



Lesson 12 *Family Matters (Ruth and Naomi)*

Teacher’s notes:

Ruth is a book that fits into a general area on the time-line but its depth lies in its universal message. Ruth is a book that everyone can relate to on some level. It is a story of family and life’s journey. The story includes loss, redemption, and hope. The story brings up issues of immigration, inclusively, generosity, genealogy, and more.

Today’s lesson focuses on the role and definition of family. Besides the genealogical importance of this book in the lineage of King David and Jesus, the example of family demonstrated by Naomi and Ruth is powerful. We live in a culture that acts as though “family” is a word with a firm definition. In reality, family may have different meanings to different people. Ruth and Naomi were not the average family in their day, and today can provide a context for us to explore what “family” means to us in our own context. Youth come from diverse backgrounds. Divorce rates and the mobility of our culture are just two of the issues that lead us to define “family” in a plethora of ways today.

Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah find themselves bound first by marriage (Ruth and Orpah had each married one of Naomi’s sons, who each had then died) and second by Ruth’s faithfulness (or stubbornness). When their husbands all die and Orpah follows Naomi’s direction to return to her own people but Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi, Ruth and Naomi are left with nothing but each other.

The two travel to Bethlehem, Naomi’s former home, in hopes of finding charity within the larger family and community. At the time Naomi had left home, she was married to a husband and had two sons. She knew the stability and protection of a strong family in a culture that demanded just that. Returning home with no husband or sons but only a foreign woman, Naomi’s fortunes seem to have completely changed.

Ruth follows Naomi’s directions and finds herself gleaning in the fields of Boaz. It was tradition for widows to be allowed to follow the harvesters and pick up anything they left behind. Boaz is part of Naomi’s late husband’s family and turns out to be very generous, telling his workers to leave behind extra for Ruth to pick up.

The connection between Ruth and Boaz becomes something more after they spend a night together on the threshing room floor. The text seems unclear as to exactly what happened, but in the original Hebrew it would have been much clearer. Ruth has followed Naomi’s instructions to go to the threshing room floor where Boaz is sleeping and to lie at his feet. The expression for “feet” used in this way usually refers to a male’s genitals. With this information, Ruth’s being at Boaz’s “feet” takes on a new meaning, as does Boaz’s willingness to take Ruth as wife when he wakes up and finds her there.

In the end, Ruth reconnects Naomi with the family that protected, loved, and defined her before she left Bethlehem years before. Together they have shown the power of family and covenant. Ruth and Naomi’s story of family and love needs no context or timeline to be significant—and is able to speak to each new generation of reader.

Scripture: Ruth 1: 1-19
 Ruth 2: 1-2, 8-12
 Ruth 3: 6-11
 Ruth 4: 13-17



- Supplies:**
- Note cards and tape or nametags and markers
 - White paper and markers
 - Digital Camera (optional)

- Preparation:**
- Read the book of Ruth. (not very long)
 - Have nametags or note cards ready when class members arrive.
 - ***Look through the activities as you think very carefully about the homes your class members come from. What adaptations will you need to make so as not to exclude or embarrass any in your group who are not privileged to have a biological family or traditional home to live in? For such situations you might offer the whole class the choice of drawing/considering their ideal image of the family table that they see themselves sitting at 30 years in the future.***

Activity	Instructions	Time
Name Game	As each member of the class comes in, give them a name tag or note card and ask them to put their name on it, large enough to read. Below their own name ask them to write the name of a parent or other adult family member. They can put a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle. Those who do not live with a relative could write the name of a guardian, mentor, or even favorite teacher. The two names should be the same size, with their name on top of the family member's name. Inform them that they will be known, at least for today, as their name, the word "of," and their family member's name. For example, a youth whose name is John and writes down Martha as the name of a family member would be called, "John of Martha" for the day. Explain that our story today comes from a time when people were known by their family or clan more than they were as individuals. This was especially true for women.	7 min.
	<p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been introduced as "_____ 's kid" ? • How does it feel to be recognized by family or group rather than self? • Are there times you want to be known as part of your family or group? • Are there times you don't want to be known by your family or group? • Has your family ever been introduced as "_____ 's family?" (insert name of a class member in blank). • What do you think it is like for children of celebrities? 	
Family Table	Give everyone a piece of white paper and put out some markers. Ask everyone to think about their "family table" at special dinners (Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.). (If they do not have the privilege of such dinners, ask them to draw what they imagine would be the ideal 'family' table.) Ask them to draw a shape to represent the table, then put marks (pictures, names, symbols, etc.) around the table to represent the people who sit there. Encourage them to choose colors appropriate	8 min.



to each person. Remind them to pay attention to who sits next to each other. When all are done, invite them to share their tales. (*remember, this may be emotional for those who have lost family members in recent times.*)

Ask:

- Was this activity easy or difficult? Why?
- How is this table different from your regular family table?
- Do members of a family behave differently at the special table?
- How would eating with this group compare to eating with friends?
- Who do you eat more meals with: family or friends?
- Who has more influence on your life?
- Who is more like you: family or friends?

Bible Study

Read Ruth 1: 1-19

8 min.

Ask:

- Can you imagine leaving most of your family to follow another family member?
- I wonder what it was that made Ruth want to stay with Naomi?
- I wonder what Ruth’s other family in Moab was like?
- I wonder what else Ruth left behind? Friends, memories?
- I wonder how Orpah felt about going back to her family?
- I wonder what it felt like for Naomi to go home again?
- I wonder what it felt like for Ruth, entering a new place?
- Have you ever felt people looking at you like they may have looked at Ruth and Naomi in Bethlehem?

Family Photo

Pull out an old church directory (a few if available).

9 min.

Before passing them around, invite the class to think about how they would pose their family (or ideal family) to get a realistic picture. Pass directories around and look at all of the smiling faces. Invite the group to think up stories of what could have really been going on behind the camera as some of the directory photos were being taken. This can be fun (but remind the class to remain respectful).

Invite the class to take turns posing their family’s “real family photo.” They can use other members of the class to pose as family members. They are welcome to play themselves in the photo or have someone else fill in for them. They should place people next to the person they are always next to. They should have people make the faces they always make. When they have everything the way they want it, they yell, “Cheese!” (You may take digital pictures if you want.)



**Bible
Study 2**

Read Ruth 2: 1-2, 8-12

10 min.

Ask:

- Can you think of a time that an extended family member was a blessing to you?
- How far out of their way should family go for each other?
- How close a relative do you have to be to have expectations of each other as family?

Read Ruth 3: 6-11 (*If class is 6-8th grade, skip this section*)

Ask:

- What do you think is happening in this scene?
- What questions do you have about this part of the story?

Explain:

“Feet” did not always mean “feet” in Ruth’s day.

Ruth was uncovering more that it first appears.

In Ruth’s day, sex and marriage were connected

(not that they aren’t today)!

In some ways, Ruth was proposing to Boaz; in other ways, she was manipulating him. Boaz says this act of devotion to Naomi’s family line is her greatest.

Ask:

- How do you feel about the interaction of Ruth and Boaz?
- If the “slang” were written explicitly, how do you think the story would be received today?

Read Ruth 4: 13-17

Ask:

- I wonder what this story tells us about the family that would grow out of it? (David and Jesus)
- What teachings of Jesus do we hear in Ruth?
- What lessons about family does Ruth teach us?
- Our church is often described as a family. Is that good or bad?
- What lessons about church can studying Ruth teach us?
- Are there people at church who have been like family to you?
- Have you ever thought about how the younger children at church look up to you? How so?

Reflection

This is a review exercise that may be done as a group, in pairs, or as individuals. That is up to the teacher, and should be done based on the needs of the class. Family issues can be difficult for some youth. Do not put anyone in a position where they will feel ashamed or attacked. Answers may be written on a piece of paper, shared with another person, or simply thought about in their head.

7 min.



1. Invite everyone to look at their Family Table pictures.

Ask:

- How is this picture like the communion table?
- How is this picture different from the communion table?
- What could God be calling you to do at either table?

2. Invite everyone to think about their Family Photo.

Ask:

- How accurate is this picture?
- How would other family members pose this picture?
- How could changing your place in the picture change the whole picture?

3. Invite everyone to pick one character from Ruth.

Ask:

- How is that person like you?
- How is that person different from you?
- What do you wish you knew about that person?
- What lesson can they teach you about your family?
- What lesson can they teach you about your church?
- What might this character inspire you to do differently?

