



Lesson 1

Creation: And It Was Good!

Teacher's Notes:

The story of creation can be found in Genesis 1 and again in Genesis 2. Yes, two different stories. The first story is very orderly, with a different part of creation created each day. Although it seems to follow a logical process, the first story reflects the recorder's understanding of how the world is put together, not so much modern science. For example, the waters are separated into those above the dome and those below. This was reflects common belief in that time, that the heavens were like a dome above the Earth, with holes in the dome allowing rain to fall through. Another example of belief of the time shows up in the telling of light and darkness being created, followed by the creation of the Sun and Moon.

The second story of creation starts around Genesis 2:4. This version is more of a story, with a narrative flow that carries over into the "Temptation" story. In this version, God seems more human, with hands to press the earth into the shape of a person, and lungs to breathe life into that person. In this version, God walks and talks in the garden with his creations. The order of parts of creation is different from the order within the Genesis 1 story.

Much like the value of having four Gospels that are each different and unique, the two creation stories show different aspects of God. Genesis 1 shows a cosmic creator who speaks and commands things into existence. Genesis 2 shows a personal and intimate creator who has relationship with what has been made. There are times when we want God to be bigger than everything else is and in control of the universe. Other times, we want God to be right by our side. Together these stories show the power and intimacy of our creator.

Scriptures: Genesis 1: 1- 2: 3
Genesis 2: 4 – 25

Supplies:

- Play-doh™ (small or mini cans) or modeling clay
- Legos™ or other types of building blocks
- White board / markers (or butcher paper / markers)

Preparation:

- Have enough Play-doh for every class member
- Prepare the whiteboard or butcher paper at front of room

Activity	Instructions	Time
Creator For A Day	Invite everyone to make something with their Play-doh. It can be something real or from their own imagination. Give class members time to make their creations, then go around and have individuals share what they have made and why they chose to make it. If this is early in the school year, you may want to have each person share his or her name as well.	<i>10 min.</i>



Ask:

- What does your creation mean to you?
- How does it feel to feel the dough/clay in your fingers?
- How did you choose what to create?
- Were there other things you chose not to make?
- If your creation could change one thing about itself, what do you think that would be?
- If your creation could ask you a question, what do you think it would ask you?

****Have the group place their creations somewhere safe! They will need them again later.***

Story Time

Divide into two groups. Give each group one of the scriptures for the day. Instruct them to read the scripture together, write down the order in which things were created, and any questions they may have about the story. When they are done, bring the groups back together to share their lists. Start with the order of creation and allow them to discuss the “real” order of Creation. Then, give a chance to share their written questions about the story, and to share their thoughts on the questions. Do not feel pressured to find actual answers. We are talking about creation, and no human answers can make everyone happy. God created, and how God did it remains a mystery. It is not unfaithful to have questions with no answers. That is what we call “mystery”!

10 min.

Creation Teams

Divide into the teams again, giving each team some blocks or Legos to work with. Instruct them to build a “perfect church” with their blocks. Everyone should give input and help build. When they are done, invite them to share their creation with the whole group.

5 min.

Ask:

- How did you come up with your “perfect church”?
- Did you agree or disagree as a group?
- How did you make decisions?

Group Think

Invite everyone to turn their attention to the front of the room (whiteboard or paper). Explain that they will be creating something together. This work of art will include all of their ideas and each person will contribute to the drawing. Invite one

5 min.



member of the class to draw a line. It can be straight, curved, squiggly, or whatever; it just needs to be a line. Don't let them get too detailed. Invite each member of the class to take a turn going to the board and adding a line or shape. Some will have more artistic skill than others. This is not about talent, but the process. When you are "done" take some time to talk about your picture.

Ask:

- How do you feel about what we created?
- Was it easier to work alone or as a group?
- Was it easier to work in a small or a large group?
- Whose work gave more direction to this drawing, those who went first or those at the end?
- Those who drew first, does it look like you intended?
- Those who drew later, do you feel like you got to really shape this creation?

What Does That Mean?

Read Genesis 1: 26 again.

5 min.

Ask the group what "dominion" means. After Thoughts are shared, pull them together, reminding (if they didn't say this) that dominion also means being responsible for something. Kings and queens have responsibility for all that is in their dominion.

Ask:

- If God gives us dominion over creation, what is our responsibility?
- Have we done a good job with our responsibility?
- How could we do better...
 - as a church?
 - as a family?
 - as a community?
 - as myself, individually?
- Who are the people who help us to care for the earth? (e.g. government leaders, sanitation workers, park rangers).

Creation Exchange

Have each person get their Play-doh creation from earlier. As the group sits in a circle, have each person pass their creation four people to the left. Go around the room and have each person share one thing they would change about the creation they now hold in their hand. After everyone has shared, go back to the original creator how they feel about the proposed changes.

5+ min.



Ask:

- How is this activity like God’s creation and our responsibility of dominion?
- How does it feel to see your creation in somebody else’s hands?
- Do you worry about your creation?
- Do you think someone else is worried about the creation in *your* hands?
- How do you think God feels about us having God’s creation in our hands?
- As creation expanded, and there were more people on Earth, do you think it was easier or harder to take care of creation? (consider more help but also more mess).
- What does it say about us that God chooses to trust us with dominion?
- What does it say about God that God chooses to trust us with dominion?

Closing

Ask the class to combine their creations into one new creation. It should be something that connects the group or represents everyone. They need to decide as a class what they will make with their creations. After choosing what to make, they need to choose who will be form responsible for making the creations into one. Will one person do this, or all of those who now hold them? When the group is finished making their new creation, ask them how they feel about it.

5 min.

Prayer

Create a prayer by standing in a circle and holding hands. Ask each person to add one word, much as they did with the drawing. Go around the circle three times, then close with, “and all God’s creation said...” with the group responding, “Amen” in unison.

2 min.



Lesson 2

A Big Flood

Teacher’s Notes:

Last week’s lesson was Creation. From Genesis 3 – 6 we hear about the serpent tempting Adam and Eve. We hear about them leaving the garden after eating the forbidden fruit. We learn about their sons, Cain and Abel. We mostly hear about how poorly those who followed Adam and Eve did with free will. We do have a genealogy from Adam to Noah, putting eight generations between these portions of the story. The ages that people lived to then seems amazing (the oldest living person listed in scripture is Methuselah at 969 years). Most were over 70 before having children. This raises the mystery if they used our modern way of telling time, or something different. However, an important part of that period was the problem of humanity (where did all the people come from? More mystery!) in living up to their responsibility to care for creation and each other.

By the time Noah comes into the story, God is frustrated. It is important to know that every culture known has some sort of creation story, and most also have a flood story. Does that mean some sort of global flood must have happened? Does it prove a climate shift and massive melt and freeze such as what we hear predicted by “Global Warming?” It is impossible to know, so here we only deal with our tradition’s flood story in scripture. Yes, God’s anger is troubling, but it won’t be the last time we hear about God being angry. Also, it is good to remember that in the time these stories were put down on paper (papyrus actually), there was no understanding of good and evil as separate or opposing forces. People thought that all things came from God and whatever came, good or bad, was surely deserved. They thought that if bad things happened to good people, it must be due to the sins of their parents or children (Thus the expression, “sins of the father...”). Noah seems to have done well, however; that is where today’s story begins.

