

Living the Word: Teaching Youth God's Story

Narrative Lectionary, Year 3

God Speaks Through Jeremiah: A New Covenant
Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34

Lesson #3-11

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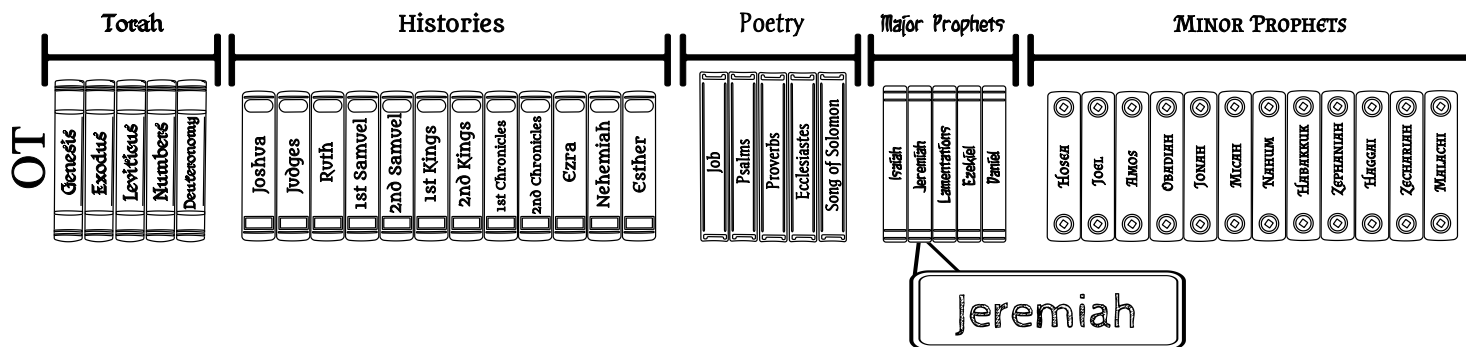
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God Speaks Through Jeremiah: A New Covenant

Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34

The Word of God prevails! In today's passage, we see God's activity through the written and spoken word of God. Regardless of the response by the readers and hearers, God holds fast to promises made.

Story Connections

Throughout Scripture, we see a covenantal God. God promised never to destroy the world with a flood again. God promised Abraham countless descendants. God covenanted with the Israelites to be their God and for them to be God's people. Through Moses, God gave the Ten Commandments, a covenant soon broken by the Israelites. In Jeremiah, we see a reference to a new covenant.

Story Summary

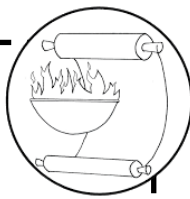
A New Covenant

The Lord spoke to Jeremiah with a message for the people of Israel. The message consisted of the consequences for their evil

Lesson @ A Glance

#3-11: God Speak Through
Jeremiah: A New Covenant

Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34



The Point: No matter what we do, God's word prevails with a promise of a new covenant!

Making Connections: God Sightings

Spiritual Practice Emphasis: Service

Bible Nuts and Bolts: Prophecy

ways. Jeremiah asked Baruch to write the words of God's message on a scroll. With hopes that the people would repent, he sent Baruch into the temple to read the scroll to the crowd. After Baruch read the scroll, the king commanded the scroll be sent to him. The king cut off the parts that had been read and threw them into the fire one by one until the entire scroll was burned.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah again. Jeremiah was told to rewrite the words that were on the first scroll. God then added more words to say that even though

the people broke the last covenant, the Lord is faithful to the promise of a new covenant, to be their God and forgive their sins.

The Point

No matter what we do, God's word prevails with a promise of a new covenant! Our response does not change the fact that God is faithful and stands by the promise of a new covenant.

“...for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.”
Jeremiah 31:34b

Bible Nuts & Bolts: Prophecy

The prophetic books of the Bible are records of prophecies, the messages spoken by prophets of God. In Scripture, a prophet of God is one who speaks or embodies God's message. Prophets often spoke in symbolic language requiring interpretation, but their message generally fell into one of three categories: criticism of the people's behavior, a call to change, or a promise of future action (threat of punishment or promise of deliverance). The purpose of a prophet's message was to motivate change in attitudes or behavior. Scripture gives accounts of prophecy often followed by fulfillment of prophecy.

For Your Reflection:

1. What goes through your mind when you reach out to a group of youth and see blank stares looking back at you?
2. How can you help youth see that work for God is worth it even when there is opposition?

