "no one answered, and no one paid attention."

Finally, it was Elijah's turn to show how his God can answer prayer. He knew God would answer and he wanted to show God's people how powerful the true God is. So he did not just pray for fire for the sacrifice. First, he made his prayer hard to answer. He dug a ditch all around his altar and he asked for four large pitchers of water. He had the water poured all over his sacrifice and the wood under it. Then he asked for more water to be poured on again. Then a third time, he asked for more water to pour on the sacrifice and wood. By now, Elijah's sacrifice and wood were both soaking wet. There was so much water that even the ditch around his altar had filled up with water. Now, what usually happens when you try to set wet wood on fire? Nothing!

Elijah prayed--not over and over, like Baal's prophets, and not for a whole day. **Once Elijah prayed. He said, "O Lord, let everyone know that *You* are God and that I am *Your* servant and that I have done all that I have done because *You* said so. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so all these people will know that *You* are God and that *You* are turning their hearts back to *You*."**

As soon as Elijah finished his prayer, God sent fire from heaven. Not only did the wet wood and sacrifice catch fire, they burned completely. The stone altar also burned and the water in the ditch was completely dried up by the fire God sent. When the people saw that, they fell down to worship. "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God," they all cried. God's people had understood the message God had sent them through His prophet. That message was that they were to worship God alone, not idols.

4. Application

Lead a short discussion to help children see that God requires His people to come together regularly to worship Him. Their parents bring them to church on Sundays in order to train them to be faithful to worship and serve the one true God as He requires. During the prayer time, let several children praise God that He is the one true God and ask several children to give thanks for parents who worship God and train their children to do the same.

5. Review Questions

- A. What was an idol in Bible times? (a statue people worshiped, saying it was a god.)
- B. What was the name of the idol in today's story? (Baal)
- C. Who wanted the people to worship Baal? (the king and queen)
- D. What was God's main message through Elijah? (God was the only God and the people were to worship Him alone.)
- E. In the contest, how would the people know which god was really God? (He would answer by sending fire from the sky to burn the sacrifice.)
- F. What did the prophets of Baal do to try to get their god to answer? (They prayed and danced and called out and cut themselves with knives all day long.)
- G. Why didn't Baal answer? (He is not a god.)
- H. What did Elijah do when it was his turn? (He soaked the sacrifice, wood, and altar with water, then prayed one time.)
- I. How did God answer? (He sent so much fire that it burned the sacrifice, the wood, the altar, and burned up all the water in the ditch.)
- J. Why do our parents bring us to church? (Because God wants us to worship Him.)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

- A. Ahead of time, cut construction paper into stone shapes, twelve "stones" for each child. Children can arrange these on a piece of plain construction paper with glue to make an altar. For wood, they could either glue thin strips of brown construction paper on top of the altar, or little scraps of wood or toothpicks. They should draw the ditch of

water around the bottom of the altar. Then have the children glue little pieces of red or orange tissue paper representing fire all over the top of the altar and even on the altar itself, since the altar was all consumed by the fire.

B. Review game: Build Elijah's altar. Cut construction paper stones ahead of time and write a review question on each one. On two or three stones, write "Say today's memory verse." Children take turns coming up and choosing a construction paper stone. Read the child the question on the stone. If he answers correctly, he may tape it to the altar.

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH AGES 4-6 YEARS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM, FALL**

Lesson 4

Title: Elijah and the Chariot of Fire; Elisha Becomes Prophet

Text: II Kings 2:1-18

Theme: God is eternal and is always with His people. His work continues because it does not depend on human beings.

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace, each child will

1. Tell how the prophet Elijah went to heaven.
2. Know who continued God's work after Elijah was gone.
3. Praise God because He has always been and always will be.
4. Thank God for giving us Jesus to do God's most important work.

Memory Verse: *Hebrews 1:1a* *In the past, God spoke . . . through the prophets.*

1. Teacher Direction

During a time of great unfaithfulness to God, Elijah had come with God's message and had stood boldly against the idolatry and wickedness of his time. Ahab and Jezebel had killed hundreds of God's prophets and the Israelites were all too content to follow their rulers' idolatrous ways. Now that it was time for Elijah's ministry to end and for him to leave this earth, it might have appeared that the only voice for God would be silenced and God's work would come to a standstill. But God's word is never silenced nor is His work ever hindered. In today's story, the prophetic office was passed on to Elisha who continued to serve in the power and authority of God. After him, other prophets came and labored as well, all part of God's planned preparation for God's perfect prophet, Christ, who would come to do God's greatest work, the redemption of His people.

2. Introduction and Review

In Bible times, what was God's messenger who spoke God's word called? (A prophet) **What was the name of the prophet we have been learning about?** (Elijah.) **Were the people in Elijah's time worshiping only God?** (No, they were worshiping Baal, or idols.) **Who was leading the people in idol worship?** (The king and queen) **What was God's main message through Elijah?** (There is only one God and we must worship only Him.) **What did God cause to happen for three years because of the idol worship?** (No rain fell.) **What did Elijah do about the idol worship in last week's story?** (Let someone describe the contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel.) **Why did Baal not answer the prophets of Baal?** (Because he is not a god.) **Even before God sent fire from heaven, the people should have been able to tell that Elijah was God's messenger because God gave him power to do what?** (Miracles) **What is one miracle we learned that Elijah did?** (He raised a dead boy back to life.)

In last week's story, Elijah was the only prophet of God up on the mountain, but there were 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah's job of telling people to worship God alone was a lonely job. So many people were worshiping Baal. What do you think would happen if something happened to Elijah? What if he were no longer there to say it was wrong to worship an idol? (Let children discuss this.)

3. Bible Story

Elijah was an old man and it was time for him to go to heaven. The Bible doesn't tell us *how* they knew but somehow Elijah and his friend and helper, Elisha, knew that it was time for Elijah to go to heaven and leave his work on earth. This would have made Elisha sad for two reasons. First, he loved Elijah and he would miss him. But also, Elisha must have wondered what would happen to God's work. Who would do it if Elijah were gone? Who would speak God's messages?

"Stay here," Elijah said to Elisha. "God has told me to go to Bethel."

"I will not leave you," Elisha answered. Together, the two men went to Bethel. At Bethel, they met sons of prophets who asked Elisha, "Do you know that Elijah will be taken from you today?" "Yes, I know," said Elisha. "Be still."

"Stay here," Elijah said to Elisha. "God has told me to go on to Jericho."

"I will not leave you," Elisha answered. Together, the two men went to Jericho. At Jericho, they met other sons of other prophets who also asked Elisha, "Do you know that Elijah will be taken from you today?" "Yes, I know," said Elisha. "Be still."

"Stay here," Elijah told Elisha. "God has told me to go the Jordan River."

"I will not leave you," Elisha answered. The two of them walked to the Jordan River. When they came to the river, they saw that it was very full, too full to cross. Elijah took the mantle he wore (this was something like a long cape), rolled it up, and hit it on the water. When Elijah did that, the waters of the river divided, moving away from the ground underneath. So Elijah and Elisha were able to walk across the river on dry land. I couldn't get across a river that way, could you? How could Elijah do that? (He was God's messenger, so God made him able to do miracles.)

On the other side of the river, Elijah said to Elisha, "It is time for me to be taken from you. Is there anything I can do for you? Ask me for it now."

The one thing Elisha wanted was to know that, even without Elijah, God's work would still go on and God's word would still be spoken. Maybe he, Elisha, could continue to do God's work and speak God's word, in Elijah's place. Elisha knew he would not be able to do that by himself. He would need God's spirit to make him able to do God's work. So when Elijah asked Elisha what he wanted, Elisha knew just what to say. He answered, "Let a double portion of your spirit be on me."

"It's a hard thing you ask for," Elijah answered. "But if you see me when I am taken from you, you will have what you are asking for. If you don't see me when I am taken from you, you will not have what you're asking."

Then, as the two men walked along, talking, a chariot of fire pulled by horses of fire appeared between the two of them, separating them. Elijah was taken into the chariot and the chariot took him to heaven. He didn't die; instead, he went to heaven that way. What a wonderful thing--but even more wonderful, in Elisha's mind, was that *he*, Elisha, had seen it happen. That meant that he would have from God what he had asked for. God's Spirit would be with him to help him do God's work and to help him speak God's message. As Elijah went up in the chariot of fire, his mantle fell from the chariot and Elisha picked it up, to keep it.

Elisha turned to go home. The Jordan River was still full and deep and he needed to get back across. Elisha took Elijah's mantle and hit the river water with it, just as Elijah had done. "Where is the God of Elijah?" he said. The river divided, just as it had done for Elijah, and Elisha walked across. Now Elisha knew for sure that, even though Elijah was gone, God would still be with him. Elisha would be able to do the same kinds of miracles Elijah had done and speak the same messages from God. God had chosen Elisha to take Elijah's place and God's work would continue.

But what about when it would be time for Elisha to die? Would God's work stop then? No, nothing can stop God's work. After Elijah, there was Elisha and after Elisha there were other prophets--until the best prophet of all came. Who is that? Jesus is the

best prophet and He is the One who did God's most important work. Jesus died so God's people could be forgiven for their sins, and He changes them on the inside so they can do what pleases God.

4. Application

Help the children to see how wonderful it was for Elisha and how wonderful it is for us that God is always in control and always keeps doing His work. He never goes away and He never changes. As you pray together today, ask several of the children to praise God for always being the same. Ask others to give thanks for Jesus, the perfect prophet who came to do God's most important work of saving His people.

5. Review Questions

- A. How did God take Elijah to heaven? (in a fiery chariot on a whirlwind)
- B. Who was Elijah's friend and helper? (Elisha)
- C. Why would Elisha have been troubled that Elijah was going away? (He did not want God's work to stop being done.)
- D. When the river Jordan was in their way, what did Elijah do? (Hit the water with his mantle and then it divided and they could walk on dry ground.)
- E. Elisha wanted to take over Elijah's work and to know God would help him. Elijah said Elisha would know he had what he was asking for if--what? (If he saw Elijah go up to heaven.)
- F. *Did* Elisha see Elijah go up to heaven? (Yes.)
- G. When Elisha came to the Jordan River, what did *he* do? (Hit the water with Elijah's mantle.)
- H. What did he say? (Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?)
- I. What happened when Elisha hit the water with Elijah's mantle? (The waters divided and he walked across on dry ground.)
- J. Elijah was gone, but who was still with Elisha? (God)
- K. Who would take over God's work in Elijah's place? (Elisha)
- L. Who is the greatest prophet God sent? (Jesus)
- M. What is God's most important work that Jesus did? (Died so the sins of God's people could be forgiven and their hearts could be changed.)
- N. People come and go and everything changes--who is always the same forever? (God)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

A. Encourage the children to pretend they are Elisha going with Elijah to see him leave. Walk around the room several times. Twice as you walk, tell the children to stop because Elijah is telling them they may go back. The children are to show you by their body language that they will not go back. Twice, tell the children to stop because the sons of the prophets are asking them if they know Elijah will be taken away today. Have the children show you with their body language how they feel about that. Remind them that they are concerned about who will do God's work if Elijah is gone. Come to a river too wide to cross, with no bridges and no boats. Tell them Elijah has hit it with his mantle and it has parted, then lead them in walking across it on dry land. (A double row of chairs that you pull apart for the children to walk between could be used here.) Have them pretend to look up, watching Elijah go. Lead them back to the "river" and, together, have them ask Elisha's question: "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" Lead them again through the divided "water," emphasizing that now they know God is still with them even though Elijah is gone.

B. Use the review questions for a review game. One option would be to cut out two simple chariot shapes from construction paper and tape them on the wall or chalkboard to represent two teams. Each time a team answers a review question correctly or says the memory verse when asked, that team's chariot moves closer to a spot designated as "heaven." The first chariot to arrive belongs to the winning team.



CHILDREN'S CHURCH

MUSIC FOR YEAR 1 - FALL QUARTER

LESSONS 5 - 8

THEME: God cares for His people

MEMORY VERSE SONG

Psalm 34:4a "I asked the Lord for help and He answered me."

HYMN

The Doxology (teach tune 2, may introduce tune 1)

CHORUS

Great is the Lord

ADDITIONAL SONGS (optional)

Make a Joyful Noise

*Let the Little Children Come
Behold, What Manner of Love*



**CHILDREN'S CHURCH AGES 4-6 YEARS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM; FALL**

Lesson 5

Title: Elisha and the Shunamite Woman
Text: II Kings 4:8-37.
Theme: God cares for His people and hears and answers their prayers.

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to retell the Bible story.
2. Thank God for caring for His people and listening to their prayers.
3. Bring a concern of his own to God in prayer.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 34:4a: I asked the Lord for help and He answered me.*

1. Teacher Direction:

The stories in this portion of the Biblical narrative focus on the contrast between the God of Elijah and Elisha and the gods of the idolaters around them. The gods of the pagan nations can neither see, hear nor help in any way. In the chapter just before this one, a pagan king cannot obtain help from his god, not even when he offers his oldest son as a burnt offering (II Kings 3). By contrast, the God of the prophets possesses all power and willingly uses that power on behalf of His people when they simply ask. From the financial woes of a single mom (II Kings 4:1-7) to victory for an army (II Kings 3), God reveals Himself in these stories as actively involved in the everyday concerns of His people. In today's story, God gave a childless woman a child at Elisha's request and then, when the child had died, God raised him to life in answer to Elisha's prayer. Later, God would show His greatest concern for the needs of His people by sending His own Son to become a human being and die in the place of His people so their sins could be forgiven.

