

Memory Verses for This Quarter

(NIV version)

1. "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

(Gal 6:2)

2. "Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow."

(Is 1:17)

3. "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."

(Ps 119:18)

4. "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."

(2 Thes 3:3)

5. "Go gather all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

(Est 4:16)

6. "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?"

(2 Corth 6:14)

7. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble..."

(Ps 46:1)

8. "The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."

(Prov 15:29)

9. "So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'"

(Heb 13:6)

10. "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

(Phil 4:13)

11. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

(Mat 7:7)

12. "My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth."

(Ps 12:2)

Bible Reading Assignments

Lesson	Bible Reading
1.	Ruth 1-4
2.	Ne 1, 2
3.	Ez 1-10 Ne 2:1-9
4.	Ne 3, 4, 6
5.	Book of Esther
6.	Ne 12:27-13
7.	1 Kgs 17:1-16
8.	1 Kgs 18:16-46
9.	1 Kgs 19:1-19
10.	2 Kgs 2:1-15
11.	2 Kgs 4:8-37
12.	2 Kgs 6:8-23

We hope to help the students develop Bible reading habits at home with this assignment. Let your

students put their initials after the completion of each assigned reading. If it is necessary, you may require that parents also put their initials on the Take-Home-Sheet. Check the students' Take-Home-Sheet occasionally. Remind and encourage your students to keep up with their reading.

God Provides Food for Elijah

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Lesson 1

Ruth and Naomi

Bible Text: Ruth

Bible Truth:

Ruth and Naomi cared for each other during a time of family problems.

Lesson Aim:

To give your students a model to emulate in the care of family members during times of difficulties.

Memory Verse:

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." **(Gal 6:2)**

Bible Background:

The story of Ruth takes place during the period of the judges. These were dark days for Israel, when "all the people did what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25). But during those dark and evil times, there were still some who followed God. Naomi and Ruth are a beautiful example of loyalty, friendship, and commitment--to God and to each other.

Ruth was a Moabitess, but that didn't stop her from worshiping the one true God, not did it stop God from accepting and blessing her. The Jews were not the only people God loved. Ruth is a perfect example of God's impartiality. Although she belonged to a race often despised by Israel, she was blessed because of her

faithfulness. She became a great-grandmother of King David and a direct ancestor of Jesus.

Think about the people God has provided in your life upon whom you depend for comfort and support when you experience problems and are hurting deeply. Thank God for these precious relationships and pray that God will continue to strengthen these bonds.

About Your Students:

As a teacher, you can have a tremendous impact upon your students as you share with them what your family relationships mean to you. In our constantly changing society, children need to know that God wants families to care for each other during both good times and difficult times. Reassure students who come from unstable family situations that God is able to provide supportive friends who can become like family members. God wants loved ones to care for and comfort each other in times of trouble.

Your ten and eleven year olds are beginning to question adult concepts and behavior as well as to determine things independently. They may waver between independence and dependence, and this struggle may be evidenced by their inconsistencies in behavior. At one moment they may seem to be self-sufficient, but, in the next moment, they may be in need of the presence or guidance of an adult. Parents respond to their children's development with the same inconsistency. They would like to give more responsibilities to their children but don't feel fully confident in them yet, especially during times of family difficulties. When parents don't ask them for help, children may decide that their parents don't need their help during a crisis.

Help your students realize that they are still an integral part of their family even if their parents may not allow them to help during a family crisis. Come up with things that they can do by themselves, within the limits set by their parents. For example, when they see

their parents in distress, they can always pray with them or in their room. They can also try to take care of their siblings unless, if for some reason, the parents won't allow them to. If that is the case, they should simply abide by family rules so as not to add to their parents' troubles. In this manner, help your children become more aware of the needs of the people around them and encourage them to take the initiative to help others.

Warm-Up:

What are some types of problems that most people have? (Family problems, problems getting along with people, etc.)

All families go through some times of sadness and difficulty. Think about a time your family went through problems and trouble. What are some ways your family cared for each other during those times?

Our Bible story is about some family members who did an especially good job of caring for each other during difficult times.

Bible Story:

I. Sad Times

- A. Elimelech and Naomi lived in Bethlehem in Judah with their two sons.
- B. There was a famine in Judah so the family moved to Moab.
- C. Elimelech and his two sons died in Moab.
- D. Naomi, however, was not left all alone.
 1. Her sons had married wives from Moab.
 2. Her daughters-in-law were named Ruth and Orpah.
 3. The widows worried about how they would survive.

II. Naomi Shows Concern

- A. The three women began their journey to Judah.
- B. Naomi urged Orpah and Ruth to return home to their parents.
- C. Orpah followed Naomi's advice.

III. Ruth Shows Concern

- A. Ruth chose to follow Naomi.
- B. Ruth and Naomi moved to Bethlehem.
- C. The barley was ripe in the fields.
 - 1. The women hadn't planted any barley so they didn't have food.
 - 2. Ruth asked if she could go to glean leftover grain.

IV. Ruth and Boaz

- A. Ruth gleaned in the field which belonged to Boaz.
- B. Boaz was kind to Ruth and admired her responsible actions and concern for Naomi.
- C. Ruth gathered barley and wheat to feed for Naomi and herself.
- D. Ruth and Boaz got married.
 - 1. They continued to care for Naomi.
 - 2. Naomi cared for Obed, her grandson.

Questions and Discussions:

1. **What problems did Ruth and Naomi experience?**
(Their husbands died; they needed food.)
2. **How did Naomi care for Ruth?**
(Encouraged her to go back with her parents; cared for Ruth's baby.)
3. **How did Ruth care for Naomi?**
(Stayed with Naomi; gathered food.)
4. **What does it mean to carry each other's burden?**
(To help one another during difficult times.)
5. **How did the people in this story obey this verse?**
(Ruth and Naomi cared for each other during difficult times.)
6. **What are some ways you can carry burdens for your family?**
(Volunteers share.)

Quiz:

Fill in the Blanks:

Long ago, when judges led Israel, there was a famine in the land. A man named E_____ (Elimelech), his wife N_____ (Naomi), and their two sons left B_____ (Bethlehem) and went to live in Moab. E_____ (Elimelech) died there and N_____ was left with her two s_____ (sons). The two s_____ (sons) married women of Moab. One of the women was named O_____ (Orpah) and the other was named R_____ (Ruth). Several years later, both of Naomi's sons d_____ (died).

When N_____ heard that there was food once again in B_____ (Bethlehem), she decided to go home. Naomi and her daughters-in-law set out on the road that would lead them to B_____. (Bethlehem). Along the way, Naomi said to them, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's house. May the Lord be kind to you as you have been to me." O_____ (Orpah) kissed Naomi good-bye and turned back. R_____ (Ruth), though, clung to N_____ (Naomi).

When Naomi tried again to convince her to leave, Ruth said, "Don't tell me to leave. Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your p_____ (people) will be my p_____ (people) and your G_____ (God) will be my G_____ (God)." So the two women went together. They arrived in Bethlehem just as the b_____ (barley) harvest was beginning.

"Let me go into the fields and pick leftover b_____ (barley) behind anyone who will let me," Ruth said to Naomi. She went to work in a f_____ (field), stopping only a short time to rest. When B_____ (Boaz), the owner of the field, saw Ruth, he asked the head of the harvesters about her. Then he spoke to R_____, (Ruth) and told her to stay near his servants g_____ (girls) and to work only in his f_____ (field). R_____ (Ruth) showed Naomi all she had gathered. Naomi was amazed and asked her where she had worked. Later she told Ruth that B_____ (Boaz) was a kinsman-redeemer, a relative of her dead husband.

One day, Naomi sent Ruth to Boaz. She wanted to know if he would m_____ (marry) Ruth and buy the l_____ (land) that had been owned by Naomi's husband and sons, since he was a kinsman-redeemer. B_____ (Boaz) told Ruth there was a closer relative that had to be given the chance to buy the l_____ (land) first.

B_____ (Boaz) went to the town gate and sat there until the other kinsman-redeemer arrived. In front of the ten elders of the town, Boaz told the other man about the l_____ (land) Naomi wished to sell and about Ruth. The other man did not want to redeem the l_____ (land), so he told Boaz to do it. Then the man took off his s_____ (sandal) and gave it to Boaz as a s_____ (sign) that the transfer of the l_____ (land) was final. Thus, Boaz acquired the l_____ (land) and married Ruth. They had a son and named him O_____ (Obed). Naomi helped to care for him and he brought her joy. And the women of the town told Naomi she was b_____ (blessed) to have a loyal daughter-in-law such as Ruth.

Bible Discovery:

Life-Application Story: Caring for One Another

Hermie's mom just got back from the hospital. "How did things go, Mom?" Hermie asked curiously.

"Oh, honey, things went just fine. Now don't you worry."

Hermie was worried and sad because she could see the tears welling up in her mom's eyes. "How did all this begin? Why was all this happening?" Hermie thought to herself.

About two years ago, Hermie's mother found out she had cancer. Hermie didn't really know what cancer was, but she knew it was some kind of disease. She also knew that cancer killed people. Hermie loved her mom. She remembered all the times she had not obeyed her mother's words. Hermie thought, "I haven't been very good to Mom. I remember how just last week I got so angry at her that I

yelled at her. I just wanted to go to the movies with my friends and she wouldn't let me. Now, I don't even know if Mom will live."

Hermie's mom looked at Hermie with tears. "Come here, honey. I want to tell you something. I just came back from the doctor's office. He said that I might have only a few months left to live."

Hermie looked at her mom with shock. "Two months! How?! Why? You can't die, Mom! I will miss you!"

Hermie's mom just cried more upon hearing these words. "Hermie, stop it! You're making this situation harder than it already is. I love you. Don't worry, I know Daddy will take good care of you. You also have your little sister, Ann to take care of you."

"How can she take care of me, Mom? She's only nine years old!"

Hermie ran up to her room and slammed the door shut. Her mom went after her, but Hermie locked the door. Her mom could hear Hermie's sobs. "Honey, open the door. Don't be angry, honey."

"Go away, Mom, I just want to be left alone!" Hermie felt bad inside. How could she talk to her mom like that? She felt confused and helpless. She kept asking herself why she never showed any respect to her mom. Whenever her mom wanted to spend time with her, she would hurriedly try to get away so she could talk on the phone with her friends. All she wanted to do was talk with her friends. She never really got to know her mom. She was either at school with them or on the phone with them. Whenever her mom told her to get off the phone, Hermie would just get so angry she would give her mom a look and slam the door in her mom's face. Isn't that what she just did right now? Yeah, she slammed the door in her mom's face. She kept thinking, "Why can't I ever change?"

Then she remembered what she once heard at a church. Hermie's friend, Kevin, once took Hermie to his church. She remembered hearing something about change in religious education class. "What was it the teacher said, 'If you want to change yourself, you should pray to God for the Holy Spirit,' What did that mean? I think it meant

we should ask God for help. What else did I learn in that class. Oh, I remember. The teacher said we should show our love to others while we still have the chance because one day we might not have that chance."

Hermie then went to her diary and began to write. "Dear Diary, I really hurt my mom's feelings today. I yelled at her again. I also upset her, like I usually do. I feel so bad because I do love my mom. I just have a hard time showing it. Diary, I just found out that my mom has cancer. She might only live a few more months. I'm so sad. I can't bear to think what I will do without my mom... I want to change my attitude before she dies. I remember I learned something at a church my friend, Kevin, took me to. I learned that all of us should love each other while we still have the chance. My mom is about to die. I don't have many chances left to show her I love her. I think I'll try to do something special for her tonight. Talk to you later, Diary. Sincerely Hermie."

Hermie decided she would make a card for her mom and put it on her pillow. She worked for about an hour on the card and then secretly put the card on her mom's pillow. Then she went downstairs to find her. Her mom was in the kitchen cooking dinner. She sneaked up behind her mom and saw her mom making spaghetti and meatball. Spaghetti and meatballs was her favorite. "Mom, you're cooking my favorite dish!"

"Yes, honey. I'm sorry if I upset you. Don't be angry. We don't have time to be angry."

"I know Mom, I'm sorry. It was my fault. I just don't want to lose you. I feel like I have so many things to ask you."

"Well, while we're waiting for Dad to pick up your sister from piano lessons, we can talk."

"OK. I think I'd like that."

That night as Hermie laid on her bed, she thought about all the things her mom told her. Then she slid off the bed, knelt down and made a prayer. "God, I hope you're listening to me. I want to thank you for all the times you've given to me with my mom. Please take care of her. And, God, please give me the Holy Spirit so that I can

change." As Hermie was making her prayer to God, Mom finished cleaning up the house and was ready to go to bed. Then she saw the card. The card read, "Dear Mom, you are the best mom in the whole world. I'm sorry I always upset you and I hope that we can be friends again. Love, Hermie."

Questions to think about:

1. What kind of changes did Hermie want to make?
2. How should we respect our parents?
3. When was the last time you changed a quality about yourself? Last week? Last month? Last year? Write down the changes you have made and how the Holy Spirit helped you.

Activity 1:

Ruth and Naomi

Solve the puzzle by switching each letter for its partner.

A-E	B-G	D-S	H-T	I-O	L-M	N-R	P-Y	W-U
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(Picture)

Activity 2:

Carry Each Other's Burden

1. Ask the students to locate Gal 6:2 in Bibles. Ask one student to read the verse while others follow along. **If your Bible has different words for this verse, raise your hand.** Allow students with different translations to read the verse aloud. What is a burden? (Something difficult to carry or something that troubles a person.) Name one person in your family and tell how you could help him or her carry a burden.
2. Make wall hangings:
Distribute three or four craft sticks or tongue depressors and one strand of precut yarn or ribbon to each student. Using felt pens, have the students write one phrase of Galatians 6:2 on each stick or depressor. Fold the yarn or ribbon in half to form a loop at the top end. Put the sticks in order and tape the yarn or ribbon to the backs of the sticks. See sketch. (Adhesive magnetic sticks can also be used to help display as a refrigerator magnet.)

Notes:

Lesson 2

Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls

Bible Text: Ne 1, 2

Bible Truth:

Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and planned a way to help the people of Judah work together to rebuild the wall.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to help those in need.

Memory Verse:

"Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow." (Is 1:17)

Bible Background:

Nehemiah wasn't the first of the exiles to return to Jerusalem. Zerubbabel had led the first group back in 537 B.C., more than 90 years earlier (Ezra 1:2). Ezra followed with a second group in 458 B.C. (Ezra 7), and now Nehemiah was ready to lead the third major return to Jerusalem (445 B.C.).

Spiritual renewal often begins with one person's vision, Nehemiah had a vision, and he shared it with enthusiasm, inspiring Jerusalem's leaders to rebuild the walls

Despite Nehemiah's willingness to sacrifice and take risks, Nehemiah knew he couldn't do this huge job alone. First, he approached God through prayer and fasting to determine if his plan was truly God's will. The book of Nehemiah recorded eight instances where he prayed spontaneously (2:4; 4:4-5, 9; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29). Nehemiah prayed at any time, even while talking with others.

