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Look, Listen and Live

Book 5

On Trial For GOD

Sunday School Lessons

from Elisha, Daniel, Jonah, Nehemiah, Esther

Look,
Listen & Live



Book 5
On Trial for GOD

Based on the Sunday School Lessons published by the AIC Sunday School Committee, Juba, Southern Sudan.

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INTRODUCTION

These lessons were written in response to some cries for help from young people who had been asked to teach in Sunday Schools. They are based on the Look, Listen and Live set of pictures (Book 1, green cover) published by Global Recordings Network Australia (formerly Gospel Recordings), whom we would like to thank for permission to use their material and encouragement to go ahead with the project. These pictures are an all important visual aid in the lessons. A reproduction of the main picture or pictures needed in each lesson has been printed at its beginning.

This book deals only with the lesson section of the Sunday School and each is planned to last about twenty minutes. The rest of the Sunday School time, composed of singing, prayer, Bible reading, quizzes and other activities, is left to the teachers to plan. We recommend that each lesson should end with a short prayer and song based on that week's teaching. The lessons are aimed at a fairly wide age range of children from 7 to 12 years.

When they were first tried out, the teachers wrote each lesson out week by week in an exercise book so they were purposely kept quite short. Some lessons have been expanded but the idea was to give a fairly brief but comprehensive outline for the teacher to fill out during their own preparation.

The aim printed at the top of each story directs the teaching of that lesson. To make the lessons suitable for children, we cannot teach the whole truth about God in each lesson. Instead the teacher should concentrate on one or two truths in each lesson so that children gradually come to know more about God.

The lesson is not meant to be read to the class from the book. It aims to be the teacher's walking stick and not a pair of crutches.

AIC Sudan Sunday School Committee.

TEACHER INSTRUCTION

READ THIS BEFORE EVERY LESSON

Teacher's Preparation

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Have you prayed and asked GOD to help you prepare the lesson?
2. Have you read the plan of the lesson and learned the aim?
3. Have you read the Bible passage and do you know the story thoroughly?
4. Do you have your pictures, objects, questions and other teaching aids ready?
5. Have you planned your revision step?

Revision

This is where you make strong the meaning of the lesson. Do not take longer than 4 minutes. Use some of these ideas or plan your own ideas.

1. Show the picture again and get the children to tell you the story.
2. Plan a quiz.
3. Tell the students again the aim of the lesson.

Lesson 1 Naaman Visits Elisha's House

Picture 1

Aim

To show that we cannot come to God trusting in our own importance.

Reading: 2 Kings 5:1-12

Memory Verse: During this set of lessons the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:1-17 will be learnt. Exodus 20:1-2.

God spoke, and these were his words: "I am the Lord your God."



Lesson Plan

Introduction

People are proud of the country they come from. If you come from Australia you will be proud that it is the world's largest island. If you don't come from Australia, think of similar things which make you proud of your country.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Naaman was very proud of his country Syria. It was an important country with a beautiful capital called Damascus and lovely rivers which made the land fertile. He was very proud of his position in the army which had won many battles. He was proud of what the King of Syria thought of him, 2 Kings 5:1.
2. But there was one thing Naaman was not proud of. He had leprosy. In those days there was no cure for it, not even in the advanced and clever country of Syria, 5:1.
3. However, there was an unimportant slave girl from the poor neighbouring country of Israel who knew where to get help. She told her mistress who was Naaman's wife about God's prophet in Israel who could cure leprosy, 5:2-3.
4. Of course Naaman heard about all this from his wife and got leave of absence from the King of Syria to visit Israel. He took a great many valuable gifts with him from rich Syria and a letter of introduction saying who he was, 5:4- 6.
5. But the important General Naaman went to the wrong person. As a proud soldier he went to see the King of Israel who couldn't cure the leprosy and was very worried by the visit. Syria and Israel were often at war with each other, 5:7.
6. God's prophet Elisha heard what had happened and instructed the King of Israel to send Naaman to his small house, 5:8.
7. Show Picture 1. Point out how angry Naaman looks. Elisha the prophet chose not to receive Naaman and all his gifts. He just sent his servant out to him with some very simple instructions to go and wash seven times in the river Jordan. The proud soldier Naaman from Syria despised the little country of Israel. He was too angry to follow the instructions, and he still had his leprosy, 5:9-11.

Teach Memory Verse

Our Response to the Story

Why didn't the prophet Elisha welcome Naaman? Why did he send his servant to this important man with such strange instructions? Elisha wanted to show Naaman that his pride in his country, his wealth and position would not help him in Israel. God would heal Naaman when he stopped trusting in his own ability. His anger was keeping him away from God's blessing. We are sometimes too proud of what we can do and that often keeps us from receiving God's blessings.

In the next lesson we will hear how Naaman learnt the truth of these words.

Lesson 2 Naaman is Healed

Picture 2

Aim

To show that when Naaman abandoned his trust in his own abilities and wealth then God healed him. In the same way when we humble ourselves before God he will bless us.

Reading: 2 Kings 5:13-16

Read 2 Kings 5:1-16 so that the whole story is reviewed.

Memory Verse:

The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:1-2. Review last week's passage and complete the learning of verse 2.

God spoke, and these were his words: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves."



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Before the class begins arrange with 3 people, students or teachers, to act out a little play. Two people have a disagreement and the third person comes in with a suggestion as to how the problem can be solved. Perhaps it could be about kicking a ball into a neighbour's garden. Both players make excuses as to why they should not go and get it. A third person persuades them to go together with an apology.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Naaman the important general refused to follow the prophet Elisha's suggestions to cure his leprosy. Why should he, a successful soldier, who could pay well for any cure, go and wash in the muddy little river Jordan? But Naaman's servants were wiser and more humble men than their master. Naaman listened to their persuasion, 2 Kings 5:9-13.
2. As the teacher tells the story of Naaman washing in the river each member of the class can pretend to be Naaman and act it out. After the seventh wash Naaman's leprosy went. Show picture 2 and point out the joy on everyone's face, 5:14.
3. Naaman forgot all his own pride and importance. He knew there was only one God, the God who Elisha spoke about. He wanted now to give a thank you gift to Elisha, but Elisha refused. He wanted Naaman to understand that the cure was a gift from God. It was God's power not Elisha's and therefore Elisha would not accept payment, 5:16.
4. (Optional) Teachers could go on to tell the story of Gehazi, Elisha's servant, who could not resist all that wealth and plotted to obtain it. His deceit did not bring any blessings, but instead a curse. He became ill with leprosy, 5:19-27.

Teach Memory Verse

This gives us another example of God's power at work.

Review the verses learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

With the help of the class think of different things people put their trust in. Some examples could be; money, possessions, job, education etc. These are all good things but we need to remember, like Naaman, that they are God's gifts. After Naaman was healed by the God of Elisha from then on he wanted to worship and trust him. Naaman no longer wanted to be full of himself. That is an example we could follow.