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. Ask them to give thanks for a member of their “family,” however they define it. Each person should squeeze the hand of the person next to them to let them know they are done with their turn in the prayer. The last person ends the prayer by saying, “All God’s Family said...” and the group responding with “Amen.”

2 min.



Lesson 13

Samuel: Anointer

Teacher's Notes:

1 Samuel and *2 Samuel* were historically one book. They were divided when translated because scrolls in that time were only so long. The division of the books has been maintained over time, even though Samuel does not appear as a character in *2 Samuel*.

The story takes us through the transition from scattered tribes with a common history to a monarchy that is firmly established. By the end of these two books, David stands as a central figure in the biblical story. Along the way we learn the stories of Samuel's birth and dedication, the people's desire for a king, the rise of Saul as the first King, David's adventures, and friendship of David and Saul's son Jonathan.

In today's lesson, the class will learn about Samuel's birth, his calling, and his duties in appointing a king. The story suggests that God is not happy about the people's desire for a king and that they have not understood God as their king. God gives in to the people's cries and appoints Samuel to appoint Saul as King. We hear about Saul's less than impressive rise to royalty. Students will be invited to think about their own birth, God's call on their life, and how they hope to respond to the ways God will call them in life.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1: 1-28
 1 Samuel 3: 1-21
 1 Samuel 8: 1-9
 1 Samuel 9: 1-6; 27 – 10:1
 1 Samuel 10: 17 – 24

Supplies:

- Oil (cooking)
- Chalice or other small but nice looking container
- Note pads and pens
- Interview questions (provided in lesson)

Preparation:

- Pour a small amount of oil into a chalice or other container.
- Have enough note pads and pens for a few groups / pairs
- Put interview questions on note cards for each group.
- Think about your own birth story. Can you tell it? If applicable, think about the birth of your children. Can you tell the story?
- Think about God's call in your life and your sense of purpose in life.

Note: You may want to consider how to talk about birth stories in your individual class context, perhaps even sending out advance notice telling parents/guardians that a part of the upcoming lesson plan involves talking about birth stories. This would give the family the advance option of discussing birth stories within their own context, but also to raise any issues with you before the lesson. You also should consider talking with the senior minister (unless that is you!) for any precautions or guidelines within your particular church that it would help you to know. Consider that some of your class members may have been conceived/ born under less than happy circumstances, may be pregnant themselves, or may have parented a child or had an abortion or miscarriage. Some may live in non-traditional homes or may be adopted (and may or may not know about being adopted).

Sharing private information with the class may not be what a young person (or parent(s)) want done before the class. This also might be something they might later regret, as individuals can be cruel when armed with such ‘gossip-tempting’ information. Be considerate, never going somewhere with a lesson that might hurt or embarrass a class member for the simple sake of sticking to a lesson format.

If you need to take a less personal approach with this lesson, either omit the ‘Happy Birthday to you!’ questions, or redirect them to stories you bring in from a lighter side, such as a variety of interesting or unusual stories about the diverse way lives come into being in this world. This may include stories out of history, of farm animals or pets (which class members may know about and like to discuss), or the unusual, such as ‘pregnant’ male seahorses, or a female dog nursing orphan kittens).

Developmental age and maturity of your particular class should be considered. If needed, professional middle and high school teachers are usually a wealth of wisdom on this subject!

Activity	Instructions	Time
Happy Birthday To Sam!	<p>Read 1 Samuel 1: 1-28</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think it was like to be Hannah? • How do you think she felt about being pregnant? • How do you feel about her giving up her child? • What do you think this child’s life will be like? 	5 min.
Happy Birthday To You!	<p>Talk about the birth stories as you have decided (see Note , previous page). Invite them to think about any interesting birth story they have heard, which could include their own, that of someone they know or read about, or even of the birth of a pet or animal they saw or heard about.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is significant about you being born and being here in class? (Work at the idea that every person is valued before God, and each and every person is a child of God with equal potential to be called to serve God.) 	7 min.
Get a Job!	<p>Read 1 Samuel 3: 1-21</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you had any experience to compare to Samuel’s night? • How have you felt called by God to do something? • What jobs does God call people to do and which ones just get left to chance? • How do people know what their “calling” is? 	25 min.

Divide the class into small groups or pairs and give them the following questions to use in interviews. Send them out to interview two people in the church. You can raise or lower the number based on time and the number of groups you are sending out. They do not need to interrupt other classes or musicians practicing before worship. There are usually



plenty of people around the building. Remind them that God calls people of all ages! Give them a set time to be back in the classroom. **Remind them to be respectful, not push a person who does not want to share information, and to thank each person they interview for their help.** When they return, invite them to share some of their results.

Questions:

1. What activities or responsibilities are you involved with at church?
2. How did you know you should help with these?
3. How do you choose which jobs to do at the church?
4. How do you decide when to say “yes” and when to say “no” to serving?
5. Does God have a special calling for you in life? If so, would you be able to share any information with us about hearing this calling?
6. What advice could you give a young person trying to hear God’s call in their life?

Do Your Job!

Read 1 Samuel 8: 1-9, 7 min.
 1 Samuel 9: 1-6; 27 – 10:1
 1 Samuel 10: 17 – 24

Ask:

- How would you feel if Saul were suddenly your king?
- How do you think God felt at the end of the story?
- How would you feel if you were in Samuel’s place?
- How do you think Saul would have answered our interview questions?
- How would you hope to answer the interview questions if you were called to be king / queen?
- How would things have been different if Saul had told God “no.”
- I wonder if there are times we tell God “yes” or “no” without meaning to?

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. 5 min.
 As leader, stand in the middle of the circle.
 Have the chalice with oil in your hands.
 Ask each person to give thanks for the person next to them in the circle and pray that they might hear God’s call in their life. As each person is prayed for, dip your finger in the oil, blot your finger on the rim of the chalice to remove excess oil, then mark their forehead with the oil, anointing them for God’s calling in their life. Once everyone has prayed for the person next to them, say “God bless us all as we seek to commit our lives to your service. Amen.”

Follow – up: *You might want to consider letting the class type up their interviews as news stories and include them in the church’s newsletter, or even create their own newspaper to distribute about God’s callings to people in the church. This could become an ongoing project as the class interviews more and more people.*



Lesson 14 *Saul and David: The Royal Families*

Teacher’s Notes:

God didn’t seem to like the idea of Israel having a king in the first place, and Saul did nothing to make it seem to work. Then, David is given to the people as king and anointed, but not publicly. Saul still reigns, and David’s journey brings him into Saul’s service.

David first comes to Saul as a musician to calm Saul, who felt he had lost favor with God. David impresses Saul and stays on in Saul’s service. As Saul and his men are trying to figure out how to defeat Goliath, David is in the area, and finally convinces them to let him try—and is successful. As much as Saul appreciates David’s service, he is smart enough to see David’s strength, charm, and faith as a threat to his throne. Saul tries to make David part of his family by giving David his oldest daughter. But David is not interested in Saul’s oldest daughter and seems insecure about joining a royal family. David does not see himself as royalty. Later, Saul’s daughter Michal expresses her feelings for David. Partially due to the encouragement of other servants, David agrees to marry Michal.

Saul seems to think that bringing David into his family will hurt him in his battles with the Philistines. In reality, David continues to be successful in all he does, including battle with the Philistines. This makes Saul even angrier. Luckily for David, Saul’s son Jonathan has become David’s best friend. There is a special bond between these two men that is described in scripture in covenantal language. Jonathan saves David’s life on more than one occasion. The story of Samuel shows division coming at the death of Saul and his sons, including Jonathan. By this time, David has taken many wives, won many battles, and is well known throughout the kingdom.

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 16: 1, 11-13
 1 Samuel 16: 14 – 23
 1 Samuel 17: 1-9, 32 – 49
 1 Samuel 18: 1-16

Supplies: • Large note-cards and pens
 • Gift box or bag
 • Rocks
 • Small gift / prize

Preparation: • Look up the words “expectation,” and “entitlement” in a dictionary.
 • Get a small prize and put it in the box / bag.
 (cookies, small ball, book, coupon for a free hug... anything!)

- Have a small bucket in the middle of the room.
- Place the box / bag by the bucket till the game starts.
- Have enough rocks to play the opening game.