After reassurance that the plan was indeed God's will, Nehemiah bravely asked King Artaxerxes to support him. Then Nehemiah courageously left his familiar surroundings to venture to Jerusalem where he endured the scorn of enemies as he shared his plan with the Jewish people. Aided by his courage and enthusiasm, he was able to convince the Jewish people of the importance of his task.

Sanballat and Tobiah labeled the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls a rebellious act, probably threatening to report the builders as traitors. These enemies also ridiculed Nehemiah, and said the walls could never be rebuilt because the damage was too extensive. Nehemiah did not let them influence them because he knew he had God's guidance.

About Your Students:

Children at this age can learn to be sensitive to the environment around them. Older E2 students begin to develop the ability to think and comprehend abstracts concepts and to project or imagine outcomes of an event. They can now imagine what it is like to be handicapped or poor. However, these thoughts may be idealistic and not realistic. You need to make their idealistic concepts by bringing in real life examples.

You can discuss with your students those who are need in their families, schools, and church. Talk about what it is like to be elderly, handicapped, or a new immigrant. You may want to try role playing, by asking students to only work with one hand, or with their eyes covered. Then ask the students to share about what it felt like to be handicapped. Don't forget to bring in the needs of the church on a local, national, even international level. Talk about the needs of the society, the uneducated, and the unsaved. Explain to them that it is a privilege to be where they are today, and that we should always think about how to help others.

Warm-Up:

Why do members of a team need a coach to help them play their best? (For encouragement, to know how to play the game, etc.) Why must a coach make game plans to help the team members? Why is a coach considered a leader?

In our Bible story, we'll hear about a group of people who needed help from a good leader.

Bible Story:

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to help those in need.

Nehemiah was a good man who loved God. He lived and worked in the royal court of the Persian king, Artaxerxes. Nehemiah was the king's cup bearer, which meant he served the king's food and drinks. A cup bearer was a personal advisor and guard of the king, which showed the king trusted him very much.

Even though Nehemiah was of Jewish background, he had never lived in Jerusalem, where his relatives had lived. When Nehemiah was born, the Jewish people of Judah had disobeyed God by worshiping idols. After their disobedience, Babylonian armies conquered the people of Judah and marched them off into captivity. Nehemiah's relatives were among the captives brought to the city of Babylon when Judah was defeated.

Now Nehemiah was very excited because some of the Jewish people recently had been allowed to go back to Jerusalem.

One day some travelers came to the palace where Nehemiah worked. Nehemiah anxiously questioned them to find out what life was like in Jerusalem.

"We have some bad news," said one of the men. "The gates to the city of Jerusalem have been burned and the walls are broken down. Enemies can break into the city very easily."

Nehemiah was shocked. The once great city of Jerusalem where his relatives had lived was in great danger. Nehemiah knew how discouraged and afraid the Jewish people who lived in Jerusalem must have been.

Nehemiah was so upset at the news that he sat down and cried. For days after that he fasted, which meant he went without food and water so he could pray without stopping to eat. Nehemiah wanted to concentrate on his prayers as he asked God for help. For four months, Nehemiah continued to work for the king without letting the Persian officials know of his deep sadness.

The King Helps Nehemiah

But one day, when Nehemiah brought King Artaxerxes something to drink, Nehemiah couldn't hide his sadness, and the king noticed.

"What's the matter Nehemiah?" King Artaxerxes asked, "You don't look sick, but you look so worried!"

Nehemiah was afraid to speak. But God gave Nehemiah the courage to explain.

"Jerusalem is in ruins and even the gates have been burned," Nehemiah told the king.

Instead of being angry, King Artaxerxes and his queen listened carefully to Nehemiah's words. "What do you want from me?" the king asked.

Before answering the king, Nehemiah prayed to God for help. Then Nehemiah pleaded, "Oh, King Artaxerxes, if I have pleased you, let me go to the country of Judah, the place where my relatives lived. Please let me go rebuild the city I love!"

"How long would you need to be gone?" the king asked. "And when will you come back?" When he heard these words, Nehemiah's worried frown disappeared. The king would let him go! Nehemiah agreed upon a time to return and then got ready to go.

Before Nehemiah left on his journey, the king gave him permission to get wood to make the city gates, the walls and the home where he would stay while working on these projects. The king also gave Nehemiah letters to give to the rulers of areas through which Nehemiah would be traveling. The letters were to make sure no one harmed Nehemiah on his journey. After making all of the arrangements, Nehemiah was eager to begin his trip!

The Arrival of Nehemiah

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, accompanied by officers and soldiers from the Persian army, news spread quickly about his arrival. Two men, Sanballat and Tobiah, were upset by this news. They didn't want anyone to help their enemies, the Jewish people. Sanballat and Tobiah wondered what Nehemiah was up to! They probably asked everyone they knew to find out exactly what Nehemiah planned to do.

But Nehemiah kept his plans a secret. When he arrived in Jerusalem, Nehemiah waited for three days. Late one night, he went out to look around the city. He took along only a few men and one horse to ride. Nehemiah didn't want anybody to know about his plans to rebuild the wall yet.

That night Nehemiah looked at the burned gate and at the broken wall. What he had heard from the travelers was true. The wall and gates were in terrible shape!

Soon after his inspection, Nehemiah gathered his people together. It was time to announce his plan!

Nehemiah Shares the Plan

"God sent me back to Jerusalem for a reason," Nehemiah began. "God even gave me the courage to ask permission for my trip from King Artaxerxes." Nehemiah continued. "You can see the trouble we are in here. Jerusalem is a pile of ruins and its gates have been burned. Come everyone, let's rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and then we won't be ashamed and sad any longer."

The people knew building the wall was going to be a big project and lots of people would need to help, but they were excited about this plan and eager to begin.

It didn't take long for word to spread to Nehemiah's enemies about what was going on. Sanballat and Tobiah laughed at the plan to rebuild the wall and gates of Jerusalem. Nehemiah was full of faith and he told the enemies that they had work to do and that they would not be affected by them.

With God's guidance and Nehemiah as their planner and leader, the people worked together to rebuild the wall

of Jerusalem. Now they had hope for a safer and happier future.

Questions and Discussions:

Spiritual renewal often begins with one person's vision, Nehemiah had a vision, and he shared it with enthusiasm, inspiring Jerusalem's leaders to rebuild the walls. From the moment he arrived in Jerusalem, everyone knew who was in charge. He organized, managed, supervised, encouraged, met opposition, sought justice, and kept going until the walls were built.

Question:

Does God have a vision for us? Are there "walls" that need to be built today? God put the desire to rebuild the walls in Nehemiah's heart, what about you? (Let the students write down what they can do for the church and their family on a poster.)

Quiz:

- 1. Why was Nehemiah concerned about Jerusalem?**
(It was the Jews' holy city. It represented Jewish national identity, and it was blessed with God's special presence in the temple.)
- 2. What was Nehemiah's proposal regarding Jerusalem?**
(He wanted to return to Jerusalem to reunite the Jews and to remove the shame of Jerusalem's broken-down walls. They would bring glory to God and restore the power of God's presence among His people.)
- 3. Read Nehemiah's prayers and write down the elements of an effective prayer.**
(Praise, thanksgiving, repentance, request and commitment.)
- 4. When Nehemiah arrived in Judah, he was greeted with opposition. How did he handle it?**
(He relied on God's help. He refused to allow fear to stop him from doing what God had called him to do.)
- 5. Who are those who opposed Nehemiah?**

(Sanballat and Tobiah.)

Bible Discovery:

Materials: Bibles, two colors of 3X5 inch index cards or 7.5X12.5 cm sheets of construction paper, rubber bands or paper clips, felt pens; optional -- children's dictionaries.

Preparation:

Letter the cards as in the sketch. Make one set of eight different cards for each of the two colored cards (for approximately every two or three students. Separately mix each set of cards you have prepared. Use a rubber band or paper clip to keep each set together.

Procedure:

Give a set of eight cards to every two or three students. Explain which color cards have words from the Bible verse to memorize on them and which colors cards have the meanings of these words. Work together to match each word from the verse with its meaning. If the students experience difficulty, give them hints about the meanings or let them look up the words in a children's dictionary. Knowing these words will help them understand the Bible verse. After finishing this, read Isaiah 1:17.

Activity 1:

Nehemiah's Journal

Have the students answer in pairs. Fill in the blanks with the correct answers. Look into Chapters 1 and 2 of Nehemiah. Afterwards, have the children act out the dialogue.

Reporter:

Nehemiah, we would like to ask you a few questions.

Nehemiah:

I would be glad to answer them.

Reporter:

What made you look so upset while serving the king?

Nehemiah:

I was upset because _____

Reporter:

Why did you fast and pray for God's help?

Nehemiah:

I fasted and prayed because _____

Reporter:

After King Artaxerxes gave you permission to go to Jerusalem, you came up with a plan. What was it?

Nehemiah:

My plan was _____

Reporter:

Sanballat and Tobiah opposed your efforts. How did the Jewish people react?

Nehemiah:

They _____

Reporter:

Why do you think the people were willing to follow you and help you rebuild Jerusalem's walls?

Nehemiah:

Activity 2:

I Can Help Too!

Put a check mark by one person you would like to help. Then make a plan of ways you could help that person. Use the questions below to help you plan.

_____ An elderly neighbor who is always home by herself/himself.

_____ A homeless person who needs food.

_____ A student who is often absent from Religious Education classes.

_____ An elderly person who needs help to buy food and do things _____ around the house.

_____ A sick friend who needs help.

_____ Others _____

My Plan

1. How do I want to help this person?
2. What will I need in order to help?
3. How can I get what I need?
4. How long will my plan take?
5. What problems could I face?
6. How will I overcome these problems?
7. How will I know when I've succeeded?

Who do you know who needs help?

What can you plan to do this week to help and encourage that person?

Lesson 3

Ezra's People Obey God's Word

Bible Text: Ezra 1-10; Ne 2:1-9

Bible Truth:

Through His Word God speaks to all people of all time and all ages.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to value God's Word by listening to Him speak through it, and obeying it.

Memory Verse:

"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law." (Ps 119:18)

Bible Background:

626 B.C.	597 B.C.	527 B.C.	445 B.C.	444 B.C.
Jeremiah warns of destruction, but the kings refuse to listen	Jerusalem destroyed by enemies	Captives return to Jerusalem	Walls and temple rebuilt	Ezra reads the Law

The Book of Ezra opens in 538 B.C., 48 years after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, defeated the southern kingdom of Judah, and carried the Jews away to Babylon as captives (2 Kgs 25; 2 Chron 36). Nebuchadnezzar died in 562, and because his successor was not strong, Babylon was overthrown by Persia in 539, just prior to the events recorded in this book.

King Cyrus of Persia allowed many groups of exiles, including Jews, to return to their homelands. For the Jews, this was a day of hope, a new beginning.

Ezra returned to the land with a second group of exiles, 80 years after Zerubbabel. Ezra found the temple rebuilt, but the lives of the people in shambles. Intermarriages with foreigners which was in opposition to God, threatened the spiritual future of the nation. So Ezra prayed for guidance and then followed through with action. Christians today must also strive to keep their lives pure, refusing to let the sinful allurements of the world around them compromise their life style.

Some Facts About Ezra

- 1 committed to studying, following, and teaching God's Word
- 1 led the second group of exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem
- 1 may have written 1 and 2 Chronicles
- 1 concerned about keeping the details of God's commands
- 1 sent by King Artaxerxes to Jerusalem to evaluate the situation, set up a religious education system, and returned with a firsthand report
- 1 worked alongside Nehemiah during the last spiritual awakening

Ezra achieved great things and made a significant impact because he had the right starting place for his actions and his life: God's Word. He studied it seriously and applied it faithfully. He taught others what he learned. He is a great model for anyone who wants to live for God.

About Your Students:

Your students may have very good language skills by now, in terms of speaking and reading. They may still think of Bible stories as ancient tales that are not likely to occur today. In part, this is due to their

limited life experiences. Moreover, it may not be easy for them to understand how they should listen to and obey God's Word: after all, most have never physically heard instructions from Him, even while reading the Bible.

Explain to your students how to listen to God's Word through the Bible. They may lack experiences, but they love to hear about how others have learned and obeyed God's Word. Share lost of testimonies with them about how you or someone applied God's Word in their lives. Demonstrate that the stories in the Bible are real and very applicable to their lives. Give examples of receiving the Holy Spirit or of the sick being healed. As their teacher, you should constantly remind them to read the Bible and of course, set a good example for them to follow. Perhaps you could even ask the students to bring their questions after reading the Bible each week.

Warm-Up:

What are some of the things we've learned about the Bible that makes it special? Let your students express their ideas. (You may wish to record what they say on the chalkboard. When the students have shared all they can think of, use this as a transition in today's study.)

The one thing that really makes the Bible special to us is that God speaks to us through His Word each day.

Bible Story:

Jeremiah, the prophet warned the kings of Judah that God was about to punish the people with destruction (Jer 25:4-14). But the evil rulers of Jeremiah's times refused to listen to the Lord's warning.

Then the prophecy came true, just as Jeremiah had predicted. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, invaded Judah and destroyed it. He took all the rulers and educated people to Babylon and left only the poorest Jews in Israel.

Seventy years later, Babylon was conquered by King Cyrus of Persia. Cyrus freed many of the Jewish captives,

and permitted them to return to Jerusalem. Their mission was to go back and rebuild the temple.

Many years went by, and the Jews finished the temple. Then Ezra the scribe came from Babylon with another group of people. Ezra was a teacher; he taught God's laws to the people in Jerusalem.

Years later, Nehemiah, a high official in the Persian king's court, came to Jerusalem to be the governor of the little Jewish community. Nehemiah led the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which brought safety and respect to the city of God's people once again.

Ezra Is Determined to Follow God's Word

Ezra was a very special person. While in Babylon, he'd set his heart to study God's Word. What is more, Ezra determined to obey God's Word and teach it to God's people.

When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, he found that some of the leaders had broken God's laws by marrying women who were not Jews and worshiped idols. Ezra was heart-broken that so many people had disobeyed God's laws, and immediately began to pray and confess the sins of God's people. Ezra's tears moved the people of Jerusalem. Ezra showed them how important it was to obey God's Word, and they were convicted of their sins. Soon everyone was weeping and praying with Ezra.

Most important, the people were all determined to obey God's Word. Those who had wives who worshiped idols put away all their wives, so the people would no longer be corrupted by idol worship.

Ezra's commitment to study God's Word, to obey God's Word, and to teach God's Word turned many people back to the Lord.

