A wooden balance scale with two pans hanging from a horizontal beam. A wooden gavel with a rounded head and a handle rests on a wooden block, which is placed on top of an open book. The background is a soft, warm gradient.

JUSTICE and the PROPHETS

THE COMBINED TEACHER'S GUIDE

SPRING QUARTER 2020

MARCH • APRIL • MAY

Christian Education Department
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BASIC SUPPLIES

Bible dictionary	writing paper
Bible pictures and maps	DVD recorder/player
CD players	milk crates
chart paper	paper – letter, drawing, pen-
Christian music – books, sheets, recordings	cils, pens, markers
Christian videos and DVDs	poster boards
crayons	robes, scarves
digital camera	old clothing
digital camcorder	scissors, glue, paste
drawing paper	video player

The Teacher's Guide
Liberating Faith Studies
Spring Quarter: March – May 2020
Prepared by Rev. Lionel Merritt

Lesson 1

March 1, 2020

Called to Accountability

Lesson Scripture: Amos 5

Focus Scripture: Amos 5:18-24

Key Verse: Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream. Amos 5:24

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand advocacy for the poor and oppressed as a commitment to divine justice and righteousness.
2. Desire fairness for the disadvantaged.
3. Become activists supporting the cause of the poor and oppressed.

Teaching Strategies

a. General

You can enhance your preparation by anticipating the “tough questions” on justice which will come from keen students. A suggestion is to keep current with the news reports. Note any controversial matter relating to justice, and seek out appropriate texts to support the positions you take.

b. Specific

For this lesson you can read one of the Internet's accounts on Caroline Ochieng. Such reports emphasize the cost of standing for justice. They explain why many persons keep silent on matters of injustice.

These activities will help to bring out key points in the lesson:

1. Use pictures that demonstrate the power of flowing water (waterfall, flood, hydroelectric dam, etc.) to aid reflection on the **Key Verse** (v. 24).
2. Discuss what people are doing or failing to do that might invite God's judgment against us. How might we change that? Here you can look at matters like the treatment of undocumented immigrants, and the public's attitude to the death penalty.
3. Divide a piece of paper into a flip chart into two columns. Put the heading for the columns as: "Reasons why the Day of the Lord excites me" and "Reasons why the Day of the Lord frightens me." Then brainstorm ideas for both columns.
4. Review brochures and/or websites for ministries that serve disenfranchised people in some way. Make a plan for the class to participate in one of these ministries. Let the class select the ministry or ministries that excite them.
5. Take the opportunity to introduce the words *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxy*. These may not be familiar. Then have the class list examples of each.

Closing Devotions

The Closing Song: "I'm Amazed" by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir.

(When we reflect on God's amazing love for us, it promotes humility in our hearts.).

Prayer: Dear God, I thank you for your perfect demonstration of

humility through Jesus Christ. I know I need your Holy Spirit to help me to walk in such humility. Strengthen me in this aspect of my life, so I may please you. This I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Resources: Flip chart, markers; device with Internet connection to access YouTube "I'm Amazed" by Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPphAxsnlzw>)

Lesson 2

March 8, 2020

A Prayer for Justice

Lesson Scripture: Habakkuk 1

Focus Scripture: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14

Key Verse: Why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they? Habakkuk 1:13b

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain the justice of God in contrast to present human injustice.
2. Aspire to the establishment of justice and fairness for all.
3. Celebrate God as the source and model of justice.

Teaching Strategies

In this lesson, try to get students to look at the frustrations they might feel when God seems to be ignoring their prayers for relief from any act they consider an injustice. Be prepared to explain why God often does not act as fast as we would like.

Case Study: If you can find similar stories, use them to reinforce the points made in that section. Also, spend some of your preparation time getting familiar with the original proclamation for the National Day of Prayer. This story emphasizes that the USA

has a heritage of looking to Almighty God for a sense of justice. That is a far cry from what we hear sometimes.

1. Discuss: "When have you shown indifference to sin?" Let participants say how they could you have shown God's love and mercy to those who suffered violence, or even to those who caused the suffering.
2. Ask the class to identify some of the problems that their communities, or the world, are facing today. Discuss possible ways to ease or solve the problems identified.
3. Lead a discussion about how God is just, in spite of the prevalence of injustice.
4. Compare and contrast Habakkuk's words with the lyrics of Longfellow's "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." Get the class' reactions with minimal prompting.
5. Brainstorm a list of circumstances to which one may respond with the words, "It's not fair!" Then, help the class to categorize them as either injustice or justice. Bear in mind people will answer out of their own experiences.
6. Get participants to complete this sentence in as many ways as possible: "When I am tempted to complain about injustice, I will _____."

Closing Devotion

Prayer: Dear Father, I see you as the provider of all good things and the fountain of true justice. Give me the patience to follow your plans to bring justice to those situations that concern me. And when I am to be part of the solution, guide me in what I have to do. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

Resources: Flip chart; markers

Lesson 3**March 15, 2020****Consequences for Injustice****Lesson Scripture:** Habakkuk 2**Focus Scripture:** Habakkuk 2:6-14**Key Verse:** "Alas for you who build a town by bloodshed, and found a city on iniquity!" Habakkuk 2:12**Lesson Goals:** By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Recognize why injustice will be punished.
2. Appreciate the fairness of divine punishment of injustice.
3. Commit to following God's command to act with justice.

Teaching Strategies

In this lesson we see the concept of comparative righteousness. Help the class to see how this may play out in their lives. Do the same for the Doctrine of Concurrence. Does a great, pure, holy God use "bad" corrupt people to do "good things"? Make sure you are comfortable discussing these topics.

Look for real life examples of both situations. For example, you can find stories of drug dealers who helped poor communities with groceries and school supplies. Did these gifts become tainted because of the source of the money? And, were the donors being charitable or just protecting their own interests? More importantly, ponder if and how God may give the "bad" drug dealers and/or gangsters credit for such donations? Be sensitive to persons in the class who may be connected to persons involved in such industries.

1. Create some case studies involving various levels of bad behavior, and discuss for each case whether the perpetrator should be punished and why.
2. List and discuss the five woes directed at Babylon (vs. 6-20). How are their punishments warranted?

3. Discuss contemporary examples of oppression, and people who waited for God's judgment (Martin Luther King, Jr., for example).
4. Compose a litany based on the dialog between Habakkuk and God.
5. Find other oracles of woe. See Isaiah 5:8-30, Matthew 23:13-39, and Luke 6:24-26. Compare these with the woes given in the text.
6. Compare and contrast the actions and fate of ancient Babylon to the actions and fates of tyrannical regimes in more recent history.

Closing Devotions

The Closing Song: "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"

As you sing this song, you may want to insert some current names to emphasize that God is aware of the actions of those persons. And, that ultimately they will answer to God.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to maintain our faith in you in the face of injustice. Amen.

Resources: Flip chart; markers

Lesson 4

March 22, 2020

Corrupt Leaders

Lesson Scripture: Micah 3–6

Focus Scripture: Micah 3:1-2, 9-12; 6:6-8

Key Verse: What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand God's requirements for people and leaders.
2. Value justice, kindness, and humility as cardinal human

virtues.

3. Become a just, kind, humble person and leader.

Teaching Strategies

Be prepared for comparisons to be made between clergy today and the clergy of former years. Some persons are strong in their views that the clergy in former times had more integrity. The way to keep the discussion respectable is to ask speakers to give reasons for the positions they take. And be careful with the accusation you entertain from participants. Remind the class of the presumption of innocence that must apply. Unless an accusation has been proven in a court of law (or the accused has admitted guilt), the presumption of innocence stands. In all our discussions we must respect this basic rule of our legal system.

1. List and discuss God's requirements for justice for people and leaders.
2. Discuss modern leaders. Ask participants to give opinions on whether these leaders are models of justice and humility.
3. Have participants write a litany of commitment to become just, kind, and humble people and leaders.
4. Share news reports about corrupt leaders, and discuss how their behavior harms the community. You can also invite comments on what people can do to minimize the harm done by those leaders.
5. Perform acts of appreciation for leaders in the congregation whose lives demonstrate what God requires.
6. Invite the class to give suggestions on, "What makes a humble leader effective?"

Closing Devotions

Show appreciation for our freedom in Christ and in our society by singing "Victory in Jesus" or "Free, Free, Free, I've Been Set Free."

Prayer: Father, I thank you for the freedoms I enjoy today and for the people you moved to fight for them. Amen.

Resources: Paper, pencils

Lesson 5

March 29, 2020

Leading Justly

Lesson Scripture: Malachi 2–3

Focus Scripture: Malachi 2:1-9; 3:5-6

Key Verse: If you will not listen, if you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse on you. Malachi 2:2

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the significance of good morals and behaviors expected of leaders.
2. Affirm the value of leadership's covenanted reverence of God.
3. Practice just spiritual leadership.

Teaching Strategies

Be sensitive to the content of this lesson, and how it may impact those who have been or are experiencing clergy abuse. Give opportunity for those who may find the lesson content difficult to endure, to be excused.

Be prepared to guide the class skillfully in discussions on the role of priests and pastors in people's lives today. Get feedback on how people feel about their leaders. Do they think the leaders are over-rated or under-rated given the demands we put on them? Is it possible that we expect too much from our religious leaders? Here are two questions to frame the answers to such questions.

- a. Why should leaders be expected to live up to a higher level of integrity than the rest of the society?

- b. Does God extend more grace to leaders than he makes available to us? If so should leaders have super-human abilities to resist the temptations that many of us fall victim to?

You can also explore the question of personalities and how different people do the same job differently because they have different personalities. Note that different leaders have different strengths and weaknesses. For example, some have successfully fought off enticements to sexual sins, only to fall victims to the greed for money. How can we explain this? Be prepared to discuss offshoots like these.

1. List and discuss ways in which we share similar attitudes with the disrespectful priests in this passage.
2. Discuss how modern leaders act toward constituents and others. Are they honorable and just? If any participant feels the current leaders are not honorable, let he/she suggest what we can do to choose more honorable persons to represent us.
3. Have participants compose a prayer for the pastoral leadership of the church.
4. Review contemporary scandals of religious leaders and discuss how they profaned God’s holy name.
5. Ask a leader in the congregation to explain your congregation’s procedures for choosing godly leaders.
6. Sing a hymn of consecration (e.g. “Make Me a Blessing,” “I Surrender All”) as a way to affirm class members’ commitment to be faithful leaders.

Closing Devotions

Close the session with, “Lord, Prepare Me to Be Your Sanctuary.”

Prayer: Dear God, we pray for purity and upright leadership in the body of Christ. Amen.

Resources: Paper, pencils

Lesson 6**April 5, 2020 - Palm Sunday****God's Just Servant****Lesson Scripture:** Isaiah 42**Focus Scripture:** Isaiah 42:1-9

Key Verse: Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1

The lesson is strongly slanted towards hope. Let the class focus on why God sends hope before solutions are manifested. Be open to questions on why God just does not send the solutions in the first place. Prepare yourself to discuss the reasons why God may not send a solution until a specific time in the future.

Within the context of the text, give the class permission to explore what we should do between receiving a message of hope and the arrival of the promised solutions. Put this in a modern context because we do not live in such a period. We have the promise of Christ's second coming, and are eagerly looking for the day of his arrival.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explore the concept of the Messiah.
2. Sense the wonder of Jesus' role as servant to the nations.
3. Emulate Jesus as a servant of God who executes justice.

Teaching Strategies

1. Ask the class to list ways in which inequity is practiced in the church and society, then guide a discussion on how these may be overcome and avoided.
2. Have participants examine their lives to determine how they may be practicing injustices, and how they may correct these

practices.

3. List and discuss ways in which God may be seen as either just or unjust in certain circumstances.
4. How does Jesus as Messiah and servant show us how to live just lives? The teaching in the Gospels will be useful here.

Special Concerns

Today is the observance of Palm Sunday.

Closing Devotion

Prayer: Dear Father, the source of all true justice, open my eyes and heart to your messages about social and economic justice. And give me the strength and wisdom to play my role in addressing injustices around me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Lesson 7

April 12, 2020 - Easter

Resurrection Hope

Lesson Scripture: Mark 16; 1 Corinthians 15

Focus Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 12-14, 20-23, 42-45

Key Verses: If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. 1 Corinthians 15:19-20

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. List the key elements of the gospel as Paul sees them.
2. Explain why Christ's resurrection is the key to understanding everyone's future.
3. Embrace the call to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, despite ridicule or resistance.

