

FAITH REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

CURRICULUM PROJECT ©

**** Grades 1-2, Year II ****

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SAMUEL, KINGS, AND CHRONICLES

by Christine Walton

**Grades 1-2
Year 2
Quarter 1**

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- II 4.4 Trinity Worksheet
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The following games may be used to help the children remember facts from the Bible stories.

BIBLE BASEBALL

Questions are divided into four groups, easiest to hardest. The easiest questions are called singles, a little harder, doubles, then triples and the hardest questions are called home runs. Divide the class into two teams. When a batter is “up,” he may ask for a single, double, etc. If he answers correctly, he moves the correct number of bases (one for a single, two for a double, etc.). Any players already on base move as they would in a regular baseball game. You may set up four chairs as a baseball diamond and have the children sit in them as they make a hit or you may draw a diamond on a chalk board and draw stick figures on the proper bases as needed. If a batter fails to answer a question correctly, he is out. After three outs, the other team is allowed to bat. Scoring is as in regular baseball. A variation of the rules allows outs to be counted only if the team in the field “catches” the ball, i.e., only if someone on the team can answer the batter’s missed question.

TWO SIDES

Divide the class and line half up by the wall to the right and half to the left. Ask a true and false question or other question with two choices. Tell your students that if they think the answer to the question is true, they should move to the wall on your right and if the answer is false, they should move to the wall on your left. Of course, if they are already lined up against the correct wall they should stay where they are. Tell the correct answer and have those who guessed incorrectly sit down. Ask other questions and continue the process until all but one are eliminated.

TIC TAC TOE

Make a Tic-Tac-Toe board with masking tape on the floor; each square should have a side of approximately eight inches. Divide the class into two teams and have members of the team take turns throwing different color (one color for each team) bean bags at the squares. In order to allow the bean bag to remain on a square, the child throwing it must answer a Bible question correctly. Three bean bags in a row horizontally, vertically, or diagonally wins the game. If only one bean bag is available, replace it on the board with a team marker (checker, button, etc.) if the question is answered correctly.

Do one or two of these each week to help the children learn the memory verses.

- *** Have the class say the verse and reference in unison.

- *** Say the verse, leaving out words that the class in unison or individually supplies, e.g., “Then ____ said, ‘Let us make ____ in our image, in our ____’” This may be done orally alone or with the help of a chalkboard and written answers.

- *** Have each child say a word in the verse and the reference. Go around the class several times until the verse is completed.

- *** Print the words of the verse on index cards or rectangles of cardboard or stiff paper, one to three words per card. Mix the cards and have the class or individual put them in the correct order. Drawings may be put on some of the cards to add interest and help beginning readers, e.g., for Genesis 1:26 draw “man, fish, sea, birds, livestock, earth, ground.” Do not draw pictures of homonyms such as the numeral 4 instead of the word “for,” as this can be confusing.

- *** Print the verse and reference scattered in scrambled order on a piece of paper. Have the child connect the words in the right order as a dot to dot puzzle. You should place the words of the verse so that they will form a simple picture when they are connected by lines. A reusable game of this can be made by printing the words on cardboard, covering this with clear contact paper, and letting the child connect the words with a water-base non-permanent felt tip marker.

The last two games are good to have available for early arrivals to do on their own.

Grades 1-2
Year 2
Quarter 1

Overview

This quarter uses selected stories from the books of I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, and I and II Chronicles. Each lesson will consist of a Bible story and discussion and a craft, activity, or worksheet to reinforce what is being taught. Some lessons also include a life application story to give further understanding of the focus of the study. Of course, God's Word must be central to each lesson, but feel free to adapt other parts to your individual situation. It goes without saying that prayer must be an integral part of Sunday School, both as the teachers and others pray for the individual students and class as a whole at home, and through prayer by the students in class itself. Even non-Christians (and almost certainly some in your class will not know Jesus Christ) are commanded to pray. At least a short time of prayer should be included in every lesson, even though this will not be indicated in the teacher's instructions. The following explains the elements included in each lesson:

Lesson Aim

Main ideas taught in the Bible story that should be emphasized by the teacher.

Memory Verse

Verse to be memorized by the student. It should be repeated several times during the lesson at different moments to help the child remember it (see Memory Games). This quarter the verses will be **I Samuel 2:1-10**.

Lesson Background

Background ideas are given to help the teacher in telling the story.

Knowledge Objectives - Facts with which the student should be familiar by the end of class.

Behavioral Objectives - Character qualities, attitudes, and actions related to the Bible story that the child should be encouraged to practice. Only God can change the sinful child's heart, but we can present God's standards so that the unbeliever may see his need of Christ and the Christian may grow in grace.

Lesson Procedure

BIBLE STORY

In most cases, the first and second grader should be able to understand the story when read straight from the Bible if a modern translation such as the New International Version is used. Because of this a Bible story, as such, is not usually given. It is recommended that, in most cases, the teacher first give an introduction. Then she should expressively read the passage from the Bible, making appropriate comments to aid understanding. Good readers, using the same version of the Bible as the teacher, may be encouraged to follow along in their Bibles. In most cases, however, the children's reading ability is such that this is a hindrance to understanding rather than a help, since it requires so much effort for them to figure out the words that they lose the continuity of the story. After the Scripture is read the teacher should paraphrase the story in her own words and ask factual and discussion-type questions to facilitate the students' understanding.

STORY

A modern-day story reinforcing concepts taught in the Bible story.

SONGS

Songs are suggested that may be sung sometime during the lesson or in an opening session if desired. It is not necessary to sing all the songs listed. Many hymns may be difficult for beginning readers, so it may be good to concentrate on two or three hymns and a few choruses per quarter. Hymns listed for several lessons would be good choices.

WORKSHEET

Some lessons include worksheets to reinforce concepts taught.

CRAFT AND/OR ACTIVITY

To reinforce lessons taught. Materials needed are underlined. The availability of pencils and crayons is assumed and the word "cut" will be underlined if scissors are needed.

Home Helps

A paper to be sent home with lesson summary and suggested activities to reinforce the lesson at home.

Note: Any writing done by the teacher for activities or memory work should be neatly printed for easier reading by your beginning readers. Do not use all capitals or cursive writing.

Grades 1-2
Year 2
Quarter 1

Additional Resources

The following may be helpful supplements to the lessons this quarter:

Lesson 3 - National Geographic *World* magazine.

- *The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Andersen.

Lesson 8 - *Martin Avdeitch* (Martin the Cobbler) by Leo Tolstoy.

Lesson 9 - *Sir Oliver's Song*, Candle-Birdwing/Sparrow

Lesson 10 - *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (Chapter 7, C.S. Lewis, Macmillan, 1952.)

Lesson 12 - *Mere Christianity* (C.S. Lewis, Macmillan, 1952.)

- *Basic Christianity* (John. R. W. Stott, Intersivarsity Press, London, 1958; Eerdmans, 1979.)

- *Knowing God* (J. I. Packer, Intersivarsity Press, 1973.)

- *How to Give Away Your Faith* (Paul Little, Intersivarsity Press, 1966.)

Lesson 13 - *Mr. Pine's Mixed-Up Signs* (Leonard Kessler, Golden Easy Reader, Grosset and Dunlop, 1961.)

**Grades 1-2
Year 2
Quarter 1**

Songs

| <u>LESSON</u> | <u>SONG</u> | <u>TRINITY HYMNAL</u> |
|---------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1,6,8 | Seek Ye First (Matthew 6:33) | |
| 1 | In Everything Give Thanks (I Thessalonians 5:16-18) | |
| 1,8 | I John 5:14-15 (“This is the Confidence”) | |
| 1,8,12 | Psalm 89:1 (“I Will Sing of the Mercies”) | |
| 2,6,8,9 | Obey My Voice (Jeremiah 7:23) | |
| 2,12 | Man is Bad | |
| 2,6 | Trust and Obey | 672 |
| 2,6 | Yield Not To Temptation | 582 |
| 2,9,11 | Let God Arise (Psalm 68:1) | |
| 3,8 | This is My Commandment (John 15:12) | |
| 3 | Nothing But the Blood | 307 |
| 4 | Only a Boy Named David | |
| 4,11 | Not By Might (Zechariah 4:6) | |
| 5,8 | A New Commandment (John 13:34) | |
| 5,8 | I John 4:7-8 (“Beloved, Let Us Love One Another”) | |
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| 5 | What a Friend We Have in Jesus | 629 |
| 7 | Father We Thank Thee | 633 |
| 7 | Now Thank We All Our God | 98 |
| 7 | Can a Little Child Like Me | 636 |
| 7 | Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus | 571 |
| 7 | Jehovah Jireh | |
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| 9 | Conquering Now and Still to Conquer | |
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| 9 | A Mighty Fortress | 92 |
| 9 | Faith of Our Fathers | 570 |
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| 10,12 | Come Ye Sinners | 472 |
| 10 | Not What My Hands Have Done | 461 |
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| 12 | Comfort, Comfort Ye My People | 197 |
| 12 | The Ends of All the Earth | 368 |
| 13 | Psalm 19:7-11 | |
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| 13 | How Firm a Foundation | 94 |
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Grades 1-2
Year 2
Quarter 1

Bible Baseball

Singles (Easy)

For what did Hannah pray?

What was the name of Hannah's son?

Who became king after Saul?

What was David's occupation as a teenager?

Name one animal David killed as a boy.

What enemy of Israel did David kill?

With what did David kill Goliath?

Name a good friend of David.

Which one of David's sons became king of Israel?

When God said Solomon could have whatever he asked for, what did he choose?

How did Solomon sin and turn from the Lord?

What prophet told an evil king of Israel that there would be no rain for a long time?

How did God feed Elijah by a brook?

Briefly describe the contest to which Elijah challenged the false prophets of Baal.

How did Baal answer and how did God answer the prayers of their worshipers?

Name an army commander who was healed of leprosy.

A young girl told a leprous army commander that what man could help him?

What did Elisha tell Naaman to do to be cured of his leprosy?

Name one sin of which Elisha's servant was guilty.

What did Elisha's servant see when God opened his eyes?

Who told the Israelites the good news that the siege of their city was over?

What did the high priest find in the Temple of the Lord and give to Josiah?

Why was Josiah a good king?

Doubles (Average)

What was the name of Hannah's husband?

What was the name of the priest of the Lord with whom Hannah spoke?

What group of people did Saul fail to destroy utterly?

What prophet rebuked Saul for failing to destroy the Amalekites?

Name Saul's son.

Who anointed David king?

Goliath was from what country?

Name two animals David killed as a boy.

What king wanted to kill David?

Name Jonathan's son whom David helped.

Give an example of Solomon's wisdom.

Name the evil king of Israel, the husband of Jezebel, who did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him.

Where did God have Elijah hide?

Name one way God helped a widow who knew Elijah.

Where did Elijah challenge the false prophets of Baal?

How did the false prophets try to get Baal to listen to them?

What did Elijah do and what did God do after God burned up Elijah's sacrifice?

From what country was Naaman? (Syria)

In what river did Naaman wash? (Jordan)

Name two sins of which Elisha's servant was guilty.

How was Gehazi punished for his sin?

What did Elisha ask God to do to the enemy troops to protect him and his servant?

Name one thing eaten by the people in a besieged Israelite city.

What did Elisha prophesy would happen to the gatekeeper of Samaria?

How was this prophecy fulfilled?

Why did the enemy that was besieging the city flee?

How old was Josiah when he became king? (eight years old)

Triples (Difficult)

Name one of Eli's sons. (Hophni and Phinehas)

Name both of Elkanah's wives. (Hannah and Peninnah)

Name David's father. (Jesse)

Name one of David's brothers. (Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah)

From what town did David come? (Bethlehem)

How tall was Goliath? (nine feet)

Who tried to discourage David from fighting Goliath? (his brothers)

How many wives and concubines did Solomon have? (1000)

Where did the widow live who helped Elijah? (Zarephath)

Name two ways God helped the widow of Zarephath.

Name Elisha's servant. (Gehazi)

Name three sins of which Elisha's servant was guilty.

The king of what foreign country wanted to kill Elisha? (Aram)

At what city did enemy troops surround Elisha and his servant?

Where did Elisha lead the enemy troops? (Samaria; to the king of Israel)

What country besieged a city in Samaria? (Aram)

What feast did Josiah celebrate after he read God's Word? (Passover)

Home Runs (Super Tough)

Where did Hannah pray for a baby (Shiloh) or where was Hannah's home (Ramah)?

Name both of Eli's sons. (Hophni and Phinehas)

Name the king of the Amalekites spared by Saul. (Agag)

Name two of David's brothers. (Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah)

Where did David kill Goliath? (the valley of Elah)

Name one reward Saul promised to the person who would kill Goliath. (great wealth, his daughter in marriage, no taxes for his father)

Name Jonathan's son's servant. (Ziba)

How many false prophets did Elijah challenge? (850)

Name the capital of Aram (Aram = Syria). (Damascus)

What did Naaman wish to take back to Aram with him? (some earth)

Name the king of Aram who besieged Samaria. (Ben-hadad)

Name the high priest under Josiah. (Hilkiah)

Name Josiah's secretary. (Shaphan)

What king killed Josiah? (Pharaoh Neco of Egypt)

HANNAH AND SAMUEL

I Samuel 1

Lesson Aim

To help your students follow the example of Hannah and Samuel in prayer and obedience to the Lord.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:1 -“Then Hannah prayed and said: ‘My heart rejoices in the Lord; in the Lord my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance.’”

Lesson Background

“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are attentive to their cry” (Psalm 34:15). Sometimes it may seem that God has forgotten us or does not care about our needs, but we can have confidence that He hears the Christian’s prayer and will do what is best. Hannah found out that when she earnestly sought the Lord, He gave her the desires of her heart (Psalm 37:4; James 1:6-8).

Being unable to conceive children can be a very severe trial to a woman, especially in a culture such as ancient Israel where family life was highly valued and a barren womb regarded as a punishment from God. Hannah’s circumstances were made even more difficult by the continual harassment of Elkanah’s other wife Peninnah. Elkanah tried to comfort Hannah, but as much as she may have appreciated this, Hannah knew that real help in her situation could only come from the Lord. When the family went up to Shiloh in Ephraim to bring the yearly sacrifice, she begged Him to aid her (the Ark of God had been brought to Shiloh in Joshua’s time and remained there for three hundred years). Hannah asked the Lord to give her a son, in

return for which she would dedicate him to be a Nazirite to serve God for his whole life. Hannah prayed so fervently that Eli the priest thought she was drunk.

God granted Hannah's request and she gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel ("asked of the Lord"). Faithful to her promise, Hannah brought Samuel to serve in the house of the Lord when he was weaned, probably at about three years of age. Then, after worshiping the Lord (the "he" in verse 28 probably refers to Elkanah and even his whole family rather than to Samuel), Hannah returned home, where God blessed her obedience by giving her other children (I Samuel 2:21).

Samuel, meanwhile, stayed at Shiloh to serve the Lord. It is doubtful that at three years old Samuel had a true relationship with God (cf. I Samuel 3), but he could obey in his childish way and learn what it meant to serve the true and living God. As Samuel grew, the Lord did work in his heart. Samuel became a prophet and faithfully led Israel for many years. One woman's faith was the catalyst that precipitated a great work of God. May we, like Hannah, honor God with believing prayer.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that Elkanah and his wives, Hannah and Peninnah (who taunted Hannah because she had no children), brought the yearly sacrifice to Shiloh, where Hannah fervently prayed (so much so that Eli the priest thought she was drunk) that the Lord would give her a son, in return for which she would give him back to the Lord to be a Nazirite and serve God forever; to know that God granted Hannah's request, and when her son Samuel, whose name means "asked of the Lord," was weaned, she brought him back to the tabernacle to serve the Lord.

Behavioral Objectives - By God's grace, to serve Him and trust Him in believing prayer.

Lesson Procedure

Note - This is the first lesson of a new year, and you will probably have several new first graders in your class. Spend some time getting to know them individually, asking about their interests, their families and school. Do not be concerned if, in taking time to do this, you do not complete all parts of this lesson (but be sure to do the Bible story).

Introduction - Introduce today's Scripture passage as follows: "Elizabeth felt terrible! It seemed as if all the other girls in her class had berry-patch dolls [substitute the name of a popular baby doll] and she did not. 'It's silly to pay that much money for a doll when you already have several,' her mother had said. When the other girls played with their dolls, they often excluded Elizabeth. 'You just have a dumb old doll, but ours are real babies,' Linda had taunted. 'Yours are just pretend babies, too,' Elizabeth had replied, but she longed to have a berry-patch doll of her very own."

"In the Bible, a woman named Hannah wanted a tiny one to hold, not a doll as Elizabeth did, but a real baby. God had not given Hannah any children, and she wanted a son more than almost anything else. Today if a married woman does not have a child people might not think too much about it, but in ancient Israel childlessness was seen as a punishment from God. People would tease Hannah about not having children, especially her husband Elkanah's other wife Peninnah. (In Old Testament times, some men had more than one wife, even though this is not what God says is best.) Let's read in the Bible about what happened to Hannah."

BIBLE STORY

Read **I Samuel 1**, focusing on God answering Hannah's believing prayer, and also mentioning that, even when he was small, Samuel began to learn about God and serve Him, and that your students are not too young to do so, too. When you read verse 11, explain that this was a Nazirite vow. A Nazirite was a person who would not partake of grape products, touch dead bodies, or cut his hair in order to show that he was set apart to live a life holy to God. This vow was usually taken for a temporary period of time, but Hannah gave Samuel to serve the Lord for his entire life. You may wish to ask if your students know of another man who was a Nazirite from birth (Samson, and probably John the Baptist).

PRAYER

Ask your children for requests and pray for them. God is not obligated to answer the prayers of those who do not know Him, but you can still pray for their requests. Of course, prayer involves much more than asking for things, including adoration, confession, and thanksgiving, but though Hannah's prayers probably included all these things (see I Samuel 2), supplication is the most obvious aspect of prayer in I Samuel 1 and will probably be the one most familiar to your children.

STORY

A VISIT TO THE TABERNACLE

(a pretend story)

"Benjamin, since this is your first visit to Shiloh, would you like to see the tabernacle?" Jacob asked. "I sure would," Benjamin replied, "but I didn't think they'd like kids hanging around there." "Well, Eli the priest is a friend of mine," said Jacob. "I'm sure we could sneak a peek. Come on; let's go."

As they approached the tabernacle, Jacob pointed to a large box-shaped object with horns going up from four corners. "That's the altar of sacrifice," he said. "People bring bulls here and the priests kill them on the altar so the people can have their sins forgiven."