Questions and Discussions:

1. **Why was it necessary for the people to know that they needed to read God's law?**
2. **How did the people show their understanding and respect for God's Word?**

3. How did God's Word speak to those who had committed sins?
4. We have seen the examples of God's people in the past. We are also God's people. How do we compare with the people in the past?
5. How many copies of the Bible do your family members have? How often do they read those Bibles?
6. How do you and your family feel about the Bible?
7. How do you suppose the people of Ezra's day set an example for us today?

Quiz:

True or False:

Cross out the wrong words and write down the right words in their place.

1. Isaiah, the prophet, warned the kings of Judah that God was about to punish the people with destruction. (F, Jeremiah)
2. The prophesy came true, just as the prophet had predicted. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Judah, invaded the city and destroyed Jerusalem. (F, the king of Babylon)
3. Then forty years later, the city of Babylon was conquered by King Jeremiah. (F, King Cyrus)
4. Many years went by, and the Jews finished the temple. Then Ezra the governor, came from Babylon with another group of people. (F, Ezra the scribe)
5. Years later, Nehemiah, a high priest in the Persian king's court, came to Jerusalem and led the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (F, Nehemiah was a high official.)
6. Ezra was a very special person because he set his heart to study God's Word. (T)
7. After Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, he found that some of the leaders had married Jewish women who worshiped God. (F. married the non-Jews who worshiped idols.)
8. The people showed their determination to obey God's Word by leaving their foreign wives who worshiped idols. (T)

Bible Discovery:

Study the Bible Everyday

The Bible is just as true for you today as it was for people 3,000 years ago. And it will be just as true 3,000 years from now. It is God's Word, and God's Word lasts forever.

God wants to speak to you through His written word. Here's how you can listen to Him this week.

1. Take this page home. Choose a different Scripture passage each day. Read it carefully.
2. Think about what you've read. Write about what God is saying to you in these verses.
3. Ask the Lord to speak to your heart through these verses.
4. Did you receive a message from God through you reading? If you did, create a picture of the new message.

When you need help. (Ps 121)

When you are happy (Ps 100)

When you have a need (Philippians 4:6-7, 19)

When you feel hatred (Ephesians 4:26-27, 29, 31, 32)

When you are discouraged (Ps 27:1; Ps 25:1-2, 4-6)

When you are tempted (James 4:7-8, 10)

When you have done wrong (Ps 51:1-3, 10, 17)

Activity 1:

God's Word Come First

The Israelites heard what Ezra told them regarding the words of God. They confessed their sins and made according changes in their lives.

God has spoken to people through His written word for thousands of years. And He still speaks to us today through the Bible.

Read Dt 11:18-19 to find out how God told the Israelites and us to honor His Word. Crack the code to complete His instructions the way we would say them today.

Study the Bible and (memorize) it. (Talk) about it (wherever) you go. (Think) about it before you go to (sleep) and as soon as you (wake) up.

We honor the Bible because it is God's Word. What is the most important wonderful thing about God's Word?

Some boys and girls will enjoy learning the following poem about the Bible. Practice saying it enthusiastically with hand-clapping. Be sure to keep a definite rhythm going throughout.

The Bible is God's holy book.
It means what it says--
Just take time to read it everyday,
Then do what it says--
Yes, read and obey.
Read and obey. (Clap)
Read and obey. (Clap)
If you want to please God,
Well, that's the way.
Read and obey. (Clap)
Read and obey. (Clap)
To be happy and safe,
Just read and obey. (Clap, Clap)

Optional:

In pairs have the students interview each other about their favorite Bible verses. Each student should ask his partner, "Why is this verse special to you?" When the interviews are complete, ask each pair of students to report their findings. Point out that one of the reasons we value God's Word is that God speaks to us individually, giving each person help and encouragement which apply to specific needs.

Activity 2:

Rhythmic Poem

Notes:

Lesson 4

Nehemiah Stands Up for God Till the End

Bible Text: Neh 3, 4, 6

Bible Truth:

Nehemiah encouraged the people of Israel and helped them overcome difficulties encountered while building the wall.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to plan ways to encourage others and to overcome difficulties, using Nehemiah's actions as an example.

Memory Verse:

"But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one." **(2 Thes 3:3)**

Bible Background:

The reason why Sanballat tried to scare Nehemiah away, or at least discourage him with scorn and threats, is that he was the governor of Samaria, the region just north of Judea where Jerusalem was located. Sanballat may have hoped to become governor of Judea, but Nehemiah's arrival spoiled his plans.

The plain of Ono was about 20 miles northwest of Jerusalem. If Sanballat and the other people could get Nehemiah to meet them there, they could kill him on the way.

Sanballat and Tobiah then decided to try a different approach, centering their attacks on Nehemiah's character. Despite their personal attacks on his character, Nehemiah nevertheless refused to give in to fear and flee to the temple. According to God's law, it would have been wrong for Nehemiah to go into the temple to hide because he wasn't a priest (Numbers 18:22).

About Your Students:

Your students are strategic problem solvers, that is, they do not solve problems randomly, but systematically. Many of your children can solve concrete problems such as math or riddles, but they still lack the ability to solve abstract problems such as difficulties in daily life. Another limitation you may find is that most of them have not learned how to clearly explain directions to another child. They tend to help others by doing for others. Thus, the goal of your lesson for today is to show them how to systematically plan a solution to their own problems in life and, in turn, encourage others to do the same.

Explain how to apply Nehemiah's systematic ways to solve the problems in their own lives, placing particular emphasis on the importance of prayer and reliance on God. Share lots of personal testimonies of how God answered prayers of young children who were lost or in fear. Further, share testimonies of how peers encouraged one another, like praying for the Holy Spirit. Go over each step towards how your students can help and encourage one another to pray for the Holy Spirit (e.g. first be a concerned friend, then set a plan to pray regularly.)

Warm-Up:

How do you feel when someone teases and laughs at you while you're trying to do something? When someone wants to fight with you? When someone tells a lie about you? What are some other difficulties you've faced?

Bible Story:

The people who lived in the city of Jerusalem had a big problem--the wall which protected Jerusalem had been burned. Nehemiah had seen the destruction and made a plan to help solve their problem. He called together the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the wall and the city gates. Everyone was eager to help! Craftsmen, merchants and farmers came to help. Workers came from towns near

Jerusalem, too. Even the priests from the temple came to work with Nehemiah.

There were eight gates that needed to be repaired: the Sheep Gate, the Fish Gate, the Old Gate, the Valley Gate, the Dung Gate, the Fountain Gate, the Water Gate, and the Horse Gate. The gates all had different names because of their locations and their significance.

Each family was assigned a specific job. Nehemiah was a good leader. He encouraged and worked with people so everyone was glad to follow his instructions.

By night time, everyone was tired after a hard day of work, but the Jewish people were pleased. Soon they would have a wall and gates that would protect them from enemies that might try to attack them.

Enemies Causes Difficulties

Sanballat was an enemy of the Jewish people. He and his friends, Tobiah, had laughed and made fun of Nehemiah's plan from the very beginning. However, when Sanballat heard about the progress Nehemiah and the Jewish people were making on the wall, he was worried and angry!

He took Tobiah with him and went to one of the gates where the Jewish people and Nehemiah were working. He started yelling at them, "You'll never get that wall up again!"

Then Tobiah joined in the mocking with Sanballat, "Why, even a tiny fox climbing up this stone wall could make it tumble down! You're just wasting your time, so why don't you just stop all of this rebuilding?" Tobiah called.

Nehemiah knew what God wanted him to do when his enemies gave him a hard time. He immediately prayed.

"Dear God, You know Sanballat and Tobiah hate us and are trying to make it hard for us to do Your work here. Please do not let these enemies succeed in stopping the rebuilding of the gates and wall."

When they realized that ridiculing Nehemiah and the Jewish people had no effect on them, Sanballat and Tobiah stopped bothering them for awhile. In the meantime, the

people worked so hard that the wall had reached half of the height that it was eventually going to be.

Guarding the Wall

Sanballat and Tobiah were disgusted when they saw the people working together. Then they came up with an idea.

When Nehemiah heard about the plans of his enemies, he was more determined than ever to continue and complete the work, "We must continue the work God has given us," Nehemiah told the people. They prayed to God for help. Then they posted a guard day and night at the wall for protection.

Some of the workers became afraid and discouraged. They began to get tired and worried that they might not be able to finish the wall. Fortunately, Nehemiah was a good leader. He told the Jewish people exactly what to do.

He assigned people to guard different areas of the wall. "Keep your weapons by your side at all times," Nehemiah warned. "If you're not actually working on the wall and gates, guard those who are." Then he reminded the people, "Don't be afraid of our enemies. Remember, the Lord is mighty and will give you strength to protect your families."

When the enemies heard how well God was helping the people guard the wall, they decided not to attack. They realized they would need to think of another way if they wanted to stop the people from rebuilding.

New Schemes

Sanballat and Tobiah did not give up easily. They decided to send Nehemiah word he should come for a meeting in Ono. But Nehemiah replied. "I am much too busy doing important work to meet with you."

Sanballat and Tobiah were stubborn. They sent Nehemiah not one, two or three, but four letters requesting him to come to Ono for a discussion. However, each time Nehemiah responded as he had the first time. "The work on the wall and gates is too important. I can't leave," Nehemiah explained.

Finally, Sanballat came up with an idea that they would tell a lie about Nehemiah and said he was having prophets in other countries announce that he is now king.

Sanballat sent Nehemiah a letter with the lie that he was trying to be king, but Nehemiah wasn't fooled! He knew this was just another one of Sanballat's plans to trick him into leaving Jerusalem.

Nehemiah told them, "I won't have any part in your scheme to make me leave the work here in Jerusalem."

Sanballat and Tobiah had one more plan. He hired a man named Shemaiah to pretend he was Nehemiah's friend. Pretending he was trying to help Nehemiah, Shemaiah warned Nehemiah that his enemies were going to kill him.

Shemaiah told him to go inside the temple for protection, but Nehemiah said "No," very firmly and told him, "God has forbidden anyone but the priest to go inside the temple."

Nehemiah realized this was just another one of his enemies' tricks. "God wants me to lead the people in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. I refuse to hide in the temple." Nehemiah retorted as he walked away.

Nehemiah allowed nothing to stop him from completing the job God had given him. After working hard and overcoming many difficulties, the people finished rebuilding the wall in 52 days. When the enemies heard about this, they were afraid and lost their self-confidence because they realized this work had been done with God's help.

Discussions:

God often shapes people with experiences and training. Even though Nehemiah had little power, he never hesitated to ask God to help him with the task of rebuilding the walls. From beginning to end, he prayed for God's help. He displayed exceptional leadership and strong faith towards God. Name some ways that you can become useful to God and His ministry.

Quiz:

1. **What were the difficulties Nehemiah and the Jewish people faced?**
(Getting discouraged, being insulted, and lied about by their enemies, etc.)
2. **How did Nehemiah's enemies try to stop him and the Jewish people from working on the wall?**
(By mocking them, wanting to fight with them, lying about Nehemiah, etc.)
3. **When the enemies came up with a plan to discourage the Jewish people, what did Nehemiah do?**
(Nehemiah told everyone not to give up on the work, and he assigned people to guard different areas of the wall. Nehemiah told them to keep their weapons by their sides at all times,)
4. **Sanballat came up with an idea that they would tell a lie. They said Nehemiah had prophets in other countries. He is now king. What did Nehemiah do?**
(Nehemiah wasn't fooled! He knew this was just another one of Sanballat's plans to trick him into leaving Jerusalem.)
5. **Sanballat and Tobiah had one more plan. They hired a man named Shemaiah to pretend he was Nehemiah's friend. Warning Nehemiah that his enemies were going to kill him, Shemaiah told him to go inside the temple for protection. What did Nehemiah tell him?**
(Nehemiah said "No," very firmly and told him, "God has forbidden anyone but the priest to go inside the temple.")
6. **What did Nehemiah do in each situation to overcome his difficulties?**
(He prepared the Jewish people to defend themselves and their families, prayed for God's help, encouraged the Jewish people and reminded them that God was in control.)

Bible Discovery:

Nehemiah allowed nothing to stop him from completing the job God had given him. After working hard and overcoming many difficulties, the people finished rebuilding the wall in 52 days. When the enemies heard about this, they were

afraid and lost their self-confidence because they realized this work had been done with God's help.

The God whom we worship is an almighty God. Focusing on God's greatness is what worship is all about. Read the following verses about God's wonderful characteristics. Find the word in each verse that describes God and also fits in the puzzle. Fill in the blanks across and down.

Across

2. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. (Ps 145:3)
4. God is exalted in His power. (Job 36:22)
6. The Lord on high is mighty. (Ps 93:4)
11. (with 10 down) The Lord is gracious and compassionate. (Ps 145:8)
13. The Lord is faithful in keeping all His promises. (Ps 145:13)

Down

1. The Lord is good to all. (Ps 145:9)
3. The Lord is righteous in all His ways. (Ps 145:17)
5. His ways are eternal (Habakkuk 3:6)
7. The Lord our God is merciful. (Daniel 9:9)
8. God is love. (1 John 4:16)
9. God is just. (2 Thessalonians 1:6)
10. (With 11 across) The Lord is gracious and compassionate. (Ps 145:8)
12. The Lord is near to all who call on him. (Ps 145:18)

Nehemiah prayed and then made plans to overcome the difficulties he faced. Write down what you could do about the problems listed.

Bible verse to remember:

"But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."

1. Some of your classmates are laughing about the art project that you and your friends are doing for an event in school.
2. Your team is trying the best to get a good score. Then a bully from the other team threatens to beat up one of your team members.
3. Your friends in school laugh at you whenever you say grace before each meal.

Activity

How Would You Handle it?

Read these difficult situations. Then fill in one of your own ideas in the blanks provided. Remember how

Notes:

Notes:

Lesson 5

Esther Risks Her Life to Serve God

Bible Text: Book of Esther

Bible Truth:

God gives us opportunities to serve Him.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to plan ways to serve God.

Memory Verse:

"Go gather all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." (Est 4:16)

Bible Background:

Esther's story begins in 483 B.C., 103 years after Nebuchadnezzar had taken the Jews into captivity (2 Kgs 25), 54 years after Zerubbabel led the first group of exiles back to Jerusalem (Ezra 1;2), and 25 years before Ezra led the second group to Jerusalem (Ezra 7). Esther lived in the kingdom of Persia, the dominant kingdom in the Middle East after Babylon's fall in 539 B.C.

Ahasuerus, also called Xerxes the Great, was Persia's fifth king (486-465 B.C.) In 481 B.C., Ahasuerus launched an attack against Greece. After his fleet won a great victory at Thermopylae, he was defeated at Salamis in 480 and had to return to Persia. Esther became queen in 479 B.C.

