

Mar Thoma Sunday Schools

Diocese of North America & Europe



Curriculum

BEING GOD'S PEOPLE IN GOD'S WORLD

Grade Four

(Samajam Curriculum - Junior Volume I)

Published By
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MAR THOMA SUNDAY SCHOOL DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

**Diocesan Bishop
Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos**

Foreword

Dearly beloved in Christ,

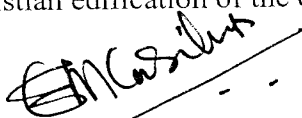
A new curriculum for our Sunday School has been a felt need in this Diocese. I am glad that the new curriculum is ready to be introduced in 2006. Here we are in the process of a transition from Cokesbury to the Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam Curriculum. While retaining the essential elements and the frame work of the Samajam Curriculum, the lessons and stories are made more conducive to our situations and challenges. The overall theme is “Being God’s People in God’s World”

Summary of Work in Three Years: The work for the curriculum started in 2002 soon after the publication of the revised edition of the book, “The Mar Thoma Church: Our Foundation and Vision (CSS Publication, 2001) and the special issue of Messenger in January 2002 which explained the development of Sunday Schools in North America. The Diocesan Sunday School Council in 2002 entrusted the task of the new curriculum with Dr. T. M. Thomas, who had been active for the growth of the Sunday schools even from the beginning of the Diocese. (He was the first convener of the Sunday school committee formed at the Zonal Assembly of 1982, Philadelphia, presided by our late Suffragan Bishop Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Athanasius). Preliminary discussions were held at the Family Conference of Dallas, 2002. A plan of action and the Curriculum Format were approved by the Council at a special meeting of Sunday school teachers and officers at Regional and Diocesan levels at the Family Conference in Florida, 2003. Five lessons of all twelve classes were completed by the time of the Family Conference in New York 2004. These five lessons (Part III) were taught in the Spring of 2005. Necessary modifications were made and the new curriculum was released in the Summer of 2005. It is now being used in all Sunday schools of North America (nearly fifty) Sept. 2005 to June 2006 academic year. While teaching these lessons improvements are being made and a new CD will be distributed by the summer 2006. The target date for the completion of printing as a book is summer 2007. Though there are thirty lessons in each class we select 25 for each year. In addition to it, there are five lessons from the book, “Mar Thoma Church: Our Foundation and Vision” for each class.

Unique Features of the New Curriculum: The manuscripts for the new curriculum were written by committees formed in all nine centers of our Diocese. All writers were expected to follow the same Format (Revised Format of 2004). Different from several other books, our curriculum includes a few values to be taught in each lesson. Today in most nations we can listen to the cry for values education, both secular and religious schools. Also, our curriculum includes two new items, one Bible Application (Bible Lesson for Our Times) and the other Life Response (Words for My Life). Here we can make the lesson appropriate for our times and relevant to the learner. Along with it there are the regular or usual items found in most lesson plans (aim, Bible reading, main ideas, memory verse etc.) There is a total of 14 items in all lessons.

I gratefully appreciate the hard work of the general convener of the New Curriculum, Dr. T. M. Thomas, Diocesan Sunday School secretaries, Mr. Thomas Koshy (2002-2005) and Mr. M. C. Varghese (2005-2008), Sunday School Council members, twelve committees each in charge of one book and others who helped for the creation of the new curriculum. Their names are mentioned in each book. Now it is our task to maximize the effectiveness of this curriculum. All Sunday School Superintendents and teachers are requested to follow the instructions of the convener in this regard.

In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit , I commend this new curriculum for the Christian edification of the children in the Mar Thoma Diocese of North America and Europe.



Rt.Rev.Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos
Diocesan Bishop

July 4, 2006



MAR THOMA SUNDAY SCHOOL DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

We remember with immense joy the great advancements we have made for The Mar Thoma Sunday School over the past three decades. The Indian immigrant community remained diligent in passing on the Christian faith and sustaining the spiritual growth for the second generation. In August 2000, Sunday School published “Order of Worship with Prayers & Hymns” with transliterated and translated versions of our traditional liturgy to bring our children to a deeper understanding. In June of 2001, our Sunday School published a Book “The Mar Thoma Church: Our Foundation and Vision” to share the faith and practices of our church to the young generation. After experimenting with several American Sunday School Curriculums for our needs, the Sunday School Teachers and the office bearers prayerfully made a leap of faith to develop a North American Mar Thoma Sunday School Curriculum with allegiance to the Sunday School Samajam Curriculum.

The collective product of the Mar Thoma heritage and the American Educational system was a Sunday School Student Book for every school grade at the appropriate vocabulary level and clearly articulated lesson with Values for Life, Words for Bible Times, Words for Our Times, Words for My Life, and Bible Learning Strategies and Activities. The first edition was released along with the Sunday School Centenary Celebrations by the Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam President, Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos, at the 2005 Mar Thoma Family Conference. The year of our Lord 2005 will be remembered for ever in the history of the North American Sunday School for developing the curriculum. The leadership of Dr. T. M. Thomas for our Sunday School remains available from the time our activities began in this country. Dr. Thomas served as an inspiring leader, traveling the full length and width of this continent to organize the curriculum committees and to structure the final version. We are greatly indebted to him for the full time ministry that we receive from him to make all our publications a grand success. Moreover, the curriculum committee members, the clergy, staff and the office bearers deserve great appreciation for persevering to produce the first version and the revision of the full curriculum in a couple of years.

We have crossed a major milestone in the production of the curriculum. The next phase should be to bring excellence in teaching. We, teachers, should cultivate a habit of continuous learning so that we can serve in this ministry better more effectively and efficiently in these changing times. Please read the “Notes to Teachers on Teaching”. It is unique for each stage as we have divided twelve classes into five units. They are: 1. Preschool classes (Nursery and KG), 2. Primary (Grades 1, 2 &3), 3. Upper Primary (Gr.4, 5&6), 4. Junior High (Gr. 7, 8&9), and 5. Senior High (Grades 10, 11 & 12). A teacher in one grade of a stage is expected to read the “Notes” in other classes also because it deals with different stages of growth. A group effort, in the regional level, is encouraged for conducting teacher development workshops with expert assistance from professionals in the region. If there are geographical limitations as parish level workshop

would be adequate. The “Teacher Manual” prepared by Samajam as booklet, was sent to all Sunday Schools last year. It is suitable for such workshops and seminars.

We, as secretaries of the current and the previous term, are greatly privileged and blessed to serve in Sunday School. It is a great joy to be the instruments of His Grace to participate in this blessed organization that continues to exhilarate techniques and technology to bring every child to Jesus. May the Lord Almighty continue to bless the challenges that we undertake in His Mighty Name.

Thomas Koshy
Secretary (2002-2005)

M.C.Varghese
Secretary (2005-2008)

July 5, 2006

Mar Thoma Sunday School
Diocese of North America & Europe

Notes to Teachers on Teaching in Upper Primary Classes (Grades 4, 5 &6)

The primary classes are divided into two, First: Grades 1 to 3 and Second: Grades 4-6. Teachers are expected to read Notes to Teachers of Grades 1-3. Most characteristic features mentioned before continue to this stage. There are two terms, lower primary and upper primary (or junior or middle school) though they are not universally used. The term middle school is also vague because it refers to a few grades between lower primary and high school. Anyhow, we are not interested in the precise use of these terms.

Characteristic Features and the Learning of these children

As already mentioned in primary school years or ages 6-12, children are very active as they are full of energy and vigor, both physical and nonphysical. It is for this stage that the psychologist Erikson used the term “industry.” The emphasis we place on activities can be continued during these years. Projects assigned to these children are in groups, but expecting greater individual initiative and responsibility. Models and heroes presented to these children are drawn from real life situations.

Today we live in a world where universal primary education is the goal. The target is to provide education till the age of 12 or 14, usually grades 4-6. However, there are many countries which do not meet the goal of basic education for a few years. Along with the number or quantity, attempts are being made to improve the quality of primary education. It includes better building, facilities, improved curriculum and qualified teachers. Among them let me comment on one, qualified teachers.

Teacher Preparation: There are teacher preparation institutions or “training” schools and colleges to create qualified teachers. In the United States, Canada and some other countries, teacher preparation is offered in colleges, while in most other countries of the world, including India, teachers for primary or elementary schools are prepared in schools, usually a post-secondary training schools for two years. These two systems of teacher training carry with it two salary scales, higher salary scale for teachers in high schools and a lower one for primary schools. The former is considered more prestigious than the latter.

What is the qualification for becoming a Sunday school teacher? In my view there are two qualifications, one the knowledge of the Bible and the other a person’s commitment to Christ as Lord and Savior. Other than that, there is no formal preparation to become a Sunday school teacher. However, teacher preparation must be arranged in Sunday schools at parish, center and diocesan levels. Teachers must continue preparation (in-service) throughout their teaching career. A good teacher is always a student who continues learning in such formal arrangements. Also, the teacher takes time to prepare the lesson for each class. Preparation for Sunday school teaching involves time for devotion because the goal here is not limited to providing further information or knowledge, but to transform the child following the model of Jesus. There are goals or aims to be accomplished and each lesson is organized as an organic unit, one segment or

item related to the other. The teacher must be well-versed with this arrangement or organization of each lesson.

Sources: As already noted, primary school children learn better through activities. Teachers who prepared the new curriculum have done their share by suggesting suitable activities and projects. If teachers want more suggestions and ideas they can use the internet. (See the Resources given in the Notes to Teachers... grades 1, 2, & 3)

Teachers who maintain the habit of reading books for their preparation, let me suggest a book: Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998. I recommend this book for Teacher Training Workshops.

Acknowledgement: Let me conclude this NOTES by expressing our gratitude to God Almighty, for His guidance, and say “thank you” to all those who worked closely with me. They include: first, our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, who entrusted a great responsibility on me and gave necessary guidance; second, the two secretaries, Mr. Thomas Koshy (2002-2005) and Mr. M.C. Varghese (2005-2008) and other Diocesan Sunday School Council Members for their whole hearted support; third, the Curriculum Committee Members who actually wrote the lessons in 12 classes following my directions (their names are listed at the end of each book) and last, but not least, all teachers and students for making use of this curriculum.

Dr. T. M. Thomas, General Convener
Diocesan Curriculum Committee

Lesson Format (Revised)

1. **Class:** There are 12 classes (Nursery, K .G, Grades 1-10)
2. **Title:** Refers to the title of the chapter or lesson.
3. **Lesson Topic:** Same as Title. It is used in the “ Table of contents” of each class.
4. **Lesson Theme:** Each lesson comes under one theme which is the same in all classes on any specific Sunday. (So introduce the theme at the Assembly.)
5. **Aim:** Purpose Of the lesson shall guide teachers for the lesson planning and presentation
6. **Bible Reading:** Each lesson is based on a specific Bible passage. Use New International Version, NIV.
7. **Values for Life:** A few values are taught through each lesson.
8. **Preparation:** Other terms are used: Introduction and Motivation.
9. **Bible Learning:
Main Ideas:** This is the body of the lesson. A few ideas are presented, one in each paragraph.
10. **Bible Learning:
Strategies &
activities:** The ‘how’ of teaching is covered here. The methods of teaching differ for each grade or age group.
11. **Bible Application
or Bible Words
for Our Times:** Lessons are related to the realities of our contemporary world.
12. **Life Response or
Words for My Life:** The lesson leads to personal commitment or life decisions.
13. **Memory Verse:** NIV is used for most lessons.
14. **Prayer:** Conclude the class with prayers given at the end of each lesson or extempore prayer.

Dr.T.M.Thomas

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PART I

GOD’S WONDERFUL WORLD

CHAPTER - 1

GOD’S CREATION - THE SEA WORLD

Theme: GOD’S CREATION

Aim: To understand the specialties of the aquatic animals and to see the glory of God’s creation.

Bible Reading: Jonah: 1: 14, 2: 10, Psalms 104: 24-31

Values for life:

1. Every creation has a purpose and a role in maintaining the stability of this World and Universe.
2. Aquatic or sea creatures are significant due to the marvelous specialties God gave them.
3. God who created this beautiful universe must be glorified.
4. We should love, protect and sustain all creatures.

Introduction

Most of you might have gone to an aquarium or an amusement park like the Sea World. Have you seen the movie “Finding Nemo”? We see the great marvel of the sea life in these - a variety of sea creatures, all different from each other. Some are big, like whales and sharks; some are small. Some fishes could generate electricity and some could fly. Why did God create them with so many differences and specialties? It is for their survival and also to help others survive for the stability of life on the earth. God's wisdom is revealed through all these differences (Psalm 104:24). The big fishes are generally called leviathan in the Bible (Isaiah 27:1, Psalms 74:14; Psalm 104:26).

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

Do you remember Jonah who tried to run away to Tarshish when God told him to go to Nineveh? What happened to him after that? He was thrown into the sea by the sailors, to prevent the ship from sinking. Then, God ordered a great, big fish to swallow him and he stayed in the belly of the fish for three days and nights.

God’s Care & Plan:

The fish that swallowed Jonah was supposed to have been a blue whale. The huge size, wide mouth and the cavity in the head are some of the special features given to whales by God. The ability to close the nostril at will and the presence of the esophagus, make the whales able to move under water and swallow their food, which could include other sea animals. The cavity in the whale's skull allows the swallowed animals also to breathe. If the prey is very big, the whale will vomit it. The fact that Jonah did not end up becoming the whale's food even after remaining in its belly for three days and nights shows that God was using the whale to reveal his command over all the creatures. The dangerous killer whale that often poses a threat to man turned out to be Jonah's very savior, guarding him from other predators of the sea. That is God's care and plan.

God's Purpose:

Shark is another of the great creatures of the sea. It stands out from the rest of the aquatic creatures with respect to its speed and size. God created it with many specialties. Its keen sense of smell enables it to detect the faintest smell of decayed fish or blood in the water. It also has a very keen sense of hearing and the ability to see even in the dark. We all know that fish stinks and that the stench of dead fish is unbearable. It could pollute the whole place, causing epidemics, especially near fishermen settlements or places where the waste material and garbage could be dumped into the sea.

But when we are at the beach, it's not the bad smell that welcomes us, but the fresh sea breeze. That's because God uses sharks as scavengers. They keep the seas free from the dead and decayed animals and in that way play a key role in maintaining the stability of the ecosystem. We realize the glory and wonder of God's creation when we learn that even the deadliest creatures play a significant role. What a wonderful God we have!

God's Provision:

We are very fortunate in having places like aquariums, which allow us to see the different types of aquatic animals and understand their nature. The dolphin shows provide great entertainment to all of us. In movies, you might have noticed how the dolphins move in groups and protect and support each other. The sea has a rich wealth of other living and non-living things too, like shells, pearls, corals etc., used in decorations and expensive ornaments. Fish, which is rich in protein, provides nutrition to us. Its fat, oil etc are used in for preparing medicines and fertilizers.

Christians & the Fish symbol:

For us Christians, fish is symbolic in many ways. You might have seen the symbol of fish on cars and bibles. During the time of persecution in the first century, Christians used this symbol to identify themselves to other Christians. This sign was also found on the doorposts, worship places and tombs, like the cross sign we use now. What does this symbol stand for? The Greek name for fish is pronounced as 'Iktheos' The five letters in the Greek word for fish is an acronym for the sentence Jesus- Christ - God's - Son- Savior. Even today in some ancient churches you may see this symbol. And we should not forget that Jesus called us, his disciples, to be 'Fishers of men'.

Now we realize God's purpose in providing the aquatic animals both big and small with certain specialties. How do we respond to this fact? We should rejoice in God's care and be grateful to Him glorify Him.

Bible Learning: Strategies and activities:

1. Have you been to an aquarium? Describe your experience.
2. Have you seen the movie "Finding Nemo"?
3. What are the characteristics of common aquatic animals?
4. Can you identify the sea animals in the pictures in this lesson?



5. Answer the following:
- a. Which fish is supposed to have swallowed Jonah?
 - b. Where did God ask Jonah to go?
 - c. Where was Jonah going to when he was thrown into the sea?

- d. The general term in the Bible for big fishes is _____
- e. Describe how God's care and purpose are shown through his creation, using the Sea World as an example.

Bible Application:

God created such a beautiful world and declared that it is good (Genesis 1). Each living and non-living being is created with a purpose to be of use to the other. We, human beings are created in God's own image as the crown of all creation. He has entrusted us with a task of preserving His creation and further beautifying the world we live in. It is our duty to fulfill the task God has entrusted to us. Let us think of ways to do this.

Life Response:

1. The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord, the earth and all who live in it are His. Psalm 24:1. Let us protect our environment – it belongs to God.
2. The dolphins teach us a great lesson through their life style. They always move as a group supporting each other. We too live in a society. Let us support those who might have to be supported, thus maintaining the stability of our society.
3. When Jonah realized the care and the purpose behind God's action, he repented and proclaimed God's message to the people. Let us obey God and proclaim the good news of salvation to all around us.
4. Through the great marvel of the sea, we saw God's purpose in providing the aquatic animals both big and small with certain specialties. Let us rejoice in God's care and be grateful to Him. We who know the glory of God should in turn glorify Him.

Memory Verse:

Gen. 1:21

So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Prayer:

Dear God, help us to see your glory and beauty of your creation. Make us understand the purpose and help us to continue your work on this earth. Through all our actions, may your name be glorified. Amen.

CHAPTER - 2

GOD'S EARTH - THE SEASONS

Theme GOD'S EARTH

Aim To make the children understand climate and seasons are inevitable for man's survival on earth.

Bible Reading Job: 36: 26-33, Deut 28: 1-14

Values for life

1. Climate and Seasons are God's blessings to the world.
2. God controls the seasons.
3. We need to praise and worship such a mighty God.
4. We need to obey God's law and do everything possible to protect our nature.

Introduction

Do you know the four main seasons of a year? That's right; spring, summer, fall and winter. Fall season is also known as the autumn season. You might also have noticed the changes that occur in nature during these times. Here in the US we have all these four seasons. Our mother country India, being close to the equator, face another season – the rainy season, which is commonly known as the monsoon season because of the heavy rains during this time. This monsoon season follows summer. People in India get a lot of thunder showers during this time. During the season changes, we experience changes in the climate too. But climate changes are not restricted to seasons. It could happen any time.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas-

Seasonal and Climatic Changes - God's Plan

How Seasonal and Climatic Changes Take Place:

Let us see how we get different seasons and why. The heavenly bodies created by God, like the sun, moon, planets and stars exercise great influence on the earth. You might have learned in your science class about how the earth rotates on its axis in a slightly slanted position and that it moves around the sun in an elliptical orbit. This is the reason for the seasons. At the time when the face of earth comes close to the sun, it starts getting warm and we get summer season. When it is away, the winter season sets in.

Similarly, the properties of these bodies and many other factors influence the climate. Wind, rain, fog, tides etc that causes climatic changes are results of this influence.

Why Seasonal and Climatic Changes are necessary:

For preserving nature and life, such climate changes are necessary. After the cold and snowy winter, we need spring to bring back new life to the nature. When we sow seeds, plant new trees or make a good garden, we need rain for its growth. The Bible, in the book of Job says - *He draws up the drops of water which distills as rain to the streams (Job: 36: 27)*; and in the book of Deuteronomy it says – *The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of His bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands (Deut: 28: 12)*.

God's Covenant to Mankind:

We have learnt about the great flood at Noah's time. The Bible tells us that it was a punishment to mankind because they sinned and turned away from God. But God saved Noah and his family from the flood. Even though sin abounds, God does not fully destroy mankind. He waits patiently for us to repent and return to Him. Listen to God's promise: *"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease" (Gen: 8: 22)*.

God the Most High-

Can you imagine the whole twenty-four hours of a day being night or day? Similarly, same season throughout the year would be boring. The underlying unity in the seasonal diversity is a revelation of God. People of different tribes, animals and plants declare the glory of God. He sustains all of these. We read in the Bible, *"How great is God – beyond our understanding! The number of years is past finding out (Job: 36: 26)*. God's covenant assures that the seasonal changes will never stop. The seasonal changes are in line with God's purpose of sustaining all things. This is God's miraculous gift. The wisdom to make the most of various seasons is also granted to God himself. See how the whole nature is used by God for blessing us. The Bible verse says: *The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to (Deut: 28: 8)*.

