

**“BE THE STORY”
SUNDAY SCHOOL
NARRATIVE LECTIONARY
CURRICULUM**

YEAR OF MATTHEW: FALL 2018

By Pastor Siri Strommen

A Look at 2018-2019

September

- 9- Introduce the Timeline- Genesis 6 “The Flood”
- 16- Genesis 12:1-9 “Call of Abraham”
- 23- Genesis 39:1-23 “Joseph in Prison”
- 30- Exodus 14:10-14, 21-29 “Rescue at Sea”

October

- 7- Exodus 19:3-7; 20:1-17 Covenant and Commandments
- 14- Joshua 24:1-15 Joshua renews the Covenant
- 21- 2 Samuel [11:1-5, 26-27]; 12:1-9 David and Bathsheba
- 28- *SPECIAL LESSON ON MARTIN LUTHER*

November

- 4-2 King 5:1-14 Elisha heals Naaman
- 11- Micah 5:2-4; 6:6-8 Micah
- 18- Isaiah 36:1-3, 13-20; 37:1-7 then 2:1-4 Swords into Plowshares
- 25- Jeremiah 1:4-10; 7:1-11 Jeremiah’s Temple Sermon

December

- 2- Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4, 3:3b-6, 17-19 Faith as a Way of Life
- 9 -Esther 4:1-17 Esther
- 16- Isaiah 42:1-9 God’s servant a Light to the Nations

January

- 6- Matthew 2:1-23 Magi Visit
- 13- Matthew 3:1-17 Baptism of Jesus
- 20- Matthew 4:1-7 Jesus Tempted
- 27- Matthew 5:1-20 The Beatitudes

February

- 3- Matthew 6:7-21 Treasure in Heaven
- 10- Matthew 7:1-14, 24-29 House on a Rock
- 17- Matthew 13:24-43 Parable of the wheat and weeds
- 24- Matthew 14:13-33 Feeding of 5000, Walking on Water

March

- 3- Matthew 16:24-17:8 Transfiguration
- 10- Matthew 18:15-35 Forgiving 70 times 7
- 17- Matthew 20:1-6 Laborers in Vineyard
- 24- Matthew 22:1-14 Wedding Banquet
- 31- Matthew 25:1-13 Bridesmaids

April

7- Matthew 25:31-46 Last Judgement
14 Matthew 21:1-17 Palm Sunday
21- Matthew 28:1-10 EASTER
28 -Matthew 28:16-20 The Great Commission

May

5-Acts 10:1-17, 34-35 Peter’s Dream
12-Acts 13:1-3; 14:8-18 Paul’s Mission
19- Romans 1:1-17 Paul’s Letters
26- Romans 5:1-11 God’s Love Poured Out

Sample Schedule

9:45-9:55 Gathering Time

- Welcome
- Singing the Old Testament or New Testament song together using a chart with the books as a guide
- Introduce theme of the day. What part of the Bible is it from? (Point to chart)
- Collect offering for the charity of your choice. Keep a record and tell the kids weekly how you are progressing on your goal.
- Celebrate birthdays

9:55-10:10 Music

10:15-10:45 Lesson of the Day

A Few Reminders

The Lesson: Each lesson is meant to last between 20-30 minutes. If you have longer than that, you may need to proactively come up with another activity such as music, or games, or something physically active for the kids.

Centering Breath: This may be a difficult part for kids to do, but it is amazing to see the effect it has on kids when they get into it and take on the challenge. The point is to teach kids a tool for calming and centering themselves that they can use when they feel anxious, or simply want to connect with God. *This is a Spiritual Practice.*

Timeline: The reason many churches are using the Narrative Lectionary is because it tells the story in order. No matter your age, it is helpful not just to learn Bible stories, but to understand that there is a flow and arc to the Bible. It isn't random. By reviewing the timeline, you are building that storyline for the kids and reinforcing the stories. But, of course, it is also a great catch up for kids who missed a week or two.

Story: I recommend the SPARK Bible for grades 2 and under, and a regular pew Bible for grades 3 and older. At times the Lectionary has stories that are not traditionally in children's Bibles, so I offer summaries that hopefully make sense to small children. These summaries can also be used for older children if the reading is obscure. I prefer this approach to scrapping the lesson all together, as it teaches us the Bible has things for us to continue to wonder about and grow into.