Esther asking the Jews to pray for God's help on her dangerous mission. In the Old Testament, prayer always accompanies fasting (see Exodus 34:28; Deut 9:9; Ezra

8:21-23). Both Esther and Mordecai believed that God would deliver His people, but they didn't just sit and wait. They took action by fasting and praying.

While the Book of Esther does not mention God directly, His presence fills the book. Esther risked her life by coming before the king to plead on behalf of her people. Her courageous act gives us a model to follow. Esther also believed that God placed her on the throne for a purpose. Likewise, we must believe and trust in God's protection and retain our integrity by doing what we know is right. Esther risked her life appearing before the king, which in turn saved the entire nation.

About Your Students:

Your students are naturally good helpers. Helping adults makes them feel adult-like and grown-up. However, they only see and live in the here and now so they rarely think to plan ahead. Besides, most of their daily schedule is taken care of by their parents, so they don't have many chances to practice planning ahead. What you can take advantage of is their eagerness to help and their dreams to become certain heroine, or professionals. You can help your students develop their dreams to work for God.

First, ask your students to identify their favorite Bible character, one whom they would like to imitate. Be specific about how these people served God. For example, Moses gave up a luxurious life in the palace. King David offered his wealth to build God's temple, and Queen Esther risked her life to save her people. Show them what they can do now to prepare themselves to emulate their dream Bible character in present life (e.g. study hard and do well in school, learn music, read the Bible). Perhaps you can ask each student to write down their plan from month to month and ask them to report whether they have followed their plan each month.

Warm-Up:

Have your students write down all the jobs he or she might do at home. Suggest that they include any ways that they might help their moms, dads, or a brothers, or sisters. Put the slips of paper in a jar. Open the jar and read each slip of paper at the end of the class. Tell them that God gives them opportunities to serve Him by helping someone else.

Bible Story:

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to plan ways to serve God.

The king of Persia was looking for a new queen. All the most beautiful women of the land were brought to his palace. Esther was one of these women.

The king liked Esther more than all of the other women, and he chose her to be his queen. Mordecai, Esther's cousin, who had brought Esther up after her mother and father died instructed, "Just keep one thing a secret. Don't tell anyone that you are a Jewish girl."

Mordecai worked in the palace. One day, he heard two men talking about killing the king. Mordecai told the king about their plot, and in doing so, he saved the king's life, but somehow everyone forgot to give Mordecai any credit.

Then something else happened. Every day, Mordecai worked in the palace, an important man named Haman passed by Mordecai's work place. Everyone was afraid of Haman, and they all bowed low to him. Mordecai was the exception. He only bowed down to God, not to Haman. Haman, who was extremely proud and mean, became furious and vindictive towards Mordecai.

Haman Plans to Exterminate the Jews

Haman hated Mordecai. When Haman learned that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman decided to get even. He would kill Mordecai, and what's more, he would see that every Jew in the whole land was killed too!

So Haman said to the king, "There's a race of people in your land, O King, who are no good at all. If

you'll write an order to destroy them, I will give you 375 tons of silver." The king said he didn't want the money, but he agreed to fulfill Haman's request anyway. "Write up the order to kill all the Jews," the king said, "and I'll sign it."

So Haman sent out an order with the king's approval that on a certain day all the Jewish people would be killed.

Mordecai Asks Esther to Help

When Mordecai heard what that wicked Haman had done, he sent a message to Esther. Esther would have to seek the king and ask him to spare the Jews.

Esther was afraid. It was a rule then that anyone who went to see the king without being invited would be killed. Only if the king held out his golden scepter would the person who went to see him be allowed to live.

When Esther told Mordecai of her hesitation to go see the king, Mordecai sent her another message. "Maybe God made you queen so you would have this opportunity to serve Him and save our people."

Esther thought about what Mordecai said. Maybe God had made her queen so she would have the chance to save her people.

"Go and get all our people in Susa to go without eating, and pray for three days. I and my maids will do the same. Then I'll go to see the king. If I die, then I die." Esther told Mordecai.

The King Is Pleased with Esther

Three days later, Esther went to see the king. When she came into the room, the king held out his golden scepter.

The king was glad to see Esther and asked what she wanted. Esther asked the king to come to a banquet she had prepared for him. "And if you please," Esther requested, "bring Haman with you." The king agreed.

That evening, the king and Haman went to Esther's banquet. As they drank, the king asked Esther what she wanted. Even if it was half of his kingdom, he would give

it to her. Esther simply invited him and Haman to another banquet the next day where she would answer his question.

That night, Haman felt very proud. How special he was! He was going to eat dinner with the king and the queen. And soon Mordecai and all the Jewish people would be dead. So Haman happily went home, and he bragged to his family about how great he was.

That same night, the king couldn't sleep. "Read something to me," the king commanded. His servants read some of the records of what happened during the king's rule. What do you suppose they read about? They read about the time Mordecai had saved the king's life.

"What's been done to reward Mordecai?"

They looked carefully at the records. One official said, "I guess nothing." So before he went to sleep, the king decided that first thing in the morning, he would figure out a way to reward Mordecai for saving his life.

When Haman came to see the king the next morning, the king asked Haman what he thought. "What should I do for someone I want to honor?" Thinking that "someone" was himself, Haman said, "Dress that person up in your own royal clothes. Let him ride your horse. Have one of the important men of your kingdom lead the horse through the streets, saying "Here's a man the king honors."

"Good," the king said. "Now go out and lead the horse. Carry out what you have said. Have Mordecai wear my clothes and ride my horse!"

Oh, how shocked and upset Haman felt! He hated Mordecai, and now the king was honoring him!

Things only got worse. At supper that night, the king again asked Esther what he could do for her. So Esther told the king, "Please spare my life and the lives of my people. You see, I'm a Jew, and this wicked Haman is trying to kill us all!"

Esther and Jews Are Saved

When the king realized what Haman had been trying to do, he was so furious that he got up and walked out of the room. Haman knelt down near Esther to beg her to save him. When the king came back, and saw Haman near Esther, he became even more outraged and he ordered that Haman

should be put to death. One of the king's officials told him that Haman had set up a gallows where he had planned to hang Mordecai. "Let that wicked Haman be killed there instead," was the king's command.

Then Esther told the king that Mordecai, who had saved the king's life, was her cousin. So the king gave Mordecai an important job in his kingdom. He even let Mordecai write out a new order to spare the lives of all the Jews.

Esther had an opportunity to serve God. Because she grasped her opportunity, she and Mordecai and all the Jewish people were saved.

Questions and Discussions:

Compare and contrast the strengths and weakness of Haman and Mordecai. Discuss and write down what lessons we can learn from each person. (You may work together as a group and write the comparison on the board.)

Quiz:

- 1. Why didn't Mordecai bow down to Haman?**
(If Mordecai bowed down, it would be an act of disobedience and betrayal towards the one true God.)
- 2. After Haman found out Mordecai was a Jew, what plan did he come up with to get even?**
(Haman planned to kill Mordecai along with all the Jews.)
- 3. Why was Esther afraid to go see the king after Mordecai told her about Haman's plan?**
(It was a rule then that anyone who went to see the king without being invited would be killed. Only if the king held out his golden scepter would the person who went to see him be allowed to live.)
- 4. Why did Esther later resolve to see the king?**
(She thought about what Mordecai said. Maybe God had made her queen so she would have the chance to save her people.)

5. What actions did she and Mordecai take before going to see the king?

(Esther and all the Jews fasted and prayed for three days.)

6. What happened the night before the king was invited to the banquet?

(He couldn't sleep, so he read the record book and he discovered that Mordecai had saved his life without being rewarded.)

7. At the end, Haman was hung. What can we learn from Haman?

(He was self-centered and was blinded by arrogance. His desire was to control others, and to receive honor was his highest goal. We can learn that hatred and pride are destructive. God did not let those evil planners go unpunished.)

8. What can we learn from Esther?

(We can learn that serving God often demands that we risk or sacrifice our own security. God always has a purpose for the situations in which He places us.)

Bible Discovery:

Let Your Light Shine

In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

A Bright Idea Puzzle

Find each picture's word in the puzzle and color those letters yellow. Fill in the remaining letters with a black pen to find a bright idea.

Activity 1:

A Brave Queen

All the Jews were in danger of being killed. Queen Esther could try to save her people, but that might mean her death. To find out what Esther decided, decode the message below. Refer to Esther 4-8:8 to read more about what happened.

Activity 2:

Assign your students one chapter of Esther to read. Then ask our students to report what happened in the chapter they read, or ask them to pick the verse that they liked best from the chapter assigned. They can then read the verse, tell why they like it, and explain how the verse fits into the story that chapter tells. (You probably have to tell them to prepare in advance a few weeks before this class.)

Lesson 6

Nehemiah Confronts and Rebukes the Jews

Bible Text: Nehemiah 12:27-13

Bible Truth:

Nehemiah corrected the people and encouraged them to continue to learn how to honor and obey God.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to encourage others to learn to honor and obey God.

Memory Verse:

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?" **(2 Corth 6:14)**

Bible Background:

The dedication of the city wall was characterized by much joy and praise. However, when Nehemiah returned, he found that the people had broken their promises to God.

God had commanded Israel not to work on the Sabbath, but to rest in remembrance of His creation and their exodus from Egypt. God also told His people not to intermarry, but Israelites broke their solemn covenant with Him. Nehemiah's severe treatment of the Israelites shows the contrast between His great faithfulness to God and the people's disobedience. (see also Ezra 10:3)

About Your Students:

The art of encouragement is not easily learned. At this age, your students are not very good at tactfully explaining rules or guidelines to others nor are they willing to listen to their peers. In part, this is due to their limited language skills and their strong desire to do things independently. You might want to explain that in order to encourage others to honor and obey God, they must first honor and obey God themselves. Discuss what it means to honor and obey God. You can use the Old Testament prophet Nehemiah as an example. Also, you might want to go over the qualities a person must possess to give encouragement (e.g. humility, love). Be honest and open with your students. Share your personal failures which they can relate to and learn from. Perhaps you can tell them about how you were not successful in encouraging a certain person because you lacked certain qualities.

Warm-Up:

Have you ever promised to do something and later changed your mind? For example, have you ever promised to practice in order to take violin lessons or be on a sports team and then later decided you didn't like to practice after all? What are some other examples you can think of? Has someone encouraged you to keep your promises in those situations?

In our Bible story, we'll learn about a time when the Jews changed their minds after having made some promises.

Bible Story:

A Very Important Day

After the wall around Jerusalem was rebuilt, the Jews were very excited. Plans were made for a day to dedicate the city wall. The people simply couldn't wait for this important day.

Finally, the important day arrived. People from all over came to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah quieted the noisy crowd and instructed them to line up for the big event.

"Since the Levites are good singers, I'd like some of them to lead," said Nehemiah.

The Levites came to the front first and then separated into two groups. Ezra took one group and started marching to the right. Nehemiah took the other group and started marching to the left around the wall. It was a huge procession. Everyone marched enthusiastically. As the groups passed each of the great gates, they gave thanks. They dedicated the wall to God.

Then the two groups met each other again half-way around the city at the Water Gate. Nehemiah and Ezra led the people into the temple yard to offer sacrifices to God. The wall was finished and the people made some very important promises to God. They promised to honor God by giving their first fruits to Him and bringing offerings to the Temple. They promised to honor God by not buying or selling anything on the Sabbath and by not marrying people who worshipped idols.

Finally, it was time for Nehemiah to return home to Babylon. He successfully completed the work that he set out to do. He helped rebuild the walls, and he encouraged the people to honor and obey God.

Nehemiah Returns to Jerusalem

After a few years passed, Nehemiah asked permission from the king to go back to Jerusalem.

The king kindly gave Nehemiah permission to visit the people in Jerusalem. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he found that the people in Jerusalem had broken their promises to God.

Nehemiah went to the temple. There, he learned that the priest had allowed an enemy who did not love God, a wicked man named Tobiah, to move his furniture into the temple courts!

"Get your possessions out of the Lord's holy place! God's enemies are forbidden to stay in the temple courtyard!" Nehemiah told Tobiah.

When Nehemiah looked for the Levites and priests, they were not in the temple. Nehemiah finally found them working in the fields.

The people didn't offer sacrifices to God as they had promised. The Levites and priests had to go plant and harvest their own crops so they could have food to eat. Nehemiah told the Levites to go back to the temple.

Nehemiah Tells the People to Keep the Sabbath Day

Everywhere Nehemiah went in Jerusalem, he saw that the people had forgotten the promises they made to God when they dedicated the rebuilt wall.

Nehemiah also discovered that the Jews were buying and selling on the Sabbath day, something they had promised not to do.

At sunset, before the next Sabbath day, Nehemiah commanded the gates of the city be shut. There would be no more buying or selling on the Sabbath day.

Sure enough the merchants came on the Sabbath to Jerusalem to sell their things. When they saw that they couldn't get inside the city, they set up their goods outside the city. This made Nehemiah angry.

"Take the things you are selling and leave the gates of Jerusalem," Nehemiah warned. "There will be no trading here on the Sabbath day," The merchants weren't happy with Nehemiah's command. They left quickly for they were afraid Nehemiah might actually hurt them.

After this, Nehemiah told the Levites to act as guards at the gates on the Sabbath.

"The Sabbath is a holy day. It is a day set aside to honor and worship God," Nehemiah instructed. The Jewish people listened and promised to keep the Sabbath holy as God wanted.

Nehemiah also reminded the Jews not to marry people who didn't worship God.

"You are not honoring God when you marry people who don't worship Him. This is against God's law."

Nehemiah reminded the people to take good care of the temple and to bring their offerings to the temple so the Levites and priests could lead the people in worship instead of working in the fields. He also made sure the Jewish people understood they were not to buy or sell on the Sabbath.

Questions and Discussions:

1. The people had promised not to allow their children to marry gentiles, but during Nehemiah's absence, the people intermarried, breaking their solemn covenant with God. Nehemiah used the example of Solomon's mistake to teach his people. Discuss with your students what Solomon's big mistake was. (See 1 Kings 11)
2. Why did God command the Israelites not to work on the Sabbath? Why is it important to keep the Sabbath Day? Discuss with your students and see how many reasons they can come up with. (See Exodus 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15; Ex 23:12; Heb 4:1-11)

Quiz:

1. **What did Nehemiah and Ezra do with the people after rebuilding the city wall?**
(They set aside a day to dedicate the wall to God.)
2. **What were some of the promises the people made to God?**
(Take good care of the temple, bring tithes (offerings) to the temple, do not buy or sell on the Sabbath, and do not marry people who worship other gods.)
3. **Why did Nehemiah go back to Babylon?**
(He completed the work that he set out to do. He helped to rebuild the wall, and he encouraged the people to honor and obey God.)
4. **After a few years, when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, what did he see?**
(He found that the people in Jerusalem had broken their promises to God. When Nehemiah went to the

temple, he learned that the priest had allowed an enemy who did not love God to move his furniture into the temple courts! They didn't take good care of the temple, they didn't bring offerings to the temple, they bought or sold things on the Sabbath, and they married people who worship other gods.)

