

THE PROPHET MALACHI

MALACHI



CHRIST CONNECTION: Malachi told everyone that another messenger, John the Baptist, would come to get people ready for Jesus, God's Son, who came to save people from their sins.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God's plan to save people through Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah.
John 20:31

STORY POINT: Malachi told the people to remember God's promises.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The book of Malachi reveals how people who have experienced God’s miraculous works can quickly turn away from following Him. God had delivered His people from captivity and helped them restore Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. And yet, shortly after their promise to obey the Lord’s commands, they were living in a way that was displeasing to Him. Complacency and corruption had replaced faithfulness to God’s Word.

Malachi told the people they were offering blemished sacrifices. He revealed how their leaders—particularly the priests—were leading the people astray. Malachi also told the people they had dishonored God in their marriages in two ways: First, they married women of foreign descent who worshiped other gods. Second, men were divorcing their wives for unjust and selfish reasons—treating marriage as if it were disposable.

Despite the unfaithfulness of God’s people, God again remained faithful. In Malachi 3, God told them that He had not destroyed them because they are His people. He called them to return to Him. He promised that if they returned to Him, He would return to them. God invited them to repent and return to Him just as He did time and time again throughout the Old Testament.

As Malachi urged the people to return to God, he also foretold the coming Messiah—Jesus. Malachi spoke of the sun of righteousness who would bring healing—a picture of Jesus as the light of the world who would bring redemption. Specifically in Malachi 3, God shared His plan to send a messenger who would clear the way for the Messiah. In His sovereignty, God fulfilled this prophecy through the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, as one crying out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight” (Luke 3:4).

The book of Malachi serves to remind us of the dangers of growing apathetic in our walk with the Lord. Help kids see how Malachi also reminds us that when we do fall short, God is faithful and ready to restore us when we turn back to Him. Through Jesus, we see God’s grace and mercy to redeem and restore all who trust in Him.



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

30–40 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel



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

Make art presses in play dough

- Big Picture Question Poster
- play dough rollers



LEARN

Tell the Bible story

- "The Prophet Malachi" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Explore a sensory bin

- large shallow bin
- shredded paper
- magnetic or wooden letters

Speak messages to friends

- toy microphone
- toy megaphone
- toy phone
- pool noodle



LIVE

Make M for Messiah

- Key Passage Phrase Marker
- colored craft sticks, 4 per child

Missions activity

- "Bowman Family Photos" printable

Snack and transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Join Two Halves" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Write shaving cream messages

- foam plates, 1 per child
- shaving cream
- art smocks, 1 per child

Make calf hoof prints

- toy cow figures
- ink pads
- art smocks



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, story point, 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 room. 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.

MAKE ART PRESSES IN PLAY DOUGH

Position a preschool height table just inside the classroom door. Place the Big Picture Question Poster in the center of the table. Place play dough, play dough rollers, animal figures, and blocks on the table next to the Big Picture Question Poster. As children arrive, guide them to flatten the dough using their hands and the play dough rollers. Demonstrate how to make prints in the dough using the animal figures and the blocks. As children play, review the big picture question.

SAY “ Welcome everyone! I am so happy you are here. Did you enjoy making art with play dough? [Allow responses.] What have you made for me to see today? [Allow responses.] In today’s Bible story, a man named **MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER GOD’S PROMISES**. Malachi told God’s people that a special messenger would come to get everyone ready for Jesus. We can read this good news in the Bible book of Malachi. **What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God’s plan to save people through Jesus**. This news made God’s people very happy. ”

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





LEARN the Bible Story

1 PLAY AN OPPOSITES GAME



Gather preschoolers to play an opposites game. Ask the children if they know what “opposite” means. Explain that it means something very different, like going the other way. Give the example of sitting down as the opposite of standing up. Tell the children that you are going to give them some directions, and that they should do the opposite of what you say. Ask them to do the opposite of touching their heads, looking up, reaching upward, standing up, sitting down, facing forward, and so forth.

SAY “When I asked you to sit down, you stood up. When I told you to touch your head, you touched your toes. Every time I told you to do something, you did the opposite. We were just playing a game, but in today’s Bible story, we will learn how God’s people disobeyed Him. They did the opposite of what He said!”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

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

THE PROPHET MALACHI

SAY “The Jewish people were home in the land God gave them. They were waiting for God to bless them, but nothing happened. Some people wondered if God still loved them.

God did love them! The people had been making wrong choices, so God sent a man named Malachi to talk to them.