Wondering: This curriculum avoids giving a definite interpretation of the story and instead encourages kids to wonder and come up with multiple meanings. I may reinforce a few ideas with activities, but that doesn't mean other ideas are wrong.

Activity: The activities chosen are NOT YOUR ONLY OPTION! If you don't like them, please use something else. You know your kids best. However, the activities I chose were meant to be diverse week to week (not a coloring sheet or craft every time), and ultimately to open up a part of the story in a real way. While there is nothing wrong with coloring a picture of Paul after studying him, but if we can do an activity that helps us to understand Grace that might impact the kids more deeply.

Feedback: I love hearing what creative additions or twists teachers have taken on the lesson. Please send me your ideas of what worked!

Blessings to you all!

This is holy work, inviting children to find themselves in the Story of God.

Pastor Siri

September 9: The Flood and Promise

Note: We often focus on the animals in this story with children, enjoying the idea of a floating zoo. The deeper meaning is a bit more concerning: God was so fed up with humanity’s evil, that God destroyed everything but a remnant to try again. Yet, in the end of the story, we see that God has decided never to do this again. God will not wage war on humanity ever again, so God’s “bow” is placed in a sky. The rainbow is a beautiful reminder that God is for us, not against us. In fact, we believe that God isn’t in the sending of a natural disaster, but in the work of humans who help one another through it.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: On this first Sunday, you should have a long blank sheet of butcher paper on a wall in or near your Sunday school classroom. Explain that every week you will be adding pictures or symbols to the timeline so that together you can remember the Story of the Bible in order.

Story: Genesis 6:5-22; 8:6-12; 9:8-17 OR SPARK pg. “The Flood”

Sample I Wonder Statements: (Make up your own!)

- I wonder if Noah and his family were scared
- I wonder if they got bored being on a boat that long!
- I wonder if the ark smelled bad
- I wonder how God was feeling before and after the flood

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the Day: God, you do not send floods or tornadoes to hurt us. When we see bad things happen in this world, we know that you are sad, too. Teach us how to help each other, as Jesus helped others. Amen.

Activity/Project One: Baptismal Ritual

- Go to the baptismal font in your sanctuary, or have a pitcher of water and bowl in your room
- Pour the water and ask the kids to tell you all the ways we use water every day (Washing our bodies, drinking, cleaning, gardening)
- Say: “In your baptisms, God promised to never let you go. God is always with you. God works with others to help you, and God works through you to help others.”
- Have the kids surround the basin of water, then take turns dipping their finger into the water and either making the sign of the cross on their forehead or their neighbors (or both).
- Say, “I am a beloved child of God forever.” OR “You are a beloved child of God forever.”

Activity Two: Lutheran Disaster Response (for grades 2 and up roughly)

- Watch the video below
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8M_g6xSvDM
- Where is God acting in the video?
- What is our job as a Church when disasters happen?

September 16: Call of Abraham

Note: As the Biblical Narrative goes, God realized humanity wouldn't be good all by themselves, so, God chose to work with one family. By blessing Abraham and his family, the world would be blessed. Their faith and love for God and each other was to be a light to the nations, inviting everyone into relationship with God.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Genesis 12:1-9 OR SPARK: pg. 26 “The Call of Abraham”

Sample I Wonder Statements: (Make up your own!)

- I wonder why God chose Abram
- I wonder if Abram doubted God's promise

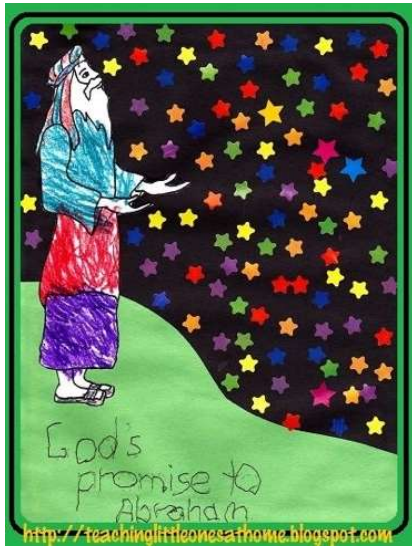
- I wonder what Abram told his wife Sarah
- I wonder if God makes us promises

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the Day: God, you chose Abraham and Sarah to create a family that believed in you. And we are a part of that family. Help us to believe in your promises, too. That you will love us and never leave us. Amen.