Teaching Strategies

Bear in mind that even today, certain aspects of the resurrection story are difficult for some people to embrace and/or explain. Be prepared to help persons examine the proof of the resurrection from the gospels. Where you can, read one or two commentators who support the physical bodily resurrection of Jesus. Guard against any suggestions that the resurrection may have been spiritual only. Emphasize that Jesus' resurrection was a physical, bodily resurrection.

Also challenge the class to give opinions on what Christians can do to enhance the spiritual aspects of the Easter celebration. Explore if it seems like Easter is just another public holiday like other national holidays. In other words, consider if we are giving Easter the pride of place it is rightly due.

1. Let the class role-play the scene of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome coming to the tomb early and encountering the young man, and what follows from there (Mark 16:1-8). Discuss how the story of the resurrection relates to Paul's teaching about the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15.
2. Get the class to explain how the resurrection of Christ is a sign of hope for justice.
3. List ways the resurrection motivates us to work for justice with hope.
4. Research and discuss the differences between resurrection and reincarnation.

In these discussions, guard against the emotional dramatization of stories about after-death experiences that people like psychics sell.

Closing Devotions

Listen to "Cornerstone" as sung by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir.

Prayer: We thank you, Jesus, for opening the door to eternal life. We know there is perfect justice in your presence. Amen.

Resources: Mobile device with Internet access; YouTube video of “Cornerstone” by The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

Lesson 8

April 19, 2020

Injustice Will Be Punished

Lesson Scripture: Esther 3; 5; 7

Focus Scripture: Esther 7:1-10

Key Verse: So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Esther 7:10

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the story of Esther as a triumph of justice.
2. Sense that treachery will not win.
3. Commit to acting justly in every situation with the assurance that good triumphs over evil.

Teaching Strategies

Prepare for this lesson by addressing the fact that God is not mentioned in the book of Esther. An introduction from a commentary like *The Matthew Henry Commentary* will be useful here. In the text we use the term “poetic justice.” Students may be more familiar with discussing how things “backfire” on people. You can show that this lesson gives us a good reason not to plan evil for people we may not like. Draw also on Jesus’ teaching to love our enemies. Consider those situations when as Christians we are faced with threats of physical harm. In those situations, is it acceptable to use physical force to fight off physical attacks? What do we teach our children about such situations?

1. Reenact in a modern context (workplace situation, for example) the story of Mordecai convincing Esther of the necessity of

taking the risk of interceding on behalf of her people. Discuss the application.

2. In the absence of the name of God in the Mordecai and Esther story, discuss the religious nature of this story and where or how you see God at work.
3. Consider the statements that in the story, religious values such as kindness, mercy, and forgiveness are lacking. Further, the story seems to highlight a vengeful, bloodthirsty, and chauvinistic spirit. In this context, have the class discuss their agreement or disagreement with these positions.
4. Discuss how well the story satisfies one's sense of justice. As immoral people often seem to attain great power and wealth, what evidence is there that people will receive the recompense their evil deeds deserve?
5. Discuss how capital punishment today does or does not satisfy the requirements of justice.
6. Write a prayer expressing the hope of the triumph of justice over evil.

Closing Devotion

We will close this lesson with a corporate reading of Psalm 7:6-8 (Message Bible).

⁶⁻⁸ Stand up, God; pit your holy fury against my furious enemies.

Wake up, God. My accusers have packed the courtroom; it's judgment time.

Take your place on the bench, reach for your gavel, throw out the false charges against me.

I'm ready, confident in your verdict:

"Innocent."

Amen.

Resources: Paper, pencils; access to YouTube

Lesson 9

April 26, 2020

The Lord Loves Justice

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 61:8–62:12

Focus Scripture: Isaiah 61:8-11; 62:2-4a (end with “Desolate”)

Key Verse: For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Isaiah 61:8

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the hope for vindication of the righteous and faithful.
2. Long for salvation and restoration for God’s people.
3. Commit to making just decisions in everyday life.

Teaching Strategies

There are very practical considerations to justice. We mention one in the lesson: the link between the practice of justice and economic prosperity. It is useful to read the World Bank’s report referenced in the lesson. This gives a firm grounding on how experts outside the church see the value of justice in a society. Note that such arguments may be more meaningful to “non-religious” people who like practical answers for the things they support.

Also underline the use of the word ‘hate’ in the **Key Verse**. In modern language, we see it as a verb telling of intense dislike or feelings of hostility. In the original Hebrew it had an even deeper meaning. For imagery, see the things that God hates as gross sin that acts like a thorn which cuts into God’s heart. It causes God so much pain that God must move quickly to destroy the thing causing the pain. Please convey this picture to the class.

1. Use an age/culturally appropriate movie clip depicting victims of injustice, to stimulate a discussion on people's emotional responses to unjust situations.
2. Compile a list of other scriptures that affirm 'justice' as part of God's character.
3. Let the class brainstorm ways that a person might be unintentionally involved in acts of injustice. Encourage participants to reflect on their own lives to determine if they are in any way perpetuating injustice.
4. Set up a classroom debate over whether God's vindication of the righteous and faithful will be physical or spiritual (using scriptural evidence).
5. Share current examples of injustice, and pray together that God will bring justice in those situations.
6. Write a litany of commitment on making just decisions in everyday life.

Closing Devotions

Psalm 23 gives an impressive imaginary picture of God's protection and provision for those who trust the Lord. This is the same picture projected by the set scriptures. A corporate recital of Psalm 23 is a fitting way to end this session.

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for your protection and provisions. Amen.

Resources: Paper, pencils

Lesson 10

May 3, 2020

A Vision of Restoration

Lesson Scripture: Zephaniah 3

Focus Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Key Verse: I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I

will save the lame and gather the outcast. Zephaniah 3:19

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Discern the need for the just restoration of God's people.
2. Aspire to trust God for victory, hope, and renewal.
3. Celebrate the return of joy and God's glory in salvation.

Teaching Strategies

Since the lesson focuses on hope, renewal, and victory, it is fair to touch on the millennial era. That will be the period of ultimate victory for Christians. Therefore, consider that there is a fair degree of controversy surrounding the events of the millennial period, and how these will unfold. So, before you enter the class to teach this lesson, have a clear picture of what the Bible teaches about the millennial age. The book of Revelation and *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* will help with this. And, be open to hear from learners' alternative versions of these events, their timing, and the reasons for them. As far as you can, convey to the class that there are at least four well-reasoned views on the millennial period.

Apart from that, keep the lesson focused on hope, victory, and renewal. Try to see why God would want us to be aware of what will happen in the future. Guide the class in appreciating the value of prophecies, and personalizing the lesson. Encourage them to share their own personal stories of times of hope and renewal. See these all as aspects of God's divine love.

1. Lead a discussion on what role the following might play, in order for your local community to hope for what Zephaniah described: humility, unity, integrity, obedience.
2. Use concordances to research some passages that contain words such as *restore*, *renew*, and *revive*. Compare and contrast with today's text.
3. Have each learner write a psalm of praise to God for God's

workings in their past, present, and future.

4. Sing and reflect on a hymn inspired by Zephaniah's song of joy, "Sing Out, All God's People!" by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (carolynshymns.com/sing_out_all_gods_people.html).
5. Summarize the bad news of the first two chapters of Zephaniah to set the context for this lesson.
6. Find and list all the synonyms for 'joy' in the scripture passage. Compare and contrast the terms. Celebrate the return of joy and God's glory in salvation.

Closing Devotions

We close this lesson by singing or reciting the lyrics to the hymn "Claim the Promise." Here are the first two stanzas:

"Claim the Promise"

Never let a shade of care rest on your brow,
You can have the Savior's helping hand just now;
He has promised if his Word you will believe,
That according to your faith you shall receive.

Refrain

*Claim the promise, plead it o'er and o'er;
On his Word lay hold as ne'er before;
Claim the promise, plead it o'er and o'er;
Let your faith be mightier than e'er before.*

He has called you in the world to shine for him,
Never need the brightness of your life grow dim;
He has promised evermore he will bestow
All that you may need to keep your light aglow.

Refrain

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to walk in the power of your promises. Amen.

Resources: Paper, pencils

Lesson 11

May 10, 2020

Peace and Justice Reign

Lesson Scripture: Zechariah 8

Focus Scripture: Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17

Key Verse: I have purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; do not be afraid. Zechariah 8:15

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Comprehend the impact of God’s presence in a community.
2. Yearn for God’s perpetual presence and the promise of justice it brings.
3. Pray for God’s presence to result in a communal sense of justice, prosperity, and unity.

Teaching Strategies

Ezra chapters 5 and 6 help us to build a context for this lesson, so become familiar with them. Use modern everyday events like weddings as an example of how powerful anticipation (hope) can be in a person’s life. People must therefore balance their fears and uncertainty about the present against the surety of the future God has promised.

You can also look at the large sums of money people spend in business on the basis of a hope to make a better return. Then, note how people leave one city for another, or one country for another, on the basis of a dream or promise for a better life. Contrast these modern-day examples with the hope God gives us in scripture.

1. Ask learners to share occasions when they’ve been part of a “how many times do I have to tell you?” scenario.
2. Encourage the group by filling in this sentence: “Even if (some

unfortunate event the news is predicting) happens, I can (believe or do something) because God (a scripture thought).”

3. Let participants consider events and happenings in the world. Then challenge them to imagine what those events can look like given God's promise of peace and justice for all people.
4. Let the class name ways they see God present in the world and in their community. How do they respond to God's presence, making it known to others?
5. Create a litany of hope and expectancy for God's ongoing presence and work in the world.

Closing Devotions

The Closing Song: YouTube “Whispering Hope” by Firm Faith Zimbabwe (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9ey1mXIMqA>).

Prayer: Dear Father, help us to hear your voice as you whisper hope to us to get us through these distressing times. Amen.

Resources: Paper, pencils; device with access to YouTube

Lesson 12

May 17, 2020

Practice Justice

Lesson Scripture: Jeremiah 21

Focus Scripture: Jeremiah 21:8-14

Key Verse: Thus says the Lord: Execute justice in the morning, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. Jeremiah 21:12a

Vocabulary

- **Sedition** – Inciting people to rebel.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand divine justice described by Jeremiah.
2. Appreciate that God is a God of justice.
3. Make a personal commitment to justice and advocacy for justice.

Teaching Strategies

Set the tone for this lesson by asking the class to identify situations of wrongdoing that are so hideous, the wrongdoers must be punished. Then, let them explain why severe punishment is a must in the situations they have identified. Try to get the participants to look inwardly: at their own thoughts and behaviors. Challenge the class to apply the principles covered in the lesson to their own lives to highlight hidden biases. This must be done with skill, so as not to offend any participants. Yet, if you do not keep the focus on the participants, the class can easily drift into general talk on how the principles apply to others.

Also, bear in mind how general attitudes to punishment have changed over the years. Some punishments (like the death penalty and flogging) which were once acceptable are now considered barbaric. Most European countries, as an example, have outlawed the death penalty. Some other countries which still have capital punishment on the statute books have not enforced it for decades. The same situation applies to the flogging of students in public schools.

Ask the class if they noticed any links between movements in crime levels and softer, more humane approaches to punishment.

1. Have learners share the titles of famous movies in which they find themselves cheering for the “bad guy” to succeed. Brainstorm the possible reasons for this.
2. Verse 13 of today's text indicates a mind-set of invincibility. What damage is done when people or nations live with arrogant attitudes? What responses counter such attitudes?

3. God's justice calls for consequences where warranted, and deliverance where needed. What is good about such justice?
4. Explore opportunities for advocacy and justice that your group can engage in together.
5. Discuss evils that continue to perpetuate in the world and why some persons or groups are not punished.

Closing Devotion

The Closing Song: "Lord, Prepare Me to Be Your Sanctuary"

Prayer: Dear Father, help us to be sensitive to your Holy Spirit, and to be responsive to your prompting to live upright lives. Amen.

