welcome

Welcome to the experience of teaching from Cornerstone Connections: Real. Solid. Stories.

The following are provided for your assistance:

- A Word About What's Ahead (student introduction) [p. 2]
- Why the Bible Story Approach? (teacher introduction) [p. 3]
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A WORD ABOUT WHAT’S AHEAD . . . (student introduction)

The goal of Cornerstone Connections is to lead you to the Bible to see the big story of God and people. This big story continues from the first generation in Eden to your generation today. It’s about the lives of people as the God of the universe interacts with them.

If you are looking for a word from God that is real, Cornerstone Connections captures the message of Scripture and challenges you to make the connections to your real life.

God’s Word is not only real; it is rock-solid. For the first generation to hear God’s voice in the garden to the last group standing before Christ at the Second Coming, the Word of God has been and continues to be reliable.

The word from God comes to us in the stories of people who encountered Him and made a decision to either follow Him or walk away.

Real. Solid. Stories. You will find one in Into the Story in each lesson. Out of the Story will provide you with ways to search for truth you can apply to your life. In each lesson you also will find:

- What Do You Think? — a mental activity to get your mind and heart in gear for the story to follow. Every time you approach a Bible story, you are coming to it in the context of the story in which you live every day.
- Did You Know? — a brief statistic or definition that digs a little deeper into the story or simply provides some helpful facts to bring to the lesson.
- Key Text — a verse that points out a key concept from the story. It is also a great place to find verses that you can memorize and store away for later use.
- Punch Lines — a few other verses from Scripture that punctuate key concepts of the lesson. You may see connections between them and the Bible story as well as your own life.
- Flashlight — a brief snapshot of Ellen White’s input on the story. These glimmers that shed light onto the biblical passage will also give you a glimpse of what awaits you in the suggested weekly reading from her inspired commentary on the stories — The Conflict of the Ages.*
• Other Eyes—a couple of quotes from various contemporary or historic sources that may open up a slightly different perspective on the central message of the lesson.

• Making It Real—the guide to making the truths about God in this story your very own. Begin here if you are studying this lesson on your own prior to, or after, studying it in a Sabbath School class. Each day of the week you will be directed to explore one of the sections of the lesson, to relate it to the story you live, and to make the message from God apply to you personally.

WHY THE BIBLE STORY APPROACH? (teacher introduction)

There is a tendency to neglect God’s Word because the Bible seems so old and the issues of life today don’t seem to automatically connect with the ancient, inspired text. Trying to read through the Bible can leave young people in a fog. But the Bible was never meant to be read. It was meant to be studied, reflected on, and integrated into life. It wasn’t written to be analyzed as much as it was to be obeyed. It takes effort. If you simply want a story to entertain you, then the Bible isn’t for you.

The Bible is not a novel that grips you, but if you get a firm hold on the message of the Bible with a teachable heart and an eye that seeks God, you will find something more than entertaining. You will discover a message just for you. “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13, NIV). Jesus said, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24, NIV).

The Bible is the tool that will be used by the promised teacher—the Holy Spirit. We, the earthly teachers, will be effective as we first let the Spirit teach us. Each of these lessons is built around a specific Bible story. You will lead the students Into the Story and help them mine truth for their lives Out of the Story. The gems of truth are not already mined for you. You and your students will have an opportunity to dig for yourselves.

“In daily study the verse-by-verse method is often most helpful. Let the student take one verse, and concentrate the mind on ascertaining the thought that God has put into that verse for him, and then dwell upon the thought until it becomes his own. One passage thus studied until its significance is clear is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained” (Education, p. 189).

Welcome to Cornerstone Connections.

—The Editors

PS. Don’t forget to check out the reading plan.

*A special adaptation has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net.*
what tools are provided for teaching the stories?

(Bolded text helps you review the suggested steps at a glance.)

❶ With each lesson in this Teacher’s Guide you will find an Explore section with topics listed that relate to this week’s story. Leadout Ministries has provided a variety of resources for exploring the topic you choose—from discussion questions to illustrations, from reader’s theater scripts to learning activities. Use the resources at leadoutministries.com to create a “program” that is relevant to your group.

