

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

HOSEA



KEY PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 13:4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why do Christians continue to sin? Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Israel was not faithful to God, but God was faithful to Israel, just as Hosea loved his wife even when she didn't love him. God is faithful to save all sinners who repent and trust in Jesus.

STORY POINT: God warned and showed His love to Israel through the prophet Hosea.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Although God had been faithful to the people of Israel, they were not faithful to God. The Israelites continued to disobey God, following worthless idols and acting wickedly. Israel even turned to other nations during times of trouble, trusting in the power of men over God. God warned Israel of their unfaithfulness and showed His faithful love through the prophet Hosea.

Though Israel was far from Him, God wanted to show a picture of His great love and relentless pursuit of His people through Hosea's life. God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer, explaining that she would not be faithful to him. Yet, God told Hosea to remain committed to her.

Hosea obeyed God and married Gomer. As God said, she was unfaithful to Hosea and left their family. In the same way, the Israelites were unfaithful to God, worshiping idols, acting corruptly, and loving violence. However, God's love did not relent, and He promised a day when He would forgive and restore them (Hosea 14:4-9).

To show the Israelites the depth of His love, God told Hosea to show love to Gomer, even though she had chosen a life of adultery (Hosea 3:1). Again, Hosea obeyed God. He paid the debts Gomer owed and brought her back home to their family.

On the cross, Jesus paid our debt of sin, restoring our relationship with God so we might be with Him forever. When we repent and turn to Jesus, He brings us into His family. Even when believers act unfaithfully, Jesus continues to be faithful and show unending love.

Encourage boys and girls to ask Jesus for forgiveness and praise Him for His unfailing love. God promised to be faithful to Israel, and He continues to be faithful to us. Point children to God's promises to Israel and the way these words of hope echo into Jesus' promises to followers of Christ to heal them, love them, and not be angry with them (Hosea 14:4).



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

- ☐ "Color to Reveal" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ cardboard box
- ☐ heart cutouts, 1 per kid



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ boxes or bins, 1 per group
- ☐ pom-poms, 10 per group
- ☐ shredded craft paper
- ☐ timer

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ envelopes, 1 per kid

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

- ☐ "Hosea, Prophet to Israel" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 14, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ 5-by-5-inch piece of cardboard, 1 per kid
- ☐ various spools of yarn
- ☐ 7 inch long strips of ribbon

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4)" 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 “How do you show someone you love them? How do you like someone to show they love you? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Color to Reveal” activity page.

SAY “God is always faithful, even when His people are unfaithful. Today, we will learn how God used the prophet Hosea to warn Israel of their sin and show His faithful love to them.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: BRING IT BACK

Before the session, write the word Love on an empty cardboard box. Create a heart cutout for each kid and hide the hearts around the room. Challenge kids to each find a heart. When kids find a heart, invite them to draw a picture of how God shows His love to people. Then direct kids to bring the hearts back to the cardboard box that says Love.

SAY “God is faithful, and He loves His people. Today, we will learn how God’s people turned away from Him and worshiped other gods. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** Like Israel was unfaithful to God, Hosea had a wife who did not show she loved him. But God sent Hosea to bring his wife back and show her unending love.”

☐ OPTION 2: PAPER HEART CHAINS



Provide each kid with a strip of paper about 11 inches long and 2 inches wide. Guide kids to fold their strip of paper accordion style, folding in one direction first, then flipping their paper over and folding in the other direction. Repeat this process until their strip is folded into a small square. Then lead kids to draw a heart on top of the folded paper. Cut out the heart, cutting the top and bottom of the heart, but being careful not to cut the side folds so the chain stays intact.

Then direct kids to take each of their paper heart chains, and with your help, staple the chains together to form one long paper heart chain. Hang the paper chain in the room and refer to it when you discuss God’s never-ending love.

SAY “Our paper heart chains may have an ending point, but imagine if they went on and on and on. That’s like God’s love for His people. God is love, and His love for His people never ends. Today, we will see how God showed His unending love for His people through the prophet Hosea. Even though God’s people rejected Him, God continued to show His love for them.”

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 “Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m happy you are here today to study God’s Word. Today, we will be in a book called Hosea. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Assist kids in finding Hosea.]

