

**Travels Thru Time Class** Decorate the room with a time line with a graphic that shows "before time, God was" and "the end of time" at the end after revelation. Poster of a "time machine" that has a dial for each lesson.

**Class Outline** -- 35 week session. Add in a mid-year and a final Review Day, a Bible Bowl prep day and a party  
1 - Creation, Power of God and God's plan.

Read Gen 1:26, 2:8-15 **Draw** a picture of what the garden looks like - why did God make us? God gave us everything we need.

2 - Adam & Eve Sin. Why did God make us able to choose? What is sin?

3 - Noah & Tower of Babel God takes care of those who follow Him. His promises.

Read stories and **fill in blank** what they did and what happened to them

4 - Abraham God's promise of a Savior. The "chosen people", their role in the Bible

Draw on a **map** where Abraham went

5 - Isaac. Wells. How to act like God's people. Being last is being best.

6 - Jacob and Esau Importance of knowing what's important

7 - Joseph Doing God's will wherever you are. God works thru our lives

**Draw** a stage set for a "movie" about Joseph

8 - Moses Reluctant leader. Exodus. What happens when people follow and they don't

Do a **play** of Moses in basket, Moses & burning bush, Moses & Pharaoh

9 - Moses and Exodus 10 Commandments (2 commands) Spies: trust. Wandering and grumbling.

Look up the foods mentioned in the Exodus - **fill in blanks** & answer thought ?'s

10 - Joshua Doing just what God says to do, trusting even when it seems silly or wrong. Jericho.

Promised Land Times - **write story** of one of the battles

11 - Gideon, (Judges) did what God asked, got rid of pagan gods and defeated the enemies

**fleece test, draw soldier**

12 - Samson - was tempted to follow pagan ways, didn't lead the people to God, enemies overpowered him

Strength test - fill in how strong you are, memorize a verse

13 - Samuel - doing what God asks all your life

are you growing in wisdom, stature & favor? Measure height, weight, etc of kids, **fill in sheet**

14 - Saul Two different responses to God's call to leadership.

To obey is better than to sacrifice -- **finish a story**

15 - David : being a person with a heart like God's

**Fill in blanks** heart page

16 - Solomon divided kingdom. People lost their love of God. Kingdom falls apart.

**Crossword Puzzle** of Proverbs

17 - Divided Kingdom, North - Jeroboam and 10 tribes break away. Northern kingdom refuses to return to God

Make a **map** of the Divided Kingdom

18 - Elijah, Elisha try to warn and save the people --Ahab & Jezebel -- captivity by Assyria

cartoon faces -- identify who's who **match up**

19 - Jonah - saving the Ninevites, enemies of God's people - Read the book of Jonah as it is written

**Word find** page from internet

20 - Josiah, Hezekiah - youth and age don't matter to God Southern kingdom waivers in trusting God.

**Cartoon strip** of Josiah & Hezekiah

21 - Jeremiah and the end of the southern kingdom

make up a scroll -- **fill in blanks** what Jeremiah warned people, make cross reference to warning for today

22 - Captivity: Daniel,; Meshak, Shadrach & Abednego People yearning for God even in captivity

**Write a prayer** Meshak, Shadrach & Abednego or Daniel may have prayed

23 - Esther: being willing to tell people who you really are, even when they don't appreciate who that is

Make T-shirt design for kids to iron on a t-shirt, wear to school and **write what people thought**

24 - Rebuilding Jerusalem - Building the wall handout

25 - Isaiah prophesies about Jesus -- **Match up** best-known prophesies and where they are fulfilled

26 - Jesus birth, promise fulfilled, wise men, Egypt, childhood in Nazareth

**Jesus** was a child just like me - the humanness of Jesus

27 - Easter John the Baptist, what was his job, what do we know about him

Look up verses about John in easter eggs

28 - Jesus' friends, fishers of men, Galilee ministry when everyone loves Him -

Jesus was a good friend - list characteristics. Am I a good friend? Checklist. Prayer to cut off and save..

29 - Jesus' miracles - people start following him - why did He do miracles?

Draw a picture of the miracle that impressed you most and tell why.

30 - Jesus teachings, sermon on mount - parables - some people didn't like them

Little **glue on things** we are to be (light, salt, built on rock etc) **explain** what they mean

- 31 - Jesus' Last Days and Death - fulfillment of promise, our response **Video**  
**News Headlines** about things that happened when Jesus died and rose
- 32 - Peter & the beginning of the church, How did Peter change - what changed him? **Video**  
**Color Book fill-in** part one about the church
- 33 - Paul missionary journeys, our mission now - map Paul's travels, how far, how long? How'd he do it?  
what job did Jesus leave us to do? how can we do it? Choose one of our missions - **write a letter** there  
**hand out Bible Bowl questions for next week**
- 34 - Revelation - God has won the battle, what is heaven like? how to be sure we'll get there?  
Work the question cloud puzzle.**fill in blanks**
- 35 - Heaven. Have kids think about what heaven is like. Draw what they most want to see or do there.

## **Lesson One: Creation**

Explain to the kids what the year's lessons will be about, and show the time machine poster starting with revelation and working backwards telling a little about some of the stories on the way by their labels. Then the time machine gets "stuck" and the lights go out.

With the room in darkness, have someone in an adjacent room, or taped on a tape player, read this loudly - as if they are God...

I am here..... and in the beginning, I created the heavens and the earth.

Now the earth is formless and empty.

Darkness is over the surface of the deep.

My Spirit is hovering over the waters.

I say: "Let there be light," and there was light!

I see that the light was good. I have separated the light from the darkness.

I will call the light "day," and the darkness I will call "night."

And there was evening, and there was morning-- the first day.

Now I say, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water."

So I will make the expanse and separate the water under the expanse from the water above it.

Ahhh... it is so. I will call the expanse "sky."

And there was evening, and there was morning-- the second day.

Now I say, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear."  
And it is so. I will call the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters I will call "seas."

Ahh.... this is good.

Then I say, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds."

And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.

And I see that it is good. And there was evening, and there was morning-- the third day.

Now I say, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years,  
Let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth."

And it was so. I have made two great lights-- the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. And I also made the stars and set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness.

Ahhh... this is good! And there was evening, and there was morning-- the fourth day.

Turn on lights again and continue without pause reading through Creation.

Talk about how there was nothing before God, not even time. And at the end of the world there will be no more time again. Point out how the story of the Bible is the story of God's love for His creation, especially man. Talk about the perfection of the creation, the garden and how everything was perfect for us.

## Lesson Two: Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel - Sin in the world

God created the whole universe, the garden and man. Why did He create **us**? To have someone to care for and someone to love Him back. Have you ever made something you were really proud of? Make cookie men and bake in oven. Start the story while they bake. Take out to cool (not eat) when baked.

Read Genesis 3, with these discussion points..

3:1 What is the personality of the serpent? SNEAKY Why did he act like that? To trick people.

3:2 Go back to 2:16 -- what God had told man about the tree

3:5 What did the serpent tell Eve? Write it on the blackboard.

3:6 Was the fruit bad? Was it scary? Was the fruit ugly? Nasty? NO - it says it was GOOD for food, PLEASING to the eye, DESIREABLE for gaining wisdom! All kinds of good things! What could be wrong with something that good??? Sometimes sins come "disguised" as good things - Things God says are wrong may look just fine to us!! Or even good!! Lots of people may be doing this thing and nothing bad ever seems to happen to them. Sometimes is it hard to see what's wrong with doing something (parents or someone says is wrong)?

3:7 What was the first thing Adam & Eve realized with their brand-new knowledge? SHAME! They had never felt any shame before. Have any of us ever felt ashamed? Wouldn't it be wonderful to never feel that way??

3:11-12 When God asked about their sin, what did they do? MAKE EXCUSES! Do we ever do that? What should they have done? Like Kevin's lesson last week about Peter being sorry for his sin and becoming a strong Christian - and Judas killing himself instead of being humble and asking forgiveness... Do you think God would have treated Adam & Eve any differently if they had 'fessed up that it was their fault and told Him they were sorry???

3:14-15 The serpent became the lowest animal. Satan would be crushed by a woman's child -- who would that be?

3:16 Woman would have pain in childbirth and would need to let her husband lead the family. Have any of you watched animals have babies?

3:17-19 Man would have to work hard now.

3:21 What did God do here? Made them clothes. What did He use? This looks like the first animals killed - the first sacrifice for sins. God may have told them to use animals for sacrifices to Him here - animals were the sacrifice He was pleased with in the next story about Adam & Eve's children -- anyone remember who they were?

3:22 Why did God make them leave Eden? In this verse let's look at what Satan told Eve.... did he tell mostly the truth?? They DID become like God, DID know good & evil, They would have been able to live forever (from the tree of life) so God had to make them leave. Satan is SNEAKY - he knows how to get you in trouble -- what you might be tempted to do wouldn't be any temptation to someone else, but all of us has something we sortof like to do that we know is really wrong for us to do, and Satan will tempt us with that.

Did sin stop when Adam & Eve left the garden? Did they learn from their mistake?? What did they teach their boys about sin and temptation??

4:2b-5 God wanted blood sacrifices - Abel gave what He asked. Cain did what he thought was better - was God really mad at Cain then? (gave him another chance to do what God wanted)

4:6 Did Cain decide to do what God wanted?

4:7 What was God's advice to Cain? Sin is at your door and you must master it. What does that mean to us? Sin is everywhere, Satan will be sure we have plenty of opportunities to do what God doesn't want us to do!! What di God tell Cain to do about it? Master it. What does that mean? We have to know what gets us into trouble, maybe practice in our heads how to stay out of trouble, and then when that chance to do bad things comes up we'll know how to avoid it.

Why do people sin???? Why did God make us able to decide - able to sin????

Does He give us anything to help us keep from sinning??

(Eve had Adam, she should have talked things out with him before grabbing that fruit. Cain had a brother who

seemed to know better what God wanted - he probably would have traded Cain some animal to sacrifice for some of Cain's grains)

Who do we have to help us?? Parents, teachers, good friends, EACH OTHER! Those of you at the same schools should watch out for each other.

How about when there's no one else there or we feel all alone? God is there. Like Eve or Cain, we just have to look around and ask for His help.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 There is ALWAYS a way out of sin if we take a minute to look for it!

Decorate the cookies and eat them.

### Lesson Three: Noah, the Ark, the Tower of Babel - Listening to God & obeying what He says

Start with a clean whiteboard. Write the things shown in bold below on it as the lesson goes.... tie the story of Noah to baptism at the end of the lesson.

Tell me about Adam & Eve and God before Satan came to the garden.

Why couldn't God be as good friends with Adam & Eve after they sinned? God is perfect, He can't even be around sin. It's like He is a bright light and any bad things cloud over the light.

Did Adam & Eve learn their lesson and no one sinned ever again? How about Cain & Abel?

Why do people do things they knew are bad?

**testing** God's rules

they were like kids and liked to **try things**

sin is making our own selves happy, doing what we want - **sin is FUN**

God was patient and didn't strike people with lightning when they did something bad

(they thought they were **getting away with being bad**)

6:5-7 Pretty soon people were not following God any more. Was anyone left to listen to God and do what He wanted??

v9. Noah was.

What could God do when almost everyone was doing bad things all the time and a few people were **trying to be good**? What can a teacher (parent, boss at work) do when one or two are trying to be good & others are not? Is it fair to people to let them get away with being bad? What would God do about these people?

13-17 God told Noah to build a giant boat - why? - to save himself and his family.

Did God want the rest of the people to obey too? Noah told them to **repent**, or change what they were doing and follow God (2Peter2:5) Noah shared with others the hope of being saved. Did anyone listen? Why not, do you think?

What was God going to do with the people who wouldn't obey? Didn't He love them any more? Read Isaiah 55:7 If people turn away from wrong and try to be good, God will be merciful. 2Peter 3:9 He does not want anyone to be lost. But He gives us the choice.

What good would it do to wipe everything out? Give the world a **fresh start**.

What if Noah had built a big sailboat? Or if he'd built a boat from some other kind of wood?

What do we know about Noah's plans? v22. He **obeyed** God's instructions, even though he might have thought it was strange (there had never been any rain before, so Noah probably had no idea what God was talking about or why he needed such a big boat!!)

What else was on the ark? Animals and birds - all kinds.

v 11-15 What exactly happened? Rain - floods of heaven and Springs of the great deep bursting open (earthquakes?? cracks in the earth?? there are some huge cracks in the ocean floor that may be from this... 40 days and nights

v 20-21 until the waters were 20' above the mountains - everything died.

v 24. How long did God make Noah and his family float around in the ark? for 150 days!!

They just floated - no sails, no oars, no motor, not even a rudder to steer with! Why was the ark built like that?

Maybe so the people inside would realize they were completely in God's control, that they had to **depend on God**.

Ch 8:1-5 then v14-19 the earth dried up and they came out of the ark. How do you suppose they felt? What would they want to do first?

v 20 They built an altar and worshipped God - **gave thanks and honor to God**

God was pleased with them, told them to go out and resettle the world, there'd be no more floods over all the earth, and He gave them a sign of His promise - the rainbow.

Why did this story happen?

**sin angers God** - He had to get rid of it

cleansed the world through **water**

started over with **new life**

saved those who **obeyed**

What does this story have to do with us today? Is there anything like this in our Christian life now? How is baptism like this story?

sin angers God  
people repent - decide to change and do right  
people obey the directions He gave (baptism in water)  
those people are saved and have a new life  
they learn to depend on God  
they give thanks and honor to God  
they tell others about God's plan

Why are only grownups or teenagers baptized? Some churches baptize babies, why aren't babies baptized in the bible? In the book of Acts you can read about people being baptized. People heard what God wanted them to do, thought about their life and realized they weren't doing what God wanted, decided to change and follow God, and then were baptized. These are grown-up decisions, and being baptized is something to take really seriously. It means deciding that you won't be the one in charge of your life anymore, but letting God be.

So, Noah and his family were saved and the world started over, all fresh and new. How well do you think people remembered the lesson of the flood? That they should let God control their lives?

Tell the story of the tower. read ch 11:4 Why did they build the tower? To make a name for themselves. What did God think? He made people, so He should know what's best for them, right? So if He tells us that some things are good for us and some things are bad, why is He saying that? Do your parents do that to you? Why?? They, like God, want the best for us. What should we do? Obey what God says and obey our parents too.

Outside:

Use 450' string and 75' string to mark off the size of the ark in the yard. Talk about why it was so big. Why it had no way to steer.

## Lesson Four – **Abraham, is a friend to God, because of his faith.**

What is faith? Like trust. How can kids show faith like Abraham? Do as he did, follow God's (parents, teachers, etc) directions without complaining.

MEET OUTSIDE for class. Tell kids we are going to do an experiment in faith to see if they know what it is and can use it. There will be a nice reward for those who do!

Line kids up and blindfold them. Space them out and have them follow verbal directions to go around an area outside or inside if there's room. Reward those who obeyed in faith (without cheating, without questioning, etc) with a treat.

ON BOARD: Abraham is God's friend (James 2:21). Abraham is father of the faithful.  
What is faith? (Add the phrases in bold to the board as the story unfolds....)

Gen 12:1 and 4-5. Abraham told to go to a land God would show him...

**Doing what you are told -- Without any questions or complaints**

Gen 12:2-3, 15:6 God promises Abraham an heir and blessings...

**Believing God's promises -- Even when they seem impossible**

Gen 18:16-21, 27-28, 23-29 Abraham pleads with God for the righteous people in Sodom & Gomorrah

**Trusting God to always do what is right -- Even when it seems harsh to us**

Gen 15:13-16 God told Abraham that his descendents would be slaves for 400 years

**Doing what God wants -- even when we know it will be hard for people we love!**

Gen 22:1-14 Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac

**Obeying what He tells us to do -- Even when it is very hard and we don't understand why**

WHAT WAS ABRAHAM'S REWARD FOR BEING FAITHFUL?

What did God tell him he would have as a reward for obeying? Gen 12:2-3

Here he obeyed the hardest thing God ever told him to do... and what happened?

Gen 22:15-18

The promise of blessings for Abraham & his family and all the world through him were given because of his faith.

Read Hebrews 11: 8-13, 17-19 Review Abraham's faith and obedience.

Hand out small containers of sand. Ask the kids to count the sand in their container in two minutes. Pour all the containers out together in a bowl. Have them guess how many bowls it'd take to make one beach.... How many people would that be? There must be a lot of people whom God considers "Children of Abraham"!! How do you know who those are??