❷ Begin the actual “lesson” time with the What Do You Think? activity (and the Did You Know? information) in the student lesson. The activities are designed to get your students to think, respond, and share with one another. The rich discussion that can grow out of this exercise is a great entry point. The key question to ask at the end is “Why did you respond the way you did?”

❸ Your Teacher’s Guide provides an illustration, along with a short “bridge” thought that will help you lead your students into the Bible passage itself.

❹ The heart of the lesson experience is to read the Bible passage, Into the Story, together and to discuss it with the help of your Out of the Story for Teachers questions. Other passages to compare to this one for further mining in the Word are sometimes provided as well.

❺ Then share the information about context and background that will make the story become more understandable for you and your students.

❻ You are provided with a short guide to help you unpack the other sections of the student lesson with your class. (Your students are also directed to work through one section of their lesson on their own each day by following the instructions in Making It Real.) Encourage them to do this the week before or the week after you discuss the lesson in class, whichever works best for your teaching situation.

❼ Each week’s Teacher’s Guide includes a teaching tip in Rabbi 101 that will be helpful for you to keep for future reference. You are also provided an activity and a summary with which to draw the lesson together and close.

❽ In each lesson students are provided with a reference to the volume from the Conflict of the Ages Series by Ellen White that corresponds with the week’s story. Students who choose to will be able to read the entire series in four years by following the reading plan.

• Leadout Ministries is a resource created especially for those who lead out in youth ministry at the local church. It is staffed by youth pastors and young people. Leadout Ministries can also be a clearinghouse for the great illustrations, activities, study guides, or other resources that you and your young people have used successfully and are willing to share. Just contact them (troy@leadoutministries.com) with your ideas.
## 2007
### 1st Quarter
1. Adam and Eve  
2. The Serpent  
3. Cain and Abel  
4. Seth and Enoch  
5. Noah  
6. Tower People  
7. Abraham  
8. Isaac  
9. Lot  
10. Rebekah  
11. J acob and Esau  
12. J acob  
13. Israel  

### 2nd Quarter
1. J oseph  
2. The Brothers  
3. Moses  
4. Egyptians  
5. Fleeing Slaves  
6. Unhappy Campers  
7. Chosen Nation  
8. Aaron  
9. The Tabernacle  
10. Miriam and Zipporah  
11. Twelve Spies  
12. Korah  
13. The Bronze Serpent  

### 3rd Quarter
1. The Borders Revisited  
2. Balaam  
3. Questionable Neighbors  
4. Law Review  
5. Moses’ Death  
6. Crossing J ordan  
7. Rahab  
8. Blessings and Curses  
9. Gibeonites  
10. Canaan Divided  
11. Last Words of J osua  
12. Annual Feasts  
13. Early J judges  

### 4th Quarter
1. Samson  
2. Samuel  
3. Eli  
4. Philistines  
5. First King  
6. Saul’s Death  
7. Anointed  
8. Fugitive  
9. Lunatic  
10. Crowned King  
11. Incombent  
12. Sinner  
13. Absalom  

## 2008
### 1st Quarter
1. God’s People  
2. Solomon  
3. Temple Builder  
4. Proud Potentate  
5. Repentant Author  
6. Rehoboam  
7. J eroboam  
8. Asa, Ahab, J ezabel  
9. Elijah  
10. Evangelist  
11. Coward  
12. The Sabbath  
13. Jehoshaphat  

### 2nd Quarter
1. Ahab  
2. Elisha  
3. Prophet  
4. Naaman  
5. Jonah  
6. Hosea  
7. Isaiah  
8. Jehovah  
9. Ahaz  
10. Hezekiah  
11. Assyria  
12. Manasseh  
13. Josiah  

### 3rd Quarter
1. Jeremiah  
2. Approaching Doom  
3. Last King  
4. Captives  
5. Daniel  
6. The Dream  
7. Three Hebrews  
8. Nebuchadnezzar  
9. Belshazzar  
10. Daniel  
11. Daniel 7  
12. Daniel 8, 9  
13. Daniel 10-12  