Activity	Instructions	Time
What's in The Box?	<p>Place a small bucket in the middle of the classroom.</p> <p>Give each student a few rocks (all get the same number). Have a gift box or bag, large enough to make them curious. Show the class the gift and explain that the person who puts the most rocks in the bucket from their seat will win the gift. Let each person take a turn tossing their rocks, with the class counting aloud the number that go in. If there is a tie, go to a second round, and so on.</p> <p>Once you have a winner, announce them as winner, but do not give them the gift yet--hold it until the end of class. Don't let them know what it is. Give no hints.</p>	<i>6 min.</i>
What's in It for Me?	<p>Give each member of the class a large note card.</p> <p>Invite the class to finish the following statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- If I study hard at school... 2- When I turn 16... 3- When I turn 18... 4- When I finish school, I will be... 5- The salary I will make for my full time career... 6- When I turn 50... 7- Next summer I will... 8- Because I am a good friend... <p>Invite the class to look back at their answers. Give them a chance to share if they are willing.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an “expectation” ? • What is an “entitlement” ? • What is the difference? • What things are you entitled to? • When have you expected something but acted entitled? • How do leaders often struggle with this issue? • How do your expectations affect your attitude? 	<i>8 min.</i>
Beyond Expectations	<p>Read 1 Samuel 16: 1, 11-13 1 Samuel 16: 14 – 23</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the youngest son, what was David entitled to? (Nothing really!) • Once anointed, how did David's entitlements change? • How did David's expectations change? • How do you think David's life changed? Why? • What are Saul's entitlements and expectations? • I wonder how Saul's perspective might have been seen before God? • What are the expectations of others for David and Saul? • If you could give one bit of advice to David or Saul, what would it be? 	<i>8 min.</i>



**Know
Fear**

Read 1 Samuel 17: 1-9, 32 – 49

8 min.

Ask:

- How did the actions of David and Saul compare to: their expectations? Expectations of others?
- When have you exceeded the expectations of others?
- I wonder what David expected after his victory?
- I wonder if David felt entitled to anything?
- What did David expect from his battle with Goliath?
- Why did David have those expectations?
- Why was David the one facing Goliath?
- What is the bravest thing you have ever done?
- What expectations did you have at the time?
- Have you ever won something?
- What expectations did you have at the time?
- What expectations do you have for our prize box?
- Did it take any courage to win the prize?
- What fears do you have about the prize?

**Know
Friends**

Ask:

10 min.

- What expectations do you have for your friends?
- What expectations do your friends have of you?
- When has a friend acted entitled to something from you?
- When have you acted entitled to something from a friend?
- What makes a good friend?
- What level of friends do you have?
- How does a person's family effect expectations for friendship?
- Have you ever felt entitled to someone's friendship?

Read 1 Samuel 18: 1-16

Ask:

- What do you think of David and Jonathan's friendship?
- What do you think of Saul's actions?
- How do you think Jonathan felt as a friend?
- What expectations do you think Jonathan felt as a son?
- What do you think Jonathan was entitled to?

**The
Box!**

Explain that class time is almost over. Get out the prize box. *8 min.*

Ask:

- What do you all think is in the box?
- What would an appropriate prize be?



Ask the winner:

- What do you expect?
- What would be a disappointment?
- Having waited this long, do you feel entitled to anything?

Present the prize and allow them to open it.

Ask:

- How do you feel about the prize?
- How do you respond to expectations being met?
- How do you respond with expectations fail to be met?
- What expectations do you have for God in your life?
- What is God entitled to?
- What are you entitled to from God?
- What have you acted like you are entitled to from God?

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands.

2 min.

Ask each member of the class to share an expectation they have for God and either give thanks for that expectation or ask forgiveness for having it if the expectation is not fair. The last person in the circle can close by saying, “Amen.”





Lesson 15 Even Kings Make Mistakes: David

Teacher’s Notes:

This lesson will explore David’s rise to power and how David ruled. Along with some of David’s success stories, the lesson looks at David’s adultery and the murder he committed to justify it. David is far from perfect as a person, yet is still called upon to lead God’s people. The lessons explores the joy of David’s new position as king, David’s indecision about the ark, and his infamous affair and marriage to Bathsheba (after having her husband killed). The class will be challenged to think about their own decision-making processes. Depending on the age of the students, many will not understand why David sends Uriah (you-RYE-uh) home from the army. The paternity of the baby would be in question if Uriah had not been home to visit his wife for a long period of time, and her visit to the king would be more suspicious, even without CNN and modern media.

David holds a unique place in Israel’s history and in the Christian story. David is lifted up as the greatest of the kings and is often the historical root of Jesus’ genealogy.

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 5: 1- 5
2 Samuel 6: 1 – 15
2 Samuel 11: 1 – 12:15

Supplies: Whiteboard or poster and markers

Preparation: Think about how you make decisions.
Think about how you have learned from mistakes.

Activity	Instructions	Time
Kingdom	Read 2 Samuel 5: 1 – 5	<i>3 min.</i>

Ask:

- What do you remember about David from past stories?
- How was the decision made to make David a king?
- How was that decision similar to decision-making in our church?

King-duh	Read 2 Samuel 6: 1 – 15	<i>8 min.</i>
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Ask:

- What do you know about “The Ark”?
- Why was David afraid of The Ark?
- What led him to bring The Ark into Jerusalem?
- What role does fear play in this story?
- What other issues affect decisions in this story?
(make a list on whiteboard or poster)
- What role does fear play in your decision making?
- How do other issues that David faced also challenge you?
(look back at your list and give time for examples)



King-Dumb! Read 2 Samuel 11: 1 – 5

30 min.

Record:

On the whiteboard or poster, start an outline of the story.
Allow the class to lift up parts of the story to be included.
Leave room for the story to expand as the class reads further.

Ask:

- How do you feel about David’s decision?
- Do you think anyone knew what David had done?
- If David’s kingdom had modern media, how would this be covered?

Read 2 Samuel 11: 6 – 13

Record: Continue your outline of the story.

Ask:

- How does David respond to his indiscretion?
- How would David’s actions have helped his situation?
- If David’s kingdom had modern media, how would this be covered?

Read 2 Samuel 11: 14 – 27

Record: Continue your outline of the story.

Ask:

- How is David making decisions at this point in the story?
- If David’s kingdom had modern media, how would this be covered?
- How does this change your image of David?

Read 2 Samuel 12: 1 – 15

Record: Continue your outline of the story.
Review the whole story of David and Bathsheba

Re-Write:

- Split the class into two groups.
- Explain that they will be writing a modern version.
- Give each group some time to work on their story.
- Ask each group to share their story with the class.
(This may be done by reading, or re-enactment.)

Ask:

- What do you think of David? As King? As a person?
- How was David treated compared to modern leaders?
- What can we learn from David’s life and leadership?
- How do you think these stories changed David?
- How would these experiences change you?
- Do you think leaders should be held to a higher standard?
- What do you expect of your leaders?
* church * government * school
- How much freedom do leaders deserve?
- How much forgiveness do leaders deserve?

King/Queen For a Day Give each student a note card and pen. *7 min.*
Explain that each of them will pretend they are King/Queen for a day. They need to make a list of their top 5 priorities. Are they more worried about security, healthcare, their image, the happiness of their family, being faithful to God, etc.?

Then ask each person to flip their card over and make their own personal priority list for their real life today.

Once everyone has written theirs, invite students to share and discuss their lists with the class.

Ask:

- How does your royal priority list compare to your personal list?
- What things change when you are a leader?
- How is it different for a pre-school line-leader compared to a king?
- What is the range between these two leadership roles like?

Prayer Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. *2 min.*
Ask each person to lift up a leader in prayer, or pray for their own needs as a leader. Ask the last person to say “Amen.”





Lesson 16 *Solomon: Too Much of a Good Thing*

Teacher's Notes:

Solomon is one of the most well known characters in scripture. The “wisdom of Solomon” is known well enough to be referenced in popular culture. When it came to abundance, Solomon had more than wisdom. Wealth, vision for construction, and concubines were all a part of Solomon’s abundance. In some ways this fulfills David’s wish that Solomon would succeed and become even more successful than David himself. Adonijah, David’s oldest son, assumes he is the next in line and even begins the process of sacrificing and preparing himself to be king when David instead takes action from his deathbed to make Solomon the king.