Lesson 13

May 24, 2020

Repent of Injustice

Lesson Scripture: Jeremiah 22

Focus Scripture: Jeremiah 22:1-10

Key Verse: Act with justice and righteousness. Jeremiah 22:3b

Vocabulary

- **Paradox** – Seemingly contradicting conditions.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that the covenant relationship between God and God's people requires justice.
2. Repent for injustice and seek to deliver the oppressed.
3. Become active agents of deliverance of the oppressed.

Teaching Strategies

The challenge in this lesson is to reconcile punishment with care and love. To put this in perspective, consider how you would respond to a learner who asks why God punishes people. He/she may suggest that God could just talk to people guilty of evil deeds just as some parents do. Be aware of the view that inflicting harsh punishment of any kind perpetuates the cycle of abuse and

violence. Be prepared to explain why punishment is sometimes necessary. Note as well, the role of punishment in any system of justice and good order in a society.

In the **Case Study**, an attempt is made to link this lesson on justice to our participation in the political process. Please walk cautiously in that section. In the class there are sure to be supporters of varying political camps. Stick to clear principles, avoiding political arguments, and apply spiritual principles.

1. Discuss how well present world leaders perform the tasks mentioned in Jeremiah 22:3.
2. Role-play Christians discussing the topics of sin and repentance.
3. In discussing Jeremiah 22:10, ask why the Lord would prohibit mourning the death of a godly king (Josiah), and command weeping for the exile of an evil king (Jehoahaz). Why wouldn't it be the other way around?
4. Brainstorm examples of ways the new covenant is neglected in ways parallel to the forsaking of the old covenant.
5. Identify people in the community who are oppressed. Ask God for forgiveness for tolerance of this oppression and to show ways to address it.
6. Identify ways you can become active agents of deliverance for the oppressed in your community.

Closing Devotions

To meet God’s standards of Justice, we must first surrender to Christ and get the help of the Holy Spirit. To remind us of this, end with the hymn “All to Jesus I Surrender” (AME Church Hymnal #251).

Prayer: Help us, dear Father, to raise our behavior to your standard of justice. Amen.

Resources: AME Church hymnals

Lesson 14**May 31, 2020****Return to Love and Justice****Lesson Scripture:** Hosea 11–12**Focus Scripture:** Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14**Key Verse:** Hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God. Hosea 12:6**Lesson Goals:** By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Compare prosperity as a worldly goal, with the godly virtues of love and justice.
2. Regret occasions when one has adopted prosperity as a key goal.
3. Practice love and justice as key virtues.

Teaching Strategies

To prepare for this lesson, have a clear picture of the dynamics of parent-child relations, including the duties and responsibilities of each party. Emphasize the link between duties and responsibilities.

The *Report* noted in the text (on Brill.com about Ghana) and other material on the *Rights of the Child Convention* can be useful in your preparation. You may want to highlight how the general opinions on the child-parent relations have changed over the years. Today, at both the national and international levels, children have rights cemented in laws which were not recognized in former generations. Contrast this with God's relationship with God's people. The basics have not changed over the centuries. Look at the value of having a consistent standard.

In the lesson, draw a big red line between parental discipline and child abuse. Child abuse is not acceptable in any language.

1. Consider concepts like love, justice, repentance, prosperity, righteousness, and faithfulness in terms of secular vs. Christian views.

2. List the blessings from today's text that God gave to God's people. Allow volunteers to share specific ways they have received those same blessings in their own lives.
3. Encourage learners to report stories of good parents they have known, and compare these characteristics to the qualities of God in today's text.
4. Discuss various ways that material prosperity goes hand in hand with unbiblical views of self and others.
5. Debate the following resolution: "The best way to avoid the self-delusion that accompanies prosperity is to take a vow of poverty."
6. Have students write a prayer of confession, asking God's forgiveness for pursuing prosperity instead of love, justice, and righteousness.

Closing Devotions

Prayer: Dear Father, we recognize that all we have is worthless unless we have you. And, with you we lack nothing.

Pray Psalm 23.

Amen.

Resources: Paper, pencils

The Senior Quarterly Teacher's Guide

Lesson 1

March 1, 2020

Expulsion From the Garden

Focus Scripture: Genesis 3:8-24

Key Verses: The Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to farm the fertile land from which he was taken. He drove out the human. To the east of the garden of Eden, he stationed winged creatures wielding flaming swords to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:23-24 (CEB)

Bible Background

- The name of the Book of Genesis comes from the Greek word meaning “origin.” The Hebrew name for the book is *Bereshit*, which translates as “in the beginning.”
- In Genesis 3:20, the name Eve means “mother of all living.” She was given her name by Adam after the Fall, when they were expelled from the garden.
- While the forbidden fruit eaten by Adam and Eve is often depicted as an apple, trees with apples are not indigenous to the Middle East. Instead, the fruit was more likely a pomegranate or fig since both are present in the region.
- * Traditionally, authorship of the Book of Genesis, along with Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, has been credited to Moses. However, it is more likely that the stories of Genesis were passed down as part of an oral tradition until they were recorded at a later date, likely in the sixth century BC.
- Adam and Eve were banished from the garden of Eden, but they were not abandoned by God. God provided clothing and protection for them.

Take-Away

Suffering is the result of sin, but God still cares for us despite our sin and suffering.

Lesson 2

March 8, 2020

Jesus in Gethsemane

Focus Scripture: Matthew 26:36-46

Key Verses: When he took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, he began to feel sad and anxious. Then he said to them, “I am very sad. It's as if I'm dying. Stay here and keep alert with me.” Matthew 26:37-38 (CEB)

Bible Background

- Gethsemane is an urban garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives.
- The name *Gethsemane* is Aramaic and means “oil press.”
- Similar accounts of Jesus’ time in Gethsemane are described in Mark 14:22-32 and Luke 22:39-46.
- Jesus was familiar with the garden. He left eight of the disciples at the gate and took Peter, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, further into the garden with him.
- Judas was able to find Jesus for the betrayal because the garden was a place Jesus and the disciples frequented.
- Gethsemane was a focal site for early Christian pilgrimages and is about 1,200 square meters in size.
- According to the National Research Council of Italy in 2012, several olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane are in excess of one thousand years old and may be offshoots of trees that sheltered Jesus in the garden.
- The grotto of Gethsemane, a small picturesque cave, was about 190 square meters and is likely where Jesus and his disciples spent the night.

Take-Away

Even God, through Jesus’ experience, has felt suffering and identifies with our experiences of suffering.

Be a Friend

Have the students in each group work together, each bringing his or her own viewpoints and ideas to the paragraph’s composition.

Pray Without Ceasing

While the students are in groups, ask if they want to share one or two personal concerns and invite them to pray- either silently or as a group- for these concerns.

Lesson 3**March 15, 2020****The Israelites in the Wilderness****Focus Scripture:** Numbers 21:4-9**Key Verse:** So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people and they bit the people. Many of the Israelites died. Numbers 21:6 (CEB)*Bible Background*

- The Book of Numbers records the story of the Israelites and their relationship with God as they wandered through the wilderness.
- The trip from Egypt to the Promised Land should have taken only a few weeks, even with a large group, but the Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years.
- The Book of Numbers contains the following words eighty times: “the Lord spoke to Moses...”
- In some translations the snakes are described as “fiery,” which in Hebrew can be interpreted as “burning,” perhaps because their bites caused severe pain.
- Today’s Bible verses in Numbers 21:4-9 are mentioned again in John 3:9-15 and provide the context for the famous words found in John 3:16.
- The serpent wrapped around a pole remains a symbolic figure for medicine and healing today.
- The name for the Book of Numbers comes from the two censuses of the Israelites documented in the book.
- The book begins with the Israelites receiving the law from God on Mount Sinai and ends with the Israelites preparing to cross the Jordan River into Moab.

Take-Away

God provides for us, and we should respond to God with gratefulness instead of grumbling.

Lesson 4**March 22, 2020****Jesus in the Wilderness****Focus Scripture:** Matthew 4:1-11

Key Verses: Jesus responded, "Go away, Satan, because it's written, *You will worship the Lord your God and serve only him.*" The devil left him, and angels came and took care of him. Matthew 4:10-11 (CEB)

Bible Background

- The similarities between Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and Adam's temptation in the garden of Eden show that we personally decide if we will give in to temptation.
- Jesus' temptation in the wilderness is also recorded in Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-13.
- Just before the temptation story, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, his cousin. In Matthew's account, this was also when the Spirit of God descended on Jesus like a dove and God said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him." (Matthew 3:17b)
- The wilderness was likely a rocky, uninhabited area that lies east of Jerusalem and the Judean hills and west of the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea.(CEB)
- While it's a unique name today, Jesus was a common first-century name. It derives from the name *Joshua* in Hebrew.
- Matthew provides no details about Satan, but uses the Greek word *diabolos*, which roughly translates to "slanderer." A similar Hebrew term, *ha-satan*, is used in the books of Job and Zechariah.
- Other biblical figures who fasted for forty days include Moses and Elijah. Severe symptoms of starvation begin after about 35 to 40 days without food.

Take-Away

The Son of God experienced the same temptations and suffering that we face, and he understands our struggles.

Quick and Fast

Remind students about Jesus' time of fasting in the desert. Then ask:

1. Why do you think it was important for Jesus to fast?
2. What do you think fasting helped Jesus accomplish during his time in the wilderness?

Lesson 5

March 29, 2020

The People of Judah Are Exiled

Focus Scripture: 2 Kings 25:8-21

Key Verse: The king of Babylon struck them down, killing them in Riblah in the land of Hamath. 2 Kings 25:21 (CEB)

Bible Background

- Jeremiah 53 and 2 Kings 24–25 are very similar in style, leading some to believe the books either were written by the same author or written from the same source material.
- Chapters 24–25 may have been written around 550 BC after Babylonian captivity ended.
- Second Kings continues the drama begun in 1 Kings. It's the last part of a group of historical books written during the Babylonian exile.
- First and Second Kings were originally one book and covered a span of four hundred years, from the death of David to the release of Johoiachin from Babylonian prison.

In Bibles printed prior to 1516, Kings and Samuel were

translated from Greek as a four-part Book of Kingdoms.

- Eight good kings ruled in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but the last three kings were evil. Kings who served God were Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah.
- The Northern Kingdom of Israel went into captivity around 720 BC, approximately 150 years before the Kingdom of Judah.
- Second Chronicles covers the same time period, but focuses more specifically on the kings of Judah rather than on the kings of both Judah and Israel.

Take-Away

Sometimes our suffering is caused by the people around us and sometimes by our own foolish actions. Still, God forgives and helps us find a new way forward.

Lesson 6

April 5, 2020 - Palm Sunday

The Hinge of History

Focus Scripture: Mark 15:22-39

Key Verses: But Jesus let out a loud cry and died. The curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. Mark 15:37-38 (CEB)

Bible Background

- The temple was the center of the Jewish faith. The first temple was built by Solomon (1 Kings 6).
- The presence of God dwelled in the Holy of Holies, the innermost chamber of the temple. The Holy of Holies contained the ark of the covenant and was separated by a curtain.
- The first temple was destroyed by invading Babylonians in 587 BC, but rebuilt by Israelites returning from Exile. It would

be destroyed again by Romans in AD 70.

- Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect or governor of Judea, questioned Jesus before he “washed his hands” (Matthew 27:24) of him. Pilate’s responsibility would have been to maintain peace and stability while collecting tax revenue for the Roman Empire. To Pilate, Jesus’ title of “King of the Jews” and his encouragement of tax collectors like Zacchaeus and Levi would have been seditious.
- Jesus’ final words echo those of Psalm 22:1: “My God! My God, why have you left me all alone?” For Jewish listeners, Jesus’ words would have evoked the whole Psalm which contains not only Jesus’ cry in the face of perceived abandonment but also confident hope in God’s rescue and deliverance.

Take-Away

Jesus’ death on the cross brings salvation to the world and transforms our individual lives.

Lesson 7

April 12, 2020 - Easter

The Resounding Resurrection

Focus Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

Key Verses: But the angel said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn’t here, because he’s been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him.” Matthew 28:5-6 (CEB)

Bible Background

- Typically the bodies of executed criminals, especially those accused of treason, were not afforded an honorable burial in a family tomb. Joseph of Arimathea must have been a man of means and an active leader in Jerusalem. It was risky for him to ask for Jesus’ body. He could have lost his status on the council.

