

11



THE PROPHETS & THE JOURNEY HOME

God's Promises Remain - Return from Exile

Year 1 – THE KINGDOM STORY

1 | Teacher's Notes

Scripture	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah 48:9-11
Objectives	<p>To explain that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our lessons are all a part of a bigger story which is the story of the Forever Kingdom. This big story is found in the Bible.• The Israelites were in exile in Babylon because they had turned away from God, but God had not forgotten his promise to Abraham and David, and he sent prophets to proclaim hope for God's people.• After 70 years, in his mercy, God allowed his people to return to their land to rebuild the temple.• Those who remembered the magnificent former temple, realized they could not rebuild a temple like that again. The fulfillment of all God's promises was still in the future and the Forever King had not yet come.• God's people remembered his promises, and that helped them to wait with hope for the Forever King.
Memory Verse	"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11 – Paraphrased)
ACNA Catechism Connections	<p>The following Catechism questions are linked to today's story:</p> <p>Q 7 What does God want to give you? ...reconcile us, free us from captivity, know him, become a citizen of his Kingdom, worship, serve and glorify him now and forever...</p> <p>Q 32 What does it mean that the Bible is the Word of God? ...God has spoken through the prophets...</p>

Q 228 How should you "learn" the Bible? ... memorize key passages for my own growth and for sharing with others...

**Suggested
Materials,
Props, and
Costumes**

Big story props:

- Crown - or picture of a crown
- Large Bible.

(These props relate to the bigger story of the Forever Kingdom, and will be used for every lesson. The crown will be referred to as the Kingdom Crown.)

Lesson props:

- **4 Large scrolls.** Each scroll should have the name of the prophet on the outside, and on the inside have the wording noted below: Each scroll has a visual prop to help the children remember the concept.
 - 1. Isaiah:** God is going to send the Forever King and he is going to be an Israelite (a descendant of Abraham), and he will also come from the family of David. The Forever King will bless you and bless all the nations of the world.
 - 2. Ezekiel:** God is going to raise up the temple again and give his people new hearts. His people will follow after God and not reject him as their king.
 - 3. Jeremiah:** God is declaring that the people of Israel will return back to their home in 70 years. He has not left you – God still loves you.
 - 4. Daniel:** God has remembered his promise to us. The Israelites are going to return to our homeland.
- **Song sheet with the following song:** "God is so good"
- **Large cardboard picture of the temple.** (Use the temple from lesson 9)
- **Newspaper pages for children to scrunch up to resemble stones**
- **Two large signs, one saying "Jerusalem" and one saying "Babylon"**
- **Two Bible verses from Life Application to take home and memorize**

Costumes: The 4 prophets. The prophets could wear either a sign with the name of the prophet, a costume or headpiece, or hold a staff. Each prophet will hold one of the 4 scrolls.

Memory Verse: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11 – Paraphrased)

(Found on the last page of this lesson plan.) Printed out and placed inside the large Bible.

2 | Lesson Outline

Welcome	As the children arrive ensure each one is personally welcomed and everyone knows each other's name.
Greeting & Collect for Purity	Light the candles Say the Greeting and Collect for Purity (see Resource Section)
Prayer of Confession	Say the Prayer of Confession (see Resource Section) Extinguish the candles
Music	Books of the Bible - Old/New Testament Also choose another song from the Resource Section
Review of foundations	Choose from the following as appropriate: The Lord's Prayer, The Apostles Creed, The Ten Commandments or The Greatest Commandment <i>For more information on how to teach these, see Resource Section</i>
Reading	Memory verse (Printed out and placed in large Bible – invite older child to read)
Poster Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss this week's poster. • Ask "I wonder questions" – these will be answered during the story. <p><i>Poster discussion is found in Section 3 and on the back of the poster</i></p>
Props/Costumes	Take a few moments to arrange the narrator and actors. (Props should already be set up prior to the start of the class.) Big story props: Kingdom Crown, Large Bible
Bible Story	<i>Proceed with story and life application found in Section 4.</i>
Related activities	<i>After the story, proceed with related activities found in Section 5.</i>
Preparation for Communion & leaving class	Gather the children together for the Preparation for Communion prayer before exiting the classroom. <i>See Resource Section.</i>

3 | Poster Discussion

Poster

(During the poster discussion, explain any difficult words in the story.)