Bible Learning: Strategies and activities-

1. Describe the four seasons focusing on the changes you see in nature.
2. Which season do you like the most? Why?
3. What is the promise that God gave Noah regarding the seasons?
4. In the Book of Job, what is written regarding rain?

5. According to God's plan, how should man's responsibility towards the nature be?

6. Give some examples of the effect on nature caused by man's irresponsibility towards it.

Bible Application-

God created everything in perfect harmony. As the crown of God's creation we should maintain the stability of nature. But most of the time, man tries to control nature causing water pollution, air pollution, deforestation, exploitation of natural resources etc. This affects the environmental equilibrium. The untimely rains, global warming, acid rains, the extinction of animals are all the results of man's control over nature. The progress and development in modern technology should aim at enriching nature, not destroying it. Let us utilize the seasons and time wisely.

Life Response-

1. God created everything in perfect harmony. As the crown of His creation, let us maintain the stability of nature.
2. God's covenant to us is that as long as the world exists, the seasons will never cease. We should listen to the Lord's words and obey them so that these blessings may benefit us and our communities.
3. Our God is an awesome God who is beyond our understanding. His wisdom is seen through out the nature. Let us thank and praise God the most high, the source of all creations and blessings

Memory Verse: Gen. 8:22

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.

Prayer-

Dear God, help us to keep the stability of the nature you have created. Make us understand the purpose and be instrumental in continuing your work on this earth. May your name be glorified through all our actions. Amen.



CHAPTER - 3

GOD'S CREATURES - THE BIRDS OF THE SKY

Theme **GOD'S CREATURES**

Aim To see the glory of God through birds.

Bible Reading 1 Kings 17: 1-6; Job 39: 26-30

Values for life

1. God uses birds just as He uses other creatures for the fulfillment of His will.
2. Each creature is essential for the survival of the others.
3. God wants the creatures to help one another.
4. Birds help in maintaining the ecological balance.

Introduction

We are learning about the wonderful world that God has created and the purpose and will of God behind each creation and also how each creation helps the other in maintaining the balance in nature. In today's lesson we are going to learn about yet another creation of God – The Birds of the Sky.

Have you gone to the bird section in a zoo or to any bird show? If you have, you will know that there are so many varieties of birds. You might also have seen some of the tricks these birds perform for us. Some of these birds you see almost anywhere in the world. But some others you see only in a specific place or country. Do you have birds as pets? Which are the common birds that are kept as pets? God had a specific purpose in creating birds. Let us try and learn about this purpose and understand the glory of God through birds. Check Genesis 1: 20. This portion tells us on which day God created birds.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas-

Throughout the Bible, we see birds being used as tools, either for a specific purpose or as an illustration of God's care and protection. God's impartial nature is revealed through these instances.

The unfailing God

God's provision through the most unexpected quarters:

Ravens might not be one of the popular birds that are kept as pets. They cannot dance as beautifully as peacocks nor can they sing as melodiously as nightingales. But they have been given great importance in the Bible.

- During the great flood of Noah's time, a raven and a dove were used to find out if the water level has gone down (Gen. 6).
- When God commanded the great prophet Elijah to hide by the brook of Kerith during a severe drought, ravens brought bread and meat daily to him.
- To show how much God cares for us, Jesus used crows as examples (Luke 12: 24).
- Like Sharks of the sea, Ravens are scavengers. By feeding on the dead and decaying, God uses them to clean up our surroundings.

Quails, Sparrows and Swallows are very small birds, insignificant in the eyes of men. But during the forty years that the Israelites wandered in the deserts before reaching Canaan, they survived with manna and quails which God provided for them. There are some birds that eat insects that destroy crops. Others eat rats and snakes. God uses these birds in maintaining the ecosystem.

God's guidance and care:

Do you know why eagle is considered as the king of birds? Eagles can fly up very high and cover long distances. They build their nests towards the very top of high mountains. In short, everything about them is related to height. They have very sharp eyesight to help them see from great heights. Scientists took a while in understanding this fact mentioned in Job: 39: 26-30. They had believed that eagles found their food by using their sense of smell. It is very interesting to watch the way eagles train their babies to fly. They undo their nests built at great heights without any warning. This forces the babies to spread and flap their wings and fly. But the mother eagle will never leave them alone. She will stay close by and if necessary, carry the babies on her wings. What a great lesson these eagles teach us. They know that for the babies to be able to reach the heights, they have to be out of the security of their nests. But all the while the mother eagle is close by, keeping an eye on the situation. Just like what our heavenly father does. Sometimes our stronghold or security is destroyed. But God has promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us. When we are too weak to move on, He carries us in His mighty arms.

God's Protection:

Those of you who have gone to farms where chickens are raised might have seen the way a mother hen watches over her chickens. When she senses danger, she will cluck and call all her brood and gather them under her wings. No one will be able to see the chickens. Until the danger is passed, they will be safe and secure there. In Matthew 23: 37 we read how like a mother hen God wants to gather His children and keep them under His protection.

God's People

Renewing strength through God:

Strength and vigor is always associated with youth. As a person grows old, he or she might become tired easily. Do you know that Eagle is our National bird? When the great Eagle becomes old, it sheds feathers and becomes unable to fly. But after some time, new feathers will start sprouting and it will regain strength. That is how it is with God's people - those who trust in the Lord. Even when they become old, their spiritual strength will renew them. They will be able to continue their life without getting tired or discouraged about it (Isaiah 40: 31).

Finding security in God's sanctuary:

As young children, we might be afraid of things that are not very familiar to us. We might be afraid of the dark. But when we are at home near Dad and Mom, we do not worry much. If there is any problem they will take care of it. The little Sparrows and Quails become restless very fast. The slightest noise will scare them. But Psalm: 84: 3 says that they have found security in the sanctuary of our Lord Almighty. If a small restless Sparrow can find security in the Lord's temple, how much more it should be with us, the crown of God's creation!

Leading a life of prayer, purity, innocence and modesty:

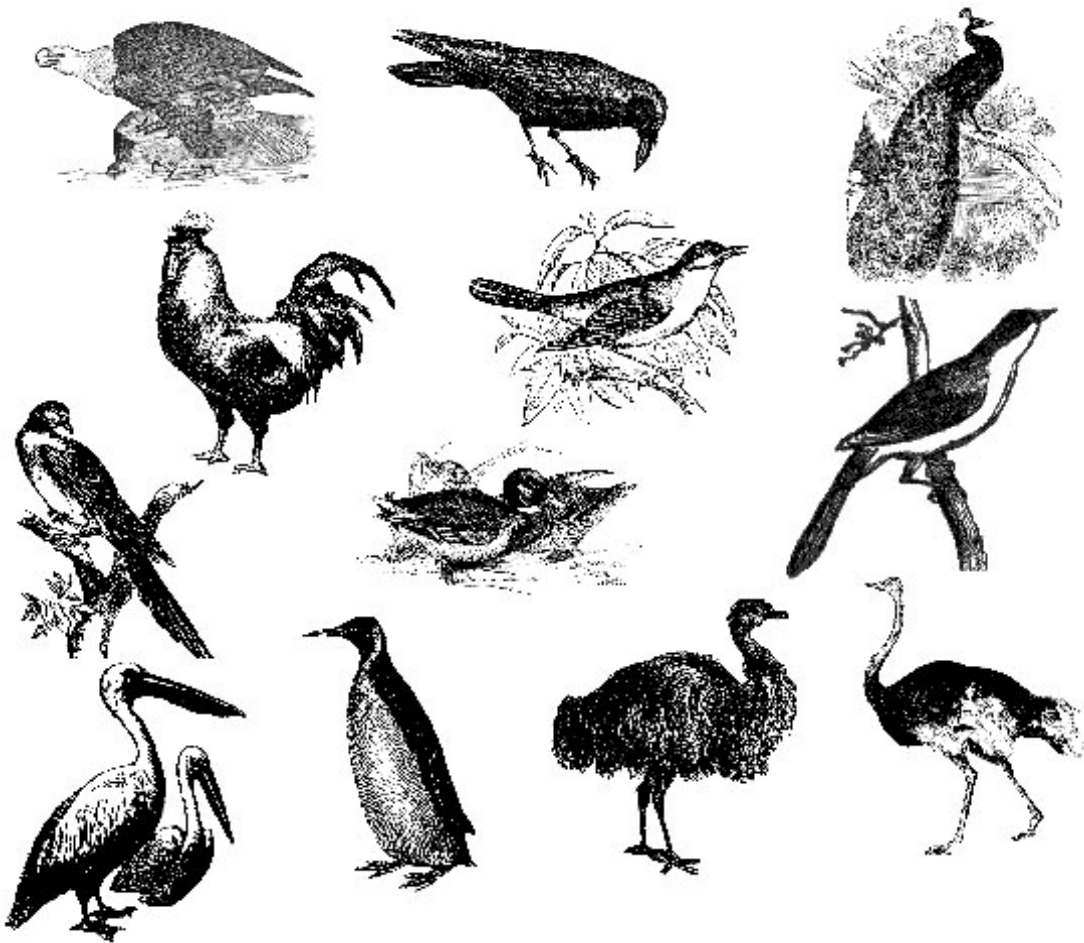
Which is the bird that stands as a symbol of purity and innocence and modesty? You are right, if you have guessed a Dove. It is also one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit (Matthew: 3: 16). In Matthew: 10: 16, Jesus says that we should be as innocent as Doves in our dealings. When we look closely at the eyes of a Dove, we find that they are always watery. Just like the eyes of believers who always pray with tears.

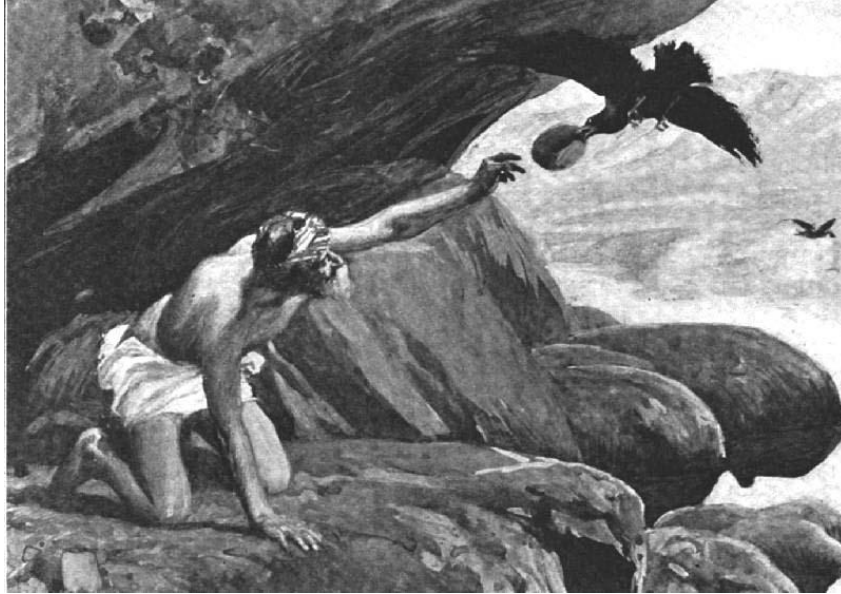
Bible Learning: Strategies and activities-

1. State whether true or false:
 - a. Noah sent an eagle to find out if the water level has gone down.

 - b. Like a mother hen God wants to gather His children and keep them under His protection. _____
 - c. In Psalm 84: 3 we find that crows find security in the sanctuary of our Lord. _____
2. Which are the common birds that are kept as pets?
3. God created birds on the _____ day.
4. _____ is the king of birds.
5. _____ is the bird that stands as the symbol of purity and innocence.

6. What is the lesson we learn from the way eagles teach their young ones to fly?
7. How can God's people renew their strength?
8. Give a few examples from the Bible to show birds being used as tools.
9. What are the lessons that the birds teach us? Describe using examples from this lesson.
10. Color the picture of birds and identify them.





Ravens feeding Elijah

Bible Application:

We live in a world dominated by the media. Ads and programs in the TV focus on beauty, power and money. Image is given lots of importance. Those who do not come under this category are ignored. So people spend all their time trying to catch up with the world standards, that they forget their creator and find no time to praise and worship Him. They become discouraged and tired when they do not get what they wish for. Let us look at the birds and learn from them. They teach us what is important. They sing and praise their creator daily, morning and evening. They tell us that God has a plan and purpose for each creation and that all are important in God's sight. As the sparrows find peace and rest in God's temple, we will be able to find peace and rest in God when we trust Him. Then we will be able regain our strength like an eagle and fulfill God's purpose for us without getting discouraged.

Life Response:

1. God is impartial. He doesn't look at outward appearance. Each and every creation is important in his sight and His creation fulfills His purpose. Let us examine ourselves. Do we deal with our fellow beings impartially or do we go by outward appearances? Let us use God's standards in our dealings.
2. The sparrow finds rest in God Almighty's Altar. Let us find peace and rest by trusting in God. Then as the eagle renews its strength, we will be able to renew ourselves.
3. The first thing birds do when they wake up and the last thing they do before sleeping is to sing and praise their creator. If the birds worship the Lord daily, how much more should we, the crown of creation do it!

Memory Verse: Mat. 6:26

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than them.

Prayer:

Dear God, the birds of the sky sing and praise your name early in the morning and in the evening. Help us to follow their example and praise and worship you and follow your footsteps at all times. Amen.

Find the Hidden Creatures

Creation Genesis 1

The animals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians God made show us how very wise God is. God designed each different creature for where it lives. For example, birds' bones are hollow so they weigh less and it is easier for them to fly.

See how many of the creatures God made you can find in hiding in this picture. There are 10. Did you find them all?



CHAPTER - 4

GOD'S CROWN OF CREATION - THE MAN

Topic **MAN THE CROWN OF CREATION**

Aim To make the children understand that God loves everyone irrespective of religion, color, tribe, gender or caste.

Bible Reading John: 4: 3 - 42

Values for life

1. God loves everyone equally.
2. God's love goes beyond the barriers of religion, caste, tribe and gender.
3. God expects man to be impartial in mutual love, concern and co-existence.
4. Strife, conflict, revenge and discrimination do not agree with Christ's nature.

Introduction

We have come to the most important part in our studies of God's wonderful world. Today, let us look at ourselves, the crown of God's creation. After creating everything else on the earth, God created humans in His own image (Genesis 1: 26 – 27), to manage over all the other creations. Let us not forget that we are God's image bearers. Our actions should fit that description.

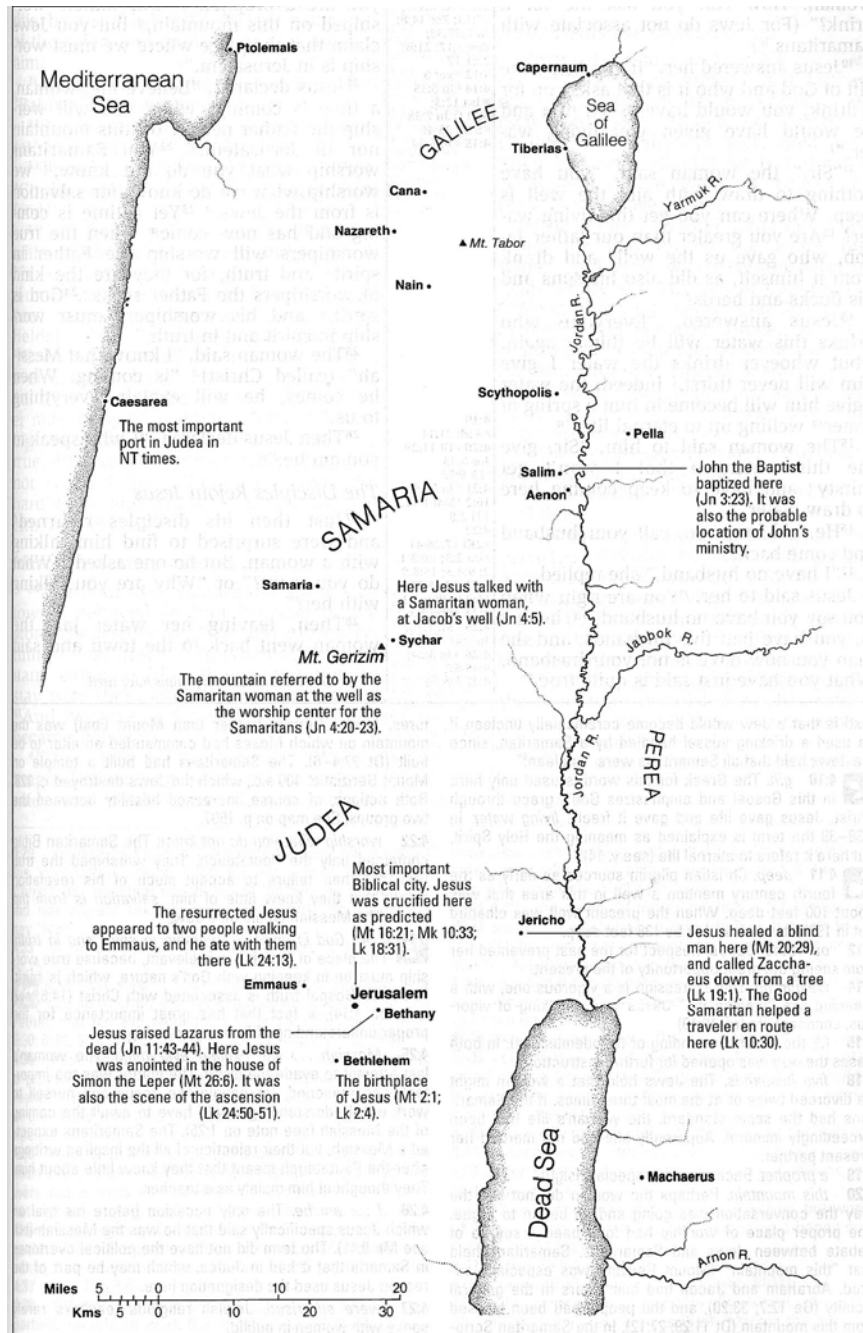
Let us assume that one morning, when you reached your classroom, you found a new student who could not walk properly and who also stammered while talking. What will be your attitude to that student?

All through history, we see discrimination or inequality in one form or another. It could be based on money, power, ability, race, caste or even gender. Slavery in this country was the result of discrimination based on race or color. There is a beautiful book, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', that brings out this subject. 'To kill a mocking bird' is another book that deals with the same subject. If you have seen the TV movie 'Color of friendship', you will find that discrimination based on race was in South Africa too. In our mother country India also, people were discriminated. This discrimination was based on caste – people of upper class and lower class. The lower class people were not allowed to mingle with the upper class. Palestine, at the time of Jesus was not an exception to this. All these social discriminations have changed a lot. But we still see them in one form or another.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas:

Let us take a look at the map of Palestine. Judea is in the southern part of Palestine and Galilee is in the northern part. In between these two Jewish regions, there is a place called Samaria. For the Jews, this was a forbidden place because the people there – the

Samaritans - were gentiles, meaning people who did not worship the true God. Jews never had any contact with the Samaritans. Even a Jewish beggar would not ask for charity from a Samaritan. They never set foot on Samaria or even say the name of a Samaritan. Discrimination was deeply felt.



Map of Palestine

God has no Discrimination

One of the famous parables of Jesus is recorded in Luke 10: 25 – 37, the parable of ‘The Good Samaritan’. When Jesus wanted to show who a good neighbor is, through a parable, He used a Samaritan. Another famous incident is recorded in John 4: 3 – 42. In this passage, we see Jesus traveling from Judea to Galilee and entering a village in Samaria called Sychar. As He was tired, He sat near a well and asked a Samaritan woman who came to draw water, to give Him a drink. She hesitated, because of the Jewish custom. We have already seen that Jews normally never entered Samaria. Also Jewish rabbis never spoke to women in public. But, we see Jesus casting these false practices into thin air showing us that God has no discrimination.