5. What was Nehemiah's reaction to his observations?

(He was very upset and angry.)

6. What did Nehemiah do after seeing all these broken promises?

(He ordered Tobiah to leave the temple court; he told the Levites to guard the city gates so that the merchants couldn't get in on the Sabbath day to do trading; he told the people to keep the Sabbath day holy; he told the people to take care of the temple and to bring offerings; he told the people not to marry anyone who didn't worship God.)

Bible Discovery:

Construction Site

How did the Israelites rebuild the city wall? To find out, look at the wall below. For each white brick, find the brick that exactly matches it in the code key. Write the letter in the matching blank brick. Read Nehemiah 6:15 if you need help.

Nehemiah told the Jews not to provoke God's anger by keeping their promises and mending their way. What are they? See if you can look at the pictures and write it down in words.

1. Keep the Sabbath holy by not selling or buying.
2. Do not marry people who do not worship God.
3. Take good care of the temple of God.
4. Bring your offerings to the temple.

Activity 2:

Love God and Love Man

Listed below are some of the words we think about and use to tell others that God loves us in a very special

Activity 1:

Things We Should Always Remember

way. We, in turn, love others because of the gifts and talents God has given to us. See if you can find these words in the puzzle. Some letters are used more than once. The words may be found across, up, down, or diagonally.

Words:

aid	save	pass	love
caring	assist	sympathetic	please
friend	tolerant	charity	
tag			
happy	giver	defend	consider
kin	heart	good	fun
pity	like	help	God
joy	lovable	sacrifice	
tender			
comfort	frank	generous	kind
mercy	solicitous		

Notes:

Lesson 7

God Cares for Elijah

Bible Text: 1 Kgs 17:1-16

Bible Truth:

God cares for Elijah and for a widow's family in a time of drought.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to trust God at times when we are worried or afraid.

Memory Verse:

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble..." (Ps 46:1)

Bible Background:

Elijah is one of the first important prophets God sent to Israel and Judah. Israel, the northern kingdom, had no faithful kings throughout its history. Elijah played a vital role in both nations, encouraging the people and leaders to turn back to God.

Elijah prophesied a drought and then hid from King Ahab by the Kerith Ravine where he was fed by ravens. When the brook dried up, God sent him to Zarephath in Phoenicia where a widow and her son fed him and gave him lodging.

The widow of Zarephath trusted Elijah and gave him all she had to eat. This simple act of faith produced a miracle. God cared for Elijah and He also cared for the widow and her family. No matter how bitter our trials or how seemingly hopeless our situation, we should seek after God's care.

About Your Students:

Trust is developed when people depend on another person to meet their needs. Your children have probably developed a strong sense of trust in their parents because their parents meet their daily needs. However, your children are on the verge of becoming independent. They will soon begin to have difficulties in their personal lives, and they will learn that their parents cannot always be there for them. Therefore, it is crucial for you

to teach your children that God is the most trustworthy and we can always rely on Him to deliver us.

In order to teach your children an intangible concept such as trusting God, you need to encourage your students to take the chance to experience it. Share lots of stories from the Bible and personal testimonies to show that when we trust in God, He will help. Whenever possible, point out instances where God has been faithful to His people. Share testimonies of God's faithfulness in your life. By listening to your stories, your children will eventually understand the love God has for His people. When your students encounter situations where they will need to trust God, they will recall your stories on God's faithfulness, and have a firm understanding that God will help them through all their trials and tribulations.

Warm-Up:

Can you tell us about a time you actually felt terror, fear, or worry? What do you think is most likely to make a person your age feel afraid or worried?

Being worried or anxious isn't any fun. Today, you'll meet three people who had good reasons to be fearful. Two of them knew what to do when they were afraid. What they did can show you how to get rid of your fears today.

Bible Story:

Elijah Warns King Ahab

King Ahab was the king of Israel, but he was a very wicked king. Instead of worshiping the Lord, King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, tried to keep God's people from worshiping Him. Ahab and Jezebel claimed that Baal controlled the rains that made Israel's crops grow. They wanted all the people to worship Baal too. Soon many of the people of Israel did what the king and queen commanded. They stopped worshiping God and worshiped Baal instead.

The king, queen, and the people should have listened to God's Word. Let's read Deut 11:13-14, "If you listen to my commands, to love and worship me with all your heart. I will give you rain for your crops and grasslands, and you will have plenty to eat and be content."

Now, since God's people refused to worship Him, the Lord decided to stop the rains. Without rain, the wheat and vegetables the people planted would not grow. Even grass wouldn't grow. Animals and people went hungry. However, before doing so, God mercifully gave King Ahab a warning. He sent the prophet Elijah to Ahab. Elijah went right up to the king and announced, "As surely as God lives, there will be no more rain for the next few years until I say so!"

Even though the king must have felt afraid, or at least worried, he didn't say he was sorry that he had rebelled against God. Thus, the rain stopped. No more crops grew. No more green grass appeared. Soon even the streams and rivers began to dry up.

King Ahab was afraid. but since he didn't want the true God to help him, there was nothing he could do to stop being afraid.

Elijah Flees

God knew that King Ahab would be angry at Elijah and would try to kill him. Therefore, God told Elijah to hide in a deep valley, called the Kerith Ravine, where a small brook would provide water.

How would Elijah get food? He was being hunted by the king and his army. He couldn't go out and buy food. Elijah must have been worried and fearful.

Nevertheless, Elijah did what God said. He went to the Kerith Ravine and waited beside the brook. And do you know what God did? God sent ravens, big black birds to bring food to Elijah every morning and every evening! Elijah trusted God, and so God took care of Elijah. God takes care of people who trust Him.

For months and months no rain fell in Israel. Even the brook that Elijah had lived next to began to dry up.

Elijah must have become anxious and worried as he noticed that everyday there was less and less water in the brook. Even people who know that God loves them will still worry sometimes.

Finally, the brook dried up completely, and Elijah had no water at all.

God Tells Elijah to Go to Zarephath

Then God spoke to Elijah again and told him to leave Israel and travel to a town named Zarephath. When Elijah got there, he met a woman who was gathering sticks for a fire. Elijah asked what she was doing, and he heard a very sad story.

The woman was a widow who had one son, and they were starving. All she had in her house was a few drops of olive oil and a little flour. Her plan was to cook one last meal for herself and her son. Then they would wait for death. Instead of saying how sorry he was, Elijah said something very surprising.

"Don't be afraid," he told the woman. "Go home and make your bread, but give some to me first. Your supply of oil and flour will never run out until God sends rain again."

How worried the widow must have been as she cooked her last bit of bread and gave it to Elijah first! Even so, the woman did what Elijah said, and God kept His promise! The oil and the flour never ran out during the months that Elijah stayed with them. The woman trusted God, just as Elijah did, and God took care of them all.

Questions and Discussions:

When you feel worried, how do you think it would help to tell God about your problem? What are your biggest problems right now?

Let's see if you can write down three things that sometimes worry you or make you anxious or afraid.

(After they write, you may want to list them on the board.)

Each of us has times when we remember how God cares for us. If we trust God and obey His word, we can be sure that He will help us.

Quiz:

True or False:

1. King Ahab was a good king of Israel, and he cared about providing food for his people. (F)
2. Ahab and Jezebel claimed that Baal controlled the rains that made Israel's crops grow. They wanted all the people to worship Baal too. (T)
3. Since God's people refused to worship Him, the Lord decided to give more and more rains. (F)
4. God sent the prophet Elijah to Ahab. Elijah went right up to the king and announced, "As surely as God lives, there will be no more rain for ten years." (F)
5. God knew that King Ahab would be angry at Elijah and would try to kill him. So God told Elijah to hide in a deep valley, called the Kerith Ravine, where a small brook would provide water. (T)
6. God sent ravens, big black birds, to bring food to Elijah every morning and every evening. (T)
7. God spoke to Elijah again and told him to leave Israel and travel to a town called Zarephath where another prophet would help him. (F)
8. God kept His promise! The oil and the flour never ran out during the long drought. The woman trusted God, just as Elijah did. (T)

Bible Discovery:

Give and Lend

People are much more important than objects. When you love people, you care more about them than your belongings. Jesus said we should give to people who ask and not say no to people who want to borrow things. Jesus also said not to ask for things back. When you give, it will be given back to you like a measuring cup that is pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and is running over. (Read Mat 5:40-42; Lk 6:27-38)

Help Robert Give

Robert has much more than he needs. Whenever you see an extra of anything in his room, circle it. Can you find ten extra objects that Robert can give away?

Do you have things you can give away? Sort through your things to find items you don't need. Ask your parents if you can give these items to others who might like to have them.

Activity 1:

Help From On High

In 1 Kings 17:1-6, God helped Elijah when he hid from the king. Cross out all the C's, G's, K's, O's and Q's in the stream. Then rearrange the remaining letters to find the three things God provided for Elijah.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activity 2:

God Hears and Answers Prayers

Print the following scrambled words on the board: earsh, sswerna, odG, rapyer, dan. Give each student a pencil, and ask them to unscramble the five words, write them correctly, and then arrange them to make a complete sentence.

The answer is: God hears and answers prayers.

Notes:

Lesson 8

Elijah Challenges the Prophets of Baal

Bible Text: 1 Kgs 18:16-46

Bible Truth:

Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to know that only our God is able to answer prayers.

Memory Verse:

"The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous." (Prov 15:29)

Bible Background:

Baal

Idols of Baal, the most popular Canaanite god, were often made in the shape of a bull, representing strength, fertility, and sexual pleasure.

The god of Baal didn't answer any of their requests. Their god was silent because it was not real. They can offer no true answers, no guidance, and no wisdom. Elijah challenged the people to take a stand---to follow whoever was the true God.

The following are some of the characteristics of false prophets

- lWorked in political field for the sole purpose of benefiting themselves.

- lHeld positions of great status and wealth.

- lGave false messages that appealed to the people's sinful natures and allayed their fears.

- lWorshiped only what the people wanted to worship.

About Your Students:

As your students learn about other religions and cultures in school, they will question the validity of their own faith. They may learn the objective view that all religions are good and have the same ultimate purpose of doing good for society. Remind them that their faith is an unique one purchased with the blood of our Lord Jesus, and that our church has the complete gospel with the abidance of the Holy Spirit. When they uphold their faith against adverse environments, they will have God's abidance. Use Elijah's story to illustrate the power of our God.

Your students may have questions about prayers made in other religions or stories about answered prayers to gods other than our God. Remind them Satan is also capable of deceiving us through miracles. You may want to share testimonies of how some hidden deceiving spirits were surfaced after prayers were earnestly offered to our God. Show your students that when it comes down to it, our God is the ultimate God, surpassing all other gods with the greatest power. Remind them of the demons Jesus and the apostles casted out. Finally, remind them that the Holy Spirit helps us have a strong faith in God. Thus, we must pray often to experience God personally,

Warm-Up:

Write the following words on the board in two columns. At the beginning of class, ask your students to tell you who (in the second column) they would ask for each item (in the first column).

I need

- new clothes
- lunch money

So I ask

- an optometrist
- Mom or Dad

books	sales man
protection from a bully	a school teacher
good advice	God
to stay up late	Pharmacist

Ask the students who they would ask if they needed some books? How about if they need new clothing?

The students would probably decide that the appropriate person to ask in each case is Mom or Dad. Why not ask the Pharmacist? (He doesn't give us books.) Why not ask a school teacher? (He can't give us books, he teaches.) That's right. It won't do any good to ask for what you need from someone who doesn't know you and love you, and it certainly doesn't do any good to ask someone who isn't real or isn't alive.

It's like this with prayer too. When we need something, we must be sure that the person we ask cares about us. And we want to be sure that He is real and alive.

Bible Story:

Elijah Gives the King and Queen a Challenge

In the days of Elijah the prophet, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel ruled Israel. They were wicked rulers who refused to worship the Lord. Instead they worshiped a false god, a god they called Baal. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel wanted everyone in Israel to worship Baal. So the queen had many of God's prophet's killed. She even sent 450 prophets of Baal through the land telling the people that Baal was the real god and that they ought to worship Baal.

Many people in Israel didn't know what to do. Their fathers and grandfathers had worshiped the Lord, but now the king and queen were telling them to worship Baal. Who was the real God?

It was then that God told Elijah to find King Ahab and warn him. God was going to stop rain from falling in Israel. That should prove that the Lord was the real God,

and that Baal wasn't real at all. Well, God's prediction of drought, which was conveyed through Elijah, became a reality. For three years no rain fell in Israel. The crops and grass died. Animals and people began to starve. Even then the people of Israel still weren't sure who the true God was. Maybe it didn't rain because Baal was angry. They couldn't decide if Baal or the God of Israel was in control.

Obadiah Brings the King to Elijah

Elijah had been hiding all this time because King Ahab wanted to kill him. Now God told Elijah to go see the king. Elijah found a government official named Obadiah who still believed in the Lord and told him to tell King Ahab where Elijah was. "I'll wait here," Elijah promised. "God wants me to see Ahab today."

Elijah Challenges the king

When the king met Elijah, he blamed Elijah for the drought and called him a "trouble-maker."

"You're the real trouble-maker," Elijah told the king. You and the queen have been worshiping Baal instead of worshiping the Lord. That's why Israel is without rain and in such terrible trouble today."

Then Elijah challenged Ahab to bring all 450 prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel. They'd have a contest to see which God was real!

God's Instructions

Well, the news of the contest traveled fast! When Elijah and the prophets of Baal got to Mount Carmel, thousands of people went there waiting to see what would happen.

Right away, Elijah spoke to the people, "How long will you keep trying to worship both the Lord and Baal? You've got to decide which is the real God and worship Him only."

Then Elijah explained the test. Elijah and the followers of Baal would each build an altar. They would each put wood on the altar and sacrifice an animal, but

they wouldn't light the fire! The 450 prophets of Baal would ask their god to send fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice. And Elijah, the one prophet of the Lord, would ask the Lord to send fire from heaven. Then everyone would know that the one who actually did send fire from heaven was the real God.

Elijah Triumphs Over the Evil Prophets

Elijah let the priests of Baal go first. So all 450 priests began to shout, "O Baal, hear us!" Nothing happened. The prophets even cut themselves. They did that because they thought Baal got excited when he smelled blood. Maybe by shouting and making themselves bleed they could get Baal's attention.

Elijah began to laugh at them. "Maybe Baal's taking a nap," Elijah teased. "Maybe he's away on a trip." The prophets of Baal tried harder and harder, but no fire came from heaven. Nothing happened at all.