2. Introduction

Review these things with the children: What was a prophet? (a messenger from God) Why could prophets sometimes work miracles? (So that people would know they were from God) Who was the best and most important prophet God ever sent? (Jesus) In last week's story, Elijah the prophet went to heaven, but he didn't die. How did he go to heaven? (In a fiery chariot) What was the name of the prophet who carried on Elijah's work after he was gone? (Elisha)

Remind the children of the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal from two weeks ago. Ask them what the prophets of Baal did to try to get Baal's attention so he would send fire from heaven. (They danced and shouted all day long.) Ask them why Baal did not answer; then ask them what happened when Elijah prayed for fire from heaven. Elijah could have said the words from our memory verse: I asked the Lord for help and He answered me. Help the children to see that one of the wonderful things about having the true God as *our* God is that we know He hears prayers and can answer them. We know He cares about all His people's needs, big and small. Perhaps you could share a story of a time when you prayed for something you needed and tell how God answered your prayer.

3. Bible story

Elisha worked hard at taking Elijah's place in doing God's work and telling God's message. He often had to travel from place to place in Israel to do his work. There were no cars or busses or airplanes in those days and whenever Elisha traveled, he walked. In

one house that Elisha often walked by there lived a woman and her husband. The woman saw that Elisha often walked by their home and she wanted to help him. The woman suggested to her husband that they make a little bedroom for Elisha upstairs in their house. They could put a bed, a table, a chair, and a light in the room. Whenever Elisha was traveling by their house, he could use the upstairs bedroom to stay in. The husband agreed and they built the little room for Elisha and put in it the furniture he would need.

Elisha was thankful for his room. He wanted to do something for the woman and her husband, so he told his servant to find out what the woman would like to have. The woman said she had everything she needed and did not want anything from Elisha. Elisha's servant reminded Elisha, though, that the woman and her husband had never been able to have any children. So Elisha promised the woman, "Next year at this time, you will hold your own little boy in your arms." The woman thought that was too good to be true, but sure enough, just as Elisha the prophet had said, by the time a year had gone by, she had given birth to a son.

The mother and father were delighted to have a child. Years went by and they had fun watching him grow and learn. Finally, he was big enough to go out into the fields and help his father with the farm work. One day, though, as he was out working in the field, he suddenly became sick. His father told a servant to carry him into the house to his mother. The mother took the sick boy onto her lap. There he sat all morning. Finally, around lunch time, the boy died.

The mother was very sad, but she knew what to do. It was Elisha who had asked God for this child for her, and God had answered his prayer. Surely the same God could help her now with her child. The woman carried her dead son upstairs to Elisha's room and placed him on Elisha's bed. Then she had a servant saddle a donkey and she rode to where she knew Elisha was staying. Elisha saw the woman coming and sent his servant out to meet her. "Ask her if she and her husband and her child are well," Elisha said. When the servant asked, the woman only said, "It is well." She did not want to talk to the servant about her troubles. She wanted to talk to the prophet of God. It was the prophet's God who could help her, if anyone could.

When the sad mother came to Elisha, she told him what had happened. Elisha said he would send his servant right away. Elisha told the servant to go straight to the woman's house, go up to where the boy lay, and place Elisha's staff on the boy's face. The servant hurried off. The woman, however, wanted *Elisha* to go to her son. She knew it was Elisha's God whose help she needed. "I will not leave *you*," the woman said to Elisha.

So Elisha got up and set out to go back to the woman's house with her. When they were almost to the house, the servant came back to meet them. "I did as you said," the servant told Elisha. "I lay your staff on the boy's face, but he has not awakened." Then Elisha went into the house. He went upstairs to the room the woman and her husband had built for him and saw the poor dead boy lying on his bed. Then the Bible says, Elisha "prayed to the Lord." The Lord who had cared enough for the woman to give her a son heard Elisha's prayer. As Elisha prayed and walked up and down in the room, the boy suddenly sneezed, not once or twice but seven times. Then he opened his eyes.

Elisha called the mother in and showed her what had happened. Overjoyed, she picked up her son in her arms and carried him away. Elisha had cared enough about this family to stop what he was doing and make the long trip back with the mother to pray for her boy. God cared about this family, too, and heard and answered Elisha's prayer. God cares about what His people need and He hears our prayers.

One thing all people need is a way to have their sins forgiven and their hearts changed so they can live for God. Is that a need God cares about? How do you know?

God sent His own Son to die for our sins and to set us free from sin.

4. Application

Be sure the children understand that God does not always answer our prayers by giving us exactly what we think we should have. He knows what is best for us and sometimes gives us something else that He knows will be better. But He always cares about the things that matter to us, whether large or small. He always hears and answers the prayers of His people by giving them what is best for them.

Encourage the children to think of one thing that is important to them that they would like to pray about this week. Make a list of these so you can ask next week if they remembered to pray and how God answered their prayers.

In your class prayer time, encourage the children to pray for these requests and to thank God that He loves His people and cares about the things that are important to them. Encourage them to thank Him for giving us prayer and for answering our prayers.

5. Review Questions

- A. What did the woman do for Elisha? (She invited him to eat with him whenever he was traveling by and then built him a little room where he could stop and rest in his travels.)
- B. What did Elisha ask the woman? (What was one thing she wanted?)
- C. The woman did not ask for anything, but there was one thing she wanted. What was it? (A child)
- D. *Did* she have a child? (Yes)
- E. What happened to the child? (He died.)
- F. To whom did the mother go for help when the child died? (Elisha)
- G. Why did she go to *Elisha* for help? (Because he was the prophet of God.)
- H. Did Elisha care about her trouble? (Yes.) How do you know? (He went with her.)
- I. Did God care that her child had died? (Yes.)
- J. What happened when Elisha prayed for the boy? (God restored him to life.)
- K. Does God *always* care about His people's troubles? (Yes.)
- L. Does God always answer His people's prayers? (Yes.)
- M. Does God always give His people exactly what they ask for? (No)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

- A. The children can make prayer reminders for themselves by drawing something that reminds them of the prayer concern they thought of at prayer time. Encourage them to post these somewhere at home where they will see them and be reminded to pray for their requests. Remind them that God cares about the everyday things in the lives of His people and invites us to pray about them. (Another variation would be to make these on 3x5 or 4x6 cards and then glue a small piece of magnetic strip to the back.)
- B. Let the children act out this story. Assign these parts: Elisha, Elisha's servant, the woman, her husband, the boy, and a servant. Retell the story, directing the children to act out what their characters would be doing. Do this more than once to give more children the opportunity to participate. As you retell it each time, point out again God's loving, involved care for His people.

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH AGES 4-6 YEARS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM; FALL**

Lesson 6

Title: Elisha and Naaman the Leper

Text: II Kings 5:1-27

Theme: God revealed His power and love to Naaman by healing his leprosy.

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to retell the Bible story.
2. Thank God for providing salvation from sin for us as He provided salvation from leprosy for Naaman.
3. Understand that he is as helpless to remove his sin as Naaman was to remove his leprosy.
4. Rely on God alone to save him from sin and its power.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 34:4a I asked the Lord for help and He answered me.*

1. Teacher Direction

In the midst of all the stories of God's dealings with Israel through Elijah and Elisha, Scripture includes this story of God's revelation of Himself to someone who was not already one of God's people. Naaman was a Gentile, a pagan and a captain in the army of Israel's enemy, yet in this story we see God revealing His power to Naaman and drawing him to Himself. God used Naaman's leprosy to show him his helplessness and his need for God. God used Naaman's military prowess to bring an Israelite slave girl into his household. God provided healing for Naaman, then provided everything Naaman needed to learn of God's provision and to make use of it. Naaman came to see that, in spite of all his power and influence, he could do nothing to help himself. It was only when he sought help from the Lord that Naaman was healed. He gladly acknowledged that the only true God was the God of Israel.

2. Introduction

Review briefly by asking the children what a prophet was, whose words the prophet spoke, why a prophet could work miracles, what was the name of the prophet who went to heaven in a fiery chariot and who was the prophet who took his place. Ask them what two things Elisha asked God for in last week's story (these were for the Shunammite woman--a child, and then for the child to be raised back to life when he had died). Take time to see if the children have any answers to prayer to report back to the class from their prayer requests of last week.

Ask if any of the children have ever had any kind of skin disease or rash and give them a little time to tell you about it if they wish. Ask them what they did about it and if they think going swimming in a river could have healed them. See what the children can tell you about leprosy. Be sure they understand that in Bible times this was a terrible disease because it could not be cured and it was very contagious. People who had the disease had to live away from other people so they would not pass the leprosy on to someone else. The disease could eat away your fingers, toes, nose and ears.

3. Bible story

Captain Naaman was a strong and powerful man. At Captain Naaman's command was a strong and powerful army. Naaman was used to being able to do whatever needed done, either on his own or with his strong army. But now, Naaman had leprosy and there was nothing he could do to help himself. Naaman's king, the king of Syria, appreciated

his brave army captain and he wanted to help him, too. Yet, even though he was a king who had great power, he did not have the power to heal Naaman's leprosy.

God had the power to heal Naaman's leprosy, but Naaman did not know that. In fact, Naaman did not know anything about God. In Syria, where Naaman lived, people worshiped idols and did not know the true God. God wanted Naaman to know about Him. God planned to use Naaman's leprosy to show Naaman who the true God is.

Naaman's wife had a young Israelite girl who helped her. The Israelite girl knew God. When she learned that Naaman had leprosy, she said, "I wish Naaman were with Elisha the prophet in Samaria. He would heal his leprosy."

Naaman's wife told Naaman about Elisha and Naaman set off to see if Elisha could heal him. When Naaman arrived at Elisha's house, Elisha sent a servant out with a message for Naaman. The message was: "Go wash in the River Jordan seven times and your leprosy will be gone." Naaman was angry! Imagine this prophet not inviting him in or even coming out to talk to him himself. He had only sent a servant! Did this prophet not know that he was Naaman, the commander of the armies of Syria? And what a foolish message--his leprosy would be gone if he washed in the Jordan River seven times. Why, there were rivers in his own country, bigger and better ones at that, that he could wash in. Wash in the River Jordan--it was ridiculous and he would not do it! Very angry, Naaman got back in his chariot and prepared to go home to Syria.

But then his servants stopped him. "Sir," they said, "if the prophet had told you to do some great, difficult thing to be healed, you would have done it. All he told you to do was to wash in a river seven times. It's easy. It can't hurt. Shouldn't you at least try it?"

So, although he thought it was silly, Captain Naaman went to the Jordan River. He got out of his chariot and waded out into the water. He washed once, then again, then a third time. After each washing, he looked at his skin to see if the leprosy had gone away, but it had not. He washed again and again--four times, five times, six times, seven times, as the prophet of God had said. When he looked at his skin after the seventh washing, what do you think he saw? The leprosy was gone and his skin was perfectly well again.

Naaman wasn't angry anymore. He hurried back to Elisha to tell him what had happened. Then Naaman said this, "Now I know that the only true God in all the earth is the God of Israel." Naaman had learned that God can help us when no one else can. God hears our prayers when we ask for help and answers them.

There is one thing every human being needs to get rid of even more than Naaman needed to get rid of his leprosy. Do you know what that is? It is sin. Leprosy separated people from people, but sin separates people from God. God provided a way for Naaman to be saved from his leprosy. God provided Jesus so people could be saved from sin. Naaman had to understand he could not help himself. He had to do what God had said to do and wash in the Jordan River. We need to understand that we cannot help ourselves with our sin. We must do what God has said and trust in the Jesus, the Savior He has given.

4. Application

Help the children to see how wonderful it is that God does not wait for people to love Him first. He works out the things that happen in people's lives so that they will learn what He is like and will come to know and love Him. Encourage the children to thank God that He is like this and that He is providing ways for *them* to come to know Him now through the teaching they receive from parents and teachers. Remind the children to also thank God for providing salvation from our sin, like He provided salvation for Naaman from his leprosy.

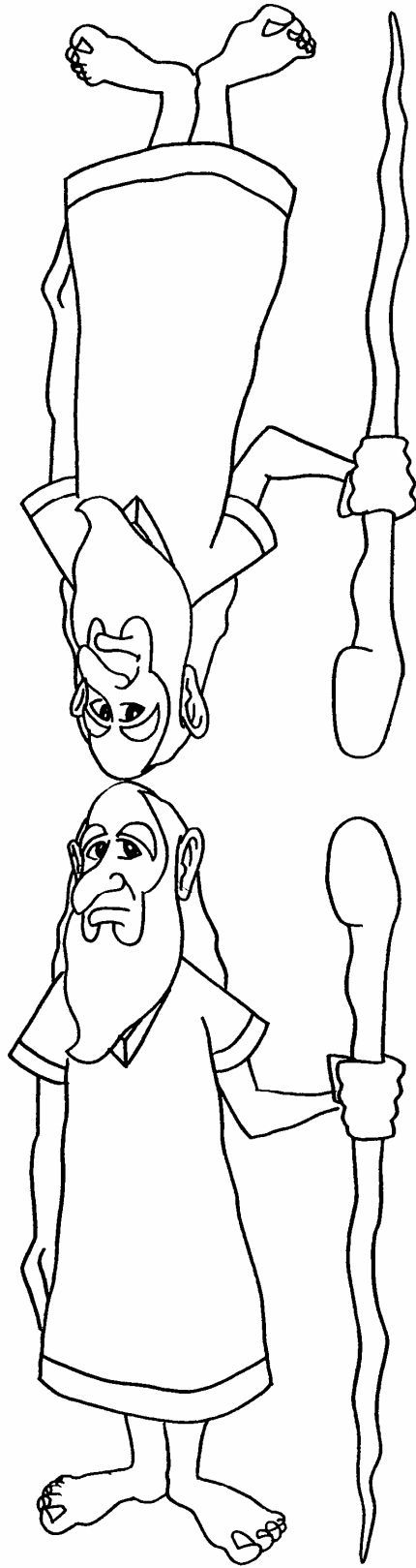
Help the children to see that, just as Naaman had to make use of what God had provided for his healing, so each of us must believe in the Savior God has provided. Just to know that God gave His Son to die in our place will not save us from our sin; each person must repent of his sin and put his faith in Jesus to be saved.