Lesson 3 Elisha and the Army of God

Picture 3

Aim

To show how God protected Elisha and continues to protect us today, but not always in the way we expect.

Reading: 2 Kings 6:8-17

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:3.

Worship no god but me.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Soldiers are very familiar to children in Africa. Talk about the different jobs soldiers do. Some are from the artillery. They fire the guns. Others drive tanks or are engineers. One of the most dangerous jobs is to be a spy or a scout and go in amongst the enemy to find out what their plans are and then report back to their own side.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. The King of Syria and the King of Israel were at war with each other. The King of Syria could not understand why each time he planned an ambush against the army of Israel it failed. He accused his officers of being spies and working for the King of Israel, 2 Kings 6:8, 10, 11.
2. The King of Syria's officers told him it was not them but the prophet Elisha. He was like a spy and knew the King of Syria's plans, 6:9, 12.
3. God who knows all things, even the secrets of men's hearts, revealed the King of Syria's plans to Elisha. Immediately the King of Syria found out where Elisha was living, in a little town, and sent a large powerful army at night to surround it. This was all just to catch Elisha, but Elisha was a man of God, 6:13-14.
4. Elisha's young servant was terrified when he got up the next morning and saw the powerful Syrian army outside the town. "What shall we do?" he asked Elisha, 6:15.
5. Learn the words of Elisha's reply to the servant and his prayer. They are very powerful and dramatic. God had sent his own army to protect Elisha. This was more much powerful than even the great Syrian force, 6:16-17. Show Picture 3.

Teach Memory Verse

Review verses learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

War is terrifying, as we have heard and seen on TV. Elisha's servant was very frightened and thought they were about to die. Through war families are separated, homes and possessions lost, people go hungry and there are so many deaths. But many believers do experience the most wonderful deliverances, often from danger and death. Perhaps you have a story to share here. God's army of angels is always protecting us although they are normally unseen. God is our Creator and the source of all power. The Lord Jesus has defeated all the evil powers in this present world. One day we shall actually see His complete victory when God establishes his rule in the new heavens and earth, 2 Peter 3:13.

Lesson 4 Elisha and the Blind Army

Picture 4

Aim

To show that God of Elisha is greater than all our enemies. If we trust God we do not need to take revenge on any enemy, as God is the perfect judge.

Reading: 2 Kings 6:17-23

Read 2 Kings 6:8-23 so that the whole story is reviewed.

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:4.

Do not make for yourself images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Ask the class what they think a person needs in order to be a good soldier. He needs to be strong, well trained, have good eyesight and obedient to his commanding officers, etc.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Elisha was facing the King of Syria's powerful army. He was one man standing against a huge army. What could he do? Elisha did the best and most powerful thing he could. He prayed to God. He asked God to make the soldiers blind. God did, 2 Kings 6:18.
2. Show Picture 4. Blind soldiers are useless. They had come to this town especially to capture Elisha. Describe how Elisha tricked these Syrian soldiers who now couldn't see him and led them to Samaria, the capital city of their enemy, 6:19.
3. Elisha prayed again and God restored the Syrian soldiers' sight. How ashamed and frightened these soldiers now were, 6:20.
4. The King of Israel immediately wanted to kill them, but he listened to Elisha's wise words. God had worked miracles in this war through Elisha and so Israel had been spared. Now these Syrian soldiers should be spared and no revenge taken, 6:21-22.
5. To their great surprise the Syrian soldiers were given a feast and then sent back home. As a result the fighting stopped, 6:23. Killing the soldiers would have prolonged this war.

Teach Memory Verse

Review all the verses learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

Elisha's God is our God. He is greater than all our enemies. We do not need to seek revenge if we are trusting him. The New Testament has some very practical advice as to how we should act towards those who are against us. Matthew 5:44. Romans 12:17-21. The Christians in Rome were being persecuted by their government when Paul wrote these words to them. Read these verses to the class. Challenge the children as to how they treat people who oppose them. Do they wait for an opportunity to take some kind of revenge on them, to abuse them? This is the way of the world not the way for a child of God.

Lesson 5 The Siege of Samaria

Picture 5

Aim

To show how God honoured Elisha as he remained a faithful and fearless servant of God in extremely difficult times. He is an example to us.

Reading: 2 Kings 6:24-7:2

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:5.

Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the Lord your God and I tolerate no rivals.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Most people in Africa today know what it feels like to be hungry. Today's story is about a town where the people were so hungry that many were dying. They could not afford to buy food. The teacher could give some examples of how food has risen in price in the last few years.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Describe how some time after the last story the King of Syria again went to war with Israel. His army surrounded the capital Samaria. As a result there was a terrible famine in the town. No-one could go out to obtain food so the prices of anything available grew out of all proportion. There is very little meat to eat in a donkey's head, and the tiny amount of dung mentioned in v25 would not cook anything, 2 Kings 6:24- 25.
2. The King of Israel walked around the city wall. He was even wearing poor clothes made out of sacks under his King's coat to remind him of the peoples' problems. Describe how the King met two women and heard about their terrible behaviour. They were so hungry they had eaten a child. They had begun to behave like animals. Show Picture 5. Notice the Syrian army camped beyond the town wall, 6:26-30.
3. The King was terribly angry. He blamed God for the terrible situation his people were in, Verse 27. This time God had not saved them from the Syrians. The King decided to kill Elisha, the servant of God, and sent a messenger to do it, 6:30-32.
4. Elisha was at home probably discussing the serious situation with the town elders. God revealed the King's evil plan completely to Elisha, before the messenger even arrived. Then the elders watched amazed as right after the messenger came the angry King himself. He had decided to do what many others try and do, to go ahead of God. He couldn't wait for God to act any longer, he would take matters into his own hands, 6:32-33.
5. Elisha was ready with some amazing words from God. They meant that twenty four hours later the siege of the town would be over, the Syrian army would be gone and food would be plentiful as well as cheap. Three kilos of wheat would cost 1 coin, 7:1.
6. The King's servant could not believe even God would accomplish this. His unbelief earned him a terrible warning, 7:2.

Teach Memory Verse

Elisha obeyed this command even in very difficult times. Review all the verses learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

The situation in Samaria shows the terrible behaviour human beings are capable of when they forget God. Elisha the man who trusted and walked with God even in this terrible time is so different. He had the courage to stand up against the power of an earthly King as well as the unbelieving ridicule of the King's steward.

William Carey was an Englishman who lived two hundred years ago. His parents were too poor to send him to school so he taught himself and became a pastor. He said, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God". By the time he died, amongst other things, he had founded a Missionary Society, established Churches in India and translated the Bible into several Indian languages.

Lesson 6 The Visit of the Four Lepers to the Syrian Camp

Picture 6

Aim

To show that God provides deliverance which needs to be shared.

