

THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH

ZECHARIAH



KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 25:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Zechariah prophesied about the Messiah, saying He would be a humble King who would build a new and better kingdom. Jesus is the Messiah King. Those who trust in Him are forgiven of their sin and welcomed into His kingdom.

STORY POINT: Zechariah shared that God's kingdom will be established forever.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Zechariah was a prophet during the same time as Ezra and Nehemiah. Zechariah's words were an encouragement to the people of God as they rebuilt the temple.

Zechariah reminded people that they were building a temple to not only be a place of worship, but a temple that would serve as a reminder of God's everlasting promises. Zechariah prophesied about the coming of the Messiah. He reminded people that God's kingdom will last forever and that the coming Messiah will reign eternally.

More specifically, Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would come to them humbly, riding on a donkey. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy on Palm Sunday when He entered Jerusalem to crowds waving palm branches, declaring Him to be the one who comes in the name of the Lord. As Jesus entered the town that day, He came riding on a donkey. Jesus knew the prophecy from Zechariah would declare boldly and publicly that He is the Messiah.

Another prophecy in Zechariah 6:12-13 declares: "You are to tell him: This is what the Lord of Armies says: Here is a man whose name is Branch; he will branch out from his place and build the Lord's temple. Yes, he will build the Lord's temple; he will bear royal splendor and will sit on his throne and rule. There will also be a priest on his throne, and there will be peaceful counsel between the two of them." In this prophecy, Zechariah reminded the people that the temple they were building was a foreshadowing of one who would come and bring the presence of God to us. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, He made the way to bring people into God's presence forever. Jesus is now seated at the Father's right hand, exalted to reign forever.

The book of Zechariah reminds us that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's plan to send a Messiah who would save people from sin. As you teach, remind kids that Jesus invites them to trust in Him to be saved, and that one day, He will return to establish His kingdom forever.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

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



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Jesus' Kingdom" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ blindfold
- ☐ "Crown Him" printable
- ☐ masking tape



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ penny
- ☐ nickel
- ☐ dime
- ☐ quarter
- ☐ dropper or pipette
- ☐ cup of water
- ☐ paper towels

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ dry erase board
- ☐ dry erase marker

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "The Prophet Zechariah" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 17, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Jim and Jean Leeper Photos" printable

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "This Is the Lord (Isaiah 25:9)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

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

| **SAY** “If you could make something happen in the future, what would it be? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Jesus’ Kingdom” activity page.

| **SAY** “God is in control, and He has planned a wonderful future for His people. Today, we will see how Zechariah told the people that God would build a better kingdom.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: CROWN HIM

Before the session, print the “Crown Him” printable on cardstock. Tape the picture of Jesus riding the donkey on a wall. Cut out the crowns.

Guide kids to form a line in front of the picture of Jesus riding the donkey. Blindfold the first kid in line and hand her a crown with a small loop of tape on the back. Spin her around three times, and then direct her to try to place the crown on Jesus’ head. Repeat, allowing each kid a turn and seeing who is the closest to placing the crown on Jesus’ head.

| **SAY** “Today, we will learn how the prophet Zechariah shared a message about the coming King riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. This prophecy came true when Jesus came to earth, and five days before He died, rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. We’ll learn that Jesus is the Messiah King who brings a better kingdom. Jesus’ kingdom looks a lot different from the world’s idea of a great kingdom. Through our story, we’ll see how Jesus’ kingdom is one of peace, humility, righteousness, and justice.”

☐ OPTION 2: KINGDOM MOVEMENTS



Invite kids to stand up and spread throughout the room. Share how you will call out words, and they must perform the correct movement for the word. Review the following movements:

- Peace: hold praying hands
- Justice: pound a fist on their other palm
- Love: make a heart with their hands
- Humility: fall to the ground

Call out the words one at a time in random order. Kids must perform the movement as quickly as possible. If a kid performs the wrong action, he or she is out. Play as many rounds as time allows.

| **SAY** “The words you heard all describe God’s kingdom. In God’s kingdom there is peace; people will not fight or argue with God or one another. God’s kingdom shows justice; God always does what is right. God’s kingdom displays love. And people in God’s kingdom are humble, putting others before themselves. Today, we will learn more about God’s kingdom, and how **ZECHARIAH SHARED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER.**”

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





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

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

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so happy you are here! If you brought your Bible, can you please hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, our Bible story comes from the book of Zechariah. Is Zechariah in the Old Testament or New Testament? [Allow responses.] That’s right! Zechariah is in the Old Testament.