Scriptures: Genesis 6: 9 – 22
 Genesis 7: 11-16
 Genesis 8: 13-19
 Genesis 9: 8-17

Supplies:

- Construction paper, tape and markers
- Microphones (not working) as drama props

Preparation:

Activity	Instructions	Time
Weather Story	Invite each person to share their name and a story about weather, such as when they got caught in the rain, when a storm scared them, or when rain stopped to let them do something fun. Stories can be scary or fun.	8 min.
Weather Watch	As a group, name as many places as you can think of to find up-to-date weather information.	5 min.

**Ask:**

- Why do we care so much about weather?
- Why do people always talk about weather?
- What is “good weather”... for play? for farmers?
- What controls the weather? Where does it come from?
- What makes “bad weather”?
- Does our answer change when weather is really bad?
(Tornado, hurricane, tsunami, flood, drought)
- How do you feel about the expressions,
“Natural disaster”? “Act of God”?

Weather Channel

Split the class up into three “broadcast teams.” One group will be doing *forecasts*. Another will be reporting *on site*. A third team will be giving *commentary* on the events.

15 min.

Give each group the list of scriptures for the day. The *forecast team* is to put together an evening weather report like would be seen on local news. A large white board or chalkboard and art supplies will be needed to draw a map and to make symbols to go on the map. Team members could also pretend to be symbols on the map (sunshine mask?).

The *on-site team* (could have a reporter, camera person, and others in the background as locals) give their report “in the field” as events happen.

The *commentary folks* will talk about what these events mean, give tips on dealing with the events, talk about the impact on other areas of life, and who is to blame. They can bring in other “experts” as guests.

Allow the three groups to give their reports to the other two. You might even record the reports to share with a larger church group. You will need extra time if actually recording.

Ask:

- What parts of the scripture got left out in your telling?
- What is the lesson or moral behind this story?
- What questions do you have about this story?
- What gives you hope in this story/
- What makes you uncomfortable?
- What does this story tell us about God?
- What could you leave out of this story without changing the meaning?
- What could you not leave out?

What If...	<p><i>Invite the class to respond to this situation:</i></p> <p>While on vacation, a powerful storm hits your hometown. You see news coverage where trees have fallen and homes have large holes in the roof. You finally reach a friend by cell phone and find that their house was destroyed. They know that you are active in your church but their family doesn't really believe in God. Your friend asks, "How could God do this to us?"</p> <p>Working in pairs, have group members share their personal answers with their partner. Together, invite them to share a response (combined or one person's) with the group.</p>	<i>8 min.</i>
Symbols	<p>Think about parts of the flood story that are often used as symbols in the Church. The dove, with the olive branch in its mouth and the rainbow are all common symbols.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do these symbols mean to you? • Do these symbols reflect the meaning of the story? • Which symbol do you relate to more? Why? 	<i>5 min.</i>
Good Thing / Bad Thing	<p>Share the following choices and ask the class to say which they believe to be more true and why. Allow them to debate and discuss.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is rain a good thing or a bad thing? • Is sugar a good thing or a bad thing? • Is free time a good thing or a bad thing? • Is passion a good thing or a bad thing? • Is freedom a good thing or a bad thing? • Is religion a good thing or a bad thing? 	<i>5 min.</i>
Prayer	<p>Ask the class to hold hands and form a circle. Invite each person to lift up a prayer of thanksgiving for something, or a prayer of concern for something. As each person finishes praying (or wishes to have the prayer pass on to the next person), have them squeeze the hand of the person next to them, until the opportunity to pray has gone around the circle.</p>	<i>3 min.</i>



Lesson 3 Abraham and Sarah’s Sacred Journey

Teacher’s notes:

The story begins with Abram and Sarai, whose names are later changed to Abraham and Sarah. This lesson covers their entire journey and so, for sake of consistency, “Abraham” and “Sarah” are used throughout. At the core of their journey is the establishment of a covenant between God and the descendants of Abraham. It is important to remember that the covenant is with the descendants of Abraham, and not exclusive to Abraham and Sarah. At one point in the story, Abraham and Sarah get impatient with God’s promise of a child and try to make things happen through Sarah’s servant, Hagar. Hagar’s child with Abraham causes much drama in the family. Eventually God promises that Ishmael, Hagar’s son, will also have many descendants and be blessed. The story of Abraham’s blessing and covenant with God is a common story for Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Each tradition has seen the covenant with a different perspective, based upon their understanding of God and the scriptures.

Abraham and Sarah are called by God to leave home and go to a new place. This is a common experience in their life; each time they move, they wonder if God will be in the new place. Of course, each time, God is there with them. They also practice the ritual of building altars of stacked rocks as reminders of God’s presence with them. The lesson’s story focuses on their travels from Haran to Shechem, to Bethel, to Egypt, and to Hebron.

Along Abraham and Sarah’s journey, we find many shorter stories about their family. Scripture tells us about Sarah laughing at God’s promise that she will have a child. We read about God’s command to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac (Don’t worry. It was just a test and the kid comes through just fine!). We hear about their travels with their nephew, Lot. Themes of testing, judgment, hospitality and deceit come up regularly in this portion of scripture. Although this curriculum only gives one week to this special journey, it deserves special attention as a core story in the understanding of God’s special relationship with people.

Scriptures: Genesis 12 – 13 (selections through story)
Genesis 12: 1 – 8 (focus verses)

Supplies:

- Small rocks (lots! 3 per person, plus 15 for story telling)
*creek stone works well (purchased by the bag at Wal-Mart)
- Paper and markers or pens
- Large flat container of sand

Preparation: Have 15 rocks in a small basket and the two figures and script from *Children Worship and Wonder’s* “Abram and Sarai: Genesis 12-13 (Sonia Stewart: **Young Children and Worship**, p. 100-103). (See: www.discipleshomemissions.org/FamilyandChildren/CWW.htm) You will also need a “desert box” (flat box with sand in it). Practice the story or invite a storyteller to join you in class. Have a blank sheet of paper for each class member and pens or markers for each person. Have another basket full of rocks so that each person can take three small rocks with them.