### 4th Quarter
1. Haggai/Zerubbabel  
2. Zechariah  
3. Temple Two  
4. Esther  
5. Queen  
6. Ezra  
7. Nehemiah  
8. Builders  
9. Plotters  
10. Reformers  
11. J esus  
12. Deliverer  
13. Future Glory  

## 2009
### 1st Quarter
1. J esus  
2. It’s Time  
3. Mary  
4. Simeon/Anna  
5. The Wise Men  
6. The Child J esus  
7. The Voice  
8. Victory  
9. Messiah Found  
10. Marriage Feast  
11. The Temple  
12. Nicodemus  
13. J ohn the Baptist  

### 2nd Quarter
1. Samaritan Woman  
2. The Nobleman  
3. The Lame Man  
4. J ohn the Baptist  
5. The Anointed One  
6. Peter  
7. Capernaum  
8. The L eper  
9. Levi-Matthew  
10. The Sabbath  
11. The Disciples  
12. The Centurion  
13. The Demonic  

### 3rd Quarter
1. Woman/J airus  
2. The Seventy  
3. The Disciples  
4. Misunderstandings  
5. Broken Barriers  
6. J esus’ Ministry  
7. Who Is J esus?  
8. Lawyer/Ruler  
9. The Children  
10. Lazarus’ Family  
11. Zacchaeus  
12. Mary  
13. J ames and J ohn  

### 4th Quarter
1. The King Comes  
2. The Pharisees  
3. The End of Time  
4. Servanthood  
5. The Last Supper  
6. Gethsemane  
7. The Trial  
8. Calvary  
9. Resurrection  
10. Mary Magdalene  
11. The Emmaus Road  
12. By the Sea  
13. J esus’ Ascension  

## 2010
### 1st Quarter
1. The Mission  
2. The Holy Spirit  
3. The Lame Man  
4. Ananias/Sapphira  
5. God’s People  
6. Stephen  
7. Paul  
8. Peter  
9. Paul/Barnabas  
10. Gentiles Included  
11. Spreading Good News  
12. The Thessalonians  
13. The Ephesians  

### 2nd Quarter
1. The Corinthians  
2. Workers for Christ  
3. Romans/Galatians  
4. J ourney  
5. Adventures and Trials  
6. Philemon  
7. Colossians/Philippians  
8. Final Arrest  
9. Before Nero  
10. J ohn the Beloved  
11. Patmos  
12. The Revelation  
13. Church Triumphant  

### 3rd Quarter
1. First Believers  
2. Seekers  
3. Wycliffe  
4. Luther  
5. Zwingli  
6. French Reformation  
7. English Reformers  
8. French Revolution  
9. American Reformers  
10. William Miller  
11. Prophecy Fulfilled  
12. The Sanctuary  
13. God’s Law  

### 4th Quarter
1. Renewal  
2. Investigative Judgment  
3. Origin of Evil  
4. Snares  
5. Great Deception  
6. The Papacy  
7. Spiritual Challenge  
8. The Bible  
9. Last Chance  
10. Time of Trouble  
11. Deliverance  
12. The End  
13. The Beginning
### 1st Quarter