Spiritual Practice: Service

Jeremiah was relentless in his service. He had a message to tell, and nothing was going to keep him from fulfilling his calling. What opposition do you face when reaching out with acts of service for God? Make a commitment today to trust God to lead, protect, and inspire you to persevere with your calling for service.

Overview, Objectives, and Materials You'll Need

Core Elements

Short on time?
Items marked +
can be adjusted to be done with
what you probably already
have in your pocket or
classroom.

Into the Story

10 min.

› Broken mirror

Promises

Reflect on promises made, kept, and broken.

+Learning the Story

15 min.

› Bibles

A New Covenant

Discover mercy in the scrolls as revealed in today's reading.

Living the Story

15 min.

› Parchment paper
› Yarn or ribbon
› Scissors
› Pens or pencils

Covenant Scrolls

Commit to serving others.

+Sending the Story

5 min.

› None

Extending the Learning:

Hands On <i>Scrolled Tiles</i> <i>Baked scrolled tiles.</i>	30 min.	› Bibles › Kitchen supplies › Ingredients for scrolled tiles (may vary) › Small plastic bags
Mixed Media <i>Photo Boards</i> <i>Using photography and random routine objects creatively photo board the story.</i>	15 min.	› Bibles › Cameras › Internet-connected devices › Optional: printer
+The Competitive Edge <i>Secrets in the Scrolls</i> <i>Follow clues hidden in scrolls to solve a mystery.</i>	15 min.	› Bibles › Activity Sheet #3-11.A › Colored paper
Simply Serving <i>Provisions</i> <i>Complete the act of service.</i>	20 min.	› Supplies from previous weeks (based on the project)
+Worship Connection <i>Human Rainbow</i> <i>Create a human rainbow of hope in God's faithfulness.</i>	15 min.	› Camera › Optional: youths' coats, sweaters, and hoodies

Into the Story: Promises (10 minutes)

Reflect on promises made, kept, and broken.

DURING CLASS:

Supplies:

› Broken mirror

1. Display or hold up a broken mirror throughout this activity. **Sometimes things break. Sometimes we break things. Sometimes worse than things breaking, promises are broken.**
2. **How would you define the word promise?** *[Answers will vary; accept all answers.]*
3. **What are some examples of the kinds of promises people make?** *[Answers will vary; wedding vows, promise not to do something again, promise to do something.]*
4. **What are some of the promises that people break?** *[Answers will vary; politicians break their promises made during campaigns; kids break their promises to obey; couples break their vows, people in court break their promise to tell the truth.]*
5. **What has it felt like when a promise made to you was not kept?** *[Answers will vary.]*
6. Draw attention to the mirror.
7. **If you are comfortable sharing, when have you ever broken a promise?** *[Answers will vary; do not pressure anyone to share.]*
8. **There is one who is faithful to be a promise keeper even when we fail to keep our promises. We are going to dig deeper to learn more about that promise keeper today.**

Learning the Story:

A New Covenant (15 minutes)

Discover mercy in the scrolls as revealed in today's reading.

DURING CLASS:

Supplies:

› Bibles

1. Ask the youth to open their Bibles to Jeremiah 36.
2. **What kinds of words do you expect to find in a scroll?** *[Answers will vary; royal announcements or decrees, invitations to something fancy, some type of constitution or formal document, etc.]*
3. Read Jeremiah 36:1.
4. Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 36:2-3.
5. Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 36:4.
6. Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 36:5-7.
7. Read Jeremiah 36:8.
8. **What was the intended outcome of the frightening words on the scroll?** *[To motivate people to repent.]* **What besides the extreme of fear of adversity might lead a person to repent** (or turn one's life around and follow God)? *[Answers will vary; love, reasoning, experience of others, hitting rock bottom.]*
9. Read Jeremiah 36:21.
10. Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 36:22-23.
11. **Even the fear of adversity did not motivate the king to want to repent. What makes a person become this unwilling to listen to God?** *[Answers will vary.]* **Do you think a person has a right not to listen to God?** *[Answers will vary.]* **Do you think it is reasonable to expect consequences for not listening to God, with or without warning?** *[Answers will vary.]* **How many chances do you think a person should get?** *[Answers will vary.]*
12. Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 36:27-28.
13. **What does this tell you about God's love for humankind?** *[God's love is patient and longsuffering; God's love is merciful and unconditional.]*
14. Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 31:31-34.
15. **What is the first covenant that the Israelites broke?** *[The Ten Commandments; having no other gods.]*
16. **What are four parts of the covenant outlined in verse 33?** *[God would put the law in their minds; God write the law on their hearts; God would be their God; they would be God's people.]*
17. **Why do you think God did for the people what they were supposed to be doing for themselves** (teaching the law of God)? *[Answers will vary; God knew they were going to continue to go off track.]*
18. Ask a volunteer to reread the last sentence of Jeremiah 31:34.