- Joseph placed Jesus' body in his family tomb. Non-family placement in the family tomb implied a special kind of reverence and affection.
- The stone rolled in front of the tomb would probably have been a disc-shaped rock, about three feet in diameter, so that it would not roll easily.
- The tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers who were appointed by Pilate himself at the request of the chief priests. To a first-century Jewish reader, the chief priests' activity on the sabbath and during a Jewish holiday would have been considered scandalous.
- Jesus continued his lifelong practice of being countercultural by first revealing his resurrection to women. In the culture of that day, the testimony of women would have been considered invalid.

Take-Away

Jesus' resurrection proves he is the Son of God and is part of the foundation for our faith.

Believe It or Not

Answers:

Deepest part of the ocean: 36,070 feet or just under 7 miles

Number of McDonald's in the world: 36,899

Height of the Statue of Liberty: 305 feet

Total miles of highways in the United States: 164,000 miles

Approximate distance from the earth to the moon: 238,900 miles

Focus Scripture: Haggai 2:1-9

Key Verse: This house will be more glorious than its predecessor, says the Lord of heavenly forces. I will provide prosperity in this place, says the Lord of heavenly forces. Haggai 2:9 (CEB)

Bible Background

- Haggai is preaching to Israelites who have been allowed to return to their homeland but have not yet rebuilt the temple. Specifically, Haggai is tying the rebuilding project with the restoration of Israel's former glory.
- Nehemiah led the first group of Israelites who returned from exile. Their first project was to rebuild the walls of the city. This call from Haggai was to continue that work by rebuilding the temple also.
- Not much is known about Haggai, whose name means "to make a pilgrimage." He is referenced in Ezra as a contemporary of Zechariah.
- The prophetic role was to deliver a message from God. Sometimes, but not always, this message leaned into a potential future. Throughout this book, Haggai relays instructions to the returned Israelites and ties their actions to the restoration of God's blessing and presence.
- The centrality of the temple in Israel's communal life cannot be overstated. The original temple was meticulously constructed by Solomon and housed the ark of the covenant. Also, it is believed to have held the two stone tablets which contained the Ten Commandments.

Take-Away

Just as God dwelled in the temple, God continues to dwell among us today.

Lesson 9

April 26, 2020

Holy Spirit Baptism

Focus Scripture: Mark 1:1-8

Key Verses: He announced, “One stronger than I am is coming after me. I’m not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” Mark 1:7-8 (CEB)

Bible Background

- Roughly four hundred years passed between the time of Malachi (the last book of the Old Testament) and the ministry of John the Baptist which opens up the Gospels.
- John the Baptist echoes and evokes the Old Testament prophets, who were known for their eccentric dress and behavior.
- Jewish teachers often wove together several passages without explicitly naming the Scripture. They relied on the audience to recall the words of previous writings. John the Baptist and the Gospel writers quote Isaiah while leaning into God’s promised future.
- Like many ancient societies, first-century Jews practiced ceremonial washing. Non-Jews converting to Judaism were immersed in water as a once-and-for-all ceremonial washing. This washing would occur under the supervision of a religious expert.
- Early in John’s Gospel, some assume that John the Baptist is the returning Elijah. Elijah had been taken up to heaven before his death. John the Baptist fulfilled the role of the “promised Elijah” (Malachi 4:5) by baptizing Jesus in the River Jordan and proclaiming his coming as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

Take-Away

John the Baptist prepared the way for both Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who remains with us today.

Lesson 10**May 3, 2020****The River of Life-Giving Water****Focus Scripture:** Revelation 22:1-5**Key Verse:** They won't need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine on them, and they will rule forever and always. Revelation 22:5 (CEB)*Bible Background*

- The detailed and systematic description of the heavenly temple and the mountain mentioned in Revelation are similar to the descriptions in Ezekiel 40. Both detail the beauty and awe of heaven.
- The specific size of the temple (also described in Ezekiel 40) is also intended to foreshadow the unfathomable awe and enormity of heaven.
- The name of the city mentioned in verse 2 is the "New Jerusalem." In this context the author is evoking the *idea* of Jerusalem more than the physical city we know today—a spiritual home that speaks to the longing for a physical home.
- Though both are believed to have been written by John, there is some scholarly debate over whether the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation share the same author. However, both do share a common metaphor of God as a source of light.
- The writings of John cover three major literary movements; letters, the apocalyptic, and the prophetic. This passage of Revelation could be classified as prophetic words that describe what will come after life.

Take-Away

Just as water sustains life on earth, it also provides us with a metaphor for God's gift of eternal life.

Lesson 11**May 10, 2020****God’s Grace Toward Adam, Eve, and Cain****Focus Scripture:** Genesis 3:21; 4:10-16**Key Verse:** The Lord God made the man and his wife leather clothes and dressed them. Genesis 3:21 (CEB)*Bible Background*

- The name *Cain* means “acquired” or “get” in Hebrew.
- In verse 15, the Lord put a “sign” on Cain. Scripture doesn’t describe the sign, and there has been a lot of debate over the centuries about the look and purpose of this sign or mark.
- While the mark of Cain was intended as a sign or protection, through the centuries, many people have twisted it as a way to further racist and segregationist viewpoints, including slavery.
- There is some scholarly debate as to whether Cain and Abel were twins.
- The “wanderer” tag that Cain wore was not the same as being a nomad. A wanderer had no social or cultural identity and thus belonged to nothing and was claimed by no one.
- This wanderer tag makes the “mark” or “sign” all the more important, as God now claims Cain when no one else will.
- Some scholars believe that the “east of Eden” phrase may have been added to the story later, as the text is fragmented and does not provide any real clues for where this story might have taken place. Others believe it was simply a place outside of Eden and symbolized banishment from God.

Take-Away

Even in the aftermath of our failures, God meets us with grace and love.

Lesson 12**May 17, 2020****God Provides Food in the Wilderness****Focus Scripture:** Exodus 16:2-15

Key Verse: “I’ve heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat. And in the morning you will have your fill of bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’” Exodus 16:12 (CEB)

Bible Background

- As we read these Bible verses, it’s important to remember that the Israelites have already seen the power of God recently demonstrated in miraculous ways. God sent the plagues to force Pharaoh to free the people, and God parted the Red Sea so that the people could escape Pharaoh’s army.
- Aaron spoke to the people for Moses, because Moses did not speak well publicly.
- Manna is not necessarily the name of a specific food item. It actually means, “What is it?”—the question the Israelites asked when God sent them manna for food while wandering in the desert.
- Exodus 16:23 indicates the sabbath was reinstated by God. Many scholars believe the manna story is also about the sabbath and God’s provision.
- Jesus compares himself to manna in John 6. As the “Bread of life,” Jesus uses this Scripture passage as a metaphor for his own life-giving purposes.

Take-Away

We experience times of doubt, worry, and anxiety, but God sustains us and walks alongside us.

Lesson 13**May 24, 2020****Grace to the Dying Thief****Focus Scripture:** Luke 23:32-33, 39-43**Key Verses:** Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied, "I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:42-43 (CEB)*Bible Background*

- In verse 33, Luke translates the name of the Crucifixion site as "The Skull." *Golgotha* is the Aramaic name, and *Calvary* is a Latin translation of the same word.
- The criminal's admission of guilt is intended to contrast Jesus' innocence. This allows the reader to fully understand the weight of crucifying an innocent man.
- The criminal's cry of "remember me" (verse 42) brings to mind the psalmist's cry for God's aid in Psalm 18 and 74.
- Crucifixion was a long, violent, and traumatic event. The person crucified often died from exhaustion and asphyxiation, sometimes after hanging many days on the cross.
- Crucifixion was most often performed to discourage those watching from committing similar crimes. In this case, the perceived threat to the "Lord" (meaning Caesar) and to the status-quo.
- Jesus' acts of forgiveness on the cross (towards the crowd and the criminals) is meant to reinforce the depth of care, love, and compassion Jesus carried with him for all people.

Take-Away

Despite our failures and guilt, God meets us with forgiveness and grace.

Steal a Wink

Tap one person on the shoulder so that individual is "it." If someone

thinks she or he knows the identity of “it,” they must raise a hand and make a guess. The target must respond truthfully. If the guesser is correct, he or she wins. If the guesser is wrong, she or he is out of play.

Lesson 14

May 31, 2020

The Holy Spirit Inspires Jesus' Followers

Focus Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

Key Verse: And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Acts 2:21 (CEB)

Bible Background

- Jesus spoke about when the “Spirit of Truth comes” in John 16:7-14.
- Jesus' disciples were all gathered in one place because they would have been celebrating Shavuot, also known as the Feast of Weeks. This festival is a celebration of God's provision for God's people and also when Moses received the Torah.
- Throughout Scripture, fire is intended to symbolize the Divine presence. Moses and the burning bush and the pillar of fire leading the Israelites in the desert are two examples.
- “New wine” is wine which has not yet begun to convert to vinegar, so it is at the highest alcohol content.
- Acts says that “Peter stood with the other eleven apostles” (verse 14) reminding us that Judas had already been replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:26). This is the only time Matthias is mentioned in the New Testament.
- The word “servants” (verse 18) in the list of people who will be included in the work of God is an indication that all orders and cultural hierarchy will be accepted.
- Pentecost received its name from the events occurring fifty

days after the Passover festival. Pentecost literally means “fiftieth.”

Take-Away

The birth of the church is a reminder that we still have dreams to dream and work to do.

Guess the Language

- “Car là où deux ou trois sont assemblés en mon nom, je suis au milieu d’eux.” **(French)**
- “Porque donde dos o tres se reúnen en mi nombre, allí estoy yo en medio de ellos.” **(Spanish)**
- “Ubi enim sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum.” **(Latin)**
- “Poiché dovunque due o tre son raunati nel nome mio, quivi son io in mezzo a loro.” **(Italian)**

The Teacher's Guide

Intermediate Lessons

Lesson 1

March 1, 2020

Called to Accountability

Lesson Scripture: Amos 5

Focus Scripture: Amos 5:18-24

Key Verse: But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream. Amos 5:24

Vocabulary

- **Day of the Lord** – The day of God's judgment.
- **Despise** – Hold deep contempt.
- **Solemn** – Not cheerful, gloomy.
- **Remnant** – Whatever is left.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between just and unjust actions using God's word.
2. Desire God's requirement of fairness and accountability in one's interactions with others.
3. Develop strategies that prevent bullying of peers.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: "Already Here" by Brian Courtney Wilson (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc>) as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: Stop, Look, and Listen.** Discussion
 - a. How does it make you feel to know that there is still a lot

of injustice around you?

- b. Name some things that you know are unfair in your school.
- c. Who in your community do you feel is trustworthy on issues of injustice?
- d. How does it make you feel when you see someone mistreated?

4. **Activity #2: Intentional Living.** Divide the class into two groups. Create a plan for ways to practice righteous living (Being Good) and generous living (Doing Good). Play YouTube music: “Intentional” by Travis Greene (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH3f0ellNv8>) as youth work on plans. Regroup and share plans. Develop a plan for the entire class, combining the groups’ plans. Post it in your youth area, and on index cards to distribute to class.
5. **Activity #3: With Liberty and Justice for All.** The U.S. Pledge of Allegiance includes these words, “With liberty and justice for all.” This has had many meanings throughout time. What do those words mean to you in the 21st century?