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### 2nd Quarter

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<th>Commentary</th>
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| **1. Jeremiah** | *Scripture Story:* Jeremiah 1.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 34. |
| **2. Approaching Doom** | *Scripture Story:* Jeremiah 25; 36.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 35. |
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 36. |
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 37. |
| **5. In the Court of Babylon** | *Scripture Story:* Daniel 1.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 39. |
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 40. |
| **7. The Fiery Furnace** | *Scripture Story:* Daniel 3.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 41. |
| **8. True Greatness** | *Scripture Story:* Daniel 4.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 42. |
| **9. The Unseen Watcher** | *Scripture Story:* Daniel 5.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 43. |
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 44. |
| **11. The Return of the Exiles** | *Scripture Story:* Daniel 7.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 45. |
| **12. Daniel prophecy (8)** | *Scripture Story:* Daniel 8; 9.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 46. |
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*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 46. |
| **2. Zechariah (1)** | *Scripture Story:* Zechariah 1–3 (Zechariah 2–3:5).  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 47. |
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 48. |
| **4. Esther (1)** | *Scripture Story:* Esther 1–4.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 49. |
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*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 49. |
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*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapters 56, 57. |
| **11. Jesus (1)** | *Scripture Story:* Isaiah 11; 29; 40.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 58. |
| **12. Jesus (2)** | *Scripture Story:* Isaiah 53; 61.  
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 59. |
*Commentary:* Prophets and Kings, chapter 60. |
January
5—An Undelivered Gift [p. 11]
God sends a message to Israel through the final words of Moses, expressing His anger at their refusal to be the blessing to all the nations that He called and empowered them to be.

12—Chosen Son [p. 15]
Solomon’s reign is remarkable not only for Israel’s peace with its neighbors, but also for its peace within.

19—A House for God [p. 19]
Solomon’s spiritual high point is the building and dedication of a permanent place for God’s presence among His people.

26—The Wise Fool [p. 23]
Among the many lessons to be learned from the life of Solomon is the important one about the dangers of unfettered prosperity.

February
2—Confessions of a Foolish Wise Man [p. 27]
In the end of Solomon’s life he confesses that only God can fulfill the deepest desires of the soul.

9—Idol Threats [p. 31]
The story of Rehoboam is a sobering reminder that idolatry—in any form—will not be tolerated by God.

16—Jeroboam Sin-drome [p. 35]
The story of Jeroboam is a classic case study of what happens when someone refuses to follow God’s leading.

23—Royal Devotion [p. 39]
Although King Asa’s legacy is not free from failure, he nevertheless distinguished himself as a committed follower of God.

March
1—Never Alone [p. 43]
Elijah, a normal human being, chose to go against the flow of the culture around him and stand up for what he believed in.

8—Faith on the Mountaintop [p. 47]
Elijah’s “extreme” faith seems far removed from everyday reality; however, his absolute trust in God is exactly what is needed in the days ahead.

15—Doubt in the Valley [p. 51]
God’s followers will face times of discouragement and despair; however, His Word is full of helpful guidance for these down times.

22—Who’s Counting? [p. 55]
Taking a stand for Christ is a challenge when it is a call to live differently from all those around. However, God finds ways to speak hope and clarity into our lives.

29—Life Sentence [p. 59]
King J ehoshaphat’s story is about someone who sought to do what was right in God’s eyes. That desire earned him a special sentence of affirmation in the Bible.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The Scripture portion for this week may at first seem tough to teach, but after a closer inspection you will find that it is a very appropriate discussion to have with this age group. As well, it is very easy to personalize and have each student really understand the meaning.

The lesson takes us to the end of Moses’ life and his final words to the Israelites. It is almost depressing in its nature, seeing that God is so disappointed in His people. However, the declaration that Moses gives to Joshua in verse 47 is a powerful admonishment for all of us to take to heart. Young people will certainly understand the direct tone the author uses for his student who is about to take the reins of leadership.

The stage is set with a God who is angry at His chosen people. The reading in Prophets and Kings shows us that God is not just upset that they are worshipping idols; He is also angry that they have chosen not to become a blessing to the surrounding nations by showing His character on this earth. He is sorely upset that they have shirked the calling He has charged them with and the opportunity He has given them to join Him in blessing the world.