"Those curtains are part of the tabernacle, aren't they?" said Benjamin. "What's that thing between the altar of sacrifice and the tabernacle?"

"That's a big pool of water for the priests to wash in called a laver. They have to be clean to approach God. Let's look in the tabernacle itself."

"Oh, isn't it beautiful!" said Benjamin. "See how the light from that seven-branched lampstand on the left shines on the embroidery on the curtain. And look! There's a boy our age over by that table wearing an ephod like a priest. How can that be?"

"The boy's name is Samuel and he helps old Eli," Jacob replied. "His mother dedicated him to God and brought him to live here at the tabernacle when he was just three years old. The table next to him is made of pure gold. The priests put fresh loaves of bread on there every week. The lampstand you pointed out is called a menorah and reminds us that God is light."

"What's behind that curtain?" Benjamin asked. "Can we go and see?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Jacob shocked. "That's the Holy of Holies, where the very Presence of God dwells. Only the high priest can go in there once a year, on the Day of Atonement, and even he has a rope tied to his leg to drag him out if he sins and God strikes him dead while he is in there. In that room is the Ark of the Covenant, a gold-covered box that contains the Ten Commandments, an omer of manna, and Aaron's rod. See the altar in front of that curtain? That's the altar of incense. The priests burn sweet-smelling incense there to show how their prayers rise up to God as the sweet-smelling incense does."

"This sure is a special place. Thank you for taking me here, Jacob," said Benjamin.

Questions:

- When do you think this story took place?
- Where did Jacob take Benjamin?
- Do we have a tabernacle at which to worship today? Why not? (Christ has fulfilled these things - see Hebrews 9).
- Name some things that Benjamin saw in the tabernacle.

ACTIVITY

This would be a good quarter in which to add events to the time line made in Year I, Quarter 3, Lesson 1, or to make a new time line. Draw a horizontal line on a 4-8 inch wide, several foot long paper. Perpendicular to this line, at evenly spaced intervals, draw small lines under which you should print dates for every 250 years between 2000 B.C. and 250 A.D. Each week during this quarter, have a child tape a card, on which he has printed the major event of the lesson and drawn a corresponding picture, at the appropriate place on the time line.

SONGS

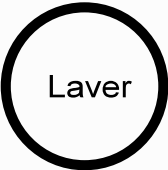
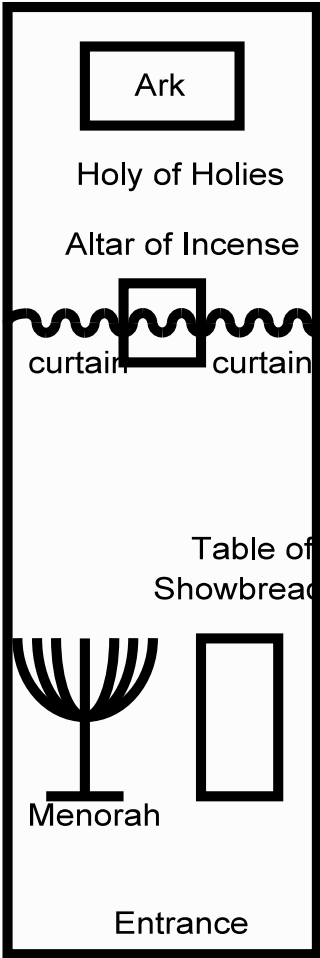
“Seek Ye First”; “In Everything Give Thanks” (I Thessalonians 5:16-18); I John 5:14-15 (“This is the confidence”); Psalm 89:1 (“I Will Sing of the Mercies”).

Take Home Activity

Tabernacle model/diagram. Draw a diagram or make a model of the tabernacle where Samuel served the Lord. A model can be made by each child or as a class. You can use different-sized boxes for the tabernacle and its furnishings and cloth for the curtains. You can make an easy 3-D model by having your students draw the diagram below, cutting the furnishings on three sides and folding them on the fourth side to stand up. Here are some helpful facts about the tabernacle:

- It stood in an enclosure approximately 150 feet long by 75 feet wide.
- The walls of the court were linen draperies attached to posts of bronze.
- The tabernacle itself was approximately 45 feet long by 15 feet wide.

TABERNACLE DIAGRAM



These papers will help you review with your child what he did in Sunday School and will include the following: The Bible passage studied and focus of the lesson, the memory verse (each quarter we will study one or two passages; the entire passage for the quarter will be listed followed by the verse to be learned for this week), suggested projects (optional projects which will reinforce the Bible lesson), and suggested parental reading.

BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

I Samuel 1 - Like Hannah and Samuel, we should fervently pray and be obedient to the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week I Samuel 2:1 - "Then Hannah prayed and said: 'My heart rejoices in the Lord; in the Lord my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance.'"

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Discuss the following with your family: "Samuel served God. How can I serve God? Can I pray (like Hannah)? worship (as Samuel and his family did)? help others (as Samuel helped Eli)? obey God and those in authority over me (as Samuel did)?"
2. Pray for specific requests and trust God to answer them (not all the time the way you would like). Write down your requests and God's answers as an encouragement for times when God seems far off.
3. Read more about Samuel and the people of Israel in I Samuel 2-14.
4. Hannah was obedient to God even though it meant leaving Samuel in an environment where the discipline may not have been the best (see I Samuel 2). Do not act presumptuously, but pray and trust God to protect your child when he must face an evil environment such as in your neighborhood, in school, or with unbelieving relatives.
5. Sing songs about prayer such as: "Seek Ye First"; "In Everything Give Thanks" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18); I John 5:14-15 ("This is the confidence"); Psalm 89:1 ("I Will Sing of the Mercies").

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - James 5:13-18; Psalm 34:15; Psalm 37:1-7; James 1:6-8; I Samuel 1-14; Hebrews 9.

SAUL DISOBEYS GOD

I Samuel 15

Lesson Aim

That your students may learn that “to obey is better than sacrifice and to heed is better than the fat of rams” (I Samuel 15:22).

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:2 - “There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”

Lesson Background

This quarter can be difficult to teach because of the large amount of history covered in a brief time. Nonetheless, even this brief overview will give your children some familiarity with important Old Testament characters that should benefit them later in in-depth studies as well as providing practical application now. A summary of the events that took place in I Samuel 2-14 may give you and your students some perspective on today’s story.

God worked in Samuel’s life and used him to tell Eli that he would be judged for failing to discipline his sons. Upon hearing that the Philistines had captured the Ark of God and that his sons, Hophni and Phineas, had died in the battle, Eli fell backward off his chair and broke his neck. The Philistines returned the Ark of God to Israel after they found their idol, Dagon, fallen on the ground before it and after God judged the Philistine people with a plague of tumors. God used Samuel to subdue the Philistines at Mizpah, but the Israelites, not satisfied with God’s rule over them, demanded a king like the heathen nations around them. Unhappily, Samuel anointed Saul, son of Kish, as king. Saul began well, rescuing the city of Jabesh from the Philistines, but later was rebuked by Samuel for sacrificing a burnt offering, which it was forbidden for him to do. Saul, with the help of his son, Jonathan, gained victories in further encounters with the Philistines and the Amalekites, but a lack of wise leadership brought severe problems.

In I Samuel 15, God told Saul to destroy the Amalekites completely. All the Amalekites were to be killed, their possessions burned, and whatever would not burn was to be brought into the Temple treasury. Such a command may seem exceedingly cruel to us, but God's righteous judgment demands the punishment and eradication of evil. The Amalekites were fierce barbarian nomads who inhabited the desert region to the south of Judah toward Egypt and had long given Israel trouble (Exodus 17:8-16; Numbers 14:45; Judges 3:13; 6:3). Saul did not spare Agag (the term is the general one for an Amalekite king as "Pharaoh" is for an Egyptian one), symbol of the entire Amalekite nation, out of mercy, but as a prideful trophy of what he, King Saul, had accomplished. In spite of apparently humble beginnings (I Samuel 10), Saul had become an arrogant, covetous, self-satisfied ruler. He even built a monument in his own honor (verse 13). Saul thought Samuel should have been pleased that the Amalekites had been defeated rather than quibbling over a few animals. As Samuel continued to show displeasure over his actions, Saul seems to have resorted to lying and blameshifting, saying that the animals were for sacrifice to God and that it was the soldiers who had spared the sheep and cattle. Under further scrutiny from Samuel, Saul finally admitted his sin, but there was no true repentance involved. His attitude seems to have been, "All right already, I sinned. Big deal, as long as I can still be king." If Saul had truly been penitent, he would have prayed to be humbled rather than to be exalted before the people (verse 30), but he cared more about what people thought of him than the honor of God. Saul wanted to reign, but not under God. What he sought as desirable he obtained as a curse, for God would no longer be with him in blessing.

There are several lessons we can learn from I Samuel 15. Obeying God in part is not enough; He demands instant and total obedience. We cannot pick and choose which commandments we will follow. We must root out and completely destroy sin in our lives, as Saul should have totally annihilated the Amalekites. Sin has disastrous consequences. Rebellion renders worship useless (cf. Isaiah 1:10-20). It results in broken relationships (verses 25-29, 34-35; the verse may mean that Saul grabbed Samuel violently). Sin can put a person's life into a downward spiral from which he will never recover. It is significant to note that Samuel prayed fervently all night for Saul, and yet Saul did not repent and God did not relent in His judgment toward him. Unlike Saul, may we repent of our sin and humbly obey the Lord.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that God, through Samuel, told Saul to destroy the Amalekites completely for the way they had treated Israel, but that proud Saul spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and the best of the sheep and cattle and built a monument to himself; that Saul tried to justify himself when rebuked by Samuel and cared more about the impression he made on people than the honor of God; and that Samuel left Saul and did not go to see him again.

Behavioral Objectives - By God's grace, to obey Him humbly and destroy sin in our lives.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - Introduce the story approximately as follows: "Last week we learned about a woman named Hannah who prayed fervently that if God would give her a son, she would give him to serve the Lord. God answered Hannah's prayer and gave her and her husband, Elkanah, a son. Does anyone remember his name? Yes, his name was Samuel, and he grew up to love and serve the Lord. The Israelite people did not always want to serve God, however. They did not want God to be their ruler, but wanted a human king like the wicked nations around them. God decided to give the Israelites what they wanted even though this would not be good for them. [You may wish to compare this to parents who might give a child what he wants, such as all the ice cream he can eat, to teach him a lesson]. He told Samuel to anoint Saul, son of Kish, as king of Israel. At first, Saul ruled fairly well and led Israel to victory over their enemies, but he became proud

and did not want to do what God said all the time. Today we will learn about what can happen when a person decides he no longer needs to do what God says.”

“God commanded Saul to do something that would seem very strange to us. He told him to kill a group of people called the Amalekites - all of them, men, women, and children. God told Saul to burn their towns and put anything that would not burn, such as gold or silver, in the Temple treasury. Why would God tell Saul to do such an apparently cruel thing? You cannot imagine Him telling you to do such a thing, can you? But we must remember two things. Israel was God’s chosen people. Even though the Israelites were sinful as we all are, God had chosen them as a nation to be a special people who would carry out His purposes, including executing judgment on the unbelieving nations around them. Secondly, the Amalekites were a cruel and wicked people. They had fought against God’s people and, in so doing, had in some sense fought against God Himself. The Amalekites deserved to die for their evil (as we all do and are only spared because of God’s mercy). Let’s read in the Bible about what happened to the Amalekites, Saul, and Samuel.”

BIBLE STORY

Read **I Samuel 15** (NIV) and discuss, focusing on the necessity of obedience. You may also use material from the background section that you feel is appropriate.

STORY

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

“You should see it; it’s just beautiful!” Karen exclaimed. “It’s blue with tiny white flowers along the edge and it looks so soft!”

“What’s beautiful?” her friend Ellen asked.

“Haven’t you been listening to a thing I’ve been saying? The scarf in McCleary’s store that I’m going to buy my mother for her birthday!” Karen replied in exasperation.

“I’m sorry,” said Ellen. “Guess I was just thinking about something else - ‘my head in the clouds,’ as my mom would say. I’ll listen now.”

“Well, okay,” said Karen somewhat mollified. “As I was saying, my mother took me shopping with her the other day and I saw this scarf in McCleary’s window. It’s on sale so I have just enough money to buy it. I can’t wait to see my mom’s face when she opens the package. She’ll be so surprised. Usually, my Dad buys something for my mother on her birthday and just says it’s from me, but this year I want to do something special for her.”

“That’s really nice of you, Karen. I hope she likes it. How are you going to get to McCleary’s store to buy the scarf?” Ellen asked.

“I’m going to ride my bike,” Karen replied offhandedly.

“All the way to town! By yourself?” Ellen gasped.

“Sure, why not?”

“Are you allowed?” asked Ellen.

“Well, not exactly. But it’s just this once. I’ve just gotta get her that scarf.”

“Why don’t you ask your Dad to buy it for you?”

“Uh, uh, I want this to be a complete surprise.”

* * * * *

The next week, after finishing a delicious piece of birthday cake, Karen handed her mom a brightly-wrapped package.

“What’s this, I wonder?” said her mother.

“Don’t look at me,” Karen’s Dad answered. “Karen said she didn’t want me to help her buy something this year. I guess she’s been busy up in her room making you something.”

“A scarf, how lovely!” Karen’s mom exclaimed, “And just what I needed.”

“But Karen,” said her Dad, “where did you get such a thing? You didn’t buy it from one of your school friends without their parents’ permission, did you?”

“Uh, no.”

“Then where did you get it?”

“I rode my bike to McCleary’s,” Karen said in a small voice.

“You did what!” both her parents cried out together.

“I, uh, rode my bike to McCleary’s store and bought the scarf.”

“Oh, Karen,” said her mother. “You know you are not allowed to go anywhere near that far on your bicycle.”

“I know,” Karen said, “but I just had to get you that present and I wanted it to be a surprise and I didn’t see how else I could do it.”

“I really appreciate your thoughtfulness,” said Karen’s mother, “but don’t you realize how dangerous it was? A stranger might have hurt you or you could have been hit by a car and we would not even have had any idea where you were. We make our rules for good reasons and you have to learn to obey them.”

“Karen,” said her father, “do you remember the verse the pastor preached about on Sunday? It was, ‘To obey is better than sacrifice and to heed is better than the fat of rams.’ Do you understand what that means?”

“I think so,” said Karen meekly. “It means that even though getting mom a birthday present was a good thing like a sacrifice, it would have been much better if I hadn’t gotten it and had obeyed you.”

“That’s right,” Karen’s Dad said. “God says that children should obey their parents so that you can learn to obey Him, and because parents generally know a little bit more than their kids.”

“You’re right, Dad. I’m sorry,” said Karen.

“Well, I hope you’ve learned something from this experience. We forgive you,” said Karen’s Dad, “but I’m afraid we will have to take your bike away from you for a while to punish you and help you remember how important it is to obey.”

“Okay, Dad,” Karen replied. “I guess I deserve to be punished. Besides,” she grinned, “after that long ride to town my legs hurt so much I don’t think I could pedal another inch.”

Questions:

- What did Karen do for her mother?
- Was she wrong to do this? Why?
- Was Karen’s mother pleased with her birthday present? Why or why not? What Bible verse did Karen’s father use to explain her sin to her?
- How was Karen’s situation and her response to it like and different from Saul’s? Are you ever tempted to disobey those in authority over you? How can you become more obedient?

SONGS

“Obey My Voice” (Jeremiah 7:23); “Man is Bad”; “Trust and Obey” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #672); “Yield Not to Temptation” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #582); “Let God Arise” (Psalm 68:1).

Take Home Activity

I Samuel 15:22b Plaque - Have your children make a plaque with I Samuel 15:22b clearly printed on it. You may do this simply by having them print the verse with felt-tip pen or crayon on a piece of white paper, perhaps matting it on a slightly larger piece of colored poster board or construction paper. You may wish to allow your students to decorate the border of their papers with simple designs. A fine result can be obtained by writing the verse with a felt-tipped calligraphy pen, which can be purchased at art supply or stationery stores (allow your children to practice on scrap paper first; if you use the calligraphy pen, obtain instruction for the proper method of using it to achieve the desired result). Other methods that might be considered for writing this verse are embroidery, liquid embroidery, or woodburning. These should only be considered if you have a very small class of mature students, plenty of help, and a large amount of time.

BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

I Samuel 15 - Unlike Saul, we should obey God because “to obey is better than sacrifice and to heed is better than the fat of rams” (I Samuel 15:22).

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:2 - “There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Pray together that your family will obey God and those in authority over them.
2. Have your family think of times when they might be tempted to disobey and resolve to do what is right (pray for God’s grace to do so) in these situations. Memorize I Samuel 15:22b.
3. Discuss how disobedient characters in books read and television programs seen this week could have done what is right (or how obedient characters did obey those in authority over them).
4. Discuss how we can be disobedient by doing what we are commanded not to do (sins of commission) or, like Saul, by not doing what we are commanded to do (sins of omission).
5. Discuss what sort of man Saul was (e.g., proud, ambitious, covetous) and how these character qualities affected his decisions.
6. Read other stories about Saul (see Suggested Parental Reading).
7. The annihilation of the Amalekites was a righteous act of God. Discuss God’s judgment of evil by human means. Of course, circumstances in Israel’s theocracy were different from those today. Are we as ruthless in rooting sin from our personal lives as the Israelites should have been in destroying the Amalekites, or do we harbor some sin as Saul did Agag and the choice sheep and cattle?
8. Sing songs such as “Obey My Voice” (Jeremiah 7:23); “Man is Bad”; “Trust and Obey” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #672); “Yield Not to Temptation” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #582); “Let God Arise” (Psalm 68:1).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - Isaiah 1:10-20; Read more about Saul - I Samuel 8-11; 13-14; 18-19; 23-24; 26; 28; 31.

DAVID IS ANOINTED

I Samuel 16:1-13

Lesson Aim

To help your students learn that “man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (I Samuel 16:7).

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:3 - “Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the Lord is a God who knows, and by Him deeds are weighed.”

Lesson Background

The Israelites had demanded a king and God had shown them the foolishness of their decision. Now, in His mercy, God chose a king for them, a man after His own heart. “The Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king’” (I Samuel 16:1).

Samuel readily obeyed the Lord but first brought up an objection, for such an action would certainly be regarded as treasonous. God provided Samuel with a plausible reason for his actions. This was not done in duplicity, but telling only the partial truth would protect Samuel’s life. A sacrifice followed by a feast was probably not an unusual occurrence. Samuel may have made it a regular practice to go from place to place offering sacrifice and making judicial decisions (verse 5 - Did the elders of the town meet Samuel trembling because they feared chastisement?).

“Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (I Samuel 16:7). Samuel thought tall Eliab would be the obvious choice for king, but God had rejected him as well as six of his

brothers. David, probably because of his age, had, it seems, not even been invited to the feast, but he was the one God had chosen. We should not despise people because of their age (cf. I Timothy 4:12), but encourage them to “Remember their Creator in the days of their youth. . .” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Though young, David evidently had spiritual qualities that set him far above his peers. Your students should be encouraged to “seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33), and not worry if they are different from those around them and therefore unpopular.

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the capstone” (Psalm 118:22, I Peter 2:7). This verse refers to Jesus Christ, but we can see also in David, who is a type of Christ, one looked down upon by men who was exalted to be king by God. Of course, at this time David’s family probably had no inkling of the significance of David’s anointing. They may have regarded it as a special honor at the feast or thought that David was being set apart by God, perhaps to be trained in a school by Samuel, but it is doubtful that they had any idea at this time that David would one day be king. However, God was planning all along, even when David was defending his flocks from the lion and the bear, that one day he would rule God’s people. God has plans for our lives, too. We will probably never rule a nation, but God can just as truly glorify Himself in our lives as He did in David’s. May our hearts be right before Him and may we regard things with spiritual judgment.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that God, because he had rejected Saul as king, told Samuel to anoint one of Jesse the Bethlehemite’s sons as king of Israel; that Samuel called Jesse’s family to attend a sacrifice to the Lord and have his family pass before Samuel, who thought that perhaps tall Eliab would be king; that God showed him that neither Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah nor any of Jesse’s older sons would be king, but David, who was watching the sheep; Samuel anointed David with oil and “from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.”

Behavioral Objectives - By God’s grace, that your students’ hearts be right before God and that they learn to judge things from a spiritual perspective.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - Introduce today’s Bible story by talking about the fact that things are not always what they appear to be. Show the children a beautifully wrapped package containing garbage and an old paper bag holding jewelry. Ask them which they would prefer and then unwrap the packages. The contrast between the actual contents and their expectations will encourage them not to judge merely by appearances. Point out that people are not always what they seem to be either, but God knows what we are really like. You may also illustrate this fact/appearance dichotomy with optical illusions such as those below, and/or with animal camouflage pictures from nature books or magazines such as *Ranger Rick* or *National Geographic World*. For example, you can use a picture of the insect known as a walking stick, which looks like a stick.

BIBLE STORY

Read **I Samuel 16:1-13** (NIV) and discuss, using any pertinent background material and focusing on the fact that God sees us as we really are. Ask your students what they think I Samuel 16:7 means. Ask them to think about whether their hearts are right before God.

STORY

THE UGLY DUCKLING

(adapted from Hans Christian Andersen)

One summer day as a mother duck sat on her eggs, she heard little cracking sounds. These were soon followed by tiny peeps as, one by one, her ducklings broke out of their shells to explore the world. How proud she was of her fine new family! The largest egg showed no signs of cracking, however, so the duck patiently sat down again to await its hatching. At last, the big egg cracked open. His mother looked at the new arrival in dismay. He was so big and ugly!

“Perhaps he is a turkey,” an old duck said. “I once sat on a turkey egg and that chick would not go near the water no matter how I quacked and clacked.”

But the ugly duckling was not a turkey, for he eagerly followed the other ducklings into the water and was soon happily swimming around the pond. Life for the ugly duckling was not enjoyable for long, however. His mother loved him but the other animals, even his own brothers and sisters, chased him, bit him and generally persecuted him mercilessly.

One day when he could stand it no longer, he flew over the fence and ran away from the barnyard. Things were not much better out in the wide world. Two goslings befriended him, but they were shot by a hunter. A hunter’s dog with wild eyes and sharp white teeth came and stood right over the duckling, but went off without touching him. When the shooting stopped, the ugly duckling ran on and on and at last came to a broken-down cottage. The woman who lived there said he could stay because she hoped he would lay eggs. But the cat and hen who lived there were bossy and the duckling longed to be near water again, so after a while he went away. Everywhere he went, however, people called the duckling “ugly” and laughed at him.

One day, the duckling saw a flock of white birds with long graceful necks flying to warmer lands for the winter. How beautiful they were! The ugly duckling had never seen birds like them and wondered who they were and where they were going. The duckling had never known winter and did not know that it is necessary for many birds to migrate to warmer climates when cold weather comes. Soon bitter winds began to blow and water in the pond turned to ice. The duckling had to keep swimming day and night to keep some of the water from freezing. Soon he became too tired and lay in the pond frozen to the ice. A farmer came the next morning, broke the ice, and took the ugly duckling home. The farmer’s playful children and screaming wife scared the duckling. After upsetting the milk pail and flying into the butter tub and flour barrel, he ran from the house to suffer through the rest of the winter as best he could.

After a time, though, spring came and the duckling again saw three of the beautiful birds he had so admired in the fall. “I must go to them,” he said to himself, “even if they are cruel to me.”

He hung his head and looked down into the still waters of the pond. But what was that reflection he saw in the water? Was it another beautiful bird? It was the ugly duckling himself, a graceful swan!

Questions:

- Why was the duckling unhappy? (He was rejected by others because of his appearance and they teased him.)
- Do you tease or in other ways act unfriendly toward those who have physical problems or those who may not be handsome or pretty?
- Do others tease you because of the way you look or the clothes you wear?
- Was the duckling really what he appeared to be?
- Does God care more about a person’s outward appearance or whether he loves God and does what is right? What should we care about?

SONGS

“This is My Commandment”; “Nothing But the Blood” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #307).

Take Home Activity

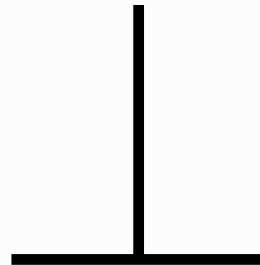
Paper Figures - Copy the figure pattern below onto a large index card or light cardboard and the clothes pattern onto an index card or paper. Supply each student with two figures and two sets of clothes. Have your children cut out the figures and clothes (you may wish to do some cutting at home if you have a large, young class and little time and help). They should not cut the excess paper between the figures’ feet if they wish their figures to stand. Rather, they should cut the stand off the side of the figures’ legs and fit the two cuts labeled “A” together to form an X shape. Have the children draw a heart on the chest of each figure and color one heart black. They should draw features on the figures and then color the figures and their clothes the same, or they should make the figure with the black heart have more beautiful clothes than the one with the white heart. “Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (I Samuel 16:7). Remind your children again that by “heart” we do not here mean the blood-pumping organ in one’s body, and that a black heart here means a sinful heart (be sure your children don’t think that black skin indicates a black heart).

OPTICAL ILLUSIONS

Which line is longer? *

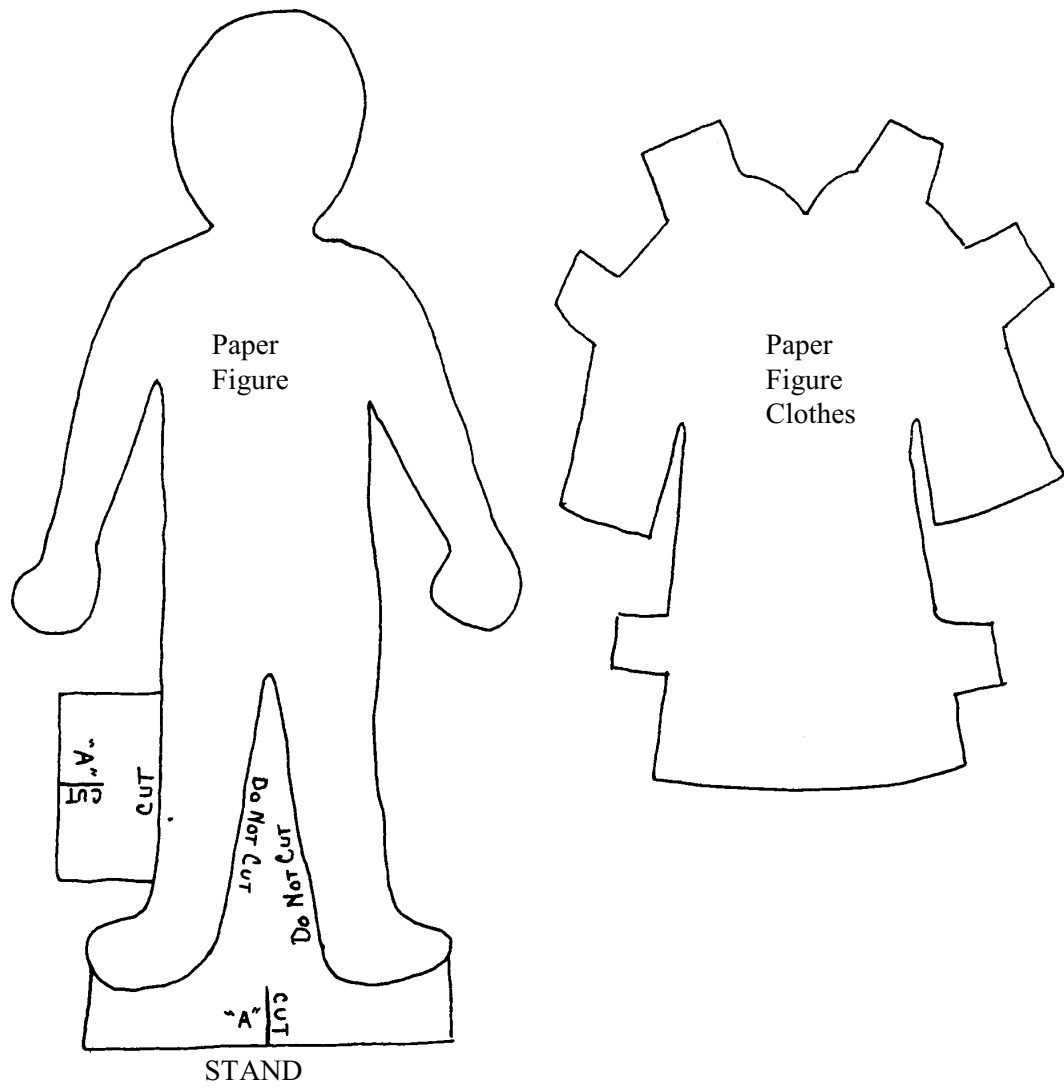


Which line of the T is longer? *



(* All lines are the same length.)

PAPER FIGURE AND CLOTHES PATTERN



BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

I Samuel 16:1-13 - David was anointed king rather than his brothers because “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (I Samuel 16:7).

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week I Samuel 2:3 - “Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the Lord is a God who knows, and by Him deeds are weighed.”

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Use the take home activity as a starting point to discuss the fact that God knows what we are like inside and wants us to have clean hearts, hearts that are right before God. This can only come about when a person has been cleansed from sin by Jesus Christ. In discussing salvation with your child never force or manipulate him into a decision. Little children have a strong desire for the approval of their parents and teachers and will often say they believe in the Lord merely to please them (often without realizing that this is their motivation). If you are uncertain about the meaning of salvation yourself, please speak to your child’s Sunday School teacher or a pastor of this church. The following books may be of some help to you in this area: *Mere Christianity* (C.S. Lewis, Macmillan, 1952.); *Basic Christianity* (John R. W. Stott, Eerdmans, 1979.); *Knowing God* (J. I. Packer, Intervarsity Press, 1973.).
2. This week, see how many things you see that are not what they appear to be. A beautifully wrapped birthday present could have garbage inside and a brown paper bag might contain jewels. This might occur in nature (e.g., a pearl in an ugly oyster), a picture, or with a character in a book or on TV who initially is presented in a positive light but turns out to be a villain. We must learn to regard things from a spiritual perspective. A classmate may wear designer clothes but be full of sin. Children are often attracted to those with physical abilities, beauty, or coveted material possessions and must learn that this is not what is important to God, nor should be to us. We should not, of course, proudly judge people as if we were better than they. Whatever positive qualities we have are gifts from God.
3. God made a shepherd boy king (David) and a king to eat grass like a sheep (Nebuchadnezzar). Help your children realize that their lives are in God’s hand. Our faithfulness to God now can affect our future.
4. Sing songs such as: “This is My Commandment”; “Nothing But the Blood” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #307).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - Read some Psalms written by David.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

I Samuel 17

Lesson Aim

That your students may learn that “not by power but by [God’s] Spirit” (Zechariah 4:6) evil can be conquered.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, review I Samuel 2:1-3.

Lesson Background

Two mighty armies confronted each other ready for battle, yet no attack occurred. Instead, a champion appeared from one force to challenge any who would dare to enter into combat with him. For forty days no one was found courageous enough to fight a man nine feet tall who carried a spear with a fifteen-pound point, and for forty days, two armies faced each other with hatred and fear.

A knowledge of geography can help us understand this situation better. Two Hebrew words are translated by the English word “valley,” *emek*, a broad valley, and *gai*, a ravine. In I Samuel 17, a ravine separated the Philistine and Israelite forces. In order to make an assault on the enemy, an army would have had to cross this gorge, thereby placing itself in a position of extreme vulnerability. Traversing the crevasse would have been especially difficult for men in weighty, cumbersome armor. The Philistines, therefore, resorted to sending forth a champion to challenge the Israelites.

That no Israelite was found to oppose Goliath is not surprising, for the Philistine was certainly an imposing figure and much hung on the results of the conflict. David did not underestimate the strength of the foe. He asked several people to ascertain the true nature of the situation before volunteering to fight the

giant. No matter what the might of the Philistine, however, one fact stood out in David's mind - Goliath had defied the armies of the living God. God's honor was more important than David's life or anything else. David also realized that "the Lord who delivered [him] from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear [would] deliver [him] from the hand of this Philistine" (I Samuel 17:37). Like Joshua and Caleb, David saw what God wanted him to do and knew that in the Lord's power no giant could stop him.

The sling David used was unlike the kind we picture sticking out of the pocket of a mischievous little boy. "The sling was made of two narrow strips of leather joined in the middle by a wide piece where the stone was held. The shepherd tied one end to his wrist. The other end was held in his hand. The sling was then skillfully swung around and the loose end released to make the stone fly" (*The Family Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen, David C. Cook, 1978, p.152). Such a weapon could propel a tennis-ball-sized rock at more than 100 miles per hour, so that David was in reality better armed than his gigantic foe.

There is much we can learn from the example of David as we face life's battles. God's glory must be of paramount importance to us; nothing must stand in its way. We can have confidence that God will defeat His enemies (verses 34-37) and that He often uses "the weak things of the world to shame the strong" (I Corinthians 1:27). We should bravely combat evil even when hope of victory seems bleak. Sometimes others, perhaps those closest to us, may try to discourage us from fighting God's battles. Eliab, perhaps embarrassed because he would not fight Goliath himself, spoke in jealous anger to David; he misinterpreted his motives, thinking that by talking to people David desired to provoke others into a rash decision merely so he could enjoy watching a battle. Saul's doubts about David's abilities (verse 33) could also have been disheartening. Of course, we should take the advice of others seriously, as David indeed did, for God can often keep us from foolhardiness through the wise counsel of Christian brothers. An important lesson for the children in your class to recognize is that David knew the Lord from boyhood (verses 34-37) and was faithful in his duties then, which prepared him for future conflict. How your students handle temptation, prayer and Bible reading, worship, conflict with evil, and the like now is likely to set a pattern that will affect them for years to come. Had David run from the lion and the bear, it is unlikely that he would have had the courage to face Goliath, nor would he have had the motivation had he not had a close relationship with God. May God give us boldness to fight the evil with which we come in contact and, by His grace, to overcome it for His glory.

Knowledge Objectives - That your students may know that Jesse sent David with some food to his brothers Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah, who were camped in the Valley of Elah where the Israelite army was facing a Philistine army across a ravine; that for forty days a nine-foot-tall Philistine champion named Goliath had defied Israel; and that even when discouraged by Eliab, David told Saul that, with the help of the God who had rescued him from the lion and the bear, David would defeat the Philistine; this he indeed did with a slingshot, sinking one of his five smooth stones into Goliath's forehead and later cutting off his head with a sword.

Behavioral Objectives - That your students may boldly fight evil in God's strength in whatever situation God has placed them.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - You may introduce today's Scripture passage by showing a drawing or photograph of a large strong man and a weak boy and asking who they think would win a fight, and/or you may briefly tell the story of the tortoise who beat the hare in a race because the overconfident rabbit stopped to rest. Explain that things do not always turn out as we think they would (have they ever had a small kid on their

ball team who was the best player?), and that sometimes God changes events quite unexpectedly, as we see in today's Bible story.

BIBLE STORY

Since today's Scripture passage is so long, an excellent way to present it is by a dramatic reading. You will need a minimum of two, preferably three adults or older children to do this. Do not use children from your class or poor readers for this because, unlike other lessons where drama is used to reinforce the Bible story, here it is being used to present the Scripture itself. Each reader will need to play several parts. Characters required are: a narrator (who may also play David, if necessary), David and Goliath (who may also play Jesse), people David questioned, Eliab, and Saul. All readers need an NIV Bible. The narrator should read the Scripture until he comes to a quotation, whereupon the appropriate character should read his "line" (with expression!). As the narrative progresses, characters should act out what is being described, though not quite to the same extent as in an actual play. Characters should wear some piece of identifying clothing or carry a prop to distinguish them from each other. For example, use a sling (use a ball of crumpled aluminum foil for a stone and remind your children not to point weapons at people) and, if possible, a shepherd's tunic for David; a heavy jacket, spear, sword, and shin guards for Goliath; a staff for Jesse; a sword for Eliab; and a crown for Saul. You may also give David a few stuffed animal sheep for the first part of the story. If you have few actors, be sure that costume changes do not become a source of amusement to your audience. Present your characters before you begin the Scripture reading (they can laugh at you then!) and remind them that this is God's Word and a very serious matter. Have them use their imaginations to picture I Samuel 17:1-3 before you begin, reminding them that war is a very terrible thing, and consider what sorts of matters the men might have been thinking as they awaited battle. When you have finished reading, discuss the passage, bringing out any background material deemed helpful. Focus on the way God works through weak people to fight great evil (ask what sorts of evil we may fight today), but be sure also to emphasize David's preparation for his task. Children often see no correlation between their present activities and future service to God. Stress that they must learn to be faithful in everyday tasks, for this sets a pattern of obedience, glorifies God now, and may be used as training for an unknown work in the future.

STORY

No life application story has been included because of the lengthy Scripture passage. If you have the time, you may wish to read and discuss Psalm 23 or another psalm written by David, e.g., Psalms 3-9, 11-32, 34-41, 51-65, 68-70, 101, 103, 108-110, 122, 124, 131, 133, and 138-145.

