

Topic: Creation of the World, Creation of Man & Woman Lesson 1
Scriptures: Genesis 1-2

Time Period: BEFORE THE FLOOD

Concept: God created the whole world and it was perfect. The garden was perfect and no sin was in the world. But Adam and Eve disobeyed and sin continued in the world. When we sin we ruin our relationship with God.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. There was nothing in the earth, only God and darkness existed. Then God said, "Let there be light", and there was light. God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. This was the first day of creation.

On the second day of creation God said "Let the waters be separated", he separated the space between the waters on the earth and the waters above the earth. He called the space "sky".

On the third day God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let dry land appear." God called the dry land "earth" and the waters "seas". God then said let "plants, flowers and trees grow on the earth." The plants, flowers and trees grew and God saw that they were good.

On the fourth day God said, "Let there be lights in the sky to separate the day from the night." So God made the sun to shine during the day and the moon and stars to shine at night.

On the fifth day God said "Let the waters be filled with living creatures and the skies be filled with birds." So God created all the fish and sea animals to live in the sea and all the birds that fly in the air.

On the sixth day God created animals to roam the earth and He saw that his creation was good. Then God created man, in His own image. God took dust from the ground and formed a man. With his own breath, God breathed life into the man. This man's name is Adam. Then God saw that Adam needed a helper, so he took a rib from the man and created woman, this was Adam's wife, Eve. God looked at his creation and said it was very good.

God planted a garden in Eden, and He placed Adam and Eve in the garden to live and care for it. God said "You may eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of that tree, you will die."

On the seventh day God ended His work, and He rested.

Jesus Connection: God created the whole world in 6 days and rested on the 7th. Everything God made was good and was created through Him, by Him, and for Him. Everything was made to bring glory to God.

Big Picture Question: Who created everything?

Big Picture Answer: God created everything. He created the world and people to bring Him glory.

Topic: Sin of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel
Scriptures: Genesis 3-4

Lesson 2

Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden. God told them they could eat from the tree of life or any other tree in the garden; except for one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

There was a serpent (who was Satan) in the garden who came to Eve and asked, "Did God tell you that you could eat the fruit from any tree in the garden?" Eve answered, "We may eat the fruit from any tree in the garden, except the tree in the middle of the garden. God told us if we ate the fruit of that tree we would die." The serpent told Eve that she would not die if she ate the fruit from that tree, but that she would instead become like God, knowing good and bad.

So Eve ate from the tree, and then gave some fruit to Adam, and he ate of it too. Immediately their eyes were opened and they saw that they were naked, and they were embarrassed. They went and made clothes for themselves by sewing leaves together.

Adam and Eve heard God walking in the Garden and were afraid. They tried to hide from God. God asked them why they hid, and if they had eaten from the tree which He told them not to. Adam said they did, but it was Eve's fault, she made him eat of the fruit of the tree. Eve blamed the serpent, saying he tricked her.

God was angry with Adam and Eve for not obeying Him, so He punished them. Adam and Eve had sinned. God told Eve that it would be painful for her to have children. He told Adam he would now have to work hard to grow food for him and his family, and God made the serpent to crawl on his belly and eat from the dust of the ground. God also threw Adam and Eve out of the garden and told them they could never come back. He put an Angel with a fiery sword to guard the entrance to the garden and the way to the tree of life.

Adam and Eve later had two sons named Cain and Abel. Abel was a shepherd, and Cain grew crops. One day, Cain gave God an offering of some of his crops, while Abel offered God the firstborn of his flock. God was pleased with Abel's offering, but not Cain's. So Cain became very angry and killed his brother Abel. Cain's sin ruined his relationship with God and he left God's presence.

Jesus Connection: God created the whole world and it was perfect. The garden was perfect and there was no sin in it. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sinned. Sin continued in the world when Cain killed his brother. Thankfully Jesus came to rescue us from our sin.

Big Picture Question: What is sin?

Big Picture Answer: Sin is breaking God's law, and it separates us from God.

Topic: Noah and the Flood
Scriptures: Genesis 6-9:17

Lesson 3

Time Period: THE FLOOD

Concept: Corruption on earth continued and God was not happy that His people were not following Him anymore. So He sent a flood to destroy the earth. After the flood, God made a promise and He continues to keep His promises!

The people who lived on the beautiful earth that God created were not good people. God became very sad and sorry that He had made them. Because they were so bad God decided to destroy the earth and everything in it. God found one good man on earth named Noah. God decided that He would save Noah and his family.

God told Noah that he wanted him to make a big boat called an ark. He told Noah exactly how to build the ark; 3 floors, 1 window, 1 door, 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high! This boat was huge! It had to be because God was going to use it to save Noah and his family. God was also going to save some of all the animals on the earth. God told Noah to gather the animals male and female, two of each kind, to the ark.

Noah obeyed all that God had said. It came time for Noah, his family, and the animals to enter the ark. Once they were all in, God shut the door of the ark. Then it began to do something that had never happened before. It began to rain! It rained for forty days and forty nights. All of the things of the earth were destroyed, but God kept His promise. Noah, his family, and all the animals were safe inside the ark.

It eventually stopped raining and the waters began to go down. The ark rested on top of a mountain named Ararat. Noah sent a dove out to see if it was time to come out of the ark. The dove flew around, but came back because there was no place for her to land. Seven days later Noah

sent the dove out again. This time she came back too, but she had an olive branch in her mouth.

Noah knew the waters had gone down even more. Noah waited seven more days and sent the dove out again. This time the dove did not come back. Noah knew it was safe to leave the ark since the dove did not return.

Noah, his family, and all the animals came out of the ark. Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and thanked Him for keeping them safe during the flood. God made another promise to Noah to never destroy the earth with water again. God put a rainbow in the sky as a sign of this promise.

Jesus Connection: God is serious about sin and will not leave it unpunished. But the story of Noah also shows us how loving God is, he provided a rescue plan for one righteous man Noah, and it extended to his family. Noah and the ark points to an even greater rescue - Jesus! He is the only perfect righteous person and He came to take punishment for our sins.

Big Picture Question: Why did God send a rainbow?

Big Picture Answer: God sent a rainbow to remind Noah that He will always keep his promises. Whenever we see a rainbow we can be reminded of God's great promise, too.

Topic: Tower of Babel
Scriptures: Genesis 9:1; 11

Lesson 4

Time Period: SCATTERING OF THE PEOPLE

Concept: After the flood the people of the whole earth were dispersed and the whole earth was filled with people of all tribes and nations.

After Noah and his family left the ark, God blessed them. He told them to have many children and fill the earth with people again. But the people settled in a valley in the land of Shinar. At this time, all the people spoke the same language.

The people began to say to one another, "Let's build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky. We'll make a name for ourselves, and it will show how great we are. Then we won't have to be scattered over the whole earth." They were trying to bring glory to themselves instead of God.

So the people began to make bricks, and they used those bricks to build their city and a tower. God came down to look at what the people were building. God knew if they continued to do this, they would just think of more bad things to do. So he mixed up their languages and their words. When the people tried to make plans for the tower, they couldn't understand each other!

The people began to move away in groups to live with those who spoke the same language. God scattered them all over the face of the earth - just as he had told them to do after the flood.

Jesus Connection: Instead of glorifying God, people chose to ignore God's plan and glorify themselves. This didn't stop God's plan to scatter the people and to form nations. One of these nations would become

God's chosen people, Israel. Through the nation of Israel, Jesus would come to save the world.

Big Picture Question: What happens when people sin?

Big Picture Answer: Sin separates people from God and one another.

Topic: Abraham leaves Ur, God's Covenant
Scriptures: Genesis 12:1-10; 15:1-6; 17:1-14

Lesson 5

Time Period: PATRIARCHS

Concepts: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

God made 3 promises made to each (land, seed, nation) and we can see those promises fulfilled throughout the Bible.

There was a man named Abram who lived in Ur. Abram was a good man, a man of God. God told Abram to leave his country and go wherever He would send him. He promised to make Abram's name great, and all the people on the earth would be blessed through him.

Abram obeyed God and left his home. Then God appeared to him in a vision and said, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, and your reward will be very great."

Abram was still sad though. He didn't have any of his own children and he knew he and Sarai, his wife, were both too old to have children of their own. But God had a plan and had promised Abram that his very own son would be his heir. He took Abram outside and said "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you can." Of course, Abram couldn't count all the stars, there were so many! God promised Abram "Your offspring will be as many as the stars." Abram believed God. God also promised that Abram's family would keep the land they were living in.

God gave Abram a sign that He would keep His covenant (promise) with him. He told Abram to sacrifice a cow, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon. Abram did as God asked, then fell into a deep sleep. While he was sleeping, God told him his family would be slaves in another country for 400 years before God would judge that nation and bless Abram's family. But Abram himself would live a long, peaceful life. When the sun set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared.

They passed between the animals as a sign that God would keep his promises.

When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him again and said "I am God Almighty; walk before me that I may make my covenant between me and you." Then Abram fell on his face and God told him he would be the father of a multitude of nations, and his name would no longer be Abram, but rather Abraham. God will bless Abraham and many kings - even King Jesus - would come through his great family and his family would have all the land of Canaan. God is going to keep all 3 of His promises!

Jesus Connection: God chose Abraham to be the father of the nation in which Jesus would be born. In this way, Abraham would bless all nations, just as God had promised. God saw Abraham's faith in the promises he made to him and counted it as righteousness.

Big Picture Question: What were the three promises God made to Abraham?

Big Picture Answer: Abraham would have a great family, he would be given land to live in, and through Abraham's family would come many kings, even Jesus.

Topic: Promise and Birth of Isaac, Sacrifice of Isaac Lesson 6
Scriptures: Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-8; 22:1-19

Sarah, Abraham's wife, was very sad because she and Abraham had no children. One day the Lord and three angels came to Abraham. The Lord told Abraham that he and Sarah would have a baby, a son.

Sarah laughed because she and Abraham were very old, too old to have children! The Lord heard Sarah laugh and said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Is there anything that the Lord cannot do? I will return to you when it is time, and Sarah will have a son."

The Lord came back as He said he would. Sarah indeed did have a child, a son. Abraham called his son Isaac, which means laughter, because Sarah laughed when she heard she would have a son. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

God promised Abraham if he would leave his home and go to another land that He would bless him. God kept His promise by giving Abraham the land of Canaan, and giving him a son, Isaac. But God wanted to make sure He was still the most important thing in Abraham's life. So God tested Abraham to see if he would obey him.

God told Abraham to take his son, whom he loved, to the land of Moriah and to then take Isaac up on the mountain to offer him as a sacrifice. A sacrifice is something of great value given to God. In the Old Testament, a sacrifice was usually an animal on an altar, this time though, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on the altar instead.

With a sad heart, Abraham got up the next morning. He gathered wood and saddled his donkey. Then he set out with Isaac and his two servants. They traveled for three days to reach the place God told them to go. Abraham then left the servants and the donkey and took

Isaac up onto the mountain. Abraham carried the knife and fire, and Isaac carried the wood.

Isaac saw something was missing and asked "where is the the lamb for the sacrifice?" Abraham told him that God would provide.

When they got to the place, Abraham built an altar and placed the wood on top. He tied up his son Isaac and placed him on top of the altar and was about to sacrifice his son.

But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham! Do not hurt the boy. Now I know that you fear God. You were willing to give up your only son for Me." Abraham then looked and saw a ram tied up in the bush, and offered up the ram as a sacrifice instead.

Because Abraham was willing to show his faith, God reminded him of the promises He made.

Jesus Connection: Abraham showed his faith in God when he was willing to sacrifice Isaac. This was a picture of God who was willing to sacrifice His only son, Jesus for us. Isaac's life was spared because God provided a ram as the substitute. We need a perfect sacrifice as our substitute for sin, which is why God provided His Son, Jesus Christ.

Big Picture Question: How can we show we believe God's plan?

Big Picture Answer: We obey God even when He asks us to do hard things that we don't understand.

Topic: Jacob Takes Birthright and Blessing
Scriptures: Genesis 25:1-33; 27

Lesson 7

Abraham and Sarah's son Isaac grew up and married Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, twins, Esau and Jacob. Esau was the older twin, Jacob the younger one. Although they were twins, Esau and Jacob, were very different.

Esau was a very good hunter and he was always in the field. Jacob stayed at home. Esau was the favorite of his father, Isaac. Jacob was the favorite of his mother, Rebekah. Esau's body was very hairy, while Jacob had smooth skin.

Esau came home one day from hunting and he was exhausted and hungry. He saw Jacob was making some soup, and he asked Jacob for a bowl. Jacob said he would give Esau some if he would give him his birthright. A birthright is a special gift that Esau had because he was born first. Esau said, "What good is a birthright to me if I die?" Esau didn't see the value of his birthright, and he gave it to Jacob for a bowl of soup.

Years later Isaac had grown very old and he could no longer see. Isaac told Esau he was near death, and he wanted to give Esau his blessing. He asked Esau to go hunt for some food, make him dinner, and then after he ate of it Esau would receive his blessing.

Rebekah heard what Isaac had said to Esau so she called for Jacob. Remember, Jacob was Rebekah's favorite son. She told Jacob to go get two goats from the herd, and she would make food for Isaac. She told him to take it to Isaac so he would give him the blessing instead of Esau. Jacob thought his father would recognize that he was not Esau, because he was a smooth skinned man and Esau was hairy. She put some of Esau's clothes on Jacob and then took the hair from the goats and

put it on Jacobs neck and arms. So Jacob did as his mother said, he took the food to Isaac.