Late that afternoon, it was Elijah's turn, but before Elijah prayed, he made the test even harder. Elijah had some men dig a ditch around the altar. Then Elijah had men go down the hill to a spring where there was still some water and fill large jars with it. He told them to pour the water over the sacrifice and over the wood on the altar. The water soaked the wood and even filled up the ditch around it. Elijah wanted to make sure that no one would think he was trying to trick them.

Then Elijah prayed. "O Lord," Elijah said. "Answer my prayer, let everyone see today that you are the true God."

Right away, God sent fire from heaven. The fire was so hot that it burned up the wet wood. It burned up the sacrifice. It even burned up the water in the ditch!

The People Know They Should Worship God

Now the thousands of people watching knew for sure which God was real. "The Lord is God!" they cried. "The Lord is God!"

Elijah shouted, "Get the prophets of Baal, and don't let a single one get away." The people rushed down

and killed 450 prophets of Baal who had tried to make them worship their false god.

Then Elijah went up to King Ahab. "You'd better get ready to leave," Elijah said, "because soon it's going to rain again."

The people knew now that the Lord is the real God. They wouldn't worship or pray to Baal anymore. And now that God's people were ready to rely on Him again, the Lord could end the drought and let the rain fall.

Questions and Discussions:

Discuss the differences between false and true prophets.

True Prophets

lWorked for spiritual purposes to serve God and the people

lOwned little or nothing

lSpoke only true messages

lSpoke only what God told them to say---no matter how unpopular

False Prophets

lWorked for political purposes to benefit themselves.

lHeld positions of great wealth

lGave false messages that appealed to the people's sinful natures and comforted their fears

lSpoke only what the people wanted to hear

Quiz:

Fill in the Blanks:

1. In the days of Elijah the prophet, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel ruled _____. (Israel)
2. They were wicked rulers who refused to worship the Lord. Instead they worshiped a false god, a god they called _____. (Baal)
3. For three years no _____ (rain) fell in Israel. The crops and grass died. Animals and people began to starve. Even then the people of Israel weren't sure who the true God was. Maybe it didn't rain because Baal was angry. They couldn't decide if _____ (Baal) or the _____ (God) of Israel had control over rain.
4. When the king found Elijah, he blamed Elijah for the drought and called him a _____. (trouble-maker)
5. Then Elijah challenged Ahab to bring all _____ (450) prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel. They would have a contest to see which God was real!
6. Elijah spoke to the people, "How long will you keep trying to worship both the Lord and Baal? You've got to decide which is the real God and _____ (worship) Him only."
7. The 450 prophets of Baal would ask their god to send fire from heaven to burn up the _____ (sacrifice). And Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, would ask the Lord to send fire from heaven. Then everyone would know that the one who actually sent fire from heaven was the _____ (real) God.
8. Late that afternoon, it was Elijah's turn, but before Elijah prayed, he made the test even harder. Elijah had some men dig a ditch around the _____ (altar.) Then Elijah had men go down the hill to a spring where there was still some water and fill large jars with it. He told them to pour the water over the sacrifice and over the wood on the altar. The water soaked the wood and even filled up the ditch around it. Then Elijah prayed. "O Lord," Elijah said. "let everyone see today that you are God. _____ (Answer) my prayer, so everyone will know you are God."

And right away, God sent fire from heaven. The fire was so hot that it burned up the wet wood. It burned up the sacrifice. It even burned up the water in the ditch!

9. Thousands of people watching knew for sure which one was the real God. "The Lord is _____ (God)!" they cried. "The Lord is _____ (God)!"
10. The people wouldn't worship or pray to Baal anymore. And now that God's people were ready to rely on Him again, the Lord could end the _____ (drought) and let the rain fall.

Bible Discovery:

Life-Application Story: Worship the One True Living God

Mike went to school that day with a Bible in his hand. Ever since he got the Holy Spirit a few weeks ago, he wanted to share the gospel with other people. Mike really wanted to preach and work for God, but he was kind of scared. What if people made fun of him? He had told his friends, Simon, that he would bring his Bible to school and explain why people need to receive the Holy Spirit. Simon was very curious. He wanted to know what was this Holy Spirit that Mike always talked about.

Mike learned from his Religious Education teacher that the Holy Spirit is a helper and guide that leads us to the truth. Mike's teacher also told him that the Holy Spirit would help him make the right decisions if he listened to it and prayed often. So from that day on, Mike prayed every night. Mike had prayed the night before for God's help. He wanted God to guide him as he tried to explain the Holy Spirit to his friend.

"Hi, Mike. I see you brought your Bible. I am really interested in knowing what the Holy Spirit is all about."

"Let's go to the library. It's quieter there."

"All right. Let's go."

On their way to the library, they ran into Butch. "Where you going with that Bible? You actually think

there's a God? Are you crazy? Show me where God is. I don't see no God. You're real stupid, Mike."

Simon looked scared. Nevertheless, in a soft trembling voice, he retorted. "Show me your brain, Butch. We don't want to fight with you so just leave us alone."

"No, I'm not going anywhere until you show me where God is. There is no God! You're worshipping a book."

Mike replied, "First of all, Butch, I don't worship the Bible, I worship God. God is real. He is the one true God. I feel sorry for you since you can't see Him. I know God is real because He gave me the Holy Spirit."

"Well, let's just see if your God can save you after school." Butch strutted away.

Now Simon was really scared. "I don't think I want to know about the Holy Spirit anymore, Mike. It's too dangerous to learn these things."

"Simon, don't worry. I brought my Bible from home and now you're telling me you don't want to know about it? Don't be afraid. I'm sure God will protect us. Let's go to the library."

So the two good friends went to the library and had a wonderful talk about the Holy Spirit.

"Wow! Mike, I didn't know there was so much to learn about the Holy Spirit. Do you think I can speak in tongues today too?"

Mike replied happily, "If God wants to give you the Holy Spirit you will. Why don't you come to church with me next Saturday? I'm sure my Dad would take you with us."

"Great! How about I come over to your house after school? We can talk some more."

Just then, the bell for the next class rang. "All right, Mike, I'll see you after school."

"Yeah, I'll see you Simon." Mike softly whispered, "Hopefully!"

After the last school bell ran, everyone ran out of the class with excitement, except for Mike. Mike told Simon not to be afraid, but Mike himself was scared to death. In the moment of weakness, Mike decided to pray in silence. He bowed his head in prayer. Just then, the

teacher came up to him, "Is everything all right. Mike? You looked pale. Maybe you should go see the nurse."

"No, I'll be all right. It's just that Butch said he was going to beat me up after school."

The teacher looked surprised. "Butch said that? Why would he say something like that? Butch is such a good student. He gets straight A's."

"Yeah, well, that's because his friend usually gives him all the answers. Anyway, don't worry about it. Butch has probably forgotten to beat me up."

Sure enough, Butch did forget to beat Mike up. When Simon went over to Mike's house, Simon couldn't believe it. "Mike, you're saying that Butch forgot to beat you up? I don't believe it." But it was true.

"I guess you were right about God's protection. God really is alive. And God really does watch over us. I think I'm going to like believing in God."

Later, Simon and Mike found out why Butch forgot to beat Mike up. You see, Butch liked to pick on people smaller than himself. On the day Butch was going to beat Mike up, he picked on Timmy. Now Timmy had a really big brother, known as Big Bob. Big Bob told Butch he better leave Timmy alone. Butch was so afraid that he ran home as soon as school let out.

God really does watch both you and me. He sees what we do and what we say. Only our God, who is both alive and true, can save us when we are in trouble. May we always thank, trust, and obey Him.

Questions to think about:

- 1. Why is it so important to pray for the Holy Spirit?**
- 2. Share with everyone a time when you were protected by God.**

Activity 1:

Be Careful To Follow The One True God

Many people in Israel didn't know what to do. Their fathers and grandfathers had worshiped the Lord, but now the king and queen instructed them to worship Baal. Who

was the real God? Only Elijah knew that the one he worshiped is the true God.

Likewise, during Jesus' time, some people tried to lead other people when they didn't know where they were going themselves. Use the Braille code to find out what Jesus says about this in Matthew 7:15 and 15:14

Answer: If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.

Activity 2:

And the Winner Is...

Find the box marked A1 at that top of the page. Copy what you see in the box into the empty A1 square in the grid. Fill in the other squares. Read 1 Kgs 18:20-39 to learn about Elijah's contest.

Lesson 9

Elijah Flees for His Life

Bible Text: 1 Kgs 19:1-19

Bible Truth:

Even though Elijah gave in to fear, God helped him when he was afraid.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to trust God whenever they are afraid or worried.

Memory Verse:

"So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" (Heb 13:6)

Bible Background:

Jezebel was extremely upset about the demise of her prophets because they had told her everything she wanted to hear, prophesying her future power and glory.

Elijah was a thorn in Jezebel's side because he was always predicting gloom and doom. When Elijah fled to Mount Horeb, God first let him rest and eat. God gave him special strength to travel this great distance--over 200 miles--without additional food. Then God confronted him with the need to return to his mission. Elijah had forgotten that there were many others who had remained faithful during the nation's wickedness.

Elijah was told to anoint Elisha, the prophet who would succeed him. Elisha's job was to work in Israel, the northern kingdom, and help direct the people back to God.

About Your Students:

Many times we cannot trust because our fear consumes us. Our distrust can cause to fear, or our fear can increase our distrust. In lesson 7, your children learned about taking the first step in trusting God. In today's lesson, it is important to teach your students that even when we are at the points of death, like Elijah was, God will never forsake us. In teaching this lesson, consider 1 Corinthians 10:13, which states, "...God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide you out so that you can stand up under it."

Explain to your students that our faith has different levels and often fluctuates because none of us are perfect. Compare and contrast the strong faith Elijah had in lesson 7 where he prayed for fire to descend from heaven, versus the weak faith Elijah had in this lesson where he prayed for his own death. The important point is that in every situation, Elijah relied on God. Tell your students that no matter how strong or weak our faith is, as long as we keep ourselves in God and ask God for help, He will always take away our fears and help us. Also, share a personal testimony of how God helped you just when you thought you had no alternatives.

Warm-Up:

Discuss fear with your students. What do you think is the worst thing about fears? (Let the children express various opinions. How do they suppose God feels when they're afraid or worried?)

Everybody has fears and worries sometimes. Why, even the prophet Elijah felt afraid once. Let's find out what happened and what God did about Elijah's fears.

Bible Story:

Queen Jezebel was angry. She was furious with Elijah. Queen Jezebel and King Ahab had tried to get everyone in Israel to worship Baal. When Elijah asked God to send fire from heaven, and God did it, the people of

Israel were convinced that the Lord was the true God. They didn't just stop worshiping Baal. The people killed all 450 prophets of Baal that Jezebel used to preach her false religion.

Well, Jezebel was so angry that she sent a message to Elijah. "I'm going to have you killed!" the furious queen threatened. "By this time tomorrow, Elijah, you'll be dead!"

Now, that was a scary message! The queen swore that she was going to kill God's prophet! Suddenly, Elijah felt afraid.

God Gives Elijah Strength

Elijah was so afraid when he heard the queen's threat that he didn't stop to think. He didn't stop for anything. What Elijah did was run away! He ran down the mountain side, away from the city of the king and queen. Then he ran many more miles out into the desert. Finally, Elijah was exhausted. He collapsed under a big bush called a broom tree and complained to God. "O God," Elijah said, "I've had enough. I can't stand it anymore. Just let me die. I am no better than my ancestors."

And then Elijah fell asleep.

How do you think God answered his prayer? Would He let Elijah die? Do you think God could protect Elijah from Queen Jezebel? Do you think God was angry at Elijah for being afraid?

Well, God didn't seem angry. In fact, God sent an angel to Elijah. The angel woke Elijah up and gave him a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. A little later the angel brought more food and water. Instead of being angry with Elijah for being afraid and running away, God was very loving. He made sure Elijah got the rest and food he needed to continue his journey.

That food and water was so special that Elijah had enough strength to travel for 40 more days, to go all the way from Israel to Mount Horeb. When Elijah got to the mountain, he found a cave and fell asleep.

God Speaks to Elijah

The next morning, God spoke to Elijah and asked, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Elijah still felt anxious and afraid. "I've been very zealous, Lord," Elijah said, "but your people have broken your laws and torn down your altars. They've even killed your prophets. I'm the only **one** left who worships you. And now they want to kill me too."

God told Elijah to go out on the mountainside and wait.

When Elijah got outside, a great wind came and demolished great rocks, but God wasn't in the great wind. Then an earthquake struck, but God wasn't in the earthquake. Then a terrible fire swept up the mountain, but God wasn't in the fire. In fact, God didn't shout at Elijah at all. Instead, Elijah heard a quiet voice speaking right beside him. It was God's voice, and the Lord asked Elijah again why he was there, so far from Israel.

So Elijah explained again. "I've been very zealous for you Lord," Elijah said, "But your people have broken your laws and torn down your altars. They've even killed all your prophets. I'm the only **one** left who worships you. And now they want to kill me too." Elijah felt all alone, as if no one else really believed in the Lord, and now, the queen was trying to kill him.

God Comforts and Encourages Elijah

The Lord very patiently told Elijah to walk back the way he came and return to Israel. The Lord explained that He had work for Elijah to do. God told Elijah that he wasn't the only person in Israel who remained faithful to Him. There were 7,000 people there who had never worshiped Baal! Elijah wasn't alone after all!

God told Elijah to go and find a helper. The helper, named Elisha, would be Elijah's friend and would travel with him so that he wouldn't have to be alone anymore.

How good and kind God is! He knows we're afraid at times. Instead of being angry, the Lord understands and helps us. God gave Elijah something to do so he wouldn't have to think about his fears all the time. God gave Elijah a friend to talk with, to remind him of how kind and loving and powerful the Lord is.

Questions and Discussions:

Do you think God stops taking care of you when you stop trusting Him? Why and why not?

(No, God took care of Elijah when he was afraid of Queen Jezebel.)

God gave Elijah a friend named Elisha so he wouldn't feel all alone. It's easier to be afraid or to worry when we feel that no one understands or cares. However, God wants us to trust Him and rely on Him when we pray.

When we are afraid, we feel very small and helpless. That's the time to remember how large and strong the Lord is. Our hands are small, but His are big and strong.

Quiz:

- 1. Why did Elijah run away from the city and travel to the desert?**
(He was afraid of the queen.)
- 2. What did Elijah tell God after he had fled to the wilderness under a broom tree?**
(He told God he could not do any more work because he was afraid and tired.)
- 3. What kind of provision did the angel give to Elijah?**
(The angel gave him a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water.)
- 4. How many days and nights did Elijah travel after eating?**
(Forty days and forty nights.)
- 5. Which mountain did he go?**
(He went to Mount Horeb.)
- 6. Why did Elijah hide himself in a cave?**
(He thought he was the only one who worshiped God.)

