

Unit 3 Prophets Tales

Week 1 Hezekiah Trusts God

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference: 2 Kings 20, 2 Chronicles 32, Isaiah 38

Main Teaching Points

- Hezekiah turned to God when he needed help.
- God listened to Hezekiah's prayer and healed him.
- We can ask for God's healing for ourselves and others.

Themes to discover

Hezekiah's illness

Although King Hezekiah wasn't perfect, he did seek to honour God. He put an end to idol worship and restored temple worship, encouraging the people in both Israel and Judah to come to Jerusalem and worship the Lord.

However, when invaded by Assyria, King Hezekiah's faith was weak. Instead of attacking the Assyrian army he negotiated with the Assyrian King and tried to buy him off. He paid him eleven tons of silver and 1 ton of gold, much of which he took some the temple of the Lord. In 2 Chronicles 32:24 it also talks about Hezekiah being proud.

Did God use Hezekiah's sickness to humble him and make him realise his dependence on Him?

Hezekiah's prayer

Hezekiah's response to Isaiah's message that he wouldn't recover from his illness, was to turn away from everyone and pray. Hezekiah was praying in the light of God's promise in 2 Chronicles 6:16-17 *"You promised that someone from his (David's) family would always be king of Israel, if they do their best to obey you, just as he did. Please keep that promise you made to your servant David."*

Hezekiah was reminding God that he had been faithful to obey his law and was therefore calling on God's promise that he should live. God immediately sent Isaiah back to tell Hezekiah that he would recover from his illness and Hezekiah was left in no doubt that his life was in God's hands.

The **Introductory activity** helps introduce the theme of the story and link it to the children's own lives.

The **Story, Quiz** and **Craft Activity** tell and reinforce the biblical story.

The **Prayer activity** gives the children the opportunity to pray for others who are sick and to understand that God has power to heal.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

Who came to visit King Hezekiah when he was very sick?

Isaiah was God's messenger. What message from God did Isaiah bring to Hezekiah?

What made God change his mind?

Ages 7-11

If you were an all-powerful King, do you think it would be easy to become proud or think too highly of yourself?

What do you think King Hezekiah learned through his illness?

What do you think would have happened if King Hezekiah hadn't turned to God for help?

Week 1 Session Outline

Welcome and Intro

Registration/Welcome/Prayer

Intro Idea

Who has ever felt really sick? What is the worst illness you have ever had?

Who has had chicken pox? What was that like?

Who has had flu? What was that like?

Talk about the illnesses the children have had and how they felt.

What do you do when you are feeling ill? E.g. stay off school, stay in bed and sleep, stay warm, eat something warm and comforting e.g. warm drinks, soup, toast etc.

It's always great when we start to feel better again isn't it? In today's bible story, we learn of a King who got sicker and sicker and how he turned to God for help.

Story telling suggestions for unit 3

Choose some of these options to help tell the story.

1. Read the stories from the Lion Storyteller bible and use the interactive ideas on Page 159 to encourage the children to listen and participate.
2. Use the visuals provided in the PowerPoints to enhance your storytelling (with notes included) Alternate PPT versions are also included with storyboards (see digital resources and resources section for this unit).
3. Use one of the videos for the story of Jonah
4. Tell the stories and draw visuals in a sand tray e.g. Storytelling in the Sand Jonah (see resources)

Story

pages 68-69 from The Lion Storyteller Bible

See Story suggestions for this unit

Quiz

You will need

Hezekiah Trusts God Quiz Questions (see resources section)

Hezekiah Trusts God Quiz Scoring game (PPT) (see digital resources)

You could make a paper version if you can't show visuals.

What to do

Divide your group into two teams Ask questions alternatively. Children should put their hand up if they know the answer. When a team member gets a question right, s/he chooses a number at random from the PowerPoint table. When the number is clicked on, the score will be revealed. Keep note of the points each team earns and reveal the winner at the end. If there is a draw, use the tiebreaker question.

Prayer Activity

2 Kings 20: 5

Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you.

Prayer Changes things

You will need

Hand sanitiser or wet wipes
Flip chart and pens or similar

What to do

Ask the children if they know anyone who is sick. A leader can have some names of church members who are sick and would like prayer. If you can, tell the children some information about the people they are praying for.

Write all the names mentioned on a flip chart or large sheet of paper so everyone can see.

Today we were learning about King Hezekiah and how his prayers changed things. He did not die of his illness. Instead, God heard his prayers and gave King Hezekiah 15 more years of life.

Our prayers of faith are powerful too. We can pray for those who are sick and trust that God will hear us.