Go back to the board, and apply the examples of Abraham's faith to kids' lives...

**Lesson five: Isaac - be at peace with**

## Lesson 6: Jacob & Esau

## Lesson 7: Joseph

## Lesson 8: Moses - How are we supposed to follow God?

Moses was chosen by God to do a job ... get His chosen people back out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. He was reluctant to do it, but God convinced him. Then it was Pharaoh's turn to be reluctant to do what God asked, but God convinced him, too!

**Read Acts 7:17-29** Stephen tells his accusers the story of Moses.

Joseph helped save the Israelites from starvation. Do you remember what that first Pharaoh gave Joseph's family?

Where is Goshen? (Use a map to show)

What happened to Joseph's relatives - the Israelites - after years? Prospered & grew many.

Why would a new Pharaoh be afraid of them? Show how they are at the gateway between Egypt and their enemy nations: Philistines, etc.

So what did that Pharaoh do with the Israelites? He oppressed and enslaved them.

About 400 years after Joseph: A special baby was born: Moses. His parents protected him. How?

Where was he brought up? (in Pharaoh's household)

Why do you think God arranged that?? (Moses would know what was important to Egyptians, would have some respect from them so they'd listen to him ...)

As he grew up, Moses knew that he was an Israelite, and that God wanted him to save his people, and he tried to get started one day ... **Read Acts 7:23-29** They didn't understand that he was trying to help, and Pharaoh tried to kill Moses -- why?

So, Moses is "off the hook" right? He went across the desert to Midian, got married, raised sheep, had children. Forty years passed. He probably thought God had forgotten him. BUT..

**Acts 7:30-34** He gets a message from God in a very strange way.

Did Moses jump up and get going? Would you? What did God have to do to motivate Moses?

**Ex: 3:11**(secret back-up weapon) **Ex 3:13 & 14** (God's name as secret password)

**Ex 4:1** (amazing signs) **Ex 4:10** (a helper! his older brother Aaron to speak for him)

We all need some help with some jobs - what jobs can you all do? List on the board: rake, mow, dishes, haul wood, shovel snow, clean rooms, vacuum, make beds, fold clothes, clean bathrooms, sweep, etc. Have kids "volunteer" for what they can do.

Which ones are chores you should do at home???

Sometimes do we know we can do something and we should do something and still not do it?

Do we have all kinds of excuses like Moses for not getting the job done right now??

So Moses and Aaron go to Egypt to take the people from there to the Promised Land. Why didn't they just walk out anyway? (they were slaves) Why did Pharaoh want to keep them there if they were not happy there? (show pictures of the buildings they built for him) What was their life like really -- they were made to work a lot, but they had houses, medical care, good land to grow food, and they could worship God and not have to worship the Egyptian gods. But the Egyptians kept treating them worse and worse, until God heard them cry out because of their slave drivers who oppressed them.

Now came the tricky part -- make Pharaoh agree to give up a good bunch of free workers for awhile and get nothing in return (Pharaoh seemed to know they wouldn't come back).

Why would Pharaoh do it? God provided nine miracles to convince him -- but every morning he changed his mind again!!! Write the first 9 plagues on slips of paper and pull them out of a jar and have the kids read them aloud.

These plagues were to make the Egyptians see that God was more powerful than all their gods, each of these plagues is aimed at one of their gods -- the sun was their most powerful.

So NOW how would God convince Pharaoh?

The tenth plague was when God killed the first-born male of every family, and every animal, too!

Why were the Israelites not killed? God told them what to do and they did it! They were to get ready to move out of Egypt, dress ready to go, fix a special meal and eat it in a hurry.

The meal was lamb cooked over the fire, bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Why "fast food"? What else were they supposed to do? (blood on door so the angel of death would pass over)

NOW was Pharaoh convinced that he'd better do what God wanted him to do??

**Read Ex. 12:29 -33** Everyone in Egypt wanted the Israelites to go!

**Ex 12:37 and 40-41** The number of people who left and the number of years in captivity were the same as Abraham was told

**Ex 13:19** They took the bones of Joseph to Canaan with them.

Why didn't they go the "easy way" to Canaan? God was afraid if they immediately had war, they'd go back to Egypt -- and he had a point to make with Pharaoh!!

Did Pharaoh give up when his huge crowd of free workers left? NO. He saw them "stuck" at the Red Sea and decided to go get them back. They were sitting ducks camped at a sea and they had no boats to cross. He brought his best warriors & chariots and thought it'd be easy.

What did the Israelites think when they heard and saw Pharaoh's army & chariots coming?

**Ex 14:11** Happy one minute (when things are going their way) and complaining - not trusting God to take care of things - as soon as the going got hard.

What did Moses tell them? **Ex 14:13** Don't be afraid - watch God save you! HOW??

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and all that night the Lord drove the sea back, so the Israelites could walk right across. Pretty soon, Pharaoh's army caught up and followed them right into the sea. God confused the Egyptians and made their chariot wheels fall off, and many of them got scared and turned back. Then God told Moses to stretch out his hand again and the sea fell back on the Egyptians at daybreak.

NOW will the people listen to Moses??? **Ex 14:31** "When the Israelites saw the great power the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant." ..... we'll see how long that lasts next time.....

**The Exodus, from the Red Sea to the Jordan River.** How God taught His chosen people to hear Him, trust Him, and obey Him. Why it is important to know what God wants and to do it.

God created the world and people and was pleased with them. He made people able to decide whether to obey - or not. The first people disobeyed God, and sin built a wall between God and people. God provided punishment for sin (to teach us to do right) and He also provided a way to remove sins and be with Him. God chose one family out of all the people on earth that He would work with over hundreds of years, so He could show everyone His great power and love. Then He sent His own Son to be a perfect sacrifice for our sins. The family was Abraham's. Remember how Abraham's family ended up as slaves in Egypt??

Joseph was sold there, but because God was with him he was able to save the family from a famine. 400 years later, a different Pharaoh made Abraham's descendents slaves. God sent Moses to take them away from Egypt to the promised land. How did Moses talk Pharaoh into letting them go?? Do you remember where they had their last look at Pharaoh??

Show a picture of the wilderness they were in now. Read Exodus 12:37-41 LOTS of people. NO stores, NO shopping centers, NOT EVEN a water faucet. In your homework, you'll find out how the people had enough to eat and drink. God took care of them.

9 Plagues – copy these to slips of paper to have kids read during the lesson

1. All the water of the Nile was turned to BLOOD! Exodus 7:20

2. FROGS went into the palace and bedroom, onto the Egyptians' beds and into the ovens and cooking pots!! Exodus 8:3

3. Throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become GNATS!! Exodus 8:16

4. Dense swarms of FLIES poured into Pharaoh's palace and throughout Egypt the land was ruined by flies. Exodus 8:24

5. All the LIVESTOCK of Egypt died. Exodus 9:6

6. Moses tossed soot from the furnace into the air and BOILS broke out on men and animals. Exodus 9:10
  
7. The worst HAILSTORM that had ever fallen on Egypt. Exodus 9:18
  
8. LOCUSTS covered the ground til it was black. They devoured all that was left after the hail. Exodus 10:15
  
9. TOTAL DARKNESS covered all Egypt for 3 days. No one could see anyone else or leave his place for 3 days. Yet all the Israelites had light! Exodus 10:23

## Lesson 8 Homework

This will be a group project. You need to work with other kids on this. Pick one of the plays below and do it for next week's class. You do not need costumes, but you can make some "props" if you need them. When you do the play you may read the verses shown and act out what the verses are telling.

### **"Rescuing Moses"**

Miriam \_\_\_\_\_  
Pharaoh's daughter \_\_\_\_\_  
Moses' Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Read Exodus 2:3-9

### **"Moses at the Burning Bush"**

Moses \_\_\_\_\_  
God's voice \_\_\_\_\_

Read Exodus 3:3-10 and 4:13-17

### **"Pharaoh and the Plague of Darkness"**

Pharaoh \_\_\_\_\_  
Moses \_\_\_\_\_

Read Exodus 10:22-29

### **"Crossing the Red Sea"**

Moses \_\_\_\_\_  
Pharaoh \_\_\_\_\_

Read Exodus 14:3-7 and 21 and 26-28

## Lesson 9 Moses, the 10 Commandments and the 12 Spies

Review:

Israelites grew greatly in numbers in Egypt after Joseph helped the people in the famine

Years go by and a new Pharaoh is afraid of how many Israelites there are - he makes them be slaves

God sent Moses to rescue the people.

God convinced Pharaoh to let them go after He sent the ten plagues

Moses led the Israelites to the Red Sea. God opened the water to let them pass thru, and drowned Pharaoh's army

600,000 men and their families in the Israelite group

God fed them manna, and quail, and provided water for them to drink

Why was it hard for the people to trust God to take care of them? It seemed IMPOSSIBLE, and it would be - for people! Not for God. **God had to teach them to trust Him and obey Him.**

Here are some of the lessons God taught the people in the wilderness: Write the following verses on colorful cards, numbering them 1-6. Have kids select a card and look up the verses on the cards. Let them read the verses in order and tell the full stories as the verses are read.

1- Ten Commandments Ex 20: 1-17 (God writes the 10 Commandments with His own hand, telling the people what He wants them to do)

2 - Golden Calf Ex 32: 7-8, 31-35 (People get impatient, have Aaron build an idol like they worshiped in Egypt)

3 - 12 Spies, Panic, Rebellion, Denied access to promised land Num 13:1-2, 14:1-4, 14:34 (People not ready to take the Promised Land when God sent them - then they decide to go when God had told them they'd be punished – that didn't work! They had not trusted God and so they couldn't have the Promised Land yet)

4- Whiners & venomous snakes Num 21:4-9 (God punished the people who complained. To be saved, the people had to do just what God told them (look at the snake)

5- Nadab & Abihu's unauthorized fire Lev 10:1-2 (these 2 priests did things their own way instead of God's special way and got a hot surprise)

6- Moses & Aaron's sin – they couldn't go into the promised land Num 20:7-12 (we talked about this last week - even people who seem to really trust and love God make mistakes and are punished)

These were not very well-behaved people!

Why did God even take care of them? Deut. 7:7-9 (because He promised)

Why was He sometimes mean to them? Dt. 8:1-3 (to humble them and test them).

His promise has two sides - blessing and a curse Dt 11:22-23, 11:16-17 (obey and receive the promised land, disobey and land will be cursed)

Why do we care about these people who lived almost 3,000 years ago??

They were God's special people - remember God decided to show the whole world who He is by blessing (and punishing) just this one family, until the day that the world would be ready for Jesus to be born. The promises given to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob and to the people with Moses were all promises that would lead to Jesus.

The Israelites were God's special people - Dt 14:26 God chose them

Today YOU and YOU and all of us are God's special people - Gal 3:29, Jn 1:12 (believers are children of God)

Kids can color and make the origami-like hand puzzle to help learn the 10 Commandments (ten commandments toy.pdf). Talk about what each commandment means to a child. Talk about how Jesus told us there are only TWO commandments now (MT 22:37-40) and that every rule God has given people is contained in those two.

## Lesson 10 Joshua -- Taking the Promised Land

It's about 1400 years before Jesus was born, about 600 years after God gave the promises to Abraham -- Who remembers what those promises were? (descendants as many as sand, etc, they would inherit the promised land, one of Abraham's descendants would save mankind) READ GENESIS 15:13-18 God said the people would be slaves for 400 years, but come back and take possession of Canaan.

Who died just before the people crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land? (Moses) So now who's in charge of the people? (Joshua) Do you remember why he was picked to lead? (he and Caleb were the two faithful spies) What was God's #1 main instruction to Joshua?  
Have kids read the verses from slips of paper --  
Exodus 31:6, 31:7, 31:8b, Joshua 1:7, 1:9b, 1:18b, 10:8, 11:6  
(be strong and courageous, do not fear) Why did He tell them that? OK, we're ready to go on in and settle in the Promised Land, right??? OOPS, there's someone already there!!

The whole Promised Land has people in it -- fields -- pastures -- villages -- and FORTS! There are many fortified cities, each with a king and many soldiers to defend it. Did God make a mistake? Did He forget that the Promised Land already belonged to someone?

Why would God tell the Israelites to kill off the people living in the Promised Land and just take their land, towns and "stuff"? The people living there had had a chance to obey God, just like Pharaoh had, but decided not to... READ LEVITICUS 18:24 many kinds of evil, God would drive them out. READ LEV 20:23-24, 26 Don't do what they did, because you are set apart to serve God

What does "set apart" mean? (different, special) Why did God want a nation "set apart" to be His own? Let kids give some reasons.  
God worked very closely with one bunch of people, sending prophets and leaders to tell them exactly what He wanted them to do (and even sending lightning bolts and plagues to remind them what He didn't want them to do!!). What was He trying to teach everybody?  
God used the Israelites to show the world the blessings people would have by following His direction -- and the consequences of not obeying Him, too. Do you think the Israelites are a good example for us of that -- things sure went well when they obeyed and sure didn't when they didn't! We have all their stories in the Bible to help us see how important it is to obey.

David said God used Israelites to demonstrate His power! 2 SAMUEL 7:22-24 Can you think of some ways God showed His power with the Israelites? (Red Sea, earth swallowing Korah)

God wanted the Israelites to be His witnesses. What's a witness? (one who sees something and tells others all about it) ISAIAH 43:10-12, 21 Israelites were God's chosen people, to proclaim my praise.

Moses made sure the people knew who God was and that it was only God who rescued them from Egypt. DEUT. 4:32-40 God talked to them out of fire, showed them amazing wonders, would drive out nations before them -- because He loved them.

In LUKE 1:17, the Bible talks again about special people... John the Baptist would bring people back to following God, to being righteous -- his job was to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" John came just before Jesus, right? He prepared people to listen to Jesus, to understand what Jesus was trying to teach them, and to follow Him. Who are God's "chosen people" now? Are we God's people if we know He is in control of everything, tell others all about Him, praise Him, know He loves us, and are prepared to serve Him?

OK, here we are standing near where Moses died at the Jordan River -- looking across at the Promised Land -- across a very wide river at flood stage, with no bridge. Where have we seen the Israelites in a similar situation? (Red Sea) And God solved this crossing the same way -- He told Joshua to have the priests take the ark into the river which stopped it, until all the people crossed on dry land! This should make the people brave! These people sure had plenty of reasons to trust God! Would they always trust Him?

Have plate of cookies on table and a sugar bowl, and a salt shaker (with salt & sugar switched). Lightly frost each cookie and hand it to each kid, telling them to put sugar on it and showing the salt shaker as sugar. See how many choose the sugar bowl instead. Talk about how trusting instructions would make life better for them, and the Israelites.

Where was the first big battle? JOSHUA 6:8-11, then 20. God just gave Jericho to them!

The next battle didn't turn out that way -- the Israelites were defeated! Does anyone remember why? Achan stole things from Jericho, and God didn't help them win at Ai.

When the sin was punished, the people went back to Ai with several armies. Joshua hid some soldiers and when it was time, held up his javelin, and they took the town in an ambush.

One town was sneaky. They pretended they lived a long way away, and tricked the Israelites into signing a peace treaty with them -- they didn't ask God about the Gibeonites first!

The 5 kings of the Amorites attacked Gibeon and the Israelites came to fight them -- God was with them and rained huge hailstones on them, and to give Israel more time to fight, He made the sun stand still from noon til the next day!

Some funny ways to fight wars, huh? Why did it work to blow the horns, hold up a javelin and make the sun stand still? Because they were doing what God told them and God fought for them.

Read Joshua 21:43-45 the Lord gave His promise and gave the land rest.  
and 24:13 He gave them cities not their own, food they didn't grow, groves they didn't plant.

What a great setup!! Was there anything that could go wrong? God warned the people:  
Joshua 23:7 Don't associate with the nations around them. verse 13 They will become snares and traps for you.  
What does that mean? What did the people do that God didn't want them doing? (worship other gods, do all kinds of evil to each other, etc)

Do we have that problem today? What sort of things can be like those idolatrous nations for us today? (bad TV shows or movies, kids at school who want to do bad things, etc) God told the Israelites to not have anything to do with the nations around them -- What would He tell us today about the things that try to take us away from following Him? How can we stay away from bad language, evil ideas, bad people?

God and Joshua both knew it would be hard for the people. They would be tempted to be like their neighbors and sin. When he was old and ready to die, he collected everyone and challenged them -- I'll read his message and challenge us the same way!!! Joshua 24:14-15.