II. TARGET

The students will:
- Understand why God was upset at the Israelites. (Know)
- Feel that they can probably use the words as a warning to them as well. (Feel)
- Seek to do what God is calling them to do in response to His charge of being a blessing to the world. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- The church*
- God (existence of a personal)
- God (existence of a sovereign)
- Knowing God

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Invite the students to share what they think the greatest gift they could get for a major milestone birthday might be. Make a list on the board so they can see their answers. Chances are there are many that will be the same. At the end, ask them what they think the value is of a relationship with Christ. You can obviously put no monetary value on this. However, you can impress on them that the greatest gift they can give anyone is an understanding of the grace and assurance of salvation that comes from living in relationship with Jesus Christ.
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:
Charles Dickens tells the story of a man who was just not very nice. He had the opportunity to be nice and caring over and over again until it became clear that he was just a crabby old man with no friends. One night in a dream, he had a series of visitors who helped him understand the responsibility we have to become blessings in this world to those around us.

Of course the story is A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens. And it is obviously a fictional allegory! But isn’t what God is saying to the Israelites much the same as what those three “visitors” say to the protagonist in the Dickens tale? “You must be a blessing!”

Because we believe in God we know that the charge is much more sincere and carries with it much more weight. We must show the grace of Christ to the world because we have experienced it and our lives have become a reaction to the grace God gives to us each day we are blessed to live in this world.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to be a blessing when you have the opportunity. Sometimes it is inconvenient to be the blessing. Sometimes it is awkward to change a tough situation into something glorious, but that is what God called the Israelites to do, and that is what He continually calls us to do as well. What a wonderful opportunity we have to show the world what God is like!

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Underline everything God mentions that they are doing wrong.
- Does God seem personally offended?
- Circle Moses’ command to Joshua.
- Create a list of things we can do to be the blessing God wants us to be.

Use the following as another teachable passage that relates to today’s story: 2 Samuel 22:50.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

These texts take place at the end of the life of Moses. He has done all that he will be allowed to do, and apparently he wants to leave the children of Israel with just a few words of rebuke and encouragement in order for them to continue in, or even go back to, the ways of God. His rebuke is because the children of Israel were having some trouble with idolatry as they were making their way through the nations of that region. Moses desperately wanted them to understand that God’s way was certainly better than what they were searching.

His charge to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 32:47 is so powerful it needs to be mentioned. The concept that we must take these words seriously because they are truly the words that give us life is very important. It is another indication of the grace God continually gives us in order to be able to live out our lives much better here on earth.

The question of how many people actually left Egypt to go to the Promised Land is an interesting one. There have been estimates of as little as 3,000 to as many as 3 million people. How can this be? It has to do with the translation of a particular word in the Hebrew language. What sort of impact does this have on the story? Well, if you think about it, the handling of 3 million people vastly differs from the handling of 3,000. It would make the difference between a group that could move quickly and a group that would literally take days to move. It also raises the question of how they could easily integrate into the other cultures they were running into. With a smaller group it would be easier to be insular; with a large group it would be much harder to keep to themselves, as assimilation of those around would take place much easier and growth or loss of people would be harder to see and manage.

Regardless of their numbers, it is plain to see that they were continually doubting God and His sovereignty over their lives. This might seem strange in conjunction with the fact that there were miracles daily for these people. However, it proves that faith is not built on miracles, but on relationships. Regardless of what they were seeing God doing, they were still following idols. God sought to be in relationship with them so that He might be able to bless them!
III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Have the students write a list of four to six ways they were blessed by people in the last week or two. Have them be specific. Let them share these blessings with one another in a corporate setting. It will be good for them to hear the great ways God is blessing them all through the people in their lives. As well, it may give them ideas about how they can become better blessings in the lives of those around them.

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:
Israel had simply forgotten their calling from God. They thought He was there for them, not the other way around. They became selfish and unwilling to partner with God for the blessing of the nations around them. God was understandably upset with this and told them in no uncertain terms. That makes up the major portion of the Scripture this week. It's OK to understand that God desires something from us. He desires our partnership with Him in order to let the world know what God is like. We must be His hands and His feet on this earth (play the song "Hands and Feet" by Audio Adrenaline if you have the time). As we understand God's call on our lives we begin to understand that we have a job, a blessing really, given to us by the Creator of the world. How can we possibly bless the nations? Well, maybe we need to start by understanding the blessings that we can bring to one another in a very small way each day.

*Fundamental Belief No. 12.

Teaching From . . .
Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapter 1.

