



UNIT 14 | SESSION 3

ZEPHANIAH WARNED GOD'S PEOPLE TO REPENT

ZEPHANIAH

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus will make everything right.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: Turn away from your wrong choices. Acts 3:19

BABIES GOSPEL GEMS

- God is going to punish people who disobey Him.
- God will take care of the people who trust in Him.
- Jesus will make everything right.

BIBLE STORY FOR TODDLERS:

Zephaniah (ZEF uh NIGH uh) told the people a message from God. A day is coming when God is going to punish people because they disobey Him. Zephaniah told them it would be a bad, dark day with clouds. God would be angry because people did wrong things. Zephaniah said, "Love God and do what He says." Then Zephaniah told the people some good news. God would take care of the people who trust in Him. He would keep them safe. The day will be such a happy day for God's people. They will sing and be happy. Zephaniah said, "God will be with you. God will take care of you. He will show you how much He loves you."



BABIES ACTIVITIES

LEARNING Activities

Engage babies in the following activities during the session. In each activity, provide handheld Bibles for babies to handle. Open a Bible to Zephaniah. Show the Bible story picture as you say the gospel gems in a soothing voice. Read the key passage phrase card. Pray for the babies.

1 SING A HYMN

Sing the chorus of “Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy.” If you are unfamiliar with the tune, listen to it online before the session.

“I will rise and go to Jesus!
He will save me from my sin.
By the riches of His merit,
There is joy and life in Him.”

SAY “ The prophet Zephaniah said that God is going to punish people who disobey Him. The good news is that Jesus will make everything right and rescue everyone who trusts in Him. ”

2 MAKE HEART ART

Make a heart cutout for each baby from construction paper. Provide stickers for babies to place on their hearts. Write the second gospel gem on each child’s art. Talk about the Bible story.

SAY “ The prophet Zephaniah told God’s people a message from God. Zephaniah told the people to love God and do what is right. On the day of the Lord, God will take care of everyone who trusts in Him. Jesus will make everything right. ”

3 EXPLORE LIGHT AND DARK

Provide LED touch lights or battery-operated nightlights. Dim the lights. Invite babies to touch and hold the lights. Make sure babies do not put the lights in their mouths or shine them in their eyes. After a few minutes, turn on the lights and talk about the Bible story. Ensure safety when lights are dim, being sensitive to babies’ who may be fearful of the dark.

SAY “ Zephaniah told God’s people about a dark, cloudy day. On that day, God is going to punish the people who disobey Him. Also on that day, God will take care of the people who trust in Him. We can be happy and glad because Jesus will make everything right. ”

Check diapers, serve bottles if needed, and release babies to parents according to your church’s security guidelines. Give parents today’s big picture card. Repeat the Christ connection, gospel gems, and Bible-learning activities for babies who stay a second hour.



TODDLER ACTIVITIES

LEARNING Activities

Engage toddlers in the following activities. In each activity, show the Bible story picture as you review the Bible story. Provide small Bibles for toddlers to handle.

1 CIRCLE TIME

Open your Bible to Zephaniah. Show the Bible story picture as you tell the provided toddlers' Bible story. Read the key passage phrase card and guide toddlers to say it with you. Pray for the toddlers.

2 MAKE TASTE-SAFE CLOUD DOUGH



Post an allergy alert. Place a plastic tablecloth on the table or floor. Scoop four cups of flour into a ziplock bag. Add ½ cup of vegetable oil and a few drops of food color. Seal the bag. Shake and squish the bag to mix the ingredients. Repeat with other colors. Though it is edible, make sure toddlers do not eat it. Retell the Bible story as toddlers play.

SAY “ Zephaniah told God’s people about a dark day with clouds. On that day, God will punish people who disobey Him. But God will take care of His people. Jesus will make everything right. ”

3 PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Invite toddlers to line up behind you. Whisper one phrase of the key passage phrase to the child behind you. Guide him to turn and say the phrase to the child behind him. Continue for all phrases. When the phrase reaches the end of the line, say the whole phrase together.

SAY “ God’s people made the wrong choice to worship idols instead of God. Zephaniah warned the people to turn away from sin and turn back to God. Zephaniah said God is going to punish people who disobey Him, but God will take care of the people who trust in Him. ”

4 READ A BOOK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Read age-appropriate books about emotions. As you read to toddlers, invite them to mimic the expressions of children in the stories. Retell the Bible story.

SAY “ One day, God is going to punish people who disobey Him. It will be a sad day for those people. But Zephaniah had good news: God will take care of those who trust in Him! God will protect them, and they will sing and be happy. ”

5 FIND LETTERS

Cut large letter Zs from construction paper and tape to the wall at toddlers’ height. Open your Bible to the Book of Zephaniah and point to Zephaniah’s name. Invite toddlers to find and touch a Z. For added difficulty, choose a color for toddlers to find. Retell the Bible story.

SAY “ Zephaniah starts with the letter Z. God gave Zephaniah a message for His people. Zephaniah said that one day Jesus will make everything right. ”

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1 TRANSITION ACTIVITY: MAKE HAPPY MUSIC

Provide rhythm instruments or toy items that make joyful music. Consider using an electronic device to play familiar hymns or praise songs in the background. Encourage toddlers to play along. After a few moments, regroup and retell the Bible story.

SAY “ God told Zephaniah a message to give to God’s people: A day is coming when God is going to punish people who disobey Him. Zephaniah gave the people good news too: God will take care of the people who trust in Him. Jesus will make everything right. ”

2 SING A FAMILIAR TUNE

“God *is so good,
 God *is so good,
 God *is so good,
 He’s so good to me.”

*Substitute sent His Son, judges sin, or makes things right in subsequent verses.

3 TAKE CARE OF DOLLS

Provide vinyl baby dolls and blankets for toddlers to play out caring for babies. Talk about how parents show they take care of babies by feeding, clothing, and holding them. Retell the Bible story.

SAY “ One day, God is going to punish people who disobey Him. God will take care of the people who trust in Him. God will show you how much He loves you. Jesus will make everything right. ”

4 OBSERVE CLOUDS

If weather permits, take toddlers outside to observe clouds according to your church’s security guidelines. If the weather is uncooperative, look up cloud formations on an electronic device. Be sensitive to children who may be fearful of storms. Retell the Bible story.

SAY “ Zephaniah told God’s people that a day was coming when God is going to punish people who disobey Him. It would a dark, cloudy day. The Bible also says that one day Jesus will make everything right. God will take care of the people who trust in Him. ”

Check diapers, serve a snack if needed, and release toddlers to parents according to your church’s security procedures. Give parents today’s big picture card to reinforce today’s Bible story, Christ connection, or gospel gems throughout the week.