Closing Devotion: In a circle, connect with each other and recite these words:

God, as we stand here today, we ask you to strengthen us to be your hands and feet. Give us boldness to stand for what is right, faith to stand alone, compassion to expand our embrace and grace, just as you have shown us. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, large post-it paper, index cards, internet connection for YouTube music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc> “Already Here” by Brian Courtney Wilson; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH3f0ellNv8> “Intentional” by Travis Greene

Lesson 2**March 8, 2020****A Prayer for Justice****Lesson Scripture:** Habakkuk 1**Focus Scripture:** Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14**Key Verse:** Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing. Habakkuk 1:13a**Vocabulary**

- **Oracle** – A response or message or the person who gives such a message.
- **Contention** – Heated disagreement.
- **Treacherous** – Guilty of being disloyal or unfaithful.
- **Perverted** – Corrupt in all ways.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand why Habakkuk prayed to God for an immediate end to injustice.
2. Empathize with those who are treated unjustly.
3. Be motivated to initiate a project that will alleviate injustice.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: “Already Here” by Brian Courtney Wilson (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc>) as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: Start Something.** Watch the news clip “March for Our Lives” <https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2018/06/16/march-for-our-lives-tour-road-to-change-gallagher-dnt.cnn>. Develop a petition. How would you write to God on this issue?
4. **Activity #2: Why Is God Silent Now!** Use this list of words to

fill in the blank of the **Bible Story**. Once the puzzle is solved, discuss the magnitude of what the prophet is asking. Word List: cry, eternity, swimming, righteous, listen, Babylonians, swallow, justice, murder, discipline, silent, break, rescue, serious, do, trouble. See answers below.

5. **Activity #3: Project Injustice/Justice.** Divide the youth into two groups. Have group one design a poster board about injustices that concern them in their community, and have group two design a vision board of how they would like to see the world. Once completed, post their project on a bulletin board to display in their church. This may take a couple of weeks to complete.

Closing Devotion: In a circle, connect with each other and recite these words:

God, as we stand here today, we ask you to strengthen us to be your hands and feet. Give us boldness to stand for what is right, faith to stand alone, compassion to expand our embrace, and grace just as you have shown us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Activity #2: Why Is God Silent Now! Answer Key

¹⁻⁴The problem as God gave Habakkuk to see it:

God, how long do I have to **cry** out for help before you **listen**?

How many times do I have to yell, "Help! **Murder!** Police!"

before you come to the **rescue**?

Why do you force me to look at evil,

stare **trouble** in the face day after day?

Anarchy and violence **break** out,

quarrels and fights all over the place.

Law and order fall to pieces.

Justice is a joke.

The wicked have the **righteous** hamstrung

and stand justice on its head.
God says, "Look!"

God, you're from ***eternity***, aren't you?
Holy God, we aren't going to die, are we?
God, you chose ***Babylonians*** for your judgment work?
Rock-Solid God, you gave them the job of ***discipline***?
But you can't be ***serious***!
You can't condone evil!
So why don't you ***do*** something about this?
Why are you ***silent*** now?
This outrage! Evil men ***swallow*** up the righteous and you stand
around and watch!
¹⁴⁻¹⁶ You're treating men and women
as so many fish in the ocean,
Swimming without direction,
swimming but not getting anywhere.

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, large post it paper,
pencils, index cards, internet connection for YouTube movie
clips and music:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc> "Already
Here" by Brian Courtney Wilson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH3f0ellNv8> "Intentional" by
Travis Greene

[https://cnn.com/videos/politics/2018/06/16/march-for-our-lives-
tour-road-to-change-gallagher-dnt.cnn](https://cnn.com/videos/politics/2018/06/16/march-for-our-lives-tour-road-to-change-gallagher-dnt.cnn) Parkland students kick
off advocacy tour

Lesson 3

March 15, 2020

Consequences for Injustice

Lesson Scripture: Habakkuk 2

Focus Scripture: Habakkuk 2:6-14

Key Verse: The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:14

Vocabulary

- **Creditor** – A person or company to whom you owe money.
- **Booty** – Valuable goods stolen or seized in war.
- **Plunder** – Goods stolen for someone's own purpose; to take things with force.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Learn that injustice will not prevail.
2. Believe that the success of the wicked is temporary.
3. Commit to following God's commandment to act with justice.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: "Already Here" by Brian Courtney Wilson (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc>) as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: Say What!?!** Discuss how this story makes you feel. What questions would you have for Beth? How would you help her deal with what is happening to her family?
4. **Activity #2: It's Not Fair.** Have students take turns discussing how they feel when they see those who do wrong prospering.
5. **Activity #3: Count Your Blessings.** On a sheet of paper, write down the blessings in your life. After writing them down, count them. You are more blessed than you think.

Closing Devotions: Play soft music - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLKeOAo2sX0> "I See the Lord" by Ron Kenoly

In a circle, connect with each other:

Take a deep breath, hold it, and then let it out slowly. Close your eyes and think on God's goodness and provision for all of us in the time of injustice and turmoil. Take another deep breath in; hold it then let it out slowly. Close your eyes and think of God's grace and mercy towards you. Take another deep breath in; let it out slowly.

Recite these words: God, nothing takes you by surprise. You are fully aware of what is going on around us. You see things that we cannot, you know things that we do not. We trust you, God, to keep us, protect us, to love us; and we acknowledge you as the head of our lives and know that injustice will not prevail. So, we breathe you in, and the cares of the world out. Amen.

Resources: Paper, pencils, computer, speaker, projector, large post-it paper, index cards, internet connection for YouTube movie clips and music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc> "Already Here" by Brian Courtney Wilson; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLKeOAo2sX0> "I See the Lord" by Ron Kenoly

Lesson 4

March 22, 2020

Corrupt Leaders

Lesson Scripture: Micah 3–6

Focus Scripture: Micah 3:1-3, 9-12; 6:6-8

Key Verse: What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

Vocabulary

- **Abhor** – Regard with disgust and hatred.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Learn the three requirements that God has for people.
2. Demonstrate justice, kindness, and humility in everyday living.
3. Serve as a just, kind, and humble leader among peers.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music “Grace” by BeBe and CeCe Winans (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccP5uAvDTsg>) as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: Think Right!** Have students volunteer to be group leaders. In groups, brainstorm and develop a list of current injustices that are happening in the world. Write them on a sheet of large post-it paper. Have students come together and the group leaders share their lists, combining them to make one list.
4. **Activity #2: Plan Right!** From the list created in **Activity #1**, develop a plan to be used to bring about an activity for justice in your community. Think about the time, place, resources, advertising, and support you needed to make it happen. From the list of spiritual attributes provided, which ones will students need to make sure they have mastered to make this happen, and why?

Spiritual Attributes

**Faith, Compassion, Discernment, Empathy,
Generosity, Humility, Kindness, Love, Endurance,
Reverence, Patience, Self-Control**

5. **Activity #3: Do Right!** With activities one and two complete, develop a “how to” list that you can refer to as you move forward, which will enable you to be examples of what justice really looks like.

Closing Devotion: Play YouTube video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5_7LEWnGaQ) “I Need You to Survive” by Hezekiah Walker. Have everyone face a partner or two and sing along to each other these words.

“I Need You to Survive”
By Hezekiah Walker

I need you, you need me.
We're all a part of God's body.
Stand with me, agree with me.
We're all a part of God's body.
It is his will, that every need be supplied.
You are important to me, I need you to survive.
You are important to me, I need you to survive.
I pray for you, you pray for me.
I love you, I need you to survive.
I won't harm you with words from my mouth.
I love you, I need you to survive.
It is his will, that every need be supplied.
You are important to me, I need you to survive.

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, large post-it paper, index cards, paper, pencils, markers, internet connection for YouTube movie clips and music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccP5uAvDTsg> “Grace” by BeBe and CeCe Winans

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMcJL_UDAvw “I Need You to Survive” by Hezekiah Walker

Lesson 5**March 29, 2020****Leading Justly****Lesson Scripture:** Malachi 2–3**Focus Scripture:** Malachi 2:1-9; 3:5-6**Key Verse:** For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. Malachi 2:7**Vocabulary**

- **Rebuke** – Sharp disapproval of someone because of their actions.
- **Abase** – Behavior that belittles someone else.
- **Reverence** – Deep respect.
- **Integrity** – Having strong moral character and principles.
- **Iniquity** – Immoral behavior.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the significance of justice in spiritual leadership.
2. Desire to be a leader who pleases God.
3. Demonstrate leadership qualities that are just and pleasing to God.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nzr-TsrleNc> “OK” by Kirk Franklin, as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: You Don't Say...** Have students share about positive experiences that they had with mentors who took an interest in them. Now, share about a leader who was the complete opposite. What do you think the two leaders could learn from each other?
4. **Activity #2: Lord Have Mercy!** Malachi points out a list of

ways in this passage that we share similar attitudes with disrespectful priests. In groups, select an attitude below and discuss the similarities, giving examples of each. Come together and share.

- Do not listen
- Do not glorify God's name
- Do not reverence God
- Do not walk with God in integrity and uprightness
- Cause others to fall by the instruction you give
- Show partiality in your instruction

Closing Devotion

Listen to the song "Do You Know Jesus" by Hezekiah Walker (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgh5DcENWq0>). Lead students in answering the questions from the song and writing notes on the index cards.

Prayer: God, I want to get to know you better. Help me to be intentional about our relationship. I really do love you, because you loved me first. Thank you for your word and your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, internet connection for YouTube music and video

Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nzr-TsrleNc> "OK" by Kirk Franklin

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MM8OkVT0hw> "The Hate You Give"

Lesson 6**April 5, 2020 – Palm Sunday****God's Just Servant****Lesson Scripture:** Isaiah 42**Focus Scripture:** Isaiah 42:1-9

Key Verse: Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1

Vocabulary

- **Abhor** – Regard with disgust and hatred.
- **Messiah** – The promised deliverer.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explore Isaiah's concept of a promised Messiah who will bring forth justice to the nations.
2. Celebrate the hope of a just world promised by the Messiah.
3. Emulate the Messiah as a servant of God who works to bring justice for all people.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJOHwjCF3yl> "Hosanna" by Kirk Franklin as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: Be the Change.** There are many opportunities to help people in our neighborhoods. Make a list of injustices in your community. What could your youth group do to work help in these situations?

4. **Activity #2: Make It Plain!** From the Bible story above, what is the role that Jesus will play as a liberator of the people?
5. **Activity #3: The Job Description.** Unscramble each of the clue words. Copy the letters in the numbered cells to the other cells with the same number.

GEUCORRANE

TIGHOSRUE

VACNEOTN

PEKREE

SOIWMISN RRKEOW

RABTOLRIE

EHLAER

REPELH

VOLRE OF OGD

SEOHNCN CAHGEN NETGA

J				
1	2	3	4	

5	6	7

8	9	10	

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

19	20	21	22	23	24		

Answer Key

servant
gentleness
meekness
truth
encourager
righteous
covenant
keeper
mission worker

liberator
healer
helper
lover of God
chosen change agent

Message: Jesus the New Covenant Messiah

6. **Activity #4: Ole School vs. New School!** Discuss the details of the New Covenant. How does it compare to the Old Covenant? And which covenant would you prefer?

Closing Palm Sunday Devotion

Leader: What a strange paradox; the king is coming, the people rejoice, singing “Hosanna in the highest!” yet fail to understand that the king they welcome is the Servant King, the king who washes his disciples’ feet, the king who came not with an army but a weapon so powerful that not even death could resist the sacrificial love of God, laid out upon a cross.

Students: Lord God, as we sing our “Hosannas” today, may we remember also that which you were riding toward; suffering and rejection, pain and humiliation, the cruel cross. Let us look forward to the joy of Easter day when you rose from death to reign forever.

Leader and Students: Help us, as we daily lay our lives before you, to live the resurrection life which acknowledges Jesus as lord and king over our lives. Amen.

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, internet connection for YouTube music and video:

Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJOHwjCF3yI>
“Hosanna” by Kirk Franklin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSBr3Gqs6tQ>: Travis Greene
2017 Stellar Award Performance feat: Israel Houghton, Jonathan McReynolds, Jonathan Butler

Lesson 7**April 12, 2020 – Easter****Resurrection Hope****Lesson Scripture:** Mark 16; 1 Corinthians 15**Focus Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 12-14, 20-23, 42-45**Key Verse:** But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here.” Mark 16:6**Vocabulary**

- **Resurrection** – Raised from the dead.
- **Subjection** – The act of controlling someone or something.
- **Perishable** – Something that is likely to decay.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that the authorities wanted to kill Jesus.
2. Appreciate the women's burial preparation of Jesus.
3. Embrace the call to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, despite ridicule or resistance.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwrE0YjfNGg>: “Won't He Do It” by Koryn Hawthorn as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: How Do You Feel?** Before beginning this discussion, ask class if the topic of death might be sensitive to any students, and excuse students from class if necessary. Discuss a time when you dealt with loss. What do you think about life after death? What do you believe about resurrection?
4. **Activity #2: Grateful!** As you listen to the music, have students

write a letter to Jesus, expressing thanks for Jesus' death and resurrection, and detail ways of showing commitment to the New Covenant.