Activity	Instructions	Time
Moving Time	<p>Invite class members to think about a move they have made or will make. This can be a move to a new house, a new town, a new state, or another “transition” (maybe a new school, new bedroom at home, etc.) Ask those who would like to share the when, how and why of the move. Older youth might already be thinking about their move to college.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What makes you nervous about moving?• What gives you comfort in the midst of moving?• Does one change in your life affect other parts of your life?	<i>5 min.</i>
Story Time	<p>Tell the Abraham and Sarah story from Children Worship and Wonder, or have a trained Storyteller come and share the story.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I wonder how Abraham and Sarah felt when they were asked to move to a new home?• I wonder how it felt to leave their home and not know where they were going?• I wonder, have you ever gone somewhere and not known where you were going?• I wonder if God sounded different in each of these places?• I wonder how they knew God was with them?• How do we know when God is with us?• How did Abraham and Sarah remember God’s presence on their journey?• How do you mark God’s presence in your life?	<i>10 min.</i>
Time Line	<p>Give each person in class a piece of paper. Explain that no one will have to share their work if they don’t want to. Ask each to put a mark on the paper for the beginning of their life and one for this moment in time. Explain that the space in between is the time-line of their life. Ask them to put in five important moments in their life on the time line. They can draw a picture to represent that moment or write it in.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can anyone share one of the moments on your timeline?• As you look at your timeline, are there places you felt “settled”?• When were you most comfortable? Why?• When were you least comfortable? Why?• What were the most challenging parts of your journey?	<i>10 min.</i>



- Where do you think God might send you next?
- Where do you hope God will send you next?
- How do you feel about God calling you to new places or God calling you to do new things?
- How do you feel God’s presence, or hear God in your life?
- Do you ever wonder if God is with you or will be with you? (new camp, new church, going to college)
- How do you respond to those feelings?
- What have you made, built, written, or done to help you remember that God was, is, or will be with you?
- Have you ever thought of those things as altars?
- Are your “altars” more about God or about you? How?

Monument Moment Explain to the class that they will be taking some time to think about how our culture records and remembers. *15 min.*
Ask them to list any public monuments they are familiar with. Make a list of monuments from Washington D.C., around your state or even in your community. Are there any at school? What about at the cemetery?

Ask:

- What is the purpose of such structures?
- Do they achieve their purpose?
- What meaning do they hold for your?
- What meaning do they hold for other people?
- Do any of them tell a story?
- Where is God in each monument’s story? Is God in the story?

Invite the class to think about the ideal public monument that would show God’s presence. They can choose where it goes, what it looks like, and how it is built. Money is no object... that is the beauty of imagination! Provide some craft supplies to let them build a model of their monument to God.

Closing Give each student three rocks. Remind them about the story they were told and about Abraham and Sarah’s journey, where they stacked rocks to form an altar to remind them that God was in that place. As we leave, we each take rocks with us. Invite them to stack them in a place where they could help them remember God’s presence, or a place they want to celebrate God’s presence. *3 min.*

Prayer Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. Ask each person to thank God for a special place where they remember that God is with them. *2 min.*



Lesson 4 Joseph: The Journey to Egypt

Teacher’s notes:

Joseph’s story is well known, partly due to the narrative form of the story in scripture and Andrew Lloyd Webber’s, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*. The story of Joseph as the dreamer sold into slavery by his jealous brothers is a major transition story in scripture. As the people have done in the past and as the baby Jesus will in the future, they follow God’s lead into Egypt for safety and for food. Of course, this path to Egypt is not direct or explicit. Joseph gets bought from Ishmaelite traders by Potiphar. Joseph excels and becomes head of the household (top slave). Unable to keep her hands off of Joseph, Potiphar’s wife lashes out at Joseph for denying her. Joseph lands in jail where he starts interpreting the dreams of others. It seems that focusing on the dreams of others, rather than his own, marks a turn in Joseph’s fortunes. Before long, he is serving Pharaoh and is second in command in all of Egypt. When Joseph’s brothers come before him in search of food, he wonders if they have grown. He puts them in jail, manipulates and tests them. The final test is passed as Judah comes to the defense of his falsely accused little brother, Benjamin. Judah’s offering to take Benjamin’s punishment shows Joseph that Joseph is not the only brother who has grown up.

The reunion leads to Jacob (known also as Israel, with the names used interchangeably in the text) coming to Egypt. This part of the story ends, although not in the scriptures in this lesson, with a promise from God to Jacob. God says that God will go with them to Egypt and one day bring them out of Egypt. This foreshadows the beginning of Exodus when a Pharaoh rules Egypt who “does not know (remember) Joseph.” This is a story of pride, arrogance, hope, and visions from God.

Scriptures: Genesis 37: 1 – 8
Genesis 37: 23 – 28
Genesis 41: 14 – 36
Genesis 42: 1- 9
Genesis 45: 1 – 15

Supplies:

- Small craft rings
- Yarn (or leather straps / hemp cord / other)
- Glue
- Beads / Feathers / Ribbon

Preparation:

- Make sure there are enough Bibles for everyone in the class.
- Have “Dream Catcher” supplies ready for each person.
- Think about your own dreams before talking about dreams with your class.

Activity	Instructions	Time
Campaign Poster	You are running for “Best Person in the World.” Draw a campaign poster and on the back, write a couple of sentences about why you should win. Invite each member of the class to share their poster.	7 min.



Ask:

- How many of you were comfortable with this activity?
- If you were uncomfortable with it, what may have led to this feeling?
- How do you feel about self-promotion?
- What are the ways you are forced to promote yourself?
(dating, scholarships, sports teams, parents' attention)
- What are the benefits of self-promotion?
- What are the downsides of self-promotion?

**Joseph
Part 1**

Read Genesis 37: 1 – 8 (might have a youth read)

5 min.

Ask:

- How do you respond to people who act like they are better than you?
- Have you ever said something like Joseph did to his family?
- Is it OK to want to do better than others in your family?
- Is it OK to tell them?
- How would you feel if you were a sibling of the boy Joseph?

**Joseph
Part 2**

Read Genesis 37: 23 – 28

5 min.

Ask:

- Did Joseph get what he deserved?
- Do you remember what happened to Joseph next?
(help them with these major plot points if needed)
 - *gets sold to Potiphar as a slave
 - *Joseph works hard to get promoted
 - *Potiphar's wife falls for Joseph
 - *Potiphar sends Joseph to jail.
 - *Joseph is all alone!
- How have things gone when you try to make dreams come true?
- Do things always go like you think they will?
- How do you respond when things don't work out as you dreamed?
- Do you ever have scary dreams where things go wrong?
- What kind of scary dreams do you have?
- Do nightmares have meanings? Can they have a message?

**Joseph
Part 3**

Read Genesis 41: 14 – 36

6 min.

Explain:

In Jail, Joseph's focus was on the dreams of others. He couldn't do anything about his own so he listened and advised those around him.

Ask:

- How is Joseph’s listening different from his early days?
- How did listening to others help Joseph?
- Who always gets the credit when Joseph speaks?
- How is that different from Joseph’s early days?

Dream Catchers

- Give each person in the class a small craft ring. *15 min.*
These are available at most craft stores or even Wal-Mart.

- Provide different colors of yarn and instruct them to cut strands of one color to tie onto the craft ring. *(Leather cord or hemp may be substituted for yarn.)*

- The first few strands should reach across the ring. Use a little glue to keep them in place if needed.

- Once a few anchor lines have been tied, students may start weaving other strands between them to make a web effect.