Do you think they kept their promise?? Read 24:31 -- as long as the people who'd been with Joshua and seen all that God did were alive they followed God. What do you suppose happened after that????????

Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you, He will never leave you."

Deuteronomy 31:7 "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with these people into the land that the Lord swore to their forefathers to give them."

Deuteronomy 31:8 "The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you...Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged"

Joshua 1:6 "Be strong and courageous because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them."

Joshua 1:7 "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you, that you may be successful wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go"

Joshua 1:18 "Only be strong and courageous!"

Joshua 10:8 "Do not be afraid of them. I have given them into your hand."

11 11/18 Gideon, Deborah, (Judges)

**Match up** Judges with their stories Prophets

Gideon: Do Right - and do it Right Away!!

Remember about Joshua and how God helped the Israelites to take the Promised Land?

Let's hear what happened next...

READ Judges 2:7, 10-15

OH NO! The people forgot about God, and He punished them just as He had told them he would! Now what??

READ Judges 2:16 God brought strong, faithful people to help the Israelites follow Him. These were good leaders called Judges and God helped them do amazing things for the people. This should make the people remember God, right? Let's see...

READ Judges 2:18-22 God said He would not drive out all the inhabitants of the land, like He had said He would. Why? Because the Israelites weren't keeping their promise to honor only Him. And to be a test for them!

How would living among these other people be a test? They worshiped other gods! Over the next hundreds of years, the Israelites settled into the Promised Land, but they never drove out all the other people. And over and over, they got tempted away from worshiping only God and started worshiping the foreign gods. Whenever they did, God let bad things happen to them. And whenever they came back to Him, He let good things happen.

Gideon was one of the Judges of Israel. He lived at a time when the Israelites had been following the evil example of their neighbors for years. Listen to what God did about it!

READ Judges 6:1-6 The Midianites came in and took their crops and animals and killed the people! It was so bad that the Israelites hid in caves!

God needed someone to lead the Israelites closer to Him and lead them to victory in war.

Read Judges 6:12-13 Gideon wanted to know why all this bad stuff was happening. God would rescue the people from their enemies now, but He needed a leader, and the leader He chose was Gideon! What did Gideon say? Read v15 and 16. Gideon thought he couldn't possibly do this job, but God told him He'd be with him and it'd be OK.

What do you suppose God would want Gideon to do first? Why were the people having all these problems? They were worshiping other gods. God wanted Gideon to get rid of the places where the people were worshiping those gods.

READ 6:25-28 God asked Gideon to tear down the altars and Gideon did. This was a brave thing to do, because the people worked hard on those altars and thought they were important. Gideon even took them down at night, so no one would see who did it. He would get much braver as he trusted God more and more...

READ 6:36-40 God is ready to send him into battle now, but Gideon isn't quite ready yet! Fleece wet & dry

Gideon did do what God wanted. He called the Israelites from all over the Promised Land to come help fight the Midianites. Gideon has 32,000 soldiers and they're ready for battle.

But God has another test for Gideon --

READ Judges 7:1-8 Why did God want Gideon to have so few soldiers? Did he want Gideon to lose the battle?

No, he wanted them to give the credit for the victory to God when they won the battle!

Gideon and his servant heard the enemy soldiers talking and knew God had made them afraid of the Israelites. He went back and called his soldiers to fight.

Read 7:15-22 Strange way to fight a battle - did you hear what their weapons were? trumpets and torches inside empty clay jars. The Midianites were so frightened they fought against each other!

When the battle was over, the Israelites wanted Gideon to rule over them.

READ 8:23 Gideon gave God the credit for the victory! And the bible says that all the rest of Gideon's life they had peace.

## 12 11/25 Samson - the real test of strength

Remove tables - line chairs up along one wall.

Test kids' strength at start of class. Give them each a scorecard, folded in half and sealed shut. Do jumping jacks, wall pushups, squats. Have them lift a small and a big weight. Put stars or big checkmarks on the outside of their scorecard for strength. Then open the card up to the inside. List "books of the bible", "ten commandments", "twelve Apostles", "Lord's Prayer" "bible verses" with similar places next to each one for the star or big checkmark.

Sit back down. Talk about how strong they are physically - then spiritually. READ 1 Timothy 4:7-8 "Have nothing to do with godless myths ... rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." Talk about how the kids are working on their physical strength - Put on board - learning new sports, running, playing, etc. They probably get reminded to eat right and get enough sleep, too. But what habits do they have to make their spirits stronger??

Last week we talked about Gideon. He didn't feel strong - told God he was the weakest of his family, who were the weakest in Israel. But he trusted in God, destroyed the idols that people had started to worship, and led the people to victory over the Midianites who had been terrorizing them. Gideon used the strength God gave him to do what God wanted him to do.

Today we're going to talk about someone who was given God's spirit and great strength from the time he was young -- and see what he did with this great strength. READ Judges 13:24-25.

But Samson was pretty concerned with himself, and not the work of the Lord. The Philistines lived in the valleys and down to the Mediterranean Sea. They were one of the people that the Israelites never drove out of the Promised Land, and they were always a problem for them. They traded with all the other countries at that time, traveling on the sea and caravans, they had chariots and iron weapons for war, making them powerful enemies -- and they worshiped idols.

Sometimes all the fancy things the Philistines had tempted the Israelites to follow their ways - even to worshiping idols. At the time of Samson, the Philistines were ruling the Israelites. Samson went to one of their towns and fell in love with a Philistine woman. Even though this was one of the main things God had told the people not to do, Samson went to her town to marry her. On the way Samson had a chance to see how strong he was:

READ Judges 14:5-6. Samson tricked some of the brides' friends with a riddle about that lion. Out of the eater, something to eat, out of the strong, something sweet. They couldn't guess, but her friends made her get Samson to tell the answer. Because they had tricked him, Samson attacked and killed the men, then went back to his parents' home. His wife was given to another man!

This sounds like the way we are sometimes - someone does something mean to us and we get back by doing something mean to them. Is that the way God wants us to be??? What other ways could Samson handle this?

READ Judges 15: 10

This gets worse and worse! Samson gets back at the brides' friends, her father gives her to someone else, Samson burns down the Philistine's fields, they kill his wife and her family, Samson slaughters a lot of Philistines and goes to hide in a cave, the Philistines gather a big army and go against the Israelites.

The rest of the Israelites didn't do anything - why are they in trouble? Do we sometimes get in trouble for things we didn't do? Like if a couple of kids in the class at school are rowdy do we have to stay in at recess? This is like that. What will the Israelites do with Samson?

READ Judges 15:11-15 The Israelites hand Samson over to the Philistines, but God allowed him to escape and kill a thousand men. Will that end the back-and-forth revenge game that Samson and the Philistines have gotten into?

A new Philistine comes into the picture - another woman ready to trick Samson - Delilah. READ 16:4-5 She wanted the money, so she kept asking Samson where his strength came from. He told her he could be overpowered if he was tied with thongs or new ropes or if his hair was tied up. But when the hidden Philistines came out of hiding, he whopped them. Delilah kept after Samson until he finally told her that the secret of his strength was his uncut hair - part of his promise to God. READ 16:15-16 Samson had great strength, but it was from God - when Samson told his secret promise with God to Delilah, God took the strength away from him. READ 16:20-21

Even now, the struggle to "get even" isn't over, though. Samson was a prisoner, but as his hair grew back, his strength also grew again. He asked God to give him super strength once more so he could have revenge on the Philistines. READ 16:28-32. It took Samson until he died to feel like he had revenge on his enemies.

What could Samson have done differently? He could have ended the back-and-forth revenge fights any time by letting God be the one to punish the Philistines. How??? He would have had to use his spiritual strength instead of his physical strength!

And, how about the very first time he did something God wasn't happy about (deciding to marry the first Philistine woman)? Would Samson's life have been better if he had done what God wanted him to do in the first place? How about his family? What do you suppose his family thought about all the things that happened to Samson? What do you think their neighbors said about Samson? Was it hard for them to have so many bad things happen to Samson and to have Samson doing so many bad things?

Let's go back to our bible verse. Is our physical strength important? Yes, it is important to take good care of the bodies God gave us. How can we be strong in our bodies? Practice, right?

But - "physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."

What is that saying? We know spiritual strength will help us please God and be with Him in heaven. But this verse says spiritual strength will make our lives right here better. How can that be? It will be easier to get along with people, our work will be appreciated, we won't always feel threatened, we'll have peace!

How can we be strong in our spirit? What kind of exercise will make our spirits stronger??

List on the board as the kids say - prayer, reading bible, talking to God, resisting evil ideas, etc.

13 12/2 Samuel

Get a big timer or stopwatch. Set it for one minute.

For that one minute, tell the kids there are NO RULES! They can do anything they want.

Then sit back down. Talk about what it would be like in a world without any rules. Would you be safe? Would your things be safe? Would you even be happy? Why do we have traffic laws? Rules against hurting people? Laws against stealing? Why did God make rules for us?

Then read Judges 21:25

“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”

Was that a good time for the people? They had conquered and settled most of the Promised Land - God gave them farms and fields and homes and cities that were all ready to move in to! Each of the twelve tribes stuck together in a different part of the Promised Land. God had given a different part to each family, or tribe. Point out the areas on the map. Have kids compare the map to the ones in their bibles.

It was good to have plenty of land to spread out in. And good for each family to have a part of the land for their own. But there were some problems, too. They didn't meet together as much as they had when they were all together in the wilderness or all together fighting for the land. They didn't get together to worship God as often as they had. The ark of God was kept at Bethel, and they met there sometimes to pray. They started to look at the nations around them, and they started to drift away from God. Everyone did as he saw fit. Not a pretty picture.

The last judge that God sent to help the people was Samuel. Samuel was also the first Prophet. A prophet is someone who hears special messages from God and his job was to tell that to the people.

Samuel was called to serve God when he was a small boy.

Tell about Hannah and Elkanah. Worshiped God. Went to the temple every year. Had no children. One time Hannah prayed to God -- READ 1 Sam 1:11. Eli the priest saw her praying so hard and thought she had had too much wine. She told him the whole story and then Eli said -- READ 1 Sam 1:17 - God would give her what she asked.

God did give Elkanah & Hannah a son. Hannah told her husband the promise -

READ 1 Sam 1:22 and when he was still a young boy she took him to Eli

READ 1 Sam 24-28 & 2:18-21 She came back to visit him every year and brought him a new coat. Eli's two sons were priests, too. But they did not honor God, and Eli tried to get them to do what was right (2:22-25) They wouldn't change and obey God! But READ 2:26 - did Samuel honor God? He not only pleased God, but also pleased Eli and the people.

READ Luke 2:52 This says almost the exact same thing -- about Jesus! They were both about your age - twelve or so. Write verse on the board, leaving spaces below stature, wisdom & favor to write ideas below each.

Talk about how kids can be like these verses - They will grow in stature (can try to be healthy). How about wisdom? (school, listening to adults, learn from mistakes) What things can kids do to have "favor with God and with men"?? List some.

Talk about how Samuel grew up to be a prophet READ 3:20 Israel recognized him as a prophet -- they could tell that he belonged to God. He was also a judge -- Samuel led the people to turn back to God and win a victory against the Philistines. READ 7:15-17

When Samuel got old, his own sons didn't follow God. The people didn't want his sons to be their leaders, and they asked for a king like the other countries had. READ 8:4-9 Samuel didn't want to let them have a king, but God said to anoint Saul. Saul was king for forty years, but lost favor with God and later Samuel anointed David to be king. We'll talk more about Saul & David next time.

Why didn't Samuel want the people to have a king? He knew they already had a King, God was their King.

Saul: The first King. How NOT to get out of mistakes!

How many of you never made any mistakes? OK, so we have a lot of practice how to get out of mistakes, right? Write on the board things kids do to make up for mistakes -- clean the mess, apologize, give back a taken thing, promise not to do the bad thing again, etc.

Today we'll talk about the first king of Israel and what HE did when he made mistakes.

Remember Samuel? We was a ?, a prophet - what's that? He served the Lord from the time he was your age. Remember the last thing we learned about Samuel? His two sons should have taken his place when he died, but they did bad things and the people didn't want them to be leaders. So...

READ 1 Sam 8:4-6 Give us a king -- didn't they have a king? Who was it? God.

Why did they want a king? To be like everyone else -- a BAD reason to do something, isn't it?!

But God told Samuel to go ahead and give the people what they wanted.

READ 8:7 they have rejected ME -- How do you think God felt? Did you ever think about God having feelings? He does, and when we do things that are wrong, He gets sad, just like your parents or teachers do...

Tell me about a perfect king -- Get kids to suggest things like tall, nice looking, strong, etc.

God gave the people just what they wanted -- a king who looked like everyone else's king.

READ 10:17-25

He was chosen by God, and the people thought he looked like a good King - tall and handsome. Saul didn't want to be King, and after he was anointed he went back to farming!

When the Ammonites threatened Jabesh-Gilead, Saul called all the Israelites to fight with him to defeat them. Listen to how he called his army together --

READ 10:7 He was a good warrior, and God helped him win against other enemies.

God helped Saul -- READ 11: 6 As long as he listened to God, God stayed with Saul and helped him lead the people. The twelve families of the Israelites united under Saul's leadership.

Saul knew Samuel was able to talk with God and get His advice on what to do. In one battle, Samuel told him to wait seven days for him to come offer sacrifices to God so they'd win. Saul waited, but Samuel didn't come, so he did the sacrifices himself. When Samuel did come, he told Saul that God would take the kingdom away from him. Another time Saul was told to completely wipe out the Amalekites, but he kept the animals for sacrifices and spared king Agag's life. Saul thought he was doing a good thing, but Samuel told him "to obey is better than to sacrifice...because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king." 1 Sam 15:23 Saul got worried, and sometimes he needed someone to calm him down. A boy called David would come and play his harp for Saul. Who remembers the story about David & the Philistine giant? Why was David able to defeat Goliath? Saul's son Jonathan became David's friend. David becomes a leader in Saul's army and God helps him win many battles. Saul gets jealous of David, and tries to kill him. David leaves for the desert and hides. Saul takes off looking for him, and twice he is somewhere where David could easily kill him, but he doesn't (because Saul is still God's anointed King). Samuel dies, and Saul has no one to tell him what God wants him to do. Going in to a battle with the Philistines at Gilboa, he talks to Samuel's ghost who tells him he and his sons will die in battle and they do.

## David Trusted God and Kept Turning Back to Him

Set chairs up in a pattern so kids can walk between them. Have them get in line and walk between the chairs. Then move the chairs so they are scattered. Ask for a volunteer. Then get out a blindfold and blindfold the volunteer. Let them try to walk among the chairs without hitting any. If they seem to be succeeding, move some to be in the way. Ask if they want help. If they accept help, guide them through. If they don't, keep moving chairs for a bit and after they have hit a few, call the game over.

What made this game difficult - almost unfair? I kept moving the chairs! The player didn't know what to do. When they got help, they could be guided safely through the maze. But if they decided to do it all alone, it was pretty hard and they took a chance of being hurt.

Does that remind you of anything God does for us? We are all going to have hard times in our lives and have some tough choices to make about what to do. We can do everything all by ourselves, kind of like Saul did, or we can let God help us along the way, the way the second King, David, did.

David grew up as a shepherd boy. He was a good shepherd, and learned to trust God to protect him. One day, David's father sent him to check on his older brothers who were in battle with Saul's army against the Philistines. Read 1 Sam 17:20-24, 32-27, and 41-49. David trusted God to fight the wild animals and to fight huge Goliath too.

Samuel anointed David to be the second King long before Saul died. But it wasn't time yet for him to be King. Later, when Saul didn't do what God had told him to do (he let the animals and some of the leaders live after God told him to kill everything) Samuel told Saul "because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king." Saul knew God had someone else in mind to be King, and he was afraid of David.

Saul put David in his army and David won many battles. Saul remembered what Samuel the prophet had told him. Soon the people admired him more than Saul! Saul got jealous, and started trying to find ways to kill David. When Saul was chasing him, David and his army lived with the Philistines for awhile. This let David learn how they did battle (so he could defeat them later).

After Saul died, there was a struggle to see who the new king would be. Ish-Bosheth (Saul's son) led the armies of northern Israel and David had an army in Judah. Joab, David's commander was able to defeat the army of the north and unite all the people under one King. David honored God for the victory... "The Lord gave David victory wherever he went" READ 2 Sam 13-15 David took over Jerusalem from the Jebusites. He strengthened the city and built a fine palace there.

