

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

HOSEA



CHRIST CONNECTION: Even when we do not love God as we should, He still loves us. God showed His love by sending Jesus to save us.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why do Christians continue to sin? Because we still have hearts that want to sin.

KEY PASSAGE: You must follow the LORD your God. Deuteronomy 13:4

STORY POINT: God is loving and faithful.



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 man 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 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

Guess the object

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ large paper bag
- ☐ heart-shaped cookie cutter



LEARN

Find the hearts

- ☐ basket

Tell the Bible story

- ☐ "Hosea, Prophet to Israel" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ paper hearts

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Decorate names

- ☐ long construction paper
- ☐ dot stickers

Dress up as family members

- ☐ dress-up clothing typical of mothers, fathers, and children
- ☐ accessories such as jewelry, neckties, hats, scarves
- ☐ oversized shoes
- ☐ mirror



LIVE

Paint with marbles

- ☐ marbles
- ☐ cup
- ☐ spoon
- ☐ washable paint
- ☐ shallow tray or box
- ☐ smocks
- ☐ "Key Passage Phrase Labels" printable, 1 copy

Missions activity

- ☐ "George and Joan Braswell Photo" printable

Snack and transition

- ☐ hand sanitizer (optional)
- ☐ "Cross Out Different Items" activity page, 1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Wear heart stickers

- ☐ heart stickers

Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker

Care for baby dolls

- ☐ doll clothes
- ☐ blankets
- ☐ books
- ☐ toy bottles

Work family puzzles

- ☐ family and people puzzles
- ☐ heavyweight paper (optional)



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.

GUESS THE OBJECT

Post the Big Picture Question Poster near the entrance to the classroom. Tape the Bible Story Picture Poster to the outside of a large paper bag. Place a heart-shaped cookie cutter in the bag. Greet preschoolers as they come to the classroom and point out the Big Picture Question Poster. Encourage children to feel what is inside the bag and guess what it is. Show the Bible Story Picture Poster as you talk about what is inside.

SAY “ I am so glad that you are at church today. There is something in this bag that reminds me of the Bible story we will hear today. Feel what is inside. Can you guess what it is? It is a heart. In our story, God told Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer, but Gomer would love other people instead. Our big picture question asks, **Why do Christians continue to sin? Because we still have hearts that want to sin.** Hosea loved Gomer even though she had made him sad. Even when we do not love God as we should, He still loves us. **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL.** ”

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





LEARN the Bible Story

1 FIND THE HEARTS

Cut heart shapes from construction paper. Place the hearts throughout the classroom. Make enough so that each child in the class can have one. Invite preschoolers to find a heart and bring it to group time. Assist as needed so that each child finds a heart. Encourage preschoolers to place the hearts they found in a small basket.

SAY “Hearts remind me of love. **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL.** God wanted to show how the people of Israel were not loving Him as they should. He told Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer, but Gomer would not love Hosea completely.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Hosea. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

SAY “Hosea was a man who listened to God. God told Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer, but Gomer would not love Hosea completely and would love other people instead. God wanted to show how the people of Israel were not loving Him as they should.

Hosea did what God said. He married Gomer, and they had three children with special names. The names were messages from God: Jezreel (which meant trouble), No Mercy (because God would punish them), and Not My People (because they were not obeying Him).

Gomer did not stay with Hosea. She went away, just like how the people of Israel went away from God. But Hosea went to find Gomer, and He brought her back home. He loved her even when she had made him sad.

Hosea told the people of Israel to turn back to God, who still loved them and would take care of them after they were punished. God’s love never stops, even when we make wrong choices.”

Christ Connection: Even when we do not love God as we should, He still loves us. God showed His love by sending Jesus to save us.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Place the basket of hearts from the previous activity in the center of the group. Invite children to take a heart from the basket as they share a way that God shows His love to us. If preschoolers are having a difficult time thinking of a way that He shows love to us, offer suggestions such as giving us families who love us, providing food and clothing for us, sending Jesus, or forgiving us when we say we are sorry for making wrong choices.

SAY “ We thought of so many ways God shows His love to us. **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL.** Hosea loved Gomer even though she had made him sad. Even when we do not love God as we should, He still loves us. God showed His love by sending Jesus to save us. ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”:

You must follow the LORD your God.
You must follow the LORD your God.
You must follow the LORD your God.
Deuteronomy 13:4

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Deuteronomy 13:4. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Say the key passage phrase together several times, alternating between saying it quickly and slowly.

SAY “ Our key passage phrase tells us that we must follow the LORD our God. Hosea told the people of Israel to turn back to God and follow Him. He said that God’s love never stops, even when we make wrong choices. ”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for loving us, even when we do not love Him as we should.

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





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 FIND GOMER



Draw a simple picture of a woman on a small sheet of paper. Encourage preschoolers to turn and face the wall while you hide the drawing somewhere in the classroom. Once it is hidden, invite preschoolers to find the woman. Give clues to help them find her. Invite preschoolers to take turns hiding the drawing.

SAY 🗨️ God told Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer, but Gomer would not love Hosea completely. She did not stay with Hosea. She went away, just like how the people of Israel went away from God. But Hosea went to find Gomer, and he brought her back home. **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL.** Even when we do not love God as we should, He still loves us. God showed His love by sending Jesus to save us. 🗨️

2 DECORATE NAMES

Place construction paper and dot stickers on the table. Write a child's name across the paper with a marker. Encourage the child to outline his name by placing dot stickers over the letters. Younger preschoolers or children with long names may prefer to only outline the first letter in their name.