What do you see in this picture? (People walking, a sign for Babylon, a scroll, sun shining on a city in ruins...)

Is there anything you wonder about?

I wonder who these people are.

I wonder where they came from and where they are going.

I wonder why the man in the blue is holding a scroll.

Let's find out more in our story...



4 | Story and Life Application

CROWN: *Point to the crown and say: 'Today we are continuing our big story of God's Forever Kingdom.'*

BIBLE: *Hold up the Bible and say: 'Our story today is from the books of Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, in the Old Testament. We know that it is a true story because it comes from the Bible and the Bible is God's Word.'*

LESSON SUMMARY: *The teacher reads the lesson summary from back of poster:*

Last week we learned that the Israelites were taken away as prisoners because they worshipped idols and did not love or obey God. God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the temple and take his people to Babylon. Even though the Israelites were in the distant land of Babylon, God still loved them and remembered them. He sent many prophets to tell the people of his plan to bring them back to their Promised Land and to give them new hearts to love God.

Some of the prophets God sent were: Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel. They spoke God's words of love, correction and promise. All of the words of these prophets were written on scrolls and read to the people. The scrolls have been kept and read for thousands of years. Their writings are a part of our Bible today and part of the story of God's great love.

At the time of this story, the Israelites were kept in Babylon for nearly 70 years. Then, in his mercy, God brought the Israelites back to the Promised Land. They began to rebuild the temple and the broken walls of Jerusalem. After all of this, the people still had to wait and pray for God to send the promised Forever King. Many people knew that God was faithful and at just the right time, God would fulfill his promise.

STORY:

TEACHER: Who remembers why the Israelites were taken away from the Promised Land to Babylon? Yes, they worshipped idols and rejected God as King, so God punished them and allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to conquer them. What did Nebuchadnezzar's army do to the temple? Yes, they destroyed the temple...

ACTION: *Lead the children over to the cardboard temple. The teacher will tip the temple on its side, and the children can scrunch up pieces of newspaper to resemble the fallen stones.*

TEACHER: Then King Nebuchadnezzar took the people with him to Babylon.

ACTION: *Lead the children back to their seats.*

TEACHER: Although the Israelites were far from Jerusalem, God still loved them. God did not forget about them.

God sent more prophets to speak to his people. When these prophets spoke God's words, the people wrote down the words in God's holy book.

ACTION: *Ask one of the children to bring the Holy Bible to you. Open the Bible and show the children Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.*

TEACHER: These books are named after the prophets that God sent to tell his message. Just think, over 2000 years ago these prophets spoke God's word to the people. The messages were written down on scrolls and in books and we have the books with us even today!

Well, what was the message? I have 4 scrolls here, one from Isaiah, one from Ezekiel, one from Jeremiah, and one from Daniel.

Who will come and read what these messages that God gave to the prophets?

ACTION: *Ask each volunteer to stand up tall, open the scroll, and read the message as if he/she was a prophet of God.*

SCROLL #1 FROM ISAIAH: *"God is going to send the Forever King and he is going to be an Israelite (a descendant of Abraham), and he will also come from the family of David. The Forever King will bless you and bless all the nations of the world."*

SCROLL #2 FROM EZEKIEL: *"God is going to raise up the temple again and give his people new hearts. Hearts after God."*

SCROLL #3 FROM JEREMIAH: *"God is declaring that the people of Israel will return back to their home in 70 years. He has not left you – God still loves you."*

TEACHER: And then after 70 years had passed, there was the prophet Daniel. Let's hear what God told Daniel to tell the people.