*A special adaptation of Prophets and Kings has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
United we stand—but divided we fall.
Around 800 years passed from when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River to when Nebuchadnezzar dragged them off to Babylon. We usually think of them as a united people all those years, but the century of monarchy ruled by Saul, David, and Solomon was about as good as it got. Before Saul the Benjamite was anointed and crowned, civil war nearly wiped out his tribe. Even the legendary rule of David was marked by restless dissenters challenging his grip on the throne, first from members of other tribes and Saul loyalists, then within his own family.
Solomon’s reign is remarkable not only for Israel’s peace with its neighbors, but for its peace within. Before losing his mule and life in battle, big brother Absalom “stole the hearts of the men of Israel” (2 Samuel 15:6, NIV) with his good looks and charisma, but for young Solomon it would take more than looks or luck. Having to get by on wits alone no doubt contributed to his asking for wisdom above everything else.
When Solomon solved a custody dispute by suggesting a baby boy be sliced in two (prompting the true parent to give up the child while the faker spitefully agreed to the split), “all Israel . . . held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice” (1 Kings 3:28, NIV). Perhaps today we should be awed that he held a country together for so long, for at his death it was torn, and no king’s horses or men ever put it together again.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Know that God desires to bless their talents if they will give Him their lives.
• Feel the call to live for God.
• Respond by dedicating themselves to God’s work.

III. EXPLORE
• Priorities
• Wisdom/counsel
• Decision-making
• Humility
You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED
Activity
Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.
Everybody lives by one philosophy or another. “He who dies with the most toys wins.” “Eat, drink, and be merry.” “Greed is good.” “All we need is love.” “I just trust God.” But whether one’s personal philosophy is pessimistic or optimistic, rooted in guilt or in gratitude, the question still lingers: What is wisdom? What does it mean to be wise?
Have your students read the following texts in as
many versions as possible: Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:1-7; Proverbs 9:10; Proverbs 15:31-33; Isaiah 11:1-3; Isaiah 33:5, 6; Micah 6:8, 9.

What light do these verses shed on the origin of wisdom? Discuss and write your students’ distinct ideas on a flipchart or whiteboard where everyone can read them.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

“Seek God’s kingdom first, and you’ll get everything else in the deal.” Nice words to live by, but is God faithful when we ask Him for wisdom for everyday life?

Nineteenth-century London preacher Charles Spurgeon said, “Men do not seek God first; God seeks them first; and if any of you are seeking Him today it is because He has first sought you.” The great Christians of history weren’t all prosperous by worldly standards, but they were all rich in wisdom. They put God first, and people respected them because they respected God. Wisdom brings humility. Ellen White wrote: “I have no special wisdom in myself; I am only an instrument in the Lord’s hands to do the work He has set for me to do” (Selected Messages, book 3, p. 46).

Paul Rusesabagina, who saved the lives of more than 1,200 people during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, grew up watching his wise father quietly command the respect of villagers. “He was usually the elder who spoke last,” Rusesabagina remembers. A particularly petty dispute his father resolved, “a small misunderstanding that had blossomed into a full-scale war of pride,” stands out in his memory. One farmer’s crop had jumped the line onto another man’s property, but most was where it should be, so there “was no clear villain or victim. ‘Listen, you two,’ [my father] said, motioning with the blade of his hand. ‘This is where the line is. Respect it from now on, and respect each other as well. I don’t want to hear about this again’” (An Ordinary Man: An Autobiography, by Paul Rusesabagina. Penguin Books, 2006).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

What’s your biggest priority in life? To find true love? To be the greatest at your art, sport, or business? To find yourself?

Solomon’s story may seem far removed from us (most people don’t find themselves ruler of God’s own theocracy, offered anything we desire), but the book of Proverbs makes clear that wisdom is for everybody. Proverbs 30 brings us the wisdom of one Agur, son of Jakeh, with a prayer that any longtime Christian will find familiar:

“Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God” (Proverbs 30:7-9, NIV).