19. **What does it mean to you that not only will God forgive your sin, but also that God will not remember your sin?** *[Answers will vary.]*
20. **Why is it sometimes difficult for us to forget our own sin when we have confessed it and God has already forgiven, forgotten, and given us a clean slate?** *[Answers will vary.]*
21. **Why do we remind ourselves or others of other people's sins when God has already forgiven, forgotten, and given them a clean slate?** *[Answers will vary.]*
22. **After seeing how God handled the situation in Jeremiah's day, how inclined are you to want to draw closer to the God of the new covenant?** *[Answers will vary.]*

Living the Story:

Covenant Scrolls (15 minutes)

Commit to serving others.

DURING CLASS:

Supplies:

- › Parchment paper
- › Yarn or ribbon
- › Scissors
- › Pens or pencil

1. **Each youth will make four small scrolls committing to perform a particular service for a specific person.** Distribute two pieces of parchment paper to each youth. **Cut one piece of paper into quarters. Write a service commitment on each quarter (scroll) including your name and contact information, the recipient's name, what you will do, and a date when you will have completed the service (perhaps the end of the year). Roll the scroll and tie it with ribbon or yarn. Keep a record of these commitments on a personal scroll (the other piece of paper) so you can be reminded to keep your promises. Check each one off as you complete the service.**
2. Help the youth brainstorm for their service commitments. They might offer a free night of babysitting service to a single mother, free driveway or sidewalk shoveling, free vacuuming of a house, reading stories to someone's children, walking a dog, washing dishes, etc.
3. At the end of the activity, remind the youth to deliver the scrolls.

Hands On: Scrolled Tuiles (30 minutes)

Bake scrolled tuiles.

BEFORE CLASS:

1. If you have your own tuile recipe, use that. If you do not have a recipe, use this or find another in your favorite cookbook or online:

<http://www.marthastewart.com/313879/scrolled-tuiles>

2. Prepare the kitchen.

Supplies:

- › Bibles
- › Kitchen supplies
- › Ingredients for scrolled tuiles (will vary)
- › Small plastic bags

DURING CLASS:

1. Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 36:1-4.
2. Ask another volunteer to read Jeremiah 36:27-29.
3. **We are going to make scrolled tuiles—wafer cookies—today, and let us hope we do not burn them!**
4. Make enough tuiles for each youth to keep one and put one in a plastic bag to give away.
5. **When you give away a tuile, tell the recipient that no matter what we do, God's word prevails with a promise of a new covenant.**
6. The youth should clean the kitchen, leaving it the way they found it.

Mixed Media: Photo Boards (15 minutes)

Using photography and random routine objects creatively photo board the story.

DURING CLASS:

1. Divide the youth into groups.
2. **Are you up for a mixed media challenge? You are going to use pictures to tell today's story from Jeremiah. It is the how and the pictures *of what* that will be the challenge. Working in small groups, you are going to use cell phones, tablets, or other cameras to take pictures of random objects or *parts* of objects that you find here in the room. You will then use these pictures to tell today's story. This will take some clever thinking, and objects can be used to represent other things or ideas. Open your eyes and look around the room carefully, trying not to overlook photo opportunities, big or small. Try to keep your group's ideas from the others as best you can. When you finish, we will come together and view each group's story picture board.**
3. Give the youth time to refresh their memory of the Bible story. They may be slow at first with the ideas for photos, but once they get going this will take off.
4. When the youth are done, the way that you share the picture boards is up to you. You may show pictures on the camera devices themselves, or you may ask the youth to post them to Instagram or another shared page where groups can access each other's work. Optional: groups can print their pictures.

Supplies

- › Bibles
- › Cameras
- › Internet-connected devices
- › Optional: printer

The Competitive Edge:

Secrets in the Scrolls (15 minutes)

Follow clues hidden in scrolls to solve a mystery.

BEFORE CLASS:

1. Make a copy of Activity Sheet #3-11.A for each team, using a different color paper for each team's copy.
2. Cut out the sections and roll and tie each like a scroll.
3. Hide the scrolls in various places around the room.

Supplies:

- › Bibles
- › Activity Sheet #3-11.A
- › Colored paper

DURING CLASS:

1. Assign each team a color to correspond with the scrolls.
2. **Your mission today is to find your team's eight clues to solve a mystery. You cannot begin solving the mystery until you have found all eight clues.**
3. **The winning team is the team that has all eight answers, including the final mystery's solution.**
4. After the game is over say, **No matter what we do, God's Word prevails with a promise of a new covenant!**

Answer key:

But
10
Broke
King
Turn
9
Know
3, 8, New Covenant

Simply Serving: Provisions (30 minutes)

Complete the act of service.

