

August/September 2020 Family Devotion Resources – The Gospel Project

8/9/2020 Unit 14, Session 1: Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh – Unit Key Passage: 2 Peter 3:9

PARENT INFORMATION

Jonah lived during the time Jeroboam II was king over Israel, mere decades before the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed. Jonah was a prophet—and while he is best known as the man who was swallowed by a big fish when he tried to run away from God, his story continues beyond chapter 2 to reveal what Jonah knew all along: God is “a gracious and compassionate God” (John 4:2b).

Jonah’s account centers around the compassion of God, not only for the people of Israel but for people throughout the earth—even Israel’s worst enemies!

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, and the rulers of Nineveh were notoriously evil and cruel. That was the very reason God called Jonah to go to them: “their evil has come up before me” (Jonah 1:2). God is the Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25), and He is sovereign over all the nations.

Jonah discovered that no one can flee from God’s presence. (Ps. 139:9-10) Through a storm and some time in the belly of a fish, God got Jonah’s attention, and Jonah went to Nineveh. For three days, Jonah walked around the city. His message to the Ninevites was brief: “In forty days Nineveh will be demolished!” (Jonah 3:4) The people of Nineveh immediately repented, and God withheld His judgment. “Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious” (Jonah 4:1). God rebuked Jonah. He left Jonah—and the reader—with a question to consider: “May I not care about the great city of Nineveh?” (Jonah 4:11).

Emphasize to your kids that Jesus is greater than Jonah. (Matt. 12:41) **God called Jonah to go to his enemies and call them to turn away from their sin, but Jonah refused. Instead, he ran away. Later, God sent Jesus to His enemies to call us to repentance. Jesus willingly obeyed. Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from sin.** God shows His mercy in the gospel, forgiving those who trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. God sends us out, like Jonah, to share the good news of salvation.

Check this session’s Activity Page and Big Picture Card as well as the Gospel Project for Kids Family App for ways to interact with the Bible content this week.

FAMILY STARTING POINTS

▪ **Babies and Toddlers**

- Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh.
- God showed mercy to Jonah and the Ninevites.
- God sent Jesus to show us mercy.
- God’s plans are good.

▪ **Preschool**

- Why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.
- God loves all people.

▪ **Kids**

- Why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.
- God loves all people and showed mercy to the Ninevites.

8/16/2020 Unit 14, Session 2: Hosea, Prophet to Israel

PARENT INFORMATION

Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel for at least forty years. God sent Hosea to tell Israel of God's hatred toward sin and of His coming judgment. (See Hos. 4:1,6.) God also sent Hosea to bring a message of love—a love that never gives up. (See Hos. 11:7-9.)

To get the message across to the Israelites, God used Hosea's own life to show Israel what a never-gives-up kind of love looks like. Hosea obeyed God's instructions to marry a prostitute. Hosea loved Gomer as his wife, even though he knew she would not be faithful to him. Gomer gave birth to children who were conceived with other men. Can you imagine Hosea's grief each time he realized his wife's unfaithfulness?

It would have been easier for Hosea to end his marriage covenant—to throw up his hands and say, "Enough! I'm done with you!" Yet God's people were no different than Gomer. They were spiritual adulterers. Their hearts chased after other lovers by loving and worshiping idols.

It would have been easier for God to end the Mosaic covenant—to throw up His hands and say, "Enough! I'm done with you!" But God's love never gives up. God gave Hosea a love for his wife that compelled him to buy her back from the slave market after all she had done. In the same way, God sought after His unfaithful people even after all they had done. God paid a high price—the life of His Son, Jesus—to bring them back to Himself.

Remember to talk about the story of Hosea with your kids in an age-appropriate way. **God used Hosea's unfaithful wife to show the people of Israel that they were unfaithful to Him. God gave Hosea a deep love; Hosea was willing to buy back Gomer even after all she had done. God's love is deep, and it never gives up. He goes after His people and paid a great price to get us back.** Even when God's people worship false idols, He is ready to forgive those who turn back to Him.

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FAMILY STARTING POINTS

▪ Babies and Toddlers

- The people of Israel stopped loving God.
- Hosea's life showed Israel how much God loved them.
- Jesus' life shows how much God loves us.
- God's plans are good.

▪ Preschool

- Why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.
- God loves people who do not love Him back.

▪ Kids

- Why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.
- God is faithful to His people even when they do not love Him.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE - 2 Peter 3:9

8/23/2020 Unit 14, Session 3: Israel Taken Captive

Parent Information

God's people had a history of disobeying God. Sin separated them from God. But man was created to know and love God, and God was working out a plan to bring His children back to Himself. Like any good father, God knows that disobedience needs to be punished. "For the LORD disciplines the one he loves, just as a father disciplines the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:12).