One day, David noticed Bathsheba next door and wanted her to be his wife, but she was already married to one of his soldiers. He asked Joab to put Uriah into the front lines of battle so he would be killed. And then he married her. Nathan the prophet explained to David how angry this made God, and David was very sorry. READ Psalm 51.

David's army drove the Philistines away from all the borders and Israel had more land, natural resources and trade. When the battles were about done, David decided to count his soldiers. God didn't like that (seems like David wasn't trusting God to win the battles) so he punished the country with a plague. David bought a piece of land in Jerusalem and built an altar there, offered sacrifices to God and the plague stopped. This is the spot where the temple to God was later built.

David wanted to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem. When they went to get it, Uzzah touched it as it started to fall off a cart. Does anyone remember what happened then? Uzzah died! Just like when Saul thought he had a "better idea" - it's best to do exactly what God says!!

David wanted to build a temple for God in Jerusalem, but God told him he was a "man of war" and so his son would build it. David still collected gold, silver, and other materials that could be used to build the temple, and in his last years gave his son Solomon all the instructions how to build it. David was called a "man after God's own heart" even though he sinned in several big ways - why? He realized when he had sinned. He admitted it to God, and repented. He continued to serve God and was faithful. Can we be "people after God's own heart"? What can we do when we know we have done something wrong?

So, the Israelites have moved into the "Promised Land", have driven away most of the evil people who lived there before, and have had two kings. What happened to them when they listened carefully to what God told them and did just as He said? What happened to them when they did whatever they wanted to? How about when they were trying to be good but thought they had better ideas about what would make God happy than what God had actually told them to do? How will we know just what God wants US to do?

## Lesson 10: Solomon, his writings, building the Temple

Open with a game: challenge the kids to decide what they would ask God for if they could have anything they wanted and He would for sure give it to them. Talk about their choices.

Today we're going to talk about someone who DID have this chance - and find out what he asked God for... anyone know who we mean?

Remember we talked about God choosing one family, Abraham's family, and how they ended up in Egypt? Then Moses brought them out of Egypt and they moved into the Promised Land? At first, they were separate groups of people, but they needed leaders. God sent them Judges to lead them and prophets to tell them what he wanted, but later they wanted a King like their neighbors. The first King was Saul and he did a good job of defeating the enemies in Canaan. David, the second King, was also a warrior, and made the country much bigger and more powerful. He was a person who tried hard to please God, and when he didn't, David was sorry right away.

When David was about to die, his oldest son Adonijah wanted to be King. But David had promised Solomon's mother that he would be King. Nathan the Prophet anointed Solomon king and the people celebrated. Before he died, David told Solomon what God had told him.

"If your descendants watch how they live and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel" 1 king 2:4

God appeared to Solomon when he started being King. God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you" (just like in your game)

READ 1King 3:7-9 He asked for wisdom. What's that? Not just knowing things. Not just being smarter than anyone, but he was. Wisdom means knowing right from wrong.

Why would Solomon need that? What was his job going to be? Lead many, many people who had just gone through many years of wars with their neighbors.

WRITE SOLOMON WISDOM on the board

READ God's answer. 1King 3:11-14 He gave him wisdom, and wealth and power! Do you think he will use this wisdom God gave him?

WRITE: RICHES, HONOR, LONG LIFE, PEACE on the board

Tell the story of the two mothers.

People from all over the world heard about Solomon and his Kingdom....

READ about the Queen of Sheba 1King 10:4-6

Solomon built the temple for God that David started in Jerusalem. It was huge, very beautiful and made out of expensive things - rare woods, gold, fine cloth. When it was finished, God appeared to Solomon again.

READ 1King 9:4-7 If you follow my statutes, Israel will do well -- if you don't things will be taken away from you. Pretty clear, huh?

What do you think the world's wisest man did with his life? In a book he wrote when he was very old, Solomon talked about how he had everything he ever wanted, did everything he thought he wanted to do, but he was never happy - he always wanted something more. He ended up saying this READ Ecc 12:8 and 13-14. Everything is meaningless - fear God and keep His commandments.

Why didn't Solomon follow his own advice? Why did he and the people in Israel wander away from following God? Solomon's Kingdom was big, powerful, rich. The people have peace and wealth in the country -- how can that be a problem? Their neighbors aren't enemies any more - they're nearby to tempt them to do things God doesn't like and even worship other gods. They aren't being threatened, aren't at war - maybe they feel like they don't need God as much any more. Maybe, because things are going OK, they will get tempted to do things God won't like....

The bible tells us that "Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places" (where people worshipped other gods). 1 King 3:3 Solomon married lots of wives, many from the countries around Israel. These many wives got

him to build temples for their gods and to worship them!

READ 1King 11:6 Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely as his father David had done.

So what did God say would happen then? (God would cut them off from the land He'd given them) When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became King. Next time we'll see what happened to him!

## The Kingdom Divides after Solomon's Death

Hand out packages of cheese crackers. Let kids start to open them. Tell them to stop, that you will take back five of the six crackers. What's left? Only a remnant. Only a little bit. Let them eat while reviewing.

God chose one family of all the people to show His great mercy and power to everyone. God gave Abraham three promises: many descendants, the Promised Land and that one of his family would be Jesus. His grandchildren became the heads of the Twelve Tribes. These twelve sons and the whole family were saved by one of the sons, even though the other 11 tried to kill him - Joseph saved them from famine. After a time living in Egypt, the family grew and grew and Pharaoh made them slaves in Egypt. God chose Moses to lead them out of Egypt and take them to the Promised Land. God led them right through the sea! He gave them water from a rock! The people were fed manna from heaven.

At Mt Sinai, God told them what He wanted them to do and how He wanted them to live. What was the first thing He wanted? The first commandment was Love the Lord your God !! And no other gods! Remember what the people were busy doing when Moses took too long talking to God on the mountain? They were building themselves a golden calf to worship!

This will be the trouble with God's people all through time. Not us, you say?? How many of us would take time to read our bibles, pray and come to church if we had a great vacation to go on or a big party we were invited to?

When the people arrived in the Promised Land, Joshua led them to take over the cities. Why did God ask them to kill or drive off all the people who lived there? Those people worshiped idols - God had given them time to decide to worship Him, but they kept on worshiping their statues of stone or wood or gold. Did the Israelites get rid of all the people in the land? No. Sometimes they left whole cities full of people living - and these neighbors tempted them time and time again to leave God and worship their idols with them.

When the people forgot Him, God sent Judges to remind them about His great love and power. When the people followed God, everything went well for them - and when they started worshiping idols, things went bad! When they had most of the people driven out of the land, the Israelites divided up the country with a place for each of the 12 tribes.

After awhile, the people demanded a King (to be like everyone else). Who was their King? God! But they wanted a human king. Saul was the first King, and he looked like a King - tall and handsome. He was a good soldier and his army took over more and more of the land. Saul started out to be a good king, but soon he began to trust himself instead of God -- he once even offered a sacrifice instead of waiting for Samuel the Prophet!

God chose David to take over from Saul -- David was a mighty warrior in Saul's army and soon Saul got jealous of him. He tried to kill David and chased him all around the country. Several times, David had a chance to sneak up on Saul and could have killed him, but David knew God had made Saul king and God would decide when to remove him. David became the second King, and defeated all the other neighbor countries so that his son inherited a kingdom at peace. David built a great city in Jerusalem and wanted to build a beautiful temple for God there, but God told him his son would have to build it because David was a man of war.

Solomon had a large, rich, peaceful country to rule. He had a big job! God told him to ask for anything at all when he became the third King -- and he asked for wisdom to be a good ruler. So God gave him riches, power and more wisdom than anyone ever had had. Solomon's kingdom was larger, richer, and more powerful than any other kingdom. David had left the plans and a lot of the materials for building the great temple, and Solomon had it built in Jerusalem. Solomon followed God all his early life, but as he got older, he began to follow the ways of the other countries. He married women who worshiped idols, and let them build temples and altars to worship them. At the end of his life, Solomon thought about all he had done, and wrote that following God and doing what God wanted was all a person should do! Many of the ideas for living a good life in Proverbs were written by Solomon.

You'd think with such a wise father that Solomon's son would have an easy job taking over. . . but there was trouble brewing for young Rehoboam. Solomon needed many workmen and a lot of money to build all the great things he built. The people of the country had sent huge taxes, and they had to go work for years on the projects. The people were tired, and wanted to go back to their homes and use their money to build up their own cities. This was a big problem for Solomon's son.

Set up two posters. Rehoboam, Judah, Jerusalem, Temple to worship God, priests, faithful people, two tribes

Jeroboam, Israel, golden calves, new temples to idols, ten tribes

Rehoboam was not as wise as his dad. He didn't pray to God for advice. He decided to listen to his friends, who probably thought they could have a great life with Rehoboam in the palace if the people would keep paying big taxes and serve them. When Rehoboam asked them for advice, his friends told him to tell the people he'd be getting more work and money from them, not less! The people rebelled! They packed up and went home and told Rehoboam they'd choose their own King.

Jeroboam, one of Solomon's leaders had been told by the Prophet Ahijah "You will be king over ten tribes of Israel. If you walk in God's ways and keep his commands, he will be with you." The people did choose Jeroboam to be the King of Israel. Only Judah and the tiny tribe of Benjamin stayed faithful to God in the country now called Judah. Ten of the twelve tribes broke away.

Jeroboam was worried that the people would decide to go back with Judah if he let them go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship God. Instead of asking God for what to do, Jeroboam decided on a plan himself. What do you suppose he did? He collected gold, and had two golden calves made and built a temple at each end of the country - one in Bethel and one in Dan. He told the people "Behold your gods, O Israel. These are the gods that brought your fathers out of slavery in Egypt." Why do you think anyone fell for that? Not everyone did. The priests and other people who were faithful to God moved to Judah instead of worshipping idols.

Remember your treats and how I threatened to take most away? These twelve tribes of people had been God's special people for hundreds of years. He had taken special care of them, feeding them, protecting them, doing miracles to drive away their enemies, giving them land and cities that they didn't have to build for themselves. How do you think He felt when so many of them turned their backs on Him?

How about Rehoboam? Here they are in Jerusalem with a brand-new, beautiful temple to worship God. But after about three years, Rehoboam started to worship the idols his mother worshiped. And the people built altars and set up idols on all the high hills around them. Soon, a powerful army came from Egypt. Shishak, the king came with twelve hundred chariots and 60,000 horsemen to make war on Judah. A Prophet told Rehoboam "You have forsaken the Lord. Your lives will be in the hands of Shishak." Oops. What will Rehoboam and his leaders do now? They did the right thing! They bowed down to God and He forgave them. Lives were saved, but Shishak took most of the gold and treasures from the temple and palace.

How do you think things were between the kingdom of Israel and Judah? There was always fighting between them. We're going to find out that all the kings who ruled in the northern kingdom of Israel were bad. None of them worshiped God. All of them worshiped idols. God sent great prophets to warn them, and some of the people moved to Judah. But the kings refused to honor God. After nineteen kings had ruled in Israel, God let that kingdom be captured by the Assyrians and all the people were taken away. The king of Assyria moved new people in to settle the land, and the Israelites never returned.

## Lesson 11: The Northern Kingdom, Elijah and Ahab

### Review:

What happens to God's people when they do what He wants them to?

Moses & crossing the Red Sea

Joshua & battle of Jericho

David & Goliath

How about when they didn't listen or do what He wanted them to?

The flood

The golden calf - earth swallowing them up

Wandering for 40 years in the wilderness

What did He want them to do anyway?

Remember last time we talked about David & his son, Solomon. Solomon was the wisest and richest man ever, and he got this warning from God when he became king:

Poster: 1 Kings 9:4-7 "If you walk before Me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever. But if you or your sons turn away from me and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them."

So, what did God want? People to follow Him, and stay away from idols! God wants to be FIRST, most important in people's lives. Does this mean us, too??

How'd Solomon do? Remember all his wives from other countries - what did he do for them? Built temples and worshipped their idols. The people kept worshipping the idols of their neighbors... Why would they do that? (to be like other people, and be liked by other people?)

What IS an idol anyway? (Show pictures of golden calf, Baal statue, and other idols.) People built themselves images & statues to worship. Does it seem silly to think that something you make yourself is better than you and should be honored? Do we ever give honor to people or things that we make special? How about movie stars, or sports heroes? Sometimes do we give them more of our attention than we give to God? (Show football, movie poster, etc)

So, did Solomon do what God said? No. Do you remember what happened to the kingdom when he died? Was split in two - ten tribes of the north called Israel and had Jeroboam for their king. Solomon's son had only two tribes and ruled over Judah with Jerusalem as center.

Jeroboam had a big problem right away when he started ruling over the northern country. The Temple of God that Solomon built was - where? Jerusalem! Jeroboam's people would want to go there to worship God several times a year. What do you suppose he did to keep them from going to Jerusalem? He made two golden calves and built two temples for them to be worshipped in - one at Bethel and one at Dan.

The 10 tribes followed their kings and not God for about 200 years, while God kept giving them chances to come back to Him. They had nineteen kings in all that time, and none of them followed God! One king only lasted a week, and then the commander of the army was chosen king.

The kings and the people were listening to bad advice, but there were some people giving them good advice - the words of God - do you know what we call men who told people the message of God? Prophets. The prophets worked hard this whole time trying to convince people to come back to God.

Let's look at the "baddest of the bad" kings and one of the most famous prophets.

Ahab was Israel's worst king.

1 kings 16:29-33 Stop and write on the board what Ahab did that God hated (sins of Jeroboam - idol worship, married Jezebel, served Baals) How bad were Ahab & Jezebel?

Have kids read Naboth's vineyard story from verses below: 1 kings 21:2-3, 4-5, 13, 15-16, 21:17-19 and 17:23

So who's Elijah? One of the greatest prophets. Two amazing stories of Elijah were both about fire...

Elijah challenged Ahab and his gods to a duel! Ahab called all 450 prophets of Baal and of 400 prophets of Ashtoreth to Mount Carmel! They build an altar, put a bull on it and called for their gods to set the offering on fire. They called and prayed from morning to noon. Then Elijah said (1 kings 18:27) They called some more til evening, then Elijah rebuilt the altar of the Lord, with 12 stones, and put a bull on it. Then he did something WEIRD. He poured 12 big pitchers of water all over it, til it overflowed. That's going to make it hard for God to light the fire, isn't it? Elijah called on God with just a little prayer and fire came down to burn up the bull, the wood, the stones and the dirt!! The people watching were amazed and went with Elijah to kill all those false prophets.

What do you think Ahab and Jezebel thought about this? They were furious and Jezebel told Elijah she'd have him killed. Elijah should have laughed at her, but do you know what he did? He ran away! Jezebel was so evil, she even scared Elijah. God had to appear to Elijah and tell him that he was not alone fighting against evil, and to keep going.

What's happened to these three people?

Ahab was killed in his chariot in a battle, and dogs licked up his blood - just like Elijah had said. Jezebel was tossed off the top of a wall, and dogs ate her - just like Elijah had said.

What happened to Elijah? He went up to the mountains with Elisha, his friend who was also a prophet. Elisha saw a chariot of fire, with horses made of fire, come to take Elijah up to heaven. That must have been impressive! Elisha's friends didn't believe him, and went looking for Elijah, but never found him --- did anyone ever see Elijah again??? Look in MT 17:1 - he's on the mountain with Moses and Jesus, appearing to the disciples.

What happened to the 10 tribes of Israel? After 200 years, God allows the kingdom of Assyria to take over all the country. They take all the people back to Assyria, between the Tigris & Euphrates Rivers, and settle them in towns there. And the Assyrians moved other people into the homes and towns of the Israelites. The Israelites never returned from Assyria.

READ:

2 kings 17: 7-8 because they worshipped other gods.

17:13-14 God had warned them!

21-23 They never listened so God took them away and they are still there.

Did God keep His promise (the poster from 1 kings 9:4-7)?

Naboth's vineyard story:

Have kids read his story from verses below: I King 21:2-25

1. Ahab said to Naboth, "Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace." But Naboth replied, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."

2. So Ahab went home, sullen and angry. He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat. His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, "Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?" He answered her, "Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, 'Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'"

3. Jezebel his wife said, "Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city with him.

4. So the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city did as Jezebel directed in the letters she had written to them. They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth in a prominent place among the people. Then two scoundrels came and sat opposite him and brought charges against Naboth before the people, saying, "Naboth has cursed both God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death.