A leader can move around the group and give everyone a squirt of hand sanitiser. Just as the hand sanitiser gets rid of germs, we pray that God will get rid of the sickness in each person's body and make them well again. Ask the children to choose 1 or 2 names and pray quietly asking God to heal them.

With younger children you may want to give them a simple prayer sentence e.g. God, please make..... and better. Amen.

Activity A Shadow Frame

You will need

Coloured cardboard
Sticky back plastic
Paper, pencils, felt pens
Scissors
A sunny day or a torch

What to do

Draw a simple picture or shape, colour it in and cut it out.

Cut out a frame from a sheet of cardboard (you may want to have these pre-cut)

Stick contact paper on to one side of the frame. Now stick the picture or shape you drew onto the contact paper.

Stick some more contact paper on the other side to seal in your picture.

If it is a sunny day, take your frame outside. Did you know a shadow is formed when an object blocks light? To block light an object must be opaque (not see through) or translucent (semi see through).

Hold your frame close to the ground and if the sun is shining, you should see the shadow of your frame and picture on the ground. The contact paper will not cause a shadow because it is transparent (see through).

You can also do this activity inside with a torch.

Talk about

What sign did King Hezekiah asked God for, to prove he would live for another 15 years?

What was amazing about what God did?



Week 2 Down the Well

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference: Jeremiah 38

Main Teaching Points

- Being faithful to God was often hard for Jeremiah
- Jeremiah persisted in truthfully sharing God's message though it meant he would be punished for doing it.
- Jeremiah teaches us that we can turn to God for help when in trouble.

Themes to discover

Jeremiah's faithfulness

Jeremiah kept right on preaching what God told him to preach, regardless of what the people did to him, regardless of how much they disliked him, regardless of what happened to him. That shows great faithfulness, trust, and belief in a big God.

Jeremiah's punishment

Jeremiah faced very real danger for continuing to share God's message with the King and his officials. The unpopular message was that they should surrender to the Babylonians so they could live. He added if they did not surrender, they would die! But surrendering was too humiliating for the King and all the leaders of Judah. So, what did they do instead? They threw Jeremiah into a cistern (a deep hole with rock sides designed to hold/collect rainwater).

God saves Jeremiah

Jeremiah prayed to God in the cistern and God sent Ebed-Melech (whose name means "servant of the king"), an Ethiopian eunuch who was an official in the royal palace. Ebed-Melech convinced King Zedekiah to save Jeremiah so Zedekiah ordered Ebed-Melech to lift Jeremiah out of the cistern. Ebed-Melech's obedience to God could have resulted in the loss of his job and the loss of his life. However, he feared God more than he feared the risk. Due to his obedience to God to stand against the murder plot against Jeremiah, he was spared when Jerusalem fell (See Jeremiah 39:15-18.)

The **Introductory activity** introduces a theme in the story and helps children relate it to their own lives.

The **Story** tells how Jeremiah the prophet was faithful to God in difficult circumstances.

The **Challenge** explores one of the themes in the story.

The **Prayer** and **Craft activities** help the children understand that they can turn to God in difficult times.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

Have you ever got stuck somewhere? What happened?

What did Jeremiah do when he was in a very scary situation stuck down a well and not able to get out?

Ages 7-11

When you reflect on this bible story, what words can you think of to describe Jeremiah.

God sent Ebed-Melech to answer Jeremiah's prayers. How might you be the answer to someone else's prayers?

Week 2 Session Outline

Welcome and Intro

Registration/Welcome/Prayer

Intro Idea

Have you ever been punished for doing something you didn't do? Maybe you got told off by your teacher for talking in class when it was someone else, or blamed for doing something that wasn't your fault? As a leader, share a story with the children that happened to you e.g. One day when I was in a science class at Junior High school, I whispered something to a friend beside me. The teacher saw me and went mad shouting about how he was sick of me always talking and interrupting and he had had enough! Then he threw me out of his class, and I had to stand in the corridor. I was confused because I didn't talk *that* much in class and didn't really understand why he had got so angry. After around 15 minutes standing in the corridor, the teacher called me in again and as I was coming in, he looked up and said 'Oh, you're not the one I thought you were' and looking round he said, 'Ah I thought you that one sitting over there.' A case of mistaken identity!!

Allow the children a chance to share their experiences of being blamed/punished wrongly.

How do you feel if you are punished for something that isn't your fault?

In today's bible story, we meet a man of God called Jeremiah who is being punished when all he has ever tried to do is be honest and do the right thing.