The Impartial God – Jesus was Impartial

Jesus mingled with everyone. He treated everyone equally, whether Jews or gentiles, men, women or children. In Matthew 15: 21 – 28, we read about Jesus curing the demon possessed daughter of a Canaanite woman. And in Mark 10: 14 -16, we see how Jesus became angry when His disciples tried to stop children from going to Jesus. In Ephesians 2: 19, we read that all are fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s family.

All belong to God

The world and all that is in it belong to God (Psalm 24: 1) and He always gives us another chance to come to Him. The Samaritan woman was excommunicated from society because of her improper life style. But Jesus spoke to her, giving her another chance. That made her conscious of her sins and aware of her need to repent and worship. Jesus is standing at the door of our hearts and asking us to allow Him to enter. Let us open our hearts to Him.

Come let us worship and bow down

When we look at everything that God created, we find how insignificant we are. Still God has made us very important by creating us in His own image and making us overseers of all creation. So let us praise and worship Him. It is not where we worship that is important, but how. Jewish people went to Jerusalem to worship and Samaritans worshiped at Mount Gerizim. In John 4: 21 – 24 Jesus told the Samaritan woman that true worshippers worship God in truth and in spirit. It means offering ourselves to God. For that we need to have the spirit of God in us that will make us conscious of our sins and make us repent. Then, the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us from within and make us bear the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5: 22). This transformation will enable us to treat everyone with impartiality.

Bible Learning: Strategies and activities-

1. State whether true or false:
 - a. Jewish people did not mingle with the Samaritans. _____
 - b. Samaritans worshipped at Jerusalem. _____

c. Jesus followed Jewish customs and did not talk to the Samaritans.

2. While traveling from Judea to Galilee, Jesus sat by a well in the village of _____.
3. Samaria is between _____ and _____.
4. Why did the Samaritan woman hesitate to give Jesus a drink of water?
5. Did Jesus show discrimination? Give examples from this lesson to support your answer.
6. Do you see any type of discrimination? What are they and where do you see them?
7. How should we treat those who are different from us? Why?



Jesus and the Samaritan woman

Bible Application:

God created us in His own image as the crown of creation. But most of the time, we do not see our fellow human being as God's image bearers. We discriminate them when they are different from us. Because of this discrimination we have inequality which creates social injustice and war. In Ephesians 2: 19, Paul says *"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household"*. This makes us all one in Christ. As members of the same family of God, our actions should speak louder than our words.

Life Response-

1. God created us – human beings in His own image. Let the beauty of God be seen through us.
2. Jesus lived in a society that discriminated people. But He did not follow any of their false customs and traditions. We too should follow His example and treat everyone equally.
3. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that true worshippers worship God in truth and in spirit. Let us worship God in truth and in spirit.
4. Any life touched by Jesus is changed just like the life of the Samaritan woman. She became conscious of her faults and repented. Let us repent our sins and offer ourselves to God. Then the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us from within and make us bear the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5: 22)

Memory Verse: Acts. 10: 34b - 35

God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.

Prayer:

Dear God, You have created us in your own image to be your witness. May our thoughts, words and actions be acceptable to you always Lord. Help us to see your image in our fellow human beings and treat everyone equally. Amen.

CHAPTER - 5

GLORY TO GOD

Theme: TO GOD BELONGS THE KINGDOM THE POWER AND THE GLORY

Aim: To understand that we need to glorify God, when we are being filled with His miraculous power.

Bible Reading Exodus 14: 1 – 31, 15: 1 - 21

Values for life

1. God controls nature and the Universe.
2. God redeems His children from the hands of their enemies.
3. We should Glorify God who created the Universe and controls it.
4. We should overcome difficulties and crisis in accordance with God's guidance.

Introduction

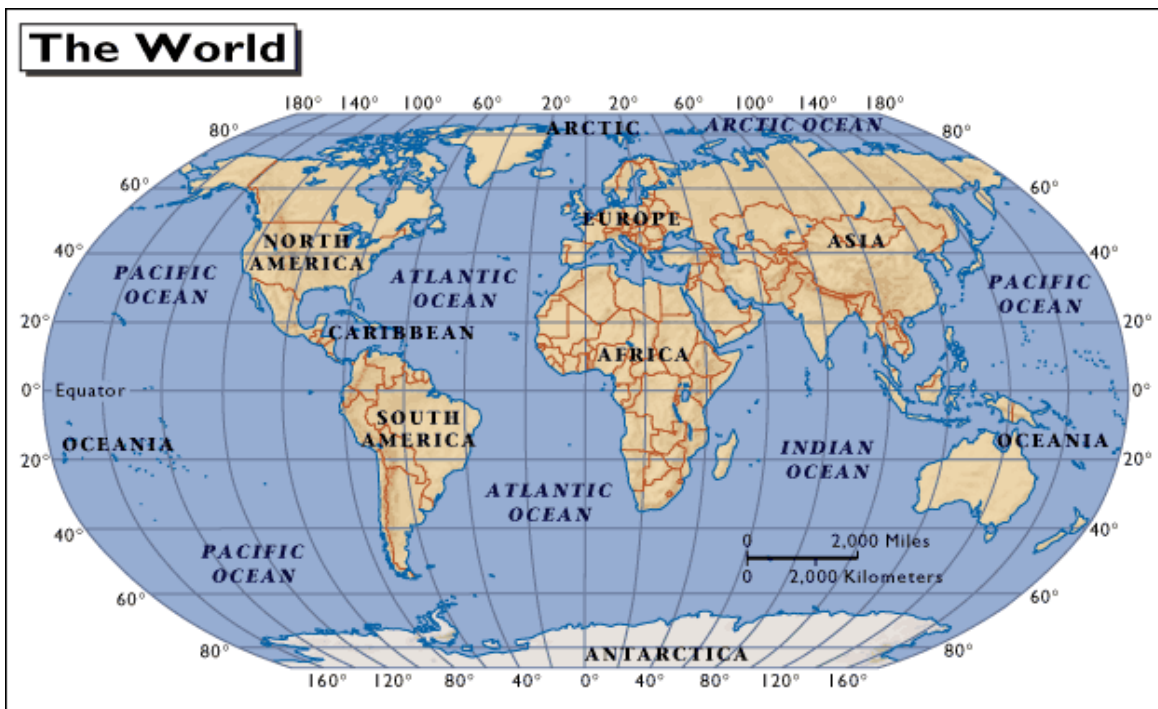
We have come to the last chapter in our studies of God's wonderful world. We saw that God created everything on this wonderful earth – the fish of the sea, the birds that fly, the seasons and us. Is God in control of only the earth? Of course not! He is in control of everything. Things that we can see and things we cannot see. So let us look at a bigger picture today – the whole nature and the Universe itself.

We have a world map here. Let us see what all we can identify in it. Now, which are the oceans that surround our country? Do you know on which day of creation God created the sea? The third day (Genesis 1: 6, 9 – 10)

Bible Learning: Main Ideas:

We have different bodies of water. We have rivers, lakes, pools (some of which are swimming pools) and also seas. What are the differences among these bodies of waters? When we stand on a beach and see huge waves rolling on to the shore, we realize how powerful the forces of nature are and how helpless we could be.

What are the different ways by which we can cross an ocean? If you have to cross these mighty oceans, which method would you choose? Let us see how a group of people crossed a sea without any of the facilities we have now and what happened to those who tried to harm them.



God is Always Near Us:

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt where they suffered a great deal. Then God chose Moses to help them come out from there. In Exodus 12, we read how all the Israelites, men, women and children with all their belongings got away from Egypt under the

leadership of Moses. They traveled day and night with very little rest. In the daytime God went before them in a pillar of cloud and at night, in a pillar of fire, guiding and protecting them.

Secure In God's Protection

Israelites fleeing from the Pharaoh of Egypt:

Pharaoh became very upset when he found that the Israelites left. So he went after them with his army, in chariots and on horses. Pharaoh and his army came very close when the Israelites were near the Red Sea. They did not know what to do. In front was the great Red Sea and behind them, Pharaoh and his army. They became terrified and started crying out and blaming Moses for bringing them out of Egypt. But Moses knew that God was with them and that He would deliver them from their enemies. So He told the Israelites not to be afraid but to stand still and see the mighty way, in which God was going to fight for them and save them (Exodus 13: 13 – 14). The pillar of cloud went behind the Israelites standing between them and the Egyptians. So for the Egyptians, it was dark but the Israelites had bright light to show them the way. Then Moses stretched his hands over the Red Sea and God commanded it to part into two sides allowing the Israelites to walk on dry land to the other shore.

God's Care and Deliverance:

The Pharaoh and his army were trying to catch the Israelites and make them slaves again and hurt them. What happened when they tried to follow the Israelites through the dry land? Moses stretched his hands over the sea again and God commanded the sea to come back to its normal position. The Egyptians were not able to escape. God gave a great victory to the Israelites that day. All of them, men, women and children with all their property reached the other side of the Red Sea safely and their enemies disappeared from their sight.



Let us Sing and Praise God for His Wondrous Love:

When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea safely and found that they did not have to worry about their enemies anymore, they believed in God's mighty power and worshiped Him and sang His praises. Moses' sister Miriam and all the women sang using tambourines and danced with joy.

The Kingdom, Power and Glory belong to God:

God is the creator and sustainer of all and His creation declares His glory. In Psalm 19: 1, we read that heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handy work. They obey Him and He uses them for His mighty purpose. Let us also sing of His mighty ways and praise and worship His holy name.

Bible Learning: Strategies and activities:

1. State whether true or false:
 - a. The sea was created on the fourth day of creation.
 - b. _____
The black sea parted and the Israelites crossed on dry land.
 - c. _____
Pharaoh and his army drowned when they tried to follow the Israelites. _____
2. The Israelites came away from Egypt where they were _____.
3. The Lord went before the Israelite as a pillar of _____ in the morning and as a pillar of _____ in the night.
4. Miriam was _____ sister.
5. Why did the Israelites blame Moses for bringing them out of Egypt?
6. How did the Israelites cross the Red Sea?
7. How did God give the Israelites a great victory?

Bible Application:

God is the creator of all things - things that we can see and things we cannot see. Nature and the whole Universe are part of His creation and are under His control. Yet, He is always near us, guiding and protecting us. He delivers us from our enemies by His mighty arms. When God is with us, who can be against us? So, we should always overcome difficulties with God's guidance. Along with all His creation, we should worship and glorify His name. For God's is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory for Ever and Ever Amen.

Life Response-

1. Our God is the creator of all things. Let us honor Him.
2. Our God saves us from everything that could hurt us and protects us. Let us sing His praise.
3. The sea and the wind and everything in this universe obey our God. Let us worship and glorify His mighty and holy name.
4. Our God loves us so much that He gave Himself to save us from our sins. Let us submit ourselves unto Him and make our Lord and Savior.

Memory Verse: Exodus 15: 2

The lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God and I will exalt him.

Prayer-

Dear God, You are the creator of all things and all the creation worship you and obey you. Yet you are always near, guiding and protecting us. Help us to see your power and majesty in everything and glorify your name. Amen.

Part II
God's Wonderful People

Chapter 6

Family in the Hands of God

Theme: Family

Aim: To understand that God cares for and gives guidance to his people.

Bible Reading: Ruth 1-4

Values for life

1. God loves and gives guidance to his people even in difficult circumstances.
2. As his children, we should submit ourselves to God's will in our lives.
3. We should love our family members as Ruth and Naomi loved each other.

Introduction

In today's lesson we will learn about two people, Ruth and Naomi, who struggled through their difficult circumstances by trusting God, and living a life of love and compassion for each other.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

During the time when the nation of Israel was governed by judges, the Bible teaches that a famine befell the city of Bethlehem, which in Hebrew means the House of Bread. An Ephrathite family, headed by Elimelech (which means "God is King") and his wife Naomi (which means "pleasant") with their two sons Mahlon and Kilion lived in Bethlehem during this time. Unfortunately, because of the famine they were forced to leave all that they had and migrate to the land of Moab, a land populated and dominated by Gentiles. (The name "Gentiles" refers to any and all people who are not the descendants of Abraham, or the Jews.)

- **Crisis in Life**

To the family's great chagrin, Elimelech died while the family lived in Moab. Naomi's sons, Mahlon and Kilion, took Moabite women as their wives. Mahlon married a woman named Ruth, and Kilion married a woman named Orpah. Sacred scripture teaches that, "after they had lived [in Moab] about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband." (Ruth 1:4-5).

- **Return to Homeland**

Having lost both her husband and two sons, Naomi did not have any reason to stay in Moab. What is more, she had heard how graciously the Lord had aided his people by providing food for them in Judah. Naomi determined to set out for Judah. She was going to return home, where she could reside with her people.

- **The Exemplary Love between Naomi, Orpah and Ruth**

Both Orpah and Ruth loved Naomi very much. They were a close family. So when Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem, they willingly chose to follow Naomi. Naomi was a gracious woman and she loved her daughters-in-laws. She did not want them to suffer by leaving all their family and all they had know by following her to Judah. She urged them to return to their homes saying, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me. May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Orpah and Ruth resisted Naomi's exhortation. They said to her, "We will go back with you to your people." (Ruth 1:8). Seeing Ruth's firm determination to go with her, Naomi stopped her urging.

- **God's Providence: Meeting Boaz and the Legacy of Ruth**

When Naomi and Ruth reached Bethlehem, Naomi's former neighbors and friends were happily surprised. Naomi and Ruth had providentially arrived in Bethlehem just when the barley harvest was beginning. The timing could not have been any better.

As it happened, Ruth chose to glean the field of a man named Boaz. Boaz was a kind and gracious man. And, unknown to Ruth, he was a relative of Elimelech. When Ruth returned to Naomi, after working in the fields all day, and told Naomi about her meeting with Boaz, Naomi was overjoyed. She knew that God's providential hand was guiding both her and Ruth.

Through his dealings with Ruth, Boaz soon came to see that Ruth was a noble woman of good character (see Ruth 2:11 and 3:10). In fact, his admiration grew into affection. Boaz soon loved Ruth. Exercising his right as the kinsman-redeemer and in accordance with the law, Boaz married Ruth. God blessed Boaz and Ruth with a son, Obed. Obed became the father of Jesse who in turn became the father of David, king of Israel. Through God's loving providence, God transformed Ruth and Naomi's perilous situation into one of victory. Ruth became the great grandmother of David the King of Israel. Ruth was a loving, obedient, humble, and God-fearing woman.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities

Fill in the following questions.

1. Why did Elimelech leave Bethlehem?
2. What was his wife's name?
3. Where did Elimelech go after leaving Bethlehem?
4. How many sons did Elimelech have?
5. Name their wives.
6. Whom did Ruth marry after she return to Bethlehem?

Bible Application:

Ruth's life teaches us that God's hand of providence is never far away. However difficult the situation will be, God is in control. He works things out for purposes we cannot even imagine. But it is always for the good.

Life Response:

God wants us to love our family and neighbors as Ruth loved Naomi. Share ways you can demonstrate love to your family.

Memory Verse:

But Ruth replied, "where you go I will go, where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people, your God my God." Ruth 1:16b

Prayer:

Lord, teach me to know that you are in control of my life. Strengthen me to trust you during difficult situations. Thank you for being so loving and kind. Amen.

Chapter 7 People Under Alienation

Theme: Humanity One in Unity

Aim: To understand that differences exist among nations and cultures, but the Holy Spirit brings unity.

Bible Reading: Gen. 11: 1-9; Acts 2: 1-12

Values for Life:

1. The human family is broken as a result of difference in race, color and language.
2. We should develop respect for other people, society and language.
3. We should work for global peace and harmony.

Introduction

1. What are some of the different ethnic groups in your class/school?
2. What skin color do they have?
3. What languages do they speak?
4. Is there any prejudice towards any group?
5. Do some people act proud or selfish?

Today we are going to study about a group of people who became proud.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

The people in Babylon became proud and selfish. They were the descendents of Noah and they lived in plain of Shinar between the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates. They decided to build a tall tower that reaches to the heavens so that they could make a name for themselves. They did not want to give glory to God. The motive the construction of the tower was to achieve name and fame for themselves. Thus they cut off their relationship with God.

Self-Centeredness destroys Social Relationships

When we are selfish we think about ourselves and ignore others. As human beings, we are expected to work with others and that is what God expects from us. When we do otherwise, God will punish us. God was displeased with the people. So he scattered them over all the earth and they started speaking different languages. It was called Babel because the Lord confused the language of the whole world. So they failed to build the tower as they planned.

The Holy Spirit heals broken relationships

Today, people of different languages and ethnicities fight against each other and destroy the bonds between people and communities. Also, people

moved away from God. By breaking relationships with God human beings live in sin. But God has sent His own son, Jesus, into the world, for the salvation of all mankind. When the relationship with God is restored, communication is also re-established. The communication lost in Babel restored on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-12).

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities

Answer the questions:

1. Who were the people of Babylon?
2. Why did they decide to build a tower?
3. Why was God displeased with the plan and what happened?
4. What is the meaning of the word Babel?
5. How did God re-establish the relationship with His people?

Bible Application

We live a broken world with ethnic groups fighting against each other. There is much hatred and violence in the world today. Terrorism is seen everywhere and people are scared of it. There are efforts to build goodwill and peace among nations. When we find two such forces, our task as Christians is to be on the side of good.

Life Response

Let us try to reconcile people when there is conflict and fights. When bullying is on the rise in schools we students have the responsibility to stand against it.

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:11

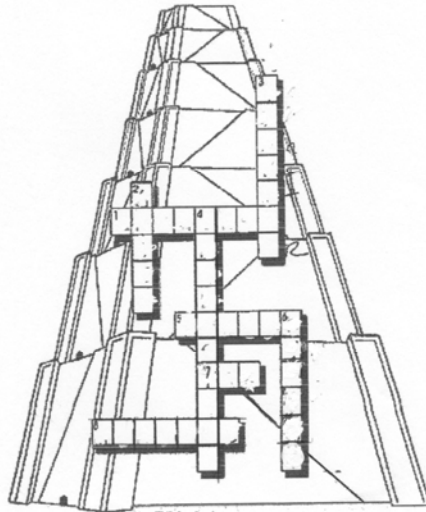
"Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all.

Prayer

"Lord, we thank you for the Holy Spirit to renew our relationship with you. Help us to maintain good relationships and communication with all people. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

Tower of Babel Genesis 11:1-9

The LORD said, let Us go down there and confuse their language so that they may not understand one another's speech. . . Therefore its name was called Babel. . . And from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.



Across:

1. the people spoke one _____

5. _____ were used to build the tower.

7. _____ was used as mortar for the bricks.

8. The people wanted the tower to reach up to the _____.

Down:

2. the tower was called _____.

3. God wanted to _____ the people all over the earth.

4. God confused their speech so they could not _____ each other.

6. the tower was built on the plain of _____.

Chapter 8

The Vision that Changed History

Theme: God Revealing in History (Jesus Christ)

Aim: To make the children understand that we must love and accept all without any prejudice.

Bible Reading: Acts 10: 1-48; 11:1-18

Values for life:

1. God loves everyone regardless of nation, race, color and gender.
2. No creation is unclean in the sight of God.
3. Salvation is for Jews and Gentiles.

Introduction:

There was a famous Indian missionary, named, Sadhu Sunder Singh. Before his conversion he belonged to Sikh religion. Though, he has studied bible in his school he was opposed to the bible and Christians. However, he had the habit of searching for the real God. He was agonizing over the question of the true God. One day he had decided to jump in front of a train and commit suicide, if God did not appear to him, before an appointed time. But indeed, Jesus Christ appeared to him. This vision totally changed his life. Until death, he led the sanity life of a true disciple of Christ. In the same way, Peter had a vision which transformed his life, orientation and familiar practices.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas:

- **Peter's Amazing Vision:**

While in the city of Joppa, Peter, the brother of Andrew and disciple of Jesus Christ, decided to pray. To avoid distraction, Peter decided to pray on top of the roof of the house he was staying. Sacred Scripture teaches us that while praying, "He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat" (Acts 10: 10-

13). Because of his Jewish background, Peter thought that eating these kinds of animals was forbidden by God.

