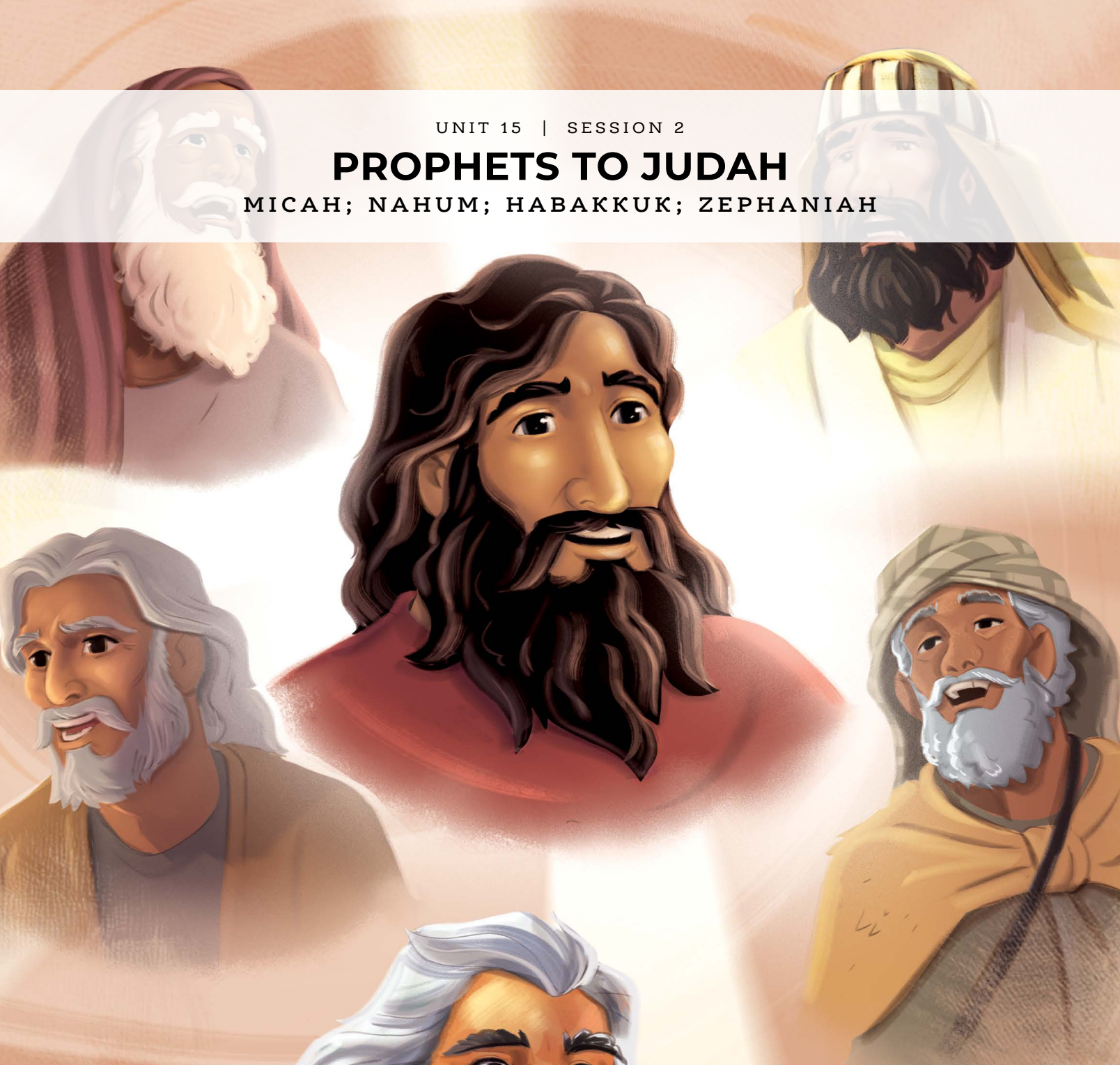


# PROPHETS TO JUDAH

MICAH; NAHUM; HABAKKUK; ZEPHANIAH



**KEY PASSAGE:** Psalm 145:9

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

**CHRIST CONNECTION:** God sent prophets to His people to warn them to repent of their sin and turn to God. Jesus gave the same message, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” When we trust in Jesus, we are restored to a right relationship with God and have the hope of eternal life.

**STORY POINT:** God sent prophets to tell the people to repent of their sins.



## PREPARE

### PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## LEADER Bible Study

While the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been destroyed by Assyria, the Southern Kingdom of Judah remained. During the years prior to Babylonian captivity, God continued to send prophets to Judah who called the people to repent of their sin. Even though the prophets pronounced the impending captivity, they also offered hope to the people: God would restore His people and provide salvation.