5. Review questions

- A. What was Naaman's job? (He was an army captain.)
- B. What was Naaman's problem? (leprosy)
- C. Could Naaman do anything to heal himself of leprosy? (No)
- D. Who was the only one who could help Naaman with this problem? (God)
- E. Did God want to help him? (Yes)
- F. How did Naaman find out there was a prophet in Israel who could help him? (His wife's servant girl said so.)
- G. What did Elisha tell Naaman to do to be cured of his leprosy? (Wash seven times in the Jordan River.)
- H. What Naaman do? (At first he got angry and was not going to do it, but then he did it.)
- I. What happened when Naaman washed seven times in the Jordan? (His leprosy was healed.)
- J. What did Naaman say about God? (He knew God was the only true God.)
- K. What problem do we have that is even worse than leprosy? (Sin)
- L. Is there anything we can do to save ourselves from our sin? (No)
- M. Who alone can save us from our sin? (Jesus)
- N. What does God tell us to do be saved from our sin? (Trust in Jesus to save us.)

6. Learning reinforcement activities

- A. Have the children make simple Naaman "puppets" with a river "stage" so they can tell the stories to their parents. They can draw and color a big Jordan River on a sheet of paper. Help them cut a slit in part of the river through which they will be able to insert the puppet they will make. For the puppets, give each child a pre-cut paper doll figure. Children color one side to represent Naaman, covered with sores. They color the other side without sores and with a happy face. They then glue the puppet to the top of a craft stick. Once all the puppets and rivers are completed, retell the part of the story where Naaman washed in the river--the children can count with you. The children move their puppets under the river, then back up six times, with the "sores side" showing. At the seventh time, they can turn their puppets around and bring them up with no sores. Ask the children who alone could take away Naaman's leprosy. Ask them who alone can take away our sin.
- B. Write the review questions on slips of paper and place them in a little bag. Add several slips of paper that say "Say the memory verse." Children take turns coming up and drawing out a slip of paper. If a child answers his question correctly, have a tiny treat for him.



NAAMAN PUPPET

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH AGES 4-6 YEARS
CURRICULUM YEAR 1; FALL**

Lesson 7

Title: Elisha Defeats the King of Aram
Text: II Kings 6:8-23
Theme: God is always with His people to protect them.

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace each child will

1. Be able to tell today's Bible story.
2. Praise God for knowing all things and for having all power.
3. Identify a time when he feels fearful, thank God that He is with him in those times and ask God to help him to remember God's protection the next time he is in that situation.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 34:4a I asked the Lord for help and He answered me.*

1. Teacher Direction

In today's story, Elisha's servant is frightened by circumstances that seem overwhelming--until Elisha prays that he will be able to see the situation as it really is. Elisha understood that he had nothing to fear from the King of Aram, who was seeking his life. The King of Aram was an idolater whose only help was an idol and so no help at all. This story continues to contrast the God of Elisha with the gods of idolaters. While the true God sees and hears what the King of Aram plans in private and passes on the information to Elisha his prophet, the idolatrous king's army becomes unable to see anything at all, even Elisha when he is right in front of them. At the same time, when Elisha prays, his servant's eyes are opened to see all the host of the Lord surrounding them to protect them from their enemies. The servant learns that the Lord is always there to answer our cries for help. This story shows us God's great power to protect His people. This power of God to protect His people would become most clear in Christ. By sending Christ, God protected His people from His own wrath at their sin.

2. Introduction

Ask the children what it means to be surrounded. After they have explained, ask whether it would be a good thing or a bad thing to be surrounded by soldiers. As they discuss this, help them to see that it would make a difference if the soldiers were friends or enemies. Ask them what an enemy is and what an enemy wants to do. Finally have them imagine they are surrounded by enemies who want to hurt them; would they feel frightened? Then have them imagine that between themselves and the enemies they are surrounded by even more people and these people are stronger and intend to protect them from their enemies; *now* would they feel frightened?

3. Bible story

Elisha was an Old Testament prophet; that means he was whose messenger? (God's) When Elisha spoke to God's people, whose word was it that he spoke? (God's) Why could Elisha work miracles? (So the people would know he really was from God.) What did the people in the countries all around Elisha

worship? (Idols) **Could the idol-worshippers work miracles? (No) Why not?** (Because the idols were not real gods and they couldn't do anything.) **In last week's story, Naaman was from one of the idol-worshiping countries and he had a problem his idol could not help him with. What was his problem? (Leprosy) Who helped him with his problem? (God, through Elisha) What did Naaman have to do? (Wash seven times in the Jordan River) What did Naaman tell Elisha after his leprosy was healed? (Now I know that your God is the only true God.)**

The King of Aram was angry! Every time he planned a surprise attack on Israel, the king of Israel would find out about it. The King of Aram would make his plans, gather his army together, place soldiers where he wanted them, and attack--only to find that the King of Israel knew all about it and was ready and waiting for him with soldiers of his own. The surprise attacks were *never* surprises! "Who's doing this?" the King of Aram yelled at his army officers and helpers. "Which one of you is a spy who goes and tells the King of Israel all our secrets?"

"It isn't us," one of the helpers answered. "It's the prophet Elisha. He tells the King of Israel the secret things you whisper in your bedroom." It was true. Elisha was the one who always knew the enemy's secrets and warned the Israelites. Now, how could he know those secrets without being there when they were told? God made those secrets known to Elisha, so he could help the Israelites protect themselves from the King of Aram. "Elisha, is it?" the king of Aram said. "One of you find out where he is so I can capture him and make him stop this." The king's servants found that Elisha was staying in the city of Dothan, so the King of Aram sent soldiers to capture him.

Now Elisha was just one person; a prophet of God. He had a servant. That means there were just the two of them. How many soldiers do you think the King of Aram needed to capture a prophet and his servant? He sent horses and chariots and a great army to capture the prophet. The soldiers arrived at Dothan at night and surrounded the city. Imagine how Elisha's servant felt when he got up in the morning, looked out the window, saw a huge army surrounding the city, and knew that they were there to get Elisha and himself. The servant was terrified and he ran to Elisha crying, "What do we do? What do we do?"

"Don't be afraid," Elisha answered. "There are more on our side than on the enemies' side." That sounded crazy to the servant. There were only two on their side--himself and Elisha. Then Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes that he may see." God did open the servant's eyes and the servant saw that the mountains were full of horses and chariots of fire. These had been sent by God to protect Elisha and his servant. They had been there all along, though no one could see them.

These horses and fiery chariots did not need to fight for Elisha, however. God did something else to show His power to protect His prophet. Elisha prayed that the entire enemy army would become blind and God answered his prayer. When the army finally came to Elisha, the man their king had sent them to capture, they were helpless. They could not capture him; they couldn't even see him. Elisha told the enemy soldiers he would lead them where they should go. They did not realize this was *Elisha*, the man they were to take prisoner. So they followed him. Elisha took the army of Aram to Samaria, where the King of Israel lived. Then Elisha prayed, asking God to open their eyes again. God answered

Elisha's prayer and the Aramean soldiers saw the King of Israel. They realized that they themselves were now prisoners. The King of Israel wanted to kill them, but Elisha said to treat them as guests instead. So Israel gave the enemy soldiers a large feast and sent them home to the King of Aram. The King of Aram was amazed--his god would not have been able to so powerfully protect *him*--and so, for a time at least, he made no more attacks on Israel.

God powerfully protects His people. He even protects them from the one thing that can hurt people more than anything else--sin. God protects people from sin by sending His Son, Jesus, to save those who believe in Him and then by changing people's hearts so they will obey Him.

4. Application

Ask the children if they think Elisha was just special or does God protect all His people in such powerful ways. Point out to them that Scripture is full of promises that God will protect His people. Just as Elisha's servant at first did not see the horses and fiery chariots, so God often protects us in ways we don't even realize. Ask the children if any were ever in a dangerous situation without being badly hurt and help them to see that God was protecting them then. Be sure they realize that this does not mean that none of God's people will ever be sick or injured; sometimes God knows more good will come to His people when they get hurt than would have if they had remained unharmed. However, nothing will ever happen to any of God's people that is not part of His good and wise plan for them. Encourage the children to thank God for always being with His people (even though they cannot see Him) and for powerfully protecting them from harm.

At first, Elisha's servant was afraid; ask the children why he stopped being afraid. (He realized how God was protecting them.) Ask the children to think of something that sometimes happens to them that makes them afraid--perhaps storms or darkness or bad dreams or neighborhood children who are mean to them. Ask them if they could see God right there with them, protecting them when those things happen, would it help them? Help them to see that even though they cannot see Him, He *is* with them at those moments. In your prayer time, encourage the children to thank God that He is with them at those times. Encourage them to ask God to help them to remember He is with them the next time they are in that fearful situation.

5. Review Questions

- A. Did the King of Aram worship God? (No) What did he worship? (Idols)
- B. What would happen every time the King of Aram planned a sneak attack against Israel? (The King of Israel would find out about it.)
- C. How did the King of Israel find out? (Elisha told him.)
- D. How did Elisha know the King of Aram's secret plans? (God told him..)
- E. How did the King of Aram plan to stop this? (He sent an army to capture Elisha.)
- F. Why was Elisha's servant frightened? (He saw a great army surrounding them.)
- G. When Elisha prayed that his servant's eyes would be opened, what did the servant see? (A greater army of horses and fiery chariots surrounding them.)
- H. What happened to the enemy soldiers when Elisha prayed? (They became blind.)
- I. Where did Elisha lead the blinded enemy soldiers? (To the King of Israel)
- J. Did the King of Israel kill the enemy soldiers? (No; Elisha told him to give them a

feast and send them home.)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

A. Give each child a piece of paper on which you have printed the memory verse. Read the verse to the children. Suggest to them that they make a simple picture of something that is frightening: darkness, a dog, a thundercloud with lightning. Encourage them to say this verse to themselves and to ask God for help when they feel afraid.

B. Since this is the last of a seven-week series on Elisha and Elijah, here are two game options to review all the stories and characters.

1. The teacher draws scenes from the stories on the board. The children volunteer to tell what happened in that story.

(Reminder: the last seven stories were: 1. While there is no rain, first ravens feed Elijah, then a widow feeds him--and her flour supply never fails; 2. Elijah raises the widow's dead son back to life; 3. Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to a contest on Mt. Carmel; 4. Elijah goes to heaven in a fiery chariot and Elisha takes his place; 5. Elisha uses the guest room of the Shunammite woman, prays for a child for her, then raises that child back to life when he dies; 6. Naaman is cured of his leprosy when he washes in the River Jordan; 7. today's story.)

2. Using these questions, see if the children can identify these characters from the stories.

- A. I was a prophet. My message was that people should not worship idols along with God. I prayed God would send fire from heaven to burn my sacrifice and he did. Who am I? (Elijah)
- B. I was an army captain. Elisha told me to wash in the River Jordan seven times and I would be healed of my leprosy. I did it and I was healed. Then I knew that God is the only true God. Who am I? (Naaman)
- C. Elisha prayed for a child for me, but then my child died. Elisha prayed and my son was raised back to life. Who am I? (The woman who made a guest room for Elisha)
- D. I became angry and tried to capture Elisha because he kept telling my secret plans to the King of Israel. Who am I? (The King of Aram)
- E. I saw Elijah go to heaven in a fiery chariot. He dropped his mantle or coat. I hit the Jordan River with it and the River parted so I could walk across on dry ground. Who am I? (Elisha)
- F. I and my friends were trying to get our idol to send fire from heaven to burn our sacrifice. We danced and screamed and cut ourselves with knives but our god never answered. Who are we? (Prophets of Baal)
- G. I and my friends got pieces of food and brought them to Elijah every day for many days. Who are we? (Ravens)
- H. I said it would not rain for three years and it didn't rain. This was because the people were worshiping Baal along with God. Who am I? (Elijah)
- I. I was afraid of the huge army that was after us until I saw all the angels and fiery chariots sent to protect us. Who am I? (Elisha's servant)

"When I am afraid, I will trust You."

psalm 56.3

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH 4-6 YEARS OLD
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM; FALL**

Lesson 8

Title: Jonah Disobeys God

Text: Jonah 1-2

Theme: God is in all places at all times and able to hear and answer our prayers..