- **Peter Meets the Gentiles:**

As Peter was pondering the meaning of the message, two men came to see him. These men came from Caesarea at the request of their master, Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Regiment of the Roman Empire. Even though Cornelius was not a Jew, he was highly respected within the community because he was a righteous and God-fearing man. Though Peter hesitated to follow these men to the house of Cornelius, finally he decided to go. After a day's journey, Peter and his fellow disciples from Joppa arrived at Cornelius' house. Cornelius was expecting them and had invited his relatives and close friends to meet Peter.

- **Cornelius and other Gentiles become Christians:**

Then Peter addressed the people who gathered there. He told them that God accepts all people from every nation who fear him and do what is right. Jesus Christ is the Lord of all of them. While Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. These people were baptized by Peter in the name of Jesus Christ.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. Where did Peter have the vision?
2. What did he see in his vision?
3. How many times was the message of the vision repeated to Peter?
4. Who sent his servants to get Peter? Why did he do so?
5. Why was Cornelius well respected even though he was not a Jew?

6. What did Peter say to the people who gathered at Cornelius house?
7. What happened as a result of Peter's speech?

Bible Application:

As we saw in today's lesson, Peter had to change some of his ideas about Jews and Gentiles to see that Jesus' message applies to everyone. He accepts everyone and his salvation is open to all.

Life Response:

God does not want any separation of people based on color, nationality, religion and other factors. It is only through Christ that we are able to see all people as one; to love them and accept them.

Memory Verse:

Romans 3:29

Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too

Prayer:

Lord, help us to love, care, and accept all without any bias or prejudice. Amen.

Chapter 9

Live Boldly for God

Theme: Response to God's Revelation

Aim: To boldly and courageously follow God even when Christians are persecuted for doing so.

Bible Reading: Daniel 3: 1-30

Values for life:

1. Christians should courageously follow God even when persecuted.
2. Prayer and obedience can help Christians stay bold and courageous in life.
3. The children of God will face many problems in life. A believer, however, is able to perform his duties with hope in the midst of any difficulty.
4. The ways and means God uses to protect and guide us, are not always as we think or want.

Introduction:

In India, a missionary and his two children were burned to death in a van. Graham Staines and his family, missionaries from Australia, were serving lepers in Orissa. Since they were Christian missionaries, there were threats from surrounding areas dominated by Hindus. The wife and the daughter survived the attack. Today, she and her daughter still continue their work boldly instead of keeping any ill will towards the murderers of her husband and sons. There are times when people in the fire were saved by God. Today we are studying one story: It is about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

These young men were slaves from Israel. The Israelites were taken as slaves, from Israel to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. The King selected some young men to serve in his capital as leaders of the government. He changed their Hebrew names and gave them new names from Daniel to Belteshazzar; Hananiah to Shadrach; Mishael to Meshach and Azariah to Abednego. They changed not only their names but also attempted to change their diet, their worship and were asked to bow before idols. Daniel and his friends were given food that was offered before idols. Having led a holy life, they decided not to touch the tasty dishes and the king's wine. They did not give up their values and faith. Their dependence on God helped them to be firm in their decision.

Nebuchadnezzar was a proud and arrogant man. He thought of himself very highly. To show off the wealth and splendor of his kingdom, King

Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up in Babylon. He commanded the people to worship the image. Anyone who refused to bow before it while the music and the band were being played, would be thrown alive into a burning furnace. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to obey his command when they were brought before the King's court. They did not care the threats of the angry King and continued in their decision. They said, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

King Nebuchadnezzar was outraged by their response. He could not believe what he heard. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and throw them into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, tightly bound, fell into the blazing furnace.

After Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into the fire, Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

In amazement, the king approached the opening of the blazing furnace and asked them to come out of the fire. So they came out of the fire. He saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; even their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. The King changed the previous decree and commanded that the people should worship the real God. The King honored and promoted them to high offices in his government.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. Who is Nebuchadnezzar?
2. How would you describe him?

3. Read Daniel Chapter 2 and write down the Jewish names of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?
4. How would you describe these three youths?
5. Explain how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's example honored God.
6. Why did Nebuchadnezzar promote the three youths?

Bible Application:

To live courageously like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we need to know what God demands of us. We find some courageous actions taken by our leaders especially of our church and its bishops. Dr. Juhanon Marthoma Metropolitan opposed the former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who declared emergency in India. People were put in prison for expressing their views. But our Metropolitan expressed his views opposing her policies. Though the Prime Minister ordered the arrest it was not put into practice.

Life Response:

So often we hear that we need to compromise our ideals and cut corners to get ahead. But the powerful example of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego teach otherwise. God wants us to be in the world, but not of it. We are to live of meekness and humility, but always with a steely determination to follow God. In the process, God will be honored and in turn He will honor you.

Memory Verse: Daniel 3:17

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.

Prayer:

Lord help us to stand firm like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Whatever comes our way, strengthen us so that we may not forsake our faith in you. Amen.

Three Brave Men

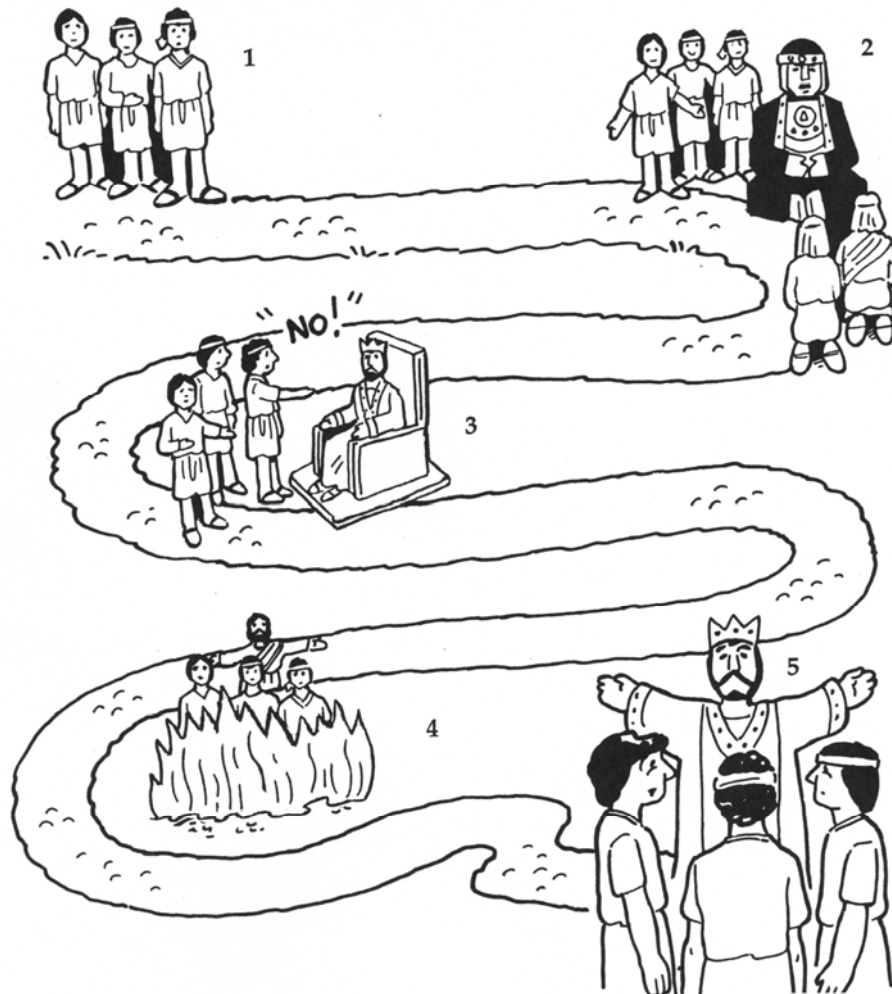
Daniel 3

Follow the Story Path

The king made a huge idol and told the people they must kneel down and worship it. Three men would not worship the idol because God says we are not to worship anyone but Him.

Follow the path to see what happened to the three brave men, named Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (1): The other people bowed down to worship the idol, but Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not (2). They told the king they would not worship the idol (3). The king had the men thrown into a fiery furnace, but Jesus appeared in the flames with the men (4). The king had the men brought out of the furnace. They were alright! God saved them from the fire (5)!

This story teaches us we should always obey God no matter what other people are doing.



Chapter 10

My Church and Other Churches

Theme: Modern Human Ventures

Aim: There are several churches but the unity can be found in Christ.

Bible Reading: Romans 12:3-8; Acts 2:42-46

Values for life:

1. Our Church is the body of Christ.
2. There are many organizations to integrate inter-church activities.
3. The church comprises of small unites called the family.

Introduction:

We are immgrants in America from another country. To own places of worship is not that easy for immigrants. But we are fortunate in having our own churches. We gather in our church buildings and conduct worship and other services regularly. It is good to learn more about our church and its purpose in our society.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- *What is The Church? What is it for?*

The Church is the body of Christ. The head is the principal organ of the body. Christ is the head of the church and the believers are the organs (Colo. 1:24; 1Cor 12:27). We have many members in the one body and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many we are one body in union with Christ and we are all joined one another as different parts of one body (Rom. 12:4-5). Just as the different organs perform the duty of the body, the church fulfills the will of Christ on earth. Jesus entrusted the church to continue his work. The commission of the church is to experience Jesus and his Kingdom in this world.

- The Early Church:

Soon after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, the disciples of Jesus like Peter, Andrew, John and Thomas started preaching powerful messages about Jesus and what he had done while he was on Earth. Through their messages, God increased the number of followers to Christianity. Luke in the book of Acts writes that, "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." When these new believers joined the ranks of Jesus' followers, they did not simply

listen to the messages and walked away, returning to their old lives. Instead they congregated together becoming the early members of the Christian church. They enjoyed fellowship among themselves and devoted time for the study of scripture and prayer.

- The Attributes of the Church (Acts 2:44-46)
 1. The Church is a community of believers.
 2. The Church is a community that comes together to worship God publicly, like the early Christians.
 3. The Church is a group of people praying and studying the scriptures together.
 4. The Church is the body of Christ. As such, each member has a unique role to play and contribute to the body.
 5. Jesus Christ is the one who establishes the church as well as leading it.
 6. The church is a ministering community. Hence it should care and help the people in need.
 7. The church is a fellowship of the people of God. A crowd changes into a community through sharing.

- Our Church and other Churches:

We see our church as part of the universal church. There are many churches in the world today, about 400 denominations. There are efforts to bring these churches together. In the United States, 36 denominations have come together to form the National Council of Churches in Christ (NCCC). The Mar Thoma Church is one among them. In India, a similar number is found in the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI). On a global scale, the protestant, Anglican and Orthodox churches are brought together in the World Council of Churches (WCC). In it, our bishops and other leaders are holding important positions. The largest denomination in America and in the world is the Roman Catholic Church, which is not part of the above world organizations.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. What is a church and what is it for?
2. How are individual believers the “parts of the body of Christ”?

3. What are the attributes of the Church?
4. What did the apostles preach after the resurrection of Jesus and what was the result?
5. Name two organizations bringing various denominations together.

Bible Application:

The early church dedicated itself to bible study, prayer, fellowship and the breaking of bread. What is your relationship with your church? The faith we develop in the church is related to the one in the family. There is a mutual relationship between the church and the family in the formation of faith.

Life Response:

Since we as individual believers are parts of the body of Christ, we need to make contributions to the church. How do you think you can contribute to your local church?

Memory Verse: Romans 12:4-5

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Prayer:

Lord, help us appreciate and participate in the institution you established—the Church. Teach us to grow in fellowship with other believers, in unity and in love so that we may properly represent you in this world. Amen.

Part III
God's Purpose for God's World

Chapter 11

God Uses a Little Boy to Achieve His Work

Theme: The Divine Nature

Aim: To develop in children the awareness to make use of their resources, talents, gifts and other possessions for the goodness of mankind and the glory of God.

Bible Reading: John 6: 1-14

Values for Life:

1. Jesus cares for the needs of people.
2. The boy shares his food for the benefit of others.
3. God can use our talents, gifts and resources if we entrust them to Him.
4. What we are and what we have are gifts from God. Our greatness lies in our readiness to share these gifts and talents with others.

Introduction:

During Thanksgiving, some of the Mar Thoma Churches meet together at their church for service and dinner together. Some of the Churches have invited people from the community to share the meal with them. Some others distribute turkey and other food items to the needy around. Some American churches arrange "Soup Kitchen" where the hungry people are fed every day. When we share food, we have a sense of satisfaction and joy. Today, we are going to study about a boy who shared his food with the listeners of Jesus.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- People following Jesus

During Jesus' public ministry, many people understood the greatness of Jesus and saw the miracles he performed by healing the sick. Also, people liked to listen to his words conveying great truth about the kingdom of God. Because of that, they followed him. People remained with him for a long time to hear him.

- Jesus showed compassion to People

One day, the people who gathered to listen to him spent a long time with him, indeed, the whole day. The time was very late and they were in the wilderness. Therefore, the people were very hungry. His disciples asked Jesus to send the

multitude home. Jesus, however, was unwilling to do that. He wanted to satisfy the hunger of the people that followed Him. So Jesus told his disciples to provide them with food.

- Five loaves and two fishes from an anonymous Boy

As the disciples heard the words of Jesus they were perplexed. How could they feed such a large crowd? Five thousand men were estimated to be there. There were women and children too. They hardly had enough money to buy food for all the people. At this time, Andrew brought a boy to Jesus. The boy had with him five loaves of bread and two fishes. He was ready to share what he had. Jesus took the loaves and fish from the boy who gave them to him. He lifted them in his hands, and looking up to heaven he blessed and broke them and gave them to his disciples to be distributed to the people. The disciples obeyed. To their amazement, the loaves of bread and fish fed the entire multitude of people. All ate and were satisfied. In fact there was so much left over bread and fish that the disciples collected 12 baskets.

The good action of the anonymous boy served to satisfy the many. He was willing to share the food that was intended for him. The name of the boy is not mentioned, but his example is made immortal in the Bible.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities

Answer the following questions:

1. Why did the multitude of people follow Jesus?
2. What did the boy bring with him?
3. How were the people fed?
4. What good quality do you find in the boy?

Fill in the blanks:

1. The people came to see Jesus because of the _____ and they wanted to _____ of their sickness.
2. _____ brought a boy who had some food with him.

3. The boy's lunch was five _____ of bread and two _____.
4. Jesus gave _____ before he broke the bread.

Bible Application:

God has given us various talents and abilities. We must use them for the benefit of others. Even if they are small, God will use them when we submit it to him. When the boy shared his food, Jesus blessed it and used it for feeding the hungry crowd around him.

Life Response:

In your school, have you shared any of your talents or your belongings with others? Give examples of what you have done in the past couple of weeks. Are you part of any club or organization that serves the community? If so, mention what it is.

Memory Verse: John 6 12b

“Jesus said to His disciples, “gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.”

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, give us the willingness to share the gifts you have given us with others. We dedicate ourselves to share our time, talents, energy, and resources for the benefit of others. Amen.

Jesus Feeds 5,000 People

◆ Number Mix-up ◆

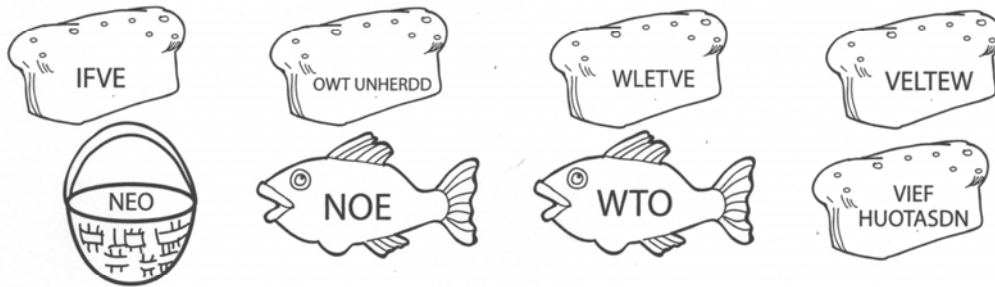


John 6:5-14

While Jesus was on earth, He did many miracles. One day, He sat on a mountainside with His disciples. A large crowd followed Him. Jesus asked His disciples where they could buy food.

Philip was surprised, because it would be very expensive to feed everyone, and they had no money. Jesus had a plan to use a boy from the crowd. The boy shared his five loaves and two fish. Jesus made a miracle happen and turned that little lunch into enough food for 5,000 people. There were even 12 baskets left over!

Unscramble the words and fill in the blanks to see why Jesus did this miracle. Solve the Math Quiz to find out how many times we should forgive.



A great crowd followed Jesus. When they became hungry, Jesus asked His disciples where they could buy food. Philip answered that even _____ pennyworth or denarii would not be enough to buy food for everyone. Jesus knew that _____ small boy would supply the food. The food was _____ rolls and _____ fish. Jesus asked the people to sit down. He blessed the food and fed over _____ men with it. When everyone was full, the _____ disciples picked up over _____ baskets of leftover food. The people knew that Jesus was the _____ whom God had promised to send.

Math Quiz

$$\frac{\text{Number of fish}}{\text{Items in boy's lunch}} \times \frac{\text{Number in crowd}}{\text{Number of pennyworth (denarii) that still wasn't enough}} \div \frac{\text{Number of loaves}}{\text{Number of baskets left over}} - \frac{\text{Number of disciples}}{\text{Answer}} = \text{Answer}$$

Place the answer in the blank below to complete the sentence.

Jesus said we should forgive others 70 x _____ times (Matthew 18:22).

Chapter 12

Jesus Cares For The Outcasts And Marginalized In Society

Theme: Divine Fellowship

Aim: To make the children understand that God is a friend even to the outcasts and marginalized in society.

Bible Readings: Matt. 8: 2-4;

Values for Life

1. Jesus is merciful enough to touch the leper, a person whom people hate to touch
2. God sanctifies us and restores lost relationships.
3. Those who have received blessings from God shall not forget His commandments.

Introduction:

Once a foreign journalist who visited Mother Teresa saw an unusual sight. A helper was lovingly taking care of a man's sores. The journalist remarked that he would not do this work for a thousand dollars. She answered that they too would not do such a thing for money. She continued, that it is not the wounds that counted but the man himself and they derive inspiration from Jesus who cares and loves and has compassion on the suffering. Today we are going to study about an event that shows the care of Jesus for the marginalized.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- A Leper Comes to Jesus

What is Leprosy? It is a skin disease with sores on the body. Since this disease was thought to be contagious, lepers were separated from society. They managed to live in their own groups with restricted movements with other people. One such person approached Jesus for help. He knelt down before Jesus in humility and pleaded, "If you have the will you can cleanse me."

- Jesus Feels Pity and Heals the Leper by Touch

Jesus had not only the will to cleanse the leper but also the compassion to do so. He could have cured him with a single word. But Jesus touched the leper and he was immediately cleansed and healed. Along with the cure, Jesus granted him His love, care, friendship and fellowship. He became a whole

person, which is the purpose of Jesus' healing in all cases.

- **Jesus Respects the Human Laws**

Jesus challenged the laws imposed by society, but respected laws that enhance human well being. It was the priest who had the authority to declare a person clean or unclean. He alone could certify an impure person's healing. Hence Jesus sends the healed leper to the priest. Jesus respected the human laws that are essential for human dignity and development.

- **Not to Publicize the Healing**

After Jesus healed the leper he asked him not to publicize it. However, he was so excited that he could not keep it as a secret. So, he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news of his healing. In the Christian life, when we receive great blessing from God it is very hard to keep it as a secret.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions:

1. What is Leprosy?
2. How were the lepers treated in society during the time of Jesus?
3. What did the leper ask Jesus to do?
4. How did Jesus heal him?
5. To whom did Jesus send the cured man and why?
6. Why did Jesus ask the leper not to tell others?

Bible Application:

There are several Christians who worked among lepers and showed God's love. In the past, lepers were sent to an island in Hawaii (Molokai) from other countries. Father Damien worked among them, became a leper and died there. In honor of this humanitarian priest, there is a statue in Washington D.C. While serving the lepers in North India, Graham Staines, a missionary from Australia became a martyr. Mother Teresa served the people who were left out in the streets, including lepers. Mar Thoma Church has hospitals, usually along with an Ashram, for the treatment of lepers.