Early in his reign, Solomon has a dream where God invites him to ask for anything he wants and Solomon asks for wisdom. God is impressed by Solomon’s request and blesses Solomon. Along with wisdom, Solomon is known for large building projects. From his own home to the building of the temple, Solomon spends part of his reign as a contractor. A fleet of ships is also credited to Solomon and was part of an economic boom that brought great wealth and the attention of the Queen of Sheba into Solomon’s Kingdom. She was not the only female to cross Solomon’s path. Solomon used marriage as a form of trade negotiation. By Solomon’s later days he had accumulated 700 wives and 300 concubines, many from countries from which Israelites had been warned not to marry (1 Kings 11).

Scripture suggests God becomes angry in Solomon’s later days due to Solomon’s lack of commitment to God. Solomon has taken on the beliefs and gods known to the cultures of his wives. Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, succeeds him as king after his death. Unfortunately, this ends the Davidic line because, just as God foretold, Rehoboam does not last long as king. He ignores the guidance of his father’s advisors and decides to be heavy handed with the people. All the tribes but his own choose to recognize Solomon’s adversary, Jeroboam, as king.

Scripture: 1 Kings 3: 1 -28
 1 Kings 10: 1-9, 23-25
 1 Kings 11: 1 - 11

Supplies: Paper and pens
 Poverty Map posted at www.Wikipedia.com
 -Search “Poverty” and select a few maps to use with the class
 -You will want to print on a color printer
 -Percentage of population living on \$1 per day map recommended

Preparation: Think about the things you have an abundance of.
 Think about the things that distract you from God.
 Think about the struggle of abundance.
 Print out copies of poverty map for class.
 Look online for other up-to-date resources and statistics.



Activity	Instructions	Time
Stuff	Give each member of the class a sheet of paper. Invite them to make a list of everything in their room. After the list is done, ask them to include everything they own that is not in their room. Once everyone has had time to finish their list, invite them to share them.	<i>5 min.</i>
More Stuff	Invite the class to make a second list of other things they wish they had. This can be things they hope to get one day. They are not limited by money! As a group, ask them to make a combined list, answering the question, “If you had 10 million dollars what would you spend it on?” They need to come to agreement as a group.	<i>7 min.</i>
Solomon’s Stuff	Read 1 Kings 3: 1 – 15 Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would Solomon compare to modern personalities?• What did Solomon do to deserved all he was given?• How do you feel about God’s blessing of Solomon? Read 1 Kings 10: 1-9, 23-25 Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did Solomon fail God?• How do you feel about God’s disappointment with Solomon?• How would Solomon compare to modern personalities?	<i>10 min.</i>
Others Stuff	Pass out copies of the poverty map. Allow the class some time to look at the map. Invite them to share their first thoughts. Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you think people in other countries would see us?• How do you think poor people in other countries look at those who are wealthy?• How does the percentage of poverty in a country change the way poor people look at wealthy people?• How do people in your school look at people who have more wealth than them?• How do you think Solomon would have fit in as a kid in your school?• How do you think Solomon would have fit in as an adult in our world?• What things do we take for granted, and need to go back and add to our list of “things” from earlier?	<i>20 min.</i>



Lesson 17 *Elijah: Kings, Widows, and a Still, Small Voice*

**This lesson may take more than one session but if you are teaching a time-line of God’s people, it is important to go through each part of this lesson.*

Teacher’s Notes:

The Kingdom of Israel has divided. David and Solomon’s kingdom has become the southern kingdom--Judah. Ahab is now king of the northern kingdom of Israel when Elijah comes into the story. Elijah’s life as a prophet is filled with stories. King Ahab is a central figure in Elijah’s day. Much of Elijah’s ministry is in response to Ahab and his wife Jezebel’s leadership. Elijah predicts a drought early in his ministry and then follows God’s lead into the wilderness where ravens bring him food and he drinks from a designated stream until it completely dries up. This story ends with Elijah in need of sustenance and him finding a widow who helps him. The next story in Elijah’s ministry centers on this widow and her son. She is about to make the last of her grain into a bread that she and her son will share as their last meal before starving. Elijah tells her to make him a cake and that her jar of meal nor her oil will be empty. God provides for the widow and her son and Elijah stays with them. Things turn for the worse when the son dies but Elijah revives him through the power of God.

After three years away from the public eye, Elijah returns to confront King Ahab who has been leading his people through the drought that Elijah predicted (warned them of). Elijah gives advice for keeping the animals alive. Elijah confronts Ahab about the number of prophets from other religions that eat at his (and Jezebel’s) table. A contest is set up between Elijah and those prophets and in the end Elijah survives and the rest are dead. At this point, the drought comes to an end. While fleeing from Jezebel in the aftermath of her prophets’ deaths, Elijah takes refuge at Horeb. Elijah waits for God to speak. There is wind, an earthquake, and fire—but God does not speak through any of these. Instead, God speaks in the silence that follows (a still, small voice).

Scripture: 1 Kings 17: 8 – 16
1 Kings 18: 17 – 39
1 Kings 19: 11 – 13

Supplies:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Blindfolds (for half the class)
- Multiple translations of the Bible (NRSV should be one of these)

Preparation:

- Think about the things you trust to God.
- Have the text marked in a few translations of the Bible.

Activity	Instructions	Time
Explaining Prophets	Open by telling the class that they are entering a new time in the history of God’s people. After Solomon comes a debate about who should rule, and the kingdom divides. Israel is the Northern Kingdom and its capital will eventually become Samaria. Judah is the Southern Kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem. This makes it more difficult to keep up with the history of God’s people. Rapid transition in the story from one kingdom to another also makes it	2 min.



hard to keep up with all the characters. With the people divided and kings not looking to God for guidance, the role of “prophet” enters into the story.

Pondering Prophets

- Ask the class what the word “prophet” means.
- Record the responses on the white board or poster.
- Ask them to list as many prophets as they can. They may include Biblical characters or people from history or their own experience. Many would call Martin Luther King, Jr. a modern prophet. The Islamic community would put Mohamed on the list. Allow the class to list who ever they want.
- Keep this list and definition for the next couple of months.
- Allow the class to edit the definition and list each week.

10 min.

Ask:

- What challenges do you think prophets faced?
- What do you think would be the hardest part of being a prophet?
- How do you think prophets got through difficult times?
- What do you think was different about prophets’ relationship with God?

Trust God

Explain that Elijah is one of the earliest prophets we really get to know in scripture. Others are mentioned earlier in the text but not much character development is included.

15 min.

When we first meet Elijah, he is predicting a drought. Then God sends him to widow who will care for him.

Read 1 Kings 17: 8 – 16

Ask:

- What did God ask of Elijah?
- What did God ask of the widow?
- I wonder who had the more difficult task?
- With what do you trust God?
- How hard is it to trust God?
- What would your life look like if you trusted God as did Elijah and the widow?

What things do you trust to God in prayer?

Are there things you don’t share or won’t let go of?

Pray:

Invite everyone to hold their hands out together, cupped.

Explain that we will be imagining prayer concerns in our hands.

Invite everyone to lift their hands, still together, up towards God.

Explain that we will lift our concerns to God in prayer.

Invite everyone to pull their hands apart and flatten their palms.

Explain that we will let go of our concerns, trusting them to God.



Make sure everyone knows the motions and the concept.

Leader says:

-- hands cupped –

“In your hands, imagine a person you care about. Think about their need and what they mean to you. Now lift them up to God.”

-- hands lifted up –

“Now take a deep breath and remember that you cannot fix them or make all their troubles go away. All you can do is support them and care for them. Trust this concern to God and trust God will listen.”

-- separate hands –

“When you are ready, release the concern to God.”

Repeat with some of the following concerns:

-Needs of others in our community

-Needs of the poor

-Needs of children or the elderly

-Needs of those in other countries

Keep the category vague enough to allow each person to create their own image in their hand.

End with this one:

“In your hands, imagine a person that is difficult for you to care about. Think about the ways they have hurt you. Think about the ways others have hurt them. You have a choice. You can hold onto the hurt or lift it up to God.”

-- hands lifted up –

“If you are able, lift that person up to God. Remember that you cannot fix them or un-do the pain they have caused you or others. You cannot heal the pain they have endured. All you can do is seek to understand and forgive.”

-- separate hands –

“When you are ready, release them to God.”

**Trust
Others**

Skip this activity if short on time.

10 min.

Pair up everyone in the class.

Do not pair close friends or family members.

Give each pair a blindfold and have one wear it.

Allow the other partner to guide them on a walk.

Have the pairs line up single file and follow you.

Half way through stop and trade who is blindfolded and who is the guide.

End the walk back in your classroom.



Ask:

- What was the hardest part of this activity?
- What fears did you have?
- How did trusting your partner in this activity compare to trusting God in prayer?