Zechariah was one of God’s prophets who shared God’s words with the people after they returned to Jerusalem. Today, we will learn that **ZECHARIAH SHARED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray together: ‘God, thank You for the Bible so we can know You. Open our hearts, minds, and ears today as we read about Your incredible plan of redemption through the prophet Zechariah. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Let’s review our big picture question. Do you remember it? [Allow responses.] **How did God plan to fix what sin broke?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.** Let’s say the answer one more time: **Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.**

The whole Bible reminds us of God’s plan to fix what sin broke! God does not want to leave us dead in our sin. He doesn’t want the world to remain broken by sin. God planned to fix what sin broke by sending a Messiah, or a Savior, into the world. Today, we will learn how the prophet Zechariah shared that a Messiah was coming to establish God’s kingdom forever. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “God brought His people home to Jerusalem just as He promised. The people laid the new foundation for God’s temple and began rebuilding the temple. While God’s enemies tried to stop the building of the temple, God sent the prophet Haggai to encourage God’s people to keep building. God provided for them and made a way for the temple to be completed. Today, we will see that Zechariah encouraged God’s people with the promise that His kingdom would be established forever. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to Zechariah 1:1-6,16,21; 2:8-9; 5:6; 7; 9:9; 13:1-2,9. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Prophet Zechariah.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH

“Zechariah (ZEK uh RIGH uh) was one of the prophets God sent to encourage the people to rebuild the temple. God told Zechariah what would happen in the future, and then Zechariah told the people what God said.

God said, “Return to me, and I will return to you. Do not be like your ancestors, who did not listen when the prophets said to repent.” Then God gave Zechariah eight different visions. In these visions, God shared His future plans for His people and the city of Jerusalem.

An angel told Zechariah that God loved His people and would again comfort them. God said, “In mercy, I have returned to Jerusalem; my house will be rebuilt within it.” God said He would destroy Israel’s enemies, and after Jerusalem was rebuilt, many nations would come to Jerusalem and God would dwell among them.

After these visions, the people came to Zechariah and asked if they should fast like they did every year. They were wanting God to see their fasting and to bless them. The Lord spoke through Zechariah and said, “When you fast, do you do it for me? Or do you do it for yourself? Here is what you should do: be loving and compassionate to one another. Do not mistreat the widow, the orphan, the immigrant, or the poor. Do not plan evil against one another.”

God reminded Zechariah how the people’s ancestors were stubborn and did not listen. God said that even though His people were punished for their sin, He was going to be faithful to save them. They will be His people, and He will be their faithful and righteous God.

Then Zechariah prophesied about the Messiah who would come, saying, “Look, Jerusalem! Your King is coming to you, humble and riding on a donkey. He will proclaim peace to the nations.” Zechariah said a future day was coming when God would wash away people’s sin and remove the idols from Jerusalem. God would build a new kingdom through the Messiah. On that day, “God will say, ‘You are My people,’ and they will answer, ‘The LORD is our God.’”

Christ Connection: Zechariah prophesied about the Messiah, saying He would be a humble King who would build a new and better kingdom. Jesus is the Messiah King. Those who trust in Him are forgiven of their sin and welcomed into His kingdom.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Shout it out: Each time God makes a promise to Zechariah to share with His people, lead the kids to shout “God keeps His promises!”

Use movement: Walk about the room as you tell the story.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Think about what Jerusalem must have looked like after the people returned. It was not as beautiful and glorious as it was before Babylon attacked it. But God wanted His people to know that He was working in the brokenness. God sent Zechariah to the people to encourage them and give them a message of hope. **ZECHARIAH SHARED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER.** And God’s kingdom will be even better than what Jerusalem was before the exile.

Zechariah reminded the Israelites of the sin that led to their exile in the first place. He encouraged the people to not be like their ancestors who turned away from God. God wanted His people to love Him and one another by obeying His commands. But when the people asked if they should fast, what did God say? **[Allow responses.]** God told the people to see why they wanted to fast. Was it for God? Or did they just want to make themselves look good? God didn’t want them to perform actions for others to see and praise them (Matthew 6:16-18). Instead, God wanted their actions to show that they loved Him and others. God told His people to show compassion to one other, treat each other fairly, and not plan evil.

God reminded the people of their sin and punishment, but He also shared that He would be faithful to provide salvation and the forgiveness of sins. Who was the King that Zechariah said would come to Jerusalem riding on a donkey? **[Allow responses.]** God’s Messiah, Jesus Christ, was coming to save anyone who believed in Him. Through Jesus, God’s kingdom would be established forever. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ God promised that He was going to wash away His people’s sins forever. Jesus Christ came to earth to save us from our sins. The Sunday before Jesus was crucified on the cross, He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy. Jesus is the humble King who took our punishment for sin by dying on the cross. When we confess Jesus as Lord, we are forgiven of sin and welcomed into His kingdom forever. ”

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

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 17, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Sometimes it’s hard to love everyone. What are some ways to help us love others?
2. Jesus put others before Himself. How can you put others before yourself?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Jim and Jean Leeper Photos” printable. Remind kids that the Leepers were missionaries to Germany, Turkey, and Bosnia.