Activity/Project:



Option A: Promise to Abraham sheet (*construction paper, glue, stars, markers*)

1. Give one black sheet paper per student
2. Give one half green sheet paper per student
3. Print or copy one of the options for Abraham
4. Cut around Abraham
5. Guide students to cut landscape line on green paper
6. Paste landscape to black paper
7. Paste Abraham onto the landscape
8. Stick stars onto the black area of the paper

Option B: Game! (*Blindfold and larger space*).

The point: Following directions as Abraham did, even if they don't seem to make any sense.

- One child is blindfolded and others stand around space unmoving.
- One person plays “God” and whispers directions into Abraham’s ear such as Two steps forward, turn left, turn right.
- When Abraham reaches another kid, they swap places and the Old Abraham becomes “God”.
- Continue until all children have played a role.

September 23: Joseph in Prison

Note: This story is about Joseph being falsely accused and not having the power to stand up for himself. It is a common theme in life: some have more power than others, and justice is not as blind as we would want it to be.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Genesis 39:1-23 or Summary Below: (There is no SPARK version)

Summary: Joseph was taken to Egypt as a slave, which was very sad and scary for him. He was away from his family. A man named Potiphar took him as a servant in his house. Joseph did a very good job, and Potiphar was very pleased with him. Things were going very well for the first time in a long time. God had blessed Joseph, making something good out of something bad.

But then, Potiphar’s wife noticed Joseph. She thought he was very handsome. One day, she found him alone and tried to kiss him. He was very shocked and said, “my master, you husband, has given me so much. But one thing that will never be mine is you! You are Potiphar’s wife only!”

Day after day she bothered him, making Joseph very uncomfortable. But he didn’t know what to do. Finally, she grabbed him and he ran away, scared and confused. But this made Potiphar’s wife so angry that she decided to lie to get him back.

She went to her husband and said, “that Hebrew boy, Joseph, was very mean to me!”

Potiphar was surprised but also very angry. He threw Joseph in prison. But even there, God was with Joseph.

Sample I Wonder Statements:

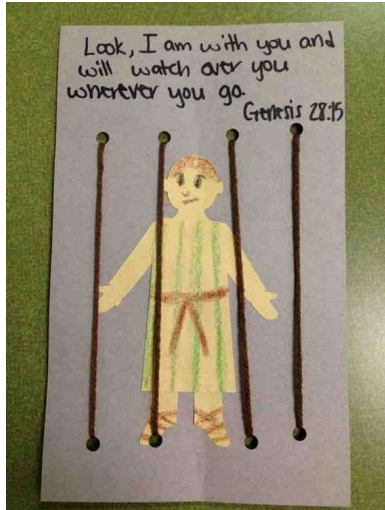
- I wonder if Joseph ever doubted God when he was in jail
- I wonder why Potiphar’s wife was so mean to him
- I wonder how God feels when we are going through a hard time
- I wonder if other people feel like Joseph at times

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the Day: God, Joseph went through some difficult times. He was sad and mad, lonely and forgotten. Help us to remember that even when we are feeling the same way, that you are still with us. Amen.

Activity/Project: Joseph in Prison (Need: construction paper, string, hole puncher, markers or crayons, scissors)



- Take a piece of “flesh” colored paper (it can be any color the kids want!) and draw a Joseph. Give him eyes and clothes, etc.
- Cut Joseph out and glue him onto a piece of construction paper
- Make several holes above and below in a horizontal fashion
- Thread strips of string through vertically and tie them in the back
- Add the verse “Look, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go.” - Genesis 28:15

September 30: Rescue at Sea

Note: While Joseph was in Egypt, his family came and joined him. They ended up as slaves generations later. Moses has now freed the people from slavery, but Pharaoh has once again changed his mind about letting them go. He pursues them, causing great fear as the people are up against a great sea.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Exodus 14:10-14, 21-29 OR SPARK pg. 84 “The Red Sea”