Note: this may take longer than 30 minutes depending on the size of the youth group, the amount of donations, and the number of recipients.

Supplies

› Supplies from previous week

BEFORE CLASS:

1. During the week, remind youth to arrive early and to refresh their memory of their roles for the project.
2. Double check to be sure the facility will be unlocked, and youth will have access to the items locked away last week.

DURING CLASS:

1. Make sure that everyone is in place and knows what to do.
2. The youth will carry out their service project. After carrying out the project, they should clean the area and then gather for a time of debriefing.
 - **What part of the project, from the first week through today's delivery did you feel went well?**
 - **What part(s) can we improve upon the next time?**
 - **Our Lord Jesus came not to be served, but to serve. We are called to do the same. Share your feelings about this experience of putting love into action and serving others in Jesus' name.**
 - **What were some of the responses that you received from those you served?**
 - **Often, both the recipients and those who do the serving are blessed through activities such as the one you planned and carried out today.**

Worship Connection:

Human Rainbow (15 minutes)

Create a human rainbow of hope in God's faithfulness.

DURING CLASS:

Supplies

- › Camera
- › Optional: youths' coats, sweaters, or hoodies

1. **The rainbow was set in the sky as a reminder of a specific promise, but we often use rainbows to remember that God is a faithful promise keeper. Even when we are not faithful, God remains faithful to us and to God's character.**
2. **We are going to form a human rainbow on the floor to thank God for keeping the new covenant. Although the formation part might be a bit silly or fun, lining feet and setting up the layers, we will also take time to thank God for the sky rainbow and dedicate this human rainbow back to God.** (The size of the group will determine if you need to make several rainbows or one big rainbow.)
3. Optional: if a human rainbow might cause some to feel uncomfortable, create a rainbow using the youth's coats, sweaters, and hoodies. Ask them to pay attention to where their belongings are, so there will not be chaos finding things after the activity.
4. When the rainbow is formed, take a photo. If they are making the human rainbow, the participating youth may ask you to take photos of them with their cell phones, so allow time to do that for them.
5. **Let us weave our way around the rainbow and call out prayers of thanks to God for the promises that bless our lives.**
6. After those popcorn-type prayers, respond with, **Lord, help us keep our promises to you. Amen.** You may choose to pray this or pray and ask the youth to repeat your prayer.

Sending the Story (5 minutes)

As hard as we try not to, we mess up. A lot. It is comforting to know that no matter what we do, God's word prevails with a keeping of the promise of a new covenant.

Review and Questions

- **What is the new covenant?** *[A promise of forgiveness; a promise that we belong to God.]*
- **What difference does it make to you that God is a promise keeper?** *[Answers will vary.]*

Sending Prayer:

Rather than holding hands in a circle when praying, hold pinkies in a pinky promise style.

Thank you, God, for fulfilling promises even when we are not as faithful on our end. Amen.

Remember to send "The Story @ Home" take home sheet with students before dismissing them.

Scroll Relay

Follow clues in scrolls to solve a mystery.

1. Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34 Of the words that begin with the letter B in the passages above, this small word introduces something big.	2. Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34 How many times is the word scroll used in the passages above?
3. Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34 What five letter word tells what happened with the first covenant?	4. Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34 Listen, cut, burn. Who am I?

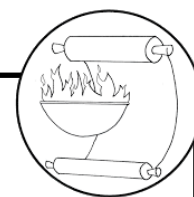
Scroll Relay

Follow clues in scrolls to solve a mystery.

5. Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34 Rhymes with burn What the people needed to do from their evil ways.	6. Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34 What number month was it when the King heard the words on the scroll?
7. Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34 Spell me one way: Shake your head. Spell me another: It is in your head. The Lord says the people would _____ God.	8. Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34 After you have gathered all the scrolls and answered the clues, use your answers to complete the following: How many letters are in the small word that began with a B? What number comes before the two numbers in your answers? What two words of hope use the number of letters in your two answers above?

God Speaks Through Jeremiah: A New Covenant

The Story @ Home + Youth #3-11
Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34



The Point

No matter what we do, God's word prevails with a promise of a new covenant! Today's story is important because our weakness does not have the final say. Our imperfections do not determine God's love for us. Our response does not change the fact that God is faithful and stands by the promise of a new covenant. Just as was prophesied in the Old Testament, the Messiah came to earth to deliver humankind. The Messiah died so that we can have new life through Jesus.