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace each child will

1. Be able to tell this Bible story.
2. Praise God for being in all places at all times.
3. Thank God for being *with him* at all times.
4. Identify times when he would be glad to know God is with him and is able to hear his prayers.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 34:4a I asked the Lord for help and He answered me.*

1. Teacher Direction

The little book of Jonah is full of rich teaching on some of the most outstanding of God's attributes. We see His holiness, justice and wrath in the initial message He has for Nineveh, as well as His grace, mercy and forgiveness in sending them a prophet and relenting when they repent. We see His longsuffering with His own disobedient servant. Jonah shows us God's omniscience and omnipresence, since wherever Jonah is, God knows just where He is and is there with Him. And God's sovereignty and power shout from the pages of Jonah, for all God commands--elements, pagan sailors, fish, vine, worm, sun, idolatrous Assyrians and one stubborn prophet--carry out God's will just as He purposed. This week's lesson covers the first two chapters of Jonah, emphasizing the omniscience and omnipresence of God. Next week's lesson covers chapters three and four and will focus on God's sovereign power and on His mercy.

2. Introduction

Ask the children a series of questions intended to draw out a variety of different locations as answers. (Where are we? Where is your grandmother? Where is your pet? etc.) Then ask: Is God here with you? Is God at your grandmother's house? Is God at home with your pet? Ask the children how can God be in all those places at the same time. This is no problem at all for God. We can only be in one place at one time, but God is in every place there is, all at the same time.

Bring pictures of places from home to show, commenting with each picture "God is in the mountains/ on this island/ in this castle, etc."

3. Bible Story

In Bible times, what was a prophet? (A messenger from God.) What two prophets have we learned about so far? (Elijah and Elisha) Jonah was another of God's prophets in Bible times. Show the children where in the Bible the book of Jonah is found. God gave Jonah a message for the people of Nineveh. The people of Nineveh were mean, cruel people. God's message was that He was going to punish them for being so mean and cruel. Jonah did not want to take God's message to the people of Nineveh. Jonah *wanted* God to punish the people of Nineveh. He was afraid that, if they knew God was angry, the people of Nineveh would stop being mean and cruel and God would forgive them. So Jonah did not want to take God's message to them.

Instead, Jonah tried to go far away, where God would not be able to find him. Can anyone can go so far away that God will not know where that person is? Is there any place a person can go where God will not be there, too? Jonah bought a ticket and got on a boat going the other direction from where God wanted him to go. Then Jonah went downstairs into the bottom of the boat and went to sleep. Did God know where Jonah was? Was God with Jonah on the boat? God is in *all* places. Of course God was with Jonah on the boat.

While Jonah peacefully slept, God commanded the wind and the clouds to make a great storm on the sea. The wind blew hard and the waves grew high. The sailors who sailed the boat were used to storms and rough seas, but even they were afraid the boat would sink. When Jonah awoke, he knew God had caused the storm and he knew it was because of him. Jonah told the sailors that if they were to throw him into the sea, the storm would stop. Of course, the sailors did not want to do that, but the storm grew worse and worse and they were all going to end up in the sea if the storm did not stop. So they threw Jonah over the edge of the boat, into the sea. Instantly, God caused the storm to stop. The wind and the sea grew quiet.

But poor Jonah was sinking deep into the sea. Was God in the sea with Jonah? Of course He was. God is in *all* places. God did not want His messenger to drown, so He commanded a very large fish to come swallow Jonah.

The large fish obeyed God and swallowed Jonah. Now Jonah was safe from drowning in the sea. But--poor Jonah--now he was deep in the sea *and* in the belly of a fish! There was no one in the world who could help him. No one in the world even knew where he was. Who *did* know where Jonah was? Was God with Jonah there in the belly of the fish? Before, Jonah had wanted to find a place where God would not be. But now he must have been very glad that God is in *all* places. Jonah wasn't alone inside the fish. God was there with him.

From inside the fish, Jonah prayed to God and God heard his prayer. Jonah thanked God for being with him and promised to obey God. He asked God to help him. God, who controls all things, even large fish, commanded the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach and the fish obeyed.

Jonah had learned his lesson. He saw now that God is everywhere and knows all that we do. He saw that there is no place where we can go to get away from God. God is in *all* places. Jonah had learned that God has all power and that all things--wind, waves, fish and prophets-- are to obey Him. Now God told Jonah again to go to that same city of Nineveh and give God's message to the people

living there. This time Jonah obeyed.

4. Application

Ask the children *when* Jonah wanted to get away from where God was. (When he was trying to disobey God.) Ask them if they can think of a time when someone would *not* like to think that God was with him. (When that person was doing something wrong.) Point out that one way to keep from doing what displeases God is to remember that He is always with you and He always sees what you do. (If you know the song, "Be Careful Little Eyes What You See," this would be a good place to sing it.) During the prayer time, encourage the children to ask God to remind them that He is always with them, so they will be careful to do what pleases Him.

Ask the children when Jonah would have been glad to know that God was with him. (When he was in the sea and when he was inside the fish, needing help.) Ask them to name some times they might be glad to remember that God is with them and can hear their prayers. During the prayer time, encourage them to thank God that He is with them at those times and always.

5. Review Questions

- A. God had a message for the cruel people in Nineveh. What was the message? (He was going to punish them for being mean and cruel.)
- B. Whom did God tell to take his message to the people in Nineveh? (Jonah)
- C. What did Jonah do? (He got on a boat to run away from God.)
- D. Was God with Jonah on the boat? (Yes.)
- E. What did God send to stop Jonah from running away? (A big storm.)
- F. What did the sailors do to make the storm stop? (Threw Jonah in the sea.)
- G. Was God with Jonah in the sea? (Yes.)
- H. What did God send to keep Jonah from drowning? (A big fish to swallow him.)
- I. Was God with Jonah inside the fish? (Yes.)
- J. What did Jonah do inside the fish? (He prayed to God.)
- K. What did God cause the fish to do? (Spit Jonah out on the land.)
- L. Then what did Jonah do? (He took God's message to the people of Nineveh.)
- M. Can anyone run away from God? (No) Why not? (Because God is everywhere and He always sees everything.)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

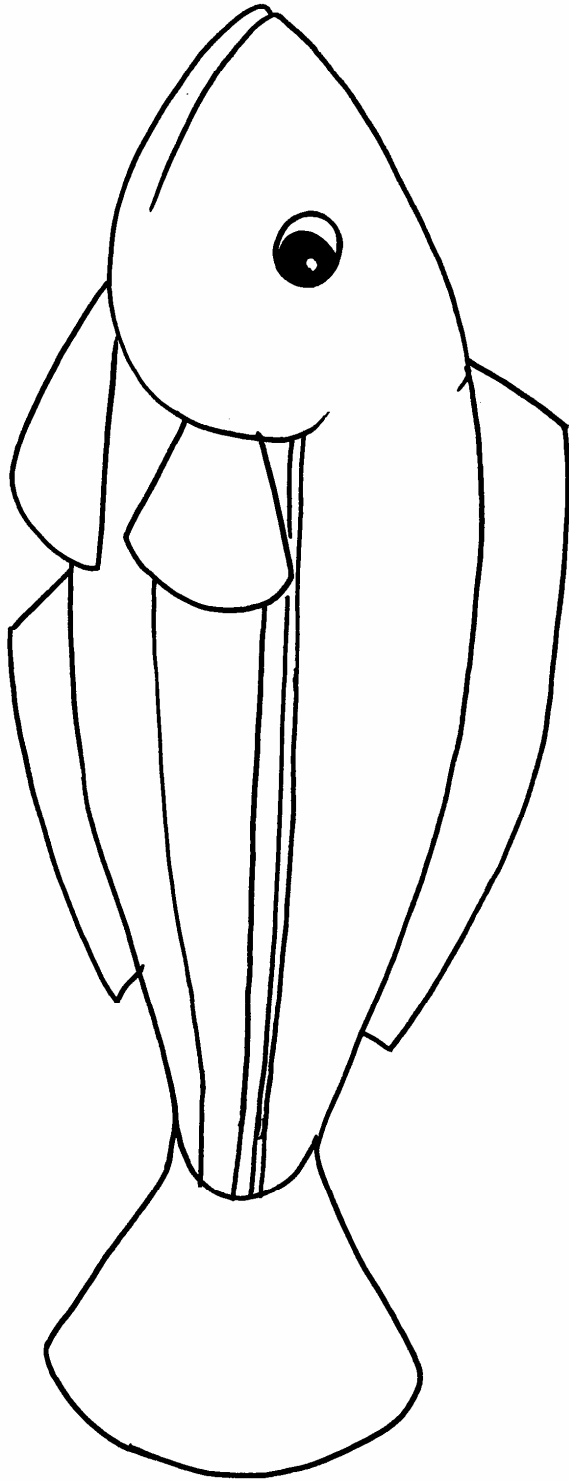
A. Retell the story, leading the children through actions for the different things that happened in the story. Jonah listens, then runs away, gets on a boat, and goes to sleep. (But God knows where he is .) The winds blow, the waves splash, and the boat rocks. The sailors throw Jonah into the sea. (But God knows where Jonah is and He is with him there.) Jonah falls down, down, down. The fish swims up and swallows Jonah. (But God knows where Jonah is and He is with him there.) Jonah prays from inside the fish. The fish swims to land and spits Jonah out. Jonah travels to Nineveh to give God's message.

B. Hide a cut-out paper "Jonah" repeatedly for the children to find. Stress that the real Jonah was hidden from most people when he was on the boat and hidden from everyone when he was inside the fish, but God always knew where he was and was even right there with him.

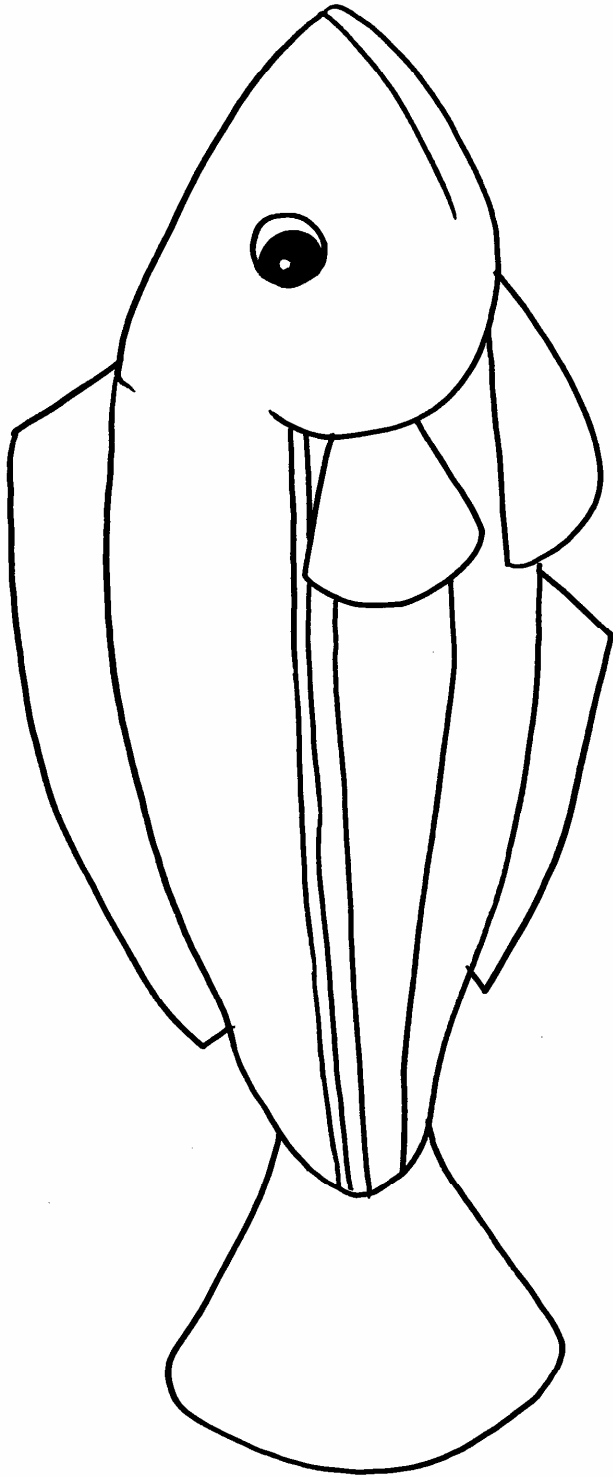
C. As a take-home reminder of the story, have the children make stuffed fish. Bring large, simple fish shapes cut from newsprint. Staple two together, leaving a large hole through which the children will stuff newspaper to make their fish “puffy.” The children are to color both sides of a fish, stuff it with crumpled newspaper, and staple the hole closed. As they work, remind them that when Jonah was in the fish in the ocean, no one would have known where he was--no one except God. God not only knew where Jonah was, He was with him there.



JONAH CUTOUT



FISH FRONT



FISH BACK



CHILDREN'S CHURCH

MUSIC FOR YEAR 1 - FALL QUARTER

LESSONS 9 - 13

THEME: God is sovereign and speaks through His
word

MEMORY VERSE SONG

Isaiah 40:8b "The word of our God stands forever."

HYMN

The Doxology

CHORUS

Great is the Lord

ADDITIONAL SONGS (optional)

Make a Joyful Noise

*Let the Little Children Come
Behold, What Manner of Love*



**CHILDREN'S CHURCH 4-6 YEARS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM; FALL**

Lesson 9

Title: Jonah Preaches in Nineveh
Text: Jonah 3-4
Theme: All things must obey God; God shows mercy to those who do not obey Him.