- Beads may be added to the web. Native American tradition includes one black to represent bad dreams and one white to represent good dreams. The idea is that both get stuck in the web, but only the good ones are allowed to “drip” down into our dreams at night.

- There is no wrong way to form the web. Once a web is created, take a long strand of yarn and wrap it around the craft ring, completely covering the ring. Yarn, ribbon, or feathers may be tied, and allowed to dangle down.

- Invite the class to work on these while conversation goes on.

- Allow the class to take their work with them to finish.

- Invite them to bring them back to decorate the classroom, or to take home to put over their beds. The Dream Catchers can remind us that God is with us, even when sleeping. We can also remember that dreaming is a good thing!

Joseph Part 4

- Read** Genesis 42: 1- 9 *4 min.*

Ask:

- Would this be a fair ending to the story? Why or why not?

- Do you remember what happens next?

(Help them with these major plot points if needed)

*Joseph tests his brothers

*Golden cup placed in Benjamin’s bag

*Benjamin accused of stealing

*Judah stands up for Benjamin

*Joseph sees that his brothers have changed



Joseph Part 5 **Read** Genesis 45: 1 – 15 *3 min.*
Ask:

- Is this a fair end to the story?
- How did Joseph’s dreams come true?

You Part 1 • Invite the class to think about the “dreams” they have held for their own lives. *3 min.*
Ask:

- When you were a small child, what did you want to be when you grow up?
- What led you to that “dream” ?

You Part 2 Invite the class to think about the “dreams” they still hold from childhood. *5 min.*
Ask:

- Now that you are older, what dreams do you have for the future?
- What are you doing or what can you do to make them come true?
- Does God still speak to people in dreams?
- What do you think God would dream for you?
- Are good dreams stronger than nightmares? How? Why?
- Are there any dreams you have already forgotten?
- Are there any dreams you wish you could get back?
- Do you ever dream for other people? Who? How?
- What do you dream for our church?
- What do you dream for our world?
- How do we make dreams come true?
- What lessons can we take from Joseph?

Prayer Ask the class to form a circle holding hands. *2 min.*
Invite each person to pray for someone else’s dream. It can be a person’s or a group’s dream. Ask them to squeeze the hand of the person next to them when they are finished with their part of the prayer.



Lesson 5

The Birth Of Moses

Teachers Notes:

In Genesis, the Children of Israel journeyed to Egypt to survive a famine at home. According to the continuation of these stories in Exodus, the Hebrews did more than survive the famine; they flourished. In time, a new Pharaoh came to rule over Egypt, one who did not know Joseph. The new Pharaoh did not have the same generous attitude as the first Pharaoh. He feared the Hebrews. To keep them from being a threat due to their vast numbers, he set them to work doing hard labor on his building projects.

That did not stop the Hebrews from multiplying. Pharaoh ordered midwives of the Hebrews to kill all baby boys born to Hebrew women. The midwives pretended that they were not speedy enough to intercept Hebrew babies at birth, saying that the Hebrew women were so hardy that they gave birth before the midwives could get there. Because the midwives' wily tactics foiled the plans of the Pharaoh to cut back on population growth among the Hebrews, he commanded all of his people: "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews, you shall throw into the Nile" (Exodus 1:22). Into this story of cultural mayhem, Moses, a man of Levite lineage, was born.

The story of Moses' birth is filled with questions and ironies. The very source of the threat to Moses' life ends up being the source of his salvation: not just Egypt itself but an Egyptian river. Furthermore, this man who comes to be a heroic leader of the Hebrews is not named by his Hebrew mother but by an Egyptian woman. The basket into which his mother puts him is literally an "ark" in Hebrew, just as was used in the Noah story to save the lives of his family and all humanity. Another interesting feature of this passage is that other than Moses, the other characters are not referred to by name.

Moses' birth story leads us to understand that the story is about the liberation of the Hebrew people. When Moses' mother saved his life and then nursed him as the child of an *Egyptian* woman, she saved an entire nation of people who were yet to be born.

Scripture: Exodus 2: 1-10

Supplies:

- Paper, Pens, Butcher Paper (or Chalk board/dry erase Board)
- Construction paper or “thank you” cards.

Preparation:

- Have enough paper and pens for every member of the class.
- Have extra paper for groups to record discussion answers.
- Have construction paper or a box of blank thank you cards, with pens or markers for decorating.

Activity	Instructions	Time
What Would I Give Up?	Ask everyone to make three columns on their paper. In one column write, “For Family,” in another, “For Friends,” and in the last, “For Strangers.” Tell the class to list in each column some of the things that they would be willing to give up for the people in their lives who fit into each column’s title. Ask the class not to think only of physical things, but ideas such as time and fame. Have the class share when finished.	10 min.



Ask:

- What would be the hardest to give up?
- What would be the easiest to give up?
- For which group would it be easiest to give up things?
- For which would it be the hardest?
- What is the hardest thing that you have ever given up?
- Have you ever given up something for someone, and did not even realize you were doing it?

Story Time

Divide into groups. After reading Exodus 2:1-10 together, each group should use one side of a piece of paper to list each time that someone in the reading gave something up, along with what happened because they gave it up. Ask the groups to share their results.

Who Was That?

On the other side of the paper, have groups list the characters in the story who are mentioned, but whose names are not given. Have the class share their results.

7 min.

Ask:

- Why do you think these people are unnamed?
- Were these unnamed people important?
- How would the story be different without these people?

Let's Look Again

Invite the class to read the story again. Think about each character in the story.

7 min.

Ask for each character:

- What might have this person been thinking at the time?
- How might things have been different without this person's actions?
- Do you think he/she realized all the consequences of his or her actions?
- How might God have been working through this character?

Say: When Moses' mother saved his life and then nursed him as the child of an *Egyptian* woman, she saved an entire nation of people who were yet to be born.

Ask:

- What do we show God through our sacrifices?
- How do we make God harder to see when we fail to act?

Let's Name Them!

Divide the Board or butcher paper into two sections. In one section list "People who do things for us, but that we do not name." In the another put, "People who helped us and they didn't even know it." Have the class list people who have helped them and people who have helped

15 min.

the church. Next have the class either make thank-you cards with construction paper, or write on purchased thank-you cards. Let each person write to the person who helped him or her individually, and have the whole class sign cards that go to people who helped the church. After church, have the class deliver these letters. If the class named someone who is deceased, if it is practical, have the class deliver these to the spouse or other family members of the deceased

**Pray
For Those
Unthanked**

Invite the class to stand and form a circle, holding hands. *5 min.*
Have each person name a person who perhaps has gone unthanked for their sacrifice. Encourage people to think outside the church and their personal lives. After each person has been named, list all of the persons named. Pray for the people named, pray that we may see God in the sacrifices of others, and pray that we realize that our own sacrifices can be ways others see God.