After the tribes of Israel split into the Northern Kingdom and Southern Kingdom, God sent prophets to both kingdoms to warn the people to turn from their sins and obey God. Over the course of 200 years, the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, and Hosea spoke to Israel and warned them of the consequences of their idolatry. They called for Israel to repent and turn back to God. But Israel did not listen.

God had been very patient with the Israelites. He had helped them in times of trouble and delayed their punishment because He is gracious and compassionate. (See 2 Kings 13:23.) But God knew His people would not love Him with all their hearts.

Finally, God had had enough. Evil King Hoshea ruled over Israel, and God allowed Israel's enemies to send the people into exile. The king of Assyria attacked Israel and laid siege to Samaria. Assyria captured Samaria and forced the people to leave the city. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the people were scattered, just as God had said it would be. (See 1 Kings 14:15.)

Israel's exile was God's judgment on their sin, but God was not finished working among His people. God was still working out His plan to keep His covenant promises. As you talk with your kids this week, point them to Jesus, the answer to God's promises. **When the Israelites disobeyed God again and again, God punished them by removing them from His presence. We disobey God, but Jesus took the punishment for our sin upon Himself. Jesus brings us into God's presence and keeps us there.**

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FAMILY STARTING POINTS

▪ Babies and Toddlers

- The people of Israel would not obey God.
- Assyria captured Israel.
- When Jesus comes back, He will bring people together.
- God's plans are good.

▪ Preschool

- Why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.
- Israel did not listen to God's warning.

▪ Kids

- Why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good
- Israel ignored God's prophets and was captured

UNIT KEY PASSAGE - 2 Peter 3:9

8/30/2020 Unit 15, Session 1: Isaiah, Prophet to Judah

Parent Information

King Uzziah's death marked the end of an era. His reign had been long and prosperous. Uzziah became king when he was 16, and he reigned over Judah for 52 years. Then Uzziah died. Under Uzziah's leadership, God's people had turned away from the promises of God and trusted in the promises of the world around them. God had promised to bless the entire world through Abraham's family, but God's people were rebellious. Instead of blessing, they set themselves up to receive God's judgment.

But God's plans and promises were not thwarted. God sent the prophet Isaiah to preach a message of hope. Even though God was going to correct His people through judgment, His purpose was one of grace through which God would receive glory. God planned to send a Messiah who would bring salvation to the world.

Isaiah 6 opens with Isaiah's worshiping in the temple. God gave Isaiah a vision. Isaiah saw God sitting on a throne. The magnitude of God's holiness made Isaiah

realize the magnitude of his own sin. His response? "Woe is me!" God extended His grace to Isaiah. He took away Isaiah's guilt, and sent him to His people.

Isaiah 53 records the fourth and final Servant song in the Book of Isaiah, describing God's plan of redemption. We see a vision of the promised Messiah, the innocent substitute who would suffer for the sake of sinners. Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecies of a Suffering Servant. People assumed God had cursed the Suffering Servant for His own sins. But no, Jesus was sinless. Isaiah wrote that He was pierced because of our transgressions and crushed because of our iniquities. His punishment is what brought our peace. The Suffering Servant died the death we deserve.

This week remind your kids that **God planned all along that Jesus would die on the cross for our sin. Seven hundred years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote that this would happen! Jesus is the Servant who suffered so that those who trust in Him would be forgiven.** When we trust in Jesus, our sins are wiped away and His righteousness is credited to us.

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FAMILY STARTING POINTS

▪ Babies and Toddlers

- Isaiah saw God on His throne.
- God told Isaiah to tell people about the Messiah.
- Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.
- God planned to send Jesus.

▪ Preschool

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.
- Isaiah told about the Messiah.

▪ Kids

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.
- The prophet Isaiah told about the Messiah.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE - 2 Chronicles 7:14

9/6/2020 Unit 15, Session 2: Hezekiah and Josiah

Parent Information

After God's people split into two kingdoms—the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah—each nation was ruled by a series of kings. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was ruled by mostly bad kings (like Ahaz who worshiped idols and did not respect God, God's law, or God's prophets) and a handful of good kings. Hezekiah and his great-grandson Josiah were two notable reformers who had a lasting impact on Judah.

Hezekiah took the throne after evil Ahaz. During Hezekiah's reign, the kingdom of Israel—which had endured more than 200 years of bad kings—was captured by Assyria and ultimately destroyed. Hezekiah "did what was right in the LORD's sight just as his ancestor David had done" (2 Chron. 29:2). He destroyed the places of idol worship and cleansed the temple. The Lord was with Hezekiah, and Hezekiah prospered.

Then Hezekiah's son Manasseh became king. For 55 years, he led the people of Judah away from God, essentially reversing the progress Hezekiah had made. Manasseh's son Amon followed in his father's evil ways but was assassinated by his own servants. The people of Judah made Amon's son Josiah king when he was just 8 years old.

