

Lesson 106

God Judges Judah

Judah is captured by King Nebuchadnezzar.

Studying God's Word

Lesson Time

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Have the students assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs.

Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Lesson Flip Chart, and any items you prepared for this lesson.

Prayer

This prayer time is designed to help the students begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to encourage them to pray.

We start our Bible lesson with prayer. Turn to the Flip Chart Prayer Page. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there.

Today let's say prayers of confession and tell God we're sorry.

I'll start. Dear God, I'm sorry for . . . (insert personal prayer here).

Pass a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—around the circle, giving all the students an opportunity to pray, or choose a volunteer to stand beside you and pray.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away, and we'll answer our Bible Truth questions.

I love you prayers—Adoration
I'm sorry prayers—Confession
I'm thankful prayers—Thanksgiving
Please prayers—Supplication

Bible Truths

These four questions will be repeated each week to help the students learn foundational truths.

Because God is just, what must he do when we sin? He must punish us.

What word means God may not punish us as we deserve? Mercy.

Can we trust God all the time? Yes, because he is faithful.

What word means God knows all things? Omniscient.

Bible Pass Around

Before Bible Pass Around, place a sticky note in your Bible to mark the first passage to be read.

Today, we are going to look into God's Word, the Bible. Hold up Bible. God's Word is true, and we can trust what it says. But where should we look? One of you will help me with that. We're going to play Bible Pass Around. I want everyone to count with me up to the number _____. (You may also choose to recite the books of the Bible, sing one of the lesson songs, or recite the memory verse as you do this activity.) As we say each number (or word), you will carefully pass the Bible to the person beside you. Remember, we don't want to drop it or tear it. Then when we get to the last number (or word), whoever has the Bible will hold on to it until we are ready for it in our lesson. Hand the Bible to the first student. Here we go!

Pre-K Lesson

K-1st Lesson

Pre-K Lesson

Introduction

Refer to Lesson 104 Flip Chart. We learned about a good king named Josiah, who wanted to serve God with his whole heart. When he heard God's words from the Book of the Law, Josiah led the people of Judah to turn from sin and to follow God.

Sadly, the kings after Josiah were wicked, and they led the people to worship false gods again. God sent prophets to tell the people to turn back to him.

Refer to Lesson 105 Flip Chart. Which prophet did we learn about in the last lesson? Jeremiah.

When God sent Jeremiah to the potter's house, he saw the potter making something out of clay.

What did the potter do with his clay that got messed up? He squashed it and started over.

God said the people of Judah were like the messed-up clay that the potter squashed and remade into something new. They needed to turn away from their sin and back to God, or God would have to send a disaster to destroy them. But the people didn't listen to Jeremiah. They punished him instead.

We talked about how the potter worked with soft, squishy clay. But today, we're going to talk about something else that's soft and squishy—only it was a real problem for Jeremiah.

How many of you have ever been stuck in the mud? Show of hands.

What is mud? Dirt and water mixed together.

What kinds of things could get stuck in the mud? Allow answers. Rocks, toys, real cars, people.

Show the bowl of pudding. In this bowl, I have some “mud”—pudding. Set the bowl on a low table. Stir the pudding with the large spoon. I’m going to give each of you a cookie to drop in. Reach up as high as you can over the bowl and let the cookie drop. Let’s see if the cookies sink into the pudding like mud. Have students wipe hands or use sanitizer then take turns dropping a sandwich cookie into the bowl from as high as they can reach. You may want them to stand on a step stool for some added height. After each student has had a turn, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside then continue with the lesson.

Use the pudding/cookie mixture, bowls, and spoons for a snack after the lesson or do the Muddy Cistern Snack Hands-On Activity.

Is the pudding like mud; did our cookies sink? How is mud different? Allow discussion.

Real mud can be a big problem. If it’s deep, things can sink down in and get stuck, and it can be very hard to get them out. Let’s

find out why the mud was such a problem for Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's Troubles

After the good King Josiah died, evil kings ruled for many years. During that time, God finally brought an enemy king to attack the kingdom of Judah because of their sin. This was Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. He captured two of Judah's bad kings and took them away. Then he chose Zedekiah to be the last king of Judah—as long as he obeyed King Nebuchadnezzar.