Sample I Wonder Statements:

- I wonder what the Israelites were thinking when Pharaoh’s army was behind them, chasing them
- I wonder what Pharaoh was thinking trying to get them back
- I wonder what Moses was thinking when he saw Pharaoh’s army coming and the people complaining
- I wonder how God feels trying to help us
- I wonder how we are like Pharaoh, refusing to let people do their own thing
- I wonder how we are like Moses, leading stubborn people
- I wonder how we are like the Israelites, scared to try new things

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the Day: Dear God, you are always with us. You see when we are sad or mad or unhappy and you want to help us. Open our hearts to lead you lead us into new life and freedom. Amen.

Activity/Project: Option A: Balloon “Parting of the Red Sea”

- Get a *balloon* for every child in the room plus one or two.
- Put a penny in each on and then blow them up.
- Place them in two rows close together, imagining they are the Red Sea.
- Have one child at a time walk through the center length-wise and watch the water part!

Option B: Baggie “Parting of the Red Sea”

- Get a snack sized baggie and fill it with blue toothpaste or hair gel and little plastic fish.
- Close up and “part” the sea!



October 7: The Ten Commandments

Note: The Israelites had only known slavery under Pharaoh. They needed a new identity and values that would allow them to thrive in their new freedom. These “Ten Words” show them how to be a community that truly will Love God with all their hearts, and love their neighbor as themselves.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Exodus 19:3-7; 20:1-17 or SPARK pg. 94 “The Ten Commandments”

Sample I Wonder Statements:

- I wonder what the people thought when God gave them the Ten commandments
- I wonder which commandment was the most surprising for the people
- I wonder which commandment is the hardest to keep
- I wonder what other things we are tempted to worship besides God
- I wonder why it’s so bad to covet? (Coveting is wanting something so bad it becomes more important than the person who owns it)

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the Day: Dear God, you love us so much you want us to have the best life possible on earth. You gave us laws that would remind us to love you and love other people, treating them with respect. Thank you for your help. Amen.

Activity/Project:

- **Option A: Popsicle Stick Ten Commandments**
 - Each kid gets ten popsicle sticks and one string.
 - Write a word or phrase on each stick for each Commandment.
 - Lay the string in an upside-down “U” and glue the commandments on.
 - Hang from a nail or doorknob at home!
- **Option B: Finger Commandments**
 - Large blank sheet of paper per child
 - Trace both their hands with markers
 - Cut the ten tablets out
 - Glue the commandments on the fingers
 - Practice remembering the commandments by wiggling each finger, saying the commandment, and even coming up with hand signals.



The 10 Commandments

October 14: Joshua Renews the Covenant

Note: The only story most kids hear about Joshua is the battle of Jericho. But Joshua continued Moses’ work after he died. He led the people into the Promised Land, and reminded them of their covenant with God. A covenant is a two-party promise, not unlike wedding vows. God promised to be with the people forever, and the people promised to worship God only.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Joshua 24:1-15 or Summary below: (There is no SPARK version of this story)

Summary: When Moses grew old and died, God chose Joshua to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. After many battles, the people finally felt safe. Then Joshua gathered all twelve tribes together and said,

“Remember, everyone! A long time ago God made a promise to Abraham. God gave Abraham the land of Canaan and also a son named Isaac. Isaac grew up, got married, and had twins: Jacob and Esau! Jacob’s family ended up in Egypt. After many years, our people became slaves in Egypt.

“But God sent Moses and Aaron to rescue us. After ten plagues caused a lot of trouble, Pharaoh finally let us go. Even when we were trapped by the Red Sea, God saved us. We have lived in the desert a long time, but now we are here in the Promised land. Our enemies have left us alone.”

Joshua stood up tall and said to all the people.

“So now, choose who you will worship and serve! But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord!”

Sample I Wonder Statements:

- I wonder if Joshua knew the people needed to be reminded of their history
- I wonder if we need to be reminded of all the times God has been with us
- I wonder what it means to serve the Lord
- I wonder what else we could serve that isn’t God

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the Day: Dear God, you are always with us. Because we cannot see you, it is easy to forget how you love us and are with us every day. Help us to find ways to serve you in our homes, at school, on the playground, and everywhere else. Amen.