5. **Activity #3: What's Better, the Old or the New?** What is from the Old Covenant and what is from the New? Put the letter 'A' in the blank if this is Old Testament Law, or 'B' if it is New Testament Law.

Answer Key

1. Came by Moses: A
2. Gives life: B
3. Ended by Jesus: A
4. Made us slaves: A
5. Still in force: B
6. Established by Jesus: B
7. Leaves us imperfect: A
8. Exposes sin: A
9. Gives life: B
10. Covers sin: B
11. Makes us live by work: A
12. For the Israelites: A
13. Makes us live by faith: B
14. Was fulfilled: A
15. Demands work: A
16. Demands obedience: B
17. Is for everyone: B
18. Needs an offering for sin: A

6. **Activity #4: It Isn't Easy!** Make a list of things that might cause you to fall short, miss the mark or outright sin. Listen to this song and realize you are not alone:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IZAVUin01U> "Hang On" by Kierra Sheard

Closing Devotion

Read this poem in unison:

Heavenly Father, I am your humble servant,
I come before you today in need of hope.
There are times when I felt helpless,
There are times when I feel weak.
I pray for hope.
I need hope for a better future.
I need hope for a better life.
I need hope for love and kindness.
Some say that the sky is at it's
darkest just before the light.
I pray that this is true, for all seems dark.
I need your light, Lord, in every way.
I pray to be filled with your light from
head to toe. To bask in your glory.
To know that all is right in the world,
as you have planned, and as you want
it to be.
Help me to walk in your light and live
my life in faith and glory.
In your name I pray, Amen.*

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, internet connection for YouTube music and video:

Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yE0W-kQyz6A>
"Grateful" by Hezekiah Walker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IZAVUin01UGEI> “Hang On” by Kierra Sheard

*<https://www.Praywithme.com/Prayforhope.html>

Lesson 8

April 19, 2020

Injustice Will Be Punished

Lesson Scripture: Esther 3; 5; 7

Focus Scripture: Esther 7:1-10

Key Verse: Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me – that is my petition – and the lives of my people – that is my request.” Esther 7:3

Vocabulary

- **Petition** – A formal written request.
- **Annihilated** – Completely destroyed.
- **Cubit** – A form of measurement in the Bible, approx. 18”.
- **Gallows** – A structure used for hanging of criminals.
- **Abate** – Subside or lessen.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Learn how justice triumphs in the story of Esther.
2. Feel assured that God’s good will triumphs over evil.
3. Commit to doing good deeds with the assurance that good triumphs over evil.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwrE0YjfNGg> “Won’t He Do It” by Koryn Hawthorn as youth come into the classroom.

2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: Let's Get Together.** There are many injustices happening against various ethnic groups today. Divide class into groups and assign a different ethnic or religious sect to each group. On a large post-it paper, have class write different issues that each group of people experiences today.
4. **Activity #2: What Was Meant for Bad...** Watch the YouTube clip from the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRampj_02a0 "One Night with the King" (start at the 7:30 mark). Discuss the clip in comparison to the actual scripture.
5. **Activity #3: I Know the Plans...** Jeremiah 29:11 states that God knows the plans God has for us, not to harm us, but to prosper us and plans to give us hope and a future. Discuss how God has used you to give hope to someone else and make a difference.
6. **Activity #4: You Can Use Me.** Play soft music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSpsD97NmZg> "Use Me" by Ron Kenoly. Make a list of projects that you can get involved in that would positively impact your community.

Closing Devotion

Close by reciting the *Serenity Prayer* together

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
the courage to change the things I can;
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

Amen.

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, post-it paper, internet connection for YouTube music and video

Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSpsD97NmZg> "Use

Me” by Ron Kenoly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwrE0YjfNGg> “Won’t He Do It” by Koryn Hawthorne

Movie Clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRampj_02a0 “One Night with the King” (start at mark 7:30)

Lesson 9

April 26, 2020

The Lord Loves Justice

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 61:8–62:12

Focus Scripture: Isaiah 61:8-11; 62:2-4a [end with “Desolate”]

Key Verse: The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. Isaiah 62:2

Vocabulary

- **Recompense** – To make amends for a loss.
- **Vindicate** – To clear someone from blame.
- **Desolate** – Bare, deserted place, void of people.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explore the hope expressed by the prophet Isaiah that those who are righteous and faithful will be vindicated.
2. Hope for salvation and restoration for God’s people.
3. Commit to making just decisions in everyday life.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7owFiihXgg> “You Know My Name” by Tasha Cobbs Leonard as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.

3. **Activity #1: Love and Hate...** On two sheets of post-it paper, have students list on one sheet, the things that they believe that God loves and hates. On the other sheet, list things that they love and hate. Compare the two and discuss.
4. **Activity #2: Starting All Over Again.** God is renewing the covenant with Jerusalem. Define the word *covenant*, and discuss why God is renewing the covenant with God's chosen people.

Closing Devotion

Prayer: God, you are full of grace and complete forgiveness. Help us to walk forward from this day. Thank you that right now we can enter into a new dawn, a fresh start, a new freedom. You turn the pages of our lives and wash each day clean. Help us to feel that we can learn from the past and move on. Thank you that we can write a new story on a fresh page. With you we find vision and hope. Thank you! Amen.

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, large post-it paper, markers, internet connection for YouTube music and video:

Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7owFiihXgg> "You Know My Name" by Tasha Cobbs Leonard

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67wjYYEoas8> Isaiah 62 Song "Surely Your Is Salvation Coming"

Lesson 10

May 3, 2020

A Vision of Restoration

Lesson Scripture: Zephaniah 3

Focus Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Key Verse: At that time, I will bring you home, at the time when I

gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord. Zephaniah 3:20

Vocabulary

- **Exult** – To feel overjoyed.
- **Reproach** – An expression of disapproval.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe God's restoration of righteousness, peace, and justice to Israel.
2. Understand how Israel and believers today feel when God restores justice and well-being to their lives
3. Celebrate with others, God's presence and protection.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2y3Zot4tE0&pbjreload=10> "How Great Is Our God" by Bishop Morton and The Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: Committed to the Work...One, Two Step.** What would you do if you were guaranteed to succeed? Discuss your goals and dreams and how many different paths are there to where you want to go.
4. **Activity #2: He's All That.** Unscramble each of the clue words below. Copy the letters in the numbered cells to the other cells with the same number to reveal a God-statement.

He's All That!

RERRUTNU	<input type="text"/>	5										
IEREVACG	<input type="text"/>	3	13									
RECTOTROP	<input type="text"/>	7										
WIROARR	<input type="text"/>	12										
REERUSC	<input type="text"/>	2										
DIENFR	<input type="text"/>	10	6									
PISMOER PEEKER	<input type="text"/>	8	14									
EMDEERER	<input type="text"/>	15	9									
JEUGD	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	11							
FAERTH	<input type="text"/>											
DEIVORPR	<input type="text"/>	1										
HEELAR	<input type="text"/>	4										

<input type="text"/>																
y	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	5	13	14	15

Answer Key

Nurturer
 Caregiver
 Protector
 Warrior
 Rescuer
 Friend
 Promise Keeper
 Redeemer

Judge
 Father
 Provider
 Healer
 You Can Depend on HIM

5. **Activity #3: Real Talk.** Share a personal testimony of a time when God “Showed Up.”

Closing Devotion

Father, I pray that you will visit us, and make your presence known in our life. Give us faith *to believe that you can change us through prayer and through acts of love and compassion. Let your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.* Help me to cultivate your presence in my life. I choose to partner with you. Remove the distractions in my life that keep me from your presence. I repent of any pride or personal idols that have taken me away from having you in first place and being completely yours. Take away any lukewarmness in my heart and set me on fire for you. Amen.

Play music as youth prepare to leave.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aD8OK07iIY> “Love Theory” by Kirk Franklin

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, internet connection for YouTube music:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aD8OK07iIY> “Love Theory” by Kirk Franklin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2y3Zot4tE0&pbjreload=10> “How Great Is Our God” by Bishop Morton and The Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship

Lesson 11

May 10, 2020

Peace and Justice Reign

Lesson Scripture: Zechariah 8

Focus Scripture: Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17

Key Verse: These are the things that you shall do: speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace. Zechariah 8:16

Vocabulary

- **Wrath** – Extreme anger.
- **Relent** – To abandon or ease off.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand God's promise of a new world of peace and prosperity for God's people.
2. Feel elated because God is allowing another chance for peace and prosperity.
3. Celebrate the promise of a new world of peace and prosperity by participating in God's coming kingdom.

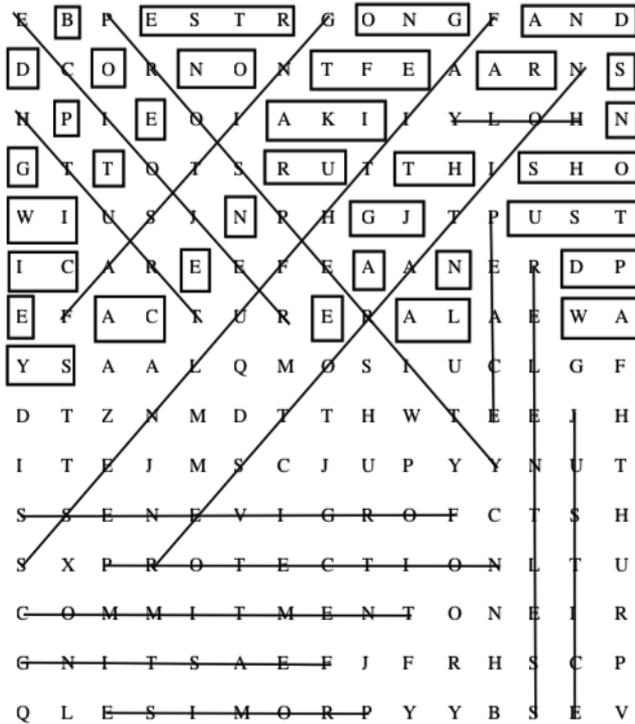
Teaching Strategies

Play YouTube music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fH2FekyDKdw> "Let There Be Peace on Earth" as youth come into the classroom.

1. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
2. **Activity #1: Spread Love.** View the YouTube commercial, "Edeka 2015 Christmas Commercial" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_B6wQMd2eI). Discuss how this video made students feel. What can you do to make a senior citizen at your church feel loved?
3. **Activity #2: Peace and Justice Reign.** Directions: Solve word search finding secret message between the discovered words. Answer key:

Peace and Justice Reign

Directions: Solve word search finding secret message between the discovered words



COMMITMENT
FEASTING
JUSTICE
PROSPERITY
RELENTLESS

FAITHFULNESS
FORGIVENESS
PEACE
PROTECTION
RESTORATION

FASTING
HOLY
PROMISE
REJOICE
TRUTH

**Be strong and do not fear speaking
truth Showing justice and
peace always**

4. **Activity #3: Be a Blessing.** Seek out the seniors in the neighborhood around your church or who attend your church and plan a day to help them, or pay them a visit to show love.
5. **Activity #4: Do Something Good.** Make a list of the senior citizens in your church and plan a special Sunday to surprise them.

Closing Devotions

Read in unison:

Prayer: God, open our eyes to see the way you see, open our hearts to love the way you love, open our hands to reach those we normally wouldn't reach, and open our mouths to speak our truth in love. Amen.

Play music as youth prepare to leave: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aD8OK07iIY> "Love Theory" by Kirk Franklin

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, word search: *Peace and Justice Reign*, internet connection for YouTube music and video:

Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fH2FekyDKdw> "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAqjgqavTBg&list=RDnAqjgqavTBg&start_radio=1 "You Still Love Me" by Tasha Cobbs

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_B6wQMd2eI "Edeka 2015 Christmas Commercial"

Lesson 12

May 17, 2020

Practice Justice

Lesson Scripture: Jeremiah 21

Focus Scripture: Jeremiah 21: 8-14

Key Verse: I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, says the Lord. Jeremiah 21:14a

Vocabulary

- **Pestilence** – A fatal epidemic disease, something that is destructive.
- **Besieged** – To be harassed or surrounded.
- **Speculative** – Based on guesses rather than the facts.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Know that God will not let evil go without punishment.
2. Experience conviction when tempted to act unjustly toward others.
3. Engage in acts that bring about justice.