7. How did God help Elijah?

(God helped Elijah by telling him that there were many people who had not worshiped Baal and that Elijah would have Elisha to help him.)

Bible Discovery:

The Work God Wants

In John 6:28, 29 some people asked Jesus, "What does God want us to do?" They thought they could gain eternal life by good works alone. Decode Jesus' answer to discover the "work" God wants. Below each cross, write the letter that has the same pattern as the cross.

Keep The Faith

How long does Jesus want us to keep believing in Him? Fill in the blanks with letters to find what Jesus said in Matthew 10:22 and Mark 13:13. Begin with the letter H after the circle. Write that letter, then skip a letter as you go around the cross. The second time you go around the cross, begin with the letter T that follows the letter H.

Answers:

Believe in Jesus.

He who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Activity 1:

Map Study

Draw a map on the board that traces Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb and back to Jerusalem. Emphasize how far Elijah traveled when he was running away from Queen Jezebel. Tell them that in the end, Elijah was able to fully trust God again. Our memory verse tells what must have happened. Elijah remembered that "The Lord is my helper," so he could say, "I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Activity 2:

On a board, list typical childhood fears. Explain that your class will vote on four things that they think children at their school are most likely to worry about. Include on the list:

- Getting bitten by a snake
- Taking a very difficult test
- Being laughed at by others
- Being in the dark at night
- Getting grabbed by a stranger
- Being beaten up by big kids
- Getting shot
- Being punished by a parent
- Not having food
- Being hurt in a car accident
- Being hit by lightning

Before voting, let the class suggest other worries or fears they may have.

Ask them to look at the list very carefully and to pick out the four things they think kids their age are most likely to be afraid of or worry about.

After the vote, give the children 3"X5" cards. On one side let them write fears or worries they sometimes have. Then they will turn the cards upside down so that no one else will see those fears.

Discuss fear with your students. Then let them suggest how the volunteers might trust God and face their fears. Remember the clues in the Bible story: God strengthened Elijah, God gave Elijah a job to do, God told Elijah he wasn't alone, and God gave Elijah a friend to help them.

Notes:

Lesson

10

Elisha Asks For A Double Portion of God's Spirit

Bible Text: 2 Kings 2:1-15

Bible Truth:

We can expect God to supply the power we need to follow Him.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to rely on God's power as we follow Him. Pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Memory Verse:

"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."
(Phil 4:13)

Bible Background:

Bethel was a special school for God's prophets. Most of the schools seem to have been located in Gilgal, Jericho, and Bethel. Those who attended these schools were trained to be prophets of God.

A mantle was a wraparound garment that was used both as a cloak and a clothing.

Elisha asked for a double share of Elijah's prophetic power. According to custom, the firstborn son

received a double share of the father's inheritance (Gen 25:31). Elisha was to be Elijah's successor, one who would continue Elijah's work as a leader of the prophets.

Elijah was taken up to heaven without dying. He is the second person mentioned in the Bible to do so. Enoch was the first (Gen 5:21-24).

About Your Students:

Your students may still feel that God's power as displayed in the Bible is a fairy tale and impractical in today's life. This is because most of us have not seen someone rise from the dead or a terminally ill person being healed. They may have already heard many testimonies about reliance on God. In order for your students to rely on God's power themselves, it is important for us to encourage them to experience God personally. Ask them to share testimonies about God's power. Ask students who have the Holy Spirit to share their experiences. We often forget that receiving the Holy Spirit is already a manifestation of God's power. You could focus this session specifically on concerns about praying for the Holy Spirit or the fullness of it. Ask your students what hinders them from praying. Is it poor concentration or from sore knees? Discuss their issues and share with them how they might overcome those physical hindrances. Don't forget to talk about their difficulties in maintaining a life of prayer. Also, discuss their doubts, if any, about the power of the Holy Spirit or prayer.

Warm-Up:

Bring a can with a tight-fitting lid (which you can open, but the children probably can't.) Let the students try to open it. Then twist it open yourself.

What kind of power did it take to open the can? (Muscle power.) Sometimes we all have things to do that require more power than we have. Different tasks that we have require different kinds of power. Tell me which of the following things is hardest to do.

1. Do your homework when you want to go out and play.
2. Tell your friends at school that you are a Christian.
3. Tell your parents when you've done something wrong.
4. Say no when friends want you to do something bad.

Bible Story:

God wanted to give Elijah a friend and companion, so He sent Elijah to find a young man named Elisha.

Elijah obeyed God, and traveled for many days. When he found Elisha, he was busy plowing his father's fields with oxen.

Elijah went up to him and threw his mantle over Elisha's shoulders. Elisha knew what that meant. It meant that Elijah wanted Elisha to follow him and serve God too.

So Elisha told his parents good-bye. And after a special meal, he left home to serve Elijah.

Elijah Is Ready to Be Taken Up to Heaven

The Bible doesn't say how long Elisha followed the prophet Elijah and helped him serve God. He probably followed him for years. And all that time, Elisha saw how God gave Elijah power to serve Him.

One day God told Elijah to travel to Bethel. Elijah told Elisha not to go with him, but Elisha didn't want to leave Elijah, so he went with him anyway.

When they got to Bethel, the Lord told Elijah to go on to Jericho. Again Elisha refused to leave Elijah and went with him. The company of prophets who were at Bethel drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent."

When they got to Jericho, the Lord told Elijah to go down into the Jordan River valley. Elijah told Elisha to stay in Jericho, but Elisha was determined to stay with his teacher. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And

he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent." Elisha knew that God was going to do something special for Elijah that day, and Elisha wanted to be there.

When they got to the river, Elijah took his mantle, or cape, and rolled it up. (Get out a square of cloth, and show what Elijah did.) Then Elijah struck the river with his mantle, and the water divided so which allowing him and Elisha to walk over on dry land!

Elisha Asks for God's Power

After they crossed the river, Elijah asked Elisha what he wanted more than anything else. And Elisha told him, "I want a double share of spiritual power that you have. I want power to follow the Lord and serve Him."

Elijah wasn't sure, "If you see me when God takes me, then God will give you that power."

Then as they walked along, a chariot of fire suddenly appeared. Elijah was snatched away to ride in chariot, and a whirlwind took him up into heaven. Elijah didn't die at all. God took Elijah up to heaven alive! Then Elisha cried out, "Father, Father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!"

As he went up into heaven, Elijah's cloak fell to the ground, and Elisha must have wondered. "Do I really have spiritual power? Can I really follow the Lord and serve Him as Elijah did?"

Elisha Has God's Power

Elisha walked back the way he and Elijah had come. When Elisha reached the river, he rolled up the cloak and struck the water, just as Elijah had. As Elisha struck the river, he called out to the God of Elijah! And the water divided, just as it had for the great prophet Elijah!

God also gave Elisha spiritual power! Some young prophets who were watching hurried up to Elisha and bowed respectfully. "The Spirit of the Lord is with Elisha just as He was with Elijah," they said. Now Elisha would be their leader and teacher, just as Elijah had been before.

Questions and Discussions:

God called Elisha to be a prophet just as Elijah had been. The "spiritual power" of Elijah and Elisha refers to their reliance on God for the power to do miracles. Discuss why we need "spiritual power" in our every day life.

Can you think of Bible heroes you'd like to be like? Do you know any Christians living now who'd make good heroes? Who are they? Why would you want to be like them?

(For us, "spiritual power" means reliance on God to help us serve Him and do what's right. We can rely on God for spiritual power to say no to admit it when we do wrong; to do our homework; to tell others that we follow Jesus; to help us bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit.)

Quiz:

- 1. How did Elijah choose Elisha?**
(Elijah went up to him and threw his mantle over Elisha's shoulders. Elisha knew what that meant. It meant that Elijah wanted Elisha to follow him and serve God too.)
- 2. What did Elisha do before he was called to serve God?**
(Elisha told his parents good-bye. And after a special meal, he left home to serve Elijah.)
- 3. Name two places where Elijah and Elisha had passed.**
(Bethel and Jericho)
- 4. What did Elijah do when he wanted to cross over the Jordan River?**
(Elijah struck the river with his mantle, and the water divided so he and Elisha could walk over on dry land.)
- 5. What did Elisha request from Elijah?**
(He wanted a double share of spiritual power that Elijah had.)
- 6. What did Elisha say when Elijah was taken up to heaven?**
(Elisha cried out, "Father, Father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!")
- 7. How do we know Elisha received power from God?**

(When Elisha reached the river, he rolled up the cloak and struck the water, just as Elijah had. As Elisha struck the river, he called out to the God of Elijah! And the water divided, just as it had for the great prophet Elijah!)

8. Why was Elijah a good teacher for Elisha to follow?

(He was a good teacher for Elisha to follow because He relied on God all the time and he was a faithful worker of God.)

Bible Discovery:

Everyone Needs God's Power!

We all need God's power to help us be a victorious soldier! We can rely on the Holy Spirit and we can rely on the words of God. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. It is a long poem about the greatness of God's word. Use the words from the word list to fill in the blanks of this passage from Psalm 119. Let's pray and keep the words of God in our hearts at all time.

Then use the word list to fill in this Stack-a-Word puzzle. One word has been filled in to get you started. (Clue: Start with the other space that needs a 9-letter word.)

Activity:

Who Should I Imitate?

Elijah was a good role model for Elisha. Elisha imitated Elijah and wanted to serve God too. Elijah was probably Elisha's hero. How should we choose our role models? Who is your hero? Write down what kinds of qualities he/she possesses. Do they meet the following requirements?

1. He or she must be someone that fears God and loves God.
2. He or she must obey God's word.
3. He or she must have love for people.
4. He or she must want to serve God.

Lesson

11

A Shunammite Woman Asks for Help

Bible Text: 2 Kgs 4:8-37

Bible Truth:

A Shunammite woman asks Elisha to pray for her dead son.

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to rely on God for help.

Memory Verse:

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Mat 7:7)

Bible Background:

The Shunammite woman realized that Elisha was a man of God, so she prepared a room for him to use whenever he was in town. She did this out of kindness and because she sensed a need. Since she did so without any selfish motives, her kindness was rewarded far beyond her comprehension.

About Your Students:

In the past several lessons, your students have learned that when a worker of God prays often and has strong faith, God shows His mighty power. In this lesson, you need to teach your students that when an ordinary person ask for something with simple faith, God also shows His mighty power. Similar to previous lessons about trust

in God, you need to build up your students' reliance on God with testimonies and lots of Bible stories. Whenever possible, point out instances where God has been faithful to His people. Share testimonies of God's faithfulness in your own life. By listening to your stories, your students will eventually understand the love God has for His people. When your students encounter situations where they need to trust God, they will recall your stories on God's faithfulness, which will reinforce the fact that God will help them through any and all situations. In addition to teaching your students to rely on God for help during grave trouble, teach them to rely on God in their daily lives. Share how you seek God's help even for trivial matters such as losing a favorite pen and finding it after relying on God. You want your students not only to think of God in times of difficulty but also during ordinary or happy times.

Warm-Up:

If we really want something, we need to let people know, don't we? Who do you tell when you're hungry? Who do you tell when you're thirsty? When you need something, you usually tell someone whom you know has the power to help.

The woman in our Bible story needed something very special. And she knew who could help her.

Bible Story:

Elisha Is Received into the Shunammite's woman home

Elisha the prophet traveled to many towns in Israel. He and his servant often passed by the home of the woman near the town of Shunam. The woman looked out her window and saw the prophet pass by frequently.

"He looks tired and hungry," she observed. So one day the woman and her husband asked Elisha to stop for supper. After that, whenever Elisha passed by, the woman invited him to eat dinner with them. After a time the woman said to her husband, "Let's fix up a room for Elisha. Then he can stay overnight and rest."

So they built Elisha a room on their flat roof and put a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp there. From then on, whenever Elisha came through, he and his servant stayed in their own special room.

Elisha Promises the Woman a Son

Elisha was grateful for the woman's kindness. What could he do to thank her? She and her husband were wealthy, and Elisha didn't have any money anyway. Elisha asked the woman if he could talk to the king or the commander of the army and ask them for any favor for the woman, but the woman said no, she had all she needed

Later, Elisha wondered out loud what he could do for her. And Elisha's servant, Gehazi, had an idea. "Well," Gehazi said, "she doesn't have any children, and her husband is very old."

Elisha thought, "Good idea--now I know how I can help the woman." He sent Gehazi to get the woman. When she came upstairs, Elisha said, "Next year you will have a son."

The woman was surprised. She'd wanted children for years, but after waiting so long, she'd given up hope. She could hardly believe what the prophet was saying. "Oh, please," she said, "don't promise me a baby unless God really intends to give me one."

Elisha just smiled. Sure enough, about a year later, the Shunammite woman did give birth to a boy. God knew what she wanted, and God gave her a son.

The Boy Dies

The woman and her husband were very happy. The boy grew older, and Elisha stopped by often to see the family and stay in the special room on their flat roof.

Then one hot summer day, the boy went out in the fields with his father. It was very, very hot. After a time, the boy's head began to ache. He told his father, "My head hurts."

His father asked a servant to carry the boy home to his mother. The mother held the boy on her lap, but he soon died!

How upset the mother was! But she knew just what to do. She laid her son on the bed in Elisha's room. Then she hurried and asked her husband to have a servant saddle a donkey. She was going to see Elisha, right away!

"What's wrong?" her husband asked.

"Everything's all right," the woman said. She got on the donkey and told the servant to hurry. She had to see Elisha right way, to ask him for God's help.

Elisha Prays for the Dead Boy

Elisha saw the Shunammite woman coming. He sent Gehazi to ask if everything was all right, but the woman wouldn't talk with Elisha's servant.

When she reached Elisha she fell down and grab hold of his ankles, but she still wouldn't say what was wrong. As Elisha looked at her he saw she was upset and bitter. Finally the woman cried out, "Did I ask God for a son? Didn't I ask you not to promise me a son?"

Then Elisha understood. The son the woman loved so much had died! The woman had come to Elisha to see if God would give her son back to her. "I won't leave until you come with me," the woman said. Thus, Elisha got up and followed her to her home.

When Elisha reached the home, he went up to his room. He found the dead boy there. Elisha prayed hard that God would give back the boy's life. Elisha prayed and prayed. He lay down over the boy's body and prayed. He got up and walked around the room. Then Elisha lay down over the boy's body and prayed some more.

Finally, he felt the boy's body begin to get warm. Then the boy sneezed seven times, and the boy opened his eyes. God had given his life back to him.

Elisha called Gehazi and told him to call the woman. When she came back upstairs into the room, Elisha told her, "Here is your son."

The woman had looked to God for help and God did not disappoint her.

Questions and Discussions:

- Print the three key words of the Matthew 7:7, 8 on the board: **ask, seek, and knock**. Read the verses several times. Discuss the differences between these three actions and have them take turns to give a life example of how to ask, seek, and knock.
(Explain that God wants us to ask Him for help whenever we are in need.)
- How sensitive are you and your family to the needs of those who pass by your home and flow through your life---especially those who teach and preach God's Word? What special needs do they have that you or your family could meet?