Story

pages 70-71 from The Lion Storyteller Bible

[See Story suggestions for this unit](#)

Challenge Perseverance

You will need

Video clip – Caminandes 3- Llamigos

Plastic cups

Mini marshmallows

Small bags

What to do

Watch the video clip first of all and then answer these questions

- What challenges did the llama face as he tried to get some fruit to eat?
- What do you think kept him going even though getting the fruit was proving very difficult?
- What changed the situation round for him?

Task

In pairs stand opposite your partner a few feet apart. One person has a plastic cup and the other has a bag with 10 mini marshmallows. The person with the mini marshmallows will throw them one at a time to the partner with the cup. The goal is to catch all 10 of the items in the cup without dropping any.

Note: Younger children can stand closer together, but the task should be very challenging with a small success rate to let children experience having to keep going with an almost impossible task.

Talk about

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not at all challenging and 10 being extremely challenging, how challenging was this activity for you and your partner?

What was challenging about the activity?

Did you try to change your strategy at all so that you were more successful?

Did you feel like giving up at any time?

Talk about

In today's bible story, Jeremiah was faced with a difficult task -delivering God's message to King Zedekiah and the people of Israel when they really didn't want to hear it.

He was put in prison and thrown in a cistern to die but he didn't give up. What kept him going?

What keeps you going when you face a difficult task?

Prayer Activity Response Prayer

Teach the response. Tell the children to listen carefully to the words and respond if they would like to. Make sure they don't feel forced into praying if they don't feel ready, let them know it is their choice.

Leader: Through all the ups and downs of life

Children: Lord Jesus, help me turn to you.

When I am facing challenges,

Lord Jesus, help me turn to you.

When I want to give up,

Lord Jesus, help me turn to you.

When I am worried about something

Lord Jesus, help me turn to you.

When life feels unfamiliar and I have to adapt

Lord Jesus, help me turn to you.

When I'm happy, when I'm sad,

Lord Jesus, help me turn to you.

Amen

Craft Activity Hard Times

You will need

Stones from a craft shop or garden centre

Paint pens

What to do

Explain that even though Jeremiah was obedient to God, he experienced some hard times. We too will experience hard times in our lives. If we are followers of Jesus, we will still experience those hard times, but we will know that God is with us throughout. That isn't always easy to remember however, when we are going through the difficult moments. This craft is a reminder that the Lord is greater than anything bad we could ever experience."

Give each child 2-3 stones and ask them to write or draw something they have found difficult (e.g. death of a grandparent, feeling anxious, feeling worried about something or someone, a difficult relationship etc).

Give each child a small paper bag and encourage or help them write, "GOD IS GREATER!" on the bag.

The children can place their stones inside the bag when they are finished, to symbolize how God takes care of the sad and difficult things that worry and upset us. Sometimes we can feel like we have heavy stones our hearts, but God asks us to trust him anyway and make the choice to serve him, like Jeremiah did, even when things are hard."



Week 3 Jonah the Groaner

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference: Jonah

Main Teaching Points

- Jonah tried to stop God's plans by running away.
- Each of us need God's help to love others in the way that God wants us too.
- God's grace is for everyone.

Themes to discover

Jonah runs away

Nineveh is the capital of Assyria, a leading power at the time of Jonah and also the enemy of Israel. So when God calls Jonah to go there and tell the people to repent, Jonah wants only to run in the opposite direction! Jonah's excuse is that as foreigners the people of Nineveh cannot be part of God's plan. But God's servants are called as 'a light to the nations' (Isaiah 49.5-6). Jonah knows that by delivering God's message to the Ninevites, he is giving them the opportunity to repent and be given a second chance. Jonah doesn't want his enemies to be forgiven and saved, he just wants them destroyed!

God shows grace to Nineveh

The people of Nineveh, the godless heathen as Jonah sees them, respond immediately to his preaching. God then changes his mind and does not send punishment upon them much to the annoyance of Jonah. Jonah should have known better, but instead responds by sulking when God shows grace and forgives the Ninevites. What new testament character does Jonah remind you of? Perhaps the prodigal son? (see Luke 15:25-32).

The **Introductory activity** is for fun and helps introduce some themes in the story.

The **Story, Challenge** and **Game** tell and reinforce the biblical story.

The **Prayer activity** helps children to think about God's grace.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

Why was it silly for Jonah to think he could run away from God?

If you were Jonah, what part of the story would you find the scariest?

Ages 7-11

If God asked you to give a second chance to people you didn't like, how would you react?

What do you think was Jonah's biggest mistake?