Teaching Objectives By God's grace each child will

1. Be able to tell the Bible story.
2. List specific things from this story which obeyed God's command and praise Him that all things obey Him.
3. Realize that he, too, should choose to obey God's word.
4. Give God thanks for being patient with us and for sending Jesus to turn us from our sin.

Memory Verse: *Isaiah 40:8b* *The word of our God stands forever.*

1. Teacher Direction

he book of Jonah shows us a multitude of creatures submissively doing the will of God. "God hurled a great wind on the sea," He "appointed a great fish," He "commanded the fish," "He appointed a plant," He "appointed a worm," He "appointed a scorching east wind." Only the people of Nineveh and the reluctant prophet are seen to rebel against Him, but even these, in His great power and mercy, He brings to voluntary submission to His will.

Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria, the greatest world power of Jonah's day. It would be the Assyrians who would bring down the northern kingdom of Israel and who would come against the southern kingdom of Judah in an attempt to destroy it as well. The Assyrians were notoriously cruel to those they conquered. In this story we see one of the most wonderful of God's characteristics, His tendency to extend mercy to His enemies and to use His great power to turn them from their sins to Himself.

2. Introduction

Bring pictures from home that could be used as demonstrations of God's power. (Examples: a flower God has made, a storm, a baby God has created, a family God provides for, food God causes to grow, a healthy child God has healed or kept healthy, etc.) As you show each picture, ask things like, "Can you make a flower? I can't either. Who can make a flower? Only God can make a flower. That is because God has all power. God can do anything."

3. Bible Story

In Bible times, what was a prophet? (A messenger from God.) **Whose words does a prophet speak?** (God's.) **Last week we had a story about a prophet who did not want to take God's message to people. What was his name?** (Jonah) **God**

told Jonah to take a message to the bad people of Nineveh, but Jonah did not want to go. What did Jonah do instead? (He got on a boat and went the other way.) Why could Jonah not go far enough to get away from God? (Because God is everywhere.) Then what happened? (A bad storm came.) Where did the storm come from? (God caused it.) All things, including storms, obey God. What happened to Jonah when the sailors threw him into the sea? (A fish swallowed him.) The Bible tells us that God “appointed” the fish to swallow Jonah. That means that God chose this fish and gave it a job to do for Him. All things, including fish, obey God. What did Jonah do inside the fish? (He prayed.) What did the fish do then? (He spit Jonah out on the land.) The Bible tells us that God *commanded* the fish to do that. Then God told Jonah again, “Go to Nineveh and preach the message I give you.” Then what did Jonah do? (Jonah obeyed.) The Bible says: “Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh.” Jonah had learned that all things must obey God—including him. So Jonah went to Nineveh with God’s message. Jonah told the people that God would destroy their city in forty days because they had been so mean and cruel. When the people of Nineveh heard Jonah’s message from God, they repented. They turned from what they had been doing wrong and turned to God. To show how sorry they were, they did not eat for several days. Even the king repented. The people of Nineveh had come to see that all things must obey God, but they had not been obeying Him. God could have destroyed them for being disobedient, but instead, God sent Jonah to warn them. Then, even though the people of Nineveh had disobeyed God, God used His great power to change their hearts so they would be sorry for their sin. When the people of Nineveh prayed to God and turned from their evil ways, God forgave them and said He would not destroy their city after all.

This was very good of God, but it made Jonah angry. He *wanted* God to punish the people of Nineveh for their sin. He did not want them to be forgiven. So Jonah, in a grumpy mood, went outside the city and sat there to watch and see what would happen. God had changed the hearts of the people of Nineveh and God wanted to change Jonah’s heart, too. God wanted Jonah to see things God’s way. He wanted Jonah to be glad the city of Nineveh would be saved. So God *appointed* a plant, a vine. He chose it and told it to do a job for Him. God caused this vine to grow up quickly and give shade for Jonah. It was just a wild vine, like a weed. Jonah did nothing to make it grow, but he enjoyed its shade. Then God appointed a worm. God chose it and told it to do a job for Him. He caused the worm to chew on the vine so that it died and Jonah’s shade was gone. To make things worse, God appointed a burning hot wind—God chose it and told it to do a job for Him. God also commanded the sun. The sun and the wind together made Jonah hot and uncomfortable without the shade from his vine. Jonah was unhappy that the vine had died and he complained about it. God told Jonah, “That was just a weed that died and look how unhappy you are about it. Don’t you see that I must be concerned for a great city like Nineveh, full of people who would be destroyed if I did not forgive them?”

4. Application

Ask the children if they can name all the things in the whole story that obeyed

God. (The storm, the fish, the people of Nineveh, Jonah--eventually--, the vine, the worm, the hot wind and the sun) Encourage the children to name other things that obey God (anything will do, since all things obey God). Ask them each to remember the thing they mentioned, then pray around the room (or table), with each child praising God that He controls that specific thing.

Point out to the children that each of them is to obey God's commands as well. His commands are found in His word, the Bible. God has promised to give His people the power to obey His commands, since we cannot do it on our own. Encourage the children to ask God to help them to obey Him.

God was patient with the people of Nineveh. He has been patient with us too because we do wrong things that make us God's enemies. God has sent us someone even better than Jonah. Ask who God has sent that is even better than Jonah. (Jesus) Jesus took the punishment for sin so His people will never have to be punished. Jesus also changes people's hearts so they will be sorry for the wrong things they have done and will believe in Him. Encourage the children to thank God for being patient with us even though we have disobeyed Him. Encourage them to thank Him for sending Jesus to turn us away from our sin.

5. Review Questions

- A. When Jonah tried to run away from God, what made the storm come up? (God)
- B. What caused the fish to swallow Jonah? (God)
- C. Why did the fish spit Jonah out? (God commanded it.)
- D. The second time God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, what did Jonah do? (He went.)
- E. What message from God did Jonah tell Nineveh? (God was going to destroy their city because they had been so bad.)
- F. What did the people of Nineveh do when they heard this message? (They were sorry and changed.)
- G. Was Jonah glad? (No)
- H. What was it that made Jonah sad when it was destroyed by a worm? (The vine that gave him shade.)
- I. Did God destroy Nineveh? (No)
- J. We have disobeyed God too. Whom has He sent to turn us from our sin? (Jesus)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

- A. Assign a part to each child: Jonah, wind, waves, sailors, fish, people of Nineveh, vine, warm wind, and sun. Retell the story, letting the children act out what their character did.
- B. Bring old magazines and allow the children to find and tear out pictures that demonstrate the power of God. Help the children to see God's power in many of the things they may take for granted: electricity, food that grows, good health for people, nature pictures, etc. God commands these different aspects of creation and they obey Him. Each child can make a collage of things that show God's power by gluing the pictures he has chosen to a piece of construction paper.

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH, 4-6 YEAR OLDS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM; FALL**

Lesson 10

Title: Jeremiah's Call

Text: Jeremiah 1:1-19

Theme: God gave the prophets all they needed to do the work He had given them to do. This included giving them His word to speak.

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace, each child will

1. Know that Jeremiah was an Old Testament prophet who wrote a portion of the Old Testament and will be able to retell the story of Jeremiah's call.
2. Thank God for the Bible because it is God's word, not merely man's.
3. Ask God to help him to learn from God's word.

Memory Verse: *Isaiah 40:8b* *The word of our God stands forever.*

1. Teacher Direction:

The majority of Old Testament prophets ministered in Israel during the time of the divided kingdom, when the northern kingdom was given over to apostasy and wickedness and the southern kingdom was slowly following in the same path. God, in His grace, sent prophet after prophet to call the people back to Himself in repentance. It is the nature of sinful man, however, to hate God and to resist His call. Most of the prophets were ridiculed or ignored. Several, like Jeremiah, were persecuted, some to the point of death. In this story, we see that God faithfully equipped His spokesmen for the task He had given them. He put His word into their mouths and He strengthened and sustained them through the resistance and persecution they endured as they ministered.

2. Introduction

Bring several books to show the children. Include some that might be familiar to them. Hold up each book and very briefly describe what it is. Then hold up a Bible and tell them that this book is different, then ask them *why* it is different. Help them to see that the Bible alone contains the word of God. Other books contain words chosen thoughtfully by the men or women who wrote the books. The men who wrote the Bible thought carefully about what they were writing too, but God guided their thinking so that what they wrote was just what God wanted said.

This would be a good place to teach the Bible verse. Help the children to see that God's word, given to the prophets in Bible times, has lasted and been passed down through thousands of years so that we still have it in our Bibles today.

3. Bible story

What is a prophet? (a messenger from God) **What are the names of the prophets we have learned about so far?** (Elijah, Elisha, Jonah). **It was not always easy to be a prophet. Often, the people would not listen to God's message from the prophets. Often, the people did not like the message and became angry at the**

prophets for bringing the message. The prophets usually brought messages from God telling the people that they were doing what was wrong and they must repent (be sorry and stop doing the wrong things.) Think about how *you* feel when one of your friends tells you that you are doing something wrong and you shouldn't be doing it. People usually do not like to be told this. When the prophets brought their messages from God, the people often did not want to listen to them.

Jeremiah was one of the prophets God sent to call His people to repent of doing wrong and worshiping idols. God came to Jeremiah and told him that He wanted Jeremiah to take God's message to His sinful people. God told Jeremiah that He had chosen him to be His messenger before Jeremiah was even born. Jeremiah wasn't sure he wanted to be God's prophet! For one thing, he was very young, probably just a teenager. Who would listen to him? And if anyone did listen to him, they would not like his message. Jeremiah was sure they would become angry if he told them to repent and then, who knows what they might do to him? God told Jeremiah not to be afraid because He would be with Jeremiah, to keep him safe.

"But I'm too young," Jeremiah said. "And I don't speak well." Then God touched Jeremiah's mouth and told him, "See, I have put My words in your mouth." Jeremiah would not have to think of what to say or how to say it; it was God's word he would speak. God would show him just what to say. God went on to tell Jeremiah what his message would be. He was to tell God's people that enemy soldiers would come and destroy their city because they had been so wicked. This would not be an easy message to deliver and the people would not like it. God promised Jeremiah that He would make him strong enough to do this, even though it would be hard.

4. Application

A. Help the children to see that God knew all along what He wanted Jeremiah to do, even before Jeremiah was born. He gave Jeremiah the words He would need to speak and the courage he would need to deliver God's message. God knows each of the children in the class and knows just what he wants that child to do for Him. God has already begun to give the children what they will need for the work He will give them to do. He has chosen their particular parents and He has provided Camelback Bible Church to help prepare them for what they will do for Him. Have the children thank God for their parents, their church and the opportunities they have to learn about God from His word. Encourage them to use these opportunities and to work hard at learning from God's word.

B. Ask the children what God's people in Jeremiah's time *should* have done when they heard Jeremiah's message that God was going to punish them for their sin. (They should have paid attention to it and repented.) Why should they have paid attention to what Jeremiah said? (Because when he spoke, it was *God's* word he was speaking.) Ask the children if we have God's words. (Yes, in the Bible.) Show them the portion of your Bible that Jeremiah wrote, adding that God gave all the writers of the Bible His word to write. What should we do when we read or hear what the Bible says? (We should do what it says to do.) The children can ask God during the prayer time to help them to pay attention to His word and to obey it.

5. Review Questions

- A. What was the name of the prophet in today's story? (Jeremiah)
- B. How old was Jeremiah when God chose him to be a prophet? (He was not even born.)
- C. How old was Jeremiah when God told him He wanted him to be a prophet? (Probably a teenager.)
- D. How did Jeremiah feel about being a prophet? (He was afraid; he thought he was too young; he said he was not a good speaker.)
- E. How did God help Jeremiah with not being a good speaker? (God put His own word into Jeremiah's mouth.)
- F. How did God help Jeremiah with being afraid? (God told Jeremiah he would be with him to deliver or protect him and that He would make Jeremiah strong.)
- G. What was Jeremiah's message from God to the people? (God would bring enemy soldiers to punish the people for doing wrong.)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

- A. Provide a page for each child to make a "Learning From God's Word" chart. Before class, make a one-month chart with a place to mark four Sundays of church attendance and five days each week of learning from God's word. Photocopy enough of these for each child to have one to decorate. Show them how to use it by marking in the appropriate spaces (or provide stickers for them to use). Encourage them to use the charts at home to remind them and their families to read from God's word and to come to worship. This will help them to prepare for the tasks God has for them to do for Him.
- B. Review game. Tell the children you will draw part of Jeremiah on the board each time they answer a question correctly. Use the review questions plus these additional questions from past lessons.
- C. Jeremiah's call craft. Cut one arm for each child. Have the children glue the edge so that the fingers will touch Jeremiah's mouth. Let them color Jeremiah with colored pencils or markers.