Isaac recognized Jacob's voice as Jacob's voice not Esau's, but when he felt of his skin and smelled his clothes he believed Jacob to be Esau. Isaac blessed Jacob with Esau's blessing - to have people serve him and bow down to him, and have everything he needed. As Jacob left his father, Esau came into his father with food he had prepared for him.

When Esau brought Isaac the food he had prepared, Isaac realized that he had blessed Jacob instead of Esau. When he told Esau what had happened, Esau hated his brother Jacob and wanted to kill him. Rebekah heard of Esau's plan and sent Jacob away to live with her brother, Laban, until it was safe for Jacob to come back home.

Jesus Connection: Jacob wanted a birthright and blessing that was not his, so he lied and tricked to receive it. We also want blessings, but we cannot disobey God just to get what we want. We must trust that God knows what is best for each of us and He will provide .

Big Picture Question: What can stop God's plan?

Big Picture Answer: Nothing can stop God's plans because they are perfect.

Topic: Jacob's Dream, Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel
Scriptures: Genesis 28:10-29:30

Lesson 8

Jacob had to go to his Uncle Laban's house to escape from Esau. The sun was going down so Jacob stopped to get some sleep for the night. Jacob took a stone and placed it under his head for a pillow. Jacob went to sleep, then he dreamed.

Jacob dreamed he saw a ladder that was going all the way up to heaven. He saw angels going up and down the ladder between heaven and earth. The Lord God stood above the ladder and called to Jacob. He told Jacob He was the God of his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham. He promised to take care of Jacob and bless him.

When Jacob woke up he remembered his dream and realized the place where he was, was special. It was here that Jacob promised to serve God.

Jacob continued on to his Uncle Laban's house. Jacob worked for Laban. Laban thought he should pay Jacob for the work he was doing and asked him what he wanted for his work. Jacob told him he would like to marry his younger daughter Rachel, so Laban agreed. Jacob had to work seven years in order to marry Rachel, but he was glad to do it because he loved her. After the seven years had passed Laban gave Jacob his daughter, but it was not Rachel.

Laban, instead, gave his oldest daughter Leah to Jacob. Jacob asked Laban how he could do that, he had worked all those years for Rachel whom he loved. Laban told him it was not right to let Rachel marry before Leah because Leah was the oldest. Laban told Jacob he would give him Rachel if he promised to work for him another seven years. Jacob agreed, and a week later Laban gave him Rachel. So then, Jacob married Rachel and he loved her more than Leah.

Jesus Connection: God gave the same promises to Jacob that he had given to Abraham. There would be a great nation, they would be given land to live in, and through their family, Jesus would be born.

Big Picture Question: Why did God make promises to Jacob?

Big Picture Answer: He received the blessing and was in the line of Abraham, just as God had told Abraham a great family would come through him.

Topic: Jacob has 12 Sons, Jacob Leaves Laban Lesson 9
Scriptures: Genesis 29:31-33:20

Jacob's wives Rachel and Leah gave Jacob twelve sons. Their names were: Rueben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. God blessed Jacob with a large family just as he promised he would.

Jacob wanted to take his family and go back home to Canaan where his family lived. Laban, his father-in-law, begged him to stay saying he had been so blessed because of Jacob. He told Jacob he would pay him what he wanted if he would stay. Jacob told him he would take all the speckled, spotted, and brown lambs from the herd, which were the lesser of the herd. Laban agreed, so Jacob stayed and worked for Laban instead of going home to Canaan.

God was with Jacob and made his herds grow stronger and bigger than Laban's herds. This made Laban's sons very angry. They thought Jacob was stealing what was really their father's. Jacob sensed their anger, and he decided to take his family and run away.

When Laban realized Jacob, his daughters, and grandchildren were gone he was angry with Jacob and went after him. God spoke to Laban and told him not to harm Jacob in any way. When he caught up to Jacob he told him he was angry that Jacob did not let him tell his family good-bye. He promised never to hurt Jacob, and then told his daughters and grandchildren good-bye. The next morning Laban left for home, and Jacob and his family set out for Canaan.

Jacob was afraid that when he arrived in Canaan that his brother Esau might still be angry with him and want to kill him. He worried about it the whole trip. He even divided up his family in case Esau came out to kill them. But when Esau saw his brother Jacob coming, he ran to him, hugged and kissed him, and together they both cried. Esau had

forgiven his brother Jacob for taking his birthright and blessing away and was so happy to see him.

Jesus Connection: God kept his promise and made Jacob a big family! Through that big family, Jesus would be born.

Big Picture Question: Why was Jacob afraid to see Esau?

Big Picture Answer: Jacob had stolen Esau's birthright, but thankfully Esau showed forgiveness to his brother, just as Jesus shows us forgiveness when we mess up.

Topic: Joseph's Coat of Colors/Dreams/Pit Lesson 10
Scriptures: Genesis 37

Jacob, now called Israel, had 12 sons. His favorite son was Joseph. He made Joseph a coat of many colors. The other brothers could see how much their father loved Joseph and they were very jealous. They hated Joseph.

Joseph had very special dreams, dreams that God would give him. He would dream that one day his brothers would bow down and serve him. Of course when his brothers heard his dreams they hated him even more.

One day Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers who were supposed to be feeding the animals. He wanted Joseph to come back and tell him what they were really doing. They saw Joseph coming from afar off, and they plotted against him.

They decided that they were going to kill Joseph. Reuben, the oldest brother, heard their plans and told them they could not kill Joseph. Reuben, being oldest, would have to answer to Jacob if anything happened to Joseph. He talked them into throwing him into a pit, a hole in the ground. Reuben didn't tell the others, but he planned on coming back later and pulling Joseph out of the pit.

When Joseph reached his brothers they grabbed him and tore off the coat of colors that Jacob had given him. They threw him into a nearby pit. Then they sat down and ate some food while Jacob lay in the pit begging for help from his brothers.

The brothers see some travelers coming towards them. Judah had an idea to sell Joseph to them. The other brothers agreed, except for Reuben who was not there at the time. The travelers agreed to buy Joseph and gave the brothers twenty pieces of silver for their

brother. How much they must have hated Joseph to sell him to strangers.

Reuben came back to the pit later to rescue Joseph and saw that he was gone. He found his brothers and wanted to know what they had done to Joseph. They told him they had sold Joseph. Reuben was very angry and scared because he was going to have to answer to Jacob for what the other brothers had done. He knew how upset his father would be.

The brothers made up a lie to tell Jacob. They took a goat from among the flock, killed it and took Joseph's coat and dipped it in the blood of the goat. They then took the coat to their father and said, "We found this coat. Do you know if it is Joseph's coat?"

Jacob recognized the coat as the one he had given Joseph. Jacob said, "It is Joseph's coat. A wild animal has killed him!" Jacob was so upset that he tore his clothes and cried for Joseph for many days.

Now the travelers who bought Joseph from his brothers took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, a captain in the Pharaoh's army. Joseph was now a slave far from his home and family.

All of these horrible things that happened to Joseph were part of God's plan to make the dreams Joseph was having come true!

Jesus Connection: Joseph is favored by Israel, but his brothers hated him and they threw him into a pit. As sad as it is, this is all part of God's great plan to save all people of the world.

Big Picture Question: Why did Joseph's brothers throw him into the pit?

Big Picture Answer: His brothers threw him into the pit because they were jealous that Israel, their father, loved Joseph more.

Topic: Joseph in Prison
Scriptures: Genesis 39

Lesson 11

God was with Joseph and made everything he did as a slave prosper. Potiphar saw that Joseph was blessed and so he made Joseph in charge of all his house. God in turn blessed Potiphar's house because of Joseph.

Potiphar's wife was not very nice. She was always trying to get Joseph to do something that was wrong. But Joseph was faithful, he refused to do anything wrong. Potiphar's wife became angry with Joseph, so she told a lie to Potiphar about Joseph.

Even though what Potiphar's wife said was a lie, Potiphar believed her. Potiphar was so angry with Joseph that he had him thrown into prison. The jailer came to like and trust Joseph just as Potiphar had. Joseph was then put in charge of the other prisoners by the jailer. God was with Joseph while he was in prison and He took care of him.

Jesus Connection: God sent Joseph to Egypt and blessed him. God is going to use Joseph as an instrument to save his family and many others in the world.

Big Picture Question: Who is always with us?

Big Picture Answer: God is always with us! He was with Joseph when he was thrown into the pit and when he was in prison in Egypt.

Topic: Joseph Interprets 3 Dreams
Scriptures: Genesis 40-41

Lesson 12

With Joseph in prison were the Pharaoh's butler and baker. Both the butler and baker had had dreams that troubled them. They were both sad because there was no one to tell them what the dreams meant. When Joseph noticed they were both sad, he asked them what was wrong. They told Joseph they were having dreams and needed some one to tell them what they meant.

Joseph told them through God he could give them the meaning of their dreams. The butler told Joseph about his dream first. He told Joseph that in his dream he saw a vine with three branches. There were grapes covering the vine. He took the grapes from the vine and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup. Then he gave it to Pharaoh to drink.

Joseph explained to him that the three branches were three days. In three days the butler was going to be released from prison and once again work as the Pharaoh's butler. Joseph asked the butler to remember him when he was restored to his job. Joseph thought he could tell Pharaoh about him and maybe he could be released from prison as well.

The baker seeing that the butler's dream was good told his dream to Joseph also. He told Joseph that in his dream he had three baskets on his head. In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for the pharaoh. The birds came out of the sky and ate all the baked goods in the basket.

Joseph explained to the baker that the three baskets were three days. In three days he would also be released from prison. Instead of getting his job back he would be put to death, and the birds would come and eat his body.

In three days, just as Joseph had said, the butler was giving his job back as the pharaoh's butler. The baker was taken from prison and put to death. The butler did not remember Joseph and forgot to tell Pharaoh about Joseph, so Joseph sat in prison for two more years.

Two years later Pharaoh was having dreams that he was very bothered by. No one in Egypt could tell him what these dreams meant. Then the butler remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh how he had told him and the baker the meaning of their dreams. Pharaoh had Joseph brought out of prison, cleaned up, and brought before him.

He told Joseph he heard he could interpret dreams. Joseph explained to him that the meaning of the dreams comes from God, not him. He asked Pharaoh to tell him about the dreams.

Pharaoh explained that he saw seven cows who were healthy and fat come up out of the river and graze in the meadow. Then seven sickly, skinny cows came up from the river and ate the fat cows. The second dream was like it, seven heads of good grain came up on a stalk. Then seven heads of bad grain came up after that and destroyed the good grain.

Joseph told him the dreams were the same. The seven fat cows and good grain were seven years of abundance and plenty in the land of Egypt. These seven years of abundance would be followed by seven years of famine, which were the skinny cows and bad grain. Joseph told him what could be done to save Egypt during the famine. Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph and how God was with him that he put Joseph in charge of all Egypt, second in command to him alone.

Just as Joseph said, Egypt had seven years of great harvest in which they stored up food for when the famine came. After the seven years of great harvest ended seven years of great famine began. God's plan

for Joseph was beginning to unfold and soon Joseph would come to know exactly why all those bad things had happened to him.

Jesus Connection: Joseph knew that while his brothers intended evil in throwing him in the pit, God meant it for good and had a plan. God blessed and used Joseph to help save his people.

Big Picture Question: Why did God send Joseph to Egypt?

Big Picture Answer: God sent Joseph to Egypt so that he could help carry out his plan to save the Israelites.

Topic: Joseph Reunited with his Family Lesson 13
Scriptures: Genesis 41:53-46

The famine had come to Egypt, and it was severe. There was no food except in Egypt because Joseph had saved it from the seven years of great harvest. People from other lands came to buy grain in Egypt so they could live. Jacob, Joseph's father, sent Joseph's ten brothers to Egypt to buy food for them as well.

Joseph recognized them when they arrived to get food and he became angry. Joseph accused them of being spies. They tried to explain to Joseph that they were only there to buy food for their families, but Joseph refused to listen. They tried to explain that they were all brothers, Jacob's sons, and that they needed food for their families. Joseph began to question them and they told them their father was home with their younger brother, Benjamin, and that their other brother was gone. They still did not realize that they were talking to that other brother, Joseph.

Joseph still refused to listen and told them he would only believe and trust them if they would bring their younger brother back to Egypt with them. Joseph kept Simeon there with him, in a prison, and let the other nine brothers go home. He gave them the grain they came for, along with their money back, and supplies for their trip home.

When they arrived home and told Jacob what had happened and that they needed to take Benjamin back with them to get Simeon, he refused. He did not want to lose Benjamin like he had lost Joseph. The brothers did not return to Egypt.

When their food ran out they once again asked Jacob to let them take Benjamin lest they all starve and die. They promised to keep him safe so Jacob agreed to let him go.

Once in Egypt they were invited to Joseph's home for a meal. This was the first time Joseph had seen Benjamin, and he was so glad to see him he had to leave the room and cry. He still did not want his brothers to know who he really was. The next morning he told his servant to send them on their way with their grain and money. He also asked the servant to hide a silver cup in Benjamin's bag.

Once outside the city Joseph sent his servant after them. The servant accused them of stealing the cup. Of course they had not stolen it, but Joseph had put it there himself. The brothers were sure that they had not stolen it and told the servant that if he found it in their belongings that whoever's bag it was in should be made a slave. The bags were searched and the cup was found in Benjamin's bag.