Week 3 Session Outline

Welcome and Intro

Registration/Welcome/Prayer

Intro Idea

You will need

Space to run around

What to do

Play the old favourite 'Captain's Coming.' Identify one end of your room as 'Port' and the other as 'Starboard'. Children run from one to the other as you call these out. Other instructions can be, scrub the deck (*kneel down and scrub*), climb the rigging (*mime climbing a net*), storm at sea (*bob up and down*), Captain's coming (*stand and salute*), shark in the water (*lie on the ground and scream*), man overboard (*bend over, mime stretching out*), which they carry out in the middle of the room. After a few practises you can start putting the last child to carry out your instruction is out. This game is all about carrying out the instructions as quickly as possible. Today's story is partly set on a boat too, but the main character didn't do what God told him -in fact, he ran in the other direction.

Story

pages 66-67 from The Lion Storyteller Bible

See Story suggestions for this unit

Challenge Make a Jonah and the Whale game

Younger Children (3-6yrs)

Older children (7-11yrs)

You will need

A blue plastic or paper cup

Large googly eyes

Glue dots

Blue card

Long piece of string (approx. 60cms)

Balloon

Black permanent marker

Flour

Funnel

What to do

Punch a small hole in the bottom of your cup with a sharp pencil.

Thread your string through and tie to secure.

Attach google eyes and a fishy tail with glue dots

Using a funnel, pour 2-3 tablespoons of flour into a balloon and tie.

Draw a man shape on the balloon to represent Jonah. Tie the balloon to the end of the string.

Your game is complete. Play your 'cup and ball style game. Challenge yourself to see how many times you can swing the string and land 'Jonah' in the 'whale's' mouth in 1 minute.



Prayer Activity

You will need

a large shallow tray (or several depending on size of your group)
play sand

What to do

Gather round the sand tray and draw people in the sand.

When the people of Nineveh heard God's message, they were sorry and changed their ways. God showed grace to them and didn't punish them.

Wipe away the people and draw a heart shape

Grace is the love and mercy given to us by God because God wants us to have it, not necessarily because of anything we do to earn it.

Ask everyone to draw themselves in the sand. Pray together:

'Lord thank you for your grace which is given freely to each of us.
Help us to hear when you want us to change our ways.

Ask everyone to wipe away the person and draw a heart in its place

Help us to obey you, knowing you love each of us. **Amen.'**

Game **Rough Seas, Calm Seas**

You will need

Parachute (or blue sheet)
Beach ball

What to do

Children hold onto the parachute handles and practise gently making small ripples across the parachute by making small up and down movements.

The parachute is like a calm sea. The waves are small, and the water is gently bobbing up and down. Now a storm is brewing, and the wind is getting strong, the water is getting rougher and rougher. Practise raising the parachute up and down to make large wave-like ripples. Do this faster and faster so that it looks like a rough sea.

Practise the commands CALM, ROUGH and STOP a few times and see if the children can obey right away!
Now add a beach ball and tell the group it is Jonah on the ship to Tarshish running away from God. At first the sea is CALM. Jonah goes below deck to have a sleep.

Now God sends a storm, and the sea begins to get ROUGH, it gets ROUGHER and ROUGHER. Jonah tells the Captain and the sailors to throw him overboard. So, they do! After 3, 1,2,3! *(The children should throw the ball off the parachute)* And suddenly the sea was CALM!

“Dive In” Activity Week

Welcome and Intro

Recap briefly on the stories covered in the last 3 sessions using some of the recap ideas at the beginning of the programme.

There is an information sheet to go along with each activity. It is helpful if leaders talk about the story as a reminder to the children when they are explaining the activity.

Make the story

King Hezekiah’s crown

You Will Need

‘King’ template

Strips of card 5cms deep and long enough to fit round heads

Scissors

Glue

Crayons or Markers

Sticky tape

What to do

Have printed copies of the word “King” available (using the template)
Each person needs three copies. Children can colour and cut out and then decorate with stick on gems. You may want some pre-cut for younger children.

Children can then glue their 3 decorated ‘King’ words onto a strip of card leaving a gap at both ends. Leaders can wrap the strip of card around each child’s head to get the correct size and then secure with sticky tape.



Explore the story Hand Challenge Prayer activity

This activity comes from Prayer spaces in Schools

See <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/>

You will need

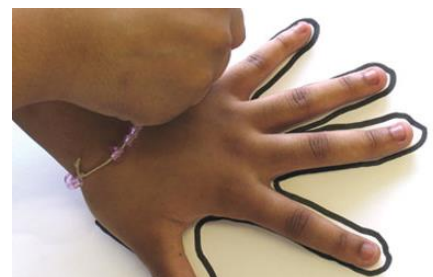
Paper, pencils or pens and scissors

What to do

Leave the materials on a table.