Life Response:

There are people left out in hospitals and nursing homes feeling isolation and loneliness. Can the youths in our church visit them from time to time singing songs, especially during Christmas season?

Memory Verse: Matt 8: 3

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man, "I am willing", he said, "Be clean". Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

Prayer:

"Lord, thank you for enabling us to understand that you are a friend of the neglected and downtrodden. Help us that we may not reject anyone. Amen."

Chapter 13

Broken Relationship

Theme: Broken Relations--A Sin

Aim: To understand that self-centeredness breaks relationships, and that repentance in accordance with God's plan helps in the re-establishment of such relationships.

Bible Reading: Matt. 26: 14-16; 47-56

Values for Life:

1. We should maintain healthy relationships with others.
2. Tensions between relationships can lead to sins of far-reaching consequences.
3. God wishes that broken relationships be re-established.
4. Repentance in accordance with God's will is what helps in the re-establishment of broken relationships.

Introduction:

In our society today, people live a very isolated life. They fail to relate with one another because of their busy schedule. Neighbors hardly know one another, even though they live right next door or across the street. Also, many people have strained relations with their own family. Even worse, they do not know God. Their communion with Him is broken. Why does this happen? How do relations breakdown and how can they be reestablished? Think of these questions as we study today's lesson.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- Greed Corrupts Relationships

Judas Iscariot was one of the Apostles (Mark 3:14-19). He belonged to the town of Iscaariyot. When Jesus chose him for His ministry he was not a person filled with deceit and conceit. Had he not been a trustworthy, truthful, and obedient man, Christ would not have chosen him. It may have been that Christ had seen his capability in being the treasurer of the Apostles. However, his self-interest and greed led him to the path of sin. He became unfaithful. The selfish, jealous and greedy Judas ignored the warnings given to him. He thought and acted along the lines of his own will. He thus degenerated in his relationship with others.

- Judas Criticizes Mary

When Mary washed Jesus' feet with the expensive perfume, Judas criticized the act severely. But Jesus supported her. Judas was more concerned about the cost of the perfume than the humble and noble act of Mary. It is a truth that a person is what he thinks. Being guilty of many such tendencies, Judas severely criticizes others.

- Tension in Relationships Leads to Sin

Judas believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But it is possible that he might have imagined a worldly kingdom of Christ. It might have been this dream that prompted him to imitate Christ. When Christ's kingdom would be established, he probably hoped for a high office in the kingdom. But when Christ rejected his chances of becoming king, he was disappointed. He grew in disappointment and frustration.

- Judas Ignores Warnings

Christ gave several warning to Judas to make him turn away from his wrong path. He did not make use of these opportunities. He ignored Christ's warnings. Christ lovingly addressed Judas when he came up to him to betray him with a kiss. He could have turned away from his intentions after feeling a sense of guilt (Matthew 26: 50; Luke 22:48). For a small sum, 30 pieces of silver, he agreed to betray his teacher. After this terrible action, could he repent and change his way of life. His sense of guilt gave him great mental turmoil. Finally he decided to end his life in the most terrible manner (Acts 1:18).

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions:

1. Who was Judas Iscariot? What kind of a person was he when Jesus chose him as his disciple?
2. What responsibilities was assigned to Judas? What are the reasons for his failure?
3. Why did Judas criticize Mary when she washed Jesus feet with perfume?
4. What was the expectation of Judas about Christ's kingdom?

5. What were some of the warnings that Judas ignored?

6. How did Judas end his life?

Circle the correct words:

1. I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, hearing of your **love, hate and faith, doubting** which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints. (Philemon 1: 4-5)

2. For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have **crushed, refreshed** by you, brother. (Philemon 1:7)

3. I appeal to you for my son **Paul Jr., Onesimus** whom I have begotten while in my chains. (Philemon 1:10)

4. But if he has wronged you or owes you anything, put that on **His, My** account. (Philemon 1:18)

5. Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even **More, Less** than I say. (Philemon 1:21)

True or False:

1. I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel. (Philemon 1: 12-13) **True/ False**

2. For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him never. (Philemon 1:15) **True/ False**

Bible Application:

People do wrong things. We are also part of this type of behavior and we make mistakes. But there are two different responses to the mistakes we make. One reaction is to ignore the opportunities to change it. Instead they keep on doing the same mistakes and became stubborn. The second choice is to understand the direction or end that the mistake will lead us to. We can repent it and start a new way of living. Judas was in the first group. Instead, we should to be in the second.

Life Response:

In our family, school and other places we make mistakes. What are some of them? What do we do about them? Do we say "sorry" to others? Do we forgive

those who hurt us? Do we pray for them? Let our Lord give us the strength to overcome temptations and lead a good way of life.

Memory Verse: John 13:34

A new command I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank you for giving us the understanding that selfish motives lead to broken relationships, which in turn lead us to disappointment and hopelessness. Lord, give us the hope and courage to live in love. Amen.

Chapter 14

The Fugitive Restored

Theme: Obedience

Aim: To understand that God intends the restoration of broken relations.

Bible Reading: The Book of Philemon

Values for Life:

1. The restoration of broken relationships is a Christian's duty.
2. Mediation is helpful to foster brotherhood and reconciliation.
3. Unless selfish thoughts are forsaken, relationships will not be revived.
4. Seek to mend broken relationships in your life and assist others to do the same.

Introduction:

Why is Abraham Lincoln considered as one of the greatest Presidents of the United States? (Abolished slavery. Kept the Union, the United States). What is slavery? It is a social evil that treats human beings like animals, as marketable objects. In America, a civil war was fought on the question of slavery. Abraham Lincoln was the President at that time. He brought the civil war to an end and granted freedom to the Blacks. Slavery was practised during New Testament times. Today we are going to study the story of a slave and his master as told by St. Paul.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- Onesimus, the slave, becomes a Christian

The slave was Onesimus and his master was Philemon. Onesimus stole money from Philemon his master and ran away to Rome. Many criminals came to this busy city and lived in hiding (fugitive). Paul, the apostle who was under house arrest at the time, was preaching the gospel to the people who called on him. Onesimus became more than a mere friend. Through his friendship with Paul he became a convert to Christianity. Paul treated him like a son. Paul learned that Onesimus had runaway from Philemon. Interestingly, Paul also knew Philemon. Paul worked in Ephesus for nearly three years during his third missionary trip (Acts 19:10). At that time many came to hear him. It is likely that Paul met Philemon there, bringing about Philemon's conversion to Jesus. Though it would have been helpful for Paul to retain his beloved Onesimus with him, he hesitates to do so, for he never liked to do it without permission. So he sent Onesimus to his master with a letter. The small letter of 25 verses contains an advice to

forgive Onesimus and to regard him as a brother in Christ. Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon with his personal letter along with his faithful friend Titus.

- Paul's Mediation

Paul, who himself was restored in Christ, encourages others (like Onesimus and Philemon) to reconcile and be restored to one another. This is truly remarkable because the penalty for running away if you were a slave was death. Yet Paul mediates between Onesimus and Philemon, calling upon Philemon to regard Onesimus as his brother in Christ. This was unheard of at the time. That was not how masters regarded their slaves, but that is exactly what Paul demanded to Philemon.

- Philemon, a leader of the Colossian Church

Why is the letter of Philemon important? Philemon was a rich and a God-fearing man of the Colossian Church. The meaning of the name Philemon is one who loves. He made the name meaningful. He forgave Onesimus, loved him as a brother and made him free by forgiving his debts. Philemon loved fellow Christian believers. He actively served in the Colossian church. He opened his house for worship. The members of the Colossian Church gathered for prayer at his house. History says that Philemon later became the Bishop of the Church of Colosse and was stoned to death and is now considered one of the many martyrs for Christ.

- The Transformation of Onesimus

If one lives in Christ he/she is a new creation. We have learnt how Onesimus and Philemon became reconciled and restored their relationship. The money lost by Philemon on account of Onesimus is nothing as compared to the gain of the kingdom of God on account of Onesimus' transformation and restoration. History says that Onesimus became an evangelist and later the bishop of Ephesus. The love, care, encouragement, forgiveness and broadmindedness of Philemon, helped the way for this transformation.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions:

1. Who was Onesimus? Why did he come to Rome?
2. What was the result of the friendship between Paul and Onesimus?

3. Why did Paul send Onesimus back to Philemon?

4. Describe the transformation of Onesimus?

Bible Application:

In our world today we find tensions, violence, hatred and other such evil tendencies. As Christians, we have a responsibility to be keep away from it. Moreover, Christians have a duty to work for reconciliation and achieve harmony and peace between individuals and groups. In the story we learned today we find a great deal about reconciliation.

Life Response:

Though in prison Paul was preaching the gospel to fellow prisoners and to people visiting him. We can do Christian work in various situations including the hard conditions in a prison. Let us make use of our circumstances to be a witness to Christ. As Christians we have the duty to work for peace and reconciliation.

Memory Verse: Philemon 11

Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, teach me to forgive others as I have been forgiven. Amen.

Chapter 15
Rainbow in the Sky, God's Covenant

Theme: Discern the Eternal Goal

Aim: To understand the meaning of covenants and know the will of God.

Bible Reading: Gen. 9: 1-17

Values for Life:

1. Ignoring the voice of God leads to ruin.
2. Those who trust and obey will be saved.
3. The children of God wait for the new earth and new heaven where justice and righteousness reign, where God's will is done.
4. Offering ourselves to God is the best worship.

Introduction

Throughout the Bible, God makes certain promises to His people. These promises are called covenants. Today we will be learning about the covenant God made with Noah.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

A. Don't Ignore the Voice of God (Read Genesis 6: 5-15)

Though mankind is God's creation, man did not heed God. Human beings readily forgot God and did not keep his commandments. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on earth and that every thought of his heart was evil. Seeing the people living in sin, the Lord was grieved. But Noah was a man who walked with God and found favor in His eyes. The name Noah means rest or comfort. For ten years he preached to the people about the judgment of God. But they did not give ear to the counsel of God. The Lord said to Noah, "I will destroy them with the earth" (6:13).

B. Trust, Obey and You will be Saved (Gen. 7:1-5)

Those who believed in God's counsel and accepted it must enter the ark and they would be saved. Noah and his family entered the ark and escaped the flood. All the others who heard his preaching, but did not repent, were destroyed. They were judged for their sins.

C. The Survivors Worshipped God

Those who came out of the ark went on to live on the earth. The survivors came out and built an altar. They gave thanks to God through burnt offerings. God,

being pleased by their worship made a covenant with them. "Never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done". (Gen. 8:21).

D. The Rainbow, Sign of the Covenant

This is the covenant that the Lord established with every living creature on earth. "Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth" (Gen. 9:11). The rainbow is the sign of the covenant that the Lord established between Him and the earth for all generations, forever. "Then I will remember the everlasting covenant between me and all flesh on earth." "Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth" (Gen 9:16). God wants us to live righteously. He will judge us according to our sins, since he is a holy and righteous God. Rainbow is the promise of God's protection in the midst of adversities.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities

Answer the questions:

1. Why did God decide to destroy the earth? How did He give the warning?
2. Who obeyed the warning and who did not? What happened to both?
3. What did the survivors do after they came out of the ark?
4. What is the meaning of the rainbow?

Bible Application

When there is wickedness or evil, God is in great sorrow, even today, as at the time of Noah. Since God is loving and just, He will take action always. The warnings He gives must be taken seriously.

Life Response

God wants us to turn to Him and seek His guidance for living in a world when evil trends are on the rise. Let us seek God's help to live a good life.

Memory Verse: Genesis 9:13

"I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

Prayer

“Lord Jesus, give us the discernment to know that we will be held accountable for our sins. We confess them to you knowing that you have promised forgiveness to those who confess and repent of their sins. Amen.”

Noah and the Ark

Genesis 6:8 — 9:17

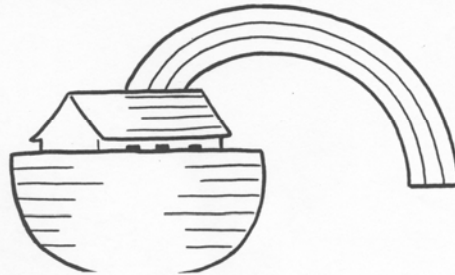
Story in Code

The people on the earth were very wicked. God knew He must punish them, so He decided to send a flood to destroy all living things. Noah did good instead of bad. God takes care of people who love and obey Him, so God had Noah build a big boat, called an ark. Noah took his family and some of every kind of animal into the ark to keep them safe. All the other living things on the earth died.

Read Genesis 6:8 through Genesis 9:17. Use the code to find the words that belong in the blanks below. Read the story. Then color the picture of the ark and the rainbow.

W	O	B	K	Y	A	N	U	D	I	R	E	S	H	C	F	T
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17

- All the people on the earth were very $\frac{\quad}{1}$ $\frac{\quad}{10}$ $\frac{\quad}{15}$ $\frac{\quad}{4}$ $\frac{\quad}{12}$ $\frac{\quad}{9}$. (Genesis 6:5)
- $\frac{\quad}{7}$ $\frac{\quad}{2}$ $\frac{\quad}{6}$ $\frac{\quad}{14}$ still loved God. (Genesis 6:8-9)
- God told Noah to build the $\frac{\quad}{6}$ $\frac{\quad}{11}$ $\frac{\quad}{4}$. (Genesis 6:14)
- After God closed the door of the ark, it began to $\frac{\quad}{11}$ $\frac{\quad}{6}$ $\frac{\quad}{10}$ $\frac{\quad}{7}$. (Genesis 7:12)
- The flood waters were on the earth for one $\frac{\quad}{14}$ $\frac{\quad}{8}$ $\frac{\quad}{7}$ $\frac{\quad}{9}$ $\frac{\quad}{11}$ $\frac{\quad}{12}$ $\frac{\quad}{9}$ and $\frac{\quad}{16}$ $\frac{\quad}{10}$ $\frac{\quad}{16}$ $\frac{\quad}{17}$ $\frac{\quad}{5}$ days. (Genesis 7:24)
- The ark rested on a mountain called $\frac{\quad}{6}$ $\frac{\quad}{11}$ $\frac{\quad}{6}$ $\frac{\quad}{11}$ $\frac{\quad}{6}$ $\frac{\quad}{17}$. (Genesis 8:4)
- God put a $\frac{\quad}{11}$ $\frac{\quad}{6}$ $\frac{\quad}{10}$ $\frac{\quad}{7}$ $\frac{\quad}{3}$ $\frac{\quad}{2}$ $\frac{\quad}{1}$ in the sky as a promise that He would never again flood the whole earth. (Genesis 9:12-16)



Part IV

God With God's World and God's People

Chapter 16

The God Who Guides

Theme: The History of Religion (Divine Guidance)

Aim: To understand that God gives guidance to overcome obstacles.

Bible Reading: Joshua 6: 1-20

Values for life:

1. God has authority and control over the Universe.
2. Trials and tribulations are not barriers in the fulfillment of God's plan.
3. If we remain faithful to God, God will reward his people.

Introduction:

Have you visited or heard of fortress? In the past, especially in ancient times, Kings made fortress and lived in it. A fortress can be a small or large area, enclosed by a strong wall to keep the space inside safe. Without such a wall, an enemy could come and defeat a King easily. King Solomon's palace and temple were kept safe within the walls of Jerusalem. Today, when we visit Israel, we can see the old city Jerusalem surrounded by walls. Today we are going to study another King and his fortress, about 10 miles away: It is the city of Jericho.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- Israel enters Canaan:

After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the nation of Israel had crossed over into the Promised Land. Under the leadership of Joshua, Moses' successor, God had promised that He would give the land of Canaan to Israel. Jericho was one of the main cities in Canaan. There were, however, many obstacles to overcome. Not least of which was the very powerful city of Jericho. It was a city fortified by strong walls and army. They were considered invincible, and a source of pride and confidence for the people of Jericho.

- God gives Jericho over to Israel:

The people of Jericho had heard of the Israelites. They feared them because they were scared of the God who had helped Israel defeat the powerful Amorites. When the residents of Jericho shut themselves behind the stone walls awaiting the attack of the Israelites, God gave directions to Joshua, the leader of the Israelites. Joshua sent two spies to Jericho and they returned with encouraging reports. God told Joshua, " Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord, your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshu. 1:9). This acted as an inspiration for him to plan the strategies with the help of God.

- The Fall of Jericho:

Under the leadership of Joshua, the Israelites marched around the city once each day for six days. The forces were led by the priests who escorted the ark of God, blowing trumpets. The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times in the same manner and so on the seventh round at a given signal, they shouted together. Then the walls collapsed and the city was captured. The walls of Jericho collapsed by the divine act and not by the efforts of Israelites.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. What was Jericho and why was it so important?
2. Who was Joshua and how would you describe him?
3. Why did the people of Jericho fear Israelites?
4. How did they march around the city?
5. How many days did they march and what did they do on the last day?
6. Describe how God guided Joshua?

7. Draw how the city of Jericho looked like before and after its fall.

Bible Application:

God guided Joshua by directly speaking to him and giving him commands. Though Joshua and the people followed the instructions. If you want to succeed in our efforts we have to be faithful and sincere in our responsibilities. Also we have to humble ourselves to follow the ways of God.

Life Response:

One of the lessons to be learned from Joshua is to be obedient. The battle plan God gave to Joshua might have seemed strange, but Joshua, nonetheless obeyed. Today also we have the same need of obeying God even when it is not reasonable to our intelligence. We should follow the example of Joshua and obey our Lord.

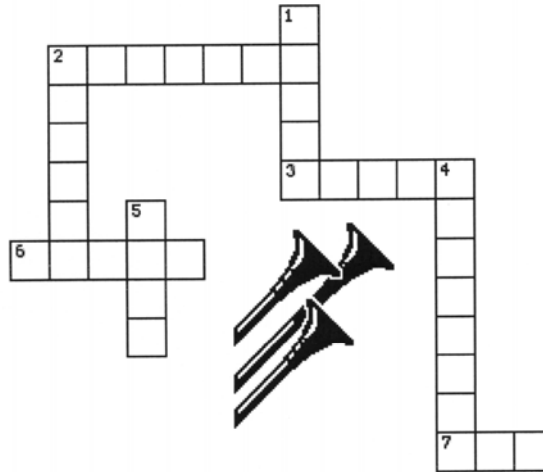
Memory Verse: Psalms 121: 1,2

I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Prayer:

Lord, help us to be faithful in the duties entrusted to us. Give us the strength to face difficulties that come across in our life. Amen.

BATTLE OF JERICHO (JOSHUA 6:1-26)



- 2 ACROSS "And the LORD, said to Joshua: 'See! I have given _____ into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.' " **JOSHUA 6:2**
- 7 ACROSS "You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go around the city once. This you shall do _____days." **JOSHUA 6:3**
- 4 DOWN "But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priest shall blow the _____." **JOSHUA 6:4**
- 1 DOWN Joshua told the priest, "Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' _____before the ark of the LORD." **JOSHUA 6:6**
- 3 ACROSS "Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, 'You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, " _____"! Then you shall shout.' " **JOSHUA 6:10**
- 5 DOWN "So the people shouted when the priests blew their trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the _____ fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city." **JOSHUA 6:20**
- 6 ACROSS "And Joshua spared _____ the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So he dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." **JOSHUA 6:25**
- 2 DOWN "So the LORD was with _____, and his fame spread throughout all the country." **JOSHUA 6:27**

Chapter 17

Man In God's Hands

Theme: History of Salvation

Aim: To understand that God cares for his people

Bible Reading: Gen. 41:37-57

Values for life:

1. God loves and cares for his people.
2. God is with us both in adversity and prosperity.
3. Trust in God generates optimism and self-confidence.