Unlike his father, Josiah began to seek God. He tore down the altars and idols of false gods, and he initiated the repairing of the Lord's temple. During the temple repair, the discovery of the book of the law of the Lord led Josiah to make a

covenant to follow God and obey His commands. Those who heard the law vowed to do the same. When Josiah died, he was remembered as the greatest king in Judah. (2 Kings 23:25)

As you talk with your kids this week, remind them that **Hezekiah and Josiah loved God and wanted to follow His commands. They wanted God's people to love God and obey the law too. When Jesus came to earth, He fulfilled the law by obeying it perfectly.**

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FAMILY STARTING POINTS

▪ Babies and Toddlers

- Hezekiah and Josiah loved God.
- Judah obeyed God when the king obeyed Him.
- Jesus helps His people obey God.
- God planned to send Jesus.

▪ Preschool

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.
- Hezekiah and Josiah led the people back to God.

▪ Kids

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.
- Hezekiah and Josiah led the people back to God.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE - 2 Chronicles 7:14

9/13/2020 Unit 15, Session 3: Jeremiah, Prophet to Judah

Parent Information

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah the priest. He lived in Judah, just north of Jerusalem. At the time God called Jeremiah into ministry, Josiah was king of Judah.

As evidenced in the callings of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others, each time God calls someone, He equips that person to do His work. Like Moses, Jeremiah was hesitant: "Oh no, Lord GOD! Look, I don't know how to speak since I am only a youth" (Jer. 1:6). God assured Jeremiah: "I will be with you" (Jer. 1:8).

God called Jeremiah to be a prophet. The people of Judah had broken the covenant God made with them at Mount Sinai. The terms of the covenant are found in Exodus 19. God said through Moses, "If you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, you will be my own possession out of all the peoples, ... and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation" (vv. 5-6). God's people responded, "We will do all that the LORD has spoken" (v. 8).

But Judah was deep in idol worship and other sins. God punished the unfaithfulness of Israel by sending the Northern Kingdom into exile. Now God's judgment was coming for Judah, and Jeremiah's job was to warn them.

This week share with your kids that along with the warnings, Jeremiah brought a message of hope. Jeremiah told God's people about a new and better covenant. **Jeremiah told about a day when God would forgive sin and change people's hearts. Jesus made these words come true. God forgives our sin through His Son, Jesus. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey His commands.** Jesus did not come to get rid of the law. (See Matt. 5:17.) Through His sinless life, Jesus fulfilled the demands of the old covenant. When we trust in Jesus, we are credited with His righteousness and our changed hearts enable us to want to follow in Christ's footsteps and obey God as well.

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FAMILY STARTING POINTS

▪ Babies and Toddlers

- Jeremiah was a prophet to Judah.
- God made a new promise to forgive His people.
- God sent Jesus to forgive His people forever.
- God planned to send Jesus.

▪ Preschool

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.
- Jeremiah told about a new and better covenant.

▪ Kids

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.
- Jeremiah told God's people about a new and better covenant.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE - 2 Chronicles 7:14

9/20/2020 Unit 15, Session 4: Habakkuk the Prophet

Parent Information

How much time do you spend waiting? Think about it. Waiting for a traffic light to turn green, waiting at the doctor's office, waiting at the drive-thru, waiting for a phone call, waiting for a birthday, waiting on someone else. The fact is, we spend a lot of our time waiting. Why do we wait? We know something is coming. A major factor in waiting is *faith*— "the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen" (Heb. 11:1). This is precisely what the prophet Habakkuk addressed. Habakkuk was a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah, living in Judah shortly before it was taken into captivity. He found himself in a period of waiting, first for judgment and then for revival.

All around him, people were oppressed, and violence escalated. The Book of Habakkuk records the prophet's dialogue with the Lord. "How long, Lord, must I call for help?" Habakkuk asked. "Why do You tolerate wrongdoing?"

God answered. He was going to raise up the Babylonians, and they would hold captive the people of Judah. Habakkuk prayed again. Judah deserved to be punished, but the Babylonians were even more wicked than Judah; how could God, in essence, bless them?

God answered. The Babylonian captivity would not last forever. After some time, God was going to rescue His people and punish the Babylonians.

As you talk with your kids about the Bible story this week, remind them that God's people waited to be delivered from captivity, and those who are in Christ are waiting for the fulfillment of Christ's return.

Habakkuk lived at a time when evil seemed to be everywhere. By faith, he trusted God's promise that God would deliver His people. Injustice, violence, and wickedness surround us today, but we can live by faith and trust that Jesus will return to make all things right. Until then, we live by faith. (See Heb. 10:35-38.) We can trust that God is sovereign over the future, so "though the fig tree does not bud and there is no fruit on the vines ... yet I will celebrate in the LORD; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!" (Hab. 3:17-18).