**Speak
For God**

Explain:

7 min.

Elijah's next task is to *speak for God* to King Ahab. Jezebel is Ahab's wife and she believes in many gods. Ahab has not been faithful to God and has supported her beliefs. In our next reading we see Elijah, bold and brash.

Read 1 Kings 18: 17 – 39

Ask:

- I wonder what part of this story scared Elijah the most?
- How did Elijah continue to show trust in God?
- How good are you at talking about God with others?
- How does your ability to trust yourself in talking about God compare with your trust of God in prayer?
- How does your ability to trust yourself in talking about God compare with your ability to trust others?

**Listen
For God**

Explain:

13 min.

Ahab and Jezebel were furious and rose up against Elijah. Elijah goes to Horeb and waits for God to speak.

Read: 1 Kings 19: 11 – 13 (multiple translations will help here!)
(Read 1 Kings 19: 12 – 13 in each translation.)

Ask:

- What are the three things that happened before the voice Elijah heard?
- What was the voice of God? What did it sound like?
- Have you ever experienced God in silence?
- What does a "moment of silence" mean in our culture?
- How do we use silence in worship?
- Where else is silence important?
- How does your ability to be still and silent relate to your being able to trust God, trust others, or speak about God?

**Be Still
With God**

Explain:

5 min.

Contemplative prayer is a style of prayer that is more focused on listening to God rather than speaking to God. Some people describe it as "spending time with God." We will take a few minutes of silence and stillness. This may be difficult because we are used to a world that moves very quickly. Try your best to follow the direction and please do not distract others in prayer.



- a. Ask the class to get into a comfortable place where they will not fidget or need to move again.
- b. Tell them not to close their eyes, but to focus on something boring that will not move or change (the floor or a spot on the wall is great for this).
- c. Ask the class to focus on breathing out and nothing else. As they hear sounds other than your voice, invite them to try and “turn down the volume” or tune them out.
- d. If they have thoughts, ask them to save them for later. The goal at the beginning is to stop thinking. This will seem like a strange concept but it is possible. Give them at least 30 seconds of pure silence. You can go longer as your group is able.
- e. After the silent opening, invite them to imagine a place where God would speak to them. Leave the room in silence for another 20 seconds.
- f. After that period of silence, invite them to imagine a place or person to where God might send them. Leave the room in silence for another 20 seconds.
- g. After that period of silence, invite them to think about how God might challenge them or the church. Leave the room in silence for another 20 seconds.
- h. Invite them to move back to their original seats as ready.

Ask:

- How did you experience the discipline of silence?
- Can anyone share their experience of this prayer?
- How is this prayer different from ways you have prayed?
- What was the easiest part of this prayer?
- What was the most challenging part of this prayer?

**Sharing
God**

Explain that God asks Elijah to take on Elisha (e-LYE-sha) as a disciple (or an apprentice). *2 min.*

Invite the class to think about people they know who could benefit from today’s lesson. Challenge them to share what they have learned with others by speaking about God or bringing others to church.

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. Ask each person to lift up a silent prayer, squeezing the hand of the person next to them when they are done. The last person in the circle will say “Amen” for everyone. *2 min.*



Lesson 18 Review: What Struck?

Teacher's Notes:

This week's lesson is intended as a review of lessons 1 – 17. If you have not been with the class during these lessons you may want to look over the lessons and themes.

This review is designed to support the learning that has taken place, while helping teachers evaluate the needs of the group for future lessons. This lesson uses review materials for individual and group memory activities looking over the lessons, and the books of the Bible. The concern of this lesson is review and retention and does not introduce any new scripture or ask for new reflection on any texts previously studied. If the class seems to need a longer review process, you may want to repeat some past lessons (maybe from weeks when attendance was low) or reflect on some previous lessons' themes. Handouts and copy sheets for this lesson are at the end of Lesson 18.

- Supplies:**
- Handout, *Review: What Struck?*, (1 set per person, or group if you want)
 - Cards on card stock or paper, cut out, put in envelope or zip lock bag
 - Lessons (Stories) and Books of the Bible names cards

Preparation: Look back over the past lessons and time-line.

Prepare cards of Lessons, and Books of the Bible names:

- print or copy the sheet(s) of names onto card stock, then cut into individual names with a paper cutter.
- keep in an envelope or zip lock bag.
- if preparing multiple sets, you may want to use different colors to keep the sets from getting mixed together.
- if you include New Testament names in this challenge, you can make it tougher by using the same color for New and Old, or easier by using different colors for the two parts.

Activity	Instructions	Time
Stories	Give groups of 2 or 3 an envelope/zip lock containing the "Stories of the Bible" (Lesson) names. Ask them to work together to put them in the order we studied them. Challenge them to do it as quickly as possible. Try to tell the story as a class, in brief, connecting one to the next.	5 min.
What Struck?	Give individuals the <i>What Struck? Review</i> sheets. Have them work alone to start for about 10 minutes (or until they start to want to talk about the activities—this might not take long). Next, have partners or groups work together to share their combined or collective memory. Finally, come together as a group to see what is in the group memory.	20 min
What Struck?	Ask: Think about the lessons and stories. What were the lessons and stories that you (and other group members): • found easiest to remember and remember accurately? Why do you think this may be? • found most difficult to remember and remember accurately? Why do you think this may be?	



- What insight does this give you about how oral lessons of the Bible were passed along from one generation to the next before finally being written down?

Favorites **Ask:** *13 min.*

- Share something about your favorite of the characters we have learned about.
- Share something about your favorite of the stories we have learned about.
- In your views, what is the biggest issue we have discussed, and how does this issue affect you?
- How have the stories we have learned challenged you?
- How have the stories we have learned encouraged you?
- How have the stories we have learned comforted you?
- What questions do you still have about the lessons we have studied?

Books: Give the class the “Books of the Bible” note cards. *15 min.*

Ask them to work together to put them in order.
Challenge them to do it as quickly as possible. You could ask an adult class to do the same activity to set a “time to beat.”
Not all of the books have been covered in this study so the class may struggle.
Many of the books have not been explored yet in the timeline of this curriculum and will be covered in future lessons.
Include them anyway.

Judge the success of the class based on Genesis to 2 Kings.
When they have finished, gather the class and debrief.

- Ask:**
- How do you feel about this activity?
 - What made it harder?
 - What made it easier?
 - Do you think this task’s content is important?
 - What value is there in knowing the books of the Bible?
 - What stories or types of stories are in each of these books?

Next **Ask:** *5 min.*

- Looking at the remaining Bible books and the stories...
 What are you most curious about?
 What are you most excited about?
 What are you least excited about?

Prayer Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. *2 min.*
ask each member of the class to give thanks for a story, character, or lesson they have learned about in these lessons.



What Struck? What Do You Remember?

See what you can remember about the lessons below: people, places, themes, what you did or made, and prayers or commitments to God or yourself. What struck for you?

First, work quietly on your own for a few minutes. Then, merge your memory with that of a partner. Finally, combine your memories into group memory, sharing as a class. Those new to class or absent during the lessons can learn by what you pass on to them!

Lesson 1: Creation: And It Was Good. Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____

Lesson 2: A Big Flood Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____

Lesson 3: Abraham & Sarah’s Sacred Journey Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____

Lesson 4: Joseph: Journey to Egypt Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____

Lesson 5: The Birth Of Moses Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____



Lesson 6: Call of Moses

Theme: _____

ppl:

plces:

did, made:

remember:

Lesson 7: Plagues & Wonderings

Theme: _____

ppl:

plces:

did, made:

remember:

Lesson 8: Laws and the Wilderness

Theme: _____

ppl:

plces:

did, made:

remember:

Lesson 9: Joshua, Passing Over to Home

Theme: _____

ppl:

plces:

did, made:

remember:

Lesson 10: Women of Wisdom and War

Theme: _____

ppl:

plces:

did, made:

remember:

Lesson 11: Three Not So Wise Guys?

Theme: _____

ppl:

plces:

did, made:

remember:



Lesson 12: Family Matters (Ruth & Naomi) Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____

Lesson 13: Samuel: Anointer Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____

Lesson 14: Saul & David: The Royal Families Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____

Lesson 15: Even Kings Make Mistakes Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____

Lesson 16: Solomon: Too Much of a Good Thing Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____

Lesson 17: Kings, Widows, & a Still Small Voice Theme: _____

ppl: _____ plces: _____

did, made: _____ remember: _____



For Leader: Below is a list of the books of the Bible, in the order found in most Protestant Christian Bibles. Also are the Lessons in the order we have studied them. On the next pages are names that can be photocopied or printed onto card stock, cut apart, and used to try to put them in order.