5. Then they sent word to Jezebel: "Naboth has been stoned and is dead." As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, "Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to sell you. He is no longer alive, but dead." When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard.

6. Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: "Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it.

Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?' Then say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood! And dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.'

Jonah

Read the book of Jonah straight from the bible.

Act out a remake of the story --

Select a kid Jonah, a bigger kid Max, a teacher, a bus driver, several passengers, a garbage truck driver.

Jonah has trouble at school with an older student named Max always harrassing him.

Jonah was told to go warn Max that the teachers had seen all the bad things he's been doing. The teacher wants Jonah to deliver one last warning to Max so he won't be expelled.

How does our hero feel? Life would be better without Max, wouldn't it? Why not let Max get what he deserves?

Jonah decides to run away instead of doing what he was told. He hops on a bus.

Pretty soon, the bus starts to swerve all around dangerously and the driver and passengers are worried!

The driver says they didn't have any trouble til Jonah got on! What will the passengers do? Pitch Jonah off the bus.

Unfortunately, Jonah got pitched into a trash dumpster! And the crash when he fell in made the lid close - and lock!

Pretty dark in there. Pretty quiet, too. No one would come around this lonely part of town for days!

What did Jonah do? He prayed. TALK about what Jonah would say in his prayer.

Three days later, he heard a wonderful sound - the garbage truck was coming! The driver was surprised to see Jonah in the dumpster and he tipped Jonah out.

Now what will Jonah do? He decides he should do what the teacher wanted him to do in the first place. Apparently that's what God wanted him to do too, or all this bad stuff wouldn't have happened to him!

When Jonah tells Max that he has only one more chance to improve his behavior, he secretly hopes Max keeps on being bad - so he'll be expelled. But Max starts being an angel! And the teacher is proud of Max.

Jonah is upset. He goes off to sulk. He watches from a distance knowing Max can't keep up the good behavior for long. But Max keeps being good! Jonah gets hot in the sun keeping an eye on Max.

One of the other students comes over and his shadow shades Max.

But the teacher comes over and tells Jonah's friend to go back to class. Jonah is sad and hot again.

The teacher asks Jonah why he is sad. Was he upset that he had no shade? Jonah admits that he didn't really want Max to start behaving after all.

The teacher told Jonah that he was worrying about the wrong things. Jonah was worried about his own little physical problem - just being too hot for awhile. Instead, he should have thought about the big trouble that Max was in and feel glad that Max was acting better and wouldn't be expelled.

Jonah was worried about a little thing. The teacher used Jonah to help Max fix a big thing.

What do you suppose Max thought about Jonah now? It turns out that when Jonah warned the people of Ninevah about God's coming judgement on them, they did repent! They were saved, and the country remained strong.

The Assyrians in Ninevah become more and more evil. They forgot God's warning, but so did Israel!!! The Israelites worshiped idols and did all kinds of things God had told them not to do. They didn't worship Him and didn't follow the warning God gave Ninevah through Jonah.

125 years go by, and God allowed the Assyrians to take all of Israel captive, never to return.

Lesson 12:

REVIEW: We are close to the end of the Old Testament stories -- let's see what we've learned -- I will tell the story and you raise your hands to fill in the blanks, OK?

Way back before time even started someone was already living -- that was \_\_\_\_.

God made the earth and two people: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_. They walked and talked with God, just like a friend.

But someone came into the Garden and tempted Adam & Eve to disobey God - that was \_\_\_\_\_

Their sin made a wall between all people and God, because God is perfect and nothing sinful can be around where He is.

People liked doing things their own way, instead of listening to God. Soon the world was so BAD that God decided to destroy it with a \_\_\_\_\_. Six people were saved: \_\_\_\_\_.

People SHOULD have learned to listen to God & do what He wants, shouldn't they?

Not very long after the flood, people built a \_\_\_\_\_, and God was so upset with them, He \_\_\_\_\_, and then the people spread out like He wanted them to.

Soon God picked out one family to be His "chosen people". Why did He decide to do that?

Who did God choose to be the first leader? \_\_\_\_\_. He told Abraham that He would give him three things: remember what?

Abraham had a son when he and Sarah his wife were very old. His name was \_\_\_\_\_.

Isaac had twin sons named \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_. Jacob had 12 sons and they became leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel.

One of the 12 sons was taken to Egypt as a slave, but he was able to save the family from starving in a famine:

\_\_\_\_\_. Jacob's family settled in Egypt and grew to be many many people

Years later, another Pharaoh in Egypt made the Israelites work as slaves.

God sent a man to take the people out of Egypt and take them to the Promised Land: \_\_\_\_\_.

God gave Moses the \_\_\_\_\_ and did miracles to give the people water and food.

One of Moses' commanders took over leading the people in the battles to take the Promised Land. At the battle of Jericho, \_\_\_\_\_ told the people to use funny weapons: \_\_\_\_\_.

The land was settled with each of the 12 tribes in an area. Sometimes the people forgot about God and started being really bad - worshiping idols or other things God told them not to do, so God sent people to tell them what He wanted. They were called \_\_\_\_\_.

Soon the people wanted a King, like their neighbors. God told the people that a King wouldn't be good for them, but they wanted one anyway.

The first King was \_\_\_\_\_. He was a good leader for awhile, but then he stopped trusting God.

A young man came and fought with a giant named \_\_\_\_\_. He was \_\_\_\_\_, and he became the second King.

David liked to sing and wrote many poems and songs. He wanted to build a fine temple for God, but God said he was a man of war, so his son would build it.

God told David's son \_\_\_\_\_ he would give him any gift he asked for when he became King. What did he ask for? What did God give Solomon?

Solomon was a good king for awhile, but he married lots of women (as kings did in those days) and they got him to worship idols and build temples for them!

When Solomon died, the kingdom had a lot of problems. \_\_\_\_\_ tribes who lived in the north decided to make their own kingdom and call it Israel. Did they keep worshiping God? What did they build to keep people from going back to the Temple to worship God?

Every king in Israel was bad. Every one worshiped idols. But God tried to make them stop worshiping idols and come back to Him. He sent special messengers to tell the people what he wanted them to do. They were called \_\_\_\_\_.

One of the prophets challenged the prophets of the idol Baal to have their god burn up a sacrifice - \_\_\_\_\_. Did it burn up? Then he covered a sacrifice with water and asked God to burn it - did that one burn? Do you remember the evil king and queen's names?

What other fiery thing happened to Elijah at the end of his life?

The kings in Israel were so bad that God let a powerful enemy take them away from the Promised Land to \_\_\_\_\_. Strangers came to live in Israel. The 10 tribes never went home.

Meanwhile, what happened to the other two tribes, the ones left in Judah in the south??

The people who lived in Judah saw all the bad things that the people in Israel did, and they saw all the bad things that happened to them because God was trying to make them feel sorry and start worshiping Him again. They should have learned, right?

Do you think they worshiped just God, and not idols? They had the beautiful Temple that Solomon built right there in Jerusalem. Things were a little better in Judah -- the people had good kings and bad kings. The good kings led the people to worship God in the Temple but there were other kings who turned their backs on God and worshiped

idols again.

One of the best kings in Judah was Hezekiah. Hezekiah was king after the Assyrians took over the country of Israel. Assyria was very powerful and tried to take over Judah too. Do you remember the story of Jonah and the big fish? Do you remember that the job God wanted Jonah to do was to tell the people of Nineveh to repent or God would destroy them? Well, Nineveh is the city where the king of Assyria lived.... God wanted to save the enemies of Israel and Judah from being destroyed ... why would God save their enemies??? Did He need them to be the ones to punish Israel when they wouldn't obey?

Judah was a little country pulled between three powerful neighbor countries: Assyria, Babylonia and Egypt. Sometimes these neighbors were their friends, but they all became Judah's enemies eventually.

Hezekiah gave the Assyrians gold and silver to leave Judah alone. Then Hezekiah got really sick and ready to die. He prayed to God to be well again and God sent the prophet Isaiah to tell him he would live another fifteen years.

Pretty soon, the Assyrian king decided to just take over Judah. Hezekiah had made Jerusalem stronger and he dug a tunnel through the rock to get to the well so the people inside Jerusalem could have water, but not the people outside the walls. The Assyrian king was Sennacherib, and he was a boaster! He sent his army commander to say "Hear the word of the great king of Assyria! Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord! Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the king of Assyria? Where are their gods now? How can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand?" Ohhhh, a challenge! Think God will show them?

Hezekiah sent messengers to Isaiah to find out what God would do. Isaiah said God would send a message to Sennacherib that would make him take off for home. But first he sent a letter to Hezekiah with the same boast as before. Hezekiah took the letter into the Temple and laid it out before the altar and prayed for God to take care of them. READ 2King 19:35-36

"That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning -- there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and returned to Nineveh and stayed there"

Soon, the Babylonians became more powerful than the Assyrians and they wiped out the capital city of Nineveh by breaking dams on the big river around the town. The rushing water melted down the mud walls around the city and a lot of the buildings, too. It disappeared so completely that for 2500 years people thought it had never really existed. Then archaeologists dug in the area and found what was left of Nineveh.

Do you think the people of Judah will be safe, now that the terrible Assyrians are gone?? Do you remember the other two powerful countries that would cause trouble for God's people?

Who here is eight years old? Do you think you could step in and be President tomorrow? Would you know enough about the laws and the way government works to be a good President? There were two kings in Judah who were very young. Joash was one of the first kings of the southern kingdom of Judah. He was made king when he was only 7. He was a good king as long as his wise uncle was alive to help him know what was right to do. But when his uncle died, he turned to worshipping idols.

Josiah was one of the last kings in Judah and he was only 8 years old! He was king after the 10 tribes in Israel had been taken away by the Assyrians, and the Assyrians had tried to take over Judah too (remember Sennacherib?). The Babylonians were starting to cause trouble. Josiah had a lot to worry about! But the Bible tells us Josiah "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in the ways of his father David." God will help Josiah.

When he was twelve, he started to destroy the idols and idol temples in Judah. Later he sent people to repair the Temple Solomon had built -- it had gotten into bad shape because people didn't respect it. When they were cleaning, they found the Book of the Law that had been given through Moses and they read it to Josiah. What will he think?

READ 2 Chr 34:19 "When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes and said 'Great is the Lord's anger because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord!' Then he called all the people together, from the least to the greatest, and read the words of the Book of the Law to everyone. Everyone promised to follow God, and they did -- as long as Josiah lived. What do you think they did after Josiah died?

One of Josiah's friends was the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah knew the people had to follow God or God would

destroy Judah just like He had destroyed Israel for not obeying Him. He warned them about all the bad things that would happen if they didn't follow God. Sometimes the things he told the people were so sad, that the book he wrote is called Lamentations (means sad things).

READ: Jeremiah 25:8-11 --- Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon would come and turn Judah into a desert wasteland, destroy Jerusalem.

Jeremiah told this to Jehoiachin, the last king of Judah, but he wouldn't listen! Jehoiachin was so mad at Jeremiah that he cut up the scroll into little pieces and put them in the fire!! Think God will be upset about that?

So Nebuchadnezzar came to Judah and took a group of people captive back to Babylon. One of these is a young man who had some major adventures which we'll talk about next time. Nebuchadnezzar came back about ten years later and destroyed Jerusalem, even completely destroying the beautiful Temple that Solomon built. Then he took nearly everyone to Babylon. Jeremiah was one of the people left in the wrecked city of Jerusalem, and he and some others went to Egypt to live.

Is this the end of the story??? It looks like God's people are all wiped out! What will happen to them now? The prophets gave God's people some hope. READ Isaiah 10:20-22 "In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, to the Mighty God. Though your people, O Israel, are like the sand by the sea, only a remnant will return."

Their enemies will be overpowered by other people, and a remnant of them would be allowed to return to Jerusalem.

## Lesson 13: Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach & Abednego

God made people to be His friends. The first two people did something every one of us ever since has done - and that's to disobey God. This made a wall between God and man. All through history God let people make up their own minds what to do, and people always seemed to end up doing what they wanted and not what He wanted. There were times He punished people to help them learn -- like the big flood, and when He confused the languages at the tower of Babel. Remember that God used one family - Abraham's family - to try to show the whole world what He wanted people to do and how powerful He was. What was Abraham promised besides the Promised Land and many descendants? Remember one special descendent would be the Savior who would make a way for people to come back to God??? God worked with Abraham's family while they had good and bad kings, when they broke the country into two pieces and one half started to worship idols. He worked with the people in Judah for many years after He'd let the tribes in Israel be taken captive to Assyria. But finally, He let the Babylonians capture the people of Judah - all that was left of the people in the Promised Land - and take them away.

Can you imagine wanting something really badly and then finally getting it, like a trip somewhere or a new room? How would you feel when you finally got what you wanted? Then how would it feel if something happened and you lost it again or got taken away from it? Would it feel even worse if you knew you lost that great thing because you had been bad?

Would you feel kind of dumb for not listening? Would you really want to go back and start over so you could try harder? Would you be really, really sad??

READ Jer. 2:11

READ Psalms 137:1-7

This is how the Israelites felt about being taken captive and losing the Promised Land.

How long would God keep them away from Jerusalem? Would they be banned forever?

READ Jer 25:8-12 .. after this Babylon would be destroyed.

Let's meet a few people who lived in the countries that took the Israelites captive.

Daniel and three of his friends were among the first people taken from Jerusalem to Babylon. The four of them were taken into a place where they would be tested and trained to work for the king of Babylon. They were offered "king's food" which was rich and not really very good for you - lots of treats, but they asked for vegetables instead! The guard didn't want to give them food not as nice as the other people, but agreed to let them eat what they wanted for awhile as a test. They were in better health than the other people! Daniel and his three friends became valuable to the king. Daniel had a chance to interpret dreams like another young man we have learned about.... remember Joseph in Egypt? Daniel's and Joseph's stories have a lot in common. This king had a real test for his wise men. READ Dan 2:9 -- that sounds impossible! But Daniel had the answer! READ 2:27-28

Some time later, the King had a huge golden statue built of himself. He ordered people to stop whatever they were doing when they heard music playing and worship that statue, and not to pray to anyone else.

READ 3:12

We don't know where Daniel was when this happened, but he must have been away from the place where the King was. His friends were there, though, and they were going to be in trouble!

They can do what the King said to do, and be like everyone else. If everyone else was doing it, then God would probably think it was OK, wouldn't He? That sounds easy. Or they could just pretend to give honor to the King's statue but then honor God in secret. Would that work? Would God see what they were doing? How did He feel about giving any kind of honor to other gods? They had one other way they could go -- they could take a chance on God.

READ 3:16-18. WOW These guys are brave! They threw them in the fire and what happened? The soldiers who threw them in burned up, but they came out not even smelling scorched! The people outside saw someone "like a son of man" walking around with them -- who do you suppose that was? We'll have to ask when we get there to be sure, but many people think it was Jesus. Wouldn't that be exciting - to make a choice to do what God wanted when it was a really hard choice - and then have Jesus walking along with you when you had to go through with the hard part? He is always there with us, you know, and especially at times like that when we are trying our hardest to do what is right. Next time you have a really hard thing to do (turn away from a fight at school, or be nice to someone who has said something mean to you) think about Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego - and think about how Jesus will be there walking beside you while you do the right thing! It'll help!

After awhile a new King, Darius, took over in Babylon. There were people in the Kings' court that didn't like the Israelites who worked for the King. Why? Daniel and his friends were good leaders. They probably had really good results from the decisions they made, because God helped them. The other leaders were jealous, and tried to

get rid of them. How will they get rid of them when all they do is good? TRICKS! That's how the devil has been causing trouble for people forever. They talked the King into a new law that anyone who prayed to someone besides the King for 30 days would be fed to the lions. By now, Daniel was about 80 years old! Should he be taking it easy? Should he find some way to avoid this problem? READ 6:10-11

He didn't pretend or hide. He prayed to God right where they could see him!

READ 6:16

The King wanted Daniel to be saved... as a matter of fact, the King spent the night without eating or entertainment and could not sleep. What did he find in the morning?

READ 6:21-23

He was safe!

## Lesson Esther in Persia

After some years, the Babylonians were taken over by Medes and Persians, and the Israelites were given to the new Kings to serve them.

King Xerxes of Persia was looking for a Queen, and chose a pretty girl named Esther to be his Queen, but he didn't know she was a Jewish girl. The Israelites were being called Jews by now. Esther's uncle Mordecai spent the days at the palace gate and once overheard two men plotting to kill the King. He turned them in and the palace officials wrote about it in the Kings' records. Later, some of the leaders of Persia who were trying to get rid of the Jews. One of these leaders was Haman. The King wanted to honor Haman so said he could have whatever he wanted, and Haman asked that all the Jews be killed on a certain day.