Reading: 2 Kings 7:3-20

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:5.
Review the beginning and complete the verse.

Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the Lord your God, and I tolerate no rivals. I bring punishment on those who hate me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Talk to the class about what happens when people hear good news. They run about quickly sharing the news with everyone they can find. A little play using three or four people, which has been practised beforehand, could demonstrate this.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. The story today concerns four men who shared some good news. However, when the story begins they were very miserable because they were ill with leprosy and they were outside the walls of Samaria. Show Picture 5 and use it to review what was happening in that town. The men discussed what to do and finally decided they might as well go to the Syrian army camp. It was night time when they set off, 2 Kings 7:3-5.
2. Meanwhile the Syrians heard a tremendous noise like a great army coming. They were so frightened that they ran away leaving everything behind them. God had sent the great Syrian army running home, 7:6-7.
3. The four men reached the camp and found no one there. They were amazed. Show Picture 6. Describe how the men went from one tent to another taking anything they wanted, 7:5,8.
4. Then the four men suddenly thought of all the people still suffering inside Samaria. They must share the good news of the Syrians' departure with them. Quickly, even though it was still night time, they returned to Samaria and shouted out the news to the town guards, 7:9-10.
5. The King even got out of bed to hear it but he thought it was a trick by the Syrians to get the people to go outside the town of Samaria. He sent some men to find out what had happened. They found the four lepers' story was true, 7:12-15.
6. Soon the people of Samaria were selling food from the Syrian camp at very low prices just as God had told Elisha. (See previous lesson No.5). God has saved Israel according to his plan, 7:16.
7. But the King's steward, as Elisha had prophesied (see previous lesson) was trampled to death by people rushing to get the food, 7:17-20.

Teach Memory Verse - Review all verses learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

A town in Africa was so short of food that aeroplanes parachuted grain to them. An elderly woman had walked some miles outside the town to gather firewood. This was a dangerous thing to do because of land mines. Suddenly she saw a great pile of grain. She couldn't believe what she saw. She looked around to see if there was anyone watching her and then filled everything she had with the grain and hurried back to the town. As she went she showed everyone she met what she had found. It was grain that had missed the dropping zone. Everyone shared and praised God for this provision.

As we trust in God he does provide according to his plan, as the people in Samaria and today have found. His perfect and complete provision is to save men from sin through the sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ. This is news we need to share with others, Romans 5:8.

Lesson 7 Jonah Flees from God

Picture 7

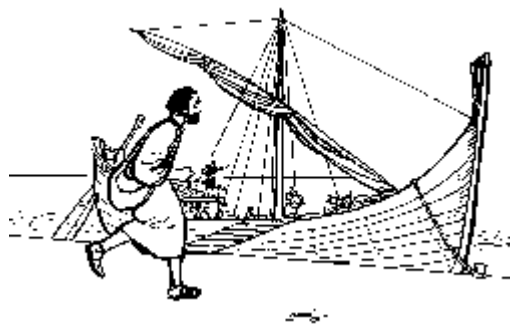
Aim

To show that wherever we go we cannot move away from God's care and protection.

Reading: Jonah 1:1-10

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:6.

But I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Describe how children often run and hide somewhere when they hear their parents calling them to do some jobs they really don't want to do.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Jonah was a prophet like Elisha, but he tried to run away from the work God told him to do. God commanded Jonah to go and preach in Nineveh. They were very wicked and they were also enemies of the people of Israel. Jonah did not want to see these wicked people saved. He was not afraid of them but he wanted God to punish them, Jonah 1:1-2.
2. Jonah thought if he went away from his own country of Israel he could get away from God. So he went and got a boat leaving Israel and going in the opposite direction from Nineveh, 1:3. Show Picture 7.
3. But as soon as the ship was at sea God sent a great storm. Everyone was terrified. Describe what they did, 1:4-5.
4. The captain found Jonah down in the ship asleep! Why wasn't he praying and helping to save the ship? 1:5-6.
5. The sailors drew lots and found out that Jonah was to blame for the storm. In his answer to the sailors' questions, Jonah shows that he knows in his head that God is sovereign ruler of heaven and earth but he could not acknowledge it in his actions. Jonah was full of courage even if it was misplaced. We shall see the amazing way God rescues Jonah in the next lesson, 1:7-10.

Teach Memory Verse

Review all the verses learnt so far. Plus: Jonah was not willing to do this when God asked him.

Our Response to the Story

Read Psalm 139:1-12 to the class. It would be best if the Psalm could be read well by two people each reading a verse in turn. Read the Psalm through twice and ask the children to listen for and be ready to tell you at the end all the different places God says he is with us. If you have a blackboard they could be written down in a list.

Finish the lesson with a prayer thanking God for his continual presence everywhere.

Lesson 8 Jonah and the Great Fish

Picture 8

Aim

To show that even in the most terrible places we can imagine, God is there.

Reading: Jonah 1:10-2:10

It would be best to read the whole of Jonah 1 to revise the complete story.

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:7.

Do not use my name for evil purposes.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Show Picture 7, and by questioning the class review the previous story. Use questions such as:

Who is the man hurrying towards the boat? Jonah 1:3.

Who is he hurrying away from? Jonah 1:3.

Why is he running away from God? Jonah 1:2-3.

What happened to the boat? Jonah 1:4.

What was Jonah doing while everyone was working hard to save the ship? Jonah 1:6.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. The sailors, who did not know the living God and who worshipped idols were amazed that Jonah had tried to run away. They wanted to know how to stop the storm, 1:10-11.
2. Jonah said they must throw him into the sea. The sailors did not want to do this. They even tried to get near to the shore first. But the storm grew worse so they asked God not to blame them for Jonah's death. They knew he would die if they threw him overboard. 1:12-14.
3. But Jonah did not die. Show Picture 8. God sent a big fish which swallowed Jonah, 1:15-17.
4. Inside a big fish must be a terrible place to be. There are a few men who have had Jonah's experience and lived to talk about it. Jonah did the only thing he could do. He prayed to God. He knew that God was with him even in his days inside the fish, 1:17-2:1.
5. In his prayer Jonah realised that God was with him and was listening to him, 2:2. He thought he had put himself beyond God's help, 2:4. Now he really knew that God is finally in control of our lives, 2:3. At the end of his prayer Jonah praised God and promised to obey him, 2:9.
6. The fish vomited Jonah out onto dry land, 2:10.

Teach Memory Verse

Review all the verse learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

Many people of all ages in various parts of the world, such as in Africa, northern Ireland and what was Yugoslavia, in the last few years can testify to God's presence with them during times of great terror and suffering when they have run away from war, lived in refugee camps or been in prison. Read out to the class the actual Bible verses from Jonah's prayer that are mentioned under Item 5 in the previous section. Perhaps some members of the class can mention a time of special difficulty and danger and say how they were reminded of God's presence with them.