Introduction:

In the United States, there are people who reached prominence, though they were born in foreign countries. Give examples (examples are Henry Kissinger and Madeline Albright. Both of them became Secretary of State, the third highest position in the US government after the President and Vice-President). In the same way, an Israelite became "second in command" to Pharaoh of Egypt. He was Joseph. Today, we are going to study about Joseph and his accomplishments as the Minister of Egypt.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

The boy who was blessed by God

Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Jacob, born to Rachel. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons because Joseph was born in his old age. He was his father's favorite. So his brothers disliked him. God gave Joseph the ability to interpret dreams. The brothers were jealous of him when he told them his dreams. They waited for a chance to harm him. They got it and they threw him into a dry well. Later, he was sold as a slave to Egyptian merchants. After going through several difficulties, including imprisonment, he rose to prominence.

Joseph interpreting dreams

While Joseph was in prison Pharaoh had a dream. The wise men of Egypt could not interpret his dreams. Pharaoh came to know about Joseph and he was brought to the King. When Pharaoh asked to interpret the dreams, Joseph replied: "I cannot do it, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires" (Gen. 41:6). Joseph explained the dream. There would be seven years of abundance in

the land, followed by seven years of famine that would destroy the land. Pharaoh should select a wise man and put him in charge of the land. He should make arrangements for collecting a fifth of the harvest during the seven years of abundance and store the grain for use during the time of famine. Pharaoh decided to appoint Joseph in charge of the land, second in command. The King honored him with a new name and a wife, a woman from Egypt.

Joseph working for the welfare of people

Joseph used his new position of power and honor for the well being of the people of Egypt, rather than his own benefits. Joseph was responsible and faithful to the King and he administered the country with great far sight. What was the reason for his success in a foreign country? It was because "the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did" (Gen. 39:23). He was humble and he trusted God while carrying out heavy responsibilities. The nation was saved from a great famine because Joseph obeyed God.

Joseph reconciling with his brothers

The famine spread over the whole country and people from other countries also came to buy food. Among them were his brothers. Kneeling before Joseph, they begged for food. The brothers did not recognize him, but Joseph knew who they were. Joseph asked them to bring their youngest brother, Benjamin. When he saw Benjamin he was unable to control his emotions and he wept loudly. Instead of taking revenge against his brothers, Joseph wanted to reconcile with them. He revealed his identity before them. He comforted them by saying, "God sent me ahead to preserve for you a remnant on earth to save your lives by a great deliverance"(Gen. 45:5). Apostle Paul agrees with it when he says "God works for the good of those who love him"(Romans 8:28).

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities

Answer the following questions:

1. Who was Joseph? Name his parents
2. Why did his brothers hate him and what did they do?
3. What did he become after passing through several hardships?
4. What were the responsibilities entrusted to him by Pharaoh?
5. Why did he succeed in his position?
6. How did his brothers come to him?

7. Describe Joseph's meeting with his brothers

Bible Application

People holding political positions as presidents and prime ministers are expected to serve the society aiming at the well being of all people in their country. Today, there are some who live according to this principle while others become selfish by looking after their own interest. As Christians, we pray for our political leaders hoping that they would work for the good of all people. In Joseph we find a good model that became a blessing in a foreign country. It became beneficial to his family also.

Life Response

When we rise to higher positions in our job with better salaries let us try to be humble and serve people who are less fortunate. In Joseph we find a good model. When we have the awareness that God has brought us to such positions, we will devote more time and money for those who are in need.

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Prayer

Lord, we thank you for all your blessings. You have loved and cared for us. Kindly help us to serve others when they are in need. Amen

Chapter 18

The First Adam and the Second Adam

Theme: Fullness of Life in Jesus Christ

Aim: To understand that we receive the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our second Adam.

Bible Reading: Romans 5: 12 -24; I Corinthians 15:4-49

Values for life:

1. God is our creator and redeemer.
2. We receive eternal life through Jesus, while death through Adam.
3. God gave us the right to become His children through Jesus.

Introduction:

In today's lesson we will learn why Jesus is called the "second Adam" by St. Paul. Jesus, through his sacrifice achieved a great work for us. He is God's promise to save a sinful humanity. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we can be right before God.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- God became man in the person of Jesus Christ:

One of the remarkable truths about Christianity is that God became a human being in the person of Jesus Christ. Many other world religions teach that the material world is inherently evil. So God cannot take human form because humanity is made of matter that is evil. Such a view of creation is not taught in the Bible. In fact, the Bible teaches that all things were created by God and for God. So the fact that God took on human form, as St. John teaches in his awesome expression—"the Word became Flesh," in the person of Jesus Christ, is not a problem from the Christian perspective. In fact, it's one of the great things God did for us. The word that Christians use to describe the fact that God became man is incarnation.

- Why did God become man?

But why did God become a man? He did so because he is compassionate. He wanted to redeem and save us from his just judgment. God is a just and holy God. He cannot tolerate sin and sinfulness. When human beings sin, he has to

judge them for the wrongs they do. Just as we must punish criminals here on Earth, so too God must punish us for the wrongs we do. St. John's gospel says: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). The way that God took the punishment for others onto himself was by becoming a man in the person of Jesus Christ. When Jesus died on the cross, he was taking the punishment for the sins of the world. All that anyone has to do to receive the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice is to repent what they have done wrong and put their trust in God.

- Comparing the New and Old Adam:

St. Paul calls Jesus the "New Adam" (1 Cor 15: 45-49).

1. The first Adam was created as living being, the second as a life-giving spirit.
 2. The first Adam was natural; the second Adam spiritual.
 3. The first Adam was from the Earth, the second Adam from Heaven.
 4. Just as humans bear the likeness of the first Adam, those who have repented are now in the likeness of the second Adam.
- What Jesus has achieved through his Sacrifice:

The beautiful message of Christianity is that it is now possible for us to know God and to commune with Him. No longer are we under His just judgment. Instead, once we have repented and appropriated the benefits of what Jesus has achieved for us, we can boldly enter the throne of God in full assurance that we are his children.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. What is the remarkable truth about Christianity?
2. Why did God become man?
3. Who is the second Adam?
4. What are some of the similarities between Jesus and Adam?

5. What are some of the differences between Jesus and Adam?

6. What has Jesus achieved for us and how?

Bible Application:

Summarize in your own words what Jesus has done for us. God was and is able to forgive us of our sins. In the same way we must be willing to forgive, when they repent, those who have wronged us.

Life Response:

1. In light of what you have learned today of Jesus' sacrifice and the great love of God, have you considered repenting of your sins and believing Jesus?
2. Sometimes people do not appreciate the great work that God has done for us because they don't recognize their need for him. As an exercise, write down why you need Jesus in your life.

Memory Verse: John 3: 16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Prayer:

Lord, help us to know and experience your grace and your forgiveness through your son Jesus Christ. Show us our great need for him, and help us to appreciate your great sacrifice. Amen.

Chapter 19

Power Through the Holy Spirit

Theme: Work of the Holy Spirit

Aim: To learn how the early Church was empowered by the Holy Spirit

Bible Reading: Acts 2: 1-13, 43-47

Values for life:

1. God's people should be guided by the Holy Spirit.
2. Salvation is received by the those who call upon the name of Jesus.
3. We must grow in faith.

Introduction:

In today's lesson we will learn about the great transformation that took place in the lives of Jesus' disciples. We oftentimes think of Jesus' followers as great and mighty men, but we must remember that they were ordinary fishermen that God transformed into powerful leaders in His church. In particular, we will focus on the change that occurred to Peter and other disciples at Pentecost in today's lesson.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- The Holy Spirit Comes to the Disciples:

Israelites observed three main festivals and they are: the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Pentecost means the 50th. After Jesus ascended to heaven to be at the right hand of the Father, Jesus' disciples stayed in Jerusalem for another fifty days. As commanded by Jesus they prayed, and at that time the Holy Spirit came upon them. These ordinary disciples showed extraordinary abilities: they were able to speak in different languages which they did not know. People who gathered there from different places (eighteen) speaking several languages heard the message in their own language. There was a spiritual communication between the believers and the people.

- The Message of Peter:

Peter first tried to clear the doubts of the people. He said that they were filled with the Holy Spirit and are not drunk. This was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, "I will pour out my spirit on all people" (Joel 2:28-30). God used Jesus Christ as the means of our salvation. The crucified Christ is the Son of God and God the father raised Jesus from the dead. The disciples were the witnesses of the risen Christ.

- Response of People:

When the people heard the speech of Peter, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." (Act 2:37-38). Repentance and faith are the only conditions essential for salvation. Mere baptism does not give forgiveness of sin. Those who have repentance and faith baptize to be united with Christ's body. Those who accepted Peter's message were baptized and about three thousand were added to their number that day. The door of salvation was thus opened. Pentecost day is considered as the birthday of Christian Church.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. What were the three main festivals of the Israelites?
2. What is Pentecost and what did the disciples do on that day?
3. Who is the Holy Spirit and what did he enable the disciples to do?
4. What was the message of Peter?
5. What was the response of people to Peter's message?
6. When was the beginning of the Church?

Bible Application:

We must realize that just as God transformed Peter and the other disciples God can also transform us. All people irrespective of age, receive salvation through faith, as a gift. All that we need to do is turn to him in repentance and seek him in prayer.

Life Response:

1. Have you entered into the life of salvation?
2. How would you tell your friends the transforming effect of the Holy Spirit?

Memory Verse: Acts 1: 8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Prayer:

Lord, we thank our for giving us the Holy Spirit. Help us to develop a new way of life through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Chapter 20

God Calls Levi

Theme: Commitment to Jesus Christ

Aim: To understand that Jesus has come to rescue and heal the sick and needy, not the perfect and righteous. It is the sick, Jesus says, who need a physician.

Bible Reading: Matthew 9: 9-13

Values for life:

1. God calls and loves those who are marginalized by society.
2. God loves those who are sinners who repent and become his disciples.
3. God call us through various means.

Introduction:

In today's lesson we will learn about how Jesus called Matthew, a tax collector, to be his disciple. Sometimes people think that only those who are perfect can be Jesus' follower. In fact, it is just the opposite. Just as only the sick need a physician, so too only the sinful need a savior. We will see in Jesus' interactions that he cares very much for those who are despised and look down upon. It is a model we should emulate.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- **Who was Levi?**

Levi was another name for Matthew. The word Matthew means "God's gift". He was from Capernaum. A small town on the way from Galilee to Demaseus. Jesus spent a great deal of time in this small town and he met Levi over there. Matthew was a tax collector. The tax collectors were representatives of the Roman Government and the Jews considers them as their enemies. The public thought of them as wicked and cruel who exploited and took bribe from the people. Jesus accepted people like Matthew, who were rejected by the society.

- **Jesus calls Matthew:**

Jesus called Matthew from his working field, collecting taxes. God called a number of people when they were active in their professions. Matthew accepted Jesus' call, "Follow Me". Matthew was extremely happy to follow him. Out of his great joy, he arranged a great banquet. His friends were tax collectors and sinners. They were astonished when Jesus appointed him as his disciple. However, the Pharisees who were

there ridiculed Jesus for eating with such people. But Jesus answered, " I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt 9:13).

- Matthew who wrote the Gospel:

Among the four gospels, one of them is written by Matthew. It is placed as the first book in the New Testament. The first three gospels were called "Synoptic Gospels" because there are similarities among them. Matthew was a Jew and he realized Jesus as the real Messiah whom the Jews were waiting for. He presents Messiah as the son of Abraham and David. (Matt 1:1)

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. What was Matthew's job?
2. How were tax collectors treated in the society?
3. What was the difference of Jesus in his treatment of tax collectors ?
4. How did the Pharisees react to Jesus?
5. What did Jesus say to the Pharisees?
6. What does Jesus' dealing with Matthew teach us about Jesus' character?

Bible Application:

Jesus cared about people who were marginalized by their society. Who were some of the people ignored in society today? Do you treat other people like that? If not, why not? Follow the example of Jesus.

Life Response:

1. Write down a list of names of people whom you have mistreated. Pray to God about it and see if you can reconcile these people.
2. Can you follow Jesus just as Matthew followed him.

Memory Verse: Matthew 9:13

But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'

Prayer:

Lord, forgive me if I have been self-righteous like the Pharisees. Teach me to be more like you and love those whom society despises. Amen.

Part V

God's Work Among God's People

Chapter 21

God Works Through History

Theme: God's Work in History

Aim: To understand that God's act of deliverance continues in history.

Bible Reading: Exodus 16: 1-36; 17: 1-16

Values for life:

1. God disciplines the Israelites in order to change their old lifestyle and attitude.
2. God is with us in all situations. It is foolish to think that God's presence is only there when we receive certain blessings.
3. Work along with God instead of complaining about the troubles.

Introduction:

In America, there is plenty of food, but there are places where people starve. Some years ago, in America, during 1930s, at the time of depression people stood in lines to get food. Today we are going to study about Israelites who faced the scarcity of food while traveling through the desert for months and years.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- **God's Gracious Response:**
The Israelites while traveling through the desert complained about the lack of several necessities, especially about food and water. Moses had to listen to their complaints and he took the matter to God in prayer. God was gracious to the request and responded to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day" (Exodus 16:4). The food that came from heaven was called Manna.
- **The Gathering of Manna:**
People were given the instruction regarding the gathering of Manna. They were expected to go out each day and gather enough food for that day. If they collected more food, it would be spoiled. People ate Manna in the morning and it was continued for 40 years till they reached the border of Cannan. On the sixth

day, they were allowed to gather twice as much as they gather on other days. It was a preparation for the Sabbath.

- **God provided Meat:**

In the evening Quail, a chicken-like bird, came and covered the Israelite camp. God provided them meat in the evening and bread in the morning. Still they grumbled. God became exceedingly angry at their complaints because they ignore the ways by which God was leading them. It is a sin if we forget what God provides and keep on complaining.

- **Water from the Rock:**

When Israelites came to the Desert of Zin, they could not get any water. People gathered in opposition to Moses and quarreled with him. Moses fell face down before God and the Lord answered. Moses was asked to strike the rock with his staff. At that time water came from the rock and people drank it. Moses called the place "Massah" which means "Strife".

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. What were some of the difficulties of the Israelities during their travel in the desert?
2. What had God done for them?
3. What were the instructions that God gave in gathering the Manna?
4. How did they get the meat?
5. What were their complaints? What was God's response?
6. What did Moses do when people complained?

7. Where did they get their water from?

Bible Application:

Gratitude is one of the most important attitudes you can develop in life. Seek to find and note the ways God has been good to you each day. Part of your prayer life should be one of thankfulness. Make sure you thank God everyday because we receive several blessings.

Life Response:

When we face scarcity and other difficulties in life, we should take the matter to God and he will provide what we need.

Memory Verse: Exodus 16:12

I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.' "

Prayer:

Lord, we praise you and glorify you for your continuous interventions in history and in our individual life. Help us not to be like the Israelites, forgetful of what you have done. Show your mercy to us, Lord. Amen.

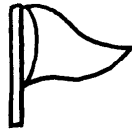
True and False Flags

God Protects His People

Exodus 14, 15 and 17

One day God's people camped at Rephidim, but there was no water to drink. God did a miracle and provided water for them. Then a group of people called the Amalekites came and fought with God's people. God defeated them. God took care of His people.

Read Exodus 17 in your Bible to see what happened. Then color the flag in front of each true statement.



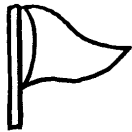
1. At Rephidim there was no water for the people to drink.



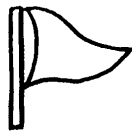
2. The people were happy that Moses had led them to Rephidim.



3. When Moses hit the rock with his rod, water flowed out of it.



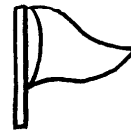
4. At Rephidim the Amalekites fought against the Israelites.



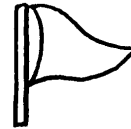
5. When Moses held his rod up in his hands the Israelites beat the Amalekites.



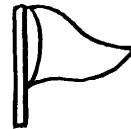
6. When Moses put his hands down, the Israelites continued to win.



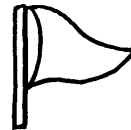
7. Moses' arms never got tired.



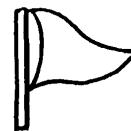
8. When Moses' arms got tired, Aaron and Hur held them up.



9. The Amalekites won the battle at Rephidim.



10. Moses built an altar and called it Jehovah-nissi. (This means "The Lord is my Banner.")



11. Moses held up his hands for two days and two nights.



12. Through faith in God the Israelites won the battle.

Chapter 22

The Shepherd And The Sheep

Theme: Ecumenism in a wider aspect

Aim: To realize that all people, irrespective of caste, color and language are the children of God.

Bible Reading: John 10:1-29

Values for life:

1. The Lord is our shepherd and we are his flock.
2. Jesus is the good shepherd and the gate for the sheep.
3. Whoever enters through Jesus will be saved.
4. Though there are differences and diversities, all people are the children of God.

Introduction:

When the bishop comes to our church and conducts worship, have you noticed any difference in the practices? During the time of his blessing and on other important occasions, like gospel reading, in the worship, a staff is held. What is the significance of the staff? It is associated with the shepherd. While watching the flock, a shepherd holds a staff. Jesus is described as a good shepherd. Today we are going to learn more about it.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas:

- The Shepherd and His Sheep:

In Psalm 23, God is described as a shepherd. The Bible talks about God as the shepherd and Israelites his flock (Isa 40:11). The word "Shepherd", "Sheep" and "lamb" are used 80, 176 and 164 times respectively in the Bible. We turn away from God like a lost sheep, but God is merciful enough to search for us. Some of the heroes in the bible, like Moses and David were shepherds.

- Jesus the good shepherd:

In the parables of Jesus, we see the qualities of a good shepherd. We understand Jesus as a good shepherd. A good shepherd knows his flock and calls them by name. He goes ahead of them when the sheep follow him. A good shepherd finds pasture for the sheep and protects them. He lays down his life for the sheep. Paul calls Jesus as the Passover lamb who sacrificed for us.

- Jesus the way and the gate:

A shepherd keeps his sheep in a pen. Enemies can enter into it without the knowledge of the shepherd. So the shepherd guards the sheep from enemies including wild animals. Among the "I am" statements in the gospel of John, he has included, " I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved" (John 10:9). Jesus is considered not only as the gate but also as the way. He is the way to eternal life. Jesus is a link between the mortal world and the immortal heaven. In order to achieve eternal life we must "abide in Christ". We can bear fruit only when we abide in Jesus Christ (John 15:4).

Bible Learning and Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions:

1. Who uses the staff during worship and why?
2. How many times do we find the term shepherd in the Bible?
3. Who is a good shepherd and name four qualities?
4. Who calls Jesus the Passover lamb and why?
5. How do we achieve eternal life?
6. Find out the "I am" statements in John 10:1-18.

Bible Application:

We live in a world where there is neglect and abuse of people especially children. In this situation we need a shepherd who cares. He protects us from all kinds of dangers.

Life Response:

Do we really depend on God and abide in him? Or do we really trust on other things and people!

Memory Verse: John 10:11

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Prayer:

Lord, you are my shepherd. Help us to live in a world that is surrounded by evil forces, to live with a caring attitude and reach others in their needs. Amen.

Chapter 23

Nature of God

Theme: Foundation of Faith

Aim: To understand the character and attributes of God.

Bible Reading: Exodus 20:1-7; Psalm 139: 1-10

Values for life:

1. There are three attributes in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. God has several characteristics.
3. We understand the nature of God through Jesus Christ.

Introduction:

An Arab and his friend were camping in a desert. The Arab used to pray five times a day and his friend, a non-believer, ridiculed him. He asked him how he could pray to someone whom he had not seen. The next morning the man woke up and found out the footprints of a camel all around the tent and told the Arab about it. The Arab asked him whether he had seen the camel. The friend said, "No, but I realized by seeing the footprints". The Arab replied, "In the same way, all the wonderful creations in the nature are the footprints of God. They proclaim the presence of God." Today we are going to learn more about the nature of God.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- **Who is God?**

God is a person having knowledge, emotions and will-power. Jesus says to the Samaritan woman that God is spirit. (John 4:14) " There is no God apart from me....there is none but me". (Isa 45:21) God has three attributes-God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Solid, liquid and gas are the three forms of water but their structure is the same. Just like that, the nature of the three attributes are the same. God said to Moses, "I am who I am". (Exo 3:14) It is not through name but through character, that we understand God.