READ 3:8-9

Even though the King was married to a Jew, he didn't know it and didn't know much about them, so he went along with it.

Mordecai heard about this scheme, and talked to Esther, telling her she had to talk to the King and beg for her people's lives (and her own!)

That doesn't sound too hard -- for the wife to go to her husband and ask a favor, does it? Doesn't your mom go to ask your dad for things sometimes - and he gives her what she asks? Well, it's a little different if you were married to a King back then. The King was really powerful, and NO ONE could just go up to him and ask him things. He had to hold out his scepter to you for you to even get close to him, even his wife! If anyone came in to talk to the King and he didn't hold that scepter out to them, the soldiers would kill them!!! So Esther was pretty scared to even think about what Mordecai said she had to do.

But Mordecai talked her in to it.

READ 4:12-14

She invited Haman and the King to dinner. Haman thinks he's really being honored, and his pride goes to his head. He passes Mordecai and gets mad that he won't bow to him, so when he gets home his wife talks him into building a gallows to hang Mordecai on.

Meanwhile the King can't sleep so he sends for his officials to read the records to him, and finds out about Mordecai saving his life not long before. He decides to honor Mordecai.

Next day, the King asks Haman how to honor someone (haman thinks the King means HIM, so he says READ 6:7-9 The King has Haman do that for Mordecai! Do you think Mordecai felt pretty pleased and thankful to God for that!! But, there's still the law that the Jews would be killed....

Esther has the King and Haman over for another dinner, and the King is so pleased he promises Esther whatever she wants. She tells the King about how Haman plotted to kill all the Jews, and asks him to save her and her family.

But the King can't go back on a law he has signed. Haman has tricked him into doing something really bad, and he can't get out of it. But he can punish Haman for his evil.

READ 7:9b-10.

And the King sent around a new law that let the Jews fight back against their enemies. Some died on the day of that battle, but most lived because of Esther's bravery.

Do we ever get in situations like Esther's? Where we have to talk to someone who frightens us or do something scary? Why was Esther able to be so brave? How can we be brave when we have to be?

These five people: Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, Abednego and Esther were STRONG people. They had strong faith in God - but they were living in a time when it looked like God had turned His back on them!! God had let their enemies take them away from the Promised Land, from the Temple, from everything they knew, and off to serve Kings who worshiped idols and even let people worship the Kings!

Why were they able to trust God, when it looked like He'd stopped loving them? Remember what Jeremiah said?

READ Jer 25: 11 again -- after 70 years they would be freed and able to return.

We'll talk about that next time....

## Lesson 14

Prophecies About Jesus: What the Jews were looking for.

We've been nearly all the way through the Old Testament now, and we know about a lot of the stories.

Adam & Eve sinned, just like we all do, and sin became a wall between people and God.

Once people got so BAD that God decided to get rid of them and the world in a flood.

But he saved Noah and his family, who had followed Him.

The world filled up with people again, and there were some good ones, and some bad ones.

God decided to use one family to show the world how much He cared and how much He liked to be obeyed, too.

He chose the family of Abraham.

Do you remember the three promises God gave Abraham (Promised Land, many descendents and one descendent would save the world)

One of Abraham's descendents was Joseph, who was taken as a slave to Egypt but was later able to save the family from starving - then the whole family moved to Egypt.

Years later, the Egyptians made Abrahams family into slaves and God sent Moses to take them out to the Promised Land.

The people saw God do amazing things to take care of them, but they were not brave enough to trust Him to help them take over the Promised Land - they were afraid.

So God made them wander in the wilderness for 40 years. In the wilderness, He gave them the 10 Commandments so they would know what He wanted them to do.

Joshua led the people to take over the Promised Land and they settled the land in 12 tribes.

When the people weren't following God, God sent Judges like Deborah, Gideon and Samson to help them do what was right.

Later, the people wanted a King to be like their neighbors.

The first three Kings were Saul, David & Solomon. Solomon built the beautiful temple in Jerusalem.

After Solomon died, ten tribes made their own country and built their own temples to worship golden calves! They had all bad kings, and God finally let enemies take them away to Assyria.

The people in Judah had good and bad kings, and a few people stayed faithful to God all the time. But the bad kings led so many people to worship idols and other bad things that God let the Babylonians take them away, too.

So only a few of the poorest people were left in Jerusalem. The Babylonians burned down the town and the beautiful temple. The people in Babylonia were so sad and homesick they couldn't sing and hung their harps in the trees.

Jeremiah told them it would last 70 years.

Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach & Abednego; and Esther were three of the captives that stayed faithful to God.

After 70 years, a new king, Cyrus, took over in Persia. The Persians thought it was good for people to worship their own gods, so they let some of the Jews go back to Jerusalem with Zerubbable to rebuild the temple and live there.

Do you think everyone wanted to go? Surprise! So much time has gone by that some people were happy where they were - they had homes and friends there. But many did go and they rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem, rebuilt the homes and shops and the temple. The temple was not nearly as beautiful as it had been, but the people worshiped God there and were glad to be home! A priest named Ezra and later an official named Nehemiah went back to Jerusalem to help the people rebuild the city and grow stronger spiritually. Ezra read the books of the law to the people and they promised to follow God. How do you think they will do?

Remember what we call the guys who tell people God's messages? Prophets. Now that the Jews were "home", they were anxious to have God give them the last of Abraham's promises - someone to come who would redeem them.

When Jesus did come many people didn't recognize Him because they expected a KING like Solomon or David who would get rid of their enemies and make them a powerful nation again. Were they listening to the prophets?

Let's see what they should have been looking for...

## Lesson 15

Let's do a real quick review of where we've been so far.

God made the world and then made people to live there.

Satan did not want the people to be God's friends, so he tempted them to sin.

Sin put a wall between people and God because God is perfect and can't be where sin is.

God didn't give up on people, but planned ahead a way that people could be with Him again.

But soon people had become so sinful, God decided to get rid of them all, except one family.

Noah's family grew and people should have been ready to follow God, but they tried to build the tower. God confounded their languages, and made them spread out into the world.

Soon, God chose one family, Abraham's, to show the world His power, and to be the family that the savior would be born into.

Abraham did what God asked him to do, he was father to Isaac, and grandfather to Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons.

Joseph who was able to save the family from a famine in Egypt.

Everyone moved to Egypt, the people grew to be a large nation there and soon were a danger to the Pharaoh because there were so many. Pharaoh made them slaves.

God called Moses to take the people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. Moses led them through the desert wanderings and taught them what God wanted.

Sometimes they listened and things went well. Sometimes they rebelled and things went bad! The people refused to go take the land when God sent them so they had to wander for 40 years.

Joshua led the people into the Promised Land and in battles to take the land from the enemies.

The Israelites divided the land into areas that went to each of the twelve tribes (families of the 12 sons) Every tribe did what it wanted. They needed leaders. God sent the Judges.

Soon the people wanted a King, like their neighbors. The first 3 kings were Saul, David & Solomon. God rewarded them when they obeyed, and the kingdom became rich & powerful.

But after Solomon died, the people rebelled and split the country. The 10 tribes in the north had nothing but bad kings and worshipped idols. God punished them with slavery in Assyria.

The 2 tribes in Judah followed God a lot of the time, but had bad kings, too, who led them into worshipping idols. God finally let them be taken to Babylon and let Jerusalem be destroyed.

After 70 years, people returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple and town.

Prophets had been telling the people to expect a savior who would establish a never-ending kingdom.

You know a little about "people" from the rest of these stories -- what do you suppose happened during the 400 years that come next? We don't have any Bible stories, but we can imagine the people followed God sometimes, and not sometimes. God didn't talk to them or their leaders the way He had before - He left them pretty much alone.

The temple wasn't as important to them, and Jews began meeting in synagogues (meeting places in the towns)

They'd go to the Temple for special days. The priests became important people and had a lot of power, but there wasn't a king. After Babylon and Persia came Alexander the Great of Greece and the Roman Empire after that. The Jews didn't rule their own country, and they wanted the Savior to be a great leader to make them a powerful nation again. They wanted a kingdom on earth, but God had a different kingdom in mind for His Savior to build.

Last time you learned about what the prophets had told the Jews to expect... a star, a child born in Bethlehem, in the time of the census, to a virgin mother, and would be called out of Egypt. Many other prophecies about Jesus were being studied and watched for by the Jews, but still they didn't recognize Him when He came. He wasn't what they expected or what they thought they wanted and needed. Instead of giving them freedom and wealth, He asked them to give up everything and have eternal life. Some did, many did not, and eventually killed Him.

**HIS BIRTH:** The story begins when an angel tells Mary she'll be Jesus' mother. Mary and Joseph aren't married, and she becomes pregnant by God's spirit. Before the baby is born, they have to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be counted in a census. When they get there, Jesus is born in a stable and greeted by shepherds who were told by angels to find Him.

**WISE MEN:** When Jesus is still a baby, wise men come from "the east", maybe Persia, to look for Him. They had been studying the prophets and knew to watch for a star, and a special star led them to Bethlehem. They asked King Herod about the "new king of the Jews". Think Herod was glad to hear there was a "new king"? While the wise men were giving gifts to Jesus, Herod plotted to kill Him by killing all the baby boys less than 2 years old.

**EGYPT:** Joseph was warned by God and took Mary & Jesus to Egypt, where he lived until Herod died and a dream told Joseph to head back. They settled in Nazareth. So, prophecies that said He'd be from Bethlehem, Egypt and that He'd be a Nazarene, were all true!

**JESUS AS CHILD:** Joseph was a carpenter and taught Jesus that work. He & Mary taught Him about being one of God's people and took Him to the special days at the Temple in Jerusalem. Once when Jesus was 12, He stayed to talk with the teachers at the Temple and his mother and father thought he was with them. They looked 3 days before finding Him and wondered what He was doing. He told them He was "doing His Father's business". But then He went home with them to Nazareth and was a good son to them.

READ Luke 2:51-52

We don't hear about Joseph again so he may have died when Jesus was young. We don't hear about Jesus, either, for 18 more years. What kind of teenager do you think He was?

He must have been taking care of the family - he had four younger brothers and some sisters and His mother Mary. How do you think he treated his family?

**JOHN THE BAPTIST:** Jesus' cousin, John, meanwhile, has gone to the desert and is telling people to repent and get ready for the coming of the Lord. Many people come to listen to him, and they do repent, but some people get angry when he tells them about their sins, like King Herod! Herod eventually put John in prison and had him killed.

## Jesus and His Friends

Last week we talked about John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin. He told people to be ready for Jesus, and he baptized Jesus at the Jordan River. We talked about how Jesus had four brothers and some sisters too. Bet He probably had a lot of friends growing up, too, because He was probably the kind of kid you'd like for a friend.

Why do we like to have friends? (write on the board as kids suggest, add these if they don't...)

To be with us, listen to us, talk to us, help us understand things, stick with us when things are hard, help us do things, take care of us when we're hurt or sad, understand who we really are.

Did you ever think that Jesus needed friends, just like we do - for the same reasons? He did - and when He grew up, Jesus purposely looked for people to be His friends.

Do you suppose that everyone wanted to be Jesus' friend? Nope! Even before he started his real work, someone saw that Jesus was starting to make people turn back to God and that someone was mad! Who doesn't want people to be with God? Remember in the garden how Satan tried to separate Adam & Eve from God? Well, he's going to try even harder to tempt Jesus away from what He has to do. If he can tempt Jesus, then he can WIN against God! Remember that Jesus is God - So, He shouldn't have any trouble with the kind of things that tempt us, should He? He could just whistle for things He wanted. But Jesus was also a person just like us. He got hungry. He got tired. His feelings got hurt. He got angry. His feet got dirty. He had friends who disappointed Him and He had enemies who hurt Him. So this was not going to be easy, after all...

Jesus went out to the desert and Satan tried to get Him to use His powers to take care of Himself, or to dare God to send angels to save Him, or to be King of the Jews and have all kinds of earthly power and riches. Jesus knew how pleasant things would be if he listened to Satan. And Jesus knew what His life would be like if He did what God wanted. He knew His job would be to die at the end, even though He didn't deserve it.... Jesus was tempted to get out of all that work and pain! But He decided to do what God wanted - how did he make the devil go away? He told Him "it is written...." READ MT 4:4,7,10 Jesus was telling the devil He knew what God wanted and He planned to listen to God! What can we say to the devil when he whispers to us that it's OK to do some bad thing? We can remember the things the Bible tells us to do and the devil will go running! After Jesus sent Satan away, God sent angels to take care of Him. The angels were a great comfort, but they couldn't always be there -- Jesus was going to need people on earth to be his friends!

Jesus moved from Nazareth where He lived as a boy, to Capernaum, right on a big lake - the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum was a busy place, with lots of people to hear His message, and that's where He spent a lot of His ministry. He talked to people about God, told them stories called parables and cured many sick people. Pretty soon, people started knowing who He was and talking about him to each other. Remember that John the Baptist had been teaching that someone was coming soon from God, and people wondered if Jesus was that special person.

Jesus could have had his pick of many people to be his best friends. He had over 5,000 people following him around part of the time! Who would he choose? What kind of things would he look for in a friend? Would it be nice to have someone rich as a friend? Someone really smart who had all the answers? Someone big and strong who could face any enemy? Twelve of his friends stayed with him all three years that he preached. They traveled with him and helped him teach the people. They were called the twelve Apostles.

The first four men he called to be his friends were fishermen. The Sea of Galilee is big, about half the size of Flathead Lake. Fishing was important, but fishermen didn't need to have much school to do it. **Read Acts 4:13.** These four men were just ordinary guys who worked hard and weren't really very smart. Read about them in the Bible - you'll see that they got scared, got angry, said and did dumb things, had to apologize a lot -- just like you and me! Even though it took a long time for them to understand what Jesus was really going to do, they knew in their hearts that He was sent from God and they became his best friends. Peter, James and John were the three closest friends that Jesus had. He often took just them off to pray with him. Sometimes he took just them when he did a special miracle or to tell them something really important. He liked to be with them and they liked to be with Him.

How about the other Apostles? Were they all well-liked by other people? **Read Mk 1:14-20.** This time of year you might have heard people talk about paying their taxes. Not very many people are happy about paying taxes! Maybe worse in Jesus' time - back then, the tax collectors usually cheated people and took more money than they should. So people really didn't like them. But Jesus didn't look at someone's job or what other people thought of them, whether they were rich or poor, smart or not - he looked at people's hearts. Matthew was a tax collector, someone other people wouldn't talk to or ever be friends with, and he asked him to be one of his friends. What do you think the other Apostles thought? Jesus accepted people for who they really were, not what they looked like or how much money they had.

What do you think it was like to be Jesus' friend? To be one of the twelve Apostles who worked with him those 3 years? To get to see all the sick people made well! To see Him make the storm stop! Mk 4:35-41. And another time, to watch Him come walking on the water to your boat! Mk 6:45-52 To go up on the mountain with Him and have Moses and Elijah appear with him as he is turned bright as the sun! Luke 9:28-36. Wow! It must have been amazing.

Jesus told them to "Follow Me". What did he mean? They went where he went... **Read John 12:26.** God would honor the ones who followed Jesus! Sounds good! Remember that everyone in those days expected that the Savior was going to take the country back from the Romans and be the new King! So following Jesus might make you an important person once he was the new King! Those poor followers were in for some surprises...

Because it was also hard to follow Jesus. **Read Mt 7:18-22, Mt 16:24-25** What do you suppose that meant? They didn't have homes to go home to. They wandered around and ate and slept at homes where people offered them something. They quit their jobs. They gave up their other friends. Jesus tried to explain to them what their new job would be when he sent them out to preach to the people all around the area. **Read Mt 10:1-7** They would not take anything with them - but would look for people who believed them to take care of them. He told them they would give up their own life to be His friends. **Read Lk 14:33** Suddenly this doesn't sound so great! But the Jesus' friends stuck with Him. They shared things with Jesus - good times and hard times.

There were people around who did take care of Jesus and his friends. Two sisters and their brother lived near Jerusalem in a town called Bethany, and Jesus and the group spent a lot of time there. Mary Martha and Lazarus became special friends. They fed them all, listened to everything Jesus taught and gave them a place to stay. Several women followed Jesus and the Apostles as they preached, too. They used their money to help buy food and other things the people needed. Most men didn't think that women could be their friends, but Jesus and the Apostles had several friends who were women. **Read Lk 8:3, Mt 27:55.** Friends take care of each other, and that's what Jesus' friends did for him!