The prophet Micah spoke to the leaders of Israel regarding their ill-earned wealth. Micah called the leaders of Israel to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Micah also shared a message of future hope: one day, God would send a new King who would be born in Bethlehem and rule over the restored people of God.

Nahum was another prophet sent to testify to God's judgment on sin. Nahum described how God would judge Assyria for its bloodshed, evil, and injustice. Nahum's message was a reminder to be faithful to God and a warning to not act like other evil nations, like Assyria.

Zephaniah begged the people to turn away from sin while there was still time. He showed that God will judge all the evil nations along with Judah.

Habakkuk spoke directly to God, asking Him why He would not stop the violence and sin of the people of Judah. God told Habakkuk that He will indeed judge the people and will bring destruction to the nation through Babylon. While Babylon would destroy Judah, Habakkuk also said he would celebrate in the Lord. Even in desolation and despair, God's people could rejoice in the hope of salvation.

God sent prophets to share the message of judgment, repentance, and restoration. Jesus willingly took on our judgment so we could turn from our sin and be restored to Him. When we trust in Jesus we are restored to a right relationship with God.

This week, encourage kids to see God's goodness through His Word. Like the prophets to Judah proclaimed a message of hope, the Word of God shares good news: Jesus died and rose again to save people from sin and death. Rejoice in the God of salvation.



## 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

- ☐ "A Common Message" activity page



### LOVE

#### Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set



### 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 Prophets to Judah" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

#### Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 15, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

#### Missions Moment

- ☐ world map

#### Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ sticky notes



### LIVE

#### Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ cardboard box
- ☐ "Shadow Puppets" printable
- ☐ craft sticks
- ☐ flashlight
- ☐ parchment paper
- ☐ strong tape

#### Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ index cards, 24

#### Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "Forgiveness through Jesus" activity page



## 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 would you share an important message with friends? Would you tell them in person, call them on the phone, write them a letter, or share another way? Why?”

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “A Common Message” activity page.

**SAY** “Today, we will see how the prophets of Judah had an important message to share with God’s people. God sent prophets to tell His people to repent of their sin.”

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### ☐ OPTION 1: WHAT’S THE MESSAGE?

Form kids into four groups and provide each kid with a piece of paper and a pencil. Assign a message 8–10 words long for each group to write on their papers, making sure each kid writes one or more words of the message on his or her paper. For example, if the message is Jesus is God’s Son who died for our sins, and the group has five kids, four kids would write two words each and one kid would write one word on his or her paper.

Next, place each group in a corner of the room. Tell kids to fold their paper into a paper airplane. Then direct groups to toss their paper airplanes to a group you assign them. Once the group receives the paper airplanes, they will work together to unfold the papers and place the words in the correct order to determine the message. Invite groups to read the message they received aloud.

**SAY** “Today, we will learn how God had a message to send to His people. **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS.** Let’s get ready to learn more about these prophets.”

#### ☐ OPTION 2: BAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS



Challenge kids to respond with a message of good news for every message of bad news you share. For example, when you say, “The dentist said you have a cavity,” the good news may be, “The cavity can be filled so your tooth can be saved.” Consider using the following examples, or create your own:

- “The dentist said you have a cavity.”
- “Your dog ran away.”
- “You have the flu.”
- “You forgot your homework at home.”
- “We are all sinners who deserve death.”

**SAY** “It gives us hope when we receive good news in response to bad news. The Bible shares bad news with us: we are all sinners who deserve death. But the Bible also responds with good news: Jesus died and rose again to save us from sin. Today, we will learn how God sent prophets to share bad news with His people: they sinned and would face consequences for their sin. But the prophets also shared good news: God would send a perfect King who would restore His people.”

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 excited you’re here. If you have a Bible with you, will you hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will learn about prophets God sent to His people. We’ll be in the books of Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. [Invite kids to find each of these books in their Bible.]

In our story, we’ll see how **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray: ‘Dear God, thank You for warning people of their sin. Help us turn away from sin and follow You. Amen.’ ”

### 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

**SAY** “ Do you remember the big picture question we learned last week? [Allow responses.] **What is God like?** What was the answer we learned? [Allow responses.] **God is holy, good, and loving.**

Today, as we learn how **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS,** we’ll clearly see how God is holy, good, and loving. God’s holiness does not tolerate sin. He will punish sin because He is holy. We also see how God is good and loving because He graciously warns people of their sin. He doesn’t ignore their sin but helps people see their need to repent and be saved. God is also good and loving because He has provided the way for people to be saved from their sin. As the prophets preached a message of repentance, they also shared hope: one day, a new King would be born who would save people from their sins. Faith in King Jesus is the only way to be saved from sin. ”

### 3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

**SAY** “ God alone is to be worshiped because only He is worthy of worship. God commanded His people, the Israelites, to worship Him alone. But they did not worship God wholeheartedly. They turned to idols like the nations around them. After the kingdom split into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, God’s people were led by many wicked kings who did what was evil. Last week, we learned that Judah had some good kings who did what was right in God’s eyes. Yet, when the good kings died, God’s people returned to worshiping idols. God even sent prophets to warn His people to turn away from their sinful ways. Eventually, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the people were exiled to Assyria. Today, we will learn how God continued to send more prophets to tell the people of Judah to repent of their sins. ”



## LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to Micah; Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Prophets to Judah.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

#### PROPHETS TO JUDAH

“ God loved His people so much that He sent messengers, or prophets, who called the people to repent of their sin so they could be restored to a right relationship with God.