Story Connections

Throughout Scripture, we see a covenant God. God promised never to destroy the world with a flood again.

God promised Abraham countless descendants. God covenanted with the Israelites to be their God and for them to be God's people. Through Moses, God gave the Ten Commandments, a covenant soon broken by the Israelites.

In Jeremiah, we see a reference to a new covenant.

Spiritual Practice: Service

Jeremiah had a message to tell, and nothing was going to keep him from fulfilling his calling. What can your family do to spread the message of God's love? Consider purchasing a few Bibles or New Testaments to deliver to a local shelter or similar location along with donations of food, clothing, or whatever else the organization needs. Make a commitment to trust God to lead, protect, and inspire you to persevere with your calling for service.

Story Summary

A New Covenant

The Lord spoke to Jeremiah with a message for the people of Israel. The message consisted of the consequences for their evil ways. Jeremiah asked Baruch to write the words of God's message on a scroll. With hopes that the people would repent, he sent Baruch into the temple to read the scroll to the crowd. After Baruch read the scroll, the king commanded the scroll be sent to him. The king cut off the parts that had been read and threw them into the fire one by one until the entire scroll was burned. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah again saying to rewrite the words that were on the first scroll. God is faithful to the new covenant.

Last Week/Next Week

Last week, Isaiah was called to serve as a prophet. Similar to Isaiah's message, in today's reading Jeremiah proclaims that the God of Israel is one who sustains, judges, and is thoroughly involved in human affairs. Next week we read the story of Daniel and the lions' den and are encouraged by the hope that God's kingdom will not be destroyed.

Bible Nuts and Bolts: Prophecy

In reading and interpreting Scripture, it is important to understand as much as possible the genre(s) of that book or passage. A genre is a certain style or form of writing. The prophetic books of the Bible (genre: prophecy) are records of prophecies, words spoken by prophets of God. A prophet of God is one who speaks a message given by God to be relayed to the people. These messages were often a criticism of the people's behavior, a call to change, or a promise of future action (punishment or deliverance). God used the prophets to motivate change in the attitudes or behavior of those for whom the message was intended. As we read through Scripture, we can see records of prophecy followed by fulfillment of those prophecies.

God Speaks Through Jeremiah: A New Covenant

The Story @ Home + Youth #3-11
Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34

Going Deeper

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? Consider the following basic pattern as a way of forming family devotions:

- ✦ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time." Pray a simple prayer together.
- ✦ Take a moment to check in with each other; what are each person's "highs" and "lows" today?
- ✦ Read aloud from the Daily Bible Readings from below. Discuss the questions following each.
- ✦ End with a blessing, by simply tracing a cross on each other's forehead. The Lord's Prayer is a good way to end your devotion time. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotions.

Note: This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with your household's context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? Be creative and flexible with how you practice and keep your devotions!

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday - Read Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34

The King refused to accept the new covenant given through Jeremiah.

- What is something that you refused to believe or accept?
- Why was Jeremiah adamant about the scroll being read in the temple?

Monday - Read Jeremiah 39:11-18

Jeremiah was freed from prison.

- God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah when he was in prison. What does that say about God's closeness to you during hard times?
- What does God's protection and freeing of Jeremiah indicate about the importance of God's message being proclaimed?

Tuesday - Read Jeremiah 42:7-16

Jeremiah advises the people to stay where they are.

- How might you have responded if you were living in fear of the King of Babylon and thought there was a better life elsewhere?
- What does Jeremiah 42:13-18 indicate about God's perspective of disobedience?

Wednesday - Read Jeremiah 44:1-10

The people worship idols once again.

- Why are we drawn to focus on things other than God?
- What behaviors do you find it hard to stop even though they have led to negative consequences?

Thursday - Read Daniel 1:1-17

When Babylon besieged Jerusalem, several Israelite youths were taken to serve the Babylonian king.

- How did the captives fulfill their duties in the Babylonian court without compromising their devotion to God?
- How can you live in today's culture without compromising your devotion to God?

Friday - Read Daniel 3:1-18

Nebuchadnezzar the king commanded that everyone worship a golden image.

- Do you worship God because you want to or because you are doing what you are told?
- How do you handle the pressure when everyone else is doing something unwise and not joining them will make you stand out?

Saturday - Read Daniel 5:1-8, 13-16, 23-28

Daniel interprets writing on the wall.

- Do you think that God places us where we are for a purpose or that God finds a purpose for us where we are?
- What would make people turn away from God who gave them life and breath to worship gods that were made by human hands?