- **How do we know about God?**

The world of God and his creation reflect the glory of God. God affirmed the relationship between man and God and between man and man through the "Ten Commandments" that he had given to the Israelites through Moses. Here, we recognize the nature of God. "No

one has ever seen God, but God, the one and only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." (John 1:18)

- Characteristics of God

God is all powerful. God's presence is not limited to time and place. He is all-knowing. In our prayers we address God, the holy. We believe in an eternal God who remains the same, "yesterday, today and forever". He remains faithful as we experience it in Jesus Christ. "Our Lord is compassionate and gracious." In the Old Testament we see a righteous God. While in New Testament we meet a loving God revealed himself in Jesus. 1John 4:8 says "God is Love".

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. Who is God? What are His attributes?

2. How do we know God?

3. Among the several characteristics that you studied select one that you prefer most. How do you show that quality in your life? Share it with others in the class.

Bible Application:

We live in a world where many people do not believe in God. Even if they believe, they do not show it in their life. To such people we have a responsibility to show God by our faith and actions.

Life Response:

Share one of the characteristics you learned about God to someone who does not know it. Try to explain to them what our faith is.

Memory Verse: *Psalms 139: 7,8*

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

Prayer:

Lord, we thank you for allowing us to know aspects of your character. We know that we will never understand you through our limited minds, but we thank you for allowing us to know even this little bit. We praise you Lord for who you are. Amen.

Chapter 24

Samson's Weakness

Theme: Hindrance in God's Work

Aim: Never ignore God's blessings and power for mere bodily pleasures.

Bible Reading: Judges 14:1-10;16:1-31

Values for life:

1. Never Ignore Divine promises and blessings.
2. Have self-control over your bodily desires.
3. We need God's grace to overcome temptations.

Introduction:

Achilles was one of the greatest heroes of Greek mythology. He played a major role in the Trojan War. He had a very strong body and with his strength he defeated others. But there was a weak spot in his body and it was his heel. He could be defeated by cutting this weak spot on his body. There are weak spots even in some strong people. We are going to study the story of a hero and his weakness described in the Bible. His name is Samson.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- ***The Person Selected by God:***

Samson was the strong person selected by God to lead Israel at a time when Philistines repeatedly attacked Israelites. Samson, the Hebrew word, means Son. Before his birth, the angel appeared to his mother and told her how to bring up the child so that he would become a hero. While growing up, he was expected not to cut his hair. He must be raised as a Nazarite, which means dedicated or consecrated. Samson became powerful when the Divine Spirit came upon him. God empowered Samson to lead Israelites against the Philistines. He was not allowed to drink any wine or alcohol.

- **Powerful deeds by Samson:**

God gave extraordinary physical power to Samson. He was able, for example, to destroy a lion with his bare hands. He had the power and stamina to take on whole armies of Philistines just by himself. In one battle, Samson destroyed a thousand Philistines using nothing more than his bare

hands and a donkey's jawbone. There are several other deeds performed by Samson showing his strength.

- **The Weakness of Samson**

Although Samson was empowered by God to do great things for the people of Israel, he was easily distracted and lead away from God by his boldly pleasures. He was attracted to beautiful woman. He fell in love with Delilah. She was a woman sent by the Philistines to find out the secret of his strength. She became friendly with him in order to get his secrets. First Samson gave only false stories. Delilah was determined to find out the weakness of Samson. Finally, she found out the secret about his strength. Soon after she got the secret, she cut all his hair that he was keeping throughout his life. With that Samson has lost all his powers and the Lord had left him.

- Samson became a prisoner of the Philistines:

When Samson lost his special powers, which the Lord has given him, he became weak. At that moment, the Philistines came and captured him. The Philistines treated him in a horrible way by taking his eyes out. They took him to the Philistine land called Gaza and set him to grind in a prison. When Samson moved away from God, he lost his strength and started his evil ways and finally became a victim of Philistines. Samson had a tragic end.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. Why did God select Samson?
2. Who is a Nazarite?
3. What powers did Samson have?
4. What was Samson's great weakness?
5. Who was the woman who got secret from Samson?
6. How did he loose his strength?
7. What happened to Samson at the end of his life?

Bible Application:

All people come across temptation in life. Some people become victims while others overcome that. Samson had a tragic end. The purpose that God wanted to fulfill through him was not accomplished. There are many people in the world who become victims of their evil desires. They need help from others who are leading a victorious life.

Life Response:

Lord's Prayer: "Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil".

Memory Verse: Romans 6: 12

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for having a certain purpose for us in our lives. Help us to lead a life controlled by the Holy Spirit. Teach us to have self-control. Amen.

Samson
Judges 13 — 16

Samson's Secret Message

Samson was the strongest man who ever lived. He tore a lion apart with his bare hands. Once, he killed a thousand enemy men by himself, and another time, he carried the city gates to the top of a hill!

God was the one who gave Samson his great strength. Samson's parents promised to never cut his hair. When Samson's hair was cut, he lost his strength. Samson's enemies paid Delilah to find out why he was so strong. Samson loved Delilah so he told her. When Samson was weak, his enemies captured him, cut off his hair and made him blind. One day when Samson's hair had grown back, he pushed down the pillars that supported a temple where thousands of the enemy were worshipping their idol. Samson and thousands of his enemies died.

Samson's strength came from God. Cross out every Q, X and Z to discover where our strength to serve God comes from:

Z Q X Q Z O X Q U Z X R Q X Z Q X
 S Z Z T X Q R X Q E Z X Q N X Z G
 X Q T Z X H Q Q Q C Z Z O X Q Z M
 X E Q Z S Z X X Q F Z X R Q O X M
 X G Z O Q Z D X X A Z Q N X Z D Q
 Z X H Z I X Q Z S Z W X Q O R X D

Secret message: _____

Number the pictures in the order in which they happened in Samson's life:



Chapter 25

Paul and Silas in Prison

Theme: Response to Hindrance in God's Work

Aim: To learn that we must praise and glorify God even when we are in the midst of hardship.

Bible Reading: Acts 16: 25-40

Values for life:

1. We must deal with hardship by remaining faithful.
2. Our response to hardship reveals our character.
3. Those who face persecution cheerfully bring glory to God.

Introduction:

Saint Polycarp, a disciple of John lived during the end of the first century when Christians were persecuted. He was the bishop of Smyrna in Turkey. Christians were brutally killed by being thrown to hungry lions. Polycarp was caught by the Romans, but was given a chance to renounce Christ and receive freedom. But Polycarp's reply was remarkable, "For eighty six years, I have served my Lord and he never harmed me. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?". He accepted death with a smile. Immediately he was thrown into the flames. Polycarp became a martyr in 156 AD. There were several others who accepted persecution for the spread of the gospel in the early centuries. They include Saint Paul and his companions. Today we study about them.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas

- **Paul and his Companions**

Paul is one of the great ambassadors of Jesus Christ. He traveled all over the Mediterranean world to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. On his journeys, different people would accompany him. For example, on his first journey, Barnabas and John Mark accompanied him. In today's lesson, Silas and Luke accompany Paul. St. Luke is the author of both the gospel, which is titled by his name, as well as the Acts of the Apostles. He was a physician and a great historian. He often times accompanied Paul on his journeys.

- The Gospel reaches Europe

Paul selected Silas for the second Missionary Journey. They traveled to Macedonia and reached Philippi, which is named after King Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. The Jews in Philippi had no Synagogue of worship. So they used to gather at the side of a river.

Once, Paul and Silas went to the place of prayer and there was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was from the city of Thyatira and she was a worshiper of God. She heard the speech of Paul and as a result she along with the members of her household, were baptized.

After this conversion they met a slave girl who was a fortune teller. She earned a great deal of money for her owners. The girl followed Paul and Silas shouting, "These men are telling you the way to be saved." Paul became so troubled that he ordered the spirit to come out of her. And the spirit left her. When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone they seized Paul and Silas and brought him before the magistrate. They were severely flogged and were thrown into prison on false accusations. They were kept in the inner cell and fastened their feet in stocks.

- Prayer and Songs in the Prison

Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. They might have been singing Ps. 136. The jailer, like the other prisoners, listened to their prayer and songs. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open and everybody's chains fell off. The jailer woke up and when he saw the prison doors were opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are here!"

- The Jailer who was Saved

It was a rule that if the prisoners escaped, the jailer would be killed by the authorities. He was terrified and asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved for he knew that they were extraordinary persons. Paul used the opportunity and said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household." The jailer was much impressed and he listened to their words. He proved his faith through actions. He took them out and washed their wounds. The jailer and his family believed in Jesus and they were baptized. There was great happiness in the family of the jailer.

Bible Learning: Strategies and Activities:

Answer the following questions.

1. Who were some of the companions of Paul during his missionary journey?

2. Who was Luke?
3. What was the first place in Europe that Paul and Silas visited?
4. Why were Paul and Silas jailed?
5. How did Paul and Silas behave in the prison?
6. How and why did the jailer convert?

Bible Application:

The Mar Thoma Church supports many missionary activities in various ways. When the gospel reached Europe it also reached India. In the Marthoma Church each member is considered as an evangelist.

Life Response:

We should emulate the example of Paul and Silas. Their example of courage and faithfulness under most difficult circumstances changed the heart of their jailer. When we face adversities we must show good example to others like the behavior of Paul and Silas.

Memory Verse: Acts 16: 31

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household."

Prayer:

Lord we pray for the missionaries who work in our country, who even when faced with hardship are working joyfully for your glory. Help us to emulate their example in our life. Amen

PART VI OUR MISSION IN GOD'S WORLD

CHAPTER - 26

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER

Theme **PERSONAL VALUES – THE POWER OF PRAYER**

Aim To understand that we can strengthen our faith through a life of prayer.

Bible Reading Daniel 6: 10 - 28

Values for life

1. Prayer is a spiritual duty of every believer.
2. Prayer helps us to face difficulties courageously by looking to God.
3. Prayer is pouring of our hearts to God
4. In prayer, believers should intercede and pray for others with God with a spiritual burden.
5. Prayer should become our life style.

Introduction

We have come to the sixth section lessons and you might have noticed how, each section deals with a specific subject. The sixth section deals with our mission in God's world and today's lesson is about personal value, the most important of which is prayer

We hear so much about prayer. We have individual prayer, family prayer, intercessory prayer, prayer groups, prayer meetings, as a nation, national day of prayer and so on. But what is prayer? What is the need for praying? Let us take an in depth look at it.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas-

Prayer is communication or talking with God. When we love someone, we talk to that person. The more we talk, the closer we get and the better we understand that person and we start to care and share more. But the moment we stop talking, we start to drift apart. God loves us so much. If we keep still, we will be able to hear Him – through His word, the bible and through His creation that surrounds us. We say we love God. How can we not talk to Him, if we love Him!

Let us take a look at some of our bible heroes and their prayer life.

Prayer that helps to face and overcome problems and difficulties

When we are faced with problems, we become troubled and worried. We might even let go of our principles to avoid the problem. You have learned about Daniel in the lions' den. Daniel and his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were Jews,

were high official in a foreign land. They always came together to pray. Apart from this, Daniel prayed three times a day to God (Daniel 6: 10). So God gave Daniel the ability to reveal mysteries that others could not do. This made Daniel's enemies very jealous and they wanted to destroy him. They came up with a plan, rule that for thirty days everyone should pray only to the king and anyone who prays to any other God should be thrown into the lions' den. What did Daniel do when he came to know about this new rule, a rule that could be a threat on his life? As was his usual custom, Daniel prayed three times a day to God. He did not get discouraged or feared his enemies or the lions' den. He knew that God is in control and only what God decides will happen, not what his enemies tried to do. So when Daniel was thrown into the lions' den because he did not pray to the king, the lions did not harm him. God protected him. It is written in the book of Daniel three times that God loved him (Daniel: 9: 23; 10:11; 10:19).



Prayer that helps us open and pour our hearts to the Lord (1 Samuel 1: 9 – 20)

Hannah, wife of Elkanah was a very noble lady but very sad because she was childless. She cried and prayed day and night asking God to remove her sadness by giving her a child. Her prayers were not mere words. They came from her heart. One day, while praying whole heartedly, she made a very solemn promise that if she gets a child, she would dedicate the child for the work of the Lord. Once she made the promise, she was not sad. She new God would do what is right for her. She asked and God blessed her with a child, who later became the great prophet Samuel. As she promised, she dedicated the child to the Lord worshipping, praising and thanking God. These are the three elements that go with any prayer.

Prayer that helps to fight against the power of darkness (1 Kings 18: 36 – 37)

The great prophet Elijah did many great wonders by the power of prayer. As a judgment against the sins of the house of king Ahab, rain and dew stopped for three and a half year, when Elijah prayed. Similarly, when he prayed, fire came down from heaven and burnt the offering, the wood and the stone and even dried up the water in the trench. This made the worshippers of Baal turn back to God.



Elijah and the prophets of Baal

Prayer - example of Christ.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, has set a perfect example for us. He spent much time praying. Apart from praying early in the morning, evening and night, we see Him praying before every major event in His life, like His baptism, selection of disciples and crucifixion. It was when He prayed that the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him and glorified Him.

Bible Learning: Strategies and activities-

1. State whether true or false:
 - a. Daniel and his three friends were thrown into the lions' den.
 - b. Samuel was Hannah and Elkanah's son.
 - c. Elijah lived during the time of King Solomon.

2. Prayer is _____ to God.
- 3 The devil took _____ to the top of the mountain to tempt Him.

- 4 Why was Daniel thrown into the Lions' den?

- 5 What happened when Hannah cried and poured her heart to the Lord daily?

- 6 What is prayer?

Bible Application-

Prayer is the means by which we communicate to the Lord. We pour our hearts to Him and place our burdens at His feet. Jesus has said to give Him all our burdens. We intercede with our Lord on behalf of our dear ones, our church and our nation. We worship, praise, give thanks and confess to our Lord after which we humbly place our worries, cares and request at His feet through prayer.

Life Response-

1. Prayerful life is a victorious life. Let us face difficulties through prayer.
2. Prayer is not simply words. It is pouring out our hearts to the Lord. Let us pray in truth and in spirit.
3. Evil will flee when faced with the power of prayer. Let us overcome evil with prayer.
4. Through intercessory prayer we uplift our brethren, our church, our society, our nation and the whole Universe to God. Through our intercessory prayer, may our spirits be up-lifted.

Memory Verse: Daniel 9: 19

O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your name.

Prayer-

Dear God, Help us to pray continuously and lift up everything to you in truth and in spirit through praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

Daniel in the Lions' Den

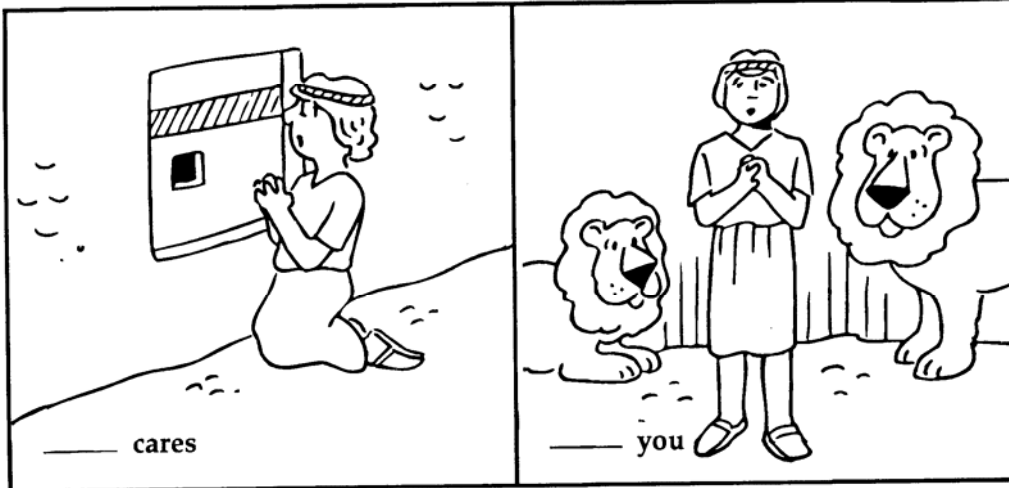
Daniel 6:4 - 22

God's Promise Puzzle Pictures

The king made a law against praying to anyone but him. Daniel continued to pray to God, so he was thrown into a den of lions. God took care of Daniel and the lions did not hurt him.

When we obey Him, God takes care of us too.

Look at the pictures which tell the story of Daniel. Number them in the order they happened. Then write the secret word from each picture on the blank with the same number as the picture. When you are finished writing the words, read the promise about God.



1 2 3 4



CHAPTER - 27

OUR RESPONSE TO THE CALL OF GOD

Theme **OUTREACH**

Aim To understand that we receive blessings by responding to the call of God.

Bible Reading Luke 5: 1 – 11.

Values for life

1. Bible is the recording of God's calling and the man's response to the call.
2. We should respond positively to the call of God.
3. Those who obey, receive blessings in abundance.
4. It is the duty of every believer to influence and bring people to God.

Introduction

Let us take a moment to see who our friends are and why we call them friends. The way we respond to each other determines if we are friends or enemies or just somebody we know. With true friends we are free. We share with them our material things, our thoughts and our concerns. We also have the freedom to tell them to do things.

Now, who is a Christian? A Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ, a person who has made Christ Lord, master and Savior of his or her life. Jesus called His followers His friends. So what distinguishes a Christian? It is the way that person responds to Jesus and His calling.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas-

Bible is referred to as the calling of God to man and man's response to that call. We have bible heroes like Noah, Abraham etc of the Old Testament and the disciples and apostles of the New Testament as specific examples. Apart from them, we have missionaries who have responded to the God's call and have left everything to obey Him. Today, let us take a look at Peter's response to Jesus' call.

The response – obedience to God's calling

The incident that made Peter a disciple of Jesus is recorded in the Gospels. Simon called Peter, his brother Andrew, and friends James and John, sons of Zebedee, were fishermen. One night, Peter, James and John went fishing in the lake Galilee. They toiled all night without catching anything. In the morning, they came to the shore and started washing their nets. That's when Jesus came that way and got into Simon Peter's boat and asked him to push a little away from the shore. Then Jesus taught the people

who were following Him. After this Jesus told Simon Peter to push his boat into the deep waters and let down his net for a catch. Peter obeyed Jesus telling Him that they have toiled all night without catching anything. But he will cast his net because Jesus has asked him to so (Luke 5: 5). What a shock Peter got when he pulled back his net!! His net was so full it was about to tear!! Peter had to get the help of his friend James and John to pull back the net. The fish he caught filled both the boats and the boats were about to sink! What a result for obedience! Will we not also be blessed abundantly when we respond to God's calling by obeying it?



Jesus calling Peter to follow Him

The result of obedience to God's calling

Can you imagine the surprise and astonishment Peter and his friends had that day! Here are the experienced fishermen trying every technique they knew to catch some fish, without any results. And then comes Jesus who is a carpenter by profession giving instructions on fishing and the result is the catch of a life time. Because Peter obeyed, He was given a new name and a new job. Till then Peter was known as Simon, son of Jonah (Jonah means dove). Jesus gave him a new name when he obeyed – Peter, which means rock (John 1: 42). From Simon who flutters as a dove he was transformed into Peter who is as solid as a rock, with a new commission of catching men. Peter and his friends James and John left everything and followed Jesus.

Let us see how this calling of Peter is recorded in the gospel of John (John 1: 35 – 42). Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was a disciple of John the Baptist. He and another disciple of John went in search of Jesus and stayed with Him a night. Then Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at Simon and called him Cephas, which in Aramaic language means firm rock. The equivalent of that word in Greek is Petros (Petra) from which we got the English word Peter.

The first three Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke, which are known as the Synoptic Gospels, refer Simon as Peter (Mat: 16: 18; Mark 3: 16; Luke: 6: 14). It is only after the incident recorded in today's lesson did Peter leave everything and follow Jesus with complete dedication.

When God calls

We see a number of factors related to God's calling.

1. God calls unexpected people at unexpected times.
2. The call is always clear.
3. God calls only those who are faithful in their duties.
4. Firm conviction about the call is very important.
5. When we respond to God's call, He entrusts us with responsibilities.
6. The God who calls will strengthen us.
7. When God calls, He expects total commitment from us.