Benjamin along with his brothers returned to Joseph's house. Joseph said he was going to make Benjamin his slave. The other brothers pleaded with Joseph to take them instead. They explained to Joseph what had happened to their other brother all those years ago, and if Benjamin was taken from their father he would surely die. Joseph could no longer endure his pain and he broke down and cried. He told his brothers who he really was and they were afraid. He told them not to be afraid because he did not blame them. Joseph told his brothers how it was really God who had sent him to Egypt so that one day he would be able to save them, just as he had done with the food he gave them. He hugged and kissed each of them and told them to go home and get their father and all their families and bring them to Egypt so he could take care of them. Jacob was so happy to learn that Joseph was alive. He was finally going to see his son again.

Jesus Connection: God used Joseph for good to help save the Israelites during the famine. God always has a great plan and knows what is best, even when it doesn't make sense to us.

Big Picture Question: Why did Joseph forgive his brothers?

Big Picture Answer: Joseph knew that being sold to Egypt was all part of God's plan and he saw that he was able to help his family even when it was hard.

Topic: Baby Moses Lesson 14
Scriptures: Exodus 1-2:10

Time Period: EXODUS FROM EGYPT

Concepts: God will use Moses to lead His people out of Egyptian slavery. God always provides deliverance and a way of escape.

Joseph's family had grown huge in Egypt, the land was filled with them. Years after Joseph died, there arose a new Pharaoh, or king, in Egypt who did not know of Joseph and all he had done. He was afraid of the Israelites, Joseph's people, because there were so many of them. The king of Egypt thought that the Israelites might try to take over his land. The king made them slaves in Egypt and treated them very badly. The more the king did to hurt them, the more their number grew. Pharaoh was so bothered by the Israelites that he came up with a horrible plan to get rid of them. Pharaoh said that all baby boys who were born to the Israelites were to be thrown into the river and drowned. The king wanted all the baby boys to die so the number of Israelites would stop growing.

There was a man named Amram who was married to Jochebed. Jochebed had born a son and loved him very much. She did not want her baby to be thrown into the river so she hid him in her house for three months. As he grew it was harder to keep him hidden. Jochebed made a basket for her baby and placed him in it. She, along with her daughter Miriam, took the baby to the river and placed the basket at the waters edge. Miriam stood afar off and watched to see what would become of her baby brother.

Then it happened that the evil king's daughter came to the river to take a bath. She saw the basket at the water's edge and wanted to see what was in it. When she opened it up she saw the beautiful baby boy, he was crying. She felt sorry for the baby, knowing that he was an Israelite child.

Miriam saw the princess take the baby and came to her and said, "Shall I go and find a nurse to take care of the baby for you?" And the princess said, "Yes, go."

Miriam went straight to her mother and told her that the princess had found the baby and needed someone to help take care of him while he was still little. Jochebed took her baby and cared for him until he was older. When it came time, she gave him back to the princess. The baby then became the princess' son. The princess named the baby Moses. From that time on Moses was raised as an Egyptian in the house of Pharaoh.

Jesus Connection: God saved Moses for a special purpose: to rescue His people. Moses and Jesus will both obey God's commands in order to carry out His plan of salvation.

Big Picture Question: Why did God save Moses?

Big Picture Answer: God saved Moses so he could rescue the Israelites from captivity.

Topic: The Burning Bush
Scriptures: Exodus 3-4:17

Lesson 15

When Moses was grown, he saw what the king was doing to the Israelites by making them slaves. Moses had seen an Egyptian man beating one of the slaves and it angered him. Moses thought no one was looking so he killed the Egyptian. When the king, Pharaoh, heard about what Moses had done, he wanted to kill Moses. Moses had to flee, or run away from Egypt to save his life. Moses fled to Midian.

While in Midian, Moses married Zipporah, and had a family. As time passed the king who sought to kill Moses died. It was then that the Israelites back in Egypt cried out to God because of their suffering. God heard them and remembered his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "If you obey me I will take care of you: I will give you a land to live in filled with your people, and through your people I will bless all the people of the earth."

One day while Moses was out taking care of the sheep God appeared to him. God came as a flame of fire in a bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but somehow not burning up. Moses wanted to take a closer look. God called to him and said, "Moses, do not come near. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." The ground was holy because God was on it. Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look upon God.

God spoke to Moses and told him that the Israelites were being hurt badly in Egypt. God told Moses that He wanted him to go to Egypt and tell the Pharaoh, or king, to let His people go! Moses was afraid and came up with all kinds of excuses why he could no go. Moses said since he grew up as an Egyptian he thought that the Israelites would not believe he came to save them. Now Moses had a rod, a large stick, in his hand. God told Moses to throw it on the ground. When Moses threw it on the ground it became a snake. God told Moses to pick the snake up

by its tail, and when Moses did so the snake became the rod again. God then told Moses to put his hand in his coat, when Moses brought his hand out from the coat it was all white and diseased. God told him to put his hand back in his coat and then bring it out again. When Moses did his hand was restored, just like it was before. God told Moses to show the Israelites these signs so they would believe that it truly was God that sent him to them.

Moses still did not want to go back to Egypt. He told God he couldn't go to the Israelites because he was not a good speaker. He just wouldn't know what to say or how to say it. God rebuked him and said, "Who made man's mouth, was it not I! Now go and I will be with you and I will tell you what you need to say!"

Moses pleaded with God not to send him, but to send someone else. God was angry with Moses and all his excuses! God told Moses to take his real brother Aaron with him and God would lead them and tell them what to do and say. He told Moses to use the rod in his hand to show the signs and prove to the Israelites and the Egyptians that he was from God.

God told Moses that the king who sought to kill him was dead. So Moses did as God commanded. God warned Moses that the Pharaoh's heart would be hardened and he would refuse to listen to Moses, that he would not let God's people go. God told Moses to use the rod to show Pharaoh God's power. So Moses took the rod of God in his hand, and he and his family left Midian for Egypt.

Jesus Connection: God saved Moses for a special purpose: to rescue His people. Moses must believe that God will be with him and help him to save His people.

Big Picture Question: What did the rod turn into?

Big Picture Answer: He turned the rod into a snake!

Topic: The Ten Plagues
Scriptures: Exodus 7-12:31

Lesson 16

When Moses arrived in Egypt, along with Aaron, he went to the Pharaoh and asked him to let God's people go. Of course, just as God had warned Moses, Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go. Moses wanted Pharaoh to see God's power. Aaron threw down God's rod before Pharaoh, and it became a snake. Pharaoh, unimpressed, called his magicians and they also made their rods become snakes. But God's rod ate up all the snakes of Pharaoh's magicians. Pharaoh became angry and again refused to let the Israelites go. Moses warned Pharaoh that God would punish Pharaoh and the Egyptians if he would not let the Israelites go, yet Pharaoh still said NO!

The next morning Pharaoh was out on the river. Moses and Aaron went to the river to meet him. Moses told Pharaoh that because he would not let the Israelites go he was going to show him the power of God! Aaron took the rod and held it out over the water and all the river became blood! The fish in the river died and began to stink. All the water the Egyptians had in their homes, and ponds, and pools became blood too! When Pharaoh's magicians imitated the blood turning to water Pharaoh grew angrier and refused to let the Israelites go. Moses gave Pharaoh a week to think about it and then he went to him again asking him to let the Israelites go.

He told Pharaoh that if he refused, Egypt would be plagued by frogs. Pharaoh refused once again, so God sent a plague of frogs upon Egypt. The river brought forth frogs and they came into the Egyptians homes, in their bedrooms, in their beds, in their ovens, in their food... FROGS WERE EVERYWHERE! So Pharaoh called to Moses and said, "Ask your God to take away the frogs and I will let your people go!" So God took away the frogs. But Pharaoh's heart hardened and he did not let the Israelites go as he promised.

So Egypt again suffered. God brought lice to all the Egyptians and their animals. Lice are little bugs that get on your skin and in your hair. Still Pharaoh would not listen. So God sent flies upon the Egyptians and their houses. God pounded the Egyptians with sickness to their animals, boils on their bodies, and hail to destroy their crops. With each plague Pharaoh would agree to let the Israelites go, but when God would remove the plague, Pharaoh would change his mind.

The eighth plague God sent upon the Egyptians was locusts. Locusts are bugs like grasshoppers. They covered the land and filled people's homes. They ate any crop that remained from the hail, and any new crops that came up. They ate the fruit from the trees. Pharaoh's servants begged Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. Once again Pharaoh promised to let the Israelites go if God would take away the locusts. Do you think Pharaoh kept his promise? Of course he didn't. Once the locusts were gone he refused to let the Israelites leave Egypt.

So God caused a great darkness to fall upon the Egyptians. For three whole days the land was dark so that the Egyptians could see nothing. It is important to know that even though God was causing these things to fall upon the Egyptians, that the children of Israel suffered none of these plagues. They were never were bothered by bloody water, frogs, lice, flies, sickness, boils, hail, locusts, and even though Egypt was darkened the Israelites had light. Once again Pharaoh refused to acknowledge the power of God and refused to let God's people go.

God sent one final horrible plague upon Egypt. At midnight God sent His angel into Egypt and He killed the first born of all the Egyptians and their animals. God saved the Israelites by giving them instructions to put blood on their doorposts, so when the Angel of the Lord came to their house He would pass over it. So it was that the firstborn of the Egyptians died, but the Israelites did not. Because of this final plague the Israelites were able to flee Egypt. Each year the Israelites would celebrate the feast of Passover remembering when

God saved them from the plague by passing over their house and protecting their firstborn.

The plagues begin:

1. Water turned to blood
2. Frogs overran Egypt
3. People and animals infested with lice
4. Flies covered the land
5. Sickness, disease killed the livestock of Egypt
6. Boils and sores affected the Egyptians and their animals
7. Hail destroyed the crops
8. Locusts covered the land
9. Darkness in Egypt for three days - Only the Israelites had light, but Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go!
10. Death of the firstborn, final plague

Jesus Connection: God called Moses to be His servant and to lead the people. Moses was a great servant and obeyed God and led the Israelites out of slavery. The Bible tells us the Jesus is better than Moses, Jesus was a servant who obeyed God perfectly and suffered to free us from our sins.

Big Picture Question: Why did God send all the plagues?

Big Picture Answer: To show the Israelites and the Egyptians His power and that He is the one true God.

Topic: Parting the Red Sea
Scriptures: Exodus 14

Lesson 17

After the last plague the Israelites gathered up their belongings and left Egypt. God lead the Israelites by a cloud in the day and fire at night. When it was told to Pharaoh that the Israelites had left Egypt he got his army together and chased after them.

The Egyptians caught up to the Israelites as they camped by the Red Sea. Pharaoh and his army were on one side of them and the Red Sea on the other. They were trapped. The children of Israel were afraid and upset with Moses. They thought because they had followed Moses and left Egypt they were now going to be killed by Pharaoh and his army.

Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, for the Egyptians which you see today, you shall not see again. The Lord will fight for you." The Lord God told Moses to hold up his rod and stretch it out over the sea. When Moses did this, the waters rolled back and parted the sea. The Israelites passed through the sea on dry ground, with water on either side of them. God placed His Angel and the cloud between them and the Egyptians.

Pharaoh and his army chased after the Israelites right into the sea. God made the wheels of the Egyptians chariots fall off and made it very difficult for them to pass through the sea. They were afraid and began to turn around. God told Moses to lift his rod over the sea and the sea began to close on the Egyptian soldiers, their chariots, and their horses. The Egyptians were swallowed up by the sea, and they all died, but the Israelites walked across the sea on dry ground to safety.

The Israelites saw this great thing that God had done for them, and so they feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and Moses. Then the Israelites sang, rejoiced, and praised the Lord their God.

Jesus Connection: God created a way for the Israelites to escape the Egyptians. In the same way, God creates a way for us to escape the penalty of sin - His son, Jesus.

Big Picture Question: Is anything too hard for God?

Big Picture Answer: No! God can part the seas and do anything!

Moses Led the Israelites
(Tune: There Were Three Wandering Jews)

Moses led the Israelites.
Moses led the Israelites.
Led, led, Israelites. Led, led, Israelites.
Moses led the Israelites.

The waters God did part.
The waters God did part.
Water, water, God did part. Water, water, God did part.
The waters God did part.

The Israelites walked across the sea.
The Israelites walked across the sea.
They walked across on dry land. They walked across on dry land.
The Israelites walked across the sea.

God took care of the Israelites.
God took care of the Israelites.
They went to the promise land. They went to the promise land.
God took care of the Israelites.

Topic: God Provides Water and Food - Bread from Heaven Lesson 18
Scriptures: Exodus 16-17:7

Time Period: WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS

Concepts: God always provides for His people, even when they are in the wilderness because of their unbelief and disobedience.

After the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea, they lived in the wilderness. The wilderness was a hard place to live. There was no food or drink in the wilderness for the children of Israel. The Israelites whined and complained that things were so much better in Egypt. In Egypt they at least had plenty to drink and eat. They were upset with Moses for bringing them out of Egypt.

The water in the wilderness was no good, it tasted bad. The Israelites complained to Moses that they were thirsty. God showed Moses a tree and told him to throw it into the water. Moses did as God said, and the water became sweet. God gave them good water to drink. He promised to take care of them if they would obey him.

Later the Israelites complained to Moses that they were hungry. They had camped where there was plenty of water, but they needed food. Once again they told Moses that because he had brought them out of Egypt, they were going to die. At least in Egypt they had plenty of food to eat. In the wilderness they were going to starve to death.