Children can follow the instructions on the ‘Dive In’ instructions sheet.

A leader should be on hand to help younger children understand what to do.



Get Sensory with the Story Down the Well

You will need

A tent or blankets/throws plus supports

2-3 sensory Ziploc bags filled with hair gel and some red and green food colouring (mixed to make brown)

Selection of toy animals / creepy crawlies e.g. stretchy or rubber snakes, spiders, bats, slugs, snails etc.

Sound files (see digital resources for this unit)

What to do

Build a den with blankets and chairs or tables set on their side and a central support e.g. a coat stand, to create a dark 'hole' (you may want to get the children involved in this) Alternatively you could also use a large tent.

Make up your Ziploc sensory bags using hair gel with red and green food colouring added to make brown [the mixture should look and feel like mud]. Make sure the bags aren't filled with air before you seal and tape them closed. Pass the bags around for children to feel. A leader can talk about the slimy mud at the bottom of the well that Jeremiah was dropped into. (See Jeremiah 38:6) The children can feel the bags and imagine what it was like to be lying in deep mud at the bottom of a well.

Talk about all the creepy crawlies and larger animals that might have lived inside a dark, damp, deep well. Pass around any that you have available.

Play the sound effects (see sound files in digital resources). Ask the children what sounds they can identify? Talk about what it was like for Jeremiah to sit in the well without food, wondering if he would ever get out. Ask the children how they think Jeremiah felt when he realized he was going to be rescued?

Build the story Pipe cleaner men

You will need

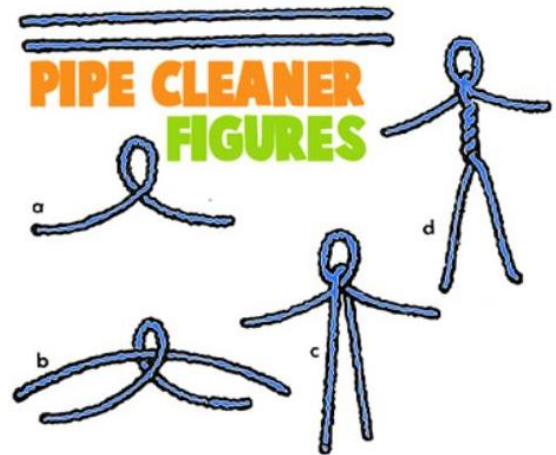
Pipe cleaners
Small rectangles of card
Pens

What to do

Show the children how to make a pipe cleaner person or encourage them to follow the diagram on the table instructions page. You may want to have small rectangles of card pre-cut for the banner/stand.

The children should think of an encouraging slogan to write on their banner: Go For It! You Can Do It! Don't Give Up! You're Nearly There! Etc.

They can use sticky tape to tape the banner to the pipe cleaner person's hands and a strip of card to its feet to make it stand up.



Talk about

Use the ideas on the table instructions page to chat to the children about perseverance.

Recreate a scene Clothes peg whale

You will need

Whale template
White card
PVA glue or glue dots
Colouring pens
Wooden clothes peg
Blue ribbon
Sticky tape
scissors

What to do

Leave out printed copies of the whale template printed onto card. Younger children will need some help with cutting. Children can colour in their whale. Next, they can cut 3 strips of blue ribbon and curl them around a pair of scissors. Stick to the underside of the whale with sticky tape so they look like a spray of water coming from the whale's blow hole.



Glue each half of the whale to the clothes peg making sure that both halves line up. Only glue the edge of each half-whale to one half of the clothes peg. You can now open and close your clothes peg to reveal Jonah in the whale's mouth.

Encourage the children to retell the scene in the story where Jonah is swallowed by the whale using their whale prop!

Get active with the story Finding Jonah

You will need

Large shallow tray filled with sand, shaving foam, flour or similar

Blindfolds

Small figure e.g. Lego man

Other small objects e.g. buttons blocks, coins, stones, etc

A timer

What to do

Show each player the small figure which represents Jonah. Next put a blindfold on the player and challenge him/her to find Jonah with hand only.

Hide the small figure in the sand (or other material). You will have already hidden 8-10 other small objects as distraction items. Set the timer, shout 'Ready Steady, Go' and supervise the player as they hunt for Jonah. As soon as they find the figure, stop the timer and record the time.



If possible, chat to the player afterwards

How easy was it to find the Jonah figure?

Was it harder with the blindfold?

Did you have a plan?

How do you think God knew where to find Jonah?