Lesson 6

Call of Moses

Teachers Notes:

This text tells the story of God calling Moses to save the Israelites. Moses was not perfect and clearly had his flaws. But Moses was God's choice. Moses was the one who could challenge the Egyptian authority, lead the people through the wilderness, and receive the law from God. Surely, God could see the frailties and limitations of Moses, but called him based on his potential. One of the biggest struggles in this story is Moses claiming his gifts while letting go of his excuses and insecurity. Luckily, Moses is not alone. His brother Aaron comes along for the journey, and we learn later in Exodus that his sister Miriam (she eventually gets a name!) lead the people in worship along the journey.

Scripture: Exodus 2: 11-25, 3: 1-10, 3: 11-21

Supplies:

- paper and pens for each class member
- chalkboard (etc)
- a coin, and random extra objects (see “Impulse” game)

Preparation:

- Think about the members of your class and positive traits of each.
- Decide how to do the readings, either reading them yourself or having volunteer class members read.
- Look over the game, “Impulses” to be clear how to lead it.

Activity	Instructions	Time
The Story Part 1	<p>Read Exodus 2: 11-25 (take your time!)</p> <p><i>Before the scripture is read, ask students to listen carefully to the scripture, trying to remember words, phrases, and ideas that pop out at them.</i></p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stood out to you? • What words or phrases got your attention? <p>Read the scripture again</p>	5 min.
The Good and the Bad	<p>Instruct class members to each write down 5 positive things about themselves (talent, ability, smile, can pray/speak in public, good listener, etc.).</p> <p>Next, have class members write 5 things that they consider could be negatives about themselves (habits, subjects they struggle with in school, physical features or challenges).</p> <p>Repeat this whole process twice (should have 10 positives and 10 negatives).</p> <p>As with all such self-reflection lists, remind group members to respect the privacy of others, not being nosey about other people's lists.</p>	8 min.



Ask:

- Which were easier to come up with, positives or negatives? Why?
- Were you afraid to write down any such qualities? Any idea why?
- Which do you think more about, your positives or negatives? Why?
- What would it take to get you to see past your negative qualities?
- Do you think being focused on their negative qualities makes people miss out on some good things in life? How/Why?

**The Story
Part 2**

Read Exodus 3: 1-10

5 min.

Before the scripture is read, ask class to listen carefully and remember any words, phrases or ideas that pop out at them

Ask:

- What stood out to you?
- What words or phrases got your attention?

Read the scripture again

**Holy
Ground**

Make three columns on a chalkboard (or other)

13 min.

Label the columns with these questions.

What are some things that are Holy to you?

Where are some places that are Holy to you?

Who are some people who are Holy to you?

Fill in the columns by having the class give answers.

Ask:

- What makes these things Holy?
- Have the group break into smaller groups to come up with their definitions of what “Holy” means.

As the groups come back together, have them share their answers with the whole group.

Explain that a common definition of Holy is “set apart,” such as for God. Things can be Holy by being set apart, different from the world they are in.

Go back to the things, people and places they said were Holy.

Ask:

- What makes them ‘set apart’?
- Are you Holy? Why or why not?

**The Story
Part 3**

Read Exodus 3: 11-21

5 min.

Before the scripture is read, ask class to listen carefully and remember any words, phrases or ideas that pop out at them

Ask:

- What stood out to you?
- What words or phrases got your attention?

Read the scripture again


Acting on Impulse

1. Divide the class into two equal groups, each sitting in a line that is back-to-back with the other team. *10 min.*
2. At one end of the two lines, place an object (doesn't matter what).
3. The leader should stand at the other end of the line from the object. The leader's position becomes the front.
4. The two group members sitting closest to the leader may watch the leader; the remaining members must look down or close their eyes.
5. The leader flips the coin, so that both team members watching can see the result. As soon as they see, "heads," they should squeeze the hand of the person next to them. The team quickly passes the "squeeze" down the line.
6. When the last person in line receives the "squeeze," that is their signal to grab the object. The first team to grab the object wins the round.
7. The winning team gets to send their first person to the back of the line, moving everyone else up by one spot.
8. A false grab, caused by a false squeeze or a squeeze on "tails" causes the group to go backwards in their rotation (the last person in back moves to the front). To win, a team must rotate through all their group members.

Ask:

- Which was harder, being at the front and not being able to grab the object, or being at the end and having to trust others to tell you when you could act?
- Do you ever let other people dictate your actions?
- Do people ever nudge you into doing something?
- Do parents ever nudge you into doing something?
- Does God ever nudge you to do things? If so, how?
- How do you think Moses felt when he saw the "burning bush?"
- How long do you think it took to realize that God was talking to him?
- Why do you think Moses came up with excuses for why he couldn't do what God asked of him?
- Have you ever felt God talked to you... such as, a burning bush, a nudge to do something helpful, or a nudge to speak up when you normally would not speak?
- Did you act on the nudge? Why or why not?
- If you didn't act, what excuses did you come up with?
- If you did act on the nudge, how did you feel?
- Which are more common: burning bushes or gentle nudges?
- How would the message of God be most direct to you?
- What do you think God might be calling you to do with you life?
- What gentle nudges has God given you about your future?

Prayer

Ask the class to form a circle holding hands. Invite each person to say, "thank you" to God for something they are good at. Close by saying: "God, help us use our gifts, and gift us with the courage to do things we are not good at when called." *2 min.*



Lesson 7 *Plagues and Wonderings*

Teacher’s Notes:

This third part of the Moses story will deal with hardship, hope and reality. The Israelites and the Egyptians both suffered. In the story, the biggest difference between the two groups is that the leader of the Israelites (Moses) brings a message of God's hope and reality to his people. The Egyptian leader, Pharaoh, brings dominance and oppression to the Israelite people. Both ultimately had to deal with what they had been through. Some died, some wandered, but all had to cope with a new reality.

Scripture: Exodus, chapters 7 through 11

- Supplies:**
- 5.5" x 8" piece of card stock for each person
 - 1 black crayon for each person
 - several brightly colored crayons for the class to share
 - one paper clip per person

Preparation: Reflect on the questions and coloring activity.

Activity	Instructions	Time
Happy Days	Give each member of the class a piece of card stock. Invite class members to think about the happiest moments in their life and to choose colors to represent those moments. Explain that they need to color their paper, covering it completely (yes, all of it!). When they are finished, invite them to share their art with the class.	<i>7 min.</i>
Despair	Read Exodus 7: 14-21; 8: 1-6, 16 & 17, 20-24; 9: 1-5, 8-12, 17-19; 10: 3-6, 21-23; 11: 4-6 Ask: • How have people suffered in the Exodus story? (don't forget events in lessons 6 – 7) • How do people in our world suffer today? • How is their suffering similar or different to that in our story? • How have you suffered? • How is your suffering similar or different to that in our story? -Some may not feel they have. -Some may struggle to admit their suffering. -Don't be afraid to ask follow up questions. Some examples to throw out to get people talking: -Divorce -Loss of or illness of loved one -Illness -Bad grades -Failure -Broken relationships -Abuse -Loss of innocence	<i>20 min.</i>



After everyone has had a chance to share, give each person a black crayon. Ask them to think or pray about the suffering they have known and the suffering they know about in the world—as they completely cover the colors on their page with the black crayon.