God heard the complaints of the Israelites and told Moses He would provide for them. In the morning, God sent manna for the children to eat. From the manna they could make bread. They were only allowed to gather what would be just enough to feed their family for the day, no leftovers! If they gathered more than enough to eat, overnight it would grow worms and stink. God wanted them to trust Him to give them their daily bread. At night God would send quail to the Israelites.

Quail was a bird, kind of like a chicken. God took care of them by giving them the food they needed to live.

God told the children of Israel that if they would trust Him and keep His laws that He would always provide for them. God wanted to take care of the children of Israel, they were His chosen people. Remember how God had promised Abraham many years ago that He would make him a great nation and his children would be as many as the stars in the sky? God was keeping his promise, the Israelites were all part of Abraham's family.

Jesus Connection: God provided for His special people, the Israelites. In the same way God provides for us and gives us what we need to live and survive.

Big Picture Question: What did God provide them to eat?

Big Picture Answer: God sent them bread from heaven, called Manna.

Topic: The Ten Commandments & The Golden Calf Lesson 19
Scriptures: Exodus 19-20,32

God had promised the Children of Israel that if they would obey Him, He would take care of them. God wanted to give them some rules to follow, called commandments. Moses went to the top of a mountain to meet with God. God wrote with His finger, the commandments, on tablets of stone. There were ten commandments He asked the children to obey.

1. To recognize that God is the only God
2. To worship him alone, no idols
3. To not use his name in a bad way, to respect it
4. To rest on the Sabbath, the 7th day, just as He did when He created the world
5. To obey your father and mother
6. To not kill another person
7. To remain faithful to your husband/wife
8. To not steal, or take something that is not yours
9. To not lie, but tell the truth
10. To be happy with what you have, not to want what other people have

Moses was on the mountain top for a long time and the children of Israel began to wonder what had become of him, they were afraid. They asked Aaron to build an idol for them to worship. Remember this is one of the things God did not want them to do. God said to worship Him only! Aaron took their jewelry and melted it, and then molded it into a golden calf.

God saw that the Israelites had made an idol to worship and He was angry. He told Moses and Moses went down to the Israelites. Moses saw them worshipping this golden calf and dancing all around it. Moses was so angry he threw down the tablets of stone that God had written the ten commandments on. They broke apart.

Moses rebuked the children of Israel. Moses took the golden calf and burned it with fire. Moses then took the ashes from the calf and mixed them with water. He made the children of Israel drink the ashes from the idol. Moses then went back to God and asked Him to forgive the Israelites for their sin.

Jesus Connection: God made a covenant with His people: "If you obey Me, you will be My people" But the people did not obey God. They sinned against God, and Moses asked God to forgive them. God makes a covenant with us, that if we obey Him, we can live life with Him in Heaven.

Big Picture Question: Why did God give His people the Ten Commandments?

Big Picture Answer: God is holy. He gave them laws to help them be holy too.

Topic: A Place to Worship - The Tabernacle Lesson 20
Scriptures: Exodus 25-27, 34-40

When Moses was on Mt. Sinai talking to God, God told him to tell the Israelites to make a place for Him - a tabernacle- so that He could live among them. God told them exactly how to make it.

Moses told the Israelites what God had said and asked the people to bring gifts to God for the tabernacle - gold, silver, and bronze; yarns, linen and furs; animal skins; oils; spices; and gemstones.

The Israelites began bringing their gifts and God gave Bezalel and Oholiab the ability to do every kind of craft so they taught others so that all the skilled people could work together to build the tabernacle.

The tabernacle was made just as God had said. Curtains of linen formed the walls and over them hung curtains of goats hair which formed a tent over the tabernacle. Inside the tabernacle they had lamp stands, tables, bowls, utensils, and the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was a very special wooden box covered in gold. It represented God's presence among the people. They also had special robes and garments made for the priests. Every piece in the tabernacle had its own special purpose given by God.

When everything was finished, a cloud covered the tabernacle showing that God was with the people. When the cloud moved, the Israelites knew it was time to move on and follow the cloud by day and the pillar of fire at night.

After they built the tabernacle, God needed to make new stones for Moses since he broke the first ones. When God was with Moses on Mount Sinai, God told Moses "The LORD, THE LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and

faithfulness..." This is the first of many times that God tells us who He is and reminds us of His great covenant with his people.

Jesus Connection: God instructed the people to make a tabernacle so that He could dwell with them. God desires to be with His people. As part of His plan, God sent Jesus to "Tabernacle" or dwell with people on earth as He does today.

Big Picture Question: What does the tabernacle show us about God?

Big Picture Answer: God wants to be with His people and be worshipped by them.

Topic: The 12 Spies

Lesson 21

Scriptures: Numbers 13-14

Moses led God's people to the edge of the promised land. God came to Moses and asked him to send 12 men to spy out the land that He had promised them. Moses sent Joshua and one man from each tribe, except the tribe of Levi. Moses asked them to see if the people who lived in the land were strong or weak, few or many; whether the land was good or bad; whether their camps were strong or weak; whether the land was rich or poor; whether there were forests in the land or not. He told them to be brave and to bring back some fruit from the land.

The men went up and spied out the land and saw that the people who lived in the land were giants. They had strong camps. The land was also good land and lots of fruit grew there. They cut down a branch with grapes on it to bring back to Moses and also some pomegranates and figs.

When they came back to camp they told Moses of what they had seen. 10 of the spies said that they could never take the land, the giants and cities were too strong for them. Caleb and Joshua spoke up and said that with God's help they could easily take the land.

The Israelites did not listen to Joshua and Caleb, but once again complained against Moses and God. "If only we had stayed in Egypt. We have been brought out here to die by the sword. We need a new leader who will take us back to Egypt!" God was furious with the Israelites and decided to kill all of them except Joshua, Caleb, and their families.

Moses begged God not to kill them. God listened to Moses but said that those who complained would never enter the promised land, and the 10 spies who did not trust God died immediately. Only those under 20 years of age, Joshua, Caleb, and their families would be able to go into

the promised land. Because the people did not believe, they would have to wander in the wilderness another 40 years - one year for each day the spies spent in the promised land.

Jesus Connection: Joshua wasn't perfect, but he lived a life of obedience to God. Joshua was faithful and was going to lead the people to the promised land.

Big Picture Question: What happens when God's people sin?

Big Picture Answer: Sin has to be punished, but God still promises forgiveness when people seek to turn back to Him.

Topic: Water From the Rock, The Bronze Serpent
Scriptures: Numbers 20:1-13; 21:4-9

Lesson 22

Moses and the Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness for a very long time. The Israelites were once again thirsty and complained to Moses. They were angry with Moses for bringing them out of Egypt where they at least had water.

The Lord God appeared to Moses and Aaron. God heard the complaints of the Israelites and told Moses what to do. "Take the rod, and gather the Israelites together. Speak to the rock that is before them and water shall pour from it, give it to them and their animals to drink."

Moses took the rod and called the people together. He took the rod in his hand and hit the rock twice with it. Water poured from the rock and the Israelites and their animals drank from it.

Water did come from the rock as God had said, but Moses did not do what God said. He told Moses to speak to the rock, but instead Moses hit the rock. God was angry with Moses. God told Moses that he would not be allowed to enter the land He had promised to Abraham all those years ago. Because Moses disobeyed God, God punished him by not letting him enter the promised land.

As the Israelites were wandering they continued to grumble and complain. The Israelites were going to travel through Edom, but the people of Edom wouldn't let them. They had to travel around it instead and it was a long, hard journey, so they complained some more "Have you led us out of Egypt to die?"

God was so angry with His people that He sent poisonous snakes among them. The snakes bit many of them and they died. The people knew they had sinned by grumbling against God. So they begged Moses, "Please ask God to take the snakes away."

Moses spoke to God, and He said, "Make a snake image and put it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will be healed."

So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Those who were bitten, looked up at the bronze snake and were healed. The Israelites had sinned against God, but He still loved them. He punished their sin, but He also gave them a way to be healed.

Jesus Connection: The Israelites faced many problems because of their sin. God sent snakes to punish them. Because of our sins, we face a huge problem: we are separated from God. We deserve to die, but God sent His only son, Jesus to save us.

Big Picture Question: What happens when people tell God they are sorry for their sins?

Big Picture Answer: God forgives them and gives them a way to be healed - through Jesus.

Topic: The Donkey and the Angel Lesson 23
Scriptures: Numbers 22

The Israelites, while wandering in the wilderness, set up camp close to Moab. The number of Israelites was huge. The King of Moab, Balak, was afraid that they might try to take his land from him. He wanted the prophet, Balaam, to say bad things about God's people. He sent messengers to Balaam and they asked him to come say bad things about the Israelites. Balaam asked God what to do.

God told Balaam not to go with these men to Moab, so Balaam refused to go. King Balak did not like that answer, so he sent even more men to Balaam. God had already given Balaam the answer, but Balaam asked God again what to do. This time God said he could go, but that was not what God wanted. He had already told Balaam no, and Balaam should have respected that answer.

Balaam got up the next morning, saddled his donkey, and headed for Moab. God was angry with Balaam for going so He sent His angel with a sword to stand in Balaam's way. The angel appeared in the road with sword in hand ready to kill Balaam. The donkey saw the angel, but Balaam could not.

The donkey went off the road and into a field trying to escape from the angel. Balaam hit his donkey to turn him back on the road. As they went along the angel appeared again. Balaam still could not see it, but the donkey could. There was a wall on both sides of the road. The donkey slammed himself and Balaam into the wall trying to protect them from the angel. Balaam's foot was crushed. He hit and yelled at the donkey. Balaam was angry with the donkey, but he could not see what the donkey could see.

Once again the angel appeared in the road, but this time the donkey had no where to go. The donkey just stopped and laid down in the

road. By this time Balaam had had it with the donkey, and he began hitting him again. Then something really strange happened. The donkey spoke to Balaam.

He said to Balaam, "Why are you hitting me? Am I not your donkey that has served you all your life?" Balaam was so angry with the donkey he said to him, "If I had a sword, I would kill you!" Then God opened Balaam's eyes so that he could see what the donkey saw. Balaam saw the Angel of God with the sword in his hand and he fell to the ground before Him.

The angel told Balaam if it wasn't for his faithful donkey that he would have killed him. Balaam was sorry he did not obey God. The angel told Balaam to go on to Moab, but to speak only what God would tell him. When Balaam arrived in Moab, he could not say bad things about the Israelites. God would only allow Balaam to speak good of them and bless them. Balaam told them, "A star will come from Jacob, and a scepter will arise from Israel." He was speaking about Jesus, who would one day come and defeat Israel's enemies.

Jesus Connection: Fourteen hundred years after Balaam announced Jesus' birth, wise men followed a star to the place Jesus was born.

Big Picture Question: Who protected God's people?

Big Picture Answer: God protected His people from their enemies.

Topic: Joshua the New Leader, Crossing the Jordan Lesson 24
Scriptures: Deuteronomy 31-32; Joshua 1, 3-4

Time Period: INVASION AND CONQUEST

Concept: God has promised the Patriarchs land as one of the 3 promises. Joshua leads the people to take the land God had promised.

Moses was now 120 years old, and God had told him he wouldn't go over the Jordan River. Moses told the people that God made Joshua the new leader of the Israelites. God told Joshua many times "Be Strong and Courageous, do not be afraid for I will be with you." Remember Joshua was one of the two spies that had faith in God that the Israelites could conquer the land of Canaan, the land God promised to Abraham. Since it was just Joshua and Caleb who believed they could take the land with God, the Israelites had to wander 40 years in the wilderness. Only those under 20 years old when they started wandering would be able to now enter the promised land.

In order to get to the promised land the Israelites had to cross the Jordan River. The Jordan River was full and overflowing the banks, it would be very dangerous to cross.

God told Joshua what to do so they could safely cross the Jordan. God told Joshua to have the priests carry the Ark of the Covenant and to go into the river. When the priests feet touched the water, the water stopped flowing and they stood on dry ground. The priests stood there until all the Israelites had safely crossed through the river. As they crossed, they gathered stones from the river bed so they could build a monument to God. The priests then came out of the river on the other side and the water immediately began to flow again.

The Israelites and Joshua took 12 of the stones (to represent the 12 tribes), piled them up, and made a monument to God for taking care of them. Joshua told them that years from now when their children saw

the stones and asked what they were, to tell them what God had done for them that day.

Jesus Connection: God told Joshua and the Israelites to set up memorial stones to remember what God had done to bring them into the promised land. Every Sunday, we take the Lord's Supper which is a memorial to remember Jesus' death on the cross for our sins.

Big Picture Question: What should God's people remember?

Big Picture Answer: God's people should remember all He has done for them and all He promises to do.

Topic: Rahab Hides the Spies Lesson 25
Scriptures: Joshua 2

When the Israelites were camping near the Jordan River before crossing over, they saw the promised land and knew they would have to defeat the people who lived there.

Joshua sent 2 spies into the city of Jericho. They stayed at the house of a woman named Rahab. The king of Jericho heard the spies were with Rahab and sent men to find them. Rahab had heard about all that God had done to Pharaoh, and she believed the Lord was God. She wanted to help His people, so she hid the spies on her roof.

When it was safe for the spies to leave, Rahab said "I know the Lord has given you this land. Please be kind to my family since I've been kind to you. When you attack Jericho, don't kill us." The spies promised to keep Rahab and her family safe. When they left, they told Rahab to tie a bright red rope in her window so the Israelites would know which house was hers.