Activity: “As for Me and My House” Craft (Need: Popsicle sticks, thick paper, markers, glue, scissors. Optional: Family picture and pre-printed verse)

- On a piece of thick paper, glue popsicle sticks into the shape of a house by making first a square and then a triangle for the rafters. Opt: paint or color the sticks first!
- Write “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord” in the rafters, or, for smaller kids, have them glue the scripture from a pre-printed page.
- Kids can either add a family picture to the blank space, or draw their family.



October 21: David and Bathsheba

Note: As with the story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, this story is often considered inappropriate for children and not often found in children’s Bibles. However, churches have often skirted around important issues such as abuse of power or even sexual abuse, to the detriment of those in the pews who have experienced it. While I take a lighter approach in the summary, we want to emphasize that God is not happy when we abuse our power. God wants women (and men) treated with respect.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: 2 Samuel [11:1-5, 26-27]; 12:1-9 or Summary Below:

Summary: King David was a powerful king. He did a great job fighting off all of Israel’s enemies so they were finally safe as a people. He built a beautiful castle, and the people were happy to have him as their king.

But King David forgot that when you are powerful and strong, you also have to be careful not to take whatever you want. One day, David was in his castle and saw a beautiful woman named Bathsheba. He thought she was so pretty, and because he was the king, he wanted her to visit him.

Bathsheba didn’t think it was a good idea, because she was married to a man named Uriah. But what could she do? David was the king, and she wanted to obey. So, Bathsheba went to visit David, and David fell in love with her. He wanted Bathsheba to be his wife, not Uriah’s wife. So, he made a plan to get rid of Uriah. Which he did.

Now, God noticed this and was very upset with David. So, God sent Nathan the prophet to talk to David. Nathan knew that David thought he was too important to get in trouble, so Nathan told him a story.

“Once there was a poor old man who had a little sheep. He loved his sheep! Oh, he named it and they played together and slept together. But a rich man nearby was throwing a feast and didn’t want to use any of his own sheep to cook for his guests. So, the rich man took the little sheep away from the poor old man.”

David was upset when he heard this story. He stood up and said, “who is this rich man? I will make sure he is punished!”

Nathan stood tall and cried out, “You are the man! The little sheep you took was Bathsheba and the old man was Uriah! God is very upset with you! You used your power as King to take whatever you wanted and that was wrong!”

King David suddenly understood and felt terrible. He prayed to God for forgiveness.

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the Day: O God, sometimes we do the wrong thing. Sometimes we tease people because we can. Sometimes we take someone else’s things just because we can. But you see this and it makes you very sad. Help us to love other people the way you love them. Amen.

Activity/Project: Forgiveness (Need: Backpack and some weights of heavy books)

God forgives us:

- Choose a volunteer to put on the empty backpack
- A child (or teacher) will pick up a heavy item and the class will name one thing we might do that would make God sad (treated other or ourselves poorly)
- Put the weight in the backpack
- Repeat until the backpack is full
- Talk about how heavy it can feel in our hearts when we have done things wrong and haven’t asked for forgiveness
- Have the class say “Please, God, forgive me”, and take the backpack off.

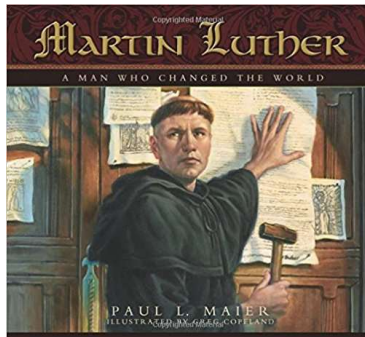


We forgive others:

- Find a new volunteer to put on the backpack
- This time, when we pick up a heavy weight, we can name things that other people might do us that would hurt us
- Repeat until the backpack is full
- Talk about how heavy it can feel in our hearts when we keep thinking and remembering what others have done to us. Forgiving others is NOT SAYING IT WAS OKAY, but rather releasing the burden
- Have the class say, “I forgive you as God forgives me”, and take the backpack off.
- Repeat as often as you like!