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FAMILY STARTING POINTS

▪ Babies and Toddlers

- Habakkuk asked God why bad things were happening.
- Habakkuk trusted God's plan for Judah.
- We can trust God when bad things happen.
- God planned to send Jesus.

▪ Preschool

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.
- Habakkuk learned to trust God.

▪ Kids

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.
- Habakkuk learned to have faith and trust in God.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE - 2 Chronicles 7:14

9/27/2020 Unit 15, Session 5: Judah Taken Captive

Parent Information

Warnings had come from the prophets for decades. God patiently waited for His people to turn from their sin. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had fallen to Assyria, and the prophet Jeremiah spared few details when he warned Judah what would happen if they did not turn from their evil ways. (See Jer. 25:1-14.)

But the people of Judah did not change their ways. The kingdom had been declining for years, despite King Hezekiah's—and later, Josiah's—efforts to prompt nationwide repentance. When King Josiah died, the people went back to their old ways, worshiping idols and disobeying the Lord

The time of judgment had come. God used Nebuchadnezzar—the king of Babylon—to deport the people from Judah to Babylon where they would live in exile for 70 years.

Nebuchadnezzar went to Judah when Jehoiakim was king. He put Jehoiakim in chains and took him to Babylon. Jehoiachin became king, and Nebuchadnezzar came back for him too. Many of the people in Judah were taken, along with treasures from the Lord's temple. Nebuchadnezzar put Zedekiah on the throne in Jerusalem.

The people of Judah were unfaithful to God. Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and God poured out His wrath on Judah. Nebuchadnezzar showed no mercy to the people of Jerusalem. The Babylonians set fire to the Lord's temple and the king's palace. They destroyed the wall around Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar's armies carried most of the people away to Babylon as prisoners; only poor farmers were allowed to stay and work the land. The people were held captive in Babylon, serving the king for 70 years.

As you share with your kids this week, let them know that **God was right to punish His people for their sin, but He kept His promise to provide a king through David's family. Ultimately, God punished our sin through His Son, Jesus, and made Him our King forever.** The prophet Jeremiah told what would happen next: "The days are coming ... when I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and Judah" (Jer. 30:3). God was going to save His people from captivity and raise up a new King—a forever King—from the line of David. (See Jer. 30:9.)

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FAMILY STARTING POINTS

▪ Babies and Toddlers

- The last kings of Judah did not obey God.
- The king of Babylon took away the people of Judah.
- Jesus is the perfect king who obeyed God.
- God planned to send Jesus.

▪ Preschool

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.
- Judah did not listen to God's warning.

▪ Kids

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.
- Judah ignored God's prophets and was captured.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE - 2 Chronicles 7:14

10/4/2020 Unit 15, Session 6: Ezekiel Gave Hope

Parent Information

Ezekiel had a tough job: ministering to people who had rejected God and suffered the consequences. The exiled people of Judah were eager to blame God for their circumstances. "It's not fair!" they argued. (See Ezek. 18:25.)

Ezekiel told the people that they were at fault for their exile; their faithlessness had provoked God's wrath. The people were getting what they deserved. "I take no pleasure in anyone's death," God said. "So repent and live!" (Ezek. 18:32).

God gave Ezekiel a vision. In this vision, God showed Ezekiel a valley of dry bones. The bones represented Israel. Ezekiel prophesied that God would put tendons, flesh, and skin on the bones. He would put breath in them so they would come to life.

Ezekiel encouraged the exiles. Apart from God, they were dead. But God was offering them life. He would restore their future. "My dwelling place will be with them," God said. "I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Ezek. 37:27).

We too are dead in our sin. (Eph. 2:1) Sin separates us from God because He is holy. We are apart from God's presence. But God does not delight in our death. He is patient and wants us to repent and live!

This week, help your kids see that **apart from Jesus, we are like the dry bones Ezekiel saw. God showed Ezekiel His power to make dead people alive. We see God's power at the cross. Jesus died to save sinners. God raised Jesus from the dead, and He gives us eternal life.** Hundreds of years after Ezekiel died, God's presence came to His people through Jesus Christ, *Immanuel*—meaning, "God with us." Jesus is the source of life; He offers us living water. (John 4:10,14) If we do not drink of it, we will be like the dry bones. No life will be in us.

Jesus changes that. He brings life to the spiritually dead. God saves us by grace, making us alive with Christ through the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 2:4-5)

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FAMILY STARTING POINTS

▪ Babies and Toddlers

- God showed Ezekiel some dry bones.
- God promised to bring His people back to their land.
- God gives us hope through Jesus.
- God planned to send Jesus.

▪ Preschool

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.
- God planned to bring His people home.

▪ Kids

- How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.
- God planned to bring His people home and give them new life.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE - 2 Chronicles 7:14