Lesson 9 Jonah at Nineveh

Picture 9

Aim

To show that God forgives those who repent and turn to him for salvation.

Reading: Jonah 3:1-10, Matthew 12:40-41

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:7.
Complete the learning of verse 7.

Do not use my name for evil purposes, because I, the Lord your God, will punish anyone who misuses my name.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

It sometimes happens when our farmers are due to plant seed they wait and see for any signs of rain. But then when the rain stops, the sun comes out and can kill the seed. Eventually the rain comes again and farmers do some more planting. They had a second chance and there was a harvest.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. God asked Jonah a second time to go and preach to the people in the town of Nineveh. Jonah went, Jonah 3:1-3.
2. Jonah warned the people in this very large and very evil city to turn back to God or in forty days their city would be destroyed, 3:3-4.
3. Jonah's message from God had a great effect on the people. They believed what they heard was true and said they were sorry for the evil they had done. The King led his people in their change of behaviour. They took off their rich clothes and fasted so they could give time to God in prayer. Show picture 9. Jonah on the left stands preaching to the repenting people, 3:5-9.
4. God saw that the people were sorry and had changed their behaviour, not just their clothes and so he did not punish them. Repentance means not just being sorry for what has been done but changing a way of life and not returning to old evil ways, 3:10.

Teach Memory Verse

The people of Nineveh changed and wanted to obey God's commandments. They understood the warning of this verse.

Review all the verses learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

Today we are like the people of Nineveh. We have forgotten God and disobeyed him. We need to repent. Jesus talked about Jonah and prophesied he would die and spend three days in the darkness of the earth, as Jonah spent three days in the darkness of the fish. The people of Nineveh are an example to us. We, like them, deserve punishment. We need to turn to God and thank him for Jesus who gives everlasting life through his death and resurrection. He is the one who is greater than Jonah, Matthew 12:40-41.

If you get dirty playing outside you could just change your clothes, but you would not be clean unless you washed your body as well. To repent we need to say we are sorry to God and to change our lives. We will want to do this if we love God as he loves us, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Review all the verses learnt so far

Lesson 10 Esther and the King

Picture 10

Aim

To show how God prepared Esther for the work he had planned for her.

Reading: Esther 1:1-12; 2:1-18

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Review Exodus 20:1-7.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Ask the class what they think makes a person beautiful. There may be some giggles over this, but Sunday School is a good place to learn that God has created some people with very good looks. Beauty is given to glorify God and praise him. He made the world and its inhabitants that way, Psalms 8:1. Our stories in the next three weeks are about a young woman who because of her beauty became a queen.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. King Xerxes of Persia was very powerful. He ruled over lands from India to Sudan. He was very rich. He gave a feast for all his governors and officials showing off all his wealth which lasted for six months! Esther 1:1- 4.
2. Later the King gave a feast lasting a week for everyone in his capital city of Susa. At that feast his Queen refused to appear before the guests, probably because they were very drunk. The King was so angry that he dismissed her, 1:5-12.
3. A great search was made to find the most beautiful girl to become the king's new Queen, 2:1-4.
4. Esther was a young Jewish girl from the country of Israel. Her parents had died so her Uncle Mordecai looked after her. Esther and Mordecai had been captured and taken to Persia with many other Jews when the Persian armies had conquered Israel. Esther was very beautiful, 2:5-7.
5. Esther was chosen to go to the palace to be given a year's beauty treatment. She not only had beautiful looks she also had a beautiful character and got on well with those in charge. She even had seven girls to look after her, 2:8-9; 12.
6. When it was Esther's turn to be seen by the King he liked her more than anyone else and made her his queen. Show Picture 10. 2:15-18.
7. But Esther on her Uncle Mordecai's advice, did not tell anyone she was a Jew who had been captured from Israel, 2:10-11.

Teach Memory Verse

Review Exodus 20:1-7.

Our Response to the Story

The King was a very powerful and wealthy man. He could be very ruthless too. He had dismissed one queen. Esther was a very young beautiful girl with very little power except what her beauty and character gave her. But as a Jew she knew how God had cared and protected her people. So she left home and went to live a quite different life. She was very brave. She is an example of trust and obedience to us.

Lesson 11 Mordecai Refuses to Bow Down

Picture 11

Aim

To show how Mordecai and Esther remained faithful to God's commandments in a foreign land and under great pressure not to do so.

Reading: Esther 3:1-15, 4:1-17

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:8.

Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Ask the class to think of times when important people have come to the church or their city. Everyone wants to please them, provide the most comfortable place to rest, and the best food to eat. Some visitors are very kind and pleasant but others can be very proud.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. The King appointed a new prime minister. Everyone was ordered to show respect to Haman when he walked past by bowing down to him. This made him very proud. This part of the story could be acted out, with one member of the class being Haman and the rest bowing down to him as he walks by! Esther 3:1-2.
2. However, one man amongst the King's officials refused to bow down. This was Mordecai. Why? To a Jew bowing down to someone meant worship. The whole class should say the second and third commandments, Exodus 20:3-5. Mordecai's refusal to bow down to him made Haman very angry. Show Picture 11. The class could also act this part of the story, 3:2-5.
3. Haman decided to have his revenge on Mordecai. He told the King that one of the groups of people he ruled over was not obeying the laws of the country. He wanted the King's permission to kill them entirely. Haman would give the King a very large sum of money when it was done. The King agreed without asking any questions, 3:6 & 8-11.
4. Instructions were issued by Haman and sent everywhere that on a particular day all Jews everywhere were to be killed. The King did not know that his queen Esther was a Jew, 3:12-15.
5. Mordecai was horrified. He went about in clothes that showed his sorrow. Queen Esther heard and sent him some new clothes. He refused them and asked her to go to the King and plead for the lives of the Jews, 4:1-8.
6. Esther sent back a message explaining that if anyone went in to see the King without being called first, they could be killed unless the King held his sceptre out to them. Show Picture 10 and point out the sceptre in the King's hand. This golden rod was a symbol of the King's power, 4:8-11.
7. Mordecai sent the young Queen Esther a warning. Even though she was Queen and lived in a palace she was still a Jew and would be killed. But perhaps God had put her there especially for this time. 4:12-14.
8. Esther agreed to go to the King, but she asked the Jews to work with her. For three days beforehand they were to fast and pray that the King would receive her, 4:15-17.

Teach Memory Verse: Review all the verses learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

Both Mordecai and Esther remained faithful to God, even when it was very dangerous to do so. They knew God was greater than all the powers against them. In an African country a Christian leader was pressured to renounce his faith in Christ. When the army invaded his Bible college looking for him he hid in a deep ditch covered with leaves for the whole night. The soldiers crossed over the ditch without seeing him. God hid him and he lived many years to tell the story of the Heavenly Father's care and protection. Do you believe that God can care for you?