Jesus Connection: Rahab didn't always obey God and live an obedient life, but she changed when she heard all the good things God had done. God then used Rahab as part of his great family through whom Jesus was born! God gives us forgiveness too, and uses us in His kingdom.

Big Picture Question: What is forgiveness?

Big Picture Answer: Forgiveness is a second chance to do what is right. God forgives us when we seek to do what is right!

Topic: The Battle of Jericho
Scriptures: Joshua 6

Lesson 26

After the Israelites had crossed over the Jordan River, by the power of God, they came to the city of Jericho. Jericho was a fortified city, it had tall brick walls built all the way around it to help protect it from its enemies. The people of Jericho had heard of all the things God had done for the Israelites, and they were greatly afraid of them. God told Joshua He would put Jericho in Joshua's hands. God gave Joshua an unusual battle plan to defeat Jericho.

God's battle plan for Joshua and the Israelites was very different from any other battle plan. God simply told Joshua and his army, along with the priests and the Ark of the covenant, to march around the city. I'm sure that the people of Jericho thought they were really silly and maybe they even decided they weren't so afraid of them after all. Joshua trusted God so he did exactly as God told him.

The armed soldiers went before seven priests blowing on trumpets, followed by the Ark of the Covenant, and then more soldiers. Joshua told them to keep silent, not to speak a word, as they marched. They marched around the city just as God had told Joshua. They did this once a day for six days. On the seventh day they did something a little different.

Once again the armed soldiers went before seven priests blowing on trumpets, followed by the Ark of the Covenant, and then more soldiers. They did this seven times instead of once as they had each day before. On the seventh time around the city as the priests blew their trumpets, Joshua told the Israelites, "Shout, for God has given you the city!" The Israelites began to shout and the walls of the city came tumbling down!

With the walls gone, the Israelites ran into the city, and as Joshua had instructed them, they destroyed everything in it. But 2 spies quickly ran to Rahab's house and brought her and her family out since they had believed in God. The Israelites then burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and things made of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the Lord. By God's power, the Israelites won their first battle for the land God had promised Abraham so many years earlier.

Jesus Connection: God gave the city of Jericho to the Israelites. He fought the battle for them and told them not to take anything from the city. God promised to provide for His people's needs. Today, God also provides for our needs and helps us overcome our own battles.

Big Picture Question: Who fought the battle of Jericho?

Big Picture Answer: God fought for His people and handed Jericho over to the Israelites.

Topic: Achan Sinned
Scriptures: Joshua 7

Lesson 27

Last week we talked about Joshua and the battle of Jericho. Do you remember that God won the battle for Israel because they followed God's plan? They were to march around the city one time a day for six days and on the seventh day march around seven times, blowing their trumpets and with a great shout the walls came tumbling down!

God also gave them instructions for destroying Jericho and everything in it. They were to take the gold, silver, vessels of bronze and iron for the treasury of the Lord. Everything else was to be destroyed! Well... an Israelite man, Achan, saw a beautiful outfit, silver, and gold in the city. He took them and buried them in the ground under his tent. Now Joshua had told the people they were not to take anything, but destroy it all. Achan did not follow God's plan. Joshua, nor the other Israelites, knew what Achan had done. Achan thought he could keep it a secret. **BUT GOD KNEW** what he had done!

After this, Israel went into battle with another city called Ai. Joshua and the Israelites knew God would help them if they obeyed, but they did not know about what Achan had done. Because Achan had sinned, Israel lost this battle and some of the Israelites were killed.

This was a horrible shock to Joshua. He couldn't understand how God could let this happen. He asked God why, and God told him because someone had taken things from Jericho that they were not supposed to. So God told the people to make themselves clean and he would choose one clan, and that clan would come forward one family at a time and God would pick the one family, and the one man who had disobeyed.

Achan was caught! Achan admitted what he had done. Because of Achan's disobedience Achan was stoned, then he and all his family and everything they had were burned up.

Jesus Connection: The punishment for Achan's sin was death. Achan wouldn't have died if he had obeyed God's commands. Because we sin, we deserve to die too. But thankfully Jesus came to die in our place.

Big Picture Question: How does God feel about sin?

Big Picture Answer: God hates sin and punishes those who disobey Him.

Topic: The First Judges - Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah Lesson 28
Scriptures: Judges 1-5

Time Period: JUDGES

Concept: God sent judges to help lead the people and remind them to obey Him. Some judges did what was right in God's sight, and others forgot who God was.

God fulfilled His promise of giving the Israelites the land and then Joshua died. Without a strong leader, the Israelites began to disobey God and worship false gods and idols. God was very angry so He let an enemy king take over them and they served him for 8 years.

Then the Israelites cried out to God, "Save us!". So God raised up Othniel to rule over Israel as their first judge. Othniel led the Israelites into battles against the enemy king, and God helped the Israelites win. The land was peaceful for 40 years, but then Othniel died.

Israel forgot God again. So God let the king of Moab attack and defeat the Israelites. The Israelites served Moab for 18 years. They remembered how good it had been when they loved and obeyed God, so they cried out to God for help again. This time God raised up Ehud to save them. He was a left-handed man from the tribe of Benjamin.

The Israelites sent Ehud to the king of Moab, who was a very fat man. Ehud had a double-edged sword hidden under his clothes. He said to the king, "I have a secret message for you." The king sent all his servants away so that he was alone with Ehud. When the king stood up from his throne, Ehud pulled out his sword with his left hand and plunged it into the king's belly! The sword was swallowed up by the king's fat - Ehud couldn't even pull it back out! Ehud escaped and locked the doors behind him. When the king's servants came back, Ehud was already gone and they found their king dead on the floor!

When Ehud escaped, he blew a ram's horn to call the people to him. "Follow me! The Lord has given your enemies to you!". So the Israelites battled the Moabites and won and there was peace in the land for 80 years.

When Ehud died, the Israelites forgot God yet again. So God gave the Philistines power over Israel. Then they remembered God and cried out to him to save them. So God send a third judge, Shamgar to save them. Shamgar killed 600 of the Philistines with an oxgoad and saved Israel.

After Shamgar died, the people forgot God again and disobeyed then cried out for God to save them. This time God sent Deborah. Deborah called for Barak, the army's leader and told him that God told him to lead 10,000 men to Mount Tabor and the Lord would help them defeat Sisera there. But Barak said "If you'll go with me, I'll go. But if you won't go with me, I will not go." Deborah went with him, along with the 10,000 men to Mount Tabor. The Lord confused Sisera and his army, and Barak and the Israelites were able to defeat the king of Canaan with God's help. There was peace for 40 years.

Jesus Connection: The Israelites have a cycle of forgetting God, crying out for him to save them, living in peace when God saves them, then forgetting God again. The judges helped save the people from the consequences of their sin, but not the cause of it. God's plan was to one day send a true deliverer - Jesus.

Big Picture Question: How does God make His plan happen?

Big Picture Answer: God works in the lives of people to bring about His plan for saving them.

Topic: Gideon Lesson 29

Scriptures: Judges 6-8

The Israelites were now living in the promised land, Canaan. They had stopped obeying God and began to serve idols like the Canaanites. They worshipped the god Baal. Because they were no longer worshipping God, God allowed the Midianites to take over. The Midianites were not nice to the Israelites. The Israelites were forced to live in dens, caves, and in the strongholds of the mountains. The Midianites took their food and animals as well. Israel had become very poor. They cried out to God to help them.

Gideon, an Israelite, was in his father's winepress hiding wheat from the Midianites when the Angel of God appeared to him. The Angel called him a mighty man of valor and told Gideon that God chose him to deliver the Israelites from the Midianites hands. The angel told Gideon that God was with him. Gideon found that hard to believe since all these bad things had happened to the Israelites. God told him he would be the one to save Israel. Gideon wasn't sure he believed this because he came from the smallest family and was the weakest of that family. God reassured Gideon that He would be with him, but Gideon asked for proof, he wanted a sign that God was who He claimed to be.

Gideon went to prepare a meal and bring it back to the Angel of the Lord. He placed it on a rock. When the Angel of the Lord touched the meat with his rod, fire came up from the rock and devoured the food that Gideon had put there. Gideon now knew that this was the true God with whom he talked. He was ready to obey whatever God commanded him. Gideon was told to tear down the altar to Baal at his father's house and rebuild one to God in its place. Gideon was afraid because he knew if he did this thing there was a great chance that he might be killed. Gideon waited until night came so he couldn't be seen, and he went and tore down the idol Baal, and built in its place an altar to God.

Gideon was afraid, but he loved God and wanted to obey him. Gideon trusted God so he was able to tear down the altar to Baal, and build a new one to God.

Gideon was chosen by God to lead the Israelites in a battle to free them from the hand of the Midianites. Gideon was not a soldier, he was a farmer. He was worried about leading the Israelites into battle so he asked God if he could test him. Gideon wanted to be sure that God was going to defeat the Midianites for them.

Gideon put a fleece of wool on the ground and said to God, "If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as you have said."

The next morning when Gideon woke up he went to the fleece. Indeed, the fleece was wet and the ground all around it dry. Gideon wrung the fleece out and it held a bowl full a water. Gideon was happy, but still unsure. He asked God if he could test him once more.

Gideon said, "Now let the fleece be dry and the ground all around it be wet with dew." And God did so that night as Gideon had asked. When Gideon awoke the next morning he once again went to the fleece. This time the fleece was dry and the ground all around it wet. Gideon trusted that God would be with him and that he could safely lead the Israelites into battle against the Midianites. God was willing to show Gideon His power so Gideon believed in God and had faith that God would defeat the Midianites by his hand.

When Gideon saw the sign of the fleece, he knew that through God he could lead the Israelites into battle against the Midianites. 32,000 men joined Gideon to fight for their freedom. God thought that was too many soldiers. He did not want the Israelites to think they could win because they had a huge army. God wanted Israel to know that the reason they could win the battle was because He was helping them. God

told Gideon to allow the men who were afraid to fight to leave. 22,000 men left. Gideon was left with an army of 10,000 men. God still thought that Gideon's army was too big.

God told Gideon to take his men to the river to get a drink. Many of the men went to the river and lapped up water with their tongues, like a dog. The rest of the men, drank water from their cupped hands. God told Gideon to take the men who drank water from their hands into battle. There were only 300 of those men, not a large army at all.

That night Gideon led the men, armed with only a trumpet and a clay pot with a torch of fire in it, to the Midianites' camp. They surrounded the camp of the Midianites as they lay sleeping. When Gideon gave the signal, his army blew their trumpets and broke their clay pots, the torches of fire lit all around the Midianites' camp.

The Midianites awoke in a panic. They thought a huge army had come to fight against them. The whole army cried out and ran from the camp. Through God, Gideon and his small army of 300 men had defeated the Midianites. Because of their faith in God the Israelites were free from Midianites.

Jesus Connection: The Israelites cried out to God because they knew they couldn't save themselves. Gideon wasn't even enough to save them, they needed God's help. God used Gideon to save his people and fight the battle for them. God gives us Jesus to help us fight our battles and save us.

Big Picture Question: How should we answer when God asks us to do something?

Big Picture Answer: We should obey God and trust Him to help us.

Topic: Samson - Birth and Strength Lesson 30
Scriptures: Judges 13-15

After Joshua died God set judges over Israel to lead them when they were in trouble. Gideon was a judge who led God's people into battle against the Midianites. Another man, named Samson, was a judge also. With God's help he saved the Israelites from their enemies the Philistines.

During the time of the judges, an angel of the Lord appeared to a certain woman. She was not able to have children. The angel told her that God was going to give her a son that would be very special. The woman was very excited about the news the angel gave her, and she couldn't wait to tell her husband.

She told her husband, Manoah, that the angel told her she would bear a son. The angel also told her that she should not drink any wine and should eat only healthy foods while she was pregnant. The angel told her that once the child was born his hair was never to be cut. The angel told her that her son would, through God, deliver the Israelites from the hand of their enemy, the Philistines.

Manoah and his wife prayed to God and asked that the angel come back to speak to them again so he could teach them how to raise their child. God heard their prayer and sent the angel to them. The angel told Manoah all that he told his wife was true. He told Manoah how special their son would be. Manoah and his wife offered a sacrifice to God. As the smoke from the sacrifice rose to heaven, the angel ascended with it.

So it came to pass that the woman bore a son. She called his name Samson. Manoah and his wife raised Samson just as God had commanded. Samson grew up and he was blessed by God.

Samson, the little boy with long hair, grew up to be a man. Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman and wanted to marry her. When he told his parents, they were sad because the Philistines were the Israelites enemy. They asked Samson to marry one of the Israelite women, but Samson didn't want to. Samson loved the Philistine woman and wanted his parents to come and meet her.

Samson went with his mother and father to meet the woman. On the way a lion came upon Samson. God gave Samson great strength and Samson killed the lion with his bare hands.

Samson and his parents continued to the woman's house and they had a great feast. Samson married the woman even though she was a Philistine, his enemy.

Jesus Connection: God raised Samson as judge to deliver Israel from the Philistines. Samson was given God's strength by obeying him to not cut his hair.

Big Picture Question: Why was Samson so strong?

Big Picture Answer: God gave Samson his strength when he kept the vow to not cut his hair.

Topic: Samson is Caught
Scriptures: Judges 16

Lesson 31

Samson made the Philistines mad so they came and killed his wife. Samson met another woman, named Delilah, whom he fell in love with. Delilah was not a good person. Some of the Philistine men came to her and offered her money if she could find out what made Samson so strong.