Quiz:

True or False:

- The woman and her husband built Elisha a room on their flat roof and put a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp there. (T)
- Elisha asked the woman if he could talk to the king or the commander of the army and ask them for any favor for the woman. The woman told him she wanted a son. (F)
- She'd wanted children for years, but even after waiting for so long, she still didn't give up hope. (F)
- The boy grew older, and Elisha stopped by often to see the family and stay in their guest room. (T)
- One hot summer day, the boy went out in the fields with his father. It was very, very hot. After a time, the boy's head began to ache. He told his father, "My head hurts." (T)
- When the boy died, the woman went to see Elisha and said, "Did I ask God for a son? Didn't I ask you not to promise me a son?" (T)
- Elisha prayed hard that God would give the boy his life. Elisha prayed and prayed. He lay down over the boy's body and prayed. (T)
- Finally, he felt the boy's body begin to get warm. Then the boy sneezed ten times. (F)

Bible Discovery:

Help the Poor

In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus told a story to warn the wealthy about being selfish and trusting their wealth instead of Him.

Read the story and complete the puzzle with the missing words.

A rich man wore fancy _____ (5-down) and lived in luxury every day. A poor _____ (3-down) named Lazarus laid at the rich man's gate longing to eat the scraps that fell from the rich man's _____ (6-across). Lazarus was covered with sores, which the dogs licked.

Both men _____ (4-across). The angels carried Lazarus to be with the prophet Abraham. The rich man was buried and went to hell. While he was suffering there, he saw Abraham and Lazarus far way. He called out to say to Abraham, "Feel sorry for me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in _____ (2-across) and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire."

Abraham said, "Remember that in your lifetime you received good things while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. Also, a big hole has been made between us so no one can go from here to there or from there to here."

The man who had been rich said, "Then please send Lazarus to _____ (2-down) my five brothers so they won't also come to this place of torment."

Abraham said, "They have the words of the _____ (7-across). If they won't listen to Moses and the Prophets, they won't believe even if someone rose from the _____ (1-down)."

Activity 1:

What a Blessing!

To find out how Elisha helped a family, read 2 Kgs 4:8-10, 17-22, and 32-37. Then read the sentences below. The sketch in each blank resembles a letter of the alphabet. Can you guess which letters? Then think of a word suggested by the sketches that fit the corresponding blanks.

Activity 2:

Make Your Own Poem

Ask your students to make up their own poems with the words **ask**, **seek**, and **knock**.

Examples:

1. Whenever I have a difficult task, God will help me; I just have to ask.
2. When I am ill and feeling weak, God's kindness and care are what I will seek.
3. If something bad happens that gives me a shock, I know how to pray; it is ask, seek, and knock.

When students are finished, put up their work in their classroom.

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Lesson

12

God's Army of Angels Protects Elisha

Bible Text: 2 Kgs 6:8-23

Bible Truth:

God is in control of all events

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to praise God for being in control of events that affect us.

Memory Verse:

"My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth." (Ps 12:2)

Bible Background:

Elisha's servant may have been Gehazi because this chapter is not in chronological order.

Elisha told the king not to slaughter the Syrians. The king was not to take credit for what God alone had done. In giving food and water to them, he was heaping burning "coals of fire on their heads." (Prov 25:21,22)

About Your Students:

This lesson should reinforce your students' faith about God's protection over us. Since they have not yet developed the ability to grasp abstract concepts, they often don't think about an invisible God or the invisible spiritual world. Your children may take for granted God's everyday protection and only think of God when they are in trouble or when they are in church. Don't forget to show them how our faith enables us to praise God, especially in situations which are not in our control. Use Elisha's faith in God to illustrate this. Elisha was able to praise God in such a hostile environment because of his strong faith and fullness of the Holy Spirit. Use today's lesson to show how trust, praise, and Holy Spirit are integral to our faith.

Teach your students to praise God by reminding them that God is always in control of the environment. Humans cannot live without air, water, sunshine, or plants. God has always been protecting us, it's just that our eyes are blinded. Encourage your students by asking them about what things God doesn't have control over in their lives. You can take this opportunity to correct some of their misconceptions about God's omnipotence.

Warm-Up:

It is not easy to trust another person to be in control when we're in danger. Sometimes we feel afraid, and it's hard to trust God. Has that ever happened to you? (Ask your students to name a few of their own experiences.)

Of course, if you could see God standing right beside you, you wouldn't be afraid. The truth is that God is right here with us, even though we can't see Him, so we don't have to be afraid. That's a major message conveyed by our Bible; to remember that God is in control even when we feel afraid.)

Bible Story:

The country of Syria was right next to the country of Israel, where God's people lived. The two countries weren't friendly with one another at all. In fact, they were usually at war.

The king of God's people had to have his army ready to fight the enemy at any time.

The king of Syria kept moving his army to find a place where he could safely attack Israel. He wanted to surprise the king of Israel and attack before Israel's army could get there to defeat him.

Each time the king of Syria was ready, he told his officers, "Move the army to that place over there."

This move was supposed to be a secret. Somehow the king of Israel always seemed to know where the Syrians were going to attack. And the king of Israel moved his army to stop them.

The king of Syria was furious. How did the king of Israel know where he was going to attack? He told his officers, "Move over there." However, as soon as the Syrian army moved, the Israelite army moved too.

The Syrian king moved his army again and again. But every time he did so, the Israelites knew his secrets and got their army there in time.

No wonder the king of Syria was angry. He shouted at his officers. "There's a spy here! Someone is telling the king of Israel where we're going to move. Who's doing it?"

"The prophet Elisha tells the king of Israel every time we move. Somehow he knows just where we're going."

Soon a whole army corps set out for Elisha's hometown of Dothan. They came to the city at night, and while everyone was still sleeping, the Syrian army surrounded the town. The next morning, the Syrians would capture Elisha for sure!

Elisha's Servant Sees God's Army of Angels

When morning came, Elisha's servant got up early. He went outside the house and looked. Then suddenly he saw the glint of the rising sun on the chariots and spears of the Syrian army.

The servant could hardly believe his eyes. All those enemy soldiers! And they were surrounding the town. Elisha was in terrible danger, and the servant was terrified.

Right away the servant rushed in and woke Elisha. "There are enemy soldiers out there. They've surrounded the town. We're lost!"

"Don't worry," Elisha told his servant. "God is taking care of us." Then Elisha went outside with his servant. "Don't worry," Elisha told his servant, "There are more on our side than there are on their side."

Elisha's servant looked around. He didn't see anyone there at all. There were just the two of them--and thousands of Syrian soldiers. Is Elisha out of his mind?

Elisha saw how puzzled his servant was. So he prayed, "Dear Lord, open my servant's eyes so he can see." Suddenly, the servant was able to see what Elisha knew was there all the time. All around them, between God's prophets and enemy soldiers, was an army of bright angels in chariots of fire! And God's army was far more powerful than the Syrians. God was protecting Elisha and his servant all the time.

The Syrians Become Blind

Then Elisha prayed, "Lord, make the Syrians blind so they can't see what's really here." And then Elisha walked right up to the commander. "You're in the wrong place," Elisha told the commander. "Follow me, and I'll take you to Elisha."

So the Syrians followed Elisha, and Elisha led them right to Samaria, where the king of Israel was. Elisha led them through the city gate, behind the city's great stone walls. And then Elisha prayed again.

"Lord, let the Syrians see again." and the Syrians realized that they were inside Samaria! Now the Syrians were surrounded by the soldiers of the king of Israel!

How excited the king of Israel was. "Shall I kill the Syrians?" the king asked Elisha. "Of course not," the prophet told him. "Feed them and send them back home." Now that the king of Syria knows that God really is with the

Israelites, he won't send his soldiers to attack them any more.

Questions and Discussions:

Remind the students of earlier events in Elisha's life. Ask them to recall and remember other ways that God helped Elisha.

How do they feel knowing God is in control? How often do they trust Him for help? (Tell them that Elisha trusted God because he knew that God is always in control. God can do anything, and God helps us when we trust Him.)

Quiz:

- 1. How did the Syrian king feel when he realized the Israelites always knew his moves?**
(He was upset and angry.)
- 2. Who advised the Israelites where to move and how to follow the Syrian army's every move?**
(Elisha)
- 3. What was the Syrian king's plan?**
(He wanted to kill Elisha.)
- 4. How do you think Elisha's servant felt when he saw the Syrian soldiers?**
(He was scared and very worried.)
- 5. Why do you think Elisha didn't worry?**
(Elisha knew that God was in control of all things.)
- 6. What did Elisha do to the Syrian army?**
(He prayed to God and asked God to make them blind so that he could lead them to Samaria. When they entered Samaria, Elisha told the king to spare them and feed them.)
- 7. Do you think the Syrian army knew that God was with the Israelites?**
(Yes.)

Bible Discovery:

God Is In Control

Write these words on the board. The words can be sung to the melody of "Jesus Loves Me."

God made everything I see,
All the world, including me.
He can help me when I pray,
So I'll trust Him everyday.

Refrains:

Yes, I will trust Him,
Yes, I will trust Him.
Yes, I will trust Him;
I'll trust Him every day.

When I don't know what is right,
Or when I'm afraid at night,
Friend and helper He will be,
For He knows what's best for me.
(Sing Refrain.)

God sees all things everywhere;
I can trust Him to take care.
He is wise and kind and strong;
I will trust Him all day long.
(Sing Refrain.)

Activity 1:

Elisha Trusts in God

Are the following sentences true or false? Circle "T" if the sentence is true. Circle "F" if it is not.

Add or subtract words to make false sentences true.

1. The king of Syria wanted to surprise the king of Israel and attack them before Israel's army could get there to defeat them. (T)
2. Each time the king of Syria was ready, he told his officers to tell Elisha. (F. Each time the king of Syria was ready, he told his officers to move the army to a certain place in secret.)
3. Somehow, the king of Israel always seemed to know where the Syrians were going to attack. (T)
4. The king of Syria was happy that the Israelites knew his secrets. (F. The king of Syria was furious that the Israelites knew his secrets.)
5. A whole army corps set out for Elisha's hometown of Jerusalem. (F. At Dothan.)
6. Elisha's servant saw the chariots and spears of the Syrian army. (T)
7. Elisha prayed to God and asked God to open his servant's ears. (F. Eyes.)
8. An army of bright angels in chariots of horses was protecting Elisha and his servant. (F. An army of bright angels in chariots of fire was protecting Elisha and his servant.)
9. Elisha prayed to God to make the Syrians blind so they couldn't see what was really there. (T)
10. The Syrians followed Elisha, and Elisha led them to the battle field. (F. The Syrians followed Elisha, and Elisha led them to Samaria.)

Activity 2:

Chariots of God and Man of God

Your students will enjoy using modeling clay to make soldiers. They can also model figures of Elisha and his servant. Paint a cardboard box to make the house.

Other children may want to make chariots for the clay army. They can make the chariots by cutting down half-pint milk cartons into the shape shown here, and attaching cardboard wheels with brass fasteners. They can use sticks as the chariot's tongue. The children can either put clay figures in the chariots or draw and cut soldiers from paper.

Notes:

Lesson

13

Final Review

Bible Text: All previous texts

Lesson Aim:

To enable your students to draw closer to God and rely on Him always.

Final Quiz:

True or False:

Cross out the wrong words and write down the right words in their place.

1. The prophesy came true, just as the prophet had predicted. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Judah, invaded the city and destroyed Jerusalem. (F, the king of Babylon)
2. Many years went by, and the Jews finished the temple. Then Ezra the governor, came from Babylon with another group of people. (F, Ezra the scribe)
3. Isaiah, the prophet, warned the kings of Judah that God was about to punish the people with destruction. (F, Jeremiah)
4. Elisha's servant saw the chariots and spears of the Syrian army. (T)
5. Elisha prayed to God and asked God to open his servant's ears. (F. Eyes.)
6. An army of bright angels in chariots of horses was protecting Elisha and his servant. (F. An army of bright angels in chariots of fire was protecting Elisha and his servant.)

7. Elisha asked the woman if he could talk to the king or the commander of the army and ask them for any favor for the woman. The woman told him she wanted a son. (F)
8. Ahab and Jezebel claimed that Baal controlled the rains that made Israel's crops grow. They wanted all the people to worship Baal too. (T)
9. God spoke to Elijah again and told him to leave Israel and travel to a town called Zarephath where another prophet would help him. (F)

Fill in the Blanks:

10. For three years no _____ (rain) fell in Israel. The crops and grass died. Animals and people began to starve. Even then the people of Israel weren't sure who the true God was. Maybe it didn't rain because Baal was angry. They couldn't decide if _____ (Baal) or the _____ (God) of Israel had control over rain.
11. When the king found Elijah, he blamed Elijah for the drought and called him a _____. (trouble-maker)
12. Then Elijah challenged Ahab to bring all _____ (450) prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel. They would have a contest to see which God was real!
13. Elijah spoke to the people, "How long will you keep trying to worship both the Lord and Baal? You've got to the decide which is the real God and _____ (worship) Him only."

Answer in your own words:

14. **When Nehemiah arrived in Judah, he was greeted with opposition. How did he handle it?**
(He relied on God's help. He refused to allow fear to stop him from doing what God had called him to do.)
15. **Why didn't Mordecai bow down to Haman?**
(If Mordecai bowed down, it would be an act of disobedience and betrayal towards the one true God.)
16. **After Haman found out Mordecai was a Jew, what plan did he come up with to get even?**

(Haman planned to kill Mordecai along with all the Jews.)

17. **What did Elijah tell God after he had fled to the wilderness under a broom tree?**
(He told God he could not do any more work because he was afraid and tired.)
18. **What kind of help did the angel give to Elijah?**
(The angel gave him a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water.)
19. **What did Nehemiah and Ezra do with the people after rebuilding the city wall?**
(They set aside a day to dedicate the wall to God.)
20. **What were some of the promises the people made to God?**
(Take good care of the temple, bring tithes (offerings) to the temple, do not buy or sell on the Sabbath, not marry people who worship other gods.)

Activity:

Scratch Out Love

One player is selected to be Scratch. If there is a large group there should two Scratches. Players join hands and form a circle. Scratch is in the center. The leader acts as the reader and as he reads continually 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, players walk slowly around Scratch who is standing still. When the readers says the word charity, players must stop, drop hands and stoop. Scratch tries to tag a player in the circle before he can get in a stooped position. If he succeeds the player tagged changes places with him and becomes Scratch and the game continues. If Scratch fails to tag a players, players resume their original position and reader continues to read. Reader may use the word love in several places instead of charity as he reads and only say, "Charity," when he wishes players to stop.