Teaching Strategies

Play YouTube music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nzr-TsrleNc> “OK” by Kirk Franklin as youth come into the classroom.

Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.

1. **Activity #1: Death of a Relationship.** Reflect and discuss a time when you had to deal with a death of a relationship. Name the emotions that you experienced. How did it make you feel?
2. **Activity #2: It Just Ain’t Right!** View the trailer from the movie, “The Hate You Give” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MM8OkVT0hw>. Discuss the evil and the injustices that continue to exist, that are outlined in this trailer. Create a response that is pleasing to God.
3. **Activity #3: Strange Fruit.** When God said that we could produce good fruit, what does that mean? Discuss the difference between good and bad fruit. Find ways to produce more “good fruit.”

4. **Activity #4: Stand for Righteousness.** Discuss abuse (physical and verbal) and its effects on God's creatures and creation. Be sensitive to students who may find this topic personally sensitive.

Closing Devotion

Read in Unison: God, we stand before you, an army of youth looking to be soldiers in the army against social injustice and oppression. We are eager to make a DIFFERENCE; however, we need you for insight, and encouragement. Bless us now, in Jesus' name we pray. AMEN!

Play music as youth prepare to leave.

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, internet connection for YouTube music and video

Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nzr-TsrleNc> "OK" by Kirk Franklin

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MM8OkVT0hw> "The Hate You Give"

Lesson 13

May 24, 2020

Repent of Injustice

Lesson Scripture: Jeremiah 22

Focus Scripture: Jeremiah 22:1-10

Key Verse: Act with justice and righteousness. Jeremiah 22:3b

Vocabulary

- **Heed** – Pay attention.
- **Desolation** – State of complete destruction.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that the covenant relationship between God and God's people requires justice.

2. Aspire to act with justice and righteousness.
3. Repent and ask God and those we have wronged for forgiveness.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdZViD4rxDE&list=RDEMkoG4mBcmt3QFUCGTlmb0ag&start_radio=1 “Indescribable” by Kierra Sheard as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: Do It Anyway.** In these three scenarios, what do you think the consequences were, and what do you think happened in the end?
4. **Activity #2: To Be or Not to Be.** Create a “What Would You Do?” skit, based on the three scenarios given in the introduction of this lesson. Assign three teams. Each team tells what their understanding of justice and righteousness is based on the skit’s scenario.
5. **Activity #3 Act with Justice...**View this short video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmsitqPfcZo> “The Roofers and the Homeless Guy.” After viewing the clip, discuss in what ways you see God at work, and in what ways you see the roofers acting justly.

Closing Devotion

Recite this prayer together, while the song “All I Need” by Brian Wilson is playing: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_SKO_pCn1A)

Write a note to God on index cards expressing your gratefulness for reaching us whenever we need him. When everyone is finished, say in unison...“Thank you, God, for touching us and making us over. In the name of Jesus. Amen.”

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, index cards, markers, internet connection for YouTube music and video

Music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdZViD4rxDE&list=RDEMkoG4mBcmt3QFUCGTlmb0ag&start_radio=1 “Indescribable” by Kierra Sheard

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_SKO_pCn1A “All I Need” by Brian Wilson

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmsitqPfcZo> “The Roofers and the Homeless Guy”

Lesson 14

May 31, 2020

Return to Love and Justice

Lesson Scripture: Hosea 11–12

Focus Scripture: Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14

Key Verse: But as for you, return to your God. Hosea 12:6a

Vocabulary

- **Indictment** – A formal charge of a crime.
- **Compassion** – Feeling of concern, brotherly/sisterly love.
- **Ephraim** – One of the ten lost tribes of Israel.
- **Recoils** – Springs back in fear.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Remember God's love and justice for God's people.
2. Long for godly love and justice for all people.
3. Develop a plan to return to God's standards of love and justice.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nzr-TsrleNc> “OK” by Kirk Franklin as youth come into the classroom.

2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
3. **Activity #1: “Do Unto Others.”** Watch the commercial clip (<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/odcR/xfinity-mobile-new-student#>). After viewing, roleplay different scenarios of how this kindness could play out in your youth group.
4. **Activity #2: Come Back to Me!** Listen to the song “Come Back to Me” by Janet Jackson while reading the lyrics provided (at the end of the lesson). Ms. Jackson sounds very sad and anguished about a lost love. This is similar to how God feels when we turn away from God. Imagine that God was the writer of this song. What would your response be? Take some time, as the song plays again, to write your response down to share at a later time.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5ecZWwO_hQ “Come Back to Me” by Janet Jackson
5. **Activity #3: Real Love Imagined.** The child in the “Imagine” segment experienced real love. It is like the love expressed by God towards the Israelites. Discuss the undeniable mandate to demonstrate God’s love based on the story above.

Closing Devotion

Repeat this together:

Dear Lord, I admit that I am a sinner. I have done many things that don’t please you. I have lived my life for myself only. I am sorry, and I repent. I ask you to forgive me. I believe that you died on the cross for me to save me. You did what I could not do for myself. I come to you now and ask you to take control of my life; I give it to you. From this day forward, help me to live every day for you and in a way that pleases you. I love you, Lord, and I thank you that I will spend all eternity with you. Amen.

Resources: Computer, speaker, projector, paper, pencils, internet connection for YouTube music and video

Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMqeRmSBcbA>
“First Love” by Kirk Franklin

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5ecZWwO_hQ “Come Back to Me” by Janet Jackson

Video: <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/odcR/xfinity-mobile-new-student#>
television commercial

The Teacher's Guide

Junior Lessons

Lesson 1

March 1, 2020

A Call to Please God

Lesson Scripture: Amos 5

Focus Scripture: Amos 5:18-24

Key Verse: Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. Amos 5:23

Word Power!!!

- **Lament** – An expression of grief, sorrow, or mourning.
- **Forsaken** – Abandoned, left behind.
- **Exile** – Place where people go for retreat/safety.
- **Solemn** – Formal, serious.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish just actions from unjust actions.
2. Encourage students to develop their own definition of justice.
3. Understand the purpose of Amos' message.

Teaching Strategies

1. Watch the YouTube video about Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Allow time for students to discuss how they can be champions of justice in their community, school, and church.
2. Create a large poster board with the word *justice* in the center. Surrounding the word, have the students write/draw pictures of their definition of the word.
3. Recite the YPD Pledge (see below). Allow time for the students to explain what it means to them.

4. Allow time for students to share their experience of seeing someone being bullied.
5. Have students create songs or poems about anti-bullying, justice/God's love. Record songs and encourage students to share their writings/songs, also post them at church.

Animated Video: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: <https://youtu.be/PyurjhRNOmw>

YPD Pledge

I pledge my willing and untiring service to all efforts of the Young People's and Children's Division to aid the needy and suffering people, regardless of race, color, or creed. I further pledge to take the Bible as my guide, to aid my church, and to attend meetings regularly. In all these tasks I seek the Savior's guidance.

Answer Key for Questions

1. Name a way that you can be an advocate of justice at school and church. **After students' answers, share your example of one way you have been an advocate of justice to encourage the students to share.**
2. What was the famous scripture in today's scripture lesson that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. shared in his speech? **Amos 5:24**
3. What does the word *justice* mean to you? **Ask students to share their definition and write it on the poster board.**

Resources: Electronic device to view the video, the YPD pledge, poster board, paper, pencil/crayons

Lesson Scripture: Habakkuk 1**Focus Scripture:** Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14

Key Verse: Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing. Habakkuk 1:13a

Word Power!!!

- **Oracle** – A person giving wise decisions and opinions.
- **Contention** – A disagreement or dispute.
- **Treacherous** – Dangerous, untrustworthy.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the message of Habakkuk.
2. Encourage students to remember that God is more powerful than anything.
3. Explore a different version of the scripture passage using *The Message* translation.

Teaching Strategies

1. Give students time to choose a partner and draw a group picture or write a poem recreating the scripture passage.
2. Allow time for sharing of drawing or poem with the class. Encourage class appreciation by applause, etc.
3. Have each student create an acronym for the word *justice* on an index card. Give time for students to share with the class.

Answer Key for Questions

1. What does Habakkuk's name mean? **The name means "to wrestle."**
2. What does justice look like to you? **Encourage students to describe a time of unity or peace in their community.**

3. God is more powerful than anyone or anything. (True or False)
TRUE.
4. What is one way we can talk to God? **We can talk to God in various ways. There is no right or wrong way to talk/pray to God.**

The Message

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 12-14

*God, you're from eternity, aren't you?
Holy God, we aren't going to die, are we?
God, you chose Babylonians for your judgment work?
Rock-Solid God, you gave them the job of discipline?
But you can't be serious!
You can't condone evil!
So why don't you do something about this?
Why are you silent now?
This outrage! Evil men swallow up the righteous
and you stand around and watch!
You're treating men and women
as so many fish in the ocean,
Swimming without direction,
swimming but not getting anywhere.*

Resources: *The Message Bible*, drawing paper, pencils, crayons (for drawing activities), index cards

Lesson 3

March 15, 2020

Rewards for the Just

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 37

Focus Scripture: Psalm 37:1-6, 12-13, 27-28, 34

Key Verse: Trust in the Lord and do good. Psalm 37:3

Word Power!!!

- **Fret** – To be upset or anxious.
- **Envious** – Jealousy or envy.
- **Vindication** – Proof that something or someone is right.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Review Psalm 37.
2. Commit to following God's commandments.
3. Learn that God rewards those who listen to God's commands.

Teaching Strategies

1. Allow children to create an art project that highlights God's love for justice.
2. Encourage students to create their own Psalm based on Psalm 37.
3. Have students count their blessings (literally). Give them two minutes to write down their blessings.

Answer Key for Questions

1. Who was the writer of Psalm 37? **The writer is David.**
2. Does God want us to fret or be envious of wrongdoers? **God does not want us to fret over wrongdoers. God's justice will come in God's own timing.**
3. Name one way that you can trust God this week. **Give one example of how you are going to trust God to get the students started.**

Litany of Thanks

Teacher: Today, God, I give you thanks and praise for the lives of all these students.

Students: God, we thank you for each other.

Teacher: Help us to trust in you, oh Lord, and to do good.

Students: We will trust and follow you, oh Lord.

Together: Trust in the Lord and do good. Take delight in the Lord, and God will give you the desires of your heart. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Ask a student to lead the class in a corporate prayer ending together with *The Lord's Prayer*.

Resources: *Litany of Thanks*, pencils, pens

Lesson 4

March 22, 2020

What God Wants

Lesson Scripture: Micah 6

Focus Scripture: Micah 6:1-8

Key Verse: What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

Word Power!!!

- **Plead** – To ask earnestly.
- **Controversy** – A disagreement.
- **Wearied** – Tired.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Talk about random acts of kindness.
2. Remind students that God calls us to love all humankind.
3. Encourage students to serve as kind and just leaders.

Teaching Strategies

1. Divide the class into two groups, and give students ample time to discuss their thoughts about the scripture reading.
2. Share random acts of kindness that students can do in their

community.

3. Aid students in creating their own *30-Day Random Acts of Kindness* calendar for the month of April. Have students briefly share answers with the class.

Answer Key for Questions

1. What is the **Key Verse** today? **What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8.**
2. What is one random act of kindness that you can do this week? **Encourage students to list at least one act of kindness they are going to do this week.**
3. What community/school issue can you address to help people feel more welcomed? **Encourage students to share about how we should welcome new friends at school or church.**

Resources: Paper, pencils, crayons (for drawing activities), blank April 2020 calendar

Lesson 5

March 29, 2020

Leading with Fairness

Lesson Scripture: Malachi 3

Focus Scripture: Malachi 3:1-4, 6-12

Key Verse: For I the Lord do not change. Malachi 3:6

Word Power!!!