Hebrew Bible (Old, or First Testament)

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy
6. Joshua
7. Judges
8. Ruth
9. 1 Samuel
10. 2 Samuel
11. 1 Kings
12. 2 Kings
13. 1 Chronicles
14. 2 Chronicles
15. Ezra
16. Nehemiah
17. Esther
18. Job
19. Psalms
20. Proverbs
21. Ecclesiastes
22. Song of Solomon
23. Isaiah
24. Jeremiah
25. Lamentations
26. Ezekiel
27. Daniel
28. Hosea
29. Joel
30. Amos
31. Obadiah
32. Jonah
33. Micah
34. Nahum
35. Habakkuk
36. Zephaniah
37. Haggai
38. Zechariah
39. Malachi

New Testament (Second Testament)

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John
5. Acts
6. Romans
7. 1 Corinthians
8. 2 Corinthians
9. Galatians
10. Ephesians
11. Philippians
12. Colossians
13. 1 Thessalonians
14. 2 Thessalonians
15. 1 Timothy
16. 2 Timothy
17. Titus
18. Philemon
19. Hebrews
20. James
21. 1 Peter
22. 2 Peter
23. 1 John
24. 2 John
25. 3 John
26. Jude
27. Revelation

LESSONS:

- Lesson 1: Creation: And It Was Good.
- Lesson 2: A Big Flood
- Lesson 3: Abraham & Sarah’s Sacred Journey
- Lesson 4: Joseph: Journey to Egypt
- Lesson 5: The Birth Of Moses
- Lesson 6: Call of Moses
- Lesson 7: Plagues & Wonderings
- Lesson 8: Laws and the Wilderness
- Lesson 9: Joshua, Passing Over to Home
- Lesson 10: Women of Wisdom and War (Deborah, Jael)
- Lesson 11: Three Not Always So Wise Guys? Sampson, Jephthah, Gideon
- Lesson 12: Family Matters (Ruth & Naomi)
- Lesson 13: Samuel: Anointer
- Lesson 14: Saul & David: The Royal Families
- Lesson 15: Even Kings Make Mistakes
- Lesson 16: Solomon: Too Much of a Good Thing
- Lesson 17: Kings, Widows, & a Still, Small Voice



Genesis	2 Chronicles	Daniel
Exodus	Ezra	Hosea
Leviticus	Nehemiah	Joel
Numbers	Esther	Amos
Deuteronomy	Job	Obadiah
Joshua	Psalms	Jonah
Judges	Proverbs	Micah
Ruth	Ecclesiastes	Nahum
1 Samuel	Song of Songs	Habakkuk
2 Samuel	Isaiah	Zephaniah
1 Kings	Jeremiah	Haggai
2 Kings	Lamentations	Zechariah
1 Chronicles	Ezekiel	Malachi

Matthew	2 Thessalonians	Revelation
Mark	1 Timothy	Creation: And It Was Good
Luke	2 Timothy	A Big Flood
John	Titus	Abraham & Sarah’s Sacred Journey
Acts	Philemon	Joseph: Journey to Egypt
Romans	Hebrews	The Birth Of Moses
1 Corinthians	James	Call of Moses
2 Corinthians	1 Peter	Plagues & Wonderings
Galatians	2 Peter	Laws and the Wilderness
Ephesians	1 John	Joshua, Passing Over to Home
Philippians	2 John	Women of Wisdom and War (Deborah, Jael)
Colossians	3 John	Three Not So Wise Guys? Sampson, Jephthah, Gideon
1 Thessalonians	Jude	Family Matters (Ruth & Naomi)
		Samuel: Anointer
		Saul & David: The Royal Families
		Even Kings Make Mistakes
		Solomon: Too Much of a Good Thing
		Kings, Widows, & A Still, Small Voice



Lesson 19 Amos Brings Bad News

Teacher's Notes:

Not long after the death of Elisha, a new threat comes into the life and story of God's people. "Exile" is just a warning in Amos day, but becomes a reality that is historically intertwined with prophecy for those who follow Amos. Exile became historic reality and had profound theological ramifications. Prophecy is a message to God's people about what is about to happen. Although there have been previous prophets, Amos is the first to bring prophecies of doom that conclude with God's people meeting their end. Other prophets follow Amos style and concern for the oppressed.

Although Amos is often quoted in modern times, especially in reference to social justice ministry, history has not given much attention to this prophet. Although Amos lacks a message of hope, Amos has a strong ethical message that stands as a turning point in the theology of Israel. We know little about Amos as a person. Instead of focusing on who Amos was, it is best to focus on the message Amos delivered and the events that brought about God's message through Amos.

Amos writes in the time of King Uzziah in Judah and King Jeroboam II of Israel, dating the events between 783 – 745 BCE. The kingdom has already divided and both Israel and Judah are in a time of prosperity. Amos takes issue with the peoples' ethics of prosperity. Amos predicts the end of Israel (N. Kingdom) and claims it is God's punishment for being unfaithful, but specifically for taking advantage of the poor rather than taking care of them.

Amos takes on Israel's neighbors, judging the Gentile countries that have failed to live up to God's standards of justice. The idea that God calls all nations, including Gentile nations, to care for their people is powerful, translating even into modern times.

Scripture: 2 Kings 14: 23 - 29
 Amos 5
 Amos 6: 1 - 8
 Hosea 10: 1 – 6
 Hosea 14: 4- 7

Supplies: Whiteboard and markers or poster and markers

Preparation: Make a chart with two large columns for writing in.
 Reflect on punishment and justice in your own life.

Activity	Instructions	Time
Opening	Inform the class that today's lesson continues into a difficult time in the history of God's people. This is a time of darkness for the people and confusion for historians who try to understand that time. Today's lesson takes place in the Northern Kingdom, known as Israel , with their capital in Samaria. After a series of unfaithful kings, Amos comes to bring a message of doom and God's punishment.	<i>2 min.</i>



Punishment Possibilities Ask the class to make a list of punishments. 15 min.

This can be things they have experienced, things they have heard about, or things they think up. List things that parents choose for their children as well as punishments handed down from a criminal justice system. Don't forget about social punishments such as, "I am not talking to them anymore!"

Leave room on your list to write next to each item.

Once you have a long list, ask the class to go back and rate them from bad to worst on a scale of 1 – 10. Give the easiest to endure a '1' and the worst a '10.'

After you are done rating the punishments, go back and write in what action that punishment would be appropriate in response to. If there are some that you think should never be appropriate, write that next to them.

Invite the class to look back at their number rankings and see if the ranking of the punishment fits the severity of the offense they have matched with that punishment.

Punishing the Past **Read** 2 Kings 14: 23 – 26 10 min.

Ask:

- What would be the appropriate punishment for sinning, supporting idolatry of various gods and leading an entire nation to do the same?
- Is this a scenario that could happen in our world today? (Consider: separation of church and state, diversity of beliefs, voting with no consideration of God)

Read Amos 6: 4-7
Hosea 10: 1 – 6

Ask:

- What faults do you hear in this passage? (*Extreme wealth and indulgence? Complacency, apathy, and laziness? Lack of consideration of the needs of others?*)
- What would be the appropriate punishments for these offenders?
- Are these sins ones that we see in our world today?
- How should these sins be punished today?
- How are these sins punished today?

God Speaks **Read** Amos 5: 6 – 11 15 min.

Ask:

- What do you think verse 11 means? What has happened? (*wealthy have taxed (levied) the poor so the wealthy can build additions to their own fancy homes.)
- What do you think an appropriate punishment would be?



Read Amos 5: 12 – 13

Ask:

- What charges does Amos bring against the people?
(taking bribes, casting aside the needy, etc.)
- What do you think an appropriate punishment would be?

Read Amos 5: 21 – 27

Ask:

- How do you feel about God being angry?
- How appropriate is God’s anger?

Read Amos 5: 26 – 27 again

Ask:

- What is the sin? (Idolatry)
- What is the punishment? (Exile)
- How do you feel about God’s punishment?

Read Amos 5: 24 again

Ask:

- What does this verse mean to you?
- How is this good news?
- How is this bad news?

**God’s
Hope**

Read Hosea 14: 4- 7

15 min.