God loved His people, but they didn’t always love Him. Even though God took care of them and saved them from their enemies, Israel turned away from God and worshiped idols. Today, we will learn about a prophet named Hosea. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and ask God to help us receive His truth: ‘Dear God, thank you for loving us even though we sin and don’t always show love to You. Help us know and trust in Your love for us and give us the desire to love You always. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “What is our big picture question? [Allow responses.] **Why do Christians continue to sin?** What is the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.** Let’s say that together one more time: **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.**

God’s people, Israel, continued to sin against God. God provided for Israel, cared for them, and displayed great patience, but Israel continued to turn away from Him. They had a sin nature and needed new hearts to be able to love God rightly. Through Jesus, God has showed us His perfect love and how people can receive new hearts. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives us of our sin and changes our hearts so we can love God and worship Him alone. One day, God will make Christians sinless like Jesus. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “Although the Northern Kingdom of Israel continued to worship idols, God provided prophets to warn His people—and even Nineveh—to turn away from their sin. God sent Elisha to speak His words and perform miracles, proving that God is the one true God. Then God sent to Jonah to Nineveh to preach against their sin. While Nineveh repented and didn’t experience God’s judgment, the nation of Israel refused to worship God alone. Today, we will see how God sent Hosea to warn Israel of their unfaithfulness to Him and remind them of His faithful love. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to Hosea. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Hosea, Prophet to Israel.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

“Israel was not faithful to God. They worshiped other gods, sinned by disobeying Him, and looked to other nations to help them in times of trouble.

God wanted to show His people a picture of how much He loved and wanted to be with them, even though they had been unfaithful to Him. He spoke to His prophet Hosea, saying, “Go and marry a woman who will not be faithful to you, and be committed to her.”

Hosea followed God’s direction and married a woman named Gomer. They had three children together. Sadly, Gomer was not faithful to Hosea and left the family.

Gomer’s unfaithfulness to Hosea was like Israel’s unfaithfulness to God. Israel had taken the grain, oil, silver, and wine that God had given to them, and had used it to worship Baal. They pursued false gods and looked to other nations to save them. But God still loved Israel and forgave them for their lack of faithfulness.

To show Israel how much He loved them, **God told Hosea to go get Gomer back. “Show love to Gomer, even though she hasn’t shown love to you, just as I have loved the Israelites.”**

Hosea obeyed God. He paid back what Gomer owed others and brought her back to live with him, and she agreed.

Hosea pled with the Israelites to come back to God, just as Gomer had come back to Hosea. Hosea reminded Israel of how God had loved Israel like a child, providing and caring for their every need. But he also told the people that there would be consequences for their sin. He said, “Come, Israel, return to the LORD, for you have stumbled in sin. Repent and turn away and return to the LORD. Ask him for forgiveness and praise him. No one else can save us but God.”

Through Hosea, God promised to be faithful to Israel. God also said that one day His people would seek the Lord their God. “I will heal them,” said God, “I will love them. I will not be angry with them anymore.”

Christ Connection: Israel was not faithful to God, but God was faithful to Israel, just as Hosea loved his wife even when she didn’t love him. God is faithful to save all sinners who repent and trust in Jesus. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening:

Tell kids that when they hear the word “unfaithful,” they should give a thumbs down. When they hear the word “faithful,” they should give a thumbs up.

Use movement: Move about the room and act out the motions of the action words in the story.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Have you noticed how God’s people were unfaithful to Him throughout the Old Testament? There are so many stories where Israel disobeyed God and turned away from Him. Today’s story is no different. Israel had sinned, worshiped other gods, and turned to other nations for help instead of asking God for help. Why do you think Israel kept turning away from God? **[Allow responses.]** Like our big picture question teaches us, all people are born with a sin nature. We want to do things our way. Israel was impatient, unfaithful to God, and wanted to do things their way instead of God’s way. Their hearts were broken because of sin, and they weren’t able to fully obey Him.

But God had always been faithful to His people. He never gave up on them and continued to show them His love. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** How did Hosea display God’s love for Israel? **[Allow responses.]** God told Hosea to go find Gomer and show her love, even though she had left him. Hosea paid Gomer’s debt and brought her back to live with him. Hosea didn’t give up on Gomer, even when she turned away from him. God had shown even greater love toward His people. He rescued them from their enemies, took care of them, and gave them good gifts. But God’s people still turned away. So, in His love, God warned the people of their sin so they could repent.

Like Israel and Gomer, we are all unfaithful to God. We sin and disobey. But God is faithful to save anyone who repents and trusts in Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the debt we owe because of our sin. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven and safe with God forever. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ God loves us so much that He warns us of our sin. The Bible reminds us that we are all sinners. But God has made the way for us to be forgiven. Through faith in Jesus, God will forgive our sin and give us eternal life. ”

(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 14, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why does God forgive us even though we don’t deserve it?
2. How does Jesus’ perfect, sinless life get credited (or given) to us?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ Dr. George and Joan Braswell were missionaries in Iran from 1968 to 1974. Dr. Braswell was the only Christian professor at a Muslim university. This opportunity to teach at the university opened up doors for Dr. Braswell to build relationships with many Muslim people and share the good news about Jesus. ”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Explain that women in Iran often work with looms to weave beautiful carpets. Tell kids that carpets from Iran are known as Persian rugs. Share how these looms can be quite large because they make carpets to fill a room.

