

PROPHETS TO JUDAH

MICAH; NAHUM; HABAKKUK; ZEPHANIAH



CHRIST CONNECTION: All these helpers told the people to turn back to God. Later, Jesus came and said the same thing: “Stop doing wrong things and come back to God.” When we trust in Jesus, we can be close to God again.

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

KEY PASSAGE: The LORD is good to everyone. Psalm 145:9

STORY POINT: God sent prophets to tell people to turn away from their sins.



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 an end 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 right relationship with God.

This week, encourage preschoolers 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 preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30–40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60–65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ “Judah’s Prophets” printable, 1 per 3 or 4 children
- ☐ envelopes, 1 per 3 or 4 children
- ☐ large pom-poms



LEARN

Tell the Bible story

- ☐ “Prophets to Judah” video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Make a mosaic heart

- ☐ heavyweight paper, 1 per child

Explore a nativity scene

- ☐ child-safe nativity scene



LIVE

Missions activity

- ☐ plastic tablecloth
- ☐ paint smocks
- ☐ brown construction paper, 1 per child
- ☐ washable yellow and black paint
- ☐ paintbrushes
- ☐ wet wipes
- ☐ black pen

Snack and transition

- ☐ hand sanitizer (optional)
- ☐ “Decode the Special Message” activity page, 1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker

Play a stop-and-go game

- ☐ masking tape
- ☐ red construction paper
- ☐ ruler

Drive cars

- ☐ painter’s tape
- ☐ toy cars



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

MATCH THE PROPHETS

Before the session, print “Judah’s Prophets” printable, one for each group of three or four children, on heavyweight paper. Cut the cards and the strip apart and put each set into an envelope. Post the Big Picture Question Poster nearby to discuss while playing. Provide the prepared envelope and large pom-poms to each group. Assist preschoolers in removing their cards from the bag and placing them onto the table within view. As you describe physical attributes from a prophet card, encourage the groups to cover the match with a pom-pom. Continue play until all the prophets have been covered. Post the Big Picture Question Poster nearby to discuss while playing.

SAY “ I am so glad you came to church today! We are learning about the prophets of Judah. **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL PEOPLE TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SIN.** We can learn from the prophets, too! Our big picture question and answer says, **What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.** We know that the Lord is good to everyone. ”

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





LEARN the Bible Story

1 NAME SPECIAL THINGS

Greet the preschoolers in group time. As everyone is seated, encourage the children to name ways that we know God loves us. Name special things God provides that make us feel loved such as: people to care for us, beautiful nature to enjoy, our Bibles to help us learn, church and church helpers, and so forth.

SAY “One way God showed He loves His people is by sending prophets to teach people about Him. Our Bible story today tells us about several prophets. **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL PEOPLE TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SIN.** Many of these prophets have a book in the Bible that tells us how God wants us to live. Listen to the story to find out what each prophet told the people to do. Remember that the prophets brought messages from God.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Micah; Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

PROPHETS TO JUDAH

SAY “God loves His people so much. Long ago, God’s people were making wrong choices, called sin. God was not happy. So, He sent special helpers called prophets to talk to His people.

Another helper, Micah, told the leaders that bad things would happen if they did not stop taking things that were not theirs. Micah also said that one day, God would send a good king who would be born in Bethlehem.

The prophet Nahum told people that God is strong and patient, but He will punish people who do wrong things. Another prophet, Zephaniah, told the people to stop worshiping pretend gods, called idols. He told them to turn back to God.

Habakkuk the prophet asked God why He let bad things happen. God promised that everyone who did wrong would be punished. Habakkuk asked God to be kind and hoped that the people would trust in God.”

Christ Connection: All these helpers told the people to turn back to God. Later, Jesus came and said the same thing: “Stop doing wrong things and come back to God.” When we trust in Jesus, we can be close to God again.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Display the Bible Story Picture Poster and use the picture to review the Bible story details. Name things a preschooler might do that are right or wrong. Give an example and ask if the child is doing the right thing or the wrong thing. Comment that the prophets reminded the people to do the right things. Name things like: hitting a brother, obeying Mom when she says it is bedtime, breaking a friend's crayon because you are mad, turning off the tablet when Dad says time is up, helping to set the table, hiding someone's favorite toy, taking a cookie without permission, getting a diaper for the baby when Mom asks, helping to put up the toys, and so forth.

SAY “God loves His people so much! He saw they were doing wrong things and sent prophets to talk to His people and remind them to turn back to God and do the right things. When we trust in Jesus and follow Him, we can be close to God! **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL PEOPLE TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SIN.** Even though the prophets lived a long time ago, their words in the Bible are still important and help us know how to live. When Jesus came, He said, ‘Stop doing wrong things and come back to God.’”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush”:

The LORD is good to everyone,
Everyone, everyone.
The LORD is good to everyone,
Psalm 145:9

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase marker at Psalm 145:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage phrase. Lead children to say the key passage phrase while passing a Bible.

SAY “Our key passage phrase tells us God is good to everyone. Because God is good, He sent prophets to talk to His people and help them do what is right! Our story also told us that God is kind, strong, and patient.”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for loving us and helping us to know the right things to do. Thank God for the Bible that tells us the special messages God sent His people.

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





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 STAND AND SIT



Retell the story and encourage the children to stand up when good things are happening and sit down when bad things happen. Prompt as needed when children should sit or stand. Clarify what is happening and why it is good or bad.

SAY “God loves His people. Today’s Bible story tells about a time when God’s people were doing bad things. Did you hear how the prophets helped God’s people and reminded them to turn back to God? [Allow responses.] Later Jesus came and said the same thing. He said, ‘Stop doing wrong things and come back to God.’ We can be close to God when we trust in Jesus.”