SAY “ Jean Leeper grew up as a shy, small-city Michigan girl. She hadn’t planned on becoming



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

a missionary, but she learned to trust God in all the adventures that came her way. Alongside her husband, Jean served the people of Germany, Turkey, and Bosnia by welcoming them into her home and showing them hospitality. This means Jean was kind and generous toward others, showing love and meeting the needs of others. ”

Tell kids that Jean was busy raising four kids, but she always welcomed anyone into her home who needed their help. Their church was filled with soldiers far away from their homes and young married couples away from their families. Jean and Jim created a family for these people and always made them feel welcome and included. The church members were always welcome to come to the Leepers' home if they needed a meal or a place to stay. This gift of hospitality gave Jim and Jean time to build friendships with the people. Jean loved to take care of and support people.

Pray, thanking God for missionaries like the Leepers who showed humility and love by welcoming others into their home and meeting their needs. Remind kids that because Jesus has met our greatest need—forgiveness of sin—we can be welcomed into His kingdom forever.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Isaiah 25:9 together.

SAY “ Through many different prophets, like Isaiah and Zechariah, God told of the coming Savior who would forgive people of their sins. Let’s continue learning our key passage together! ”

Gather the kids together in a circle. Start by reciting the words of the key passage aloud, and inviting the kids to repeat each word after you. Repeat, but say the words in a whisper the first round, in a louder voice, the second round, and in a shouting voice the third round. At the end of the three rounds, clap and shout, giving praise to God for bringing salvation through Jesus.

Lead kids to sing “This Is the Lord (Isaiah 25:9).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ God, thank You for keeping Your promise by sending Your Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. As we seek to live for You each day, help us love You by loving others. Amen. ”

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





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Zechariah 13. Explain that the book of Zechariah was written by the prophet Zechariah. Tell kids that the book of Zechariah is in the Minor Prophets division of the Old Testament.

Consider pointing out the nation of Jerusalem (H5) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Zechariah 13:1 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ God spoke through Zechariah and shared how a day would come when people’s sins will be washed away. We cannot wash away our own sin; this is only something done by God. But God provided the way for our sin to be washed away when He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven! Only those who have trusted in Jesus will live in God’s kingdom forever. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Why did God continue to remind His people of their sin? ”

Share that sin separates us from God. God wanted His people to understand their need for a Savior. Remind kids that God doesn’t want us to remain dead in our sins; He wants us to experience freedom by understanding the great love He has shown people through Jesus.

SAY “ Do we earn salvation through our actions? Why not? ”

Remind kids that our salvation is not based on our actions. No one can earn their way to God, because none of us can perfectly follow the law. Discuss how God’s people thought they could fast to show they were “good.” But God reminded the people that their motivations were not right. Explain that salvation is based on what God has done through Jesus, not what we do.

SAY “ How did Zechariah give the people hope? ”

Discuss how Zechariah shared God’s future plans for His people and promised to send the Messiah King. Remind kids that Jesus is the Messiah who came to establish His kingdom. Help the kids understand that God has given us hope for an eternity with Him when we trust in Jesus. But we also get to be part of His kingdom here on this earth. Like Zechariah told God’s people to love one another, show compassion, treat each other fairly, and turn away from evil, God calls people in His kingdom to live that way now. When we live in ways that show we love God, we invite others to see what God’s kingdom is like. We can give people hope for salvation and a better future.

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: WHAT'S THE LIMIT?

Before the activity, fill a small cup with water. Gather the kids around a table. Begin by laying a penny, dime, nickel, and quarter beside one another. Ask each kid how many drops of water he or she thinks will fit on each different coin. Write down the kids' answers. Starting with the penny, use a dropper to begin placing one drop of water at a time on the coins. Encourage kids to help you count the drops and write down the results. Allow the kids to compare their answers to the results of the experiment. Use a paper towel to clean up any spills.

SAY “ Each coin had a limit to how many drops of water could fit on it. But did you know that God’s kingdom has no limits? He invites anyone who trusts in Jesus as Lord to come into His kingdom. **ZECHARIAH SHARED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER!** Not only can we live for God’s kingdom now, but we can share the gospel and invite others to trust in Jesus, reminding them that anyone is invited to be saved! ”

☐ OPTION 2: PREDICT IT



Before the session, write down 6–10 sentences on a dry erase board. Cover the second half of the sentences by taping paper over them. Tell kids that you will read part of a sentence and they must predict how the sentence will end. For example, you might say, “The best dessert is” Invite kids to raise their hands and share their predictions. Then reveal what the second half of the sentence actually said. Repeat, until kids have given their predictions for each sentence.

SAY “ We couldn’t predict how the sentences would end with certainty. This reminds me of how we don’t know everything about the future either. Only God knows with absolute certainty what will happen because He has planned everything from the very beginning. But today, we did see that God gave the prophet Zechariah eight visions to explain what would happen in Israel’s future. And God’s plan to send the Messiah came true! While we don’t know everything, we can be certain that if we trust in Jesus, we will live in God’s kingdom forever. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.