SONGS

"Only a Boy Named David"; "Not by Might" (Zechariah 4:6); Psalms of David set to music (see the list of Psalms above and, for example, the Scripture Index of the *Trinity Hymnal*).

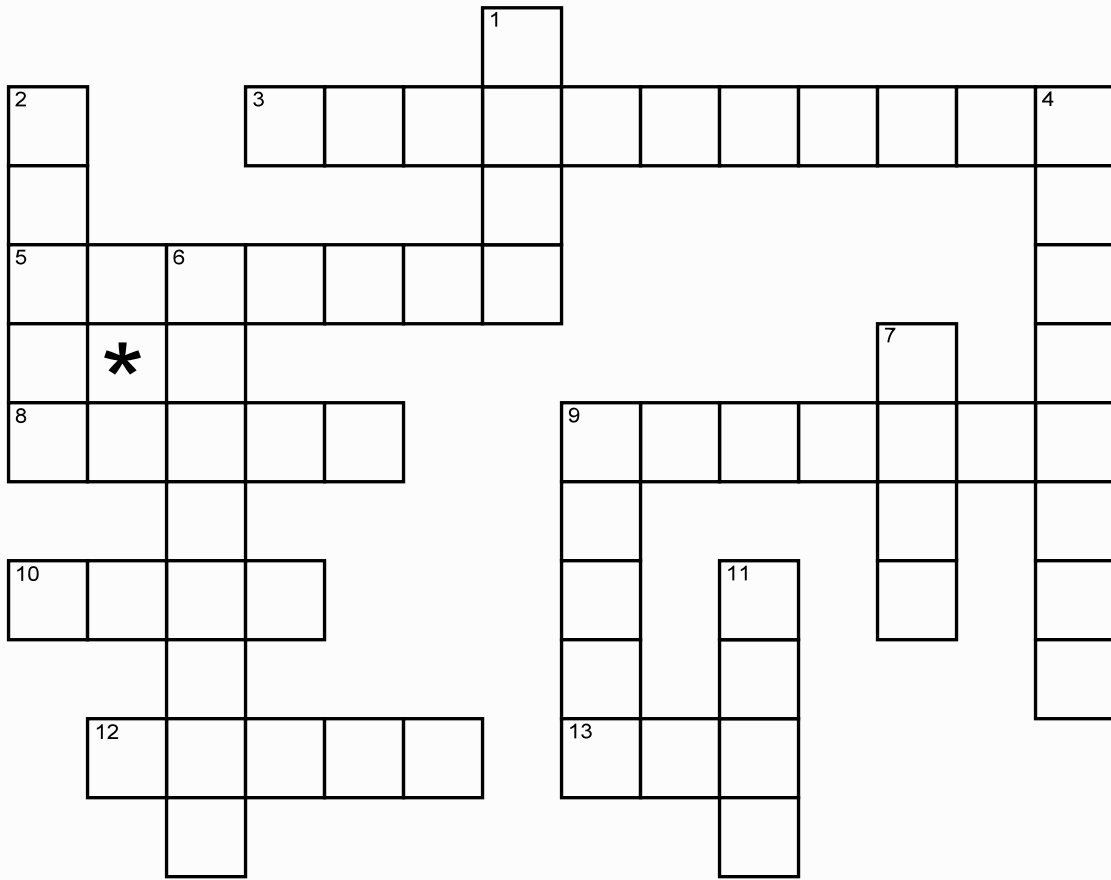
Take Home Activity

Worksheet - Since some of your children may be unable to read, you may wish to do this as a class, or by pairing a reader with a non-reader to work on the crossword together.

WHAT HAPPENED FIRST?

Number these events in order and draw pictures of them.

- _____ Goliath mocked the Israelites.
- _____ David tried on Saul's armor.
- _____ David killed a lion and a bear.
- _____ Jesse sent David to his brothers.
- _____ David killed Goliath.
- _____ Eliab talked angrily to David.



WORD BANK

giant Eliab Goliath Elah David

Shammah ten Jesse Abinadab

shepherd bear nine Philistines Saul

ACROSS:

- 3. A nation that fought Israel.
- 5. David's third oldest brother.
- 8. David's oldest brother.
- 9. The Philistine champion.
- 10. David fought this animal.
- 12. He killed the Philistine champion
- 13. David brought this many loaves and cheese to the army

DOWN:

- 1. The valley where the Israelites waited for waited for battle.
- 2. David's father.
- 4. David's job.
- 6. David's second oldest brother.
- 7. King of the Israelites.
- 9. A very large man. .
- 11. The Philistine champion was ___ feet tall.

BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

I Samuel 17 - Like David, we should boldly fight evil “giants” in dependence upon God’s Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week review I Samuel 2:1-3.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Pray that God will enable you and your family to fight evil in dependence upon God’s Spirit. Think of some specific evils you can help combat, and plan to do so.
2. Note how characters in books read and television shows seen this week face evil. Do they ignore it, side with it, or go against it? If they fight evil, do they do so in pride or humble dependence on God, or at least help from other people?
3. David’s boyhood experiences prepared him for conflict with Goliath. Remind your child that faithfulness in present spiritual (e.g., by Bible reading, prayer, church attendance, learning to obey, helping others) and other (e.g., educational) duties, as well as having value now, prepare him for future situations. Remember, too, David was probably less than sixteen years old (according to the Hebrew word); children can serve God as truly as adults if they submit their lives to Him.
4. Children must learn persistence in difficult, sometimes boring tasks such as in learning an instrument or math facts. It was a good thing that David had practiced shooting stones from his sling for many hours as a young lad. The sling David used was unlike the kind we picture sticking out of the pocket of a mischievous little boy. “The sling was made of two narrow strips of leather joined in the middle by a wide piece where the stone was held. The shepherd tied one end to his wrist. The other end was held in his hand. The sling was then skillfully swung around and the loose end released to make the stone fly” (*The Family Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen, David C. Cook, 1978, p.152).
5. Read and discuss Scripture listed under Suggested Parental Reading.
6. Sing songs such as “Only a Boy Named David”; “Not By Might” (Zechariah 4:6); Psalms of David set to music (see, for example the Scripture Index of the *Trinity Hymnal*). David wrote the following Psalms: 3-9, 11-32, 34-41, 51-65, 68-70, 86, 101, 103, 108-110, 122, 124, 131, 133, and 138-145.

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - Psalm 23 and other Psalms written by David (see # 6 in Suggested Projects); I Samuel 18-19.

DAVID AND JONATHAN

I Samuel 20; II Samuel 9

Lesson Aim

That your students learn that we should put others first and be good friends to those who love God, as were David and Jonathan.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:4 - “The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumbled are armed with strength.”

Lesson Background

It is not without reason that the relationship of David and Jonathan has long been regarded as an unparalleled example of what friendship should be. These men truly cared for each other’s welfare more than their own. As heir apparent to the Israelite throne, it would have been far more natural for Jonathan to regard David as a bitter rival, but “he loved (David) as he loved himself” (I Samuel 20:17). David and Jonathan were open with each other and spoke frankly without fear of rejection. They were willing to go to trouble and through danger for one another. They cheerfully kept their word; David ungrudgingly kept his promise to Jonathan, even many years later when there was nothing to force him to do so (I Samuel 20 cf. II Samuel 9).

The fulfillment of this promise gives us an excellent picture of God’s grace toward us, His children. Under no obligation except His own word, God has shown us grace when we deserved judgment. David was merciful to Mephibosheth when the latter had good reason to expect the opposite. It was common practice for kings to kill heirs to the throne (I Kings 15:29; 16:11), and Mephibosheth had further cause to anticipate trouble because of his grandfather Saul’s evil treatment of David. Jonathan’s lame son had nothing he could

offer in exchange for his life. Instead of hurting Mephibosheth, however, David blessed him and provided daily for his needs. We should also note that David took the initiative in bringing reconciliation between himself and his enemy. The parallels between this story and God’s grace to sinners should be plain. May we respond in grateful loyalty to our King, as did Mephibosheth. May we show love to our fellow believers in Christ as did David and Jonathan.

Knowledge Objectives - That your students know that Jonathan warned David that Saul was trying to kill him as David had suspected (Jonathan discovered this when Saul became violently angry at a feast David purposely failed to attend); that David and Jonathan swore friendship to each other; that David promised to show kindness to Jonathan’s family always; and that David fulfilled this promise by seeking out Jonathan’s lame son Mephibosheth and providing for his needs.

Behavioral Objectives - By God’s grace, that your students may respond thankfully to His mercy in loyal obedience and also be good friends to others.

Lesson Procedure

STORY

ANDREW’S DECISION

Andrew had a decision to make. He nibbled his pencil eraser thoughtfully considering it. That afternoon his soccer team was going to pick their captain and Andrew wanted to be chosen more than almost anything, yet he realized he really didn’t deserve this honor. Andrew really wasn’t a very good player and didn’t always listen to the coach’s instructions, a fact he admitted to himself. Now Gary, that new kid, knew something about the game! The way he wove in and out of the defense was something to behold, and he didn’t “hog” the ball, either. He was a nice kid, too. Gary really should be captain, but Andrew knew that if he, Andrew, indicated that he wished to be captain, there would be no contest. Andrew was popular and all he had to do was say the word and half the team would vote for him without question. What should he do?

Discuss this story briefly and use it to lead into today’s Bible story as follows:

BIBLE STORY

“The Bible says, ‘Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others’ (Philippians 2:3-4). This does not mean we should always let others have their own way, because then they may become bullies and that is not good for them either, but we should show love to one another. Today’s Bible story is about two friends who did love each other. Their names were David and Jonathan.” (You may wish to review briefly the last two weeks’ Bible stories about David by asking your children questions.)

“Does anyone remember why Samuel was afraid when God told him to anoint a son of Jesse as king of Israel? Samuel knew that King Saul would be very angry if he found out that Samuel had anointed someone else as king, for Saul liked being a rich and powerful ruler who could make others obey him. Saul probably intended to reign for his whole life and then to have his son be king. He would want to stop anyone who tried to interfere with his plans, perhaps even to kill him, for this is what many rulers did to those they

thought might dethrone them. Therefore, Samuel had kept God's intentions a secret. David married Saul's daughter Michal and became good friends with his son Jonathan, but it became obvious that Saul intended to harm David, so he fled. This is where today's Bible story begins."

Read **I Samuel 20** (NIV) and discuss as you read along. You may omit verses 5-10 if desired. Be sure your children understand that Jonathan was in effect relinquishing his claim to the throne to David, and also the significance of David's promise to Jonathan. Use the following transition to lead into the second part of today's Scripture.

"When Saul realized that David had fled, he chased him in order to kill him, but God protected David. Finally, Saul was killed and eventually all the tribes of Israel recognized David as king. One day David was thinking about his friend Jonathan. Jonathan had died in battle with his father, King Saul, and now David thought of the promise he had made to be kind to Jonathan's family." Read **II Samuel 9** (NIV). Discuss the fulfillment of David's promise (we should keep our promises, too) and how this story is analogous to Christ's mercy to His people.

ACTIVITY

Friendship Discussion/Activity. Have a discussion about what it means to be a friend. You may wish to read and discuss Bible passages on the subject such as Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:6,9,10,11; Philippians 2:1-4; I Corinthians 13:4-7; John 15:12-15. Have students who read well take turns in looking up the verses. It might be helpful to write down the main ideas of the verses in a few simple words. Use these verses to see how David, Jonathan, Jesus, and we measure up to what the Bible says a friend should be. You may also wish to have your children write a poem or story about friendship.

SONGS

"A New Commandment"; I John 4:7-8 ("Beloved, let us love one another"); "How Beautiful the Sight" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #356); "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #629).

Take Home Activity

Do one or both of the following:

A. Draw a picture of something you can do for or with a friend that he would like.

B. Make a present to give to a friend. Get ideas from a craft book or use a suitable project from this curriculum. The following are things you might choose to make: a jigsaw puzzle (cut a picture glued on cardboard into several shapes); a puppet (two pieces of cloth sewn together); a doll; a pin; a game (board or card, perhaps a Bible question game); a kite; a pinwheel; food; a parachute (tie strings to a handkerchief or a piece of similar size cut from a plastic bag); or ring toss (rings can be made from rope or wire circles taped together and a target from a clothespin or short piece of dowel rod nailed to a piece of two-by-four).

BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

I Samuel 20; II Samuel 9 - We should put others first and be good friends to those who love God, as were David and Jonathan.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:4 - “The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumbled are armed with strength.”

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read and discuss other stories about David (I Samuel 21-27, 29; II Samuel 1-8, 10-24; I Chronicles 11-21) and his son Solomon (I Chronicles 22; I Kings 1-2), about whom we will learn next week.
2. Compare what David did for Mephibosheth in II Samuel 9 with what Christ has done for believers. Write down a list of similarities and differences. Read more about Mephibosheth (see II Samuel 4:4; 16:1-4; 19:24-30).
3. Read Scripture verses on love and friendship (see Suggested Parental Reading). Discuss how to be a good friend. Befriend someone who is lonely or someone you don't know very well and make a specific plan for how to strengthen an existing friendship.
4. God should be our best friend, but often He is more like a passing acquaintance because we spend so little time with Him. Spend time in worship and prayer this week. If God is not your friend but your enemy because you have not come to know Him through salvation by Jesus Christ, speak to a pastor from this church or your child's Sunday School teacher about how you can have a relationship with Him.
5. Note the positive and negative ways characters in books read and television programs seen this week act toward their friends and discuss with your family. Ask God to help you be a good friend to others.
6. Write a poem or a story about friendship.
7. Sing songs such as: “A New Commandment”; I John 4:7-8 (“Beloved, let us love one another”); “How Beautiful the Sight” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #356); “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #629).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - About David and Solomon: I Samuel 21-27, 29; II Samuel 1-8, 10-24; I Chronicles 11-22; I Kings 1-2. About love and friendship: Philippians 2:1-4; I Corinthians 13:4-7; Proverbs 27:6; 17:17; 18:24; 22:24; 27:6, 9, 10, 11; 29:5; John 15:12-15.

SOLOMON

I Kings 3, 10, 11

Lesson Aim

That your students may realize that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10), and learn the importance of loving Him above all and not compromising with sin.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:5 - “Those who were full hire themselves out for food, but those who were hungry hunger no more. She who was barren has borne seven children, but she who has had many sons pines away.”

Lesson Background

Solomon, who ruled over Israel from 970 to 931 B.C., was a man of enormous potential who accomplished great things, but nonetheless brought dishonor to God’s name by his compromise with sin. Solomon’s reign began well even though he gained the throne at a rather young age (I Kings 3:7 speaks of him as a “child,” Eusebius says of age twelve, Josephus fifteen; Solomon’s early accession was precipitated by the conspiracy of Joab and Abiathar to enthrone David’s eldest surviving son Adonijah). Solomon saw the need of God’s blessing (I Kings 3:3-9). Rather than begging God for riches or long life, Solomon asked for a discerning heart to govern the Israelites. The Lord blessed his choice by giving him a long life and wealth as well as granting his request. God gave Solomon the ability to rule Israel justly and administer the affairs of the nation wisely. Under his reign, Israel enjoyed forty years of peace and prosperity unparalleled in its history before or since. Solomon dealt with Israel’s few enemies at this time, fortified key cities (Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Beth-horon, Baalath), exacted tribute from foreign nations, instituted an extensive building program, and greatly expanded both caravan and sea trade. He also levied high taxes and conscripted Israelites for forced labor to work on his construction projects, which set the stage for future

trouble. God gave Solomon great intellectual abilities, which he used to gain knowledge of botany, zoology, poetry, and the like (4:32-34). His reputation for wisdom and his achievements became so well known that the Queen of Sheba traveled 1200 miles to see if the reports she had heard were really true.

Solomon had a good inheritance. David bestowed on his favorite son a fine spiritual heritage (would not he who was called “a man after God’s own heart” have prayed diligently for his son and attempted to impart spiritual truth to him?), material prosperity, and a nation enjoying hard-won peace. On top of this, God blessed Solomon himself. Yet Solomon turned away from the Lord. He married foreign women, and to please them “he followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites” (I Kings 11:5). Worship of these gods involved fertility rites, prostitution, sexual deviance, and child sacrifice, although Solomon himself probably did not engage in all of these practices. What caused this downfall? Political alliances by marriage were common at this time and many of Solomon’s one thousand wives and concubines were obtained for this reason. Could not Solomon trust God to protect Israel from foreign domination rather than disobeying the dual prohibitions against multiple marriages and idolatrous unions? Rather than safeguarding his kingdom, Solomon’s actions led to its downfall, as God judged Israel through its division under Rehoboam. Solomon’s marriages may also have been motivated by sexual desire and a lust for riches (brought by the women into the marriages), power and recognition (the status of a king was enhanced by the size and quality of his harem), and feminine attention. Solomon’s sin was not private. It affected Israel not only then but for years to come. The high places set up to honor his wives’ idols were a snare to Israel until they were destroyed by Josiah hundreds of years later (II Kings 23:13).

Solomon’s life is a story of “what could have been.” Many of your students, like Solomon, may have a godly heritage and great potential. Will they forget their need of God? Recognizing temptations to sin and repenting of sin before it snowballs could prevent your children’s lives from ending as disastrously as did Solomon’s. They should be careful, too, that innocent friendships with unbelievers do not lead them into trouble and an acceptance of their gods and lifestyles. Solomon compromised with sin and it led him into greater and greater grief. May we ruthlessly forsake sin in our lives and turn for forgiveness and help to the God of all wisdom, power and mercy.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that David’s son Solomon asked God for wisdom and that God, pleased with his request, gave him this (as seen by the incident with the two women and the baby), as well as such great riches and honor that other rulers like the Queen of Sheba were amazed, but that Solomon disobeyed God by marrying foreign women who turned his heart to other gods, so God judged Solomon, gave him enemies, and allowed his son Rehoboam to inherit only the southern portion of the kingdom (Judah and Benjamin).

Behavioral Objectives - By God’s grace, to forsake sin and seek His wisdom to live lives pleasing to Him.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - “Can you imagine your mom going grocery shopping one day and coming home with 185 bushels (show how large a bushel is) of flour, 375 bushels of meal, and the meat from thirty cattle and a hundred sheep and goats? What if she then told you that this food was to be eaten in one day? That’s silly, you would say. No family could eat that much in one day or even in one year. Yet Scripture reports that this is what King Solomon had daily to meet the needs of his household and all who ate at his table! Of course, Solomon provided food for many hundreds of people, not just a few, as in your family, but we can see from this how rich and influential Solomon must have been.”