Zedekiah did many evil things, and he would not listen to Jeremiah's messages from God. The Bible tells us that the priests and the people turned away from God, too. They even brought their idol worship into God's holy temple!

Jeremiah told them that King Nebuchadnezzar would bring his army to attack the city of Jerusalem and burn it down. The people didn't like hearing that the Babylonians were going to destroy them. But instead of listening and turning back to God, they punished Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 38:6

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's look in the book of Jeremiah to find out what they did. Have the student with the Bible bring it up

and turn to the sticky note. Listen to Jeremiah 38:6. Read the verse.

Where did they cast Jeremiah? Into a what?
Into a cistern.

A cistern was a deep pit dug into the ground to catch water when it rained.

Was there water in this cistern? Did Jeremiah drown? No, there was no water. What was in the cistern? Only mud.

They let Jeremiah down with ropes into the deep pit—down, down, down. There was no water in the cistern, but there was a lot of mud at the bottom. Poor Jeremiah sank down in the mud. He was stuck!

What do you think would happen to Jeremiah now? Allow guesses.

King Zedekiah had a servant named Ebed-melech. When he heard that Jeremiah had been thrown into the cistern, he went to see the king.

“O, King,” he said. “It isn’t right to leave Jeremiah in the cistern. He has nothing to eat down there and will die of hunger.”

The king listened to him and said, “Take 30 of my men and go lift Jeremiah out of the cistern before he dies.”

Whew! God used Ebed-melech to save Jeremiah's life. He grabbed some ropes and old clothes and rags and went to the cistern where Jeremiah was waiting at the bottom, sunk down in the mud. "Jeremiah!" he shouted into the pit. "Put these rags under your arms and wrap the rope around you."

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Jeremiah did what Ebed-melech told him. Soon he could feel himself being pulled by the 30 men up at the top of the hole. I'm sure Jeremiah was glad to get out of there!

God's Judgment

So, Jeremiah was saved from the muddy pit, but no one could escape from the Babylonians. Jeremiah had warned the people that God would send a disaster to punish them for their sin. Now it was finally happening.

King Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army attacked the city of Jerusalem. The Bible tells us that they killed many people—young and old, men and women. They broke into the temple of the Lord and stole all the beautiful treasures inside. Then they set fire to the temple and the king's palace! Finally, many of the people who didn't die were taken away to Babylon—far from their homes in Judah.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. This was a terrible punishment! The Babylonian army was cruel.

Remember, God is just, so he must punish sin. God was using the Babylonians to punish the people of Judah because they would not turn from their sins and come back to God.

Jeremiah 39:12

What about Jeremiah? He was in the city when this all happened! Was he killed or taken away? Listen to Jeremiah 39:12 for the answer. Read the verse.

What did King Nebuchadnezzar tell his captain to do with Jeremiah? Look after him well and do him no harm.

Wow! God used King Nebuchadnezzar to protect Jeremiah so he would live through the judgment of Judah. Even though the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, God made sure Jeremiah was safe.

Later, Jeremiah even got to choose if he wanted to go with his people to Babylon or stay with those left in Judah. A few of the poorest people were left behind to farm the land for the Babylonians. Jeremiah decided to stay with them, and he faithfully spoke God's messages to the end of his life.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game below.

K-1st Lesson

Introduction

Refer to Lesson 104 Flip Chart. We learned about a good king named Josiah, who wanted to serve God with his whole heart. When he heard God's words from the Book of the Law, Josiah led the people of Judah to turn from sin and follow God. Sadly, the kings after Josiah were wicked. They led the people away from the Lord again to worship false gods.

Refer to Lesson 105 Flip Chart. God sent prophets to tell the people to turn back to him. We learned about one of these prophets in the last lesson. What was his name? Jeremiah.

When God sent Jeremiah to the potter's house, what was the potter doing? He was making a vessel out of clay.