Delilah asked Samson where his strength came from. Samson told her 3 lies. Each time Delilah would do what Samson said to take his strength, but it never worked. Delilah was getting angry that he would not tell her. Delilah kept asking Samson over and over again until he finally told her the truth about his strength.

Samson told Delilah that since he was born, God told his parents to never cut his hair. He told her that his hair had never been cut and that was where his strength came from. He told Delilah that if his hair was cut, he would lose all his strength and become weak. Delilah told the Philistines Samson's secret. She told them if they cut Samson's hair he would lose his strength and become weak.

When Samson went to sleep Delilah told the Philistines to come in. They cut his hair and poked out his eyes. They put him in heavy chains and took him off to prison.

One night the Philistines had a big party at the temple. They wanted Samson to come out so they could make fun of him. They had him brought out by a little boy to show how weak he was. They stood him between two columns in the temple. They had not paid attention to the fact the Samson's hair had begun to grow back while he was in prison. Samson prayed to God and asked God to make him strong again. God returned Samson's strength to him and he pushed over the columns in

the temple. The temple fell in and killed the Philistines that were there, along with Samson.

Jesus Connection: God raised Samson as judge to deliver Israel from the Philistines. Samson was given God's strength by obeying him to not cut his hair, but when he lied and told Delilah his secret and they cut his hair, Samson lost all his strength.

Big Picture Question: What should we do when we sin and mess up?

Big Picture Answer: We should ask God to forgive us.

Topic: Ruth Stays with Naomi
Scriptures: Ruth 1

Lesson 32

There arose a famine in the land of Judah. A man named Elimelech, along with his wife Naomi, and their two sons went to Moab to escape the famine. Once they arrived in Moab the man, Elimelech, died and left Naomi a widow. Naomi's two sons got married and they all took care of Naomi since she didn't have a husband. Then Naomi's two sons died. Naomi had no one to care for her. She decided to go back home to Judah.

Naomi's daughter-in-law's, Orpah and Ruth, followed her. Naomi told them they should go back to their mother's and father's and find new husbands. They both cried because they wanted to go with Naomi. Naomi tried to explain to them that she had nothing to give them, and that she could not care for them. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye and went back to her family. Ruth refused to leave her and held on to her as tight as she could.

Ruth told Naomi she would never leave her. She said, "Where you go I will go, where you stay I will stay. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God." She told her she would follow her wherever she went, that she would live with her wherever she lived. Ruth told Naomi she wanted to be her family and that she wanted to serve the God that Naomi served. She told her until death comes, she would never leave her. When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she let her. Naomi and Ruth went back to Judah. Everyone in Judah was so happy to see them.

Jesus Connection: Even though Ruth had lost all her family, she knew Naomi and Naomi's God are who she should follow.

Big Picture Question: Who are we to follow?

Big Picture Answer: We should follow God.

Topic: Ruth Marries Boaz

Lesson 33

Scriptures: Ruth 2-4

When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Judah they had no food to eat. Ruth decided to go to the fields and pick up some leftover grain. Boaz, the man who owned the field where Ruth was picking up grain, noticed her and asked his servants about her. They told Boaz that she was Naomi's daughter-in-law. They told Boaz how she had worked hard all day long. Boaz was impressed by Ruth.

Boaz introduced himself to Ruth. He told Ruth he had heard of all she had done for Naomi. Boaz told her that she could pick up grain in his fields whenever she wanted. He warned her not to go to any other fields. He told her that she would be safe there and that no one would bother her. Boaz then told his servants to let her pick whatever she wanted and as much as she wanted. He also told them to drop extra grain so she could pick it up.

When Ruth came home, Naomi couldn't believe the amount of grain that Ruth had collected. She wanted to know whose fields she had worked in. Naomi was overcome with excitement when she found out it was Boaz's field. Boaz was a close relative to Naomi, and this meant that he could marry Ruth.

Naomi sent Ruth to Boaz to tell him that she would like to marry him. Boaz was happy because he wanted to marry her too. There was one small problem though. There was another relative who was closer to Naomi than Boaz, and if he wanted to marry her that meant Boaz couldn't. Boaz went to see this relative and he decided that he did not want to marry Ruth. This meant Boaz was free to marry her. Boaz and Ruth were married and God blessed Ruth by giving her a son. His name was Obed. When Obed grew up, he became the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David. Through King David came Jesus!

Jesus Connection: Boaz was a family redeemer and helped any of his relatives who were in trouble. Boaz cared for Ruth and Naomi because their husbands had died. In a similar way, Jesus is our redeemer and cares for us.

Big Picture Question: Who is our redeemer?

Big Picture Answer: Jesus is our redeemer because He saves us from our sins.

Topic: Samuel - Samuel Born, God Calls Samuel
Scriptures: 1 Samuel 1-3

Lesson 34

There was a man named Elkanah, he had a wife named Hannah. They had no children together. This made Hannah very sad. Hannah wanted a son more than anything. Hannah went to the tabernacle, the house of God, and prayed, pleading with God to please give her a son. Hannah promised God if He would give her a son, that she would give him back to God.

The old priest, Eli, saw Hannah praying. She was so upset that he thought something was wrong with her. Hannah told Eli that she was praying to God for a son. Eli told her to go home and that God would answer her prayer. Hannah went away happy, she was no longer sad, she knew God would give her a son.

Just as Eli had said, God answered Hannah's prayer and she had a baby, a son. Hannah named her son Samuel. When Samuel was old enough she took Samuel back to the tabernacle just as she promised God she would. Samuel worked for God taking care of things in the tabernacle. The old priest, Eli, watched over Samuel. Hannah would come to visit her son, Samuel, every year. When she came she would always bring him a new coat that she made for him. Hannah loved her son, but she loved God more by keeping the promise she made to Him.

Samuel grew and was living in the tabernacle with Eli. Eli loved and cared for Samuel, he taught Samuel how to serve God. One night, while Samuel was asleep in bed, he heard a voice. "Samuel! Samuel!" the voice called. Assuming it was Eli, Samuel jumped out of bed and ran to him. "Here I am," said Samuel. Eli said to him, "I did not call for you. Go back to bed." So Samuel went back to bed.

Again, Samuel heard the voice call him, "Samuel! Samuel!" He once again got up and ran to Eli's room. "Here I am," said Samuel to Eli. Eli said, "I did not call you. Go back to bed." Samuel went back to bed.

Then, a third time, the voice called "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel again got out of bed and ran to where Eli was sleeping. "I know I heard you calling!" Samuel said. Then Eli realized that it was God calling Samuel. He told Samuel it was God calling him, and he told him what he should do. "The next time you hear the voice, say, "Yes, God, I am listening."

Samuel went back to bed and then he heard the voice calling, "Samuel! Samuel!" "Yes, God, I am listening." said Samuel. Samuel listened very carefully while God talked to him. God did not give Samuel good news. God said he was going to punish Eli's family because his sons were so wicked. When Eli woke he asked Samuel what God said to him. Samuel was afraid to tell him. Eli told Samuel to never be afraid to speak what God told him. So Samuel told Eli all that God had said to him.

Jesus Connection: Samuel was a prophet for the nation of Israel. He used God's words to tell the people what God is like and to remind the people that they should serve Him, the one true God.

Big Picture Question: Who spoke to Samuel?

Big Picture Answer: God spoke to Samuel, and Samuel listened.

Topic: Ark Captured, Israel Demanded a King Lesson 35
Scriptures: 1 Samuel 4-5, 8-10

The Philistines were enemies of the people of Israel. The Israelites went to battle against the Philistines, but the Philistines won, killing about 4,000 Israelites. The leaders of Israel were confused why they hadn't won the battle. Instead of asking God what they had done wrong, they decided to take the Ark of the Covenant and carry it into the battlefield. But they still weren't asking God for help so the Philistines won again! But this time, they stole the ark of the covenant. One of the Israelite soldiers escaped the battle and ran to tell Eli the priest what had happened. When Eli heard the news, he fell off his chair and died.

The Philistines moved the ark from one city to another, but wherever it went it made the people sick. Wherever the Ark of the Covenant was taken, God punished the people living in that city. The Philistines were afraid and didn't want God to punish them anymore so they decided to send the ark back to the Israelites where it belonged.

The Israelites decided that they wanted to have a king like the other nations. They told Samuel that they wanted him to find them a king, but God was supposed to be their king. They were not supposed to be like the other nations, they were God's special people. Samuel was upset. He prayed to God to ask Him what he should do.

God told Samuel not to be upset. He told Samuel to give the people what they wanted, but to warn them about what a king would do. Samuel told the people that a king would take their sons and daughters from them. He would use them to work for him. He told them that the king would take their land and their money. Samuel tried to talk them out of wanting a king, but they would not listen. "We want a king!" they shouted.

Samuel began to search for a king for Israel. One day a tall handsome young man, named Saul, was out looking for his father's lost sheep. When he couldn't find them he decided to go find Samuel and ask him if he knew where they were. Samuel told him not to worry, that his father's sheep had been found.

Samuel didn't just tell Saul that the sheep had been found. He poured oil over Saul's head and told him that he was going to be the king. When Saul left to go home, he told no one what Samuel had said to him, he didn't believe it.

Samuel told the Israelites that a king had been found. When he told them it was Saul, Saul hid. They found Saul hiding and brought him out before the people. The people liked Saul and shouted, "Long live the king!" Saul became the first king in Israel.

Jesus Connection: The Ark of the Covenant was important to God because it reminded the people that God was with them. Years later God gave the people something better than a sign - He gave us Jesus.

Big Picture Question: What kind of king did God plan to give Israel?

Big Picture Answer: God was going to send a perfect king - Jesus Christ.

Topic: Saul Chosen as King & God Rejected Saul Lesson 36

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 13:1-14; 14:18-48; 15:1-35

Time Period: UNITED KINGDOM

Concept: God sent 3 kings: Saul, David and Solomon

David would be in the lineage (family) of Jesus, the true King.

As the king of Israel, Saul gathered an army to fight their enemies, the Philistines. The Philistines had 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men on horseback, and more foot soldiers than anyone could count! When the Israelites saw them, they were afraid. They hid in caves, thickets and holes.

Samuel had told Saul to wait for him for 7 days, then Samuel would come and tell Saul what he should do. Saul waited, but Samuel didn't come. Saul's soldiers began to leave him. Not wanting to wait anymore, Saul decided he would make an offering to God. This was only supposed to be done by a priest so this is not what God wanted! Saul just finished his offering when Samuel arrived.

Samuel asked Saul what he had done and Saul said "The men were leaving me! I wanted to ask for God's help to fight the Philistines." Samuel told Saul he had disobeyed God and would not be king much longer since he didn't obey Him.

Some time later, Samuel came to tell Saul that God wanted Saul to attack the Amalekites and destroy all their people and animals. So Saul and his army fought and won. But they disobeyed God and didn't destroy everything as God had said.

God told Samuel "I'm sorry that I made Saul king because he does not obey Me." Samuel told Saul what God had said and Saul said "I did obey Him, I only saved the best animals to sacrifice to God." But God cares more about obedience than sacrifice so he took away his kingship.

Jesus Connection: God's message to Saul was clear. Saul was supposed to obey God and things would go well. But Saul didn't obey, so God rejected him and he was no longer able to be king.

Big Picture Question: How does God feel when His people obey?

Big Picture Answer: God is happy when we obey Him!

Topic: David and Goliath

Lesson 37

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 16-17

Israel was at war with its enemy, the Philistines. The Philistines were bad people who did not believe in God. One of their soldiers was a giant named Goliath. He stood over 9 feet tall. The Philistines stood on one hill, and the Israelites on another. Everyday Goliath would shout, "I dare just one man of Israel to fight me!" This went on for days, no one would take Goliath up on his challenge. The Israelites were scared of Goliath. They had forgotten that God was on their side and He would protect them.

There was a young shepherd boy named David. David had three older brothers that were soldiers. One day his father sent David to take them some food. When David arrived at the battlefield he heard Goliath shouting. It made David very angry.

David said that he would fight Goliath. The Israelite soldiers laughed at David. He was just a boy, what made him think he could kill Goliath? David said that God was on his side, and with God on his side he could do it. They called for King Saul. David told Saul how he had killed lions and bears protecting his father's sheep. King Saul told David that he could fight Goliath.

King Saul told David he could use his armor, but it was way too big! David went over to a brook of water and picked up five smooth stones and put them in a pouch. When Goliath saw that David had come to fight him, he laughed. David told Goliath he was fighting him in the name of God and that he was going to kill him.

Goliath headed towards David, and David ran up to meet him. David took a stone from his pouch and put it in his sling. He slung his sling and the stone went flying in the air. It hit Goliath right in the head and knocked him to the ground! David ran and grabbed Goliath's own sword

and cut his head off with it. When the Philistines saw that Goliath was dead they ran away scared. David trusted in God, and God gave him the victory over Goliath.

Jesus Connection: The Israelites were going up against their toughest enemy and didn't stand a chance on their own against Goliath. But David knew the Lord was with him and God would give him the power to defeat Goliath.

Big Picture Question: Who gave David the power to defeat Goliath?

Big Picture Answer: God gave David the power to defeat Goliath.