“Today’s Bible story took place more than nine hundred years before Jesus was born. Shortly before he died David appointed Solomon, the son of his favorite wife Bathsheba, to be king of Israel. Solomon reigned for forty years and he was indeed a wealthy king. The Bible says that he had a yearly income of more than twenty-five tons of gold (a small car weighs a ton)! Silver became so commonplace in Jerusalem that it was considered to have little value. How did Solomon become so wealthy and powerful? This was God’s doing, of course. When Solomon gained the throne as a young man he recognized his dependence on the Lord. He probably little realized, however, how mighty he would become nor how he would turn away from the God who had blessed him. Let’s read something of what the Bible has to say about Solomon.”

BIBLE STORY

Read **I Kings 3, 10:1-13, 11:1-13** (NIV) and discuss one section at a time, as well as the total impact of Solomon’s life. Emphasize Solomon’s good beginning in seeking the Lord, the source of all wisdom, contrasted with his later downfall because of his compromise with sin. Tell your students how God judged Solomon’s disobedience by giving him enemies and dividing his kingdom between his son Rehoboam, who only kept the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and Jeroboam, who ruled the ten northern tribes of Israel. You may want to summarize some of the Scripture in your own words and/or do a dramatic reading or play of I Kings 3:16-28.

ACTIVITY

There will be no life application story included in today’s lesson because of the length of the Scripture passages. You may wish to do one of the following if you have time.

Write several different events from Solomon’s life on pieces of cardboard or paper, one event per paper. It would be helpful if you could describe the event by a key phrase and draw a simple picture of it. Hand one paper to each child and then have the children try to arrange themselves in proper order to tell the story of Solomon’s life. You may wish to make two papers for each event, divide your class into two teams, and have them compete to see which team can put their papers in order first. Some suggested events are: Solomon asks for wisdom; a wise ruling about a baby; Solomon builds the temple; the Queen of Sheba visits Solomon; Solomon marries many foreign women; God raises up enemies to Solomon; Solomon dies; ten tribes of Israel revolt against Rehoboam.

Talk about other Scripture written by Solomon. Selected verses from Proverbs might be particularly helpful to discuss.

SONGS

“Seek Ye First”; “Obey My Voice” (Jeremiah 7:23); “Yield Not to Temptation” (*Trinity Hymnal* #582); “Trust and Obey” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #672).

Take Home Activity

Solomon Picture - Have your students draw a picture of Solomon asking for wisdom, making a wise ruling, dedicating the temple, or talking with the Queen of Sheba. You may wish to do this by making crayon scratch pictures. To do this, have your students color an abstract design with brightly-colored crayons, completely covering a piece of paper. Be sure your children press hard with the crayons to color darkly. Then have them color over this completely with black crayon. The children should then draw their picture by scratching away some of the black crayon with a toothpick, revealing the bright colors underneath.

BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

I Kings 3, 10, 11 - Like Solomon, we should seek the God of all wisdom, but unlike Solomon, we should not compromise with sin.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week I Samuel 2:5 - “Those who were full hire themselves out for food, but those who were hungry hunger no more. She who was barren has borne seven children, but she who has had many sons pines away.”

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read more about King Solomon (see Suggested Parental Reading).
2. Read and discuss Scripture written by Solomon (see Suggested Parental Reading). Proverbs would be especially valuable to study with your children. Perhaps an adult or teenager in your family would be willing to go through the book and group verses by subject such as wisdom, family relationships, friendship, other interpersonal relationships, and the rich and poor. You might wish to draw different colored lines in your Bible next to verses on different subjects.
3. Solomon began well, but small compromises with sin became a major turning from God. Remind your family and yourself of the importance of immediately repenting of and forsaking even “small” sins, and how dangerous pride because of one’s advantages can be.
4. God gave Solomon wisdom, but he made an effort to gain knowledge about God’s creation, too (I Kings 4:32-33). Encourage each family member to learn something new this week and share it with others. Remind your children of the importance of doing the best they can with their studies.
5. If you are a Christian, be careful that seemingly harmless relationships with unbelievers do not lead you into a worship of their idols and an acceptance of their lifestyles, as occurred with Solomon because of his marriage to non-Israelite women. God commands us to declare His Gospel to those around us and to show them love, but we do need to guard against unwise involvement.
6. Sing songs such as: “Seek Ye First”; “Obey My Voice” (Jeremiah 7:23); “Yield Not To Temptation” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #582); “Trust and Obey” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #672).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - About Solomon: I Kings 2, 4-9; I Chronicles 28-29; II Chronicles 1-9. By Solomon: Proverbs; Psalm 72 and 127; Ecclesiastes; Song of Solomon. Also see James 1:5-7; Matthew 6:28-30.

ELIJAH AND THE RAVENS

I Kings 17:1-6

Lesson Aim

That your students recognize with thanksgiving that it is God who provides for all their needs, and that they boldly stand against evil as Elijah did.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, review I Samuel 2:1-5.

Lesson Background

Israel's history was one of continual rebellion against the Lord. Solomon's turning from God set the stage for a downward spiral of evil and judgment from which Israel, particularly the northern tribes, would never recover. With the division of the monarchy, Jeroboam set up idolatrous golden calves at Bethel and Dan lest the majority of the northern population return their allegiance to Rehoboam in the south as they made their annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple (I Kings 12:26-27). Rather than securing his position as king, these measures turned God's wrath against Jeroboam (I Kings 11:34-39 cf. I Kings 14:10-16), and the calves became a snare to Israel for many years to come.

Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Nadab, who ruled two years and was killed by a man named Baasha. Baasha reigned for twenty-four years, followed by his son Elah, who was murdered by Zimri, one of his officials. Zimri committed suicide and, after a brief power struggle, the nation was taken over by Omri, commander of the army. All of these men "did evil in the eyes of the Lord, walking in the ways of Jeroboam" (I Kings 15:34).

“In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians and began to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him” (I Kings 16:29-33). The next verse goes on to relate an act of open defiance against the Lord, the rebuilding of Jericho, something that God had condemned.

God could not allow such rebellion against Him to continue. Into this situation He sent a man to warn of judgment whose very name proclaimed “Jehovah is God” - Elijah. Around 860 B.C., Elijah, from the rugged hill country of Gilead east of the Jordan, appeared in Ahab’s court declaring that God’s wrath was upon Ahab. It was a tremendous act of courage to approach a king without permission, particularly one as evil as Ahab, but to come suddenly into court denouncing a ruler as a wicked sinner would seem positively foolhardy. Yet Elijah realized that he had more power and authority than any earthly monarch, for he knew and was serving the living God. This confidence was nurtured by prayer (James 5:17) and trust in God’s Word. Elijah’s proclamation of judgment was motivated by a holy jealousy for God’s honor and founded in a belief that the Lord would fulfill His promises. In Deuteronomy 11:16-17, God said that He would withhold His blessing of rain from those who worship idols, so there was good justification for Elijah’s announcement that “there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word” (I Kings 17:1; there had already been a drought in Israel for six months - cf. I Kings 18:1 and Luke 4:25). Elijah realized the intense suffering such a judgment would bring, but God’s glory was more important than any other consideration and he acted in obedience.

Elijah was willing to do whatever God told him, not only to thunder against a wicked ruler, but also to go into hiding for a long period of time, something that is often difficult for an outgoing “man of action.” Elijah’s seclusion afforded him protection and also kept him from public ministry, for there was to be a spiritual as well as physical drought in the land.

God provided for all of Elijah’s needs, even sending food in a miraculous manner (the ravens were acting contrary to their natural instincts) so that he might remain hidden by the brook. The Lord also supplies our daily needs, though we are often unthankful because we forget our dependence on Him. Many of us assume without question that at any time we can travel a short distance to a store and purchase any sort of food or clothing we desire. Few of us have been hungry for even a day or two. We little realize how quickly drought, floods, insect plagues, fuel shortage, economic hardship, or war could bring about ruin, and so we are unappreciative of the way the sovereign Lord has ordered our circumstances and the blessings He bestows on us daily. Children, unless they have suffered deprivation, tend to take God’s provision for granted, too. They may complain about the food they are served or covet new clothes and toys. May we be good examples to them of people who are thankful to God for His provision of our needs. May we, like Elijah, also speak boldly against the evils in our day.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that Elijah the Tishbite declared God’s judgment to Ahab that there would be no dew nor rain in Israel for three more years, and that Elijah then obeyed God by hiding in the Kerith ravine, where he was fed by ravens and drank water from a brook.

Behavioral Objectives - By God’s grace to speak boldly against evil as Elijah did, and be thankful for the Lord’s provision of our daily needs.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - Introduce today's Bible story approximately as follows: "Have you ever been thirsty, really thirsty? How would you feel if you turned on the faucet and nothing came out? Something like this happened to the people in today's Bible story. Where does water come from anyway?" (Help your students realize that its ultimate source is God.) "What things is water needed for besides drinking?" (For growing plants including food, for animals to live, for cleaning things.) "If God can give us the blessing of water, He could also take it away. Let's read about why He might do this." Read **Deuteronomy 11:16-17**.

"If people worship idols, God said He would hold back the rain. What is an idol? Can anyone tell me the name of the king we learned about last week who turned from God and worshiped idols? Yes, Solomon disobeyed the Lord. Maybe you remember that because of Solomon's sin, God divided the kingdom of Israel between his son Rehoboam in the south, who ruled two tribes, and Jeroboam, one of his officials, who reigned over the ten northern tribes. God promised to bless Jeroboam if he would follow in the way of righteousness, but Jeroboam refused to listen to the Lord and set up golden calf idols at Bethel and Dan. These became a great temptation to the people of Israel. They continued to worship idols, not only under the rule of Jeroboam, but for almost forty years after this under the reigns of Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri. For all this time, God withheld a major judgment from the people, but finally there came a king who was so evil that God could no longer deal in mercy. This ruler's name was Ahab. Let's see what the Bible has to say about him." Read **I Kings 16:29-33**.

"Would you like to tell such a person that God was going to punish him? Even if you went to see him without permission to tell him good news, he might have had you killed. Yet God gave one man courage to face Ahab and tell him that he would be punished for his sin. His name was Elijah."

BIBLE STORY

Read **I Kings 17:1-6** and discuss, emphasizing Elijah's courage in confronting Ahab and the Lord's provision for Elijah's needs. Make application to your students' lives. (How can we stand against evil? Does God provide for our needs? What should be our response to this?)

STORY

ABUNDANTLY SUPPLIED

"My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Many, many people have found out the truth of this verse; if we seek God first in our lives, He will supply all our needs. More than a hundred years ago, an Englishman named George Muller trusted God not only for his own needs, but for those of hundreds of homeless boys and girls in the orphanages he built. Sometimes it seemed that the children would have to go hungry, for there would be no food left in the pantry and no money to buy any. George Muller, however, would continue to pray in faith; sure enough, at the last minute someone would send a gift and the orphans would have enough to eat.

Grown-ups are not the only ones who can ask the Lord to help them. There lived a boy in Texas who needed shirts in which to go to school. It wasn't that he just wanted new shirts because he didn't like the shirts he had. The boy did not own any school shirts that fit him. Every night, as his family got together to pray for many things, the boy would always remind his parents: "Remember to pray for my shirts; I need them to go to school."

This went on for some time, but every evening the boy asked God to supply his need. One night, he asked again, "Remember to pray for my shirts."

"Oh, we are not going to pray for them tonight," his mother said.

“Why not?” asked the boy.

His mother didn’t say anything, but sent an older child into the other room. The child returned carrying a shirt. “A shirt, and just my size!” exclaimed the boy. “God answered my prayer!”

His mother still said nothing, but sent the older child back into the other room. He returned carrying another shirt. The brother went away again and, one trip after another, came back with a shirt until the boy had twelve shirts! A store that was going out of business had had a dozen shirts it had not known what to do with and had called the boy’s mother to see if she could use them. God had not only answered the boy’s prayer, but answered it abundantly.

SONGS

“Father We Thank Thee” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #633); “Now Thank We All Our God” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #98); “Can A Little Child Like Me” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #636); “Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #571); “Jehovah Jireh.”

Take Home Activity

“**Thank You God for. . .**” **Collage.** Have your children make a collage of things for which they can thank God by gluing pictures cut from old magazines to a piece of poster board, cardboard, or construction paper. The pictures should be glued on in different directions and slightly overlap each other. Your students should print “Thank You God for. . .” at the top of the paper.

BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

I Kings 17:1-6 - We should be thankful to God, who supplies all our needs, and we should boldly stand against evil as Elijah did.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week review I Samuel 2:1-5.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Thank God for supplying all your needs. Praying before meals can be a good start in remembering our dependence on the Lord and consequent duty to thank Him for His many blessings to us. Don't complain about food or other provisions with which you are not satisfied. Realize how quickly even basic necessities could be removed by drought, insects, floods, financial hardship, or war.
2. Write a poem or song thanking God for His many blessings.
3. Read a story of how God miraculously provided a person's food or other needs.
4. Elijah obeyed God and boldly declared God's judgment on wicked Ahab and sinful Israel. Discuss ways in which we can fight evil today (e.g., abortion). Make a specific plan to speak or act against sin and carry it out.
5. Read about the history of Israel and Judah between the time of Solomon and Elijah (see Suggested Parental Reading).
6. Sing songs of thanksgiving such as: "Father We Thank Thee" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #633); "Now Thank We All Our God" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #98); "Can A Little Child Like Me" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #636); also "Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #571); "Jehovah Jireh."

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - Psalm 34:9-10; Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:14-19; Deuteronomy 11:16-17; James 5:17. History of Israel between the time of Solomon and Elijah: I Kings 12-16. History of Judah: II Chronicles 10-17.

Books - Also read about times when God miraculously provided for the needs of His people, such as a biography of George Muller (*George Muller: Man of Faith and Miracles*; Basil Miller, Bethany, 1941).

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW

I Kings 17:7-24

Lesson Aim

To know that, like the widow at Zarephath, we should share what we have with other believers and trust in the Lord.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:6 - “The Lord brings death and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and raises up.”

Lesson Background

The prophet Elijah told King Ahab that there would be no dew nor rain in Israel except at his word. God then directed Elijah to hide in the ravine Kerith where the Lord provided him with water to drink from the brook and food brought by ravens. At first, perhaps, Ahab and the Israelites did not believe Elijah’s warning of judgment, but as the weeks without rain lengthened into months and finally into years, they began to realize the truth of God’s word. Eventually, the brook at Kerith also dried up and Elijah himself began to suffer the devastating effects of the answer to his prayer. Are we willing to pray for something or do a work for God that might cause us to suffer hardship? It is interesting to speculate as to how Elijah might have felt as he saw his water supply dry up little by little. How would we respond in such a situation? Would we continue to trust God? Elijah apparently did, for he remained in obedience at Kerith rather than trying to find water elsewhere on his own. When God directed him, he traveled to Zarephath.

The command to go seventy-five miles to Zarephath certainly did not seem to make sense. Zarephath, a Phoenician city full of Baal worshipers (Phoenicia was the native land of wicked queen Jezebel), was also suffering from drought and famine. It would be, however, perhaps the last place Ahab would look for Elijah; also, the Lord desired to work in the widow’s life according to His own sovereign

design (Luke 4:25-26). It must have been humbling for Elijah to be dependent on a Gentile woman. Sometimes it is harder to receive than to give. How difficult it must have been for Elijah to ask the widow to share her precious food and water (he even asked her to feed him before herself), and even more difficult for the woman to do so. Why should she share her last meal with this strange prophet, anyway? She easily could have made the excuse that she had to meet the needs of her family first. But the widow trusted Elijah and Elijah knew that the God who had protected him from Ahab, supplied his needs at Kerith, and led him and the woman to the right place at the right time so they could meet would continue to provide for their needs. Therefore, he was able to say confidently that their supply of food would not diminish.

God was faithful to Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. When the widow's son died, she turned angrily against Elijah, forgetting that had Elijah not come, she and her son would already be dead from starvation. Elijah felt compassion for her, and he also realized that the boy's death would bring dishonor to the name of the Lord in this Gentile region, so he prayed and God restored the child's life. May we trust in the God who provided for Elijah and restored the widow's son to life and share what we have with others.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that when the brook at Kerith dried up, God sent Elijah to meet a widow in Zarephath and Elijah asked her to share with him what she thought would be her last meal; that, as Elijah said, the flour and oil did not run out, but were miraculously replenished; and that when the woman's son died, she bitterly reproached Elijah, but he took the child to his room and prayed for him, stretching himself out on the boy three times, and the Lord restored the boy to life.

Behavioral Objectives - By God's grace, to trust Him and share what He has given us with others.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - Review last week's Bible story (I Kings 17:1-6) using a question-and-answer format. Concentrate on the effect of the drought in Israel (hard cracked land, dying vegetation, dust, not being able to grow crops, hunger, thirst, etc.).

BIBLE STORY

Read **I Kings 17:7-24** (NIV) and discuss, bringing out the applications mentioned in the background material. Particularly focus on the widow's generosity and God's faithfulness to her. Point out to your class that it is the Lord who controls the matters of life and death, as seen in the incident with the widow's son (see today's memory verse).

STORY

MARTIN THE COBBLER (adapted from a story by Leo Tolstoy)

In a certain town, there lived a shoemaker named Martin Avdeitch. He lived in a basement room that possessed but one window. The window looked out into the street and through it a glimpse could be caught of the passersby. It is true that only their legs could be seen, but this did not matter, as Martin could recognize people by their boots alone, for he had repaired many of them. Martin had become very bitter against God, for his wife and three children had died, and now life did not seem worthwhile to the old cobbler.

One day, an elderly Christian peasant came to visit the shoemaker, and Martin told him about his troubles and how he wished to die. “You should not speak like that, Martin,” replied the old pilgrim. “It is not for us to judge the acts of God. . . . If you despair, it is because you have wished to live too much for your own pleasure.”

“For what, then, should I live?” asked Martin.

“For God alone,” replied the old man. The man told Martin that by reading the New Testament he would find out how to live for God.

Martin bought the New Testament, intending to read it only occasionally, but it brought so much comfort to his soul that he began to read it every day. The more he read, the happier he became, and whereas once he would moan and complain about his lot in life, he now offered praise to God in everything. The cobbler was particularly impressed by the Bible passages that speak of believers helping other people, for he realized he had lived a selfish life and not shared what he had.

One night, Martin dreamed that Christ Himself was speaking to him. “Martin, Martin,” the Lord said, “Look thou into the street, for tomorrow I am coming to visit thee.”

When Martin awoke the next day, he thought that he must have imagined the voice, and yet as he stitched the shoe leather, he couldn’t help glancing out the window occasionally just in case the voice had been real. All he saw, however, was the usual assortment of footwear, boots belonging to soldiers, a neighbor’s polished galoshes, or the baker’s shoes with a basket swinging next to them.