2 MAKE A MOSAIC HEART

Cut large heart shapes from sheets of heavyweight paper. Cut construction paper into small squares about ½ inch on each side. Guide the children to spread glue on a portion of the heart shape and then add construction paper tiles to cover that area. Encourage children to continue adding glue and squares until their heart shape is covered.

SAY “GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL PEOPLE TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SIN. Some of God’s people were being mean to people who did not have much money, taking things that did not belong to them, and worshiping pretend gods. They were not showing God’s love. God promised to send a good king who would be born in Bethlehem. Sending Jesus was a way that God showed love to His people a long time ago and also a way He shows that He loves us!”

3 EXPLORE A NATIVITY SCENE

Provide an unbreakable, child-safe nativity scene for the children to play with as you discuss the prophet Micah. Comment that Micah told the people that God would send a good king who would be born in Bethlehem. Tell the children that Micah lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born.

SAY “GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL PEOPLE TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SIN. Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophet Micah told God’s people that a good king would be born in Bethlehem. God’s people believed what Micah said and watched for a special baby to be born. Jesus was born in Bethlehem just like Micah told them.”

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 CREATE WITH PLAY DOUGH



Encourage preschoolers to make statues with play dough that they will later smash. Explain that preschoolers will learn about a time when God's people worshiped fake gods or idols. An idol is something we worship instead of God. At the end of the activity, invite preschoolers to "smash" the pretend idols and then clean up their supplies.

SAY "Today we will learn about many times when the people of Judah and Israel disobeyed God. They did things like worship fake gods, treat poor people unkindly, and take things from others. **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL PEOPLE TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SINS.**"

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Cover a table with a plastic tablecloth. Assist each preschooler with putting a paint smock over his clothing. Paint a preschooler's entire hand yellow and help him press his hand on a sheet of brown construction paper. Point his fingers down, toward the bottom of the page. Help preschoolers use wet wipes to clean their hands while the yellow paint is drying. After the paint has partially dried, let preschoolers make spots on their handprint cheetah with black paint and a paintbrush. Once the paint has dried, use a black pen to add face details to the thumb of the handprint. Pray for Rose and the missions team as they minister to the people in the Horn of Africa.

SAY "Cheetahs live in the Horn of Africa. These handprint cheetahs can help us remember to pray for a missionary named Rose. Rose wanted to tell people who live in the Horn of Africa about Jesus. She knew she could not do it alone. Rose's pastor asked churches across Mexico and Panama to support Rose as a missionary."

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY "All these helpers told the people to turn back to God. Later, Jesus came and said the same thing: 'Stop doing wrong things and come back to God.' When we trust in Jesus, we can be close to God again."

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 TALK ABOUT CONSEQUENCES



Ask what happens when we make bad choices and do things we should not do. Give examples such as running out in the street without looking, not picking up toys when Dad asks, hitting a little brother, and so on. Comment that there are consequences when we choose to do things we should not do. We may have time out or have to stop playing with a toy we like. We may need to apologize to someone else. **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL PEOPLE TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SIN.**

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Micah; Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

PROPHETS TO JUDAH

- God loves His people and sent prophets to talk to them because they were doing wrong things.
- Micah warned the leaders to stop taking things that were not theirs and promised a good king would come from Bethlehem.
- Nahum reminded the people that God is strong and patient but will punish those who do wrong, and Zephaniah told them to stop worshiping pretend gods.
- Habakkuk asked God why bad things were happening, and God promised that everyone who did wrong would be punished.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush”:

The LORD is good to everyone,
Everyone, everyone.
The LORD is good to everyone,
Psalm 145:9

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 145:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Guide the children to stand up and say the key passage phrase and then sit down to say it together.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for the Bible that teaches us how to live and obey Him.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 SING CHRISTMAS CAROLS



Sing familiar Christmas carols together and point out words or phrases that are familiar to our Bible story. Discuss that musicians, poets, and artists created songs based upon the words of the prophets.

SAY “Micah told the people of Judah that God had promised to send a good king who would be born in Bethlehem. Hundreds of years later, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, some of the people saw that He was the good king God had promised. We sing songs at Christmas to remind us that God sent Jesus! You will hear these songs at church, on the radio, and at other places every year at Christmas. Christmas is a special time to celebrate Jesus’ birth, but we can celebrate all year long.”

7 PLAY A STOP-AND-GO GAME

Cut an octagon from red construction paper and use masking tape to attach it to a ruler, forming a stop sign. Assist children in forming a straight line at one end of the room. Encourage children to stop when the sign is up and, when the sign is down, to walk in various ways, such as baby steps, bunny hops, and so forth.

SAY “Stop signs are red and tell drivers to stop moving. You played a stop-and-go game by following the directions. God told the people to stop doing things that were wrong like mistreating others, taking things that were not theirs, and worshiping pretend gods. We all sin and do things we should not do. We must stop, apologize to God and others, and make a wiser choice. **GOD SENT PROPHETS TO TELL PEOPLE TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SINS.**”

8 DRIVE CARS

Make roads on the floor using painter’s tape. Instruct preschoolers to drive toy cars along the roads. As they drive, periodically say, “Stop.” Each time you say, “Stop,” lead boys and girls to stop driving their cars and turn them in the opposite direction. Encourage preschoolers to continue driving, but in a different direction. Play as long as time and interest allow.

SAY “What did you do when I said, ‘Stop?’ [Allow responses.] Yes! You stopped your car and turned it in a different direction. God’s prophets told the people the same message: stop doing wrong things and turn back to God. When Jesus came, He said the same thing: ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’ When we trust in Jesus, we can have a right relationship with God.”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.