**The prophet Micah said that God was going to judge the wicked leaders of His people.** They had become rich by stealing from others. **Micah warned that God would send foreign nations to destroy Israel, and called the people to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Micah’s message also included hope—he said that God would one day send a new king from the line of David,** who would be born in Bethlehem and rule over the restored people of God.

**Years later, God gave a message for the prophet Nahum to share. The main message of Nahum’s writings is this: “God is slow to anger and great in power. He will not let the wicked go free.”** Nahum comforted God’s people and gave them hope by showing that God will punish their enemies, the evil nations and empires that love violence. Nahum’s message was also a warning to not act like these nations, and to remain faithful to God.

**Zephaniah was another prophet.** He saw that the nation of Judah was going to be judged for worshiping idols and that God would send a great nation to destroy the city of Jerusalem. **Zephaniah begged the people to turn away from sin while there was still time, so that they might be spared from God’s righteous anger against sin.** Zephaniah said that God will also judge all the evil nations and Judah because they acted like these evil nations.

**The prophet Habakkuk was also sent to the people of Judah. Habakkuk spoke directly to God, asking Him why He would not stop the violence and sin of the people of Judah.** God responded by saying He would gather the army of Babylon to destroy Judah. **God shared that even though this disaster would come, the righteous will live by faith in Him. Habakkuk ends his message by pleading for God to be merciful to His people. Even though God’s judgment would come, Habakkuk said: “I will celebrate in the Lord; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!”**

Christ Connection: God sent prophets to His people to warn them to repent of their sin and turn to God. Jesus gave the same message, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” When we trust in Jesus, we are restored to a right relationship with God and have the hope of eternal life. ”

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Share it:** Tell kids that God sent more than just four prophets to Judah. Share how Joel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were also prophets to Judah.

**Emphasize it:** Emphasize how Jesus is the only perfect Prophet because He is the Word of God made flesh who always spoke truth and obeyed God.



## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

## 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** “ Like the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the Southern Kingdom of Judah turned away from God and worshiped idols. The people of Judah acted wickedly and did not love justice and mercy. They did not walk with God and follow His ways. But God loved His people, and **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS**. Who were the four prophets in our story? [Allow responses.] Today, we learned about Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk. Each prophet spoke God's words to the people, reminding them to turn away from sin.

God is just, and He will not allow evil to go unpunished. What did the prophet Micah say about God's coming judgment? Look at Micah 3:9,12. [Ask a volunteer to read Micah 3:9,12 aloud.] The prophet Micah said that Judah's leaders were evil and unjust. Because of their sin, Jerusalem would be destroyed. The prophet Nahum also said God would judge the evil nations who hurt Israel. But what did Nahum say about those who trust in God? Look at Nahum 1:7. [Ask a volunteer to read Nahum 1:7 aloud.] God is good, and He cares for and protects those who trust in Him.

Zephaniah and Habakkuk also gave messages of God's coming judgment on the people's sins. But they also gave the people hope. Though the nation of Babylon would come to destroy Jerusalem and take the people captive, God promised to restore His people. He promised a day when they would be rescued. What did Zephaniah say God would one day do? Look at Zephaniah 3:16-18. [Ask a volunteer to read Zephaniah 3:16-18 aloud.] God would be among His people, like a warrior who saves. He would bring His people back from Babylon. Habakkuk also trusted in God's salvation, even though judgment would come. Habakkuk said, 'I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.'

Like the prophets' message of repentance, Jesus gave the same message, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.' When we trust in Jesus, we are restored to a right relationship with God and have the hope of eternal life. We don't need to fear judgment. Instead, we can rejoice in the God of our salvation. ”

## 3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

**SAY** “ **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS**, but the people's continued sin eventually led to judgment. God is patient and loving, but He is also just. Jesus' death on the cross showed God's love toward sinners because Jesus took our place. Jesus' death also showed God's justice for sin because Jesus experienced judgment for sin, even though He was sinless. Have you put your faith in Jesus? ”

(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 15, Session 2” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why were there multiple prophets in the Old Testament?
2. How does the Bible help us see our sin and need for Jesus?



## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

#### 5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Share how a woman named Rose desired to share Jesus with the people who lived in an area known as the Horn of Africa. [Point to the Horn of Africa on a world map.]