SCROLL #4 FROM DANIEL: *"God has remembered his promise to us – we are going to return to our homeland."*

TEACHER: Can you imagine how happy the people were? Finally they were going back to Jerusalem. They returned to their Promised Land.

Although the people were excited to return, as they came close to the city they could see that it was a wreck.

ACTION: *Have the children walk over to the ruined temple and mime sad faces and sit down there.*

TEACHER: We recall that 70 years ago, King Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the city and the temple – and since then, no one had been there to rebuild it. There was a lot of work to do. The city of Jerusalem was ruined and so was the temple. But the people worked very hard. They rebuilt the city walls, and they rebuilt the temple.

ACTION: *Have the children turn the temple the right side up and tidy up the stones.*

TEACHER: When it was all finished – they were happy and they celebrated. The people praised God. They played their trumpets and cymbals to God. They sang songs to God. Songs like, “God is so good.”

ACTION: *Have the children sing the following song with you:*

<i>God is so good.</i>	<i>His mercy endures.</i>
<i>God is so good.</i>	<i>His mercy endures.</i>
<i>God is so good,</i>	<i>His mercy endures,</i>
<i>He's so good to us.</i>	<i>He's so good to us.</i>

ACTION: *Have the children jump up and down and shout “Hurrah, God is good!”
Have the children go back to their seats.*

TEACHER: Although the people were happy to be back in their home, some people cried. They were sad because they remembered the magnificent temple that King Solomon built. The people knew that they could never rebuild a temple like that again.

There was another reason the people were sad. God's Forever King had not yet come.

ACTION: *Teacher bring over the scroll of Isaiah, and read: “God is going to send the Forever King... The Forever King will bless you, and bless all the nations of the world.”*

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

- **What does this story tell us about God?** (God loves people even in their sin, he sends hope and encouragement)

- What were the Israelites worshipping before they were taken to Babylon? (false gods and idols) How long were they in Babylon? (70 years)
- Did God still love them even though he sent them out of the Promised Land? (absolutely) How did God show his love to his people? (He sent the prophets to remind them of his love and promises)
- What was the role (job) of the prophets? (to listen to God, to warn people that they were going against God's ways, to tell them to repent, to bring God's word to the people, to encourage them and tell them of God's love and plans. They were God's messengers.)
- When God let his people return to their land, what did they need to do? (rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, pray and wait for the promised King)
- What did God give to his people that helped them pray and wait for God's promised Forever King? (The prophets and the law, God's Holy Book)

Life Application (this discussion can also take place during craft/activity time):

The Israelites had to wait a long time for the Forever King to come, and while they were waiting, they held on to the promises that God had given them. They read and remembered God's words written by the prophets in the scrolls. As Christians we read and remember God's words and promises too. Many Christians have special verses from the Bible that they have committed to memory to be an encouragement to them.

Today we will give each one of you two cards with encouraging verses from the Bible. One verse is from the Old Testament and one is from the New Testament. The Old Testament verse is from Jeremiah, one of the prophets that we learned about today. It is right from the time when the Israelites were in captivity in Babylon! "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

On the New Testament card, your special verse is from John. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

You can decorate them now with stickers and then take them home with you and keep them by your bed. Each night before you go to bed, you can read your special verse, or have your parents read it to you. You can try to memorize it, so it can always stay with you. If we keep God's word in our hearts and in our minds, we will be strong in love, faith and hope.

5 | Response Activities

Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement

- Have the children complete the activities in the Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement.

Optional activities

- Bible Memory Verse cards and stickers. Teach the children how to memorize their special verse, by breaking it into smaller chunks, and repeating it several times.
- Make scrolls using brown craft paper. Glue Scripture verses in them.
- Different learning stations, such as: a book table, modelling clay, colouring papers.



Prophet and helper looking at scroll

"For I know the
plans I have for you,
declares the LORD,
plans for peace and
not for evil, to give
you a future and a
hope."

(Jeremiah 29:11)