Jesus worked hard with the Apostles for three years. He taught them what God is really like, how God wants people to love Him the way God loves them. He taught them that God loves everyone, even though for many years the Jews had been His special people. Jesus told them the agreement that God had with the Jews was being fulfilled with His life and death - that He would be the sacrifice that had to be made so people could be friends with God again - to take the wall down that sin had put between people and God. The Apostles talked to Jesus, but mostly they listened to Him. They often called him "Teacher". Just like all good friends, they listened to Him.

Even though the Apostles didn't understand what Jesus really meant about the kingdom of God until after he died, Jesus knew they loved him and He loved them. One of the last things He told his friends to do was to "Love each other as I have loved you!" How did Jesus love them? He could have been a grand King if he'd listened to Satan! Could have had all the riches in the world. He gave up the things he probably wanted as a human - comfort, riches, nice house, good job, family -- so that he could wander around teaching people what God wants them to do and end up being betrayed by one of his friends and being killed even though he had never done anything wrong. That's how much he loved them - and us. That's more than I can love anyone - how about you? But he tells us to try anyway.

We need to be with people, accept them for who they really are, share things with them, take care of each other and listen to each other. Those things are love.

**TEACHING:** Now Jesus is ready to start His work. He starts teaching people and they begin to follow Him around to listen. Why? What was He telling them they couldn't hear in the synagogue? He wasn't telling them to give honor to the priests. He didn't tell them they had to follow hundreds of laws, and offer many sacrifices every year. Instead, He told them God wanted them to love God and love each other better than themselves. What does that mean?

**PARABLES & MIRACLES:** Jesus taught the people with stories called parables, like the Wise & Foolish Builders - do you remember that one? He also did miracles, amazing things that no one else could do, so people would know He really was who He said He was. Like feeding 5000 people with one lunch. We're going to talk about parables and miracles Jesus did next time. These simple stories and amazing powers made even more people follow Jesus.

**JEALOUSY:** People should be really excited to have Jesus there. Many people are. But some people are not. Who do you think would be afraid and jealous of Jesus? He was telling people God didn't need them to go to the Temple any more, or give sacrifices to the priests, so who'd be out of a job? It was kind of like it must have been in the jungle when the witch doctor saw a modern Doctor show up with his medicines and thermometers and surgical tools - and people got cured. How did the witch doctor feel? They were the most important people in the area...now they aren't needed. What will the priests do about Jesus?

**COMMITMENT:** People liked what Jesus did feeding them and making sick people well. But then Jesus challenged them: what were they following Him for? He told them "Any of you who do not give up everything you have, cannot be my disciple" MT 14:33 Do you think that made people think about what they were hearing? Did they think of Jesus like Santa, giving them things they wanted? Or did they really want to know how to be close to God?

**TRANSFIGURATION:** Jesus is sad so many people give up, and asks the Apostles whether they will leave Him, too... Peter says, "You are Christ, the Son of the living God!" Jesus took Peter, James and John up on a mountain, and He was changed, made bright as the sun, right before their eyes. And Moses and Elijah appeared standing next to Him. A voice said, "This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" Would you be scared? Would you listen? Would you believe even more in who Jesus was?

**PLOTS:** Meanwhile, back at the Temple... What do you think has been going on with the priests and teachers while all the people follow Jesus? What do you think they thought when Jesus healed someone? Or when He told people they needed to obey God rather than offer lots of sacrifices? The priests began plotting how they could get rid of Jesus, and Jesus knew it was getting close to time to finish up the job God sent Him to do. God didn't just need Him to live a perfect life, God also needed Him to be the last and perfect sacrifice.

**HIS DEATH:** We're going to talk more about when Jesus died and came out of His grave alive again in a couple weeks. Remember, one of Jesus 12 Apostles turned Him in to the ones who wanted to kill Him? When the soldiers took Him to the chief priest, the bible says "then all the disciples deserted Him and fled". Sometimes we wonder what we'd do - would we stick with Jesus and try to defend Him? Or be like all the others and be afraid and hide? How do we act even now, when someone talks bad about God or Jesus?

The priests and high priests questioned Jesus about who He was, and took him to the governor and to King Herod trying to get him sentenced to death. Finally, Jesus was taken to be killed on a cross. He hung there for three hours before He died. Soldiers and people standing around teased Him that if He was God, He could just step down from there - and He could have, couldn't He? He suffered and died as a human. What do you suppose his disciples were thinking as He died?

**EVENTS AT DEATH:** God showed the people that Jesus really was His Son with many miraculous signs. As He was dying, the sky became dark for three hours in the middle of the afternoon. Right when He died, there was a great earthquake and people who had died got up out of their graves! And one thing was especially important. The curtain in the Temple was torn in half, from the top down (only God could do that because no one could reach) What did that curtain block off in the Temple? It separated the area where people were - and the Holy of Holies place, where God was. Only one high priest could go in there only once a year to offer sacrifices for all the people. No one else was allowed to be near where God was. What did it mean when the curtain was wide open, torn by God?

**RESURRECTION:** Today's Easter, when people celebrate Jesus rising from the dead. He was buried in a cave after they took His body down from the cross. A big stone was put in front of the entrance and sealed with wax so the soldiers would know if anyone tried to sneak in. Guards stood near. After three days, they probably thought they were right about Jesus - just another big shot, telling people stories! Two ladies went to the tomb on that first Easter

morning and just when they got to the tomb, a big earthquake came and an angel rolled the stone away from in front of the tomb. The soldiers watched as the ladies looked in and saw - NOTHING! Just the burial cloths were there, folded up where Jesus had been, dead as could be, three days before. Where'd He go? Who took the body?

APPEARANCES: We'd still be kind of wondering about that except that many people saw Jesus after He rose. He appeared to them, walked around, talked with them, He even ate food with them. Thomas, one of the Apostles, was gone when Jesus came to them, and didn't believe it was really Jesus that the others saw.... but then Jesus came and had Thomas touch Him to prove He was really alive. Thanks to Thomas, we can know for sure He was!

ASCENSION: For 40 days, Jesus visited with the disciples and encouraged them. Then one day, He rose up into the clouds and went back to heaven to sit at the right side of His Father God - to wait for us!

GOSPEL: Was Jesus' work all done then? The part He had to do was done, but how would people know who He was, and what God wanted them to do? Why didn't Jesus stay here and tell everyone what they needed to know? Who did He leave that job to? How are we doing at our job? Have you told your friends you believe in Jesus?

## Lesson 16: Jesus' Teachings

The purpose of Jesus' life, what He taught about and the miracles He did

"Props" for this class: a kaiser roll, toy house, flat rock, sand, water, mustard seeds, salt, powerful flashlight, coins and/or jewels, toy sheep

for homework sheet: tiny basket, monopoly houses, mustard seeds, birthday candles, pearls, bandaids, sheep (sticker, button, or toy)

We've talked about many stories from the Bible in this class, but did you realize that the Bible is really only one story? It's the story of God loving the people He made, but letting them decide whether to obey Him or not. It's the story of how He teaches people, works with people, rewarding those who obey and punishing those who don't. It's the story of His PLAN to give people the chance to live with Him. The Bible is really one story - the story of Jesus, from the very beginning.

We've learned about how Adam & Eve sinned and sin separated us from God.

God saved only Noah and his family when the people of the world got too wicked.

Later, God chose Abraham's family to be his special people. He blessed them when they followed Him and punished them when they did what they wanted to do.

He used Joseph to bring the people to Egypt where they grew to be a big nation. Pharaoh was worried about how many Israelites there were, and made them slaves.

God sent Moses to take the people out of Egypt and through the desert, where He taught them what he expected them to do (10 Commandments) and how to worship Him. The people learned that if they followed God, He would take care of them. This was the big lesson God was trying to teach people, but it was going to take a long time for people to learn!

Joshua helped to take over the Promised Land and it was settled by the 12 tribes. Whenever the people forgot about God, He sent judges and prophets to tell them what they should do.

The people wanted a king, and Saul, David and Solomon were the first three kings. God blessed the Israelites and their kingdom became very rich and powerful.

But the people got tempted away from following Him, and when Solomon died, ten of the 12 tribes made their own kingdom and made golden calves to worship! They weren't paying attention to the lesson God was trying to teach them, were they? God gave them time to come back to Him, but those 10 tribes never did, and He let the Assyrians take them away from the Promised Land forever.

The 2 tribes left in Jerusalem tried harder to please God, but they were tempted to worship idols, too. God let them be taken to Babylon, where they had to live for 70 years away from the Promised Land. By that time, the Persians controlled the Jewish people.

The king of Persia, who had defeated the Babylonians, said the Jewish people could go back to Jerusalem. They worked hard to rebuild the Temple and the city. Then they could worship God the way Moses had taught their families years before. They tried to learn what God wanted them to do. They had the writings of Moses - the first five books of our Bible - and they had many writings from the prophets. These books were on scrolls and very precious to the Jewish people. They met in synagogues to study and talk about what these books said.

400 years go by. The Jewish people never really got the Promised Land back. They were able to live there, but one big government after another ruled over them, charging them taxes, making laws for them, and making them wish for a new king to come and make them powerful again. They looked in the words of the prophets and thought a mighty king would come to save them from the Romans, but when the mighty King Jesus did come, many people didn't want what He brought them.

Jesus was a plain, ordinary, poor guy - a carpenter from a "hick" town in the mountains. He was never trained as a priest, never fought any great battles, never even had his own house! His friends were raggedy fishermen and clerks. Do you suppose the important people of Jesus' day had a hard time thinking of Him as the new King?

Why did so many poor people follow Jesus? What did He offer them?

Jesus said He brought a "new life" for people. People who suffered on earth would be richly rewarded in heaven. He said that worldly honor and riches were not important, that being kind and loving were more important. Other false prophets had come around before trying to tell people they were sent from God, so Jesus would have to do something so people would believe Him.

READ JN 20:30-31 How did Jesus prove who He was? Miracles, signs and wonders.

Let's see how many of Jesus' miracles you already know.... (have kids take turns remembering them and write them on the board) Some of the better-known ones:

Centurion's servant healed MT 8

2 blind men healed MT 20

Paralytic man thru the roof MK 2

Dead girl raised MK 5

10 lepers healed LK 17

Feeding 5,000 MT 14, MK 6, LK 9, JN 6

Why do you think Jesus did so many miracles for the crowds? Many people came to Him and then followed Him around when He did these amazing things. They came to Him because He could feed them miraculously and they brought the sick and injured people from all around hoping He'd heal them. They were looking for a King to make everything right again - but most people thought about Jesus making their earthly life better.

Many of Jesus' miracles were done when only a handful of people, his disciples or even a few of His 12 apostles, were there to see. Read these:

Lazarus raised JN 11

Temple tax in fish MT 17

Calming the storm MK 4 LK 8

Why did Jesus do these wonderful things when just a handful of people would see them? What did they need more of than the crowds did? Jesus did these private miracles to give His friends stronger faith, so they would be rock-solid sure of who He was. When He was gone back to heaven, these friends would be the ones who would tell the world all about Him.

What did Jesus teach people, once He had their attention? He used parables - know what that is? Using an everyday story to tell a spiritual message, like fables or many fairy tales do. This makes it easier for people to understand the meaning of the story, and to remember.

Here's some clues: tell me the parable Jesus taught.

He taught us why we need to trust God:

house, rock, sand: we need to build on the right foundation-not the world, but Jesus the rock

He taught us about heaven:

mustard seed: God's kingdom will grow big enough for everyone to find a home there

He taught us who God wants there with Him:

toy sheep: every single person is precious to God, He wants everyone to be safe with Him

weeds: not everyone will get to heaven, though. Only those who obey.

Jesus taught that there are really only TWO commandments, not the 10 Moses had, or the hundreds that the priests and pharisees had. These two parables taught the 2 commands:

-treasure box, jewels, coins and a pearl: kingdom is worth more than anything on earth. We need to love God more than anything or any person that we care about on earth

-bandages: good samaritan - we need to love "our neighbor" as much as we care for ourself

He taught us how we can teach others by our example:

flashlight shining in a dark box: we need to show the world the "light" that Jesus can be

salt container: we can make the world better by being good christians

And teach others by telling them about Jesus:

bag of seeds: sower spreads the message, people receive it differently. Those who believe grow and spread more seeds.

## Lesson 17:

### Jesus' death and what it means to us, our response

Start the class in the lobby. Read Jn 12:9-19 Have posters made for them to carry to class, and encourage them to read them to each other as they walk along ("Hosanna" "Blessed is the king, etc)

Jesus and His disciples went to Jerusalem for the Passover - a big feast for Jews, so many people were there. Jesus had just raised his friend Lazarus back to life after he'd been dead for four days and LOTS of people wanted to be around Him to see what else He could do. On the way in to Jerusalem, a mob of people lined the streets, waving palm fronds and saying "Hosannah to the King". What do you think they expected this new king to do for them?

In class, have kids take off shoes & socks.

Have large basin with warm water. Let each kid paddle around in it, sit down and dry his feet with a towel. Talk about how Jesus and the disciples arrived in Jerusalem for this big feast of Passover, had a room prepared for a special dinner together, but had walked all day - dusty feet. Who usually washed the feet of people coming into a banquet? The servants! Read John 13:1-5 and 12-17. What was Jesus trying to teach them??

Have a table laid flat on the floor, with blankets folded up to sit on. Have kids sit around the table. Read Mt 26:20-25 Judas already planned to turn Jesus over to the people who wanted to kill him. Show a bag of 30 coins. Talk about how money can make us do things we know are wrong!

At that dinner, Jesus offered bread and wine saying it was His body and blood that would be given to save people from their sins. He told them to do the same thing with the bread and wine to remember Him. This is the same ceremony we do every Sunday in communion. Read Mt 26:26-30

His friends probably wondered what He was talking about! Jesus had tried to tell them He wasn't going to be just another King on earth, but was going to be a spiritual King, with a kingdom that would last forever in people's hearts. But they didn't understand.

Read Mark 14:43-50. After supper, Jesus went to a garden to pray. Why did He go outside to the woods or garden? He took His 3 close friends into the middle of the garden with Him to watch out for trouble. Jesus prayed to God, because He didn't want to die. He didn't HAVE to die, did He? He could have gotten out of "the plan" any time He wanted to, because He was God. But the plan meant He needed to suffer and die, and it would be painful and sad, because He was man, too. He prayed, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me" (He wanted some other plan if possible) but then what did He say? "Yet not My will, but Thine be done"

Take the kids outside in the woods and pray for something they have to do that is very hard (end of the year tests, getting along in the family, confessing to something bad they have done, etc) Collect to pray together for a second.

Back inside: Suddenly, a crowd came in to the garden with Judas and he turned Jesus over to them. Jesus said, "All this has taken place so that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled". He knew what would happen, but He was willing to do it anyway. What did His friends do? One of the saddest sentences in the Bible comes next -- "Then all the disciples left Him and fled." Read John 12:12-13 again (Hosanna, etc) and then Mk 14:50 again. What happened to everyone?

The crowd took Jesus to the priests and rulers trying to get someone to convict Him of something

wrong. They took Him to the old High Priest, to the current High Priest, to the Sanhedrin priests, to King Herod and finally to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate didn't want to be responsible for killing Jesus, because he couldn't find anything wrong that Jesus had done. He finally washed his hands in front of everyone and let the Jews take Jesus to be crucified.

Read John 19:7-15 Pilate finally let the Jews have Jesus so they could kill him themselves.

Read John 12:12-13 again (Hosanna, etc) and then Jn 18:15 again -- what made the people change their minds about Jesus??

Have you ever been in a crowd that was teasing some kid, and found yourself saying mean things too?? Have you ever been at the lunch tables and suddenly everyone is throwing food wrappers around, and you start to do it too?? God wants us to THINK for our own selves - not follow the crowd by saying we love Him when we really don't, and not follow the crowd by saying we don't care about God or make fun of Him, either!

Talk about Jesus' death. Read Mark 15:25-36. Then play "Eloi Sabbathani" song, while kids close their eyes.

Then Read Mark 15:37-39.

The soldiers took Jesus up on a hill outside of town and nailed Him on a cross. Pilate had a sign hung on the cross that said, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" People came by and said, "if you're the Son of God, get yourself down off there" - and He surely could, couldn't He? Do you think He was tempted to do just that part of the time?