How do those verses sum up a Christian perspective on life?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- How did Solomon win his people’s approval despite so much intertribal conflict?
- What mistakes do you see Solomon making that will later come back to haunt him?
- The people were happy and prosperous under Solomon. What spiritual dangers does prosperity bring that can result in poverty?
- How would you describe God’s offer to Solomon?
- Underline what’s new to you in the story.
- Circle the words or phrases that best capture the story’s various emotions.
- What questions does this story prompt in your thinking?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: James 1:5; Proverbs 2:1-5; 3:13-18; Philippians 1:9.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

In Proverbs, wisdom is next to godliness. Proverbs’ themes have been summarized in five major points:

1. Actions have consequences. In God’s world good deeds lead to blessing and bad deeds result in negative consequences or punishment.
God is passionate about justice.

2. How we treat others and relate to God is as important as the technical things we know.

3. God gives everyone freedom of choice. In contrast to much of Greek philosophy and fear, we are not ruled by fate. The ideal of wisdom is that when people know the good, they will do it.

4. In everything we do we either follow the road of righteousness or the highway of folly, with sure results.

5. Proverbs contrasts the opposite types—the wise and the foolish, the slothful and the studious, the rich and the poor.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

It’s a familiar text to most Christians, but while archaeologists find parallels between many of the Bible’s proverbs and other “wise sayings” in ancient Middle Eastern manuscripts, only the Bible describes wisdom as beginning with worship. Gerald Wheeler writes: “A major difference between nonbiblical wisdom and that of Scripture is that the other wisdom documents taught that one could have success by what one did. The Bible teaches that true success comes from whom one worships. . . . “The fear of the Lord/God’ is a fundamental and widespread image. It combines awe, reverence, faith, and obedience—the whole life of the believers as they relate to God. As His followers live out a concrete expression of their loyalty and faithfulness, they respond to the leading of God, who alone can provide atonement. A truly godly life can only come through God Himself” (Wisdom: Timeless

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

More Improvisation

Laugh and learn with some Bible improv. Proverbs’ contrasts and vivid imagery provide endless possibilities for improvisational fun. Have one student narrate while others act out some of the “wise vs. fool” descriptions from Proverbs. The lighthearted humor, visual reinforcement, and whole-body learning will cement the principles in their minds like nothing else. For example:

• “The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin” (10:8, NIV).
• “The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down” (14:1, NIV).
• “Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue” (17:28, NIV).
• “In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has” (21:20, NIV).
• “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control” (29:11, NIV).

See also Proverbs 6:6-11; 12:27; and other verses throughout the book.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

• Other Eyes
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

• Flashlight
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

• Punch Lines
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Proverbs focuses primarily on external behavior, for Bible writers believed that what we do reflects who we are. We see this in Proverbs 6:16-19, NIV: “There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.”

Violence of words and deeds is equally condemned in Proverbs, “For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife” (30:33, NIV).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Have your students rewrite specific proverbs, in groups, to apply to their own situations—at school, with parents and siblings, with friends—and in their own words. For example, Proverbs 30:32, 33; Proverbs 28:1, 6-8; Proverbs 13:20-22; Proverbs 11:4-6; Proverbs 11:22-27.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Proverbs are timeless. “Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion” (11:22, NIV). You don’t have to live in 900 B.C. to come up with an instant association for those words—just look at the nearest tabloid newspaper. “He who brings trouble on his family will inherit only wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise” (11:29, NIV). Remind you of anyone you know?

“He who winks maliciously causes grief, and a chattering fool comes to ruin” (10:10, NIV). “An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips” (24:26, NIV). “The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion” (28:1, NIV). Each one is still as true as it’s ever been.

Proverbs is one of the most underrated books of the Bible, but it’s packed with power for anyone who wants to glorify God and live an outstanding life. James 1:5 says: “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him” (NIV). In Proverbs, God gives us some words to live by.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapter 1.

*A special adaptation of Prophets and Kings has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week’s lesson captures the spiritual highpoint of King Solomon’s life. He lived many years, but his greatest achievement occurred early in his reign. That accomplishment was the building and dedication of a permanent place where God’s presence could dwell with His people.