The teachers were supposed to teach the people about God, but they were not telling the truth. Malachi warned that one day God would come to see who was doing good and who was doing bad. God would give good things to those who did the right things and punish those who did the wrong things.

God also said, “I will send someone special to get people ready for me.”

This special person would say, “Someone even more special is coming! Get ready!” That most special person would be Jesus, the Savior God promised.

Malachi also told the people that God wanted them to share. God promised, “One day, the people who love Me will be very happy, like little calves jumping around!”

After Malachi, there were no more messengers from God for a long time—about 400 years.”

Christ Connection: Malachi told everyone that another messenger, John the Baptist, would come to get people ready for Jesus, God’s Son, who came to save people from their sins.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Show the Bible Story Picture Poster to the children. Point to the picture of Malachi and ask the children to say who the man is. (Malachi) Continue pointing to Malachi and ask: Why did God send Malachi? (to talk to the people) What did Malachi tell the people? (God will send someone to get the people ready for Him.) Point to the picture of John and ask who this man is. (John) Continue pointing to John and ask: Who is this person? (another messenger) What will John tell the people? (to get ready for Jesus)

SAY “ God’s people had been disobeying, so God sent Malachi to talk to them. **MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER GOD’S PROMISES.** Malachi also told everyone that another messenger, John the Baptist, would come to get people ready for Jesus, God’s Son, who came to save people from their sins. ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “God Is So Good”:

God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus,
The Bible tells us so.

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 20:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage phrase aloud. Prompt children to stand up and to spin around while saying the key passage with you. Direct the children to be seated. Ask the children to tell you what it means to make good choices. Say the key passage phrase together.

SAY “ We talked about what it means to make good choices. To sin is to do, say, or think something that displeases God. Our key passage phrase reminds us that the Bible is about God’s plan to send Jesus to save us from sin. God sent Malachi to talk to the people because they were making bad choices. **MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER GOD’S PROMISES.** One of God’s promises was to send a Savior, Jesus. **What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God’s plan to save people through Jesus.** ”

6 PRAY

Pray, asking God to help us remember His promises and obey His laws.

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





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 COUNT TO 100

Gather 100 items such as crayons, markers, or blocks. Place a group of 5 items on the table and invite the children to count out their own group of 5. Encourage the children to count out additional groups of 5 items until there are 20 groups—a total of 100 items.

SAY 🗨️ We have 20 groups of 5 items here. That is 100 items. [Point to each group of items as you count by 5 to 100.] Wow! We counted to 100. That is a lot. Today, we heard how a prophet named **MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES** to send a messenger to get God's people ready for the Savior. It was 400 years from the time that Malachi spoke to God's people until John the Baptist came to get people ready for Jesus. We learn about John the Baptist and Malachi in the Bible. **What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God's plan to save people through Jesus.** 🗨️

2 EXPLORE A LETTER SENSORY BIN

Place a large, shallow bin on a sturdy table and fill with shredded paper. Bury letters beneath the surface of the shredded paper. Invite a child to search through the bin with his hands to find the letters. As the child finds a buried letter, prompt him to lift it out and place it on the table next to the bin. Say what the letter is. When he finds all the letters, guide him to hide them back in the bin under the paper for another child's turn.

SAY 🗨️ What are some of the letters that you found in the bin? [Allow responses.] Letters make up words that we can read or speak. In our Bible story, a man named Malachi talked to God's people. **MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES.** Malachi told everyone that another messenger, John the Baptist, would come to get people ready for Jesus, God's Son, who came to save people from their sins. 🗨️

3 SPEAK MESSAGES TO FRIENDS

Display a toy megaphone, phone, microphone, and pool noodle. Encourage several children to come and speak messages to their friends. Demonstrate how to speak through the megaphone and the microphone. Give the child a phone and prompt him to "call" a friend. Show a child how to hold one end of a pool noodle to his ear while another child talks to him through the other end. Guide the children to speak messages to their friends such as "Jesus is coming," "God wants us to obey Him," "God loves us," "God cares for us," and "Jesus saves us."

SAY 🗨️ A messenger is someone who speaks messages. Today, you spoke messages about God to your friends. God sent Malachi to talk to the people because they had been making wrong choices. Malachi warned the people and said that God would come to see who was doing good and who was doing bad. **MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES.** 🗨️

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 MAKE M FOR MESSIAH

Make copies of the Key Passage Phrase Marker for each child. Distribute phrase markers, construction paper, glue, and four colored craft sticks to each child. Demonstrate how to arrange the four craft sticks onto the paper to create a capital letter M. Assist preschoolers in gluing their craft stick M to their paper. Read the key passage phrase aloud and assist the children in placing their phrase maker along the bottom of their pages.