Hope**Read** Exodus 13: 1-22*10 min.***Ask:**

- Where was hope in this reading?
- How important is hope to those who are suffering?
- Where have you seen light in your suffering?
- What special people or places have brought light to you?
(friends, family, camp, vacation, worship, etc.)

Give each class member a paper clip with one point straightened out. Ask them to use the paper clip to make a design by scratching a line through the black on their paper. The color will show through. They can make a fancy design or simply put marks for each source of hope that comes to mind.

Reality**Read** Exodus 14: 5-30*10 min.***Ask:**

- How did the Egyptians react when the Israelites left?
- What effect did their reaction have? Physically, emotionally?
- How do you think the people felt, seeing Egyptian bodies wash up on the shore?
- How much does hope protect us from sorrow?
- How might God have felt about what happened in this story?
- I wonder how the Hebrews felt once they were free but had no home?
- I wonder what the hardest parts of the story were for the Hebrews? What would the hardest part be for you?
- What reality are you living through?
- Remind the class that even though there is hope to get through hard times, we still have to live in them.

Say: Maybe you can see hope but you still live with divorce,
a loss of a family member or friend, a broken leg,
or a bad mistake you made.

What helps you get through the day?

Where do you receive help?

Do you need help?

**Do not give time for questions to be answered.*

Teachers note: This lesson is purposely left open ended because life is open-ended.

Just as this marks the beginning of the Exodus story and the beginning of the Israelites' wandering, our sorrow and suffering may be a current reality for which we cannot see an end. Just because we have healed from one loss does not mean we won't have others. But we should never forget that we will always have hope.

(Please do not try to force a conclusion to this. Having lots of questions and no sense of closure is a reality for many.)

**Closing
Prayer**

Have group members choose a partner, then go to a place in the room where they can sit apart from the others. Partners should exchange pictures and look at them quietly. Without asking for detail about the picture, have each person pray silently for their partner. When both are finished, invite them to say "Amen" together and leave quietly.

5 min.





Lesson 8

The Law and the Wilderness

Teacher's Notes:

Once the Israelites crossed the sea and found themselves “safe” on the other side, they faced many unexpected challenges. Some rules were needed to help everyone get along outside the structure of Egyptian society and law. Common expectations and community norms were needed. As the people journey together, Moses presents them with the “Law” from God. At the core of God’s Law for the Israelites is the Ten Commandments. Received by Moses and delivered to God’s people, these laws have become a part of the social norms of many cultures and governments. In our own nation today, the Ten Commandments are widely accepted as social and spiritual norms.

When we look closely at the Ten Commandments, we can see a list of prohibitions, or things not to do. Before the prohibitions are laws focusing more on faith than on works, with the question of worshiping God or idols the basic point. In the middle of the two types of rules is the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy. For many, ‘keeping the Sabbath’ helps bring success in following the other commandments. When we honor the Sabbath we keep our focus on God rather than on things that might become idols. This focus also helps us sort out the struggles and feelings in our lives. For example, those who take a Sabbath—a rest—are less likely to be stressed out and want to kill someone. This may seem an extreme and somewhat silly example, but it helps illustrate the point. The Ten Commandments are deeper than ten rules that we may imagine Moses holding up on stone tablets. Of course, rules don’t mean much unless people follow them, which Israel did to varying degrees of success. Like all of us, Israel had its share of failures and successes. This lesson will explore both, and help us find ourselves and our lives reflected in Israel’s journey.

Scriptures: Exodus 20: 1 - 21

Supplies: Paper and pens

Preparation: Stuff to get ready

Activity	Instructions	Time
Rules At Home	Ask each person to share the three biggest rules in their home. Allow them some time to think about the three, and even write them down as they go. As they hear others share, they may want to adapt or amend their own list.	<i>5 min.</i>
Rules at School	Ask each person to share the rule they have the hardest time with at school. Allow them some time to think about their choice. Allow them to share their answers and talk About the different rules others have lifted up.	<i>4 min.</i>



Unwritten Rules	Divide the class up into small teams or pairs. Ask each group to make a list of rules that are unwritten but everyone knows to follow. This might include rules about how to act among friends, at parties, on dates, on teams, or other general cultural rules.	<i>8 min.</i>
	Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do these rules affect your behavior?• How are such rules fair or unfair?• How are such rules made and enforced?• How are such rules challenged or changed?	
Rules & Radicals	Explain that there are many different levels obedience in following rules. Some are diligent rule followers. Others tend to rebel. In between are a wide range of behaviors.	<i>5 min.</i>
	Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you more of a rule follower or a radical?• What affects your willingness to follow rules?• How does the person giving you the rule affect your choices?• How does the importance of the rule affect you?• How do you judge a rule?• How do you decide what rules to follow or break?	
Rule Makers	Divide the class into groups of three or four. Explain that each group will be a country. They can make up their own name and need to come up with ten major rules for their nation. The group needs to prioritize the rules from 1 – 10 in level of importance. Bring the two groups back together and let them share their work.	<i>20 min.</i>
	Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did you choose the rules for your country?• What determined the importance of the rules?• Are the most important rules ones that benefit the ruler or the citizens?• Are some designed to make you more likable as a leader?• How would your rules change if you just focused on what the people wanted? Be specific.• How would your rules change if you just focused on what you wanted?	
	Explain: <p>Announce to the class that all of the countries are being merged together. As a class, they must come up with a common set of rules for the new united land. Give them time to make their rules.</p>	



God's Rules

Read Exodus 20: 1 - 21

7 min.

Ask:

- How did God's people respond to the Ten Commandments?
- I wonder how we would respond to these rules if they were new to us?
- I wonder how many of these rules were already norms for them?
- I wonder how Moses felt as the one chosen to deliver the law?
- I wonder how Moses felt as the leader and possible enforcer of the law?
- I wonder how God felt about the people's response to the Law?
- How do you think God feels about our response to the Law?
- How do you think God feels about our response to society's laws?
- How might God's laws ask us to break society's laws?
- How do we prioritize God's and society's expectations?

Prayer

Ask the class to form a circle holding hands.
Invite each person to say thank you for a rule
or a person who helped change or shape rules.
Ask the last person in the circle to say, "Amen."

2 min.





Lesson 9

Joshua: Passing Over to Home

Teacher's notes:

Joshua is a difficult book because it raises many questions about God's role in war and violence. Before diving into this, we have an important point to review from past lessons. We remember from the Flood story (and can see in other stories as well) that Israel believed that all things came from God. All occurrences, great and small, bad and good, were understood to be from God, even though they often came at the hands of other people. They had no cultural understanding of evil as a separate power from God.

The events of Joshua were passed along in oral tradition and not written down until generations after the events had occurred. The book of Joshua answers many of the questions that a younger generation may have asked the generation before them: When did God stop sending manna from heaven for food? How did we get to this land? How did our family come to this region?