October 28: Martin Luther

Note: This Sunday is Reformation Sunday. We remember that on October 31st 1517, Luther nailed the 95 theses (arguments) to the wall of the church, starting the Reformation. So, our lesson on Sunday is all about Martin Luther. It might be worth telling the kids this story is not from the Bible. This happened a long time after Jesus.



Story: Read “Martin Luther: The Man Who Changed the World” or another children’s book on Martin Luther.

Questions for Discussion:

- What was interesting to you?
- Who is Martin Luther?
- What was the problem in the story?
- Why are we called Lutherans?
- What happened almost 500 years ago that makes this day special? (Hint: Nailing of 95 theses or arguments on the door)

Activity/Project: 95 Theses

- Kids each get a parchment paper
- They write down a word, words, sentence or paragraph stating their favorite thing about God, or what they believe about God
- Kids go downstairs to the courtyard where MARTIN LUTHER will be waiting to nail their statement up on a door.

(We took two OLD doors and secured them in the main gathering area and had a man dressed up as Martin Luther who pounded in each statement)



November 4: Naaman is Healed

Note: This coming week we are back in gear with the story of Naaman, the captain from Syria, north of Israel. He gets leprosy, a skin disease that was greatly feared in Biblical times. Usually lepers were kicked out of the community and forced to live in leper colonies. It was devastating for everyone involved. You might want to explain this a bit to the kids.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: 2 King 5:1-14 or SPARK pg. 148 “Naaman is Healed”

Sample I wonder Statements:

- I wonder if Naaman was nervous he wouldn't be healed.
- I wonder why the servant girl was so nice to her masters by giving them a good idea.
- I wonder what Naaman was expecting for a cure.
- I wonder why Naaman had to wash seven times
- I wonder if God works through simple things today
- I wonder how we need healing
- I wonder if God uses medicine and doctors to heal us today

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the day: O God, you want us to be healthy and happy. You give us good food, sleep, exercise, family and friends to keep us whole. Let us be the friends other people need to feel better, too. Amen.

Activity/Project: *Baby powder, cotton ball, water basin, water pitcher.*

- Fill a water basin with water from the water pitcher.
- Put baby powder on arms and rub it in so your arms are powdery white.
- Wash it away in the water basin.
- Make the sign of the cross on each other’s forehead and say “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit”.
- Talk about how in the waters of baptism God claims us and works to heal us every day of our lives, washing away our sin.

November 11: Micah the Prophet

Note: One of the most beloved verses in the Bible comes from Micah 6:6-8. It is one of the best summaries of our faith journey with God. We don’t usually do memorizing, but this particular verse might be a good one to repeat out loud many times with the class.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Micah 5:2-4; 6:6-8 or Summary Below:

Summary: Micah was a prophet in a time when things were difficult for the people. The Assyrians, a powerful enemy, were getting closer and closer, making the Israelites afraid. So, Micah told the people:

“Remember that God is with you! Look at the little town of Bethlehem! It is one of the smallest clans of Judah, but a very important ruler is going to come from there. See? God doesn’t forget anyone.

“Are you confused about how to worship God? Do you think lots of money makes God happy? Or fancy worship? No, people! God has told you what is good. *And what does the Lord want from you but to do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God?*”

Sample I wonder Statements:

- I wonder what things we do that make God proud
- I wonder what things we do that make God angry
- I wonder what it means to do justice
- I wonder what it means to walk with God
- I wonder what it means to love kindness

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the day: O God, you know that the best thing for us is if we take care of each other and worship you. Help us to learn and understand how to do that. Amen.

Activity/Project: Micah 6:8 Activity (Need: 3 plates, crackers, cheese, other snack items)

- **Do Justice: What is Fair?**
 - Ask for three volunteers to sit on one side of the table. The rest of the kids can sit on the floor or wherever they can watch
 - Give each kid a plate.
 - Now, fill up one plate with an apple, carrots, crackers, cheese, etc!
 - Put a few crackers on the second plate
 - Leave the last plate empty
 - Ask the kids if this is fair. What could they do?
 - Justice is about Fairness: it is making sure everyone has what they need
- **Watch: “Fair’n Square” and/or “Long Story Shortz Fairness”**
 - Are there times when someone would need more help than another?
 - How does God want us to share with one another?