As he continued watching, the old patched boots of Stepanitch, an old soldier who lived by doing a few jobs for a kind neighbor, halted by the window. “That poor man must be frozen,” thought Martin as he watched Stepanitch clumsily try to clear snow away from the front of the building. “Perhaps he would like some tea.” Stepanitch was very grateful to come in and warm himself, and, as the old soldier drank glass after glass of tea, Martin spoke to him about Christ.

“I thank you, Martin Avdeitch,” Stepanitch said. “You have taken me in, and fed both soul and body.”

“Nay, but I beg you to come again,” replied Avdeitch. “I am only too glad of a guest.” So Stepanitch departed.

Later Martin, peering out his window, saw a plain-looking, poorly dressed woman with a child in her arms. Her clothing was ragged and fit only for summer, and even from behind his windowpanes Avdeitch could hear the child crying miserably and its mother vainly trying to soothe it. Martin went to the door and asked the woman to come into his shoemaker’s shop. He gave her a bowl of soup and held the baby for her while she ate. The woman was a soldier’s wife, but she had not heard from her husband in eight months. She had lost her job when the baby was born and had not been able to find another. In compassion, Martin gave the woman his old jacket and some money. The woman gratefully thanked him and left to return home.

Martin Avdeitch had a little soup himself and went back to his shoemaking, all the while continuing to glance out the window whenever a shadow falling across his work told him someone was passing by. Suddenly he looked up and, through the window, Martin spied a ragged boy snatching an apple from the basket of an old peddler woman. The woman was on her guard, however, for she turned and grasped the boy by the hair, intending to bring him to the police. Martin ran out of his shop to try to stop the fight and implored the peddler woman to let the boy go. She told him the boy had stolen an apple, but Martin, after making the boy apologize and promise never to do such a thing again, offered to pay for it. “Yes, but you spoil the young rascal by doing that,” she objected.

Martin reminded her that because Christ has forgiven our many sins, we should forgive one another. The woman was picking up a heavy sack she had been carrying to continue her journey home when the boy darted forward and said, “Nay, let me carry it, grandmother. It will be all on my way home.” The old woman nodded assent, gave up the sack to the boy, and went away with him down the street.

Martin went back inside his shop to work, but had done little when it grew too dark to distinguish the stitches easily, so he put away his things for the night and took his New Testament from the shelf. The cobbler thought he heard movement behind him so he looked round and saw in the shadow of a dark corner

what appeared to be figures - figures of persons standing there, yet he could not distinguish them clearly. At the same time, Martin thought he heard the same voice he had heard the previous night speaking to him again.

“Martin, Martin, dost thou not know me?”

“Who art thou?” said Avdeitch.

“Even I!” whispered the voice again. “Lo, it is I” - and there stepped from the dark corner Stepanitch. He smiled, and then, like the fading of a little cloud, was gone. “It is I!” whispered the voice again - and there stepped from the same corner the woman and her baby. The same thing happened again as the apple-seller and the boy appeared and then were gone. Martin Avdeitch joyfully turned to the place where his New Testament had fallen open and read these words: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. . . . I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:35.40).

Then Avdeitch understood that the vision had come true, and that his Savior had in very truth visited him that day, and that He had received Him.

SONGS

“Seek Ye First”; “This Is My Commandment”; “A New Commandment”; I John 4:7-8 (“Beloved, Let Us Love One Another”); ‘Obey My Voice’; I John 5:14-15 (“This is the Confidence”); “Lord Thou Lovest The Cheerful Giver” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #434).

Take Home Activity

Food Making and Sharing - Have your children prepare some food from a simple recipe (e.g., cookies, cornbread, celery sticks with peanut butter) and share it with others. After they share the food, perhaps with another Sunday School class, they may eat some themselves.

BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

I Kings 17:7-24 - Like the widow at Zarephath, we should share what we have with other believers and trust in the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:6- “The Lord brings death and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and raises up.”

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. The widow of Zarephath shared what she had with God’s prophet. In fact, she put his needs before her own. Discuss how you can put other people’s needs before your own and make a specific plan to do so and/or to share something with someone this week. Do this as a family as well as individually.
2. God has promised to provide for those who love Him, but in return He commands His children to give to His work. Read Malachi 3:6-12 and discuss tithing in relation to the widow’s generosity to God’s servant.
3. Elijah believed that God was lovingly in charge of the situation in spite of appearances to the contrary when the brook at Kerith dried up and the widow’s son died. What situations might tempt you to doubt God’s goodness and power? Discuss how you can trust the Lord in times of trial.
4. Read “Martin the Cobbler” or another story about sharing with others.
5. Sing songs such as: “Seek Ye First”; “This Is My Commandment”; “A New Commandment”; I John 4:7-8 (“Beloved, Let Us Love One Another”); “Obey My Voice”; I John 5:14-15 (“This is the Confidence”); “Lord Thou Lovest The Cheerful Giver” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #434).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - Matthew 25:31-46; Matthew 10:40-42; Luke 4:25-26; Malachi 3:6-12; Psalm 37:25; 41:1; Proverbs 19:17; Philippians 4:14-19.

Books - “Martin Avdeitch” (Martin the Cobbler), a short story by Tolstoy.

ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL

I Kings 18

Lesson Aim

To teach students that we should serve the mighty God of Elijah, not powerless idols.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:7 - “The Lord sends poverty and wealth; He humbles and He exalts.” Also, review **I Samuel 2:1-6**.

Lesson Background

“Is that you, you troubler of Israel?” King Ahab asked. Elijah had returned. After three and a half years of drought, God’s judgment on Israel as spoken by the prophet, Elijah had come back. Ahab could probably hardly believe his eyes, for he had searched high and low, even in neighboring countries, for Elijah. “I have not made trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied, “but you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the Lord’s commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table” (I Kings 18:18-19). Ahab had changed little since the beginning of the drought. Note, for example, in I Kings 18:2-5, that he showed greater concern for animals than people, though admittedly horses were a major part of Israel’s defense system. Yet he did what Elijah said and the stage was set for the confrontation between Baal and the God of Elijah.

The contest showed the utter impotence of false gods. Baal, a god of the sun and storm, certainly should have been able to send fire and been willing to send it in response to the fervent cries of his followers if he were real. But sincerity does not guarantee help or success, and the false prophets danced, shouted, and cut themselves to no avail. Then Elijah, according to the Lord’s command (verse 37), calmly prepared an

altar with twelve stones. He even drenched the bull (the water probably came from the nearby Mediterranean Sea) to demonstrate even more dramatically the power of the true God. God showed His acceptance of the sacrifice by sending fire not only to consume the bull, but the wood, stones, soil, and water as well! Elijah then had the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal seized and slaughtered in the Kishon Valley. This was not an act of cruel vindictiveness, but a necessary step to cleanse Israel from evil. Now that atonement had been made for the sins of the people, the Lord could bless Israel with rain. This He did in response to the prayers of Elijah. May we, like Elijah, beseech the Lord earnestly, humbly, expectantly, and persistently.

“How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him” (I Kings 18:21); thus Elijah challenged the people of Israel on Mount Carmel. The same question echoes down through the centuries to us. By God’s grace, may we choose to serve the Lord with our whole hearts.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that Obadiah fearfully told Ahab that Elijah had returned, that Elijah told Ahab to assemble the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah on Mount Carmel, where the false prophets frantically called on their gods to consume a sacrifice to no avail, while the Lord answered Elijah’s prayer by sending fire to consume the sacrifice, wood, stones, soil, and water; that Elijah ordered the prophets of Baal to be killed; and that Elijah prayed to the Lord for rain, sending his servant back seven times before he saw a small cloud, later followed by other clouds and heavy rain.

Behavioral Objectives - By God’s grace, to serve the Lord wholeheartedly and pray effectively as Elijah did.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - Introduce the Bible story as follows, giving your children an opportunity to answer the questions: “For the past few weeks we have been talking about people who worshiped idols. What is an idol? Does anyone remember the name of a king who worshiped a false god called Baal? We will learn more about Ahab today.” If possible play “Just One God is He” and possibly “Only Elohim” on the record *Sir Oliver’s Song* (Candle Birdwing/Sparrow). “Do people worship idols today? In some parts of the world, people still do bow down to objects carved from wood or stone, but in America, people bow down to different sorts of false gods. An idol is something you worship instead of the Lord, something you expect to solve your problems and to which you devote much time and energy. Some people worship money, others power, pleasure, or their possessions. Is there anything in your life that is more important to you than God? Today’s Bible story shows that idols don’t have the power people think they do.”

BIBLE STORY

Read **I Kings 18** and discuss, focusing on the fact that all people must choose (this is not to deny God’s sovereignty) whether we will serve false gods or the Lord. We cannot “sit on the fence.” Also discuss the power of God, the need for a Sacrifice, and Elijah’s courage, faith, and persistent, believing prayer.

STORY

BONIFACE'S CHALLENGE

One day in the eighth century, a large group of people were gathered around an oak tree near Geismar, Germany. They were meeting to worship their god Thor, a god of thunder and lightning, to whom they believed the huge tree belonged. Christians had come to Germany to tell these people that they should worship the true God of the Bible, but they did not listen, or they changed what they heard by adding little bits of Christian teaching to their own pagan religion. The people were extremely afraid of the spirits and were certain that their gods were angry with the Christians and would soon destroy them.

Suddenly, a man carrying an ax strode into the clearing and walked toward the large oak tree. He lifted the heavy ax toward his shoulder and swung down with a mighty chop. People gasped. How could the man dare even to approach this tree sacred to their gods? Surely Thor would send lightning down and strike him dead. But the man, whose name was Boniface, stood there unharmed. Finally, a powerful gust of wind blew and the huge tree crashed to the ground in four sections.

The people were astonished. Why did Thor not punish Boniface for his blasphemy? Could it be that the Christian God was stronger than their gods? Eventually many people turned to Christ and did come to know that He is mightier than any false god or demon. A church was even built from the wood of the oak tree. These things happened because Boniface was willing to obey God and bravely face angry people and the powers of darkness.

Questions:

- Who did the German people in this story worship?
- How did Boniface show that the Lord is mightier than false gods?
- Do you serve the Lord or idols?
- How can you stand up against false gods?
- How is this story similar to today's Bible story?

SONGS

“Let God Arise” (Psalm 68:1); “Obey My Voice” (Jeremiah 7:23); “The Weapons of Our Warfare” (II Corinthians 10:4); “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”; “Conquering Now and Still to Conquer”; “All Hail the Power” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #296); “A Mighty Fortress” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #92); “Faith of Our Fathers” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #570).

Take Home Activity

Diorama (shoebox scene) - Have the children construct a shoebox scene of the confrontation on Mount Carmel. For the background, have your students color the bottom of a shoebox, or glue construction paper or a scene from a magazine to it. They should then turn the shoebox on its side and construct a representation of I Kings 18 using stones for the altar and construction paper, plants, or playdough for other objects in the foreground. Figures can be made from paper, clothespins, pipe cleaners, or playdough. Have your students print “Whom will you serve?” on a piece of paper, fold it to stand, and tape it on the top of the diorama (the side of the shoebox).

BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

I Kings 18 - We should serve the mighty God of Elijah, not powerless idols.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:7 - "The Lord sends poverty and wealth; He humbles and He exalts." Also review **I Samuel 2:1-6**.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

- Elijah said to the people of Israel, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (I Kings 18:21). Many people try to "sit on the fence" in religious matters, assuming that as long as they avoid conspicuous sins, God approves of them. But Jesus said, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other. So because you are lukewarm - neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16). We must wholeheartedly follow the Lord. If you have been fence-sitting, have not been redeemed by Jesus, or are not sure of your salvation, please speak to your child's Sunday School teacher or a pastor of this church.
- 2. God condemned the Israelites for worshiping idols. Today, few of us bow down before statues of wood or stone, but many put their trust in money, social influence, and political power, or regard these things, as well as personal happiness and pleasure, as more important than God. Do you or those in your family worship these or similar idols? Discuss and make plans to avoid becoming entrapped by these things.
- 3. As a family, note in books read and television programs seen this week whether characters chose to follow the Lord or false gods, good or evil. Discuss the implications of these characters' worldviews and actions.
- 4. Elijah was faithful to God, trusted Him, and obeyed His word (I Kings 18:36). He challenged false gods (can you think of specific ways you can do this today?). He also prayed earnestly, humbly, expectantly, and persistently. Discuss how the members of your family can follow God in wholehearted obedience, challenge the false gods of our day, and pray effectively. You may wish to read other Bible passages about prayer or people who tried to destroy idols.
- 5. The false prophets of Baal danced, shouted, and slashed themselves with knives in order to obtain answers to their prayers. Elijah mocked them, saying that perhaps their god had gone on a journey or was taking a nap. Do we ever feel God is sleeping? How do we try to get Him to hear us? Why might the Lord not answer our prayers as we think He should (e.g., sin in our lives; He is using certain circumstances for good)? Discuss these things. What should our attitude toward the Lord be in prayer? Compare your attitude with Elijah's.

6. Sing songs such as: “Let God Arise” (Psalm 68:1); “Obey My Voice” (Jeremiah 7:23); “The Weapons of Our Warfare” (II Corinthians 10:4); “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”; “Conquering Now and Still to Conquer”; “All Hail the Power” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #296); “A Mighty Fortress” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #92); “Faith of Our Fathers” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #570).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - Psalm 115:2-8; Isaiah 44:9-26; Isaiah 46:5-9; James 5:17-18.

ELISHA AND NAAMAN

II Kings 5

Lesson Aim

That your students may realize that we all need to be cleansed from sin and turn to God in obedience.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:8 - “He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; He seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. For the foundations of the earth are the Lord’s; upon them He has set the world.”

Lesson Background

Today’s Bible story, the healing of Naaman the Syrian (Syria = Aram), is the first of several about Elisha, Elijah’s successor, who ministered in the Northern Kingdom during the reigns of Jehoram (Joram, probably the king in II Kings 5), Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Jehoash from approximately 850 to 800 B.C. Naaman had contracted leprosy (the Bible uses the word to refer to a number of skin diseases), a disease in which nerve endings become deadened, often leading to ulceration and loss of appendages. Because of the highly communicable nature of the disease, lepers in Israel were required to veil their mouths, avoid human contact, and shout “unclean” wherever they went. Apparently such restrictions were not mandated in Syria.

Leprosy, like sin, which it pictures in the Bible, is loathsome, destructive, and insidious, often starting seemingly insignificantly but spreading rapidly, easily communicable, and fatal. Naaman was, of course, willing to do almost anything to be cleansed from his horrid affliction, as people will often work hard in order to obtain acceptance with God; but only by doing things God’s way can anyone be cleansed of leprosy or sin. This was one thing proud Naaman was not willing to do at first. “Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be cleansed?”

So he turned and went off in a rage” (II Kings 5:12). The Syrian commander had confidence in his wealth, clothing, and position; he had to recognize his helplessness and dire need. Naaman needed to humble himself, doing something that might seem foolish, in order to be cured of his malady. People must realize that the “foolishness of the cross” (I Corinthians 1:18) and trust in Jesus Christ is the only way they can be saved from their hopeless condition (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Elisha’s refusal to show favoritism to an important official (cf. James 2:1-11) or prejudice against one of Israel’s enemies is also a good example for us.

God used Naaman’s servants to convince Naaman to wash seven times in the river Jordan. Do we encourage our friends and acquaintances to obey God? The servants might have remained quiet lest they incur Naaman’s wrath. Are we too afraid or apathetic to use our influence to attempt to draw people closer to the Lord? Another person in II Kings 5 had an even greater reason to be silent than Naaman’s servants - his wife’s serving girl, who had told Naaman where to seek help in the first place. After all, he had led the forces in Israel that had taken her captive! Why should she show him any kindness? Do you and your students show love to your enemies?

We can also learn lessons from Elisha’s servant Gehazi. Naaman had brought a considerable sum of money with him (some of which was probably used for traveling expenses) - about 750 pounds of silver and 150 pounds of gold, worth more than seventy thousand dollars! Even though Paul insisted that God’s workers were worthy of financial reward for their labor, Elisha refused to accept payment from Naaman, probably lest it seem that God’s gifts are for hire (cf. Acts 8:9-25). James said, “after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:15). So with Gehazi, one sin led to another, covetousness to lying to stealing. But God is not mocked and Gehazi did not escape without punishment. He did get to keep something that belonged to Naaman, but it was not what he coveted, but rather his leprosy. Note, too, that Elisha’s good example and teaching did not prevent Gehazi from sinning.

Which of the many characters in II Kings 5 are you and your students like? Do you resemble the fearful, suspicious king of Israel, misunderstanding what others say and ready to get into a fight? Are you proud like Naaman, depending on your wealth, position, and abilities to accomplish what you desire? Do you covet, lie, and steal like Gehazi? Or are you an obedient servant of God like Elisha, and one who leads others closer to God, as did Naaman’s servants and wife’s serving girl? If you or your children bear a closer resemblance to the former characters than the latter, the remedy is not a bath in the Jordan River, but the cleansing of the blood of Christ.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that Naaman, commander of the Syrian army, was told by his wife’s captive Israelite servant girl that Elisha could heal him of his leprosy; that the Syrian king sent Naaman to the king of Israel with silver, gold, and clothing; that the king of Israel eventually sent Naaman to Elisha, who told Gehazi to tell Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan River; that Naaman became angry at this advice but later, at the encouragement of his servants, did what Elisha said and was cured of his leprosy; that Elisha refused to take payment from the grateful Naaman, but Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, coveted Naaman’s wealth and tried to procure money and clothes under false pretenses, whereupon he became leprous, as Elisha said.

Behavioral Objectives - By God’s grace, to repent of the leprosy of sin and be cleansed by Christ, to serve Him in loving obedience, and encourage other people to follow Him.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - Introduce today's Scripture passage by giving background information helpful to understanding it. Tell your children what leprosy is, about Naaman's prominence, Elisha, and the captive slave girl approximately as follows. If you prefer, you may give your students some of this information as you read the Scripture passage, but their knowledge of these things (which we take for granted, but which may, in fact, be shaky) is necessary to understand the story properly.

BIBLE STORY

"Today's Bible story is about a man called Naaman who considered himself very important. After all, he was the commander of the entire Syrian army! Almost everyone regarded him with respect, and he had been given many honors. What would your mother do if such a person, perhaps the governor of your state, the vice-president, or a leader from another country were to come to your home? She would probably clean your house for days, make a delicious dinner, use her best dishes, and perhaps put flowers on the table. Today we will learn what happened when Naaman traveled to Israel to see Elisha, who was God's prophet to the Northern Kingdom after Elijah (be sure your children do not confuse their names). One might think an important official would be happy, but Naaman had a problem; Naaman was a leper. A leper (not a big cat called a leopard!) is a person who has leprosy. Can anyone tell me about this disease?" Tell your students about leprosy; see the background material.