In Joshua we see details of how the people of Israel built altars. Each tribe took a stone from the Jordan River as they were crossing, with the waters held back by the power of God through the ark of the covenant (Joshua 4). The narrative tells that the stones were stacked into an altar so that when the children saw and asked about the stones, the adults could tell them about all that God has done. Acts of dedication and affirmation of the covenant appear throughout the book of Joshua.

One theme that might be overlooked, but is at the core of Joshua, is the connection between their crossing over and the Passover. The book tells the details of crossing, or passing over into the "Promised Land." The first step is sending out spies who find refuge with Rahab, a prostitute living in Jericho. In exchange for hiding and protecting the spies of Israel, Rahab asks for protection for herself and family when the invasion comes. She is instructed to hang a red cord outside her tent to mark the home and thus save it from any harm—similar to the blood of the lamb on the doors in Egypt. The theme comes up again when all of the men are circumcised in preparation of the Passover. The familiar story of Jericho's defeat takes place over seven days, seeming to fall over the seven days of Passover. Along with crossing the Jordan River on dry ground, these references to the Passover provide the context for the events of Joshua.

Scripture: Joshua 1: 1-3
Joshua 2
Joshua 20
Joshua 24: 1-27

Supplies:

- Paper, multi-colored markers or pencils, rulers (straight-edges)
- Large paper or white board with multi-colored markers

Preparation: Pray about the youth in your class. Think about the families you know. Think of any pastoral concerns this lesson might raise for class members. Think about your own family background. Name your own issues.



Activity	Instructions	Time
My Space	<p>Give each member of the class a piece of paper and ask them to draw the floor plan of where they live. Ask them to color in each room with a different color. One color should be their own space. Another color could be used for each family member’s space, including anyone who has their own chair or spot on the couch. Don’t forget pets and their special places. They may want to use a special color for shared family space. Allow them to use their creativity.</p> <p>Invite each member of the class to share their floor plans. While they are answering, ask them how those spaces were assigned. Were they assigned, or simply developed over time?</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any paces outside of your home that are ‘yours’? (My-Space on line, table in cafeteria, seat in class, their car or seat in family car, pew at church, etc.) • In any way, can you claim that God gave you your space? • Do you ever have any conflicts caused by your space or another’s? • How is your space holy? If it is not holy, why not? • Do you remember ever being promised your own space? (get a new bed, bedroom, or a car one day?) • What other promises have required patience to see come true? • Have you ever had to share something special? (toy, TV, computer, car, clothes, pictures, jewelry, etc.) 	<i>8 min.</i>
Their Space	<p>Read Joshua 1: 1-3</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you remember where the promise of land came from? (God’s covenant with Abraham) • What other promises did God make? (Many nations, blessed nations, no more flood, etc.) • Do you think anyone gave up on God’s promise after 40 years? • I wonder if people thought “the Promised Land” was just a myth? • I wonder when people started wondering which part was theirs? • Do you think there were conflicts over who got the best areas? • Joshua splits the land among the tribes. How do you think that works? 	<i>5 min.</i>
Rahab’s Space	<p>Explain that before the land can be divided, they have to conquer the people already living there. The first city is Jericho.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <p>What do you know about the story of Jericho? How does Joshua lead the people to defeat Jericho? (walking around the walls 7 times, then they fell.)</p>	<i>5 min.</i>



Read Joshua 2

Ask:

- What kind of person do you think Rahab was?
- Was Rahab’s space Holy? Why or why not?
- How do you think Rahab felt with the spies staying in her home?
- How do you think her family felt about her decision?

**Safe
Space**

Read Exodus 12: 11 – 14

8 min.

Ask:

- How is this story similar to the story in Joshua 2?
(mark on the door, cord and blood both red, etc.)
- Are there places you feel are “protected” in your life?
- Are there really any protected places in the world?
- What makes a “safe space” for you?
- If you were in trouble, where would you go?
- If you were in trouble, who would you turn to?

Read Joshua 20

Ask:

- What does “refuge” mean to you?
- What is a refugee?
- What kind of structures do we have today that are like
“cities of refuge?”
- Have you ever wished you could go away until things were better?
- Who, in our society, could use such a safe place?
- How should Church be a place of refuge?
- What does “sanctuary” mean to you?
- How does God provide refuge or shelter?
(literally, spiritually, emotionally)

**Space
At the
Table**

Draw a floor plan of your Church’s sanctuary. It does not *15 min.*
have to be perfect but should have the major elements.
Make sure the drawing is big enough for the class to mark
on during their discussion. Ask them to use a similar
color system to mark people’s space in the sanctuary.
Ask them to write names of families, or types of people.
Make sure places where youth sit are marked. Don’t
forget choir, musicians, ministers, and worship leaders.

If the group does not color or mark the communion table,
baptistery, pulpit and other places be sure to have them
fill in those spaces.



Ask:

- Is our Church sanctuary Holy? Why or why not?
- Is our Church sanctuary a place of refuge?
- Who in our church is a refugee?
- When have you felt like a refugee at church?
- What message does Communion hold for a refugee?
- How does Communion connect to Joshua?
 - (Passover remembered)
 - (God’s protection for all who believe)
 - (place of refuge for those who feel outcast)
- Whose space is the Communion Table?
- Do those who need refuge know about our Church?
 - Why or why not?
- What are other places of refuge in your community?
 - (shelters, public parks, ball fields, parking lots, etc.)
- How can our Church be in ministry in those places?
- What can our Church do better in providing refuge?
- What can you do as an individual to provide refuge?
- Do you think you could do what Rahab did?
 - Why or why not?

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. Inform them that each person will have a turn standing in the middle of the circle. Invite them to think of a person who needs the refuge of a church like ours. When each person steps into the middle, invite that person to share a prayer, silent or aloud, for the person needing to find a place of refuge—and to ask God to help them in opening safe space to others. Go around the circle, letting each person have a turn in the middle. The rest of the group closes the circle by holding hands while the person in the middle prays. When the person in the middle is done, they return to the circle and the next person in the circle enters.

8 Min.

At the end, close in a silent prayer of forgiveness for all the times we have failed to provide refuge.

OPTION: play the song *Would you Harbor Me?*
by Sweet Honey and the Rock
*available on I-Tunes



Lesson 10 Deborah and Jael: Women of Wisdom and War

Teacher’s notes:

In the historical story of Israel, Judges is a bridge from individual leaders such as Moses and Joshua to Kings such as Saul, David, and Samuel. Joshua brings us from wilderness into the “promised land” and ends with God’s people renewing the covenant as they settle into their new home. The question that comes with Joshua’s death is, “Who will lead?” The Hebrew word for “Judge” can also mean “rule” or “ruler.”

Along with a confusing timeline, Judges presents the stories of twelve characters that might be called leaders, rulers, or heroes. The first is brief and focuses on Ehud, a leader who sounds more like an assassin. Another leader is Deborah. Deborah is listed as a “prophetess,” who was judge over the people of Israel in her day. Deborah seems to be available for people to come with their problems and questions. Her role changes into government leader who calls Barak as military leader and gives him orders for battle.