Ask:

- How should we respond to punishment?
- Does our response change based on its fairness?
- How do Hosea’s words of God’s promises for the future affect how you feel about God punishing?
- What do you wish parents and others who punish would know from this lesson?
- Who have you ever punished and how did you punish them?
 - *babysitting *cold shoulder to friend
 - *self punishment *not talking to parents or sibling
- What lesson do you need to learn from Amos and Hosea?
- Where is hope in the way you punish others?
- Where is hope in the way you punish yourself?
- How does forgiveness fit into all of this?

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. Ask each to lift up a silent prayer for each of the following as you name them:

3 min.

- Forgive those who punish us unfairly...
- Forgive us for those we have punished unfairly...
- Forgive those who have taken advantage of others...
- Forgive us when we have taken advantage of others...
- Forgive us when we have made light of someone else’s pain...
- Help us to be more faithful to you, God...
- Hear our silent prayer requests... “Amen”



Lesson 20 Down South with Hezekiah and Josiah

Teacher’s Notes:

Assyria makes Amos’ prophecy a reality, capturing and taking many Israelites into exile—especially young promising members of upper class and ruling families. Meanwhile, Hezekiah (hez-uh-KIE-yah) has come into power in Judah and has restored the temple, reorganized the Priests and Levites, and in the process celebrated Passover in grand fashion. Assyria is turned back when they attempt to take Jerusalem, showing God’s protection for Judah. Hezekiah is followed by Manasseh (ma-NASS-eh) who is not faithful and finds himself a captive of Assyria until he repents and is restored. Amon follows Manasseh as king and is unfaithful, but Josiah (joe-SIGH-uh) follows him and continues the restoration that Hezekiah began. During Josiah’s reign, workers in the temple discover “the Book of the Law.” Upon this discovery, Josiah leads the people in renewing the covenant and celebrating Passover.

Isaiah (which seems to be the work of at least three writers contributing under the name, combined into one book) warns about what is still to come. Isaiah warns about a day when Babylon will come and take all that belongs to Hezekiah’s people, even his own sons. Hezekiah is very old and seems content that none of this will happen until after his reign. Although Hezekiah has been faithful to God there is a sense that the wealth and prosperity that some would attribute to faithfulness may actually be a vice to which they will soon fall victim.

Toward the end of our readings, Josiah consults the prophet Huldah. As one of the few named women in the Old Testament, she is an important figure. She has praise for Josiah but a long-range forecast of gloom and doom for God’s people.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 29: 1 – 6
 2 Chronicles 32: 9 – 23
 Isaiah 39
 2 Chronicles 34: 1 – 3, 14 – 19, 22 – 28, 33

Supplies: Whiteboard and markers

Preparation: Think about good karma, good energy, faithfulness, and pride.
 Where do they connect, conflict, or diverge?
 How are church and state connected?
 Can self-righteousness of a nation affect spiritual folks?

Activity	Instructions	Time
Now and Later	Give the class the following choices to discuss. Ask them for each pair, “would you take this deal?” After each Now/Later, invite the youth to debate each deal. Now: Peace while you live (no war), except- Later: war on U.S. soil for the next 50 years after you die. Now: You will make at least \$200,000 a year, except- Later: school budgets are cut in half in the next 20 years.	20 min.



- Now: Give up the remote control for the rest of your life and-
Later: HIV/AIDS no longer exists.
- Now: Comfortable winters while you are old, except-
Later: For two generations after, people can't go outside in any season without protective clothing from sun.
- Now: Designer clothes for \$20 or less per item for life, except-
Later: civil war kills half of Cambodian children and youth who rebel against sweatshop managers.
- Now: Wear a lie detector with a display screen and-
Later: have lifelong friends and a happy marriage that doesn't end.
- Now: You live, disease and cancer free until you die, except--
Later: half of your family's next generation will face either cancer or AIDS.

Read Isaiah 39

Re-read Isaiah 39: 5 – 8.

Ask:

- How do you feel about Hezekiah's response?
- How is Hezekiah's response similar or different to our game?
- Can you name real world choices that seem similar to our game?
(i.e. pollution, national debt, global warming, Social security, etc.)
- How have previous generations responded to the real choices that may be similar to our game?
- What does it mean to "leave the world better than we got it" ?

Good Intentions

Explain: Hezekiah meant well in the beginning. *20 min.*

Read 2 Chronicles 29: 1 – 6

Ask:

- How does this reading change your image of Hezekiah?
- Are there lessons from the past that Hezekiah should have learned from the restoration of the temple?

Read 2 Chronicles 32: 9 – 23

Ask:

- How does this reading change your image of Hezekiah?
- If Hezekiah were running for office would you vote for him?
- How should we judge those who go before us?
- How will later generations judge your parents?
- How will later generations judge you?



Explain:

A couple of generations after Hezekiah’s death, Josiah becomes king and continues much of the restoration Hezekiah began.

Read: 2 Chronicles 34: 1 – 3, 14 – 19, 22 – 28, 33

Ask:

- Compare Hezekiah and Josiah.
- How did their responses to future prophecy differ?
- Do you think Huldah was afraid to deliver her prophesy?

**Passover
Pass On**

Explain:

In the tradition of the Passover, the role of children is to ask the adults: “What makes this night different?” *10 min.*

Adults then tell the story to name and remember who they are. The children asking was a way of holding adults accountable.

Ask:

- What are ways that young people hold adults accountable in our world?
- What things get passed on from one generation to the next?
- How is faith passed on from one generation to the next?
- How will you pass on your faith to another generation?
- What will you do to serve the next generation?
- What are you willing to sacrifice for them?
- Which children in your church or community now look to you for care and leadership?

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. *2 min.*
Ask each person to share one thing they will do for future generations of Christians.

If they need some structure for their sharing, ask the class to say,

“In service to the church of the future,
I will _____ today.”



Lesson 21

Micah’s Three Things

Teacher’s Notes:

Micah speaks from Judah—the Southern Kingdom. Samaria and the Northern Kingdom fall during Micah’s lifetime and Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom has survived a siege. In the Northern Kingdom, Amos and Hosea are contemporaries. The earliest writings under the name ‘Isaiah’ come from the Southern Kingdom. As with the Northern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom has a gap between social classes, and more trouble seems to be on the horizon. Micah warns of an exile to come, and lifts up the idea of a “remnant” of God’s people that will be gathered.

Although the teachings of Micah are important to Jewish as well as Gentile people of faith, many Christians see the prophecy of Micah 5:2-5, speaking of a leader who will come out of Bethlehem, as referencing the birth of Jesus. The most well known portion of Micah’s prophecy is in chapter 6, which reads like a legal proceeding between God and God’s people. Micah 6:8 is one of the most famous texts in all of scripture: *“God has told you, O’ mortal what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and walk humbly with God?”* The rest of chapter 6 talks about injustice that had become common in the time of Micah, and God’s judgment to follow. The rest of Micah’s words are a promise for the future and a reminder of God’s compassion and love.

Scripture: Micah 6: 1 - 13

Supplies: Note cards and pens
Whiteboard and markers

Preparation: Reflect on your own faith and your core beliefs.

Activity	Instructions	Time
The Basics	Give each member of the class a note card. Ask each person to list five beliefs that are at the core of and essential to their faith. Pair up members of the class and invite them to compare. As they compare, invite them to edit based on the conversations. Combine pairs into groups of 4 and repeat the process. Finally, bring the class back together and share thoughts from each group. Ask everyone to look at their own card again, and remove one of their five, picking the least of the important. Give them a moment to make their decision, then ask them to remove one more. Invite everyone to share their final three core beliefs. As a class, vote on the top three using each person’s card as the options to choose from. Once the class has their top three, debrief...	25 min.



Ask:

- How does this list reflect the faith of the whole class?
- How does this list reflect the faith of individual members?
- What was the hardest part of this process?
- What was the easiest part of this process?
- As a group, did you lift up things we do for God or for other people?
- How simple is your faith?
- How complicated is your faith?
- How do you think other people would respond to your three core beliefs on your card?
- Would these three be a good way to share your faith with other people?

Micah’s Basics

Read Micah 6: 8

12 min.

Ask:

- How does Micah’s list of three compare to your list?
- Is Micah’s list more about what we do for God or for others?
- What do you think it means to “seek justice?”
- What do you think it means to “love kindness?”
- What do you think it means to “walk humbly with God?”

Read Micah 6: 1 – 8

Ask:

How does reading the text before this scripture change its meaning?