- **Covenant** – A promise.
- **Refine** – To purify; make better.
- **Statutes** – Laws.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Desire to be a leader who pleases God.
2. Learn that God wants leaders to be just.
3. Demonstrate leadership qualities that please God.

Teaching Strategies

Have students:

1. Create a poem that displays God's love for humanity as an example for children to create their own.
2. Explain what it means to be a faithful leader.
3. Plan ways to explain tithing to the students.

Answer Key for Questions

1. Does God's love for you change? **God's love does not change.**
2. Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. (True or False) **TRUE.**
3. What does the word repent mean? **Repent means to turn away from sin.**

Resources: Pen, pencils

Lesson 6

April 5, 2020 – Palm Sunday

God's Just Servant

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 21

Focus Scripture: Matthew 21:1-2, 6-8, 12-17

Key Verse: The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. Matthew 21:6

Word Power!!!

- **Cloak** – An outer garment such as a cape or coat.

- **Hosanna** – A shout of praise and adoration to God, meaning, “Please save.”
- **Scribes** – Teachers of the Jewish tradition and law.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that Jesus is the promised Messiah.
2. Understand the importance of Palm Sunday.
3. Encourage class participation by asking students to recall what they know about Palm Sunday (before the lesson begins).

Teaching Strategies

1. Read the printed passage twice. Allow students time to draw a depiction of the scripture and share with the class.
2. Emphasize the humbleness of Jesus.
3. Play “Simon Says” to explain following a leader.

Answer Key for Questions

1. What is Palm Sunday? **Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem.**
2. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a fancy horse with elegant garments. (True or False) **FALSE.**
3. Name one way you can follow directions this week. **Encourage students to list at least one way they are going to follow a teacher’s directions this week.**

Resources: Palm branches (one for each student), crayons, drawing paper, AME Church Hymnal # 251 – “I Surrender All”

Lesson 7

April 12, 2020 – Easter

Resurrection Hope

Lesson Scripture: Mark 16, 1 Corinthians 15

Focus Scripture: Mark 16:1-9

Key Verse: “Do not be alarmed, you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised.” Mark 16:6

Word Power!!!

- **Sabbath** – A day set aside to worship God, usually Sunday for Christians
- **Resurrection** – Christ’s rising from the dead.
- **Anoint** – To bless (with oil) as part of a religious ritual.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of Easter.
2. Appreciate the kindness that the women did for Jesus.
3. Encourage students to be able to share the resurrection story with others.

Teaching Strategies

1. Provide an opportunity for the children to dramatize the **Key Verse** through music, dance, or spoken word. Make certain that all students have a chance to participate.
2. Ask students why Jesus Christ’s resurrection is important. Then ask students to share why it is important to them personally.
3. Create a class drawing on the post-it paper, depicting Good Friday to Easter.
4. Read John 3:16 to the class during the **Getting Ready!!!** section.

Answer Key for Questions

1. What is Easter about? **Easter is about the resurrection**

of Jesus Christ.

2. Name one of the three women who went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. **Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James, Salome.**
3. How can you share the true meaning of Easter with your family and friends? **Have the students discuss this answer among themselves.**

Resources: Post-it paper, pencils, Easter bags

Lesson 8**April 19, 2020****Injustice Will Be Punished**

Lesson Scripture: Esther 3; 5; 7

Focus Scripture: Esther 7:1-10

Key Verse: King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" Esther 7:5

Word Power!!!

- **Merely** – Barely.
- **Foe** – An enemy or opponent.
- **Compensate** – Give something in recognition of; reward.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Stress the importance of praying to God.
2. Understand the story of Queen Esther.
3. Be assured that good will triumph over evil.

Teaching Strategies

1. Have students reenact the biblical story, and discuss how the story made them feel.
2. Discuss the importance of waiting for something and trusting God.
3. Plan a project with the students, in which they can serve the needs of others who may be victims.

Answer Key for Questions

1. What are the two books in the Bible named after women?
Esther and Ruth.
2. Why was Haman so angry? Why did he want to kill the Jewish people? **Haman was angry because Mordecai wouldn't bow down to him. Haman wanted to kill the Jews because they worshipped God and would not bow to man.**
3. What was the outcome of the story? **Queen Esther saved her people and the king ordered that Haman be killed.**

Resources: Pens, crayons, pencils

Lesson 9

April 26, 2020

A Just King

Lesson Scripture: 1 Kings 3:1-28

Focus Scripture: 1 Kings 3:16-28

Key Verse: All Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to execute justice.
1 Kings 3:28

Word Power!!!

- **Judgment** – A decision made (often by a judge).
- **Render** – To give an announcement.
- **Perceive** – To come to understand or realize.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the story of Solomon.
2. Recognize that Solomon requested something that was selfless.
3. Gain an understanding of what wisdom is.

Teaching Strategy

1. Share the importance of prayer with the class.

Answer Key for Questions

1. For what did King Solomon ask God? **King Solomon asked God for wisdom.**
2. Who was King Solomon's father? **King David was Solomon's father.**
3. How did King Solomon decide who was the mother of the baby boy? **He announced that he was going to split the baby in half. The real mother begged him not to because she wanted to see the baby live. This is how Solomon knew who the real mother of the child was.**

Resources: Paper, crayons, pencils

Lesson 10**May 3, 2020****God Promises Justice****Lesson Scripture:** Zephaniah 3**Focus Scripture:** Zephaniah 3:1-2, 5, 12-13**Key Verse:** The Lord...is righteous; he does no wrong. Every morning he renders his judgment, each dawn without fail.
Zephaniah 3:5**Word Power!!!**

- **Defiled** – Marred or spoiled.
- **Remnant** – A small group of people who will remain faithful to God; what's left.
- **Utter** – To say something.
- **Deceitful** – Guilty of misleading others.
- **Famished** – Very hungry.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Encourage the importance of forgiveness.
2. Remind students that God never makes a mistake.
3. Encourage the importance of telling the truth.

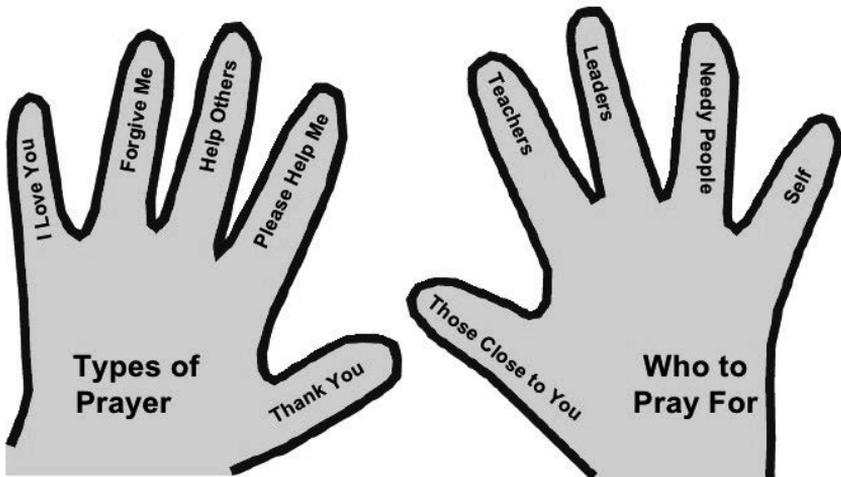
Teaching Strategies

1. Have students write ways that we can forgive.
2. Have students share an experience when they forgave someone.
3. Lead discussion about times when you told the truth in a hard situation. Have students volunteer to give examples.
4. Share your *Prayer Hand* with the class.
5. Give the class ample time to share their *Prayer Hands* with the class.

Answer Key for Questions

1. Have you ever prayed for someone else? **Don't press when asking the students this question. Be cognizant that some students may have sick or deceased relatives.**
2. Why was God mad at the people of Judah? **God was upset with the people of Judah because they forgot about God and started worshipping idols.**
3. What is something that you want to pray to God about? **Answers will vary depending on the students and what they are going through.**

Hands For Prayer



Resources: Paper, crayons, pencils, drawing paper

Lesson 11

May 10, 2020

Peace and Justice Reign

Lesson Scripture: Zechariah 8

Focus Scripture: Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17

Key Verses: I will save my people...and I will be their God.
Zechariah 8:7-8

Word Power!!!

- **Devise** – To plan.
- **Oath** – A sworn promise.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that God is in control.
2. Feel elated because God is allowing another chance for peace and prosperity.
3. Encourage others to see that God is everywhere.

Teaching Strategies

1. Ask students to draw a picture of what peace looks like to them.
2. Suggest ways of showing gratitude for God's faithfulness.

Answer Key for Questions

1. What is peace to you? **Ask students to show the pictures they've drawn. Be aware that some may be shy about their drawing abilities.**
2. Create "thinking of you" cards with scriptures and pictures to be given to the sick and shut-in.
3. What was the name of the prophet in the scripture lesson today? **The name of the prophet in the lesson is Zechariah.**

Resources: Paper, pencils, crayons, markers, cardstock to make cards

Lesson 12**May 17, 2020****Practice Justice****Lesson Scripture:** Jeremiah 21**Focus Scripture:** Jeremiah 21:8-14**Key Verse:** Thus says the Lord: See, I'm setting before you the way of life. Jeremiah 21:8**Word Power!!!**

- **Famine** – An extreme lack of food.
- **Pestilence** – Deadly disease.
- **Besiege** – To surround, lay siege to.
- **Devour** – To destructively consume.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the story of Jeremiah.
2. Desire to treat everyone fairly.
3. Understand that God wants us to do the work of justice.

Teaching Strategies

1. Explain the background of Jeremiah's life.
2. Discuss immigration reform in relation to injustice with children.
3. Give students time to share how the printed passage made them feel.

Answer Key for Questions

1. What did Jeremiah tell King Zedekiah to do? **He told him to surrender.**
2. Jeremiah was a faithful prophet of God. (True or False)
TRUE.

3. How do you think Jeremiah felt when he saw the people rejecting God? **He was angry that they turned their backs on God.**

Resources: Paper/pencils

Lesson 13

May 24, 2020

Repent of Injustice

Lesson Scripture: Jeremiah 22

Focus Scripture: Jeremiah 22:1-10

Key Verse: Act with justice and righteousness....And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood. Jeremiah 22:3

Word Power!!!

- **Heed** – To pay attention.
- **Desolation** – A state of complete emptiness.
- **Bemoan** – To express sorrow.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand God's justice in this story.
2. Understand the importance of repentance.
3. Learn that we should treat everyone fairly.

Teaching Strategies

1. Suggest possible outreach projects for making life better for others.
2. Explore Jeremiah's feelings in the story.
3. Create a project where the class can help children in their community.

Answer Key for Questions

1. Why should we treat others with kindness? **See Luke 6:31, John 13:34-35, and Hebrews 13:2.**
2. Did the King in this story listen to Jeremiah's warning? **The King did not listen to Jeremiah's warning and had to pay the consequences.**
3. Name a time when you were given a second chance. How did that make you feel? **Answers will vary, depending on what each individual student is going through.**

Resources: Pens, pencils

Lesson 14

May 31, 2020

Return to Love and Justice

Lesson Scripture: Hosea 11–12

Focus Scripture: Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14

Key Verse: Hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God. Hosea 12:6

Word Power!!!

- **Ephraim** – One of the tribes of Israel.
- **Indictment** – A formal charge of a crime.
- **Iniquity** – Unfair and unjust behavior.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand God's justice in this story.
2. Understand Hosea's message.
3. Understand repentance.

Teaching Strategies

1. Discuss outreach projects for making life better for people the children know, or in the community.
2. Discuss the importance of children being loved unconditionally.
3. Choose verses in the **Focus Scripture** that children can illustrate, memorize, or write a song about; for example, 11:1-2a; 11:9; 12:6.

Answer Key for Questions

1. What was Hosea's message to the people? **Hosea's message was about repentance and getting back in right relationship with God.**
2. List the blessings from today's text that God gave to God's people. **Love and compassion.**
3. What do you do when you are faced with difficult challenges? **Answers will vary depending on what each student is going through; the important thing here is to be attentive to what they are saying. If you feel a student is going through too much, contact your pastor.**

Resources: Pens, pencils