Lesson 12 Esther's Feast

Picture 12

Aim

To show how God answered the prayers of the Jews.

Reading: Esther 5:1-14; 7:1-10; 9:1-4

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:9-10.

You have six days in which to do your work, but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Ask the class how you feel like when you are really frightened. Your mouth goes dry, you feel as if there is a big knot in your stomach, your knees might even be knocking together.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Queen Esther had a very frightening thing to do but she had all the Jewish people praying for her. She had to go and see the King even though he had not called for her. This could mean death unless he held his golden rod out to her, Esther 4:16.
2. Describe how Esther dressed herself beautifully and went to see the King. He did hold out his sceptre to her and was even pleased to see her. Show Picture 10. 5:1-3.
3. Esther wisely did not tell the King her great problem, she just asked the King and his prime minister, Haman, to a feast that night. After they had enjoyed the first feast she asked them to come again the next night and then she would have a request for the King, 5:4-8.
4. Haman was so proud to be invited to eat with the King and Queen. He boasted about it. But his happiness turned to anger when he remembered Mordecai who still refused to bow to him. Haman and his family erected a special gallows as high as the city walls to hang Mordecai on when the day came to kill all the Jews, 5:9-14.
5. At the second feast the King asked again, "Queen Esther what do you want?" The following verses in Esther 7:1-6 are very dramatic. The teacher should learn the words of the conversation off by heart and act out the parts of the King and Esther. Remind the class that Esther is a Jew. She is asking for her own life and her peoples'. Show Picture 12.
6. The King was very angry when he heard of Haman's wicked plans. The King had been tricked by them. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai and the Jews were saved. God was with Esther and answered the prayers of the Jews. Today the Jews still have a special feast day to remember Queen Esther's act. 7:7, 9-10; 9:1-4.

Teach Memory Verse

Recite all the Commandments learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

"God stepping in to save South Africa." This was the heading in a newspaper after 25,000 people from the provinces of Natal met in a stadium for a Jesus Peace Rally to pray for the government elections. As the thousands prayed a meeting between opposing tribal and political leaders took place. Prayer was answered as the elections were peaceful, with all groups being represented. God still hears and answers prayer today.

Lesson 13 Daniel and His Friends

Picture 13

Aim

To show how God honours those who honour Him.

Reading: Daniel 1:1-21

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:10.

On that day no one is to work - neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

It is sad but true that there are many people, especially children, who are slaves today. Wars often bring slavery. Talk to the class about what slavery is. A slave is owned by another person and often sent away from his home country. He owns nothing and earns nothing and is often very cruelly treated.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Daniel and his three friends were slaves. As young boys they had been captured in war and taken away from their homes in Israel to Babylon, (now Iran and Iraq), Daniel 1:1-2.
2. The King of Babylon ordered that good looking, clever boys be selected from good homes in Israel, even from the royal family, and trained to be his servants. He ordered them to be well looked after with food from his own table, and well educated, 1:3-7.
3. The King of Babylon's food was offered to idols before it was eaten, but Daniel and his friends wanted to honour the living God and continue to keep his commandments, so they refused the rich food. *Show Picture 13.* Describe how Daniel first went to the King's steward who was willing, but too frightened, to help. The steward is standing behind the maid looking worried in the picture, 1:8-10.
4. Tell how Daniel went, with a plan, to the soldier who guarded them. They were allowed to eat vegetables and drink water for ten days and then tested against other slaves who had eaten the King's food, 1:11-14.
5. God honoured Daniel and his friends, for after ten days they were fitter than anyone else. After three years they became healthier and wiser than all the young men of Babylon, 1:15-21.

Teach Memory Verse

This is the commandment that Eric Liddell wanted to obey.

Recite the commandments learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

Eric Liddell was a young Scottish runner. In the Olympic Games of 1924 he found out that the race he was expected to win, the 100 metres, was to be run on a Sunday. As a Christian he believed he would be breaking God's commandment if he ran that day, so he refused. Everyone was very upset. Instead, Liddell said he would run in the 400 metres.

As he went out to run someone handed him a piece of paper which read, "I will honour those who honour me," I Samuel 2:30. God honoured Liddell's witness, as he did Daniel's, and he won the race. God honours our witness today.

Lesson 14 Daniel and the King of Babylon

Picture 14

Aim

To show how Daniel and his three friends walked closely with God in an enemy land, so God gave them great power and responsibility.

Reading: Daniel 2:1-49

This is a long passage and not all the details of the dreams will be taught, but it is important to know what it was about.

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 2:11.



In six days, I, the Lord, made the earth, the sky, the sea, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested.

Lesson Plan

Introduction

Ask the class what you feel like if you are worried about something. Probably you can't sleep, you may not want to eat and it's a good idea to go and talk to someone about what is worrying you.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. The great King of Babylon was very worried as he had had a dream and wanted to understand it. He sent for all his wise men and decided to test their abilities. They had to tell him what his dream was about as well as what it meant. He was very angry when they could not do it and ordered them all to be killed. This included Daniel and his three friends, Daniel 2:1-13.
2. Daniel and his friends prayed to God, who revealed the dream to Daniel, 2:14-19.
3. Daniel explained to the King that it was only the God of heaven who could reveal what the dreams he sent meant. Show Picture 14. Notice how very humble Daniel was but what courage God gave him to speak out to a powerful King, 2:24-29.
4. God was telling the King about the future. There would be many kingdoms in the world but a greater kingdom was coming which would destroy them all. This was the Kingdom of God which would last for ever. 2:36-39, 44-45.
5. The King was pleased with Daniel. All the other wise men were saved and Daniel was made Governor over Babylon, 2:46-49.

Teach Memory Verse

This verse shows the power of God the creator of the world.

Recite the commandments learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

The powerful President and government of Albania, a country in Europe, said, "There is no God." Churches were closed and people were even forbidden to pray. But people in the rest of the world prayed for that country. In 1991 prayer was answered and that government fell. Now Churches are opening and thousands of people are asking for Bibles and Christian literature in this very poor country. Our God is the supreme ruler over this world.

Lesson 15 The Image of Gold

Picture 15

Aim

To teach how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego showed that God is Sovereign.

Reading: Daniel 3: 1-18

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 2:11.
Complete the learning of verse 11.