Invite kids to practice weaving by creating a “loom” from a 5-by-5-inch piece of cardboard. Cut slits at the top and bottom of the cardboard equal distance apart. Then lead kids to take yarn and tape the end of the yarn to the back of the “loom.” Kids will then bring the yarn through the first slit, turn the “loom” over, and bring the yarn down to the matching slit at the bottom. Repeat, wrapping the yarn through all the slits. Next, weave 7 inch long strips of ribbon in an under-and-over pattern across the “loom.” Repeat, weaving multiple ribbon strips, each in a new row, until the desired length is achieved.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Deuteronomy 13:4 together.

SAY “God is loving, faithful, kind, and gracious. He deserves our worship and our obedience. He is worth following.”

Guide kids to sit in a large circle. Play music and direct the kids to pass the ball around a circle. When the music stops, lead the kid with the ball to say the key passage. Kids may use the Key Passage Poster for help. Continue until all have had an opportunity to say the verse on their own.

Lead kids to sing “Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4).” 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 “Heavenly Father, thank You for being faithful even when we’re not. Help us trust You and to be faithful to You in everything we do. Thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. 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 Hosea 14. Explain that Hosea is part of the Minor Prophets in the Old Testament. Point out some of the other Minor Prophets such as Jonah, Joel, Micah, and Nahum.

Consider pointing out the location of Israel (E5) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Hosea 14:1-2 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud. Use these verses to point ahead to next week's session.

SAY “ God’s people were stuck in a pattern of sin. Even when they tried to follow God, they would eventually turn away again. In these verses, Hosea begged the people to once again turn back to God. He called the people to ask God for forgiveness. He wanted God to receive praise for how He is faithful to forgive people who repent of sin and trust in Him.

God wants us to keep turning to Him for forgiveness too. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives all of our sin. But because Jesus hasn’t yet returned, Christians still sin. **CHRISTIANS CONTINUE TO SIN BECAUSE WE STILL HAVE A SIN NATURE, BUT WHEN JESUS RETURNS, HE WILL MAKE US SINLESS LIKE HIM.** God’s people praise Him for how He has saved them from sin. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Hosea warned about God’s judgment on sin. How did this show God’s love? ”

Tell kids that just as it is loving for a parent to warn a kid of danger, so it is also loving for God to warn His people of the judgment His people would face for their sin. God desires people to repent and trust in Jesus to be saved from the judgment of sin.

SAY “ What does it mean that God is faithful? ”

Share that the word faithful means steadfast, dedicated, dependable, and worthy of trust. God is always faithful because He never changes. God is faithful to His character. He will keep His promise to forgive sin for those who trust in Jesus. And He will be faithful to punish those who do not trust in Jesus.

SAY “ If God remains faithful to Christians no matter what, why do you think it’s good to obey God? ”

Help kids think through what it communicates to God and the world when we obey God. Help kids see that God loves us and wants us to love Him. Explain how God’s mercy, grace, and love toward us awakens our hearts to love Him, and our love for God will naturally lead us to obey Him.

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: RESCUE THE POM-POMS

Before the session, fill boxes with shredded craft paper for each group of three or four kids. Mix 10 pom-poms in with the paper, concealing them from view. Form kids into groups of three or four and provide each group with a box. On your start, challenge groups to find and “rescue” the 10 pom-poms hidden in their box. Start a timer and record the time it takes for each group to find all the pom-poms. Play again, hiding all the pom-poms again and challenging groups to beat their time.

SAY “ In our story, we learned how God sent Hosea to bring his wife back. Hosea rescued Gomer and brought her back to live with him. This reminds me of how God sent Jesus to rescue sinners. The Bible says we are all like sheep and have run away from God. But Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came to find us and bring us back to God. Those who trust in Jesus have their sins forgiven and are rescued from the punishment of sin. ”

☐ OPTION 2: LOVE LETTERS



Invite kids to draw a picture of how they can love others, even when they make mistakes. Invite kids to think about how Hosea showed Gomer love even when she didn’t love him. Remind kids about God’s unfailing love for His people, even when they sin against Him. Place the drawings in an envelope. Then encourage kids to give their “love letter” to a parent or a friend, while telling them about God’s unfailing love.

SAY “ Have you ever had someone forgive you or show you love when you had wronged them? God shows us love all the time, even when we sin against Him. The Bible is one big story about God’s love for us and how He made the way for us to be forgiven of our sin. Romans 5:8 tells us that, ‘But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.’ Take your letters home and share how **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA**, and how He shows His love to us through Jesus. ”

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.