SAY “ Our key passage phrase says, ‘These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah. John 20:31.’ Messiah starts with the letter M, just like the one you have made on your paper. God sent the Messiah, Jesus, to save people from their sin. ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Print and display a copy of the “Bowman Family Photos” printable. Mention that Valley Life Church has faced some hard times.

SAY “ Valley Life Church was damaged and robbed a few times, but they continue to share the good news about Jesus. Pastor Brian Bowman and the church members want to help all people in the area know more about God and His Son, Jesus. Valley Life Church wants to be ready to start new churches in nearby neighborhoods. Valley Life Church wants everyone know about Jesus. [Lead a prayer.] ”

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 “ Malachi told everyone that another messenger, John the Baptist, would come to get people ready for Jesus, God’s Son, who came to save people from their sins. ”

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 PLAY A “MIRROR ME” GAME

Greet the children and invite them to play a game. Guide the children to stand and face you. Say that you are going to do several slow motions and that they should act like your reflection in the mirror and do everything as you do it. Practice a motion such as lifting your right arm up and down. Then do additional motions: lifting your left arm up and down, nodding your head, lifting and lowering each leg, bending at the waist to the right and left, and so forth. When you are finished, thank the children for following directions.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to the book of Malachi. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

THE PROPHET MALACHI

- The Jewish people were waiting for God to bless them, but nothing happened. They wondered if God still loved them.
- God loved them, but they were making wrong choices, called sin, so He sent Malachi to warn them and remind them to do the right things.
- Malachi said God would send a special person to get people ready for Jesus, the Savior.
- After Malachi, no more messengers came from God for a long time, but after hundreds of years, John the Baptist would come to get people ready for Jesus.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “God Is So Good”:

God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus,
The Bible tells us so.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 20:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Say the phrase together. Guide the children to whisper the key passage then to shout it. Tell the children that our key passage is a good message to tell others. Ask them to tell you other good messages about Jesus they can tell others.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for His good promises. Ask Him to help us remember His promises, even when it’s hard.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 PLAY A MESSAGE GAME



Invite the children to play a game with you. Arrange the children in a seated circle facing inward. Tell the children that you are going to whisper a message into the ear of the child sitting next to you. Explain that the child's job is to whisper the same message into the ear of the child next to him. Guide the children to "pass" the message around the circle by whispering it in the ear of the child sitting next to them. Prompt the last child in the circle to say the message out loud. Messages to whisper: "God loves you," "God sent Jesus," "Malachi told about Jesus," "John was God's special messenger," "God keeps His promises."

SAY "We whispered messages to our friends about God and about Jesus. Long before Jesus was born, God spoke through a man named Malachi. **MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES.** He taught that another messenger, John the Baptist, would come to get people ready for Jesus, God's Son, who came to save people from their sins."

7 WRITE SHAVING CREAM MESSAGES



Assist children in putting on art smocks. Squirt a small mound of shaving cream onto foam plates, one for each child. Invite children to be seated around a table. Place a plate in front of each child. Prompt the children to write, draw, or swirl with their fingers in the shaving cream. Demonstrate for the children how to use a finger to draw letters: J for John or Jesus, M for Malachi or messenger, B for Bible, or G for God. Immediately wash hands once play is finished.

SAY "Isn't the shaving cream fun to play with? [Allow responses.] We practiced writing messages by writing different letters in the shaving cream with our fingers. We wrote an M for Malachi. **MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES.** We also wrote a J for John and for Jesus. Malachi told everyone that another messenger, John the Baptist, would come to get people ready for Jesus, God's Son, who came to save people from their sins."

8 MAKE CALF HOOF PRINTS

Assist children in putting on art smocks. Distribute papers with the key passage phrase, ink pads, and toy cow figures to children. Demonstrate for the children how to press the hooves of the cow figures into the ink pads and press the hooves onto the paper creating animal prints. Encourage the children to make several sets of prints on their papers.

SAY "In today's Bible story, **MALACHI TOLD THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES.** He said the people would be so happy one day, they would be like little calves jumping around. Isn't that a fun expression? Malachi was telling the people that they would be happy because God would send a special person as a messenger to get people ready for Jesus, the Savior."

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