In six days I, the Lord, made the earth, the sky, the sea, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested. That is why I, the Lord, blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Take a torch and shine the light on the class. They may have to shield their eyes against the bright light.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. The King of Babylon put up a very large statue of himself made of gold. It was set up on a plain so it could be seen shining very brightly, like a torch a long way off, Daniel 3:1. The teacher and class could measure out the size. It was about 30 metres high by 3 metres wide.
2. The King had become very proud. He ruled over a lot of land and it was the custom for Kings to put up large statues of themselves. Perhaps the King even thought of himself as a god and wanted the people to bow down to him showing how great and clever he was. There was a great opening ceremony when everyone bowed down to the King's statue. Show Picture 15. There was a terrible punishment for anyone who did not obey, 3:2 - 7.
3. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were the three friends of Daniel who came with him as slaves to this foreign country. They were still slaves but had been given great responsibility in the government and some people were jealous of them. They plotted to get rid of them. They told the King about these three foreigners who were Jews. They would disobey the King's orders. They worshipped only God, 3:8 - 12. The Ten Commandments could be recited at this point in the Lesson.
4. The King was very angry when he heard about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's disobedience to his command. He sent for them and questioned them. There was no god who could protect them against his power, 3:13-15.
5. The answer of the three men is very important because it shows their belief in God's over-ruling sovereignty. They said "The God we serve is able to save us, but even if he doesn't we will not worship the golden statue." 3:16 - 18.

Teach Memory Verse

Our Response to the Story

Obedience to God's commandments comes before anything else. A Bishop was killed for his faith in God in January, 1994. Just before he died he said, "I am ready to die for the cause of the church so that others will be able to worship their God peacefully and without so much fear. I will not die a silent death. " The witness of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego was seen. They did not hide. Pray for Christians who are suffering for their Christian witness. God is sovereign and does not always remove our suffering because he is working to a master plan which is not obvious to us yet.

Lesson 16 The Furnace of Fire

Picture 16

Aim

To show how God kept Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego through a terrible trial.

Reading: Daniel 3:19-30

It would be best to read the whole chapter so that the complete story is reviewed.

Memory Verse: No new memory verse.

Review the commandments that have been learnt so far.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Talk about fire and ask the class what we use it for. It is very useful for cooking, warmth and light. But it can also bring harm - it's heat can burn us and sometimes kills us, as in a house fire.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were facing terrible punishment by fire. Revise last week's story - Show picture 15 and asking questions about it.
2. As the three friends remained faithful to God and would not bow down to the golden statue, the angry King made the furnace hotter than before. It was so hot that the guards were killed by the flames when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown in, as the King watched, Daniel 3:19-23.
3. The King could not believe it when he saw four men, not three, in the furnace, and they were walking around. Show Picture 16. God miraculously saved the men by sending his messenger to protect them, 3:24-25.
4. The King called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego out of the fire. He realised that no other God can save men like this, 3:26-30.

Review the Memory Verses

Our Response to the Story

Remind the class of some of the stories they have recently heard, when God has performed a miracle to protect or heal someone. In this set of lessons there has been the healing of Namaan (2), the protection of Elisha (2 & 3), the end of the siege of Samaria (6), the saving of Jonah (7) and the good health of Daniel and his friends (8).

A man full of anger and revenge tried to knife a Christian missionary but the knife simply would not go through the Christian's clothes. Much later the would-be killer became interested in Christianity. When he met the missionary he confessed to what he had tried to do and said he was glad the missionary had been wearing a protective jacket. But the missionary answered he had only ordinary clothes on!

God still protects his servants miraculously. We don't know yet how miraculous it often is. Thank God for his loving protection.

Lesson 17 Daniel Prays to God

Picture 17

Aim

To show that Daniel knew his relationship with God in prayer was more important than anything else.

Reading: Daniel 6:1-15

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:12.

Respect your father and your mother.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Take a torch with you to Sunday School and show the class that when the bulb in the torch is connected to the battery there is a supply of electrical current which gives light. The power must be connected or there won't be any light.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Daniel was an excellent and efficient administrator. God had given him this gift and he knew he needed to keep in touch with God. His period of prayer with God, three times a day, were very important. He needed to be in touch with his source of power. But other men were very jealous of Daniel's position. He was a slave even though he was like a prime minister, Daniel 6:1-5.
2. Describe how the jealous men went to see the King and got him to issue an order forbidding anyone to pray to any god or man other than the King for thirty days. This request was not only a plot against Daniel but to flatter the King who was a different one from the earlier stories, Daniel 6:6-9.
3. Daniel heard of the King's new law and the terrible punishment for any who disobeyed, but he still prayed, 6:7,10.
4. Daniel's enemies saw him praying and reported it to the King. Show Picture 17. They reminded the King of his new law which could not be changed, 6:11-13.
5. The King was very upset and tried to think of every way he could to stop sending Daniel to the lions' den. He could not find a way out, 6:14-15.

Teach Memory Verse

Recite the commandments learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

If we go without food for a day we feel hungry and uncomfortable. If we go without food for more than a week our body begins to weaken and we become sick. Prayer is like spiritual food. Daniel knew he needed to keep in touch with God, that was the most important thing in his life. It was more important than the threat of terrible punishment. If we are Christians and want to serve God, we must keep in touch with him at all times, as a soldier does with his commander.

Lesson 18 Daniel in the Lions' Den

Picture 18

Aim

To show that, like Daniel, we do not need to fear anything that man can do to us. Nothing can ever take away the everlasting life Jesus Christ has given us.

Reading: Daniel 6:16-18

It would be best to read the whole chapter through.

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:12.

Review the beginning and complete the verse.

Respect your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Ask if anyone has ever seen a lion or knows anyone who has done so. They are very strong, powerful and dangerous animals. You would want a good weapon with you if you met one.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Daniel was going to meet not one but several lions and completely unarmed. The King was unhappy but could not find a way out of his new and foolish law, Daniel 6:14-15. Show Picture 17 and briefly review the previous story by asking questions.
2. Daniel was arrested and put into the lions' den. Tell the class about the King's prayer, the precautions to keep Daniel inside the den and the King's bad night, 6:16-18.
3. At first light the King hurried down the lions' pit. Was Daniel's God able to save him? Describe Daniel's answer to the King. Show Picture 18. Daniel was quite safe, 6:19-22.
4. The King was overjoyed. Daniel was released and the evil men who plotted against him put in the den instead, 6:23-24.
5. God used this event to show his power and as a result the King was convinced that Daniel served the living God. Knowledge of God spread throughout this huge kingdom, Read 6:26-27.

Teach Memory Verse

Review previous verses.

Our Response to the Story

Thousands of people in Africa live in fear of war, of hunger, of sickness, of evil spirits and most of all of death. Many have lost their homes and all their possessions more than once. Daniel trusted God to care for him and he kept him from the lions, but others God allowed to leave this life and die. Look at the list in Hebrews 11:35-40. Terrible persecutions like these are still happening today, but even if evil men kill Christians they still have hope. God's son, Jesus Christ, came to give us life after death.

Lesson 19 Nehemiah Before the Great King

Picture 19

Aim

To show how God answered Nehemiah's prayer.