"The Syrian army had attacked Israel and captured some Jewish people to be their slaves. One girl who was taken from her homeland came to serve Naaman's wife. How would you feel if one day some men took you far away from your parents, your house, friends, and all the people you loved? Would you hate your enemies? Let's see how this girl acted toward her captors."

Read **II Kings 5** (NIV) and discuss as you read the passage and afterward.

ACTIVITY

Who Am I? This game, to review facts about Bible characters from today's Scripture passage and possibly previous lessons, can be played in several ways. You may give clues about a character and have your students guess who you are talking about. You may have each student describe a different character and have his classmates guess who the person is. You may wish to pin (or tape) names of Bible characters on the backs of your students and, one at a time, have the child guess who he is by questioning the other students (e.g., Am I a man? Am I a prophet? Did I love God?) Here is a list of possible characters and several facts about them:

- **Elisha** - Prophet, successor to Elijah, told a man to wash in the Jordan River.
- **Elijah** - Prophet, confronted Ahab, foretold drought, fed by ravens; challenged Baal on Mount Carmel.
- **Naaman's wife's serving girl** - Captured from Israel by the Syrians, told Naaman about Elisha.
- **Naaman** - Syrian commander, leper, healed after washing seven times in the Jordan River.
- **Gehazi** - Elisha's servant, coveted, lied, and stole; became a leper.
- **Ahab** - Extremely wicked king of Israel.
- **Widow** - Lived in Zarephath, fed Elijah, her son died but was restored to life.
- **Solomon** - Wise king of Israel, made decision about a baby, wealthy, sinned by marrying many foreign wives, son Rehoboam.
- **David** - King of Israel, friend of God, killed Goliath, killed a lion and a bear, shepherd, friend of Jonathan.

- **Goliath** - Nine-foot-tall Philistine, defied the army of Israel, killed by David.
- **Eliab** - David's brother, criticized David.
- **Jonathan** - Saul's son, David's friend, killed at Mount Gilboa.
- **Saul** - King of Israel who turned from God, tried to kill David, failed to destroy the Amalekites.
- **Samuel** - Prophet, anointed David as king, mother was Hannah, father was Elkanah.
- **Hannah** - Samuel's mother, prayed for a son.
- **Elkanah** - Samuel's father.
- **Peninnah** - Elkanah's wife who provoked Hannah.
- **Eli** - Priest at the Temple who spoke with Hannah, had two rebellious sons, Hophni and Phineas.

ACTIVITY

Have your children act out today's Bible story or put on a play using the finger puppets made in the Take Home Activity.

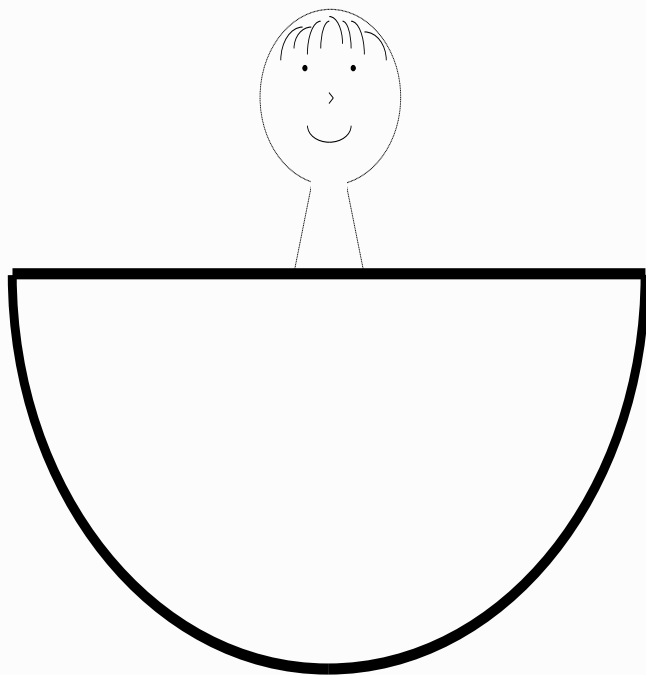
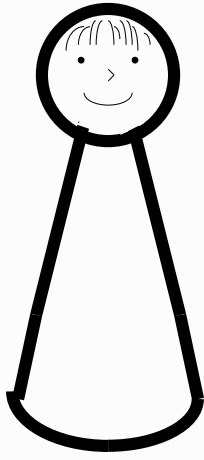
SONGS

"There Is A Fountain" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #253); "Come Every Soul" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #675); "Come Ye Sinners" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472); "'Not What My Hands Have Done" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461).

Take Home Activity

Finger Puppets - Have your children make finger puppets of today's Bible story characters. Your students should make the body from a half circle of paper (you may trace the pattern on the next page). Have them trace around a nickel or draw freehand a circle for the puppet's head. After drawing a neck, they should cut out the head and neck and tape the neck to the middle of the straight part of the half circle (body). Your children should then gently bring the two halves of the straight edge of the body to meet and overlap, forming a cone shape. Tape this. Draw the puppet's features and color as desired. Actually, the puppets may be easier to color before assembling.

FINGER PUPPET PATTERN



BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

II Kings 5 - We all need to be cleansed from sin and turn to God in obedience.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:8 - "He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; He seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. For the foundations of the earth are the Lord's; upon them He has set the world."

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. In Scripture, leprosy symbolizes sin. Find out more about this disease and its comparison with sin (e.g., both are loathsome, insidious, destructive, and deadly). Discuss how the story of Naaman pictures salvation. Naaman could not heal himself; neither can a sinner make himself acceptable to God. Only when the proud Syrian commander humbled himself to follow God's seemingly foolish instructions (see I Corinthians 1:24; Romans 1:16) was he cleansed from his leprosy. Is your pride keeping you from doing what God would have you do? For further information about salvation through Christ, please speak to one of this church's pastors or your child's Sunday School teacher.
2. God used a captive Israelite servant girl to tell Naaman how he could be cured of his leprosy. This girl treated her enemy with love, believed that God could solve his problems, and talked openly about her faith. How can you help develop these qualities in your children (and in your own life)? The servant girl's parents probably angrily questioned God when their daughter was abducted from her homeland, but the Lord eventually brought good from this situation. Pray that you will trust God and that He will glorify Himself and bring good out of the trials in your life.
3. "After desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:15). Elisha's servant Gehazi coveted, then lied, and then stole (cf. Joshua 7). Help your children realize that one sin often leads to another, perhaps illustrating this through books read and television programs seen this week.
4. Even though Naaman was the commander of the entire Syrian army, Elisha did not show him any favoritism. Read James 2:1-11 and discuss your attitude toward different sorts of people. Plan how you can treat people in accordance with the Lord's commands.
5. Read other Scripture about Elisha (see Suggested Parental Reading).
6. Sing songs such as: "There Is A Fountain" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #253); "Come Ye Sinners" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472); "Come Every Soul" ["Only Trust Him"] (*Trinity Hymnal*, #675); "Not What My Hands Have Done" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - John 14:6; James 4:6-10; Psalm 51:7; Joshua 7; Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-9; Revelation 1:5-6; Luke 4:27. **Other stories about Elisha** - I Kings 19:13-21; II Kings 2-4; 6:1-7.

Books - *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (especially chapter 7; C.S. Lewis, Macmillan, 1952, part of the Narnia series).

ELISHA AT DOTHAN

II Kings 6:8-27

Lesson Aim

That your students may realize that God is far more powerful than the evil forces of this world.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:9 - “He will guard the feet of His saints, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness. It is not by strength that one prevails.”

Lesson Background

Today’s Scripture passage demonstrates God’s omniscience and omnipotence as He reveals the Aramean (Aram = Syria) king’s plans for border raids on Israel, protects Elisha and his servant from harm, and even delivers the Aramean force into the hand of the king of Israel. The identities of the characters in today’s story are uncertain because there is some question whether this story occurred before or after II Kings 5. Some scholars maintain that these events took place first because Gehazi would not be serving Elisha as a leper. II Kings 6 does not mention Gehazi by name, however, and another servant might be referred to if the stories are in proper chronological order. We will assume that the events are in chronological order, in which case the king of Israel would have been Jehoram, while Ben-hadad was the king of Aram.

Because Elisha had continually frustrated his plans to capture Israelite territory, Ben-hadad sent his forces to find the prophet at Dothan. Dothan was located west of the Jordan in the northeast portion of what later was known as Samaria on an isolated hill in a plain enclosed by a range of hills. This seems an ungrateful way for Ben-hadad to treat a man responsible for curing an important Aramean general of leprosy. The Aramean king may have sent such a large force not to kill, but to capture Elisha. “Possibly he hoped to bribe the prophet into becoming his court magician” (John C. Whitcomb). The size of the army could also

indicate Ben-hadad's fear of Elisha (remember what happened when Ahaziah tried to capture Elijah - II Kings 1). No matter what his plans were, Ben-hadad needed to realize that he was fighting against God and that his problems would not be solved by removing an "obstacle" in his way. Elisha's servant needed to learn that "those who are with us [God's people] are more than those who are with them [God's enemies]" (II Kings 6:16). God opened the servant's eyes to spiritual realities, but struck the Aramean army with blindness so they could not even perceive physical ones. Elisha then led them ten miles away to the capital in Samaria. Elisha would not allow Jehoram to kill the Arameans, perhaps so that an evil king would not gain a victory in such a miraculous way, but also so the Arameans would fear God and be aware of His mercy (I Kings 20:31). It seems that this was effective at least for a while, for the Arameans stopped their border raids on Israel.

Elisha had confidence in God because he knew Him and was aware of His might. May the Lord open our eyes to who He is and to the power with which He protects His servants and accomplishes His good will.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that Elisha warned the king of Israel of where the Aramean army was encamped, which angered the Aramean king so that he sent a force to capture Elisha; that God opened Elisha's servant's eyes to see that those who were with them were more than those who were against them; that God struck the Aramean force with blindness; and that Elisha led them to the Israelite king, who fed them and let them go.

Behavioral Objectives - By God's grace, to serve the omnipotent Lord.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - Introduce your lesson approximately as follows: "Have you ever seen a TV show or movie where a detective hid a tiny microphone in a room so that later he could hear what people in the room were saying? If microphones had been invented in biblical times, the king of Aram might have thought that his tent had been "bugged" like this because every time he planned a surprise attack on Israel, the Jewish king found out about it and was on his guard. The Aramean king thought one of his men was a spy, but an Aramean officer told him it was not any of them, but Elisha, who knew even what the king said in his bedroom because God revealed it to him. Can anyone tell me anything about this man Elisha? Let's read about what happened when the Aramean king, whose name was Ben-hadad, found out that Elisha had been spoiling his plans."

BIBLE STORY

Read **II Kings 6:8-23** and discuss using pertinent background material.

ACTIVITY

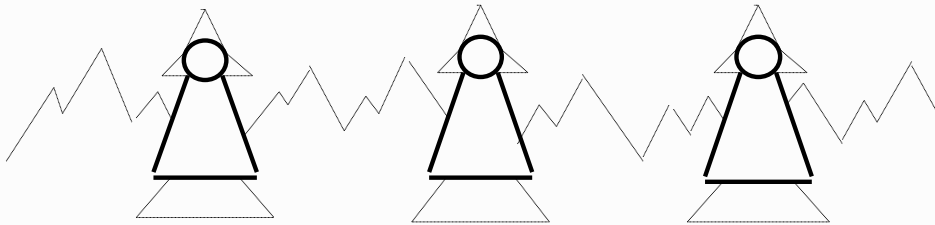
Have your children work individually or do the paper as a class. This activity should help remind your students of events studied this quarter, as well as teaching them some geography of Israel. Match the people and places as follows (if multiple answers are possible, one is acceptable): Saul (Amalekites, Judah); Eli (Shiloh); Elijah (Mount Carmel, Zarephath, Kerith, the location of which is unknown); Elisha (Dothan, Samaria); Ben-hadad (Aram); Naaman (Jordan River, Aram); David (Jerusalem, Judah, Valley of Elah); Goliath (Philistia, Valley of Elah); widow (Zarephath); Solomon (Jerusalem, Judah). Your students may color the map, if desired.

SONGS

“The Weapons of Our Warfare” (II Corinthians 10:4); “Let God Arise” (Psalm 68:1); “Not By Might” (Zechariah 4:6); “Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace” (Isaiah 26:3).

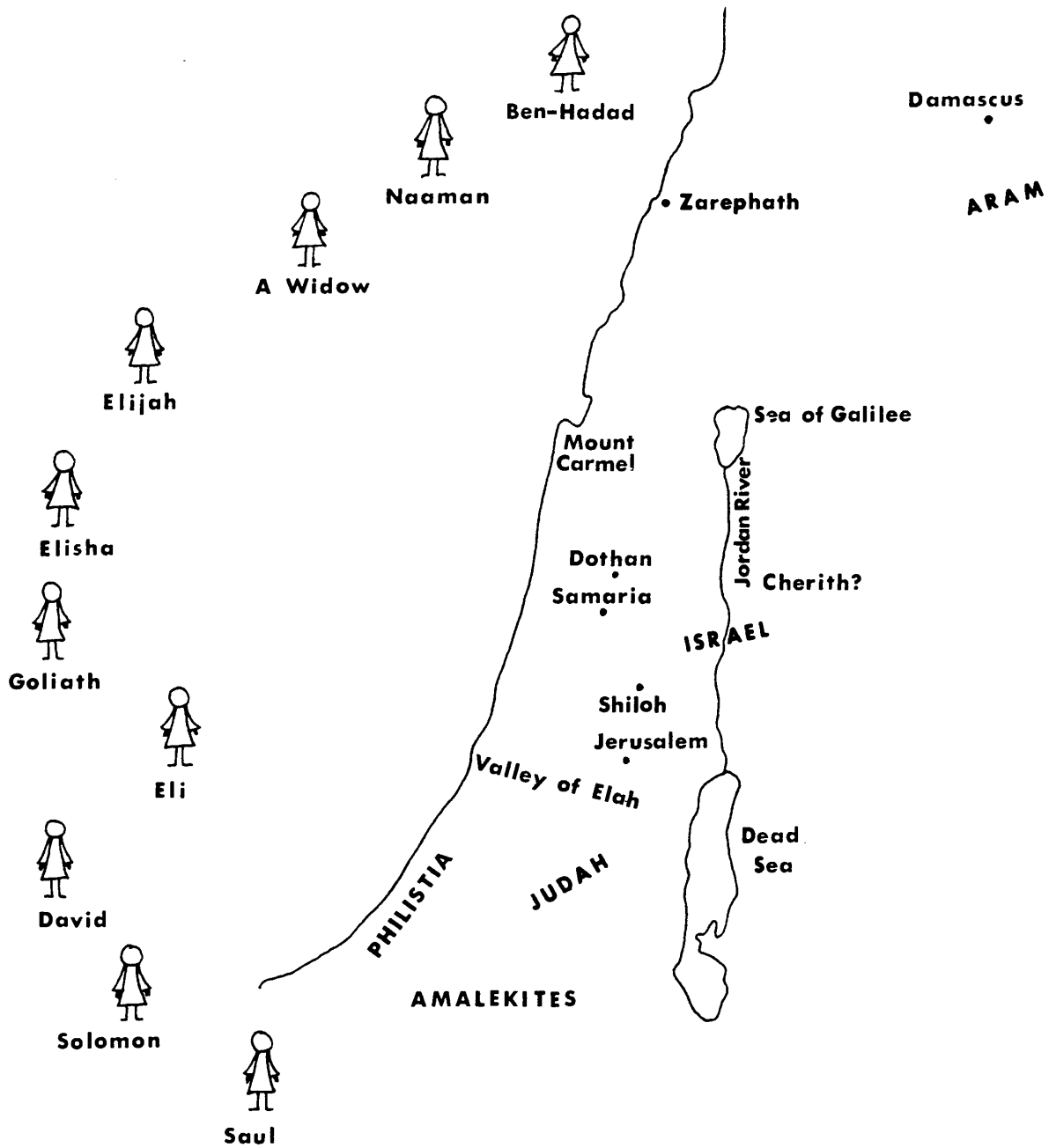
Take Home Activity

Have your students draw a picture of Elisha and his servant being attacked at Dothan, including God's force of angels surrounding them. They should not use the color green in their drawings and should sketch in the angels only lightly. Disguise the angels by drawing trees around them (see picture) using a green crayon or felt-tipped pen. To see the angels, as Elisha and his servant did, place a piece of green cellophane over the picture.



Dotted lines indicate those drawn with green crayon.

MATCH THE PEOPLE AND PLACES



BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

II Kings 6:8-27 - God is more powerful than the evil forces of this world, as Elisha's servant found out at Dothan.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:9 - "He will guard the feet of His saints, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness. It is not by strength that one prevails."

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Discuss some current events with your family this week, remembering that God is in control of these situations. Thank God for His omnipotence and sovereign rule in the world.
2. Remind the Christians in your family that God can take care of them as surely as He did Elisha and his servant. Pray that the Lord will "open your eyes" to the truth regarding these things. Read Scripture or other stories about God's protection and/or His turning evil situations to His people's benefit.
3. Read (and/or sing) Psalms about God's protection and omnipotence, such as Psalms 3, 9, 18, 20, 27, 35, 140, and 144.
4. Sing songs such as: "The Weapons of Our Warfare" (II Corinthians 10:4); "Let God Arise" (Psalm 68:1); "Not By Might" (Zechariah 4:6); "Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace" (Isaiah 26:3).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - I John 4:4; Psalm 34:7; II Chronicles 32:7; Hebrews 1:14; Zechariah 2:8; Ephesians 6:10-18; Romans 8:31-39; II Thessalonians 1:7-8; the Psalms listed under Suggested Projects #3.

LEPERS BRING GOOD NEWS

II Kings 7

Lesson Aim

That your students know that God is merciful, and that we should share the Gospel with others.

Memory Verse

This quarter, I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:10 - “Those who oppose the Lord will be shattered. He will thunder against them from heaven; the Lord will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed.”