Jesus said two amazing things on the cross as He died. He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" When someone does something especially bad to you, do you ever take time to think they might not understand what they are doing?

Then He said, "it is finished" and He died. What was finished?? The Plan was finished. The last Promise to Abraham was carried out. All the prophecies were fulfilled.

What happened when He died? Weird things - a big earthquake, graves opened up and people who'd been dead started walking around, the sky went dark at noon and something strange in the Temple. The curtain was torn in half from top to bottom. What did that mean?

Remember what sin did? Put a wall between people and God. The curtain in the Temple was like that - a wall between people and God. Now there wasn't anything between people and God.

Anyone could talk to God and come to Him for answers and comfort.

What did Jesus' followers think now? Read Mt 28:1-7 They were probably afraid, worried, sad, etc.

Where did Jesus' earthly body go? After He died, He was buried in a tomb in a cave, with a huge stone in front of the door and soldiers guarding it. Why? The priests were afraid Jesus' disciples would steal the body and claim Jesus had risen from the dead! What DID happen? He did rise from the dead!

So why did Jesus DIE? He died because that was the only way for our sins to be paid for. When someone does something really bad now, he goes to jail. If the world was completely fair, all of us would be in jail for some minutes every day to pay for the bad things we think and do. God came up with a Plan -- to have His Son pay for all our sins Himself. Anyone who follows Him will have a "paid for" ticket to heaven.

## Lesson 18: The Church and its Spread Around the World

Show the books of the Bible on a flipchart or other visual aid. Talk about the whole Bible being just one story - the story of God's plan to bring the people He made and loves back to be with Him through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus.

Why did Jesus die? To be that sacrifice to "make up" for every person's sins.

Why did He live? To show us what God is like, and how God wants us to live.

Remember last time we talked about Jesus dying and going back to heaven. Was that the end of the story? What's missing? How will people KNOW about what Jesus did?

READ ACTS 1:2-11.

The disciples stayed in Jerusalem waiting for SOMETHING -- they didn't know what it would be. On Pentecost, they were together in a room when amazing things happened. The room was filled with the sound of a wild wind as the Holy Spirit came to them. The Apostles had flames of fire appear above their heads to show the Holy Spirit was with them, and they began to speak about Jesus in languages they didn't even know! More important, the Holy Spirit let them finally understand all about why Jesus came to earth and why He had to die, so they could tell everyone else the Plan. Who would they tell first?

A crowd of people from all around the world was in Jerusalem for the Pentecost feast. They heard weird sounds coming from the room where the Apostles were, and then a crowd gathered around them when they came out on the street all excited about Jesus. Soon a huge crowd was there, and Peter began to tell them about Jesus and how His death was part of God's plan, and that they had killed the prophets and now the Son of God when they told Pilate to crucify Him. What do you think people did then? Some of them didn't believe, and they left. Some began to plot to get rid of the Apostles! But 3,000 people suddenly realized Jesus was really God, and they needed to become His followers - so there were 3,000 baptisms that very day -- and soon there were 5,000 and then 8,000! People were excited and the new church grew and grew.

People came to see the miracles that the Apostles could do, and to hear the message they told. But people paid attention to the disciples for another reason -- and we should remember this - People in Jerusalem noticed that these new followers were DIFFERENT than they had been before. Now they were NICE. They took care of each other. They didn't get sad or even angry any more. They had hope and they loved each other. In Roman times, that was hard to do, because regular people could be made into slaves, could be killed for nothing, didn't have good medical care so if they got sick it was just too bad. And these people still were full of joy. That made other people want to know "what's up with them"???

How do we act around other people at school, at the store, or in our neighborhood? Would people think that about us, or do we act just like all the other folks around us who don't know about Jesus? That's something we need to remember...

The new Christians met together a lot, because they were so excited about Jesus. They got the Apostles to tell them everything about Him. They sang. They prayed. They gave money to help each other out, because many of them were just traveling in Jerusalem for the big feast and really lived somewhere else. They also had a ceremony where they broke bread and shared wine with each other... just like Jesus and the apostles did before He died. Do we do any of those things? We listen to God's word. We sing. We pray. We give. We share communion. The baby church was getting big and the baby Christians were getting strong in their faith. They knew God was with them.

Work thru the Acts coloring book, filling in the blanks.

Choose one child to be "emperor". Talk about how the Roman Empire controlled all the known world in Jesus' day and people could go anywhere in the empire at peace. Travel was very common. Pretend that a terrible plague is taking over the earth and everyone will die. The emperor has found a cure! He will give it to anyone who will take it. How will he get the word out to people all over the empire so they'll know and take the cure?? Let kids come up with ideas - no TV, newspapers, radio, helicopters, etc. In Roman times there was a pretty efficient system of mail and there were soldiers all over the empire who kept in contact with the emperor. So he could use them. Was that going to be God's plan?

How do you suppose the creator of the whole world decided to get His message of salvation to all the people? Jesus came at a time when there were none of the ways we send messages. God decided to let people tell people. He had 12 special people (remember what they were called? the apostles) and about a hundred or so really devoted followers. How will that handful of people tell the whole world anything? Does this sound like a good plan?

Draw on the board one circle. Next row draw two circles and lines to them. Next row draw four circles from the two with lines. Then draw eight, sixteen and 32. Maybe this WILL work...

The followers of Jesus were EXCITED! They were anxious to tell people what happened, and that the death of Jesus wasn't a sad thing, but the beginning of His church and the fulfillment of God's Promise. Do you think they can spread the message to everyone?

Who wouldn't be happy about this? Some people just thought the christians were strange. But some people, like the priests who would lose their place of importance, wanted to get rid of them. Soon they made up charges against one follower named Stephen and stoned him to death. There were threats against all the christians, and it became dangerous to be one. What would they do? Hide? Fight back? Does that sound like them? Remember most of them came from somewhere else - so now they took off in all directions to go home!

READ ACTS 8:1-3.

Did they go home empty-handed? No, they had the wonderful message to tell! Did they go home being the same people as when they left? No, they had changed and now they were happy and full of hope. So people everywhere around the world took notice and people everywhere around the world started becoming christians, too. They were so good at spreading God's message that Paul wrote an amazing thing just a few years later:

READ COLOSSIANS 1:23.

Maybe God DID know what He was doing sending His message out with ordinary people!

Another way the message got around was with missionaries. The most famous was Paul. He started out as a leader trying to kill christians! But Jesus appeared to him on his way to grab up some more christians and told Paul he wanted him to become a follower himself! Paul became one of the strongest christians we know about, and suffered a lot of things because he taught people about Jesus. Paul and other missionaries started churches in big and little towns all around Asia, Greece, even to Spain. There is even a church in Africa today that was started by a man who had gone to Jerusalem and was taught the gospel by Philip while they were riding along in a chariot a few years after Jesus died.

Missions are important. We support people who work in missions. Emmanuel Osei in Africa has taught the gospel to about a hundred people, and some of them are teaching people in other towns now. The Good News Medical Clinic in the Philippines teaches people about Jesus while they wait to see a doctor, and the church that the christians go to has gotten so full of new people that they need to add on!

What is the message that the Apostles told, and that has been taught ever since? What is God's plan for people? How do people get to be with Him? People sin - every person does. The only perfect being is God, and He can't have sin around Him. To get rid of the sin in His people, God sent His Son Jesus to "pay for" everyone's sins by dying as a sacrifice. This is a free offer, like the free offer coupons you get in the newspaper sometimes. How do you get that free pizza or whatever? You have to take in the coupon, and claim the gift, don't you? God has a similar plan. The gift of eternal life with Him in heaven is there for everyone to have, if they believe it, want it and take it. First you have to hear about the gift. Someone tells you the bible story. Then you have to believe it. Once you believe God's plan, would you go on sinning and doing whatever you want to? No, you'll want to stay away from bad things and try to please God because you are so thankful for this chance to be with Him. What will you do if someone asks you if you believe in Jesus? Tell them! That's part of the plan too. God has one part of the plan where we have to do something. Do you know what that is? He asks us to be baptized - to be put under water to wash away our sins. Once we do that, can we go back to doing whatever we want? The bible tells us part of being a christian is trying to be like Jesus all the time. READ 1 COR. 15:58.

What did God give us to help us get to heaven?

He gave us HIS SON, to show us what He is like and what He wants us to be like

He gave us HIS WORD, to tell us everything we need to know to get home to Him  
He gave us EACH OTHER, so we can teach, encourage, help and love each other

Do color books.

## Lesson 19: Revelation and Heaven

Revelation was written last of all the Bible books. The Apostle John, one of Jesus' best friends, was the last Apostle left alive after the others were killed. He was sent to a prison island until he died. He had a vision from God and wrote it down in the book of Revelation. God was showing us about how good and evil are always fighting, ever since time began. There's a big battle in Revelation, and for awhile it looks like the devil will win! But one of the main points about this book is that God is always in control and God has already won the fight between good and evil. We just have to stick with God and His plan and then we'll be rewarded. Who knows what reward God has planned for the people who stay faithful to Him?

Heaven! Anyone you know been there who can come tell us about it? Got any good postcards? Videos? Not even a kid's pencil drawing? How about just a cassette of the angels singing? No one's got that? How do we know we even want to go there? How can we know what it's like? Well, John was able to see it in his vision and he told us a lot about heaven. And Jesus gave little hints about it too. Let's do some digging and see what we can find out about this place....

do cloud pictures....

Last Class: Review

Let kids tell the story of the Bible using the timeline in the room. Have them take turns around the table.

Tell the story using the time machine poster.

Use the bookmarker storyteller and have them tell the story.

Each time accentuate the 3 "stars" - the problem, the promise and God keeps His promise (Adam & Eve bring sin, God promises Abraham that He'll send a Savior, Jesus dies for us)

Make Bible Bowl teams: Let them pick names for their teams. Make a poster for their team.

Cece, Brett, Maura

Josh, Patrick, visitor

Cody, Emily

Do a few practice Bible Bowl questions in their teams, using the timeclock and bell.

Go over their passports and issue last stickers. Final announcement of those who qualified for the trip will be at the lunch.

(take table & chairs out of His kids room).

LUNCH: cook pizza, eat outside on picnic tables.

While the lunch is cooking, have the whole group divide into three teams, evenly spaced in ages and with one of the His kids teams part of each group. Have the His kids work with the group to sort the yellow cards in order. Prize:

Line up for lunch in the order that the groups finished.

Clean up from lunch.

set up Bible Bowl. Kids at three tables. Hang team poster on table.

Judges and audience circled around kids. Timekeeper has an assistant to do the bell.

Scorekeeper has paper to keep score - 1 point for each right answer.

Teams take turns answering questions. Each team gets one question in the round. If they get it right, they score, if not they don't. Give prizes for each group - first place picks first among prizes. Award prizes to any other kids in audience.

After Bible Bowl, have group come in for awards. Kids get a folder for all their work, and parents can help them take it all down. When that's done, have His kids go up on stage. Have them turn in their passports and give them a ticket for the trip in exchange (we'll need the passports for the Canada trip) Take picture of the group!

### **BIBLE BOWL QUESTIONS and ANSWERS:**

These will be the questions for our Bible Bowl on June 2nd. You will be part of a team to answer the questions and everyone will get a prize. Bring your family and brothers and sisters to help with the Bible Bowl. Practice these with your family in the next two weeks and you'll be ready!!

What time was it when God started living? *God was there before there was even time.*

Who made the universe? And how? *God made the universe by saying "let there be..." for everything, and it was there.*

Who were the first two people? *Adam and Eve*

What did their sin do? *Made a wall between God and people.*

What made God destroy the world with a flood? *People were sinning all the time*

Who was saved from the flood? *1) Noah 2) Noah's family 3) some of all animals 4) all of the answers*

What were the three promises God made to Abraham? *His family would be as many as the stars, they would get the Promised Land, and the Savior would come in his family*

The Bible tells us Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son because he had faith in God. *(T,F)*

Who was sold by his brothers to be a slave in Egypt? *Joseph*

How did God use Joseph to save the Israelites? *1) He was able to kill the giant 2) He was in charge of saving food for the famine 3) He put them on a boat when there was a flood*

Who did God send to rescue the Israelites from the Pharaoh in Egypt? *Moses*

Why did the Israelites have to wander? Where did Moses take them? For how long? *They didn't trust God when they were told to go take the Promised Land so they wandered through the desert, for 40 years*

What did God give Moses from on top of the mountain? *1) the 10 Commandments 2) the golden calf 3) the few suggestions*

What did the 10 Commandments tell people? *They told people what God wanted them to do*

Who led the Israelites to take over the Promised Land? *Joshua led them*

What weapon did God tell them to use to knock down the walls of Jericho? *1) tanks 2) battering rams 3) trumpets*

How many little countries did they divide the Promised Land into? *12, one for each tribe*

What people did God send when the Israelites forgot about obeying Him? *1) moms & dads 2) Judges 3) Romans*

Which of these was NOT one of the Judges of Israel? *1) strong Samson, 2) Herod 3) Gideon who tested God with a fleece*

The people wanted something their neighbors had - what was it? *A king*

Who were the first three kings? *Saul, David, Solomon*

David was well-known for his success in battle. Who was his best-known opponent? *Goliath*

Solomon built something that we remember him for. What was it? *The Temple in Jerusalem*

10 Tribes made their own country after Solomon died. What was their biggest sin? *worshipping idols.*

What did God let happen to the 10 Tribes? *they were taken as slaves to Assyria*

What kind of Kings ruled over the 10 Tribes? *1) They were all good 2) They were all evil.*

Ahab and Jezebel were the most evil King & Queen from the 10 Tribes. (T,F)

God sent special men to tell the people what He wanted them to do? What are they called? *the Prophets*

Elijah challenged 500 Prophets of Baal. What did God do to the sacrifice Elijah set up? *God burned up his sacrifice and the water and the dirt!*

What happened to Elijah at the end of his life? *he was taken to heaven in a very strange vehicle. What was it? horses and chariot of fire*

2 Tribes stayed around Jerusalem and tried to follow God. Josiah was one of their good Kings who found something and read it to the people. What was it? *the Books of the Law from Moses*

Hezekiah was a good King who went in to the temple when he got a letter from an enemy. Why did he do that?  
1) *to ask God to tell him what to do* 2) *to give it to the priests to burn up* 3) *to slip under the curtain so no one would see it.*

Isaiah was a Prophet who told people a wonderful message. What was it? *He told about the Savior that would come.*

Because Daniel would not stop praying to God when the King ordered him to, God saved him from something - What? 1) *falling into a pit* 2) *a fiery furnace* 3) *lions who were supposed to eat him.*

Daniel's friends Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego wouldn't worship a giant gold statue. What did the King do?  
*Had them thrown in a fiery furnace.*

King Cyrus of the Persian Empire let the people go back to Jerusalem to do something special. What? *rebuild the city and Temple so they could worship God*

Are there any stories from the 400 years after the people rebuilt the Temple until Jesus' birth? *No*

There were lots of prophecies about the Savior that was coming. Did Jesus match all of them? *Yes*

Why did Jesus do so many miracles? *So people would believe that He really was God, like He said*

Most people didn't believe Jesus was the Savior they were waiting for. They wanted a powerful King on earth. (T,F)

What was the reason He lived among us as a man? *to show us how God wanted us to live*

Why did Jesus die? 1) *to pay for our sins*, 2) *take away the wall between us and God*, and 3) *to fulfill the Promise God had made to Abraham* 4) *all of these answers.*

What amazing thing happened at the Temple when Jesus died? *the curtain was torn from top to bottom*

What three things did the Holy Spirit do in the room when He came to the Apostles after Jesus went back to heaven? *sound of mighty wind, flames above their heads, speaking in tongues*

What did many of the people do when they heard Peter preach the first sermon about Jesus? *they were baptized.*  
Bonus: how many were baptized that day? *3,000*

What did the believers do when the Jews started persecuting (killing) them for being Christians? 1) *they hid* 2) *they went all over the world teaching about Jesus* 3) *they fought back*

What did Paul go around the world and do after Jesus called him to be an Apostle? *He started churches all over*

Name five things all the first Christians did in worship that we do today. *listen to God's word, sing, pray, communion, give to help others*

Does John tell us in Revelation who won the big battle between God and Satan? Who? *yes, God did*

What does God want us to do so we can be with Him in heaven? *be baptized and try to live like His Son Jesus did*

What is your favorite thing about heaven *(every answer will be different)*