Topic: David and Jonathan Lesson 38
Scriptures: 1 Samuel 18:1-11; 19:1-7; 20:1-42

After David killed Goliath, he went to live at Saul's palace. There he became best friends with Saul's son, Jonathan. David was successful at everything Saul asked him to do, and Saul made David an officer in his army. But the people seemed to like David better than Saul and that made Saul so jealous that he tried to kill David! He even wanted his son, Jonathan to kill David, but Jonathan was David's friend and told David to go hide while he talked to Saul.

The next morning, Jonathan asked Saul, "Why do you want to kill David? He's done nothing but help you." Saul agreed and promised not to kill him. But Saul didn't keep his promise for long, and one day while David was playing the harp, Saul threw a spear at him. David escaped and told Jonathan what had happened. Jonathan was shocked, but David reminded him that Saul wouldn't tell Jonathan he wanted to kill him since they were friends. So David came up with a plan.

A festival was coming up and David should've been eating with the king, but he wasn't going to go. David told Jonathan, "If Saul asks where I am, tell him to go to Bethlehem. If he gets angry, you'll know he wants to kill me."

David hid in a field and after the festival, Jonathan would signal David by shooting 3 arrows into the field. If it was safe for David to return, Jonathan would send his servant to get the arrows. If Jonathan told his servant "the arrows are to the side of you" David would know he was safe to return. If Saul wanted to kill David, Jonathan would say "The arrows are beyond you!"

Jonathan went to the feast and Saul asked where David was. When Jonathan told him he had gone to Bethlehem, Saul was furious and yelled "He deserves to die!". The next morning, Jonathan knew Saul

wanted to kill David, so he shot the 3 arrows and shouted, "the arrows are beyond you!" David knew Saul wanted to kill him, so David and Jonathan said good-bye and David fled.

Jesus Connection: Jonathan was a true friend to David. Everyone could use a friend like that!

Big Picture Question: Who is our friend?

Big Picture Answer: Jesus is our friend - no matter what!

Topic: David Anointed King, Uzzah, God's Covenant with David
Lesson 39

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 2, 5-7

King Saul and three of his sons were killed in battle against the Philistines. Israel needed a new king. David had already been chosen by God to be the next king of Israel. Some of the Israelites decided they did not want David to become their king, they wanted one of Saul's other sons to be king.

So David was king over a small part of Israel and Saul's son was king over the other part of Israel. That was not God's plan. There was a battle between David's army and the other king's army. David's army won. Then the other king was killed by two men while he lay resting in his bed. David then became king over all of Israel.

The Philistines had taken the Ark of the Covenant from the Israelites in battle. It made bad things happen to them so they got rid of it. When David became king he wanted to move the Ark to Jerusalem. This was a good idea.

Things went terribly wrong though. David did not move the Ark the way God had said to. God had told the Israelites a long time ago that it had to be carried on poles by the Levite priests, and no one could touch it! Instead of carrying the Ark the way God said to, the Ark was put on a cart and pulled by oxen. The oxen began to stumble and one of the men named Uzzah put out his hand and touched the Ark to keep it from falling. Remember God had said not to touch the Ark. Uzzah was immediately struck dead.

One day, David was talking with Nathan who was a prophet from God. David wanted to build a temple for the Ark of the Covenant for God, but God didn't want that. God gave Nathan a message for David. This is what God said. "I made you king. I've been with you wherever you have

gone. I will make your name great and when you die, one of your sons will be king. Your son will build a house for me. I will love him, and I will never leave him. Your throne will last forever."

Jesus Connection: God made a covenant (promise) with David that his throne would last forever! God told David that future kings of Israel would come from David's family, and David's kingdom would last forever. God kept his promise by sending Jesus.

Big Picture Question: What did God promise David?

Big Picture Answer: God promised that David's kingdom would last forever.

Topic: Solomon Prays for Wisdom, Temple Built Lesson 40

Scriptures: 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12; 3:1-5; 6:1-8:66

David had been king over Israel for a long time, but now he was getting old. It was time for his son, Solomon to become king. Because David was old and at the end of his life he gave Solomon some advice. He told him, "Be strong and brave. Obey God and He will give you success in everything you do. God promised that if we are faithful, then every king of Israel will come from our family."

When David died, Solomon became king. One night, God appeared to Solomon in a dream and told him to ask him for anything. Now Solomon could've asked for anything - riches, power, or a long life. But Solomon didn't ask for any of these. He asked for something way better. Solomon said, "Lord my God, You have made me king in my father's place, but I am young and don't know much about being a king. Please give me a wise and obedient heart. Help me know the difference between right and wrong and help me to lead your people well."

God was pleased with Solomon and told him he would make him wiser than anyone who had ever lived. Solomon was so wise that he wrote many proverbs and sayings for us to learn from today. He wrote the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon for us to learn from. His gift wasn't just for him, but we can all learn from the wisdom God gave him.

In Solomon's fourth year as king, he began to build a temple for the Lord. The temple would take the place of the tabernacle where God had met with his people for 480 years - ever since He lead them out of Egypt.

Solomon ordered thousands of workers to build the temple, it took 7 years to build and was made of beautiful stone and cedar. The Most

Holy Place - where the Ark of the Covenant was to be kept - was completely covered with pure gold! It was such a beautiful temple.

When the priests moved the Ark of the Covenant into the temple, a cloud filled the temple, and God's glory was in the cloud. The people prayed, offered sacrifices and worshipped God. Then they went home with hearts full of joy for all that God had done for them.

Jesus Connection: The temple Solomon built was a temporary dwelling place, and because God is holy, only the priests could approach God, and only if they followed specific instructions. Ordinary people had no access to the living God, but Jesus changed that. Jesus made the temple our hearts so that He can dwell in us without having to have a building.

Big Picture Question: What did God promise Solomon?

Big Picture Answer: God promised that if Solomon would obey His commands, He would live among His people and never leave them.

Topic: Elijah the Prophet Cared for by God
Scriptures: 1 Kings 16:29-17

Lesson 41

Time Period: DIVIDED KINGDOM

Concept: The kingdom divides over Solomon's sin, but God is still keeping His promises through the kings of Israel and Judah.

King Solomon loved God but didn't always obey God. God had warned the Israelites not to worship false gods, but they did it anyways. God was angry and warned Solomon, but Solomon wouldn't listen. When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king. The people told Rehoboam, "Your father made us work too hard. We will gladly serve you if you make our work easier." Rehoboam thought about it and asked his friends, but he didn't ask God. He told the people, "Solomon didn't make you work hard enough! I'll make you work even harder." This made the Israelites mad, so the people from the northern tribes didn't want to serve Rehoboam and made Jeroboam their king. Only the southern tribe of Judah stayed under Rehoboam's rule. So there was a kingdom in the north lead by Jeroboam and a kingdom in the south lead by Rehoboam.

Now during this time when the kingdom was divided there was a prophet of Israel, Elijah. The king at that time was Ahab, and his Queen was Jezebel. They were both very evil. They did not serve God. They served an idol named Baal. In fact, most of the Israelites were not loyal to God, they were worshipping Baal also. Ahab had even built an altar to Baal. By doing this, Ahab made God very angry.

Elijah was a loyal servant of God. Elijah was one of very few that still worshipped God. God used Elijah as His prophet to tell Ahab of the punishment to be brought on him and the people for their idolatry. Elijah went to Ahab and spoke God's word, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, there will be no rain unless I say." God was going to cause a drought. No rain meant no water. Without water how could they grow food? This would be a harsh punishment for the land. Even though this

punishment would affect Elijah, he was loyal to God and did not get angry with Him. God sent Elijah away and provided him with water from a brook, meat, and bread, brought by ravens.

After a while the brook dried up and there was no water for Elijah. God sent Elijah to the house of a widow, she had no husband, only a son. Elijah asked her for food and water. She gave Elijah water, but told him she had very little to eat. She only had enough flour and oil to make bread for her and her son. If she gave it to Elijah they would be hungry.

Elijah told her if she would use it to make him some bread, that God would make sure she never ran out of oil and flour. The widow did as Elijah asked. After making the bread she still had oil and flour left when it should have been gone. God was taking care of her, and her son, for helping Elijah.

A few days later the widow's son became sick and died. The widow was very upset, she told Elijah about her son. Elijah asked her to show him where the boy was. She took him to the boy. Elijah laid the boy on his bed. He laid on the boy's body three times and prayed to God to make him alive again. God heard Elijah's prayer and made the boy come alive. Elijah brought the boy to his mother. She was so happy. The widow thanked Elijah and said she knew that Elijah was a man of God.

Jesus Connection: Elijah was a special prophet from God and he obeyed what God said, so God was with him. God told us that He would send another prophet - Jesus - who would bring the good news of salvation.

Big Picture Question: Who was with Elijah?

Big Picture Answer: God with with Elijah and cared for him.

Topic: Elijah and the Contest at Mt Carmel
Scriptures: 1 Kings 18

Lesson 42

The drought lasted for three and a half years. After that, God sent Elijah to tell Ahab that He would send rain. When Ahab saw Elijah he was angry and blamed Elijah for the drought. Elijah told him that he was responsible for the drought because he had forsaken God and worshipped Baal. Elijah challenged Ahab to a contest to prove to him, and the people, who the true and living God was.

Ahab, Jezebel, and four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal were on Baal's side. Only Elijah was willing to be loyal to God. The contest was to see who would bring down fire, Baal or God. The prophets of Baal built an altar and put a bull on top of the altar. They prayed to Baal and asked Baal for fire. Nothing happened. They prayed even more and leaped around the altar, but still nothing. Elijah said to them, "Is your god too busy? Is he on vacation? Maybe your god is sleeping and cannot hear you! Call to him louder and maybe you will awaken him!" The prophets called to Baal louder and began to cut themselves until they bled. Still there was no answer from Baal.

Elijah built an altar to God just as the prophets of Baal had done. Only Elijah did something more. He dug a trench all the way around his altar and then asked that jugs of water be poured over the altar until the trench was overflowing with water. Elijah knew God's power. Elijah knew that God could burn up the altar even though it had been soaked with water. Elijah then prayed and asked God to send down fire to show the people that He was the true and living God. God heard Elijah's prayer and sent down so great a fire that it burnt up the bull, the altar, and even the water that had been in the trenches. When the people saw this they knew that the God that Elijah was loyal to was the true God. Baal was not real, but God is!

Jesus Connection: Elijah called on the power of God to prove to the worshippers of Baal that God is the one, true God. By sending fire from heaven, God showed His great power.

Big Picture Question: Who is the one, true God?

Big Picture Answer: Yahweh is the one, true God.

Topic: Elijah and the Whirlwind, Elisha heals Naaman
Scriptures: 2 Kings 2,5

Lesson 43

Elijah's work on earth God had given him to do was done. God wanted to bring Elijah to heaven to be with Him. Elisha, Elijah's friend, wanted to go with Elijah. Elijah told him that he would not be able to go with him. Elisha wouldn't leave his friend, he continued following him. Several other prophets tried to tell Elisha that Elijah was going to be leaving. He did not want to hear it. "I know, be quiet!" he would tell them.

Elisha followed Elijah to the Jordan River. When they got to the river, Elijah took off his robe, rolled it up, and hit the water with it. The waters parted and the two walked across on dry ground. When they got to the other side Elijah asked Elisha if there was anything he could do for him before he left him. Elisha told Elijah that he wanted to be just like him, only better. Elisha wanted to serve God as his friend did.

Suddenly a chariot with horses of fire separated the two friends. Elijah was in the chariot going to heaven in a great big wind. Elisha cried out, "My father! My father!" Elijah dropped his robe from the chariot. Elisha picked it up. Elisha's request had been given to him, he was going to take Elijah's place as a great prophet of God!

While Elisha was a prophet there was a man named Naaman who was a very brave and strong soldier. Naaman was well liked by his master, the king, because God had helped Naaman win battles. But Naaman also had a terrible disease, called leprosy. Naaman had sores all over his skin, it was very painful. Naaman's wife had a young girl who was her servant. She told Naaman and his wife about a prophet who could make Naaman's leprosy go away. Naaman went to the king and told him what the young girl had said. The king gave him permission to go see the prophet.

Elisha told Naaman to go and wash seven times in the Jordan River, and then his skin would be made like new. Naaman became very angry!
"Surely Elisha should have come out and called to God on my behalf and waved his hand over my leprosy to make it better! Aren't there better, cleaner rivers to wash in than the Jordan!"

Naaman's servants came to him and said, "If he told you to go and do some great big hard thing to be healed wouldn't you have done it? Why not then just do as he said and wash in the Jordan River?" So Naaman went to the Jordan and washed seven times as Elisha had told him, and his skin was made well. Naaman went back to Elisha and told them that now he knew that the God that Elisha worshipped was the true God!

Jesus Connection: Naaman was sick with a skin problem and because he obeyed God, his disease was cleaned. All people are sick with a sin problem, but Jesus can wash our sins away and heal us.

Big Picture Question: Who heals us from our sin?

Big Picture Answer: Jesus heals us from our sins.

Topic: Jonah
Scriptures: Jonah

Lesson 44

God continued to send prophets, his messengers, to warn the people to repent and turn back to Him.

The people living in Nineveh were very bad. They did not obey God. God asked Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach to the people. God wanted them to change and be good, God wanted them to obey Him. Jonah did not like the people in Nineveh and he did not want to go. Instead of going to Nineveh like God told him to, Jonah ran away and tried to hide from God.

Jonah went and got on a boat that was going away from Nineveh. Jonah was silly to think he could hide from God. God knew where Jonah was. God waited until the boat got to the middle of the sea, He then caused a very big storm. All the people in the boat were very afraid. Jonah told them the storm was his fault, "Pick me up and throw me into the water, the storm will stop."