Bible Learning: Strategies and activities-

1. State whether true or false:
 - a. James and John were brothers.
 - b. The word Peter means fisherman.
 - c. The first three Gospels are known as the Synoptic Gospels.
2. Peter's brother _____ took him to Jesus first.
3. The four Gospels are _____, _____, _____ & _____.
4. What was the result of Peter's obedience to Jesus' instruction?
5. What are the factors related to God's calling? (select 3 or 4)

Bible Application

Bible records how God interacts with men and how men respond to it. By reading and studying the Bible we come to know what God expects of us. We should respond positively to the call of God. When we follow Jesus, our disappointments will turn into abundant blessing. When we receive such great spiritual blessing from God, it is our moral responsibility to share that Good News to others so that they in turn receive that blessing.

Life Response

William Carey was the son of a poor, village, school teacher. He was a shoemaker by profession. He was convinced that God was calling him to spread the Good News. He committed himself to that noble task and went to India in 1793. Staying in Serampore, Bengal, he started many missionary works. Along with his friends William Ward and Joshua Marshma, he translated the Bible into forty-four Indian languages. It was this William Carey who gave the famous slogan "Expect great from God and attempt great things for God. When Jesus calls, we should be able to obey, follow and live for Him.

Memory Verse: Luke 5: 10

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid, from now on you will catch men."

Prayer

Dear God, Help us to listen and hear you and make us say 'yes' when you call . Amen.

Called to Be Disciples



Luke 5: 1-11 ;

Luke 6:12-17

Jesus called 12 disciples to help Him spread the Good News of the Gospel. These men had worked at many different jobs. They had to learn how to live a new kind of life. Jesus taught them through His words and His example. Jesus showed His disciples how to follow Him.

When you want to know how to live, you can read your Bible to see how Jesus lived. You will never go wrong if you always follow Him.

Unscramble the words below to learn the names of Jesus' 12 disciples. Remember that they left their former ways and followed Jesus.

◇ **Jesus' Followers** ◇
Scramble



1. NMOSI TREPE _____

2. WADNER _____

3. SJMAE _____

4. NJHO _____

5. IPPHLI _____

6. LWROMTBEAHO _____

7. TWTMEAH _____

8. SMATOH _____

9. MEJAS _____

10. MIOSN _____

11. UDSAJ _____

12. ADUSJ CRSAITIO _____

CHAPTER - 28

THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF FAMILY

Theme **The Role Of Family And School**

Aim For the children to understand that the action of each member of the family affects the family's well being.

Bible Reading Gen 25: 24 – 34; 27: 1 - 27.

Values for life

1. Family is a spiritual society established by God.
2. The influence of the parents is very important in a family.
3. Schools play a very important part in character formation.
4. When we give priority to selfish interests, families split.

Introduction

Once, a Sunday school teacher asked her class of young students to draw the picture of the most beautiful creation of God. All the students took part in it. Some drew the picture of Nature. Others drew the Universe with Sun, moon, planets and stars. The picture drawn by one student impressed and touched the teacher more than all the others. It was the picture of the student's family. This student is not the only one who thinks that family is the most beautiful creation. A museum in Paris has a famous picture titled 'The most beautiful'. The picture is that of a Christian family.

Now, what comes to mind when we use the word 'Family'? Normally it is of a small group, which is a basic unit of society, with a dad, a mom and at least one child. This could become bigger and could include more children and grand parents. It is sad to see this picture being replaced by something different in our society nowadays as we have more and more broken families.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas-

When God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden, He was creating and establishing the first family. God liked this family unit and blessed it. He also laid down the rules for a family to continue in this blessed state, having joy, peace and harmony. Now, let us take a moment and see what these rules are and how the presence or absence of these rules, influence each and every member of the family.

Family rooted in God – Obedience to God

At the closing of our wedding service, we normally sing or recite Psalm 128. This Psalm tells who a blessed person is and the result of being blessed. The first and most important aspect is the fear of the Lord and obedience to His commands. This is the most important commandment God gave to the Israelites.



Pray together.... Stay together....

Family that cares for each other - Love and Concern for each other

The second aspect is the continuation of the first one – to love your brother as yourself. Your brother is your sibling as well as your neighbor – or anyone you come in contact with. Jesus said these are the most important commandments.

Let us take a look at one of the families mentioned in the beginning of the Bible – the family of Isaac and Rebecca. Isaac was the promised son born to Abraham and Sarah after they became very old. Isaac was a man of prayer. He obeyed his parents and worshipped God. Both Isaac and his wife Rebecca were God fearing people. God gave them twin sons Esau and Jacob. Till this part everything was done according to God's will. But after Esau and Jacob were born, things changed. Let's see what went wrong.



Isaac blesses Jacob

Parents were partial in their love for their children –

Isaac loved Esau more because he loved to eat the food hunted and prepared by Esau. (Esau was a hunter, you know!). So Isaac wanted to give all his blessings to Esau. Rebecca favored Jacob more. When she came to know about Isaac's plan to bless Esau, She made Jacob agree to her tricky plan so that Jacob will get the blessing instead of Esau. This favoritism showed by the parents caused problems between the brothers.

Esau took pride and depended on in his ability more than the fear of Lord and tradition –

Even though he was the first child, Esau sold his position as the first child, to his brother Jacob for a cup of soup to satisfy his physical desires. The first child had many privileges in that society and was considered very prestigious. Esau went after what pleased and attracted him. He did not care much if they were right or wrong. Against the wishes of his parents, Esau married girls that did not hold any family values

Jacob was timid. So he used cunningness to gain things –

Jacob did not have the physical ability of Esau to do things. So he tried to get things by using the weaknesses of others. Jacob got the birth right from his brother at a time when Esau was weak with hunger. Jacob deceived his father Isaac who was blind to get his blessing, by dressing up as Esau, Isaac's favorite son.

Here we see that even though Isaac and Rebecca feared the Lord, they did not love and treat their children equally.

Bible Learning: Strategies and activities-

1. State whether true or false:
 - a. Esau and Jacob were twins.
 - b. Isaac loved Jacob more.
 - c. Esau was a hunter.
2. Isaac's parents are _____ and _____.
3. Jacob was deceived into marrying _____.
4. The descendents of Jacob are the _____.
5. The descendents of Esau are known as the _____.
6. What are the main rules for a family to be and continue in a blessed state?
7. What was the failure of the family of Isaac and Rebecca?

Bible Application

God created family and blessed it. He has given us the rules to continue in this blessed state. He made parents the head of the family and has given them the responsibility of bringing up their children according to His ways. When parents obey those rules, they will be able to train their children to follow them. We will be a good influence to everyone we come in contact with. Our friends at school and church will want to follow our example. In this way the family will be able to witness God in the society. But when we ignore God's commands and follow our selfish desires, family will fall apart. This will cause problems that will affect the whole nation.

Life Response-

1. When God created the first family, He found that it was good and blessed it. For a family to stay in that blessed state, it has to follow God's commands.
2. Parents have the responsibility of bringing up their children according to God's ways and treating all the children equally.
3. What we sow is what we reap. When we sow according to God's plan, we will reap His blessing. But if we sow our selfish desires and cheat to gain things, we will be cheated in return.
4. It is our responsibility to be God's witnesses in our society.

Memory Verse: Eph 6: 1 - 3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" – which is the first commandment with a promise – "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth".

Prayer-

Dear God, Help us to follow your commands faithfully and be your witnesses wherever we are and be a good influence with everyone we come in contact with. Amen.

CHAPTER - 29

MOSES – A PERFECT LEADER

Theme **Life Style – Self Emptying**

Aim To make the children understand that to suffer with the people of God is better than enjoying a luxurious life and ungodly life.

Bible Reading Heb: 11: 23 – 29; Ex: 2; 3.

Values for life

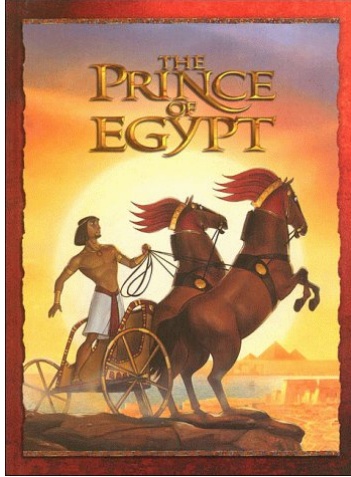
1. We cannot do anything for the world without sacrifice.
2. God called Moses and prepared him to deliver Israel from Egypt.
3. Only those who can find the best in life will be able to give up worldly pleasures.
4. When we do anything depending on God, we will succeed.
5. God's call is an invitation to accept a new way.

Introduction

You all would have seen TV shows of super heroes or leaders, like Super man, Spider man or Bat man. What makes these characters different and more likable than the other characters? It is the way they do the right thing to help the people and do good things for them, right? You see, they are not selfish people. They do not use their gifts for their own pleasure. They give up or sacrifice what they want to or can do for themselves so they can help the whole community. This is one of the main qualities of a leader. Sacrificing or giving up things for the sake of helping others. Today, let us learn about one of the greatest leaders of the Bible – Moses.

Bible Learning: Main Ideas-

During the great famine, Joseph was the Prime minister of Egypt, who made Jacob and his whole family, the Israelites, to go to Egypt. As time went by, the Israelites became a very large and powerful group. This made Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, afraid that the Israelites would attack and overpower the Egyptians. So he made the Israelites slaves. He also ordered all the boy babies to be killed when they were born. That was when baby Moses was born to Amram and Jochebed. He had an older brother Aaron and a sister Miriam. Baby Moses was kept hidden for three months. After that he was put in a basket and placed on river Nile. Pharaoh's daughter saw the basket and felt pity for the Hebrew baby. She brought the baby up as her own son and named him Moses because she pulled him out of the water. Miriam, Moses' sister who was watching to see what was happening to the baby, asked the princess if she could find a Hebrew woman to nurse him. The princess agreed. So Moses was able to live with his parents also. So you see, even though Moses was a Hebrew slave boy, he grew up in the king's palace as a prince.





Preparation to be a leader – a Deliverer

The Israelites were suffering under the Pharaoh as slaves. They were crying out to the Lord to send a deliverer. God chose a deliverer for them – Moses.

Knowledge and wisdom

As a prince, Moses learned under their great teachers of Egypt and gained knowledge, wisdom and skills in all areas. He could get whatever he wished for. But Moses chose to suffer with his own people, the Israelites, instead of enjoying the pleasures of sin (Heb 11: 24 – 25).

Love for his people

Moses loved and cared for his people, the Israelites, very much. So once when he saw an Egyptian kill an Israelite, he killed the Egyptian. But this sin that he committed made Moses run away from Egypt to a place called Midian.

Divine training

In Midian, Moses married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro the priest. There Moses looked after the goats and sheep of Jethro. Look at the change in situation. From a prince to a shepherd! Was that a misfortune? No. God was training Moses to be the deliverer of the Israelites. As a prince, Moses gained knowledge. As a shepherd in the deserts of Midian, he learned love, patience, forgiveness and above all, humility. Through different situations, God trained Moses in all areas necessary to be a great leader.

Nature of a Leader

Hears the calling

Moses heard God's voice from the burning bush and listened to it.

Realizes the shortcomings

Moses was a murderer. He knew that he was not able to do anything on his own ability. He ended up being a murderer when he went according to his own judgment. Moses knew that only with God, he will be able to lead the people.

Willingness to change from old ways to the new

From the role of being a prince and a shepherd, Moses had to take up the position as a deliverer.

Role of a Leader

Organizer

The Israelites who came out of Egypt was a huge group of six hundred thousand men alone and then women and children. Managing this huge group alone was very difficult. Listening to the advice given by his father-in-law Jethro, Moses organized smaller groups and distributed the responsibilities to leaders of the smaller groups. This made management much smoother and easier.

Judge and Diplomat

Using the Ten Commandments given by God, Moses judged the people impartially. These commandments held the Israelites together as a tribe while they were traveling through the desert. It is worth remembering that almost all the countries of the world have their civil laws based on the Ten Commandments.

Man of prayer

Above all these, Moses talked to God constantly. Whenever the Israelites sinned and made God angry, Moses interceded – prayed for them and on their behalf. The Israelites worshipping the golden calf is one example. If Moses had not prayed for them, God would have destroyed the Israelites.

Bible Learning: Strategies and activities-

1. State whether true or false:
 - a Moses was an only child.
 - b The name Moses means "pulled out of water"..
 - c Jethro was the king of Egypt.

2. Moses' parent are _____ and _____.
3. From Egypt, Moses ran away to a place called _____.
4. Moses' wife is _____.
5. How did the Israelites become slaves in Egypt?
6. How did God prepare Moses to be a deliverer of the Israelites?
7. What are the qualities of a good leader? Explain using Moses as an example.

Bible Application

When God chooses a person for His purpose, He takes him through His school of training. It is the responsibility of each person to listen and obey when God calls, change his old ways to the new ways God shows and humbly submit to the will of God. God will turn him to a great leader like Moses or to take an example of our modern times, Mother Teresa.

Life Response-

1. The greatest leaders are those who listen to God's calling and answer to His call. Let us say 'Yes Lord' when He calls.
2. When God calls, He takes us through His school of training. Let us not resist His training.
3. The greatest leader is the humblest of all. Let us humble ourselves before God.

Memory Verse: Hebrew 11: 26

. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Prayer-

Dear God, we know than great leaders are not born but are chosen and trained by you. When you call, help us to listen and change our old ways and follow the new way you have opened up for us. Amen.

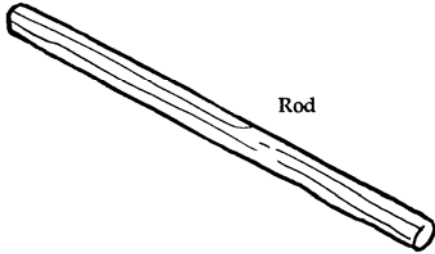
God's Servant, Moses

Exodus 2 — Deuteronomy 33

Remember Moses

Moses was a great leader of God's people. In fact, the Bible says that there was no leader who was as great as Moses (Deuteronomy 34:10). But sometimes Moses still disobeyed God, so God punished Moses by not allowing him to go into the Promised Land with the Israelites.

There are many important stories which teach us about God and His love for us which we should remember from Moses' life. Look at the four pictures. Then write in each blank the name of the picture which is the correct answer. If you need help look in Exodus 2, 3, and 7.



Rod



Bush

Set 1

1. When Moses was a baby, his mother put him in a _____.
2. Moses saw something on the mountain. It was a burning _____.
3. God told Moses to take off his _____.
4. Moses had a _____ because he took care of his father-in-law's sheep.

Set 2

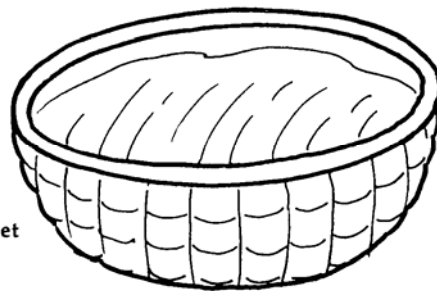
1. Moses' mother hid the _____ near the edge of the river.
2. Moses obeyed God. He took off his _____.
3. When Moses threw down his _____, it became a snake.
4. The _____ burned, but it did not burn up.

Set 3

1. God spoke to Moses out of the burning _____.
2. When Moses picked up the snake, it became a _____.
3. Moses took off his _____ because he was standing on holy ground.
4. Pharaoh's daughter found Moses in the _____ in the river.



Shoes



Basket

CHAPTER - 30

IN THE PATH OF SERVICE

Theme Service

Aim To train our children to help and serve the poor and needy.

Bible Reading Acts 9: 36 – 43.

Values for life

1. Those who love God, love their brothers also.
2. Children of God must do good deeds.
3. We should spend our God given wealth for the good of others.
4. Children of God should give fellowship to fellow believers.
5. We must support charitable institutions.

Introduction

We live in a society where media – TV, Radio, Theaters – plays a very important role. Anything that happens to a celebrity is given great importance in the news. The death of Princess Dianna was a great shock to everyone. It was covered by the whole News media. But the media gave more importance to another person who died the same day – Mother Teresa.

Why was this simple nun given so much of importance? More importance even than what was given to a Princess? Mother Teresa might be the person who has done the most for the poor, needy and the homeless than anyone else during the last century. 'Missionaries of Charity', an organization that works among the homeless and the orphans, was founded by Mother Teresa. She served Jesus by literally following His words "whatever you do to least among you, you do to me".



Mother Teresa

Nurse Florence Nightingale, known as 'The Lady with the Lamp', is another example of one who served others. She considered any call for help as a call from Jesus. Society will never forget those who help people in need. In the New Testament, we read about a lady who did so much for the people in her community. Her name was Tabitha. Let us take a look at her remarkable life.



Florence Nightingale

Bible Learning: Main Ideas-

Tabitha, in Greek is Dorcas, which means deer. She lived in a harbor town called Joppa which is North West of Jerusalem. This is the same town from which Jonah got into a ship sailing to Tarshish, when God told him to go to Nineveh. Tabitha, became a Christian as a result of the teachings and works of the apostles. A true Christian or disciple of Jesus is one who has accepted Him as his or her personal savior and follows His examples. When we follow His examples, those who see the good works will praise our Father in Heaven (Mat 5: 48).

Not to be served but to serve

Jesus once said that He came to the world not to be served but to serve (Mat 20: 28). Tabitha followed the example of Jesus. As a Christian she helped all those around her who were in need. Being a tailor, she stitched clothes for all the poor widows who lived close to her.

Sharing with those in need

Tabitha shared her time, talents and money with those in need. When we share what we have with those who are in need, everyone will have what they need and in this way we will be able to have equality.

Actions speak louder than words

We all know that speeches could be boring. People will get bored if we keep on talking and giving advice. If we do not follow what we preach, then we will be called hypocrites,

people without integrity. But when we witness Jesus through our actions, they will stay in the minds of people we come in contact with. What Tabitha did for others affected them more than her words. Everyone loved her. So when Tabitha fell ill and died, they were all shocked and became very sad and gathered around her dead body crying. When the other Christians there heard that Peter was in the next town called Lydda, they sent for him. When Peter came, the widows that Tabitha helped showed him the clothes that she made for them. Peter saw how Tabitha was witnessing Jesus by serving others. After asking everyone to go out of the room, Peter prayed and then in a commanding voice said, 'Tabitha get up'. Tabitha opened her eyes. Seeing Peter, she got up and Peter helped her stand. All the people who gathered were amazed to see Tabitha alive again. Many unbelievers became Christians when they heard about this great miracle.

Bible Learning: Strategies and activities-

1. State whether true or false:
 - 1 Tabitha means lamb.
 - 2 Jonah got into a ship to Tarshish from Joppa.
 - 3 Tabitha was a tailor.

2. The name Tabitha in Greek is _____.
 - 1 The meaning of the word Tabitha is _____.
 - 2 _____ prayed and brought Tabitha back to life.

- 3 How should a Christian respond to the needs of others?

- 4 Who is a true Christian? Explain using Tabitha's life as a model

Bible Application

Being a Christian means, accepting Jesus as personal savior and following the path that Jesus has shown us. It is the duty of a Christian to be a witness of Christ. Jesus said, He came not to be served but to serve. When we serve and help those in need, we will be witnesses of Christ and those who see our good work will glorify Our Father in heaven.

Life Response-

1. Jesus showed us the path of service. Let us follow His path and serve those in need.
2. When we share with others the blessings that God has given us, we are witnessing Christ to them. By seeing our good actions, they will glorify our Father in Heaven.
3. Actions speak louder than words. Let us be witnesses of Christ through our actions.
4. Our Church gives importance to witnessing through service. That is the reason why we have many charitable organizations in our Church. 'Tabitha

Mission', an organization that takes care of widows and the elderly, is one of them. Let us pray for these organizations and support them.

Memory Verse: Mat 25: 40

The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'.

Prayer-

Dear God, You said that you have come not to be served, but to serve. As your followers Lord, help us to serve others in your name. Amen.

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