November 18: Swords into Plowshares

Note: This passage can seem rather dense to kids. Prepare them to listen to the story by pointing out that Isaiah is describing a new leader who will make peace on earth. The people were so exhausted by war that they needed hope. There are big words like “righteousness” and “Meek” and “equity”. Don’t be afraid to explain what they mean. (Righteousness was being aligned and right with God). Have them listen for images that make sense such as the wolf shall live with the lamb. We believe this leader fits with Jesus very well, so we often think about that.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Isaiah 36:1-3, 13-20; 37:1-7 then 2:1-4 **Summary option below**

Summary: King Hezekiah was the king of Judah. One day, the King of Assyria came to visit him, and Hezekiah was nervous. What did the king want?

The king sent a servant named Rab-shakeh to speak to the people of Judah. He shouted, “O People! The king of Assyria is warning you that he is more powerful than your king! Don’t let your king tell you that everything is fine. Don’t let you king tell you that God will protect you! Assyria has defeated other countries, and we will defeat you!”

When King Hezekiah hear this, he was very afraid. He ran to meet with his servants and with the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah said, “don’t be afraid. God has told me that the King of Assyria will grow afraid and go home.”

Isaiah also said, “one day, people from all over the world will come to God’s mountain. They will want to listen to God and learn how to live. God will give justice to all people, and they will turn their swords into rakes and shovels. No one will fight anyone anymore, and no one will go to war anymore!”

Sample I wonder Statements:

- I wonder why the King of Assyria wanted to fight Judah
- I wonder how Isaiah could hear God
- I wonder why we fight now
- I wonder how we can create peace in our world

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the day: O God, you wish that everyone in the world would have a safe life, where everyone has what they need. We pray for peace around this world and peace in our homes as well. Amen.

Older Kid Activity (readers): “Bombshell Jewelry”

- First, discuss how nations no longer use swords and spears to fight. What do they use? (bombs, etc)
- Find Cambodia on a map
- Watch “Bombshell Jewelry” on youtube or through our facebook link

- <https://www.tenthousandvillages.com/mosaic/not-your-average-jewelry/>
- How is God working through this organization?

EVERYONE: Create “Peace” Jewelry

(You can order jewelry kits with peace charms at Oriental Trading Company. Or use what you have!)



November 25: Jeremiah’s Temple Sermon

Note: Jeremiah was a very important prophet to Israel. Of all the prophets, he seemed to have the most difficult time. No one listened to him, and he went to great suffering trying to get those in power to listen to his message of impending doom. We believe Jeremiah was actually taken away in the exile, and never heard from again.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Jeremiah 1:4-10; 7:1-11 or SPARK pg. 176, 178

Sample I wonder Questions:

- I wonder what Jeremiah thought when God called him?
- I wonder how God calls us today?
- I wonder how it feels to say something other people don’t want to hear?
- I wonder what God might want me to do or say in my life?

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the day: O God, you ask us to worship you and to take care of the people around us. Help us to be like Jeremiah, never afraid to tell the truth and have courage. Amen.

Activity: Fill in the “I am a Child” sheet

- Have the kids can write as many things on the sheet (or draw a picture) of what they can do in the world EVEN though they are a child or BECAUSE they are a child.
- Talk about how no matter how old you are or your ability, you can still share God’s love

I am a Child. God calls me to:

December 2: Faith as a Way of Life

Note: Habakkuk is a short little book about a prophet living in Judah around 600 BCE. He sees his small country as a battleground between Babylon and Egypt. He wants God to rescue them. Because the writing is so poetic, it might be best to read the summary for most ages.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4; 3:3b-6, 17-19 or Summary Below:

Summary:

The prophet Habakkuk cried out to God.

“O Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you aren’t listening?

There are bad things happening everywhere! Will you not come and save us?

There is destruction and violence all around me!

There are more bad people than good, so all the decisions are made poorly.

I am standing at a tall place, waiting and watching for you, God.

I am waiting to hear what you have to say.

Then God did speak to me, and God said:

‘Write this down, so that others may read it. I have a dream about a special time. It is coming soon. If it seems to take a while, just wait for it. Look at the people who think they know it all. They have it all wrong. But those who are good live by their faith.’