Reading: Nehemiah 1:1-11; 2:1-9

Memory Verse: Ten Commandments Exodus 20:13

Do not commit murder.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Ask the class if they have ever tried to keep a piece of news to themselves. If it's good news you must not show any happiness on your face or in the way you behave. If it is bad news that is much more difficult to keep to yourself.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Nehemiah had some very bad news. He was a Jew who trusted God. Like Daniel he lived as a slave in Babylon, but some time after him. News was brought to Nehemiah that Jerusalem, the city of his ancestors, was in ruins and the Jews who lived there were in great trouble, Nehemiah 1:1-3.
2. Nehemiah took his sadness to God and prayed. He worshipped God and reminded God of his promises to Israel, confessed the sin of the people who had forgotten God and then finally asked God to help him when he went to see the great King. He prayed for several months, 1:4-11.
3. Nehemiah was a trusted servant. His job was to taste the King's wine before he drank it, in case it was poisoned. No-one must ever look sad before the powerful King. Show Picture 19 and describe how Nehemiah went to serve the King, 2:1-4.
4. Nehemiah silently prayed to God before he answered the King's question. He was ready with his request for leave to go to Jerusalem and for building supplies. In his prayer time Nehemiah had made good plans and God answered Nehemiah's prayers. His requests were granted and he was given soldiers to protect him on the journey, 2:4-9.

Teach Memory Verse

Recite the commandments learnt so far.

Our Response to the Story

Some of the children who come to Sunday School will be six years old. That is the time a group of Christians in America have been praying for the Sandawe people in Tanzania to hear the Gospel. God is answering prayer and a small church has begun. One of the first to believe was a middle aged man. He called at the missionary's house and pulled out two little Christian tracts that he had been reading for a month. He said, "I have stayed with these little books for two months and I've read them and read them. I've talked with my wife about them. Now I've come here to be saved." (AIM International).

God heard and answered Nehemiah's prayer.

God hears and answers our prayers.

Lesson 20 Nehemiah Inspects the Ruined City

Picture 20

Aim

To show how Nehemiah made very careful plans and so encouraged the people in their faith in God that they were ready to co-operate with him.

Reading: Nehemiah 2:9-20

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:14

Do not commit adultery.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Think of something you had to do that was very difficult. How did you set about it? Did you pray first? Did you make careful plans? Did you get other people to help you?

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Nehemiah had a very difficult job to do and he did all these things before he started it. He had to go and help the people of Jerusalem rebuild their city. They needed to do the walls first so that it was safe. But the people were very discouraged. The work was so big, no one was there to help and they had many enemies, Nehemiah 2:9-10.
2. Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem with his building supplies and for three days he kept quiet about what God had sent him to do. Show Picture 20. Instead of talking he carefully inspected the city at night so none of the inhabitants saw him, 2:11-12.
3. Describe what Nehemiah saw. The city was in ruins, 2:13-15.
4. Nehemiah called the local leaders together and said what he had done. He told them the truth, the city was in a bad state, but he also gave his testimony. God had helped him. This encouraged them in their faith, and they were ready to begin this big work, 2:16-18.
5. There were powerful enemies who laughed at the Jews, but Nehemiah knew God was with them, 2:19-20.

Teach Memory Verse

Review previous verses.

Our Response to the Story

Nehemiah was able to encourage the people of Jerusalem and give them new vision by sharing with them the way God had blessed him. This would be an opportunity for the teacher to share his/her testimony with the class briefly, or give examples of how God has blessed different people in the local church.

Lesson 21 Building the Walls

Picture 21

Aim

To show how God blessed Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem. The walls of the city were built in spite of many difficulties.

Reading: Nehemiah 3:1-5, 12, 31-32; 4:1-23; 6:1-4,15-16

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:21

Do not steal.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

Ask two of the class to come and help you. Give them each two pieces of string which they have to tie together in front of the class BUT one of the volunteers must use only one hand. The class will see it's much easier to do this using two hands and not one. Perhaps the one-handed person will have to use another part of his body instead of his other hand!

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Nehemiah had a difficult job to do. Last week's lesson could be briefly reviewed, using pics 19 & 20.
2. First Nehemiah had to organise everyone to take part in the re-building. Different families were given different parts of the wall to build. Everyone in the family helped, merchants as well as priests and ordinary people, but there were a few leaders who could have been more co-operative. Nehemiah 3:1-5, 12, 31-32. The walls began to go up.
3. Enemies of the Jews came to laugh at the wall. It was so weak a fox could knock it down. If someone laughs at what you are doing you want to hit out at them. (Perhaps the class had laughed at the person who tied the string with one hand, earlier). Instead Nehemiah prayed God would punish these enemies in his own time and way. The big walls were half done, 4:1-6.
4. The enemies did not give up. They plotted to attack the builders so Nehemiah arranged that only half the people built the wall while the other half stood guard. Those who built only used one hand, they held their weapons in the other. Nehemiah kept a man with a trumpet by him to sound the alarm if it was needed. Show Picture 21. The walls continued to go up, 4:7- 20.
5. Everyone worked from dawn until nightfall. Nehemiah didn't even take his clothes off. The enemy tried to murder Nehemiah but their plots failed, 4:22- 23; 6:1-4.
6. With God's help the wall of the city was completely rebuilt in the record time of fifty-two days, 6:15-16.
7. There was a great celebration when the walls were dedicated. Everyone marched along the wall. 12:27, 43.

Teach Memory Verse

Review previous verses.

Our Response to the Story

This is a most exciting story to tell and would be a good one for the class to act in a series of short scenes.

Scene 1. One group of people miming building the wall and others walking by and laughing at them.

Scene 2. Half of the workers on guard watching the other half building the wall with one hand.

Other scenes could finish with everyone walking around in a circle, representing the walls, singing to God.

Examples could also be shared of overcoming difficulties today with God's help. Think back to the testimonies examples shared at the end of the previous lesson.

Lesson 22 Ezra Reads the Law

Picture 22

Aim

To show how reading God's word feeds us spiritually and enables us to live a life that pleases God and brings us joy.

Reading: Nehemiah 8:1-12, 18; 9:1-3

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:16

Do not accuse anyone falsely.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

What do you do when you have completed a job? Perhaps you might sit down for a rest or you may begin to do something else, or if it's something big that you have finished you might show it to your friends.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem had completed the great job of rebuilding the walls of their city. Now it was safe to live there. Everyone was called to come into the city. Ezra the priest was asked to read God's word which would tell them how to live together in the city, Nehemiah 8:1.
2. Show Picture 22. Ezra is standing on a raised platform so everyone can see him. He is holding a scroll which is what the Old Testament was written on before printing was invented. The rebuilt city walls are behind him. Everyone (the artist could not draw all the people!) who was old enough to understand, including children, came to hear. The reading started at dawn and went on until mid-day. The people stood to listen all that time, 8:2-6.
3. Every so often Ezra stopped reading and the Levites, who were the teachers, explained God's word to the people. The Levites are standing behind Ezra in the picture. One passage the people would have heard read was Exodus 20. This would be a good time to recite it, 8:7-8.
4. When the people heard what God's word said they were upset because they realised how much they had disobeyed the Law. Refer to Picture 22 again. They had deserved to have their city destroyed. Nehemiah told them not to be sad that day, this was a day of rejoicing, God had spoken to them and told them how to live and worship him. Later on the city had a day when they met especially to think about their sin and ask God's forgiveness, 8:9,11; 9:1-3.
5. The people went home and celebrated. God brought them joy because they heard his word and it gave them strength. 8:10, 12.