Questions for Review Game

1. Why did God sometimes make prophets able to work miracles? (So the people would know the prophet had come from God.)
2. What one person in the Bible worked the most miracles? (Jesus)
3. What was one miracle Elisha did for the woman who built a guest room for him? (He raised her dead son to life.)
4. What did Elisha tell Naaman to do to be cured of his leprosy? (Wash in the Jordan River seven times.)
5. Elijah told the prophets of Baal they would both get sacrifices ready for their gods. How would they know which one was really God? (The one who sent fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice was the real God.)
6. What did the prophets of Baal do to try to get Baal's attention (but still he did not answer)? (They shouted, and jumped and danced all day long.)
7. What did Elijah do to his sacrifice before asking God to send fire from heaven? (He soaked it with water)
8. What happened when Elijah prayed over his sacrifice? (Fire came down and burnt the sacrifice and the altar and burned up all the water.)
9. Elijah did not die. How did he go to heaven? (In a fiery chariot)
10. Who took over God's work when Elijah died? (Elisha)
11. The king of Syria sent a big army to surround Elisha and capture him. Elisha's servant was afraid. Elisha prayed that God would open the servant's eyes. Then what did the servant see? (He saw a larger army of fiery chariots protecting them.)
12. What happened to the Syrian army? (They went blind and Elisha led them right to the King of Israel, their enemy.)
13. What was the name of the prophet who tried to run away instead of taking God's message to Nineveh? (Jonah)
14. How did God get Jonah to go to Nineveh? (He sent a storm and then a big fish to swallow Jonah.)
15. When Jonah finally preached in Nineveh, the people were sorry for what they had done wrong so God said He would not punish them. How did Jonah feel? (Unhappy)
16. What did God use to show Jonah he should care about the people of Nineveh? (He used a plant, a worm that attacked it, and a hot wind.)
17. Who is the greatest prophet of all? (Jesus)

LEARNING FROM GOD'S WORD

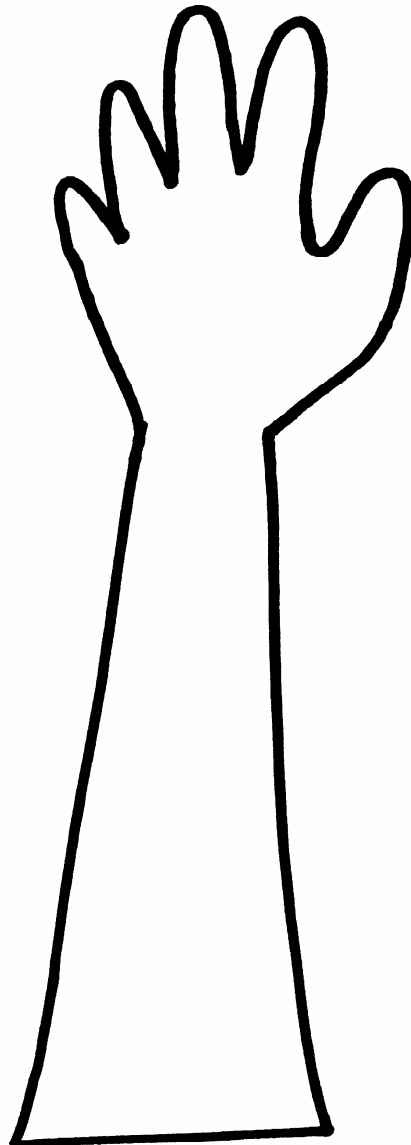
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

glue



"The Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me,
'Now I have put my words in your mouth.'" (Jeremiah 1:9)

(Fold the construction paper before cutting
to make more than one at time.)



**CHILDREN'S CHURCH 4-6 YEARS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM; FALL**

Lesson 11

Title: Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah's Scroll
Text: Jeremiah 36:1-32
Theme: Although enemies try to destroy it, God preserves His word.

Teaching Objectives: By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to retell the Bible story.
2. Thank God for not only giving us His word, but for protecting it down through the years so people could still have it today.
3. Understand his need to obey God's word by turning from his sin and trusting in Jesus.

Memory Verse: *Isaiah 40:8b. The word of our God stands forever.*

1. Teacher Direction:

Throughout the Biblical narrative we find repeated instances of sinful, hostile man seeking to destroy the word of God, both the written word of God (Scripture) and the incarnate word of God (Christ). These attempts to destroy God's word have continued until the present. The same omnipotent and sovereign God who supernaturally gave His word to man also watches over it to preserve it. Today's story comes during the final years of the kingdom of Judah. The Jews, alone of all the nations of the earth, had been given the word of God and were required to preserve it and to proclaim it among the nations. This story gives evidence of how far God's people had fallen, for it describes their king deliberately and scornfully cutting the scroll of God's word into pieces and burning it in the fire. Yet God preserved the very word this king destroyed so that we still have it today. The king, however, was cut off as king and killed by his enemies, his wives and children were taken and his kingdom was destroyed--exactly as the word of the Lord had promised.

Our story clearly states that God gave His word through Jeremiah so that the people would have one more chance to repent and be forgiven. The people of Jeremiah's day did not have as much of God's word as we have today. God has given us Scripture that calls us to repentance and faith in Jesus, the One who died so our sins could be forgiven and we could live new lives of obedience to God. We have a great responsibility to listen to these Scriptures and turn from our sin to faith in Christ.

2. Introduction

Ask the children to imagine a man who had been placed in charge of a certain city by the king of the land. Imagine that the king sends the man a letter with instructions about how he is to rule the city. When the man ruling the city reads what the king wants, he cuts the letter into pieces and burns it in the fire. Then the man looks for the messenger who brought the letter because he wants to kill him to keep him from bringing other letters from the king. Ask the children how much this man respects the king. Ask them what they think the king will do to this man. Tell them that in today's story they will hear of a king whom God had placed over His people who acted like this toward God and God's word.

3. Bible Story

What prophets have we learned about so far? (Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and Jeremiah) Last week, we learned that Jeremiah was afraid he would not be a good prophet because he was not good at speaking to people. God told him not to worry, that He would give Jeremiah the words to say. **Whose messengers were all the prophets?** (God's) **Whose word did all the prophets speak?** (God's) **God did not just want to tell His message to a few people living in Bible times; He wanted to make sure that all people of all times could know what was in His word. So He made sure that His word was written down and carefully guarded through the years. Before books were invented, people wrote on scrolls. So in the early days, God's word was written on scrolls.** (Show the children a paper you have rolled up like a scroll so they can see what one would look like.)

Jeremiah had been God's faithful messenger for years. One day, God told Jeremiah to write down on a scroll all the words God had given him to tell to the people. God told Jeremiah to do this so the people would have another chance to hear God's message. Maybe this time they would listen to God's word, repent for what they had been doing wrong, and God would forgive them. Jeremiah called in Baruch, his scribe. A scribe would write things down on a scroll as someone told him what to write. Jeremiah told Baruch all of God's messages he had ever spoken while Baruch copied them all down on a scroll. Ask the children how Jeremiah could have remembered all the things God had told him over so many years. Help them to see that since it was God who gave His word, God could make Jeremiah able to remember all of the messages He had given over the years.

When all the writing was finished, Jeremiah sent Baruch to the temple to read the scroll to the people. "Perhaps they will pray to God for forgiveness and He will not punish them after all," Jeremiah said. When some of the king's men heard the words Baruch was reading, they realized how important this scroll was. They knew the king needed to hear it. But they also knew the king. So before taking the scroll of God's word to King Jehoiakim, they told Baruch that he and Jeremiah should go hide somewhere.

When they read the scroll of God's word to King Jehoiakim, the king was sitting by his fire, keeping warm. After hearing it, he took the scroll, cut it in pieces and threw the pieces in the fire. His servants begged him not to do this, but he would not listen. He did not want to hear that what he was doing was wrong and he did not want to obey God and repent. To make sure that there would be no other scrolls with God's word written on them, he sent his men to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch, but the Bible tells us that "the Lord hid them." So God preserved His messenger so that the message could be written again.

God told Jeremiah to take another scroll and write again everything that had been on the first scroll. This Jeremiah did and his book has lasted until today. Did you know that God gives His word to us through messengers like Jeremiah? Did you know that God also takes care of His word and makes sure it lasts and gets passed down through the years? Show the children the book of Jeremiah in your Bible and tell them this is the same part of the word of God that Jehoiakim tried to destroy, but God guarded and kept it so we still have it today.

4. Application

During prayer time, encourage the children to thank God for protecting Jeremiah so he could rewrite the scroll of God's word and we could still have it today. Encourage them to thank God for keeping *all* of His word for us so we can still read it now.

Ask them what was the main message on Jeremiah's scroll for the people of his time. (The people were to be sorry for the wrong they were doing and to stop doing it and turn to God.) Point out to the children that we have more of God's word than the people of Jeremiah's

time had. We have the parts that tell about Jesus and that tell how He died on the cross to be punished for the sins of His people. We know from our Scriptures how to be forgiven for the wrong we have done and how to begin new lives of living for God. Help the children to see how important it is for them to pay attention to and obey God's message for them.

5. Review Questions

- A. Jeremiah had been telling the people God's messages for years. In today's story, what did God tell Jeremiah to do with all those messages? (Write them on a scroll.)
- B. How could Jeremiah remember all the messages from God and write them correctly? (God made him able to remember them.)
- C. Why did God want his messages written on a scroll and then read to the people? (So they would have one more chance to repent of their sins and ask God to forgive them.)
- D. Where did Baruch, Jeremiah's "secretary," read the scroll? (He read it in the temple)
- E. What did King Jehoiakim do when the scroll was read to him? (He cut it up and burned it in the fire.)
- F. What did he try to do next? (Arrest Jeremiah and Baruch.)
- G. Why could he not arrest them? (God hid them.)
- H. Then what did God tell Jeremiah to do? (Write all the same words in another scroll.)
- I. Do we still have the message from God that Jeremiah wrote? (Yes) Where? (In the Bible.)
- J. We have more of God's word written for us today. What important parts do we have now that people in Jeremiah's time did not have? (We have the parts of Scripture that tell about Jesus.)
- K. What is God's message for us today? (We must repent of our sin and believe in Jesus.)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

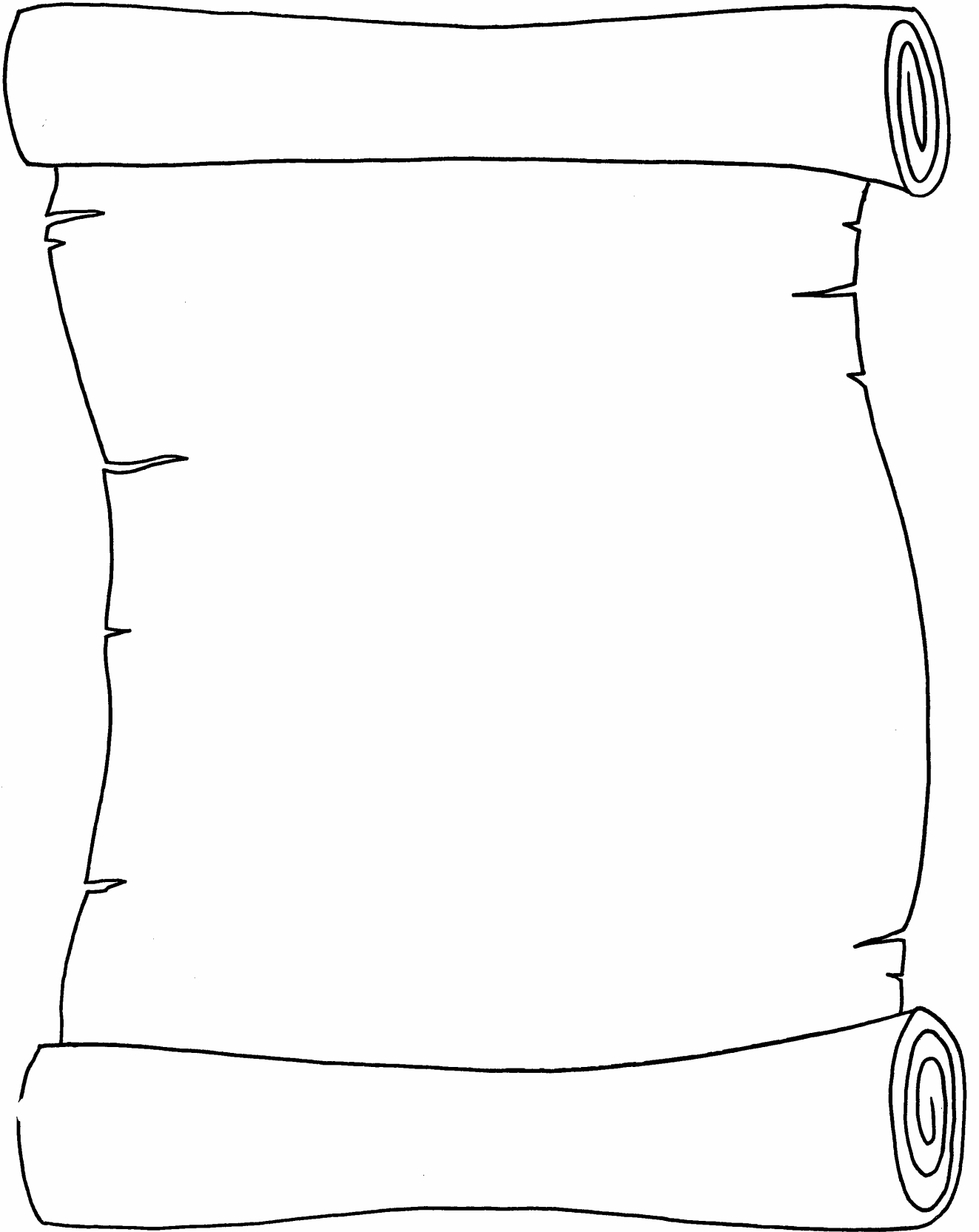
- A. Provide each child with a copy of the attached text on long 8.5 X 14 paper. Explain to them that the writing on the top of this is similar to the way scripture was written in the time today's story took place, but that back then it was written by hand with much effort. Help them to imagine how long it would have taken for Jeremiah's scroll to be made, and how precious it was to him. Remind the children that once Jeremiah's scroll was burned, he wrote it all over again a second time. Let each child "write" the memory verse on their paper by using a marker to fill in the letters. Tell them they are writing God's Word just as Jeremiah did, but that Jeremiah had much more to write. When they are done, help them to roll it up and tie a string around to fasten it.
- B. Have children make their own scrolls. Bring paper of several different colors, yarn of several different colors and copies of the memory verse. Children choose a piece of colored paper and glue the memory verse to it. Once the glue is dry, show them how to roll it up like a scroll. Allow them each to choose a piece of yarn and help them tie the yarn around their scrolls. Using a can or a plastic cup, have all the children put their rolled-up scrolls in the can to demonstrate how the scrolls would have been stored in Jeremiah's time. Remind the children that God protected Jeremiah so he could rewrite all the words of the scroll that had been burned. Remind them that God had men write His words down so we could always have them.
- C. Lead the children in singing the song "The Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock." Explain to them that the man who built his house on the sand was like someone who hears God's word and doesn't obey it--like King Jehoiakim. Like the house in the song, great trouble will come to this person. The man who builds his house on the rock is like someone who hears what God's word says to do and then does what it says. His life will be blessed. As you sing

this familiar song, demonstrate it with a pan of sand and a pan containing a large, flat rock. Use a small house made of Legos or another small object to represent a house. Using a watering can or a spray bottle, show what happens to the houses as more and more water builds up in the bottoms of the pans.