What did the potter do with the clay that got messed up? He squashed it and started over.

God said the people of Judah were like the messed-up clay that the potter squashed and remade into something new. They needed to turn away from their sin and turn back to God, so God would not have to send a disaster to destroy them. But the people didn't listen to Jeremiah's message. They punished him instead.

We talked about how the potter worked with clay. It's soft and squishy, and you can make things out of it. But today, we're going to talk about something else that's

soft and squishy—only it was a real problem for Jeremiah.

How many of you have ever been stuck in the mud? Show of hands.

What is mud? Dirt and water mixed together.

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Jeremiah's Troubles

Remember how evil kings ruled for many years after the good King Josiah? It was during that time when God finally brought an enemy king named Nebuchadnezzar to attack the kingdom of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. He captured two of Judah's bad kings and took them away. Then he chose Zedekiah to be the last king—as long as he obeyed King Nebuchadnezzar.

The Bible tells us that King Zedekiah did many evil things, and the priests and the people turned away from God, too. They even brought their idol worship into God's holy temple! But that's not all; Zedekiah also turned against King Nebuchadnezzar and thought he could get away with disobeying the Babylonian king. Jeremiah warned the people that the Babylonians would attack the city of Jerusalem and burn it down.

The people didn't like hearing that they were going to be destroyed. But instead of listening to Jeremiah's message and turning back to God, they were mean to Jeremiah.

Once when Jeremiah tried to go visit his family outside the city, the guard at the gate stopped him and said, "Hey! You're going to join the Babylonians."

"No, I'm not," Jeremiah replied. "That's a lie! I'm not joining the enemy."

But the guard grabbed Jeremiah and took him to the officials. They were so angry with Jeremiah that they beat him and put him in prison. After many days, King Zedekiah had Jeremiah brought out of prison. But later when Jeremiah spoke about God's warnings again, the king told his officials they could punish Jeremiah however they wanted to.

Jeremiah 38:6

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Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. They let Jeremiah down with ropes into the deep pit. Poor Jeremiah sank down in the mud. He was stuck!

What do you think would happen to Jeremiah now? Allow guesses.

King Zedekiah had a servant named Ebed-melech, who was from the country of Ethiopia. When Ebed-melech heard that Jeremiah had been thrown into the cistern, he went to see the king.

Jeremiah 38:9–10

Let's find out if he helped Jeremiah. Listen to Jeremiah 38:9. Read the verse.

What did Ebed-melech tell the king would happen to Jeremiah? He would die of what? He would die of hunger.

At this time, the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the Babylonian army. They had come to capture the city just as Jeremiah said. No one inside the city walls could get food or clothes or extra water. And now all the bread was gone.

Do you think King Zedekiah did anything to help Jeremiah? Listen to the next verse. Read verse 10.

The king did help. He gave his servant permission to rescue Jeremiah from the pit.

God used Ebed-melech to save Jeremiah's life!

Ebed-melech grabbed some ropes and old clothes and rags and hurried to the cistern where Jeremiah was waiting at the bottom, sunk down in the mud. "Jeremiah!" he shouted into the pit. "Put these rags under your arms and wrap the rope around you."

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Jeremiah did what Ebed-melech told him. Soon he could feel himself being pulled and tugged by the 30 men outside of the hole. Up, up he went—all the way to the top. I'm sure Jeremiah was glad to get out of there!

God's Judgment

So, Jeremiah was saved from the muddy pit, but the Babylonians still had the city surrounded. There would be no escape from God's judgment!

King Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army attacked the city of Jerusalem. The Bible tells us that they came in and killed many people— young and old.

They broke into the temple of the Lord and stole all the beautiful treasures. Then they set fire to the temple and the king's palace! And they broke down the wall around the city that used to keep the people safe. Finally, many of the people who

didn't die were taken away—far from their homes—to Babylon.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. This was a terrible punishment! The Babylonian army was cruel. Remember, God is just, so he must punish sin. God was using the Babylonians to punish the people of Judah because they would not turn from their sins and come back to God.

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Continue with the Lesson Review Game.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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