Lesson Background

The Lord is a God of judgment and a God of mercy. Because of the idolatry and sin of His people, God had sent the Arameans (Syrians) to besiege Samaria (II Kings 6:24-33). As the food supplies were depleted and inflation occurred to the point that a practically inedible head of a donkey, an unclean animal, sold for eighty shekels (about two pounds) of silver, the people were in such desperate straits that they resorted to cannibalism. God had warned that this would be the result of rebellion against Him (Leviticus 26:27-29; Deuteronomy 28:49-57), yet there is no indication that the people begged God for deliverance from their calamity. Although the king (probably Jehoram) rent his clothes and wore sackcloth, he still regarded God’s prophet as the source of his difficulties and vowed to kill him (II Kings 6:30-31; Joel 2:13). However, in spite of continued disobedience, God sent salvation to the helpless Israelites.

Four lepers sat outside the gate in Samaria. They realized that certain death from starvation awaited them if they remained where they were or if they attempted to gain access to the city. So they said to each other, “Let’s go over to the camp of the Arameans and surrender. If they spare us, we live; if they kill us, then we die” (II Kings 7:4).

The lepers went out to the Aramean camp and stared in amazement, for Ben-hadad's army had fled in haste, leaving their supplies, empty tents, horses, and donkeys. God had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses so they thought the Hittites and Egyptians were coming to Israel's aid. The starving men immediately took care of their own needs, even carrying away silver, gold, and clothes after their immediate wants had been satisfied. "Then they said to each other, 'We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let's go at once and report this to the royal palace'" (II Kings 7:9).

Perhaps the lepers could be accused of selfishness for taking and hiding the Aramean gold, silver, and clothes, but here they recognized their responsibility to share the blessings that had come to them. This probably would not have been a natural reaction, for it is likely that their fellow Israelites had treated them cruelly and denied them protection from the Arameans. Are we willing to share the blessings God has given us and the good news of His salvation with those who have been unkind to us? There are millions who are spiritually starving, unaware of the bounteous provision God has made for them (cf. the Samaritans). Like the lepers, we have a responsibility to those who are hungry (II Corinthians 5:17-21).

Today's story, as with the last two we've studied, points out Elisha's absolute confidence in the Lord. Courageously he spoke God's word in spite of the seeming impossibility of its fulfillment. What a contrast to the Israelite king (who considered the Arameans' flight to be a ruse) and the gatekeeper who mocked God's word, saw its fulfillment, but was then trampled to death. May we trust our merciful God and boldly proclaim His Gospel to a starving world.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that God judged the Israelites by having the Arameans besiege Samaria; that He sent deliverance as Elisha prophesied by making the Arameans hear horses and chariots, which they thought were Hittite and Egyptian armies; and that God used four lepers to announce the good news of God's provision to the starving people of Samaria.

Behavioral Objectives - By God's grace, to turn from idols, thank Him for His mercy, and boldly tell others the good news of salvation through Christ.

Lesson Procedure

STORY

ULU FINDS HELP

Ulu trudged along the dusty road carrying her little brother. Her brother wasn't very heavy; you could probably have picked him up with no problem, but Ulu was almost as small as he and she hadn't eaten in three days. Both children were so thin one could see their bones pushing tightly against their skin under their ragged shirts. Armies had destroyed their home and Ulu and her brother had fled with others searching for food and safety. The children had not been able to keep up with the group and now walked alone in a daze, not knowing nor particularly caring where they were going. Ulu did not know why she kept walking; it would be so much easier to sit down and wait for death to come.

Suddenly rounding a bend in the road, Ulu saw a huge crowd and heard a loud commotion. What could be happening? Not more trouble. Then Ulu saw a little boy walk by carrying a bowl of porridge. Food! Where did he get it? Could Ulu get some for her brother and perhaps a little for herself? But looking at the large crowds and lines of people, Ulu felt confused and discouraged. Surely there would be no help for poor orphans such as they.

Then a woman came over to the children and spoke kindly to them in Ulu's language. "Come with me," she said. "We will give you some food. We want to help you because our Lord Jesus said we should show love to others."

"Jesus?" thought Ulu. "Who was this Jesus, some sort of a god?" Her people worshiped many gods, but this woman's God, who told His followers to love others, sounded different. Perhaps she would ask her about Jesus, but first Ulu had to find out about the food that had been mentioned. Eagerly, Ulu stumbled after the sympathetic stranger.

Questions:

- What problem did Ulu and her brother have?
- What are some causes of famine? (e.g., lack of rain, too much rain, political upheaval)
- Do you think that perhaps God was judging Ulu's people for their idolatry and sin? (Possibly)
- How did God also show mercy to Ulu's people? (He sent Christians to help them.)

BIBLE STORY

Introduction - "God judged the Israelites in today's Bible story for their sin by sending famine. Ben-hadad, king of Aram (Syria), sent an army to surround the city of Samaria. No one could leave the city to get food from their fields or they would be killed by the Arameans. After a while, the food in the city ran out and, to keep from starving, the people were even eating donkey's heads (and these cost about two pounds of silver)." [At this point you may wish to read **II Kings 6:24-33**, but since the concept of cannibalism is a bit gruesome for first and second graders to deal with, it might be better to omit this and mention only that king Jehoram wished to kill Elisha, and what Elisha told him.]

Read **II Kings 7** and discuss. Use appropriate background material. Emphasize God's judgment and mercy to the Israelites and Christians, Elisha's faithfulness, and our responsibility to tell others the Gospel.

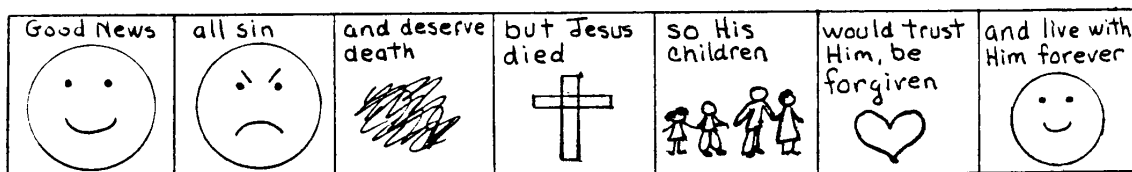
SONGS

"I Will Sing of the Mercies" (Psalm 89:1); "The Steadfast Love of the Lord" (Lamentations 3:22-23); "Man is Bad"; "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #197); "The Ends of All the Earth" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #368); "Come Every Soul" ["Only Trust Him"] (*Trinity Hymnal*, #675); "Come Ye Sinners" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472).

Take Home Activity

Good News Booklet - Tracts are often associated with simplistic presentations of the Gospel, but God has used this means to bring people to Himself. Today's craft should help clarify God's redemptive plan in your children's minds and help them to share the good news of salvation with others. Discuss the contents of the booklet with your students. You may wish to explain that, although they all may wish to show their booklet to others, perhaps God needs to work its truths in their lives, too. The lepers ate before sharing food with others. As has been cautioned before, however, never force or manipulate a child to "accept Christ."

Have your children make a seven-page booklet by stapling or tying (through holes punched in the side of the paper) seven pieces of paper. Have them print the following words and draw the following pictures on the appropriate pages: cover ("Good News"; draw a smiling face); page 1 ("all sin"; draw a frowning face); page 2 ("and deserve death"; draw a black scribble or a tombstone); page 3 ("but Jesus died"; draw a cross); page 4 ("so His children"; draw people); page 5 ("would trust Him, be forgiven"; draw a white heart); page 6 ("and live with Him forever"; draw a smiling face).



BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

II Kings 7 - We should share the good news of God's mercy.

MEMORY VERSE

I Samuel 2:1-10; this week, I Samuel 2:10 - "Those who oppose the Lord will be shattered. He will thunder against them from heaven; the Lord will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed."

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Use the Good News booklet made in class to discuss God's plan of salvation with your child. Never force or manipulate your child to "accept Christ." If you do not know Jesus Christ yourself, speak to your child's Sunday School teacher or a pastor of this church and read a book suggested below. If you and your child have been redeemed by God, help him learn to articulate his faith clearly; memorize Bible verses that would be helpful in sharing the Gospel.
2. Thank God for His mercy to you.
3. Read other stories about Elisha (see Scripture under Suggested Parental Reading).
4. This quarter we have touched on events in Israelite history from Samuel through Elisha (next week we will conclude with Josiah in the Southern Kingdom). Read more about the kings of the Divided Monarchy in II Kings (about Israel and Judah) and II Chronicles (about Judah).
5. Sing songs such as: "I Will Sing of the Mercies" (Psalm 89:1); "The Steadfast Love of the Lord" (Lamentations 3:22-23); "Man is Bad"; "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #197); "The Ends of All the Earth" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #368); "Come Every Soul" ["Only Trust Him"] (*Trinity Hymnal*, #675); "Come Ye Sinners" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - Deuteronomy 28; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Romans 5:6-12; Matthew 5:38-48; Psalm 113.
More about Elisha - II Kings 6:1-7; 8:1-15; 9:1-13; 13:14-21.

Books - Read a book about how to share your faith with others (e.g., *How To Give Away Your Faith*, Paul Little, Intervarsity Press.; *Out of the Salt Shaker and into the World*, Rebecca Manley Pippert, Intervarsity Press). If you have not been redeemed by Jesus Christ, speak to you child's Sunday School teacher or a pastor from this church and read one of the following books about coming to know Him: *Mere Christianity* (C.S. Lewis, Macmillan, 1952); *Basic Christianity* (John R. W. Stott, Intervarsity Press, London, 1958, Eerdmans, 1979); *Knowing God* (J. I. Packer, Intervarsity, 1973).

JOSIAH

II Kings 22-23

Lesson Aim

That your students know that, like Josiah, we should turn to the Lord with all our heart and soul and strength.

Memory Verse

Review I Samuel 2:1-10.

Lesson Background

Today's Bible story takes us to the Southern Kingdom to study the reign of King Josiah. "Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did - with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses. Nevertheless the Lord did not turn away from the heat of His fierce anger, which burned against Judah because of all that Manasseh [Josiah's grandfather, a horrible idolater] had done to provoke Him to anger" (II Kings 22:25-26).

Josiah began to reign, probably with the help of godly advisors, when he was eight years old (II Kings 22:1). At sixteen, he began to seek after God (II Chronicles 34:3) and at twenty he began to cleanse Jerusalem and Judah of idolatry (II Chronicles 34:3-7). Eventually he even spread his reforms into Israel, notably to Bethel, the center of calf worship, although Israel was then under the control of the weakening Assyrian empire. Josiah fulfilled the prophecy spoken three hundred years before by the man of God to Jeroboam I by burning the bones of the false prophets on the altar and then destroying it (II Kings 23:15-16 cf. I Kings 13:1-3). These last reforms occurred as a result of the finding of the Book of the Law during the repair of the Temple when Josiah was twenty-six.

Regarding this discovery, some commentators argue that Josiah would certainly have had a copy of the Pentateuch already and could hardly have been unfamiliar with its statutes. We must remember, however, that during Manasseh's evil and idolatrous fifty-five year reign, worship of the true God had almost been eliminated and scriptural teaching had been neglected or even suppressed for a long time. God's Word brought conviction of sin resulting in obedient action. Josiah removed idols from the Temple and throughout Judah, ousted pagan priests from positions of authority, stopped child sacrifice, took away the horses and burned the chariots dedicated to the sun that had stood in front of the Temple, and desecrated the high places built by Solomon. Josiah not only abolished idolatry, but also reinstated true worship of Jehovah; he celebrated a Passover such as had not been observed since the days of the judges. Josiah humbly obeyed God's Word and served the Lord with his whole heart. May we do likewise.

In spite of Josiah's reforms, God would not relent in His judgment of Judah. Prophets (Jeremiah, Zephaniah, probably Nahum and perhaps Habakkuk) had warned the people, but they refused to turn to the Lord as had their king. In 609 B.C. Josiah went to fight Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt, who was coming to the aid of Assyria in an attempt to prevent Babylonia from becoming the new world leader. Josiah died in battle against the Egyptians at Megiddo and was spared from seeing the Lord's judgment.

Knowledge Objectives - To know that Josiah became king of Judah when he was eight years old; that he turned to the Lord with his whole heart and tried with some success to rid Judah of idolatry; that in repairing the Temple, Hilkiah the high priest found the Book of the Law, which Shaphan the secretary read to Josiah; that upon hearing it, Josiah rent his clothes and tried to follow its statutes, including celebrating a Passover such as had not been celebrated since the time of the judges; that in spite of Josiah's reforms, God did not relent in judging Judah because of the terrible wickedness of Josiah's grandfather Manasseh; and that Josiah died in battle against Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt.

Behavioral Objectives - By God's grace, to turn to the Lord humbly and wholeheartedly and obey the statutes written in His Word, including worshiping Him in spirit and in truth; to realize the importance and power of God's Word.

Lesson Procedure

Introduction - Introduce today's story approximately as follows: "Most eight-year-olds like to do the same things you do. They enjoy running outdoors, playing games with their friends, or just sitting around eating or talking. They like to learn how to do things and probably go to school. Today's Bible story concerns an eight-year-old boy to whom something very unusual happened - he became king of the whole nation of Judah!"

"How would you feel if you suddenly became king or queen of a country? What would you do? Would you use your power selfishly or would you try to rule your people wisely? What a lot of decisions there would be to make! Would you fight another country if it attacked you or would you try to make peace? Would you build new roads? Would you tax the people? If some people in your country were hungry, how would you help feed them? How would you deal with lawbreakers? Most importantly, would you help your people serve God or would you ignore their sin and even lead them into idolatry?"

Perhaps Josiah wondered about these things. His very evil grandfather Manasseh, who had promoted false worship and many horrible practices in his fifty-five year reign, had died, as had his wicked father Amon, and eight-year-old Josiah became king in his place. Eight-year-old boys do not rule kingdoms all by themselves, however, and apparently Josiah had good advisors to help him. When he was sixteen Josiah

began to seek the Lord, and at twenty he began to destroy the idols in Jerusalem and Judah. Josiah was a king of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, not Israel in the north, where many of this quarter's Bible stories, the ones about Elijah and Elisha, have taken place.

BIBLE STORY

II Kings 22-23 - You may wish to tell today's Bible story in your own words or those below rather than reading it directly from Scripture because of the length and prosaic nature of the passage.

When Josiah was twenty-six years old, he ordered his secretary, Shaphan, to tell Hilkiah the high priest to pay the workers who were repairing the Temple of the Lord. The Temple had not been properly cared for when Manasseh was king because he had been concerned about his idols and not God. During the clean-up work in the Temple, Hilkiah made an exciting discovery. "Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, 'I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord.' He gave it to Shaphan who read it" (II Kings 22:8). Shaphan, in turn, read God's Word to Josiah, who tore his robes in grief when he heard the words. How great must be the Lord's anger against them, thought Josiah, for the people had not acted in accordance with the teachings of God's Word. Josiah sent to a prophetess named Huldah to inquire of the Lord about all that was written in the book. Huldah said that because of Judah's idolatry, God was going to bring disaster on the nation according to everything written in the book, but because Josiah's heart was responsive to God and he had humbled himself when he heard God's Word, he would be buried in peace.

(Read **II Kings 23:1-3**.) The king then issued orders to cleanse idolatry from the land. He burned articles made for Baal and Asherah and chariots dedicated to the sun. He pulled down altars to false gods and smashed them to pieces. He even burned the bones of false prophets on an altar he destroyed in Israel, as had been prophesied to Jeroboam I by a man of God. Josiah desecrated the high places King Solomon had built and stopped pagan practices such as child sacrifice. The king also ordered the people to celebrate Passover, and the feast was such as had not been celebrated since the time of the judges.

In 609 B.C. at Megiddo, Josiah died in battle against Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt, who was coming to help the Assyrians keep Babylon from becoming too strong a world power. As God had said, he did not live to see the judgment the Lord brought on Judah beginning four years later when the country was invaded and the people carried off to captivity in Babylon.

Discuss the Bible story, particularly noting the importance of God's Word and Josiah's response to it, which should be ours also.

STORY (optional)

Read *Mr. Pine's Mixed-up Signs* (Leonard Kessler, Golden Easy Reader, Grossett and Dunlap, 1961). The story humorously describes the problems that arise when Mr. Pine loses his glasses and, since he cannot see well, puts back store and street signs that he had painted in the wrong places. Compare the confusion the inhabitants of the town experience when their signs were changed around with life without the guidance of God's Word. Of course, the latter is incomparably more serious, for not following God's directions will bring about His judgment.

ACTIVITY

Bible Baseball - Today would be a good time to review facts learned this quarter using this or a similar game.

SONGS

Psalm 19:7-11; “Thy Word Have I Hid” (Psalm 119:11; *Trinity Hymnal*, #136); “The B-I-B-L-E”; “How Firm a Foundation” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #94); “Holy Bible, Book Divine” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #137).

Take Home Activity

Scroll - Have each of your children roll a long piece of paper at both ends to form a scroll (Have them first roll the entire paper into a tube shape and then unroll it). Tape or glue small sticks or dowel rods to the ends of the paper before it is rolled for handles, if desired. Show your students how Josiah would have read the Book of the Law which would have been in scroll form (remember, Hebrew reads right to left). You may have your children write some of their memory verses, Psalm 119:11, Psalm 119:105 or the word “law” in Hebrew (torah) on the scroll (see below). They may also decorate the borders of the scroll.

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BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

II Kings 22-23 - Like Josiah, we should turn to the Lord with all our heart and soul and strength.

MEMORY VERSE

Review I Samuel 2:1-10.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read this week's Scripture passage and/or its parallel passage in II Chronicles 34-35 and dramatize finding the Book of the Law.
2. God's Word had a tremendous impact on Josiah's life and that of his nation as he humbly turned to the Lord. Read about the impact the Bible has had on people who have never read it before. Learn about Bible translation and support those involved in it (contact a translation organization such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, Huntingdon Beach, California). Perhaps your children could have a special project (e.g., sell lemonade, popcorn, or cookies or do a service for others) to earn money for those who spread God's Word to people who have not heard it.
3. Read Scripture about God's Word, e.g., Psalm 119.
4. Memorize God's Word.
5. Like Shaphan, read God's Word to someone who does not usually read it or hear it.
6. Continue reading about the history of the Divided Monarchy in II Kings and II Chronicles. Make a chart of the kings and point out where different events occurred on a map.
7. Sing songs about God's Word such as: Psalm 19:7-11; "Thy Word Have I Hid" (Psalm 119:11; *Trinity Hymnal*, #136); "The B-I-B-L-E"; "How Firm a Foundation" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #94); "Holy Bible, Book Divine" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #137).

SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

Scripture - II Chronicles 34-35; Psalm 119. Continue reading about the history of Israel and Judah in II Kings and II Chronicles.

Books - Read a book about the power of God's Word as it is read by people for the first time. Publications are available from Wycliffe Bible Translators, Huntingdon Beach, California, including a free missionary magazine, *In Other Words*.