The word of our God stands forever

The word of our
God
stands forever.

Isaiah 40: 8b



**CHILDREN'S CHURCH 4-6 YEARS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM; FALL**

Lesson 12

Title: Jeremiah, the Prophet, Persecuted

Text: Jeremiah 37:1-38:28

Theme: God preserves His word by strengthening His prophets to continue to proclaim it even under persecution.

Teaching Objectives By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to tell of several ways in which Jeremiah was mistreated for faithfully proclaiming God's message.
2. Give thanks to God for making His word stand forever by giving Jeremiah strength and courage to continue to speak God's message.
3. Praise God for Jesus who endured even greater suffering so that God's message of salvation could be proclaimed.

Memory Verse *Isaiah 40:8b* *The word of our God stands forever.*

1. Teacher Direction

This story comes in the final days of the existence of the Kingdom of Judah. The great world power of the day, Babylon, had already invaded Jerusalem twice before, taking plunder and captives. Zedekiah, the last of the kings of Judah, was on the throne. The evil and apostasy of Judah had continued so long that there was no longer any hope that repentance would result in deliverance. God had told the people through the prophets that judgment at the hands of the Babylonians was sure. Now Jeremiah's message from God was that the people should repent and show their repentance by submitting to God's chastisement. They were to do this by surrendering to the king of Babylon. Though they would be taken as captives from the land, the captivity would only be temporary and their lives would be spared. But if they stayed in Jerusalem and tried to defend it, they would die. The Jews were angry with Jeremiah for this message, calling it treason and persecuting him repeatedly for it. Throughout Jeremiah's long ministry, God faithfully kept the promise he had made to him when he called him: "They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you." (Jeremiah 1:19)

The greatest prophet of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, endured far greater suffering than Jeremiah endured, for he endured not only persecution and death at the hands of men, but God's wrath and punishment as well. God sustained Him through all His suffering and then raised Him from the dead so that God's best message, the gospel, could be proclaimed.

2. Introduction

Tell the children to imagine that they see a group of boys doing something that is dangerous, like teasing a large and vicious dog that has been known to jump over its fence. What would they do? Ask your students what they would do if, when they warned the boys, the boys not only kept teasing the dogs but began calling your students bad names. Then ask them what they would do if the boys came over and began hitting them and telling them to be quiet about the dog. Would they keep warning the boys or would they give up and go away?

Tell the children that Jeremiah was a prophet speaking God's message for many years. Most of the time, the people to whom he spoke God's word were like those boys. They did not want to hear the message Jeremiah brought from God and they tried to stop him from speaking it. Ask them how they think Jeremiah was able to keep on speaking God's message when people were mean to him and hurt him for it.

3. Bible story

How old was the prophet Jeremiah when God called him to be a prophet? (He was a teenager.) **How did he feel about being a prophet?** (He was afraid; he thought he was too young; he said he was not a good speaker.) **Do you remember what God promised Jeremiah?** God promised that He would put His own word in Jeremiah's mouth and that He would be with Jeremiah. **What happened to the scroll of God's words that Jeremiah and his secretary wrote?** (The king cut it up and burned it in the fire.)

That king was taken away by his enemies, as God had said would happen. Now there was a new king, Zedekiah. God's people had been doing bad things and worshiping idols for so long that God had told them they would be punished. God had brought a great enemy army to Jerusalem. Now God had a new message for His people. There was nothing God's people could do to make the enemy soldiers go away. God wanted His people to stop fighting against the enemy soldiers and surrender their city to the enemies. This is how they would show God they were sorry for their sins and knew they deserved His punishment. If God's people surrendered, the enemies would take them away as prisoners, but later, God would bring them back to their city. If they did not surrender, but tried to fight, God said they would be killed by the enemies.

God's people did not like this message and they were angry at Jeremiah for giving it. They arrested Jeremiah and beat him. Then they put him in prison for a long time. One day, King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah. When Jeremiah was brought to the king, King Zedekiah asked him, "Is there any new message from God?" The king was still hoping that God would *not* punish him and his people for their sins. He hoped they could go on living as they had been. Jeremiah answered, "The only message from God is still the same one: enemy soldiers will capture the city and the king." That displeased the king and he sent Jeremiah back to prison. What might have happened if Jeremiah had said what the king wanted to hear, that God would keep him safe from the enemies? (The king might have been happy with Jeremiah and let him out of prison.) **Do you think it was easy for Jeremiah to tell the truth, knowing he would go back to prison? How was it that Jeremiah was able to be strong enough and brave enough to tell the truth? (God made him strong enough and brave enough.)**

Another time, Jeremiah was faithfully telling the people the message God had given him to tell them. "If you stay in the city and fight," he said, "you will be killed, but if you surrender to the enemy soldiers, you will be left alive." This time, it was the leaders of God's people who became angry with Jeremiah for his message. They went to King Zedekiah and said that Jeremiah should be killed because his message was discouraging the people. The king told them to do whatever they wanted to do to Jeremiah, so the men dropped Jeremiah into a pit. The mud at the bottom of this pit was so deep that Jeremiah sank down into it. They planned to leave Jeremiah there to starve to death. But God provided a friend for Jeremiah. One of the king's servants, a man from Africa, went to the king for Jeremiah. He said to the king, "Jeremiah has done nothing wrong. He should not be in the muddy pit." The king gave this man permission to take Jeremiah out of the pit. The African man lowered ropes down into the pit for Jeremiah to hold and then he used the ropes to pull Jeremiah out.

Then King Zedekiah asked to see Jeremiah again. Again King Zedekiah asked Jeremiah, "Is there a new message from God yet?" Jeremiah knew that every time he spoke God's true message people hurt him or beat him or put him in prison. He might have been tempted to say something else that would make the king happy. But God gave him courage and strength to continue to tell God's word. He told the king again that he should surrender to the enemies. Again, Jeremiah was sent to prison. This was not the end of all the hard things that happened to Jeremiah because he gave God's message. But always, God made Jeremiah able to keep speaking His word.

The greatest prophet God ever sent was the Lord Jesus Christ. God sent Him to die and to take the punishment for the sins of God's people. This was much harder than what happened to Jeremiah. But God gave Jesus the strength and courage He needed to do the work God had given Him. Then Jesus rose from the dead. Now God's best message can be told to everyone. If you turn from your sins and believe in Jesus, your sins will be forgiven so you can live *with* God and *for* God.

4. Application

Encourage the children to thank God for giving Jeremiah strength to keep speaking God's word when people were so cruel to him. They can thank God for protecting the Bible so we can have it today, and for making His word stand forever.

Encourage the children to praise God for giving Jesus the strength to die for the sins of His people. They can thank Him for raising Jesus from the dead so our sins can be forgiven and we can live lives of obedience to God.

5. Review questions

- A. When Jeremiah spoke God's message, how did the people feel about it? (Angry)
- B. What were some of the things the people did to Jeremiah because they did not like the message from God that he brought? (They beat him, put him in prison and put him in a pit where he sank in the mud.)
- C. Why would it have been hard for Jeremiah to keep telling God's message? (Because the people did cruel things to him because they did not like God's message.)
- D. How could Jeremiah be strong enough and brave enough to keep telling God's message? (God gave him the strength and the courage he needed.)
- E. Who was God's greatest prophet, even braver and stronger than Jeremiah? (Jesus)
- F. Why did Jesus need to be strong and brave? (To die on the cross to take the punishment for our sins)
- G. How did God help Jesus? (He gave Him the strength to take our punishment and He raised Him from the dead.)

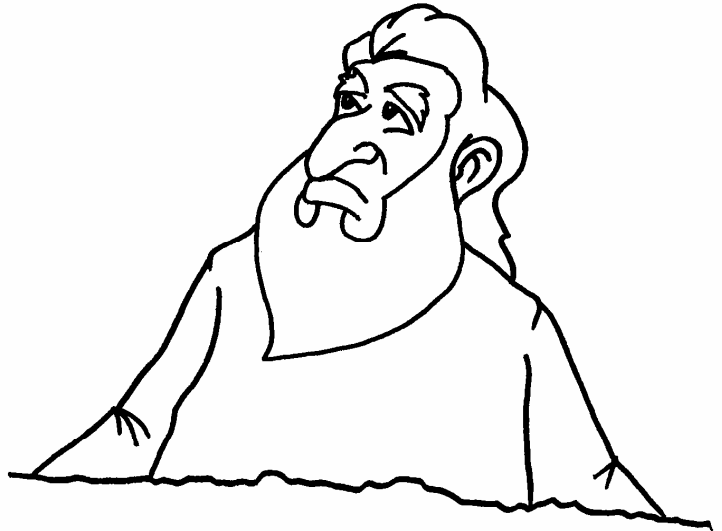
6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

A. Ahead of time, prepare a page with several simple hand drawings to symbolize Jeremiah's sufferings and Jesus' sufferings. These could include a barred window to represent prison, mud to represent the pit Jeremiah was in, the cross, and the tomb. On another page, write the words to the memory verse in letters the children could color. Photocopy enough of these pages for each child to have one. Cut the pictures out ahead of time or help the children cut them out in class. The children can color the pictures and the memory verse, then glue them to a construction paper page. As the children make this collage, remind them of how God strengthened both Jeremiah and Jesus to do the work He had given them.

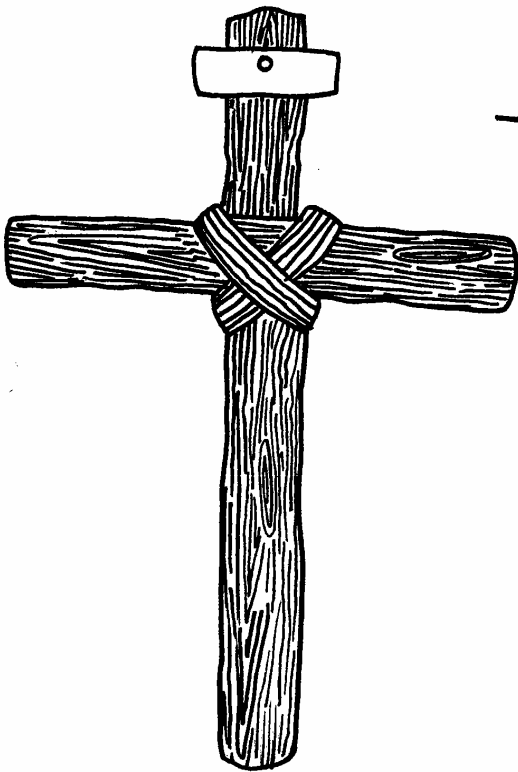
B. Use the following list of questions from the lessons on prophets to play this review game. On the board, tape a paper cut-out of a stick figure to represent Jeremiah. Draw a pit and tape the figure at the bottom of it. Draw the rope ladder with which Jeremiah was pulled out of the pit. Make one rung for each question. Each time a child answers a question correctly, move the stick figure up one rung.

- 1. In the Old Testament, what was a man called who had a message from God? (A prophet)
- 2. Whose words did a prophet speak? (God's words.)
- 3. Why could prophets sometimes do miracles? (To show they had really come from God.)
- 4. Who did more miracles than anyone in the Bible? (Jesus.)