**SAY** “Rose told the leadership at her church that she wanted to be a missionary to the people in Africa. The church's leadership knew they could not send her alone or provide all of her financial needs. Rose's pastor recruited 15 other churches across Mexico and Panama to support Rose as a missionary to the Horn of Africa.

When Rose arrived in Africa, she began to work with farmers who tend livestock. The farmers live in a harsh environment that is very dry. The area they live in also has no running water or electricity. But despite the difficult environment, Rose is committed to sharing Jesus. The people Rose shares the gospel with can often be hostile to the gospel. But, by God's grace, some have trusted in Jesus.”

Pray for Rose as she shares the gospel with people who don't always want to hear it. Pray for the churches who support the mission work in the Horn of Africa.

#### 6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

**SAY** “God is good! Even though sin deserves punishment, God is good to everyone because He has provided people with the way to be saved from sin and death through His Son, Jesus.”

Cover one word of the Key Passage Poster with a sticky note. Lead kids to say the key passage aloud. Continue covering words, one at a time, until every word is covered. Repeat, saying the key passage aloud each time.

Lead kids to sing “The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9).” 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** “Dear God, thank You for Your loving kindness toward us. We are sinners in need of Jesus. Thank You for the Bible, which helps us see our sin and our need of Jesus. 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 the Table of Contents. Point out the books of the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel) and the books of the Minor Prophets (the 12 remaining books). Invite kids to find the books of the Minor Prophets from the Bible story: Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk.

Consider pointing out the location of Judah (14) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Micah 6:8 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

**SAY** “ The prophet Micah reminded the people of Judah to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. All the prophets told the people to turn away from sin and follow God. The people of Judah acted like the nations around them, rather than like God. God called His people to follow Him and show others what He is like by the way they live. Instead, the people acted wickedly and worshiped idols.

Today, believers in Jesus are called to show others what God is like. Through faith in Jesus, we live to bring God glory and help people recognize that **God is holy, good, and loving.** ”

### 2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

**SAY** “ What was the similar message the prophets told the people of Judah? ”

Remind kids that **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS.** Share how each prophet warned of God's judgment on sin, both for Judah and also for the nations. Discuss how God is just and holy; He will punish sin.  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Thess. 1:8-9.)

**SAY** “ Did the prophets share any message of hope? What? ”

Discuss how God also promised hope for His people, even though they would face judgment. Through the prophets, God shared that His people would be restored to their homes and that the Messiah would come to save those who trust in Him. Tell kids that salvation is available to those who repent and trust in Jesus, the promised Messiah.  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Zech. 9:9.)

**SAY** “ What sins do you need to repent of? Pray, ask God to reveal any sin, and repent of it. ”

Allow time for kids to sit in silence, praying to God. Then discuss how repentance is an act of God's grace as He shows us our sin so we can confess it and be forgiven. Encourage kids to continually confess sin to God, asking Him to help them turn away from it and follow Jesus.  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 32:5.)

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





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE the Mission

#### 1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

##### ☐ OPTION 1: RETELL THE STORY

Before the session, create a shadow puppet theatre by using a cardboard box. Tape parchment paper over the open end of the box to create a “screen.” Cut a large square on the box opposite the parchment paper, so the puppets can fit through. On a side of the box, cut a hole just big enough for a flashlight to go through. Place a tablecloth on a table. Then place the theatre on the table. Kids will stand behind the box to perform the show.

Print a copy of the “Shadow Puppets” printable. Cut out the puppets. Glue each shadow puppet to a craft stick. Then cut out the script into strips. Assign a kid to each role in the story and provide the kids with the script strips for their role. Invite kids to retell the story by reading the script while holding up the corresponding puppet.

**SAY “ GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS.** God sent Jesus to tell us to repent of our sins and trust in Him for salvation. ”

##### ☐ OPTION 2: MINOR PROPHETS



Before the session, write the names of the 12 Minor Prophets on individual index cards. Create two sets. Shuffle each set of cards and place them facedown in two piles at one end of the room. Place a Bible next to each pile. Form kids into two teams. Invite a kid from each team to a pile of cards. When you say, “go,” challenge kids to pick up a card and find the book in the Bible. When the kid finds the book, she will close the Bible, run back to her team, and another kid will go to the pile of cards. Play continues until one team is the first to find all 12 books.

**SAY “** These 12 books are not less important, but because they are shorter, they are referred to as the Minor Prophets. God used many prophets to tell His people to turn away from sin. God is just, but He is also kind to offer forgiveness. He wanted His people to listen to His words and repent. Jesus is our perfect Prophet, who not only shared a message of repentance but is the only way for people to be saved. ”

#### 2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His kindness and salvation through Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Forgiveness through Jesus” on the activity page.