Teach Memory Verse

The teacher may put this under Item 3 in this particular lesson.

Our Response to the Story

Encourage the children to say the memory verses during the week. If any children in the class come from one family they can say them to each other which is easier than alone. This will encourage them. If any of the children can read and have a Bible or portion of Scripture, the teacher should set them five to ten verses to read each day. The Gospels or Genesis are good books to begin with if available.

Lesson 23 Jesus on the Cross

Picture 23

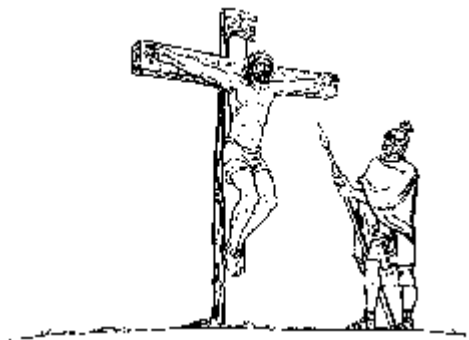
Aim

To show how the stories of these great men of God pointed the way to Jesus, God's Son who was faithful unto death.

Reading: Matthew 27:27-56; Romans 5:8-10

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:17

Do not desire another man's house; do not desire his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkey or anything else that he owns.



Lesson Plan

Introduction

If you walk around a town you will see notices that will tell you where something is, like a church or an office building. Sometimes the notices are shaped like an arrow and point in the direction of that building.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Our lessons have been about great men and women of God - Elisha, Jonah, Esther, Daniel and his three friends and Nehemiah. They all had to overcome great difficulties and problems because of man's sin. They all pointed the way to God. Elisha and Jonah were prophets, their job was to teach people about God and show the way to know him. But people realised how easily they forgot about God. Think what happened when Ezra read out God's law.
2. Finally at his appointed time God sent His only Son Jesus Christ to show us the way to know God. Jesus is God. He came to earth to show us how to live. God saved Elisha and Daniel from death many times, but Jesus allowed Himself to die for us.
3. Jesus was arrested and sentenced to death by crucifixion, a very cruel and slow death. The soldiers of Governor Pilate dressed him up as a King and laughed and beat him. (Remember how the wall builders were laughed at in Lesson 21.) Jesus could have stopped them. Matthew 27:27-31.
4. Jesus refused the wine that would have dulled the pain, he was taking the full punishment for our sin. Describe how people thought Jesus would save himself from the cross if he was God's Son. They did not understand that Jesus stayed there because he loves us. He took the punishment for our sin. Matthew 27:32-36; 39-43, Romans 5:8.
5. At noon everything went dark. The sun went out because the Son of God was dying for the world. At three o'clock Jesus died. He gave up his life. Notice the Bible says he gave a loud cry. People are usually weak when they die. Many strange things happened in the city of Jerusalem, Matthew 27:45-53.
6. The soldiers who were on guard were terrified, perhaps one of them realised that Jesus was no ordinary man. Show Picture 23. The soldier said, "He really was the Son of God," Matthew 27:54.
7. Of course, Jesus is not still on the Cross. He really died but He rose to life again. He was seen by many witnesses before he went to Heaven. Matthew 28:1-20

Teach Memory Verse

Review previous verses.

Our Response to the Story

Many people walked by as Jesus died. Think about the different ones. There were the soldiers who laughed at him, the people who were disappointed because he didn't perform a miracle and come down off the cross but there was just one soldier who believed Jesus was the Son of God.

By his sacrifice on the cross Jesus brought forgiveness for our sins. From being God's enemies we can become God's friends. That's a wonderful change! Thank God for it, Romans 5:8-10.

Lesson 24 Jesus Shows the Way to Everlasting Life

Picture 24

Aim

To ask the class to think about the two ways Jesus talked about.

Reading: Psalm 1; Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6

Memory Verse: The Ten Commandments. No new verses.
Review the passage learnt.

Lesson Plan

Introduction

Talk about winnowing grain. It would be good to take a winnowing basket to Sunday School and ask what it is used for. It is used to hold the grain when it is separated from the chaff (outside skin of the grain.) The grain is our food, the chaff is useless and blows away in the wind.



Main Points of the Lesson

1. King David wrote a song or Psalm about two men. He said men who followed God were like fruitful trees but those who did not were like useless chaff, Psalm 1:3-4. (This Psalm was learnt as a memory passage in Book 4. Servants of God.)
2. Jesus said life was like walking along a road and going through a gate. The large gate that leads to what looks like a big wide road is very attractive, but it will take us away from God and away from his commandments. This is the way of Satan and it leads to hell and destruction. Sadly many people go through that gate, Matthew 7:13.
3. But Jesus talked about following his way. This was like going through a narrow gate to a much harder road with fewer people on it. However hard the road of life is, Jesus is always with us if we follow his way which leads to Heaven. This is the road of Everlasting Life which begins when we commit ourselves to Jesus. Show Picture 24, Jesus is pointing out his narrow road. This is the best way to walk through life. Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6.
4. Use the stories of the different people in this set of lessons to show how they chose to follow God's ways on the narrow road or Satan's way along the broad road.

Examples:

Lessons 11 & 12. Mordecai, Esther's uncle, chose God's way. Haman the Prime Minister chose Satan's way.
Lesson 9. The people of Nineveh turned from Satan's way to God's way.
Lessons 17 & 18. Daniel chose God's way which was very hard. The evil men against Daniel chose Satan's way.

Memory Verses

Instead of everyone saying the commandments straight through, divide class into two or more groups and let each group say one in turn. It is better not to let one child repeat them alone as all the others will get bored.

A note about picture 24:

The Bible does not tell us very much about hell. It is a place of separation from God who is the source of light and love and will therefore be very terrible. This is difficult to show in pictures. There is nothing worse than to be separated from God who created us and loves us.

Our Response to the Story

Ask the children to think very carefully about which road they are walking along. Are they walking with Jesus? Ask those who want to know more about this to come and talk to a teacher or the pastor after the class. Children love to please and if teachers ask those who want to follow Jesus to raise their hands or stand up, many will do so who do not really mean it. The Holy Spirit will prompt any one he is calling to come afterwards.