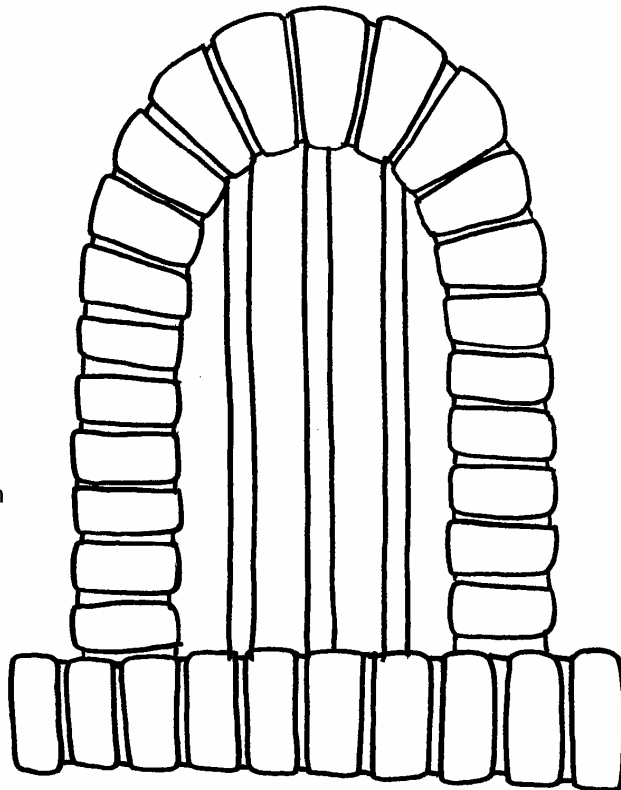
5. Part of Elijah's message from God was that there would be no rain for three years. Why? (Because the people were worshiping idols along with God.)
6. While there was no rain, what kind of creature brought food to Elijah? (Ravens.)
7. When Elijah went to stay with a widow who was almost out of flour for making bread, he asked her to use her last little bit of flour to make him some bread. She did. Then what happened? (Her flour did not run out for all the days Elijah stayed with her.)
8. Elijah and the prophets of Baal had a contest to see whose god would answer with fire from heaven. What did the prophets of Baal do (but still received no answer)? (They yelled, danced, and cut themselves with knives.)
9. What did Elijah have to do to get God to answer with fire from heaven? (He asked one time.)
10. How did Elijah go to heaven? (In a fiery chariot.)
11. Who took over God's work after Elijah? (Elisha)
12. What did Elisha do for the woman who gave him a room to stay in? (He prayed that she would have a child and she did; when the child died, he raised him back to life.)
13. What did Elisha do for Naaman? (Elisha told Naaman to go wash in the Jordan River and his leprosy would be healed.)
14. When the King of Syria sent an army to capture Elisha, Elisha's servant was afraid. Elisha prayed that the servant's eyes would be opened. What did the servant see? (Many chariots of fire around them to protect them.)
15. Who was the prophet who tried to run away from God? (Jonah)
16. Name some of the places where God was still with Jonah. (On the boat, in the ocean, inside the fish, in Nineveh.)
17. What did the people of Nineveh do when Jonah gave them God's message that God would soon destroy them for their wickedness? (They repented.)
18. When God said He would not destroy Nineveh after all, since they had repented, how did Jonah feel? (Angry)
19. What did God use to show Jonah he should not be angry about Nineveh not being destroyed? (A plant that gave him shade and a worm that destroyed it.)
20. How old was Jeremiah when God called him to be a prophet? (He was a teenager.)
21. Jeremiah was afraid he would not be a good prophet because he could not speak well. What did God say He would do? (He would put His words in Jeremiah's mouth.)
22. God wanted us to still have His word today. What did He tell Jeremiah to do so we could keep His word for years and years? (Write it on a scroll.)
23. What did the king do with Jeremiah's scroll? (He cut it up and burned it.)
24. What did God tell Jeremiah to do after the king burnt the scroll? (Write it all again.)
25. What kinds of things did people do to Jeremiah because they did not like the message from God he spoke? (They beat him, put him in prison, and put him in a muddy pit.)
26. How could Jeremiah keep speaking God's message when people treated him like that? (God made him strong enough and brave enough to keep speaking it.)
27. Who else did God make strong enough and brave enough to do God's work, even though it was harder than Jeremiah's? (Jesus.)



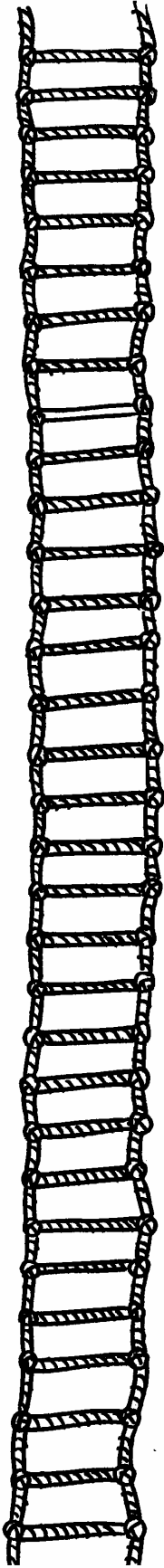
JEREMIAH stuck in a mud pit



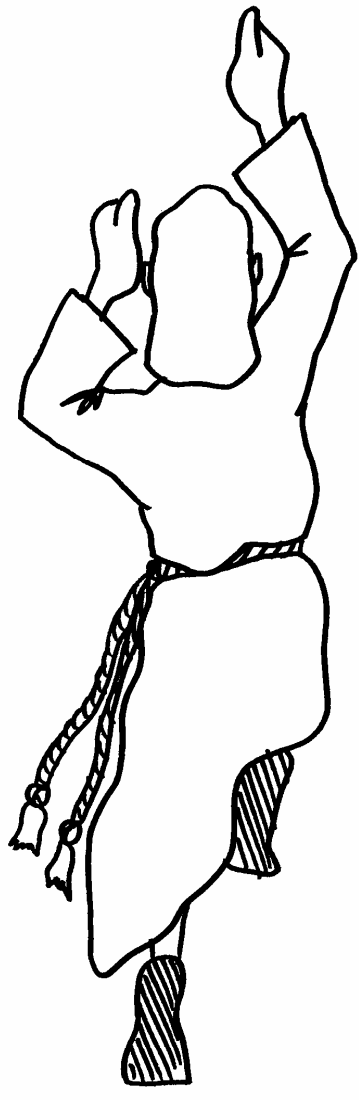
the cross CHRIST was crucified on



prison window that held JEREMIAH



JEREMIAH'S CLIMB



**CHILDREN'S CHURCH 4-6 YEARS
YEAR 1 CURRICULUM; FALL**

Lesson 13

Title: God's Perfect Prophet, Jesus Christ
Text: Matthew 17:1-8
Theme: The Lord Jesus Christ perfectly reveals God and His will.

- Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace each child will
1. Be able to recount the story of Jesus' transfiguration.
 2. Know that Jesus is a better prophet than the Old Testament prophets because He is God's Son *and* the Savior, and give praise to Jesus for those things.
 3. Accept the message of salvation from God that Jesus brings.

Memory Verse: *Hebrews 1:2a* God has spoken to us through His Son.

1. Teacher Direction:

All of the Old Testament prophets pointed ahead to the Lord Jesus Christ who would be the perfect revelation of God. Since He was God, Jesus could speak the words of God with authority and could show, by His life, what God was like. Jesus not only revealed the will of God, He accomplished it by his perfect life and substitutionary death. Jesus taught that God's will was that people should believe in the One God had sent (John 6:28-29). Unlike other prophets who spoke God's will only to have their messages ignored, Jesus has the ability to give life to His listeners, changing their hearts so they can embrace and obey the message he brings from God.

2. Introduction

Bring a Bible story book with pictures from the life of Jesus. Review the concept of prophets speaking the word of God to His people. Tell the children that the Bible tells us that God spoke through prophets until the time that He sent His Son. Jesus is the best and perfect prophet. All that God wanted us to know, He shows us in Jesus. Show the children a picture of Jesus teaching. The people who heard Jesus teach said that His teaching was different from anyone else's teaching about God. That was because Jesus knew more about God and what He was like than anyone else, because He was the Son of God. Remind the children that prophets often performed miracles as evidence that God had truly sent them. Show pictures of Jesus' miracles and point out that, as the Son of God, He did more miracles than anyone else in the Bible. Help the children to see that Jesus is the best and perfect Prophet.

3. Bible Story

All the prophets brought God's word to God's people. One thing that was a part of the message of all the prophets was that God promised to some day send a Savior. This Savior would make a way for people to be forgiven of their sin, *and* He would make a way for people to say "No" to sin and live for God. Jesus was

the Savior God had promised, but when Jesus lived on earth, He looked like any other man. God wanted Jesus' helpers to understand that Jesus was not just any other man; He was not even just any other prophet. Jesus' helpers would be the ones to tell everyone else about Jesus; that He was the Savior God had promised. These helpers needed to know for sure that Jesus was the Son of God.

So one day, Jesus invited three of His helpers, Peter, James, and John, to climb to the top of a mountain with Him. At the top of this mountain, Jesus would show Himself to Peter, James, and John in a way no one else had seen Him. They would see that Jesus was really the Son of God. When Jesus and the three helpers had climbed to the top of the mountain, Peter, James, and John were very tired and they actually began sleeping. But then they saw something that made them wide awake again. It was Jesus. The way Jesus looked began to change. Jesus' face grew brighter and brighter and brighter, until it shone like the sun. When the sun shines, it is too bright to look right at it. It will hurt your eyes if you try it. This was what Jesus' face looked like. Jesus' clothing became so very white that it looked like He was dressed all in light, or like He was wearing a flash of lightning that did not go away. Jesus was showing Peter, James, and John something of what He had been like in Heaven, before He had come to earth.

The way Jesus *looked* was amazing enough, and Peter, James, and John did not know what to think. But then the three helpers saw something else that was amazing. They saw two men standing with Jesus, men who had not been there before. The two men were Elijah and Moses. Moses and Elijah had both been prophets who had spoken the word of God while they lived on earth. Moses had died and Elijah had gone to heaven in the fiery chariot many, many years before. Peter, James, and John would have been very surprised to see these two men speaking with Jesus. The Bible tells us that Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus about the death Jesus would die on the cross. That's because these two prophets understood that Jesus is not only the greatest Prophet of all, but also the One who would save people from sin. Dying was what He had come to do. All the prophets had called the people to turn from their sin and obey God. Now Jesus would die to take the punishment for His people's sin so God could forgive those sins. Jesus would change the hearts of His people so they would hate sin and would love and obey God.

Peter had an idea. "Let's make three special tents here on this mountain, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus." While he was still saying this, a bright cloud came over them all. They heard God's voice from heaven say, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him." When the helpers heard this voice, they were frightened and fell down on the ground. Jesus came to them, touched them, and said, "Get up, and don't be afraid." When they looked up, Moses and Elijah had gone.

When God had sent prophets, He expected His people to listen to those prophets and obey what they said. Now He had sent His very Son. It was even more important that people listen to and obey His Son. God spoke from heaven to show Peter, James, and John (who would show others as well) that they must listen to and obey the message Jesus brought. Jesus' message was that God would forgive their sin and change them on the inside so they could live for God,

if they would believe in Jesus. God wants His people to obey that message.

4. Application

Review with the children how Jesus is God's best Prophet: He could speak God's words because He *is* God; He did many amazing miracles; He brought a message of how to be forgiven for sin; He died so sin could be forgiven; He changes people on the inside so they can stop sinning and obey God. Encourage them to give praise to Jesus for being the best Prophet in all these ways.

Review the message of salvation Jesus brought. Remind the children of God's voice from heaven telling Peter, James, and John they must listen to Jesus, because He is God's Son. Encourage them to listen to Jesus and to obey Him by believing in Him as the One who can forgive their sins and make them able to live in obedience to God.

5. Review Questions

- A. Who is the greatest Prophet of all? (Jesus.)
- B. How many of Jesus' disciples went up on the mountain with Him? (Three.)
- C. How did Jesus' appearance change when He was up on the mountain? (His face and clothing shone very brightly.)
- D. Who was on the mountain talking with Jesus? (Moses and Elijah.)
- E. What were Jesus, Moses, and Elijah talking about on the mountain? (Jesus' death.)
- F. What did God's voice from heaven say? (This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him.)
- G. What did Jesus tell people that God wants them to do? (Believe in Jesus.)
- H. What did Jesus do so that people's sins can be forgiven? (He died on the cross for them.)
- I. When Jesus tells people they must stop sinning and do God's will, how can He make them able to do that? (He can change them on the inside so they are able to say "No" to sin and to live for God.)

6. Learning Reinforcement Activities

A. The children could role play being the three disciples in the story. They could climb the mountain, be weary when they reach the top and grow sleepy (which is what one of the parallel accounts says happened), be temporarily blinded by the brightness of the face and clothing of Jesus, be startled to see Moses and Elijah, hear the voice from heaven and be frightened and fall down. Remind them that the voice was God's, urging them to pay attention to Jesus, His Son. As they get back up, remind them that Jesus told them not to be afraid.

B. Use pictures from the life of Jesus again, but this time look at more of them and spend more time discussing them. Look at several pictures of Jesus teaching and see if the children can tell you any of the things that Jesus said as He taught. If they need help, remind them of some of the things He taught them about God (He is holy, He forgives, we can call Him Father, etc). Remind them that Jesus knew more about God than any other prophet knew, since Jesus was Himself the Son of God. Show a number of pictures of Jesus' miracles and let children who know explain what is happening in

the different pictures. Be sure the children understand that Jesus could do more amazing things than any prophet because He was the very Son of God. Show a picture of the crucifixion and of the tomb and discuss how Jesus died in the place of His people to make it possible for their sins to be forgiven and for them to have power over sin. Show a picture of the resurrection and emphasize that Jesus' resurrection proves that He is the Son of God and the greatest Prophet of all.