So, Habakkuk prayed to God: “O God, you have always done amazing things! You are bigger than the sky, and everything beautiful on earth tells a story about you. You have chased away our enemies in the past like an earthquake. Even though life is difficult right now and I can’t see you working, I will still rejoice in you. I will still praise you, O God of my salvation! You, God, are my strength!”

Sample I Wonder Statements:

- I wonder if we ever have times when we feel God isn’t listening to us
- I wonder if God has a dream for us when we are going through a difficult time
- I wonder how we can use God to be strong when we are sad or scared

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the Day: Dear God, sometimes it is hard to know where you are, because we can’t see you. Sometimes we have bad days or have people in our lives that make us feel sad. But we know that you are always with us, and you are working to keep us all safe. Amen.

Activity/Project: “God is my strength.”- Habakkuk 3:19

(A shield is used to protect us. God can be like a shield, giving us strength in difficult times.)

- Use pre-cut shields, or trace the shape of a shield onto thick paper/cardboard
- Let the kids decorate their shield with whatever art supplies you have- let them be creative!
- Include “God is my strength” on the shield



December 9:

Esther

Note: This week we look at the story of Esther in the Bible. This story takes place in Persia. The Jews have been scattered and many still live in other countries even after Cyrus the Persian King invited them back to their land. Esther is a Jew, a young woman, who was chosen to marry a particular Persian king. As it so happens, her cousin Mordecai discovers a plot to kill the Jews. Esther must risk her life to approach the king and find a way to tell him he’s been fooled into passing a law that will destroy her people. She succeeds. That day of liberation is celebrated as Purim for the Jews every single year, when they tell this story with actors and costumes and lots of food.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Esther 4:1-17 or SPARK: pg. 153

Sample I Wonder Statements:

- I wonder if Esther was afraid for her life.
- I wonder if God planned for Esther to become queen so she could save her people
- I wonder if God planned for Mordecai to overhear this plot so he could speak to Esther
- I wonder if God ever puts us in places so we can do good things
- I wonder if we are ever too scared to do the right thing

December 16: Light to the Nations

Note: Isaiah is one of the most important prophets in the Old Testament. The book is 66 chapters long, and takes place over a long period of time. This part of the book is very hopeful, and gives the people something to aspire to.

Craft: Because of the time it takes for the glue to dry, you might want to start the craft before you read the story. If you put a second coat of glue over the tissue paper, you might need to wait to send these projects home with the kids later in the morning or later on.

Begin with Centering Breath: Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

Timeline: Go through the timeline so far.

Story: Isaiah 42:1-9 or Summary below:

Summary: God said:

“Here is my servant, whom I have chosen for you!

I have put my spirit in him so he can bring justice to everyone.

He will not shout or be loud, and we won't hurt those who are already hurt.

He won't get tired or stop until everyone on earth has what they need.”

God, the one who made heaven and earth, who gives life to all people and puts spirit in them all, says:

“I am God and I have called you in love.

I have held your hand and guided you where you needed to go.

I have asked you to do something special: you will show my love to the world as if you were a flashlight in the dark.

You will help those who are blind to see, you will set prisoners free, and help those who are in trouble.

I am the only God you need.

The way that things used to be done is going away and something new is coming. Let me tell you all about it!”

Sample I Wonder Statements:

- I wonder who God's servant is
- I wonder if that servant could be me or you
- I wonder how I can be like a flashlight, showing God's love to the world
- I wonder what new thing God is doing today

Where are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

Ask for Prayers: At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

Prayer of the Day: God of light, you ask us all, no matter how young or old we are, no matter how good we are at something or how bad, no matter what, we can all help you. We can care for other people, showing your love to the world. Amen.

Activity/Project: Make a Candle-holder (Need: Clear votive candleholder, colorful tissue paper, Mod Podge glue)

- Each kid can choose two or three colors of tissue paper to tear into little pieces
- Use a glue to
- Add the tissue each piece
- The glue takes you have time, add a coat over create a very professional
- Let dry!



paint on the votive paper, overlapping

30 minutes to dry. If you can wait and the tissue paper to clean and look!

Merry Christmas!