They threw Jonah into the water, and immediately the storm stopped. God sent a big fish to come and swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and nights. Jonah was sorry he disobeyed God. Jonah prayed to God and asked God to forgive him.

God made the fish spit Jonah out onto the dry land. God gave Jonah another chance to obey Him. This time Jonah did as God said. Jonah went to Nineveh and told the people to change their ways. He told them to stop being bad and start being good. The people of Nineveh listened to Jonah and they began to obey God.

Jesus Connection: God showed mercy and grace by forgiving the people of Nineveh when they repented of their sins. God shows us the same mercy and grace and even sent His own son to die for us!

Big Picture Question: How can we be forgiven?

Big Picture Answer: God forgives when we are sorry for what we have done and ask for forgiveness.

Who Did, Who Did

Who did, who did, who did, who did,
Who did swallow Jo Jo Jonah,
Who did, who did, who did, who did,
Who did swallow Jo Jo Jonah,
Who did, who did, who did, who did,
Who did swallow Jo Jo Jonah,
Who did swallow Jonah,
Who did swallow Jonah
Who did swallow Jonah
Who did swallow Jonah down.

Big fish, big fish, big fish, big fish,
Big fish swallowed Jo Jo Jonah
Big fish, big fish, big fish, big fish,
Big fish swallowed Jo Jo Jonah
Big fish, big fish, big fish, big fish,
Big fish swallowed Jo Jo Jonah
Big fish swallowed Jonah,
Big fish swallowed Jonah
Big fish swallowed Jonah
Big fish swallowed Jonah down.

Jonah Sailed Away

(Tune: I'm A Little Teapot)

Jonah sailed away from God one day.
Swallowed by a fish, and then he prayed.
The fish spit Jonah on the beach
He went to Nineveh to teach and preach.

Topic: Hezekiah - Judah's Faithful King, Isaiah
Scriptures: 2 Kings 18-20, Isaiah 53

Lesson 45

Time period: JUDAH ALONE

Concept: The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was destroyed by the Assyrians (722 BC), but God still has a plan for His people.

There had been many bad kings during the divided kingdom especially in Israel, they did not follow God's laws and disobeyed Him. But there were some good kings in the southern kingdom of Judah. Well the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians so Judah was left all alone. One of Judah's kings was Hezekiah, and he became king when he was 25 years old. He ruled in Jerusalem and did what was right in God's sight and obeyed Him. He removed the idols and followed the laws God had given to Moses.

After the king of Assyria had taken the northern kingdom of Israel, he also took some of the cities of Judah and then sent officials to the city of Jerusalem (the capital of Judah). When King Hezekiah heard about the Assyrians trying to take them and telling the people not to trust in God, Hezekiah was so upset and mourned. He sent messengers to the prophet, Isaiah, asking him to pray for God's people.

Isaiah prayed to God and told Hezekiah "do not be afraid, the King of Assyria will go back to his own land. And he will die there by the sword." Hezekiah prayed more and God heard his prayer and the next night the angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 men in the camp of the Assyrians. God saved the city of Jerusalem because they obeyed Him and didn't forget His laws.

Isaiah continued to prophesy to the people and share God's messages. Sometimes he gave messages of how people needed to change their ways, sometimes they were about the coming of the One who would

save his people. This message was about Jesus - who wouldn't be born until 700 years later!!

Isaiah preached to the people that Jesus would be hated and suffer, he told them how He would suffer for our sins and how His suffering would save us. "He was despised and rejected by men...", "But He was pierced for our transgressions.. and we are healed by His wounds." Isaiah told the people why Jesus was coming and what He would do for us. How incredible that God knew exactly what would happen 700 years before Jesus was even born!

Everything Isaiah and the prophets said came true. Jesus was hated and He died on the cross for our sins.

Jesus Connection: Hezekiah was a faithful king and led the people to worship God and obey Him. Like Hezekiah, Jesus is our faithful king who rules over the earth.

Big Picture Question: Whose prayers does God hear?

Big Picture Answer: God hears the prayers of all His people!

Topic: Daniel Eats Vegetables
Scriptures: Daniel 1

Lesson 46

Time Period: BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

Concept: Judah was taken into captivity in 2 Chronicles 36. (586 BC Jerusalem fell) No matter where the Israelites were, God was still with them and was helping them to see He was the one true God.

Just like the northern kingdom of Israel was taken captive because they didn't obey God, years later King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came and took the kingdom of Judah and the city of Jerusalem since they had forgotten God's laws and weren't obeying him or listening to His warnings. The Babylonians destroyed the temple, tore down Jerusalem's walls, and destroyed all its valuable treasures. Those who they didn't kill, they took to Babylon to be servants of the king.

God's people had been taken away from their home and made slaves. Many of the young boys were taken to King Nebuchadnezzar's palace and made to work. Only the strongest and smartest were chosen to work in the palace. Some of these servants were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They had been taken to be trained for 3 years to become servants before they could be presented to the king. The king gave them food to eat and wine to drink from his own table.

Daniel and his three friends did not want to eat the food the king gave them, it would be disobeying God if they did. They asked to only be given vegetables and water. The king's servant did not want to go against the king's wishes. Daniel said, "Let us eat only vegetables and drink water for ten days. After ten days if we do not look stronger and healthier than the other boys then do to us as you wish." The servant agreed.

After ten days Daniel and his friends were compared to the boys who ate from the king's table. Daniel and his friends were stronger and

healthier than the other boys. The king was impressed by Daniel and his friends. Daniel and his friends obeyed God, even when everyone else around them did not. Because they obeyed God, God made them really smart and at the end of their training they were presented to King Nebuchadnezzar. The King saw how smart they were, so they began to serve in his court, a high position!

Jesus Connection: Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon and were ordered to do things against God's laws. They chose to obey God instead and because of their obedience, God blessed them!

Big Picture Question: What did Daniel and his friends do when they were captured?

Big Picture Answer: They obeyed God, no matter what!

Topic: Fiery Furnace
Scriptures: Daniel 3

Lesson 47

King Nebuchadnezzar thought so highly of himself that he had a huge golden statue made of himself. He made a law that everyone must bow down and worship his statue. If someone refused to bow down and worship it, they would be thrown into a furnace of fire.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego followed God. They refused to bow down and worship the statue. They were brought before Nebuchadnezzar. He asked, "Is it true that you will not worship the golden statue that I have set up? If you will worship it you will not be thrown into the fire, but if you refuse to the fiery furnace you will go!" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "If that is the case then to the fire we will go, our God will protect us and keep us safe! We will never worship the golden statue that you set up!"

Nebuchadnezzar was so angry! The men were tied up and sent to the furnace. The furnace was so hot with fire that when it was opened up the men who put them in the fire were also burned up by the fire. As Nebuchadnezzar watched, he saw the men walking in the furnace, they had not been burned and now there were four men instead of three! Nebuchadnezzar called the men to come out of the furnace. They were perfectly safe, not one hair on their head had been burned by the fire. Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who sent His angel to deliver them from the fiery furnace." Nebuchadnezzar told them that they were free to worship their God without fear of harm. Because of their faith in God, He saved them from certain death. God showed Nebuchadnezzar and his people that day who the true God was!

Jesus Connection: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were rescued from a fire because they obeyed God instead of man. Jesus came to

save us from more than physical harm, but His sacrifice saves us from eternal death if we obey His commands.

Big Picture Question: Who protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

Big Picture Answer: God protected them in the fire.

Topic: Daniel in the Lion's Den
Scriptures: Daniel 5-6

Lesson 48

Daniel was well liked by the new king, Darius. Darius gave Daniel a very important job. It made the other men who worked for the king very jealous of Daniel. These men wanted to get Daniel in trouble with the king. Daniel was very good at his job and never did anything wrong. They knew that they would have to attack his God to get him to disobey Darius.

Three times a day Daniel would kneel in front of his window and pray to God. The men used this against Daniel. They tricked Darius into making a law that no one could pray to any other god than Darius or they would be cast into a den of hungry lions! Of course, faithful Daniel refused to stop praying to God. He didn't even try to hide it, he still prayed in front of his window three times a day where he could be seen.

When these bad men saw Daniel praying they ran and told the king. The king was very sad because Daniel was his friend, he was sorry he ever made the law. Daniel was to be thrown into the lion's den. Darius told Daniel, "I know your God will save you!" Daniel was thrown to the lions. Darius was so upset that he could not eat or sleep that night. He couldn't wait till morning to check on his friend Daniel. When morning came Darius ran to the den and called, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God saved you?" Daniel replied, "My God sent an angel to shut the lion's mouths, they have not hurt me!"

Darius was so happy to find Daniel safe, but so angry that he had been tricked by evil men. Darius had the men who tricked him thrown into the den of lions. This time God did not send His angel to shut the lion's mouths!

Jesus Connection: God showed His power to rescue Daniel from the lions. But Daniel is just a small part of a much bigger story! God

rescues us from a bigger problem than lions - sin and death - through Jesus!

Big Picture Question: *God rescued Daniel from the lions. What does God rescue us from?*

Big Picture Answer: *God rescues us from sin and death.*

Daniel

See Daniel pray three times a day,
Three times a day, Three times a day,
See Daniel pray three times a day.
With his window open.

See Daniel in the lion's den,
The lion's den
The lion's den
See Daniel in the lion's den
God delivered him.

Sing praise to God for saving him,
For saving him, For saving him,
Sing praise to God for saving him,
From the lion's den.

Topic: Esther Becomes Queen, Laws Against the Jews
Scriptures: Esther 1-3

Lesson 49

Time Period: RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY

Concept: The people stayed in captivity many years, but God had promised through the prophet Jeremiah that His people would one day return to their own land. God kept His promises and led the people back home.

King Xerxes became angry with his wife, Queen Vashti. He told her she could not be the queen anymore. King Xerxes sent word out that he was looking for a new queen. Beautiful girls from all over came, wanting to be chosen as the new queen.

Mordecai, a Jew, brought his cousin Esther. Mordecai took care of Esther because her parents had died. Esther was very beautiful. It was Esther's turn to meet the king. He too thought Esther was very beautiful. He liked her more than all the other girls he had met. The king placed a crown on Esther's head and she became the new queen.

One day, Mordecai, Queen Esther's cousin, overheard two of the king's men talking about killing the king. Mordecai, wanting to protect the king, told his cousin Esther what the men were planning to do. Esther told the king of the men's evil plans. Thanks to Mordecai, these men were not able to carry out their wicked plan. The king was so thankful. He had what Mordecai had done for him written down in a book so it would not be forgotten.

There was a man named Haman who worked for the king. He held a very important job so the king said all men should bow to him when they see him. Mordecai was a man of God and refused to bow and worship any man. He would worship God only! Haman hated Mordecai for not bowing to him. Haman decided that Mordecai should be killed, not only Mordecai, but all of God's people known as the Jews.

Haman tricked the king into signing a law to kill all the Jews. Haman told the king that there was a whole group of people who did not respect him and would not obey the king's laws. This was a lie!

Of course, the king was worried about his kingdom so he said that Haman's plan to kill these people sounded like a good idea to him. The king signed a law that said on a certain day all these people, the Jews, were to be killed. Foolish Haman did not know that queen Esther was a Jew, Mordecai had told her not to tell anyone. When Mordecai and Esther heard about the king's new law they were very sad.

Jesus Connection: God always has a plan to protect His people. Esther was given a special place in the kingdom as queen, and God will use her for His good!

Big Picture Question: How does God use people?

Big Picture Answer: God uses ordinary people to carry out His plans.

Topic: Esther Saves God's People Lesson 50
Scriptures: Esther 4-5

Mordecai and Esther are very sad about the new law the king signed saying that all Jews were to be killed. Mordecai knew that the law was Haman's fault. Mordecai told Esther that she had to talk to the king about the law. Esther was scared. She told Mordecai, "I can't do that! I can not see the king unless he asks for me. I could be killed if I go to him!" Mordecai tells Esther that maybe God planned for her to be the queen so she could save His people! Esther agrees to go to the king. "If I die, I die!" she says.

Esther was very brave to go to the king. When the king saw her he was glad to see her and he held out his golden scepter to her. That meant she could come in and speak to him. "What can I do for you Queen Esther?" asked the king. Esther told the king she would like to have a party for the king and Haman. The king agrees. Haman thinks he is so special because he was invited to the queen's party.

Later the night the king was reading a book. He was reading the book that told how Mordecai had saved his life. He wanted to thank Mordecai for what he had done. The king made Haman honor Mordecai. Haman hated Mordecai already, but that made him hate Mordecai even more!

Esther had a second party for the king and Haman. At this banquet Esther tells the king that someone has planned to kill her people. The king is very upset and asks Esther who would do such a thing. "That wicked man is Haman!" Esther tells the king. Esther told the king how Haman had tricked him into making the law. The king was so angry with Haman that he had Haman killed. Because of Esther's bravery and courage she saved her people, God's people, from certain death.

Time Period: YEARS OF SILENCE

Concept: After all the people returned from captivity and rebuilt the temple and Jerusalem there are 400 years of silence. This makes up the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Jesus Connection: Mordecai reminds Esther "who knows if you were brought to the kingdom for such a time as this." God was using Esther to save His people. God uses us today to help tell others about Jesus so they can also be saved.

Big Picture Question: Why was Esther brave?

Big Picture Answer: Esther trusted in God to provide and protect her.