Barak is the military leader called to lead the people, but is unwilling to follow God’s command (given through Deborah) unless Deborah comes with them to the battlefield. The relationship between these two characters is strange and difficult to define. We know the name of Deborah’s husband, who is mentioned only briefly in Deborah’s introduction. Strangely, most people know Deborah’s name but few know Barak as a Biblical name. Deborah’s story includes the story of Jael, one of the rare places in scripture where we are told more about the women than the men of a story. Judges has many female characters, with a large number of them having names (a rarity in scripture). In the midst of the inclusion of women we also find the story of Jephthah and his daughter, which seems out of place in a book filled with strong women who have names (more about this in the next lesson).

Scripture: Judges 4: 1-24

Supplies: Whiteboard, chalkboard, or large sheets of paper

Preparation: Have markers / chalk ready
Reflect on the role of women in your congregation.

Activity	Instructions	Time
Who’s In Charge?	This is a “wake up” activity to help the class get going. Have everyone sit in a circle (should be, anyway) so that everyone can see each other. Send a volunteer out of the room while the rest of the room chooses a “leader.” Everyone must do what the leader does, but the leader should try to be subtle so they are not discovered. Everyone but the volunteer must remain seated. Bring the volunteer back and explain that the volunteer’s job is to stand in the middle of the group and try to figure out who the leader is. You can play a few rounds with different volunteers and different leaders.	7 min.
Look at Leaders	Ask class members to think about leaders in the world and in their lives. Ask them to name titles that rulers	8 min.



are known by and write them on a whiteboard, or a large sheet of paper while the class brainstorms.

(i.e. king, queen, dictator, Scout Master, team captain)

After the class has a good list of leaders, ask them to compare and contrast the different leader roles. Make sure to lift up different styles and structures, such as the difference between being a President or king.

Ask:

- How do leaders get selected?
- How do leaders get their authority?
- How are leaders judged? How is this fair or unfair?
- Can anyone be a leader? Why or why not?
- What makes a good leader?
- What makes a bad leader?

Leader Games

The class will play two games:

12 min.

“Follow the Leader” and “Simon Says”

Play “Follow the Leader” first, having everyone follow one designated leader on a walk around the church.

Once the group returns, assign a new leader and play “Simon Says.” At the end, invite the class to take their seats.

Ask:

- How is the job of leader different in these two games? (*one leads by example and the other by instruction.)
- Which game do you like better?
- Which type of leader would you rather be?
- Which type of leader would you rather follow?
- What are some situations where a leader who gives instructions would be helpful?
- What are some situations where a leader who sets an example would be helpful?
- What are some situations where a leader who gives instructions would be *unhelpful*?
- What are some situations where a leader who sets an example would be *unhelpful*?
- What kind of leader are you?

Leaders In Our Lesson

Read Judges 4

10 min.

Invite the class to retell the story so that everyone has an understanding of the narrative. The difficult names of people and cities can make it hard to follow the first time through.

Invite the group to add to their list of leaders by adding the names of leaders in the story. Be sure not to forget the names of Kings and other minor characters.



Ask:

- What do you think about the leaders we read about?
- Who do you think were the best leaders? Why?
- Who do you think were the worst leaders? Why?
- Which character could you relate to best? Why?
- Does it bother you that Barak didn't want to go to battle without Deborah? Why or why not?
- What role do women play in this story?
- Who do you think people responded to Deborah leading?
- What challenges do women have in leadership today?
- What is the role of women in church leadership today?
- Are there parts of our culture that would be challenged by our reading from Judges? (*be respectful of other church traditions that do not allow women in leadership but do not be afraid to let the class talk about any issues that may come up.*)
- Do you think Jael was a leader? Why or why not?
- Are all faithful people leaders?
- Who is more responsible for the outcome of a situation? - leaders or followers?
- Can a person be a hero without being a leader?
- Who in today's society would you consider a hero?

Look for Leaders

Using your same list of leaders, invite the class to add the names of leaders in the church. This can be leadership positions (i.e. Elder, Minister, board member) or names of people who lead. Give each member of the class a note card and invite them to write down the leadership jobs or titles they think they might have the gifts to hold. Also invite them to write down the names of leaders they respect. Invite them also to write down how God leads them in their life. This question may be difficult. Try not to help them too much as they wrestle with its meaning. 7 min.

Ask:

- Would anyone like to share some of their answers?
- Would anyone like to share how God leads them?

Invite the class to keep their card in their Bible or somewhere special to think about how God leads them and their role in the story of God's people.

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. 2 min.
Ask each person to give thanks for a leader that from the class's list. This can be from any of the lists added and can be a person, job, or title. Anything on the list can be used. The last person can say "Amen."



They Did What?

Split the class into three groups and assign each one a different story. Inform them that their task is to read the story and know it well enough to convince the other two groups that the main male character in their story (Gideon, Jephthah, or Sampson) used the poorest judgment of the three.

33 min.

Give the groups 10 minutes to read their story and prepare for the debate. Allow another 10 minutes for discussion. When each group has had a chance to share their position, allow some given and take. Invite each group to respond to the case presented to the other, still trying to convince the class their character used the poorest judgment.

As conversation winds down, ask the groups to split up again and give them time to plan for another round of debate. Explain that they should now look at the other character's stories and find good points about these other characters. Give them at least 5 minutes to look at the other stories. Bring the groups back together and open the debate again, using the new information.

At the end of the time period, ask the groups to vote. Each group gets one vote and cannot vote for their own. Give each group a minute to huddle and decide who to vote for, then call for a final vote. Finally, announce a winner and celebrate the dubious winner.

Ask:

- Which character did you feel the most in common with?
- Which character do you think was the most faithful? Why?
- Do you learn more from these characters' faults or strengths? Why?
- What do you learn from these stories?
- If a story was written about you and God, what instance of poor judgment or what challenging character trait might have the potential to become your 'fatal flaw'?
- Thinking about each main character:
 - What keeps you from trusting God's promises?
 - What silly deals have you tried to make with God?
 - When have you given something or someone else credit for what God has done?
 - Have you ever given God credit for a negative action or occurrence in life caused by someone else?
- Thinking about the other characters:
 - What was the role of the women in these stories?
 - How do you feel about Jephthah's daughter?
 - How do you feel about the role of women in Sampson's story?



I'll Do What?

Give each member of the class a note card. Invite them to write down one thing in their life that is their most challenging flaw—perhaps, if let run loose, could become a ‘fatal flaw,’ like that of the characters. Tell them that no one else will see their card. Give them a moment to write. Ask them to make some notes on how they can address that issue in their life. Invite them to put their card in their Bible, or somewhere they can reflect on it in their prayers.

3 min.

Prayer

Invite the class to form a circle and join hands. Ask each person to share a prayer saying aloud or silently, “God I’m sorry about _____,” but filling in the blank only silently. When they have completed their silent prayer, they may squeeze the hand of the person next to them who will continue the pattern. When the prayer comes back to the teacher, close by saying “Amen.”

2 min.