SAY 🗨️ Names are very special. Families choose names for their children. Hosea married Gomer, and they had three children with special names. Their names were Jezreel which means trouble, No Mercy because God would punish the people of Israel, and Not My People because the people were not obeying God. These names were a message from God. Hosea told the people of Israel to turn back to God, who still loved them and would take care of them after they were punished. **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL.** Even when we do not love God as we should, He still loves us. God showed His love by sending Jesus to save us. 🗨️

3 DRESS UP AS FAMILY MEMBERS

Place dress-up clothing and accessories out for preschoolers to explore. Invite preschoolers to dress up as different family members of the same gender (ex. boys dress up as dads, grandfathers, brothers, etc.). Assist children as needed with placing the clothing over their own clothes. Encourage preschoolers to look at themselves in the mirror. Talk about the different family members in a child's life while being sensitive to different family situations.

SAY 🗨️ This clothing and these accessories remind me of different people in our families. Hosea and Gomer had a family. God told Hosea to marry Gomer, but Gomer would not love him completely. God wanted to show how the people of Israel were not loving Him as they should. Hosea married Gomer, and they had three children. Hosea loved Gomer even though she had made him sad. **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL.** Even when we do not love God as we should, He still loves us. God showed His love by sending Jesus to save us. 🗨️

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 PAINT WITH MARBLES

Cut construction paper into heart shapes. Place marbles in a small cup with washable paint. Assist preschoolers with placing a smock over their clothing. Invite a preschooler to place her paper in the shallow tray. Demonstrate how to spoon the marbles out of the cup and onto the paper. Encourage her to gently tilt the tray so that the marbles move and paint the paper. Print the “Key Passage Phrase Label” printable and invite children to add a label to their completed artwork.

SAY “Hearts make me think of love. **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL.** Our key passage phrase reminds us to follow the Lord our God. Hosea followed God by marrying Gomer and telling the people to turn back to God, who would still love them and would take care of them after they were punished.”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Print and display a copy of the “George and Joan Braswell Photo” printable. Lead preschoolers to pretend to take a trip to another country. Ask them what they will pack. Then guide them to pretend being on a boat and ask what they see and feel on a boat. Then pretend to fly on an airplane and ask preschoolers to name what they might see. Pray, thanking God for the Braswells’ willingness to be missionaries in another country.

SAY “The Braswells felt God leading them to be missionaries. Later, George, Joan, and their three children sailed on a boat to Rome and then flew on an airplane. Eventually they arrived in the country of Iran to be missionaries.”

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 “Even when we do not love God as we should, He still loves us. God showed His love by sending Jesus to save us.”

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 WEAR HEART STICKERS

Give each child a heart sticker as they come to group time. Tell preschoolers that hearts remind us of love and that **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL**.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Hosea. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

- God told Hosea to marry Gomer, who would not love him completely, to show how the people of Israel were not loving God as they should.
- Hosea and Gomer had three children with names from God: Jezreel (trouble), No Mercy (punishment), and Not My People (disobedience).
- Gomer ran away, just like the people of Israel ran away from God, but Hosea went after her and brought her back home.
- Hosea told the people to return to God, who still loved them and would take care of them after their punishment.
- Even when we do not love God fully, He still loves us and showed His love by sending Jesus to save us.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”:

You must follow the LORD your God.
You must follow the LORD your God.
You must follow the LORD your God.
Deuteronomy 13:4

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Deuteronomy 13:4. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Tell preschoolers that we can follow the Lord by loving Him and showing love to others. Encourage preschoolers to whisper the key passage phrase with you very quietly several times.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for loving us and sending Jesus to save us.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 MAKE PLAY DOUGH LETTERS



Place play dough out for preschoolers to explore. Demonstrate how to roll the play dough into a long rope. Guide preschoolers to form letters with the play dough. Some preschoolers may recognize the first letter of their name. Invite them to create that letter with the play dough.

SAY “ You used play dough to make some of the letters in your name. Names are very special. Hosea and Gomer had three children with special names. The names were messages from God. Jezreel meant trouble. No Mercy meant that God would punish the people of Israel. Not My People meant that the people were not obeying God. Hosea told the people of Israel to turn back to God, who still loved them and would take care of them. **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL.** ”

7 CARE FOR BABY DOLLS

Place dolls, blankets, doll clothes, books, and toy bottles in a quiet area of the classroom. Encourage preschoolers to care for the dolls. Demonstrate how to dress the babies and wrap them in blankets. Invite preschoolers to pretend to feed the babies and read them books. Encourage preschoolers to sing songs to the babies and rock them to sleep.

SAY “ I like the way you are caring for the babies. Hosea and Gomer had three children in their family, but Gomer did not stay with her family. She went away, just like the people of Israel went away from God. Hosea went to find Gomer, and he brought her back home. He loved her even though she had made him sad. Hosea told the people of Israel to turn back to God, who still loved them. Even when we do not love God as we should, He still loves us. God showed His love by sending Jesus to save us. ”

8 WORK FAMILY PUZZLES

Place puzzles featuring families and people on the table. Simple puzzles can be made by printing pictures of people or families onto heavyweight paper and cutting them into pieces. Invite preschoolers to complete the puzzles. Older preschoolers may enjoy the challenge of mixing the puzzle pieces from several different puzzles together and sorting them before completing the puzzle or hiding the puzzle pieces in a bag and revealing the pieces one at a time.

SAY “ God told Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer, but Gomer would not love Hosea completely. God wanted to show how the people of Israel were not loving Him as they should. Gomer went away just like the people of Israel went away from God. Hosea still loved her and brought her back home. Hosea told the people of Israel to turn back to God, who still loved them and would take care of them. **GOD IS LOVING AND FAITHFUL.** ”

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