Read Micah 6: 8 – 13

Ask:

How does reading the text after this scripture change its meaning?

God’s Basics

Explain that Micah 6 reads like the sentencing in a court case. God has an accusation to make and the people want to know what to do to make up for their faults. They ask, “with what shall we come before the Lord?” Micah answers God with 6:8. The verses that follow show some details in God’s case against the people. Cheating each other was a big concern.

15 min.

What concerns do you think God has with people of faith today?

Make a list of the answers given by the class.

Ask (assuming God will use Micah 6:8 as the criteria):

- If God were to put you on trial for faithfulness, how would you do?
- If God were to put our church on trial, how would we do?
- If God were to put all Christians on trial, how would we do?
- If God were to put all faiths on trial, how would we do?

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands.

2 min.

Ask each person to share a concern for justice, an encouragement for kindness, or a statement of humility.



Lesson 22

Exiles and Remnants

Teacher's Notes:

The story of God's people takes place on a stage that is central to trade and important to the transition of power in the ancient world. With Egypt as an established power to the South and West, Israel stands as a major trade route from what we now know as Turkey and Greece, as well as other nations that came to power in the ancient world. The Assyrians and Babylonians played a major role in Israel's history of conquest and exile. Not only was Israel's location important strategically, their loyalty to one unseen God over any ruler or national power was seen as strange and insulting to whoever thought they ruled the world at that time.

Since the Davidic Kingdom was established and the ark brought to Jerusalem, the city has been the center of cultural and religious life for the Jewish community and central to the Christian story. Solomon builds the temple there, with the ark secure in the center. Threats to Jerusalem would have been seen, by many, as a threat to the dwelling place of God. As one superpower after another comes to reign in the Eastern Mediterranean coast, Jerusalem is always in the path of danger. With the fall of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom, even more pressure is put on Jerusalem's strength and stability.

The city survives one siege, leading Micah and the first voice writing under the name Isaiah to give warnings to Jerusalem. Based on historical events, such as the reign of kings (such as Hezekiah) referenced in scripture, scholars tend to agree on three distinct writers writing under the voice of Isaiah, a common way of writing with authority in that day. The first voice echoes Micah's vision of Jerusalem falling, and an ensuing exile.

At first, Jerusalem does not come under direct attack when the king refuses to join Israel and Syria in an alliance. Jerusalem survives a siege by this alliance, but after Assyria destroys the Northern Kingdom and Hezekiah ignores Isaiah's advice and joins a rebellion of nations against Assyria, Jerusalem is sacked by Assyria. As a result, Jerusalem falls under an even heavier burden of servitude to Assyria. Jerusalem finally falls to the Babylonians, who have defeated the Assyrians to become the major power in the region. Jerusalem is later rebuilt when the Babylonians fall to the Persians.

Scripture: Isaiah 10: 5 – 7, 10 - 11
Isaiah 10: 20 – 27

Supplies: Copies of "Prophets Time-line" (see last page of this lesson).

Preparation: Get a large map, globe, or copies of individual maps for groups to look at. Look over time-line and map to familiarize yourself.

Activity	Instructions	Time
Racing the Gap	Draw two lines that teams will follow in a race. The lines should start out a fair distance apart, gradually move closer, until the middle when they are about a foot apart. Then the lines should move back away from each other until the end, when they should be the same distance apart as at the start. Divide the class into two teams (<i>an easy way to do this is to have everyone number off, 1,2,1,2,1,2...etc.</i>). Assign each team to a line. Each team must stay on their line and not step off of it during the race.	10 min.



Race 1: Have each team race, relay style, down and back.

Race 2: Have each team race, relay style, down and back while one person from each team stands in the narrow point between the lines.

- Debrief:*
- How many times did those in middle get bumped?
 - Did those racing worry about bumping them?
 - How did those in the middle affect the outcome?

Race 3: Have each team race, relay style, down and back while a cup of water sits on a stool in the narrow point between the lines. Run this version more than once, encouraging the class to speed up. You may want to put a towel under the stool. Stop Race 3 if the cup of water is knocked over.

- Debrief:*
- How long did you think it would take for a spill?
 - How did the water make you personally feel?
 - Did anyone act like they were “good enough” to avoid it?”
 - What was the best way to keep it from spilling?

The Map

Gather the class around a globe or a large world map, or give each member of the class their own map of the world. *25 min.*

Invite them to reflect on where Israel sits compared to other nations and regions. Invite them to share what they know about that part of the world’s history.

Ask:

- How would you get to Egypt if you were in France?
- How would you get to Turkey if you were in Ethiopia?
- How would you get to the Baltic Sea if you were in Yemen?
- Assuming people lived in these places before they had their modern names, and assuming they were actively trading stuff, how do you think this affected Israel?
- What are the major “trade routes” today in our world?
(Airplanes go anywhere but leave/arrive through big cities.)
(Trains often go through industrial areas as well as big cities.)
(Interstates go through big cities.)
(Ships are important to carry large loads around the world.)
- How are modern locations changed by traffic?
(Restaurants, hotels, gas stations, more roads, etc.)
- How much wealth do people near trade routes have?
(Some people have become rich making money from trade.)
(Some people have low paying jobs with trade industries.)
- How is Israel’s place on the map in trading like the relay race games we played?
- Did/do travelers worry about people living in Israel?



Map of the Future Explain that Isaiah predicted a time when Jerusalem would fall and they would no longer live in security. Isaiah lived through the fall of the N. Kingdom and a siege of Jerusalem by Assyria. He warned that God will use Assyria to punish Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom for not being faithful. *7 min.*

Read Isaiah 10: 5 – 7, 10 - 11

Ask:

- Who do you think is talking? (God?)
- Who do you think “him” is? (Assyria?)

Read Isaiah 10: 20 – 27

Ask:

- What do you think “remnant” means?
- Would you be comforted by the promise of a remnant?
- Does the promise of a remnant make up for the fear of being in exile?
- What would be the worst part of being an exile?
- If you were Assyria who would you take away first?
Or, rephrased...
- If you could take away a player from another team who would you take?
- Would it make you feel better to know your teammate would be returned after the game?
- How long do you think it would take for a new place to feel like home?
- How long do you think it would take for returning “home” to Jerusalem to seem strange?

Map of Time Give each member of the class a timeline. Look at the timeline to see when God’s people went into exile. *6 min.*

Ask:

- How do you think the experience was different for those who were born while in exile?
- How long do you think people kept hope alive?
- What do you think “home” meant to those in exile?
- Is there any experience in your life that helps you understand what the exiles would have felt?

Prayer Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. Ask each person to give thanks for one thing about “home.” *2 min.*



Prophets Timeline

DATES (BCE)	PROPHET	KING	LOCATION	CONTEXT
750 – 724	Amos Hosea		N. Kingdom	Judgment
742 – 735		Jotham	Judah	
735 – 715		Ahaz	Judah	
722	FALL OF SAMARIA – N. Kingdom (Israel) falls; 10 tribes lost			
715 – 687		Hezekiah	Judah	
701	ASSYRIAN SIEGE ON JERUSALEM – Sennacherib			
742 – 687	Micah		Judah	
	Isaiah		Judah	
687	Obadiah		Judah	Anti-Edomites
640 - 609		Josiah	Judah	Faithfulness
630 - 612	Zephaniah ben Cushi (“Yahweh protects” son of “Africa”)			
626	BABYLON rises to power under King Nabopolassar			
612	Nahum		around Judah	Predicts Nin.
612	BABYLONIANS DEFEAT ASSYRIANS, Ninevah falls			
627 – 586+	Jeremiah	Josiah / Judah Jehoiakim		
	Ezekiel			Exile
605 - 586	Habakkuk	Jehoiakim	Judah	Bab. invasion
605 - 562	<i>Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, is King of Babylon</i>			
597	BABYLONIANS INVADE JERUSALEM			
593 -	Ezekiel	Jehoiakim	In Exile	No return
587 - 586 586 - 538	BABYLONIANS DESTROY JERUSALEM AND TEMPLE <i>Hebrews are exported (exiled) to Babylon</i>			
538	PERSIANS UNDER KING CYRUS DEFEAT BABYLON			
500 – 350	Joel		Judah	Nationalistic
520	Haggai		Judah	Temple build
	Zechariah			Post-exile
515	Malachi			Reform
480 – 450	Ezra and Nehemiah			
332	PERSIANS NO MORE			
????	Jonah		Dispersed all over	Fable