Solomon spared no expense in the construction of the Temple, conscripted as much manual labor as needed, and then found artisans from Egypt who could do the special work of the Temple. This latter act foreshadowed his penchant for depending on other nations for that which he should have trusted God.

Nonetheless, the righteous desire of Solomon to build a house for God should be the same desire that drives us to build a place for God in our lives. The care Solomon demonstrates in the building of the Temple can be likened to that which we should exhibit in the development of a Christian character. We should use no shoddy materials in this process, so that we may render to God the best that we have to give.

Solomon also understood the sanctity of God’s holy law kept in the ark. The law, transcript of God’s character, was very much at the heart of the ceremony. Today, it should be written on our hearts as we seek to love, worship, and obey God.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Understand that we were created to worship God. (Know)

• Feel the necessity to give God their best in all areas of life. (Feel)

• Respond by selecting a place where they can meet with God each day. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Sanctuary (Christ’s ministry in heavenly)*
• Worship
• Prayer

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Ask students to share the “form” their worship takes in their selected spot for communication with God. Share aspects from your own life that are closely tied to worshipping God.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was present at the Vienna Music Hall, where his oratorio The Creation was being performed, the story goes. Weakened by age, the great composer was confined to a wheelchair. As the majestic work moved along, the audience was
caught up with tremendous emotion. When the passage “And there was light!” was reached, the chorus and orchestra burst forth in such power that the crowd could no longer restrain its enthusiasm.

The vast assembly rose in spontaneous applause. Haydn struggled to stand and motioned for silence. With his hand pointed toward heaven, he said, “No, no, not from me, but from thence comes all!” Having given the glory and praise to the Creator, he fell back into his chair exhausted (see Our Daily Bread, September 20, 1992).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story
Share the following in your own words:

Something truly special happens when praise and honor are directed toward the One who alone deserves it. That’s what Haydn understood, and it’s also what King Solomon understood. The ingenuity used to build the magnificent Temple he had just constructed for God did not come from Solomon. The materials were not of his making. Solomon did the only thing that any human can do at such an awesome moment; he directed all glory to God.

Worship is the heartbeat of the Christian’s life, and we are at our best when we are praising and worshiping God.

Out of the Story for Teachers
After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Mark each place where the ark of the covenant is mentioned. What is its significance in this passage?
- Solomon is the nation’s political leader. Does the passage reveal him to be its spiritual leader also?
- Underline the places where there is a major change in the tone of the ceremony.
- What contribution does music make to the service? What is the significance of the song that is sung and why does the writer highlight the oneness of the musicians and singers?
- Circle the spots in the text where you see God.
- Those involved in the worship service dressed a certain way, even the musicians. How do we reconcile this with the “come as you are” idea of worship?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Isaiah 6:1-8; Romans 12:1-5; Isaiah 55; Habakkuk 2:20; Ecclesiastes 5.

Sharing Context and Background
Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. As wise and great as Solomon was, it is evident that his father, David, had a tremendous impact on him. This is seen in the way in which Solomon orchestrated the dedication ceremony for the building of the Temple.

   In 1 Chronicles 15:11-16 David summons the tribal leaders and the leaders of the nation to go with him to bring the ark to Jerusalem. When the ark gets to Jerusalem an elaborate ceremony is executed, complete with music, sacrifices, and a special psalm written and performed by none other than David himself (1 Chronicles 16). David’s psalm of praise carries much of the sentiment of Solomon’s dedicatory prayer. There is no doubt that David greatly influenced his son, but nowhere is it seen more clearly than in the way Solomon carried out the dedication of the Temple.

2. Some moments are years in the making. The story of the building of God’s Temple and its special ceremony was a moment that was centuries in the making. Consider that after God’s people were delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, among His first commands to Moses was this: “Have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8, NIV). Moses went on to construct the traveling wilderness sanctuary that housed the ark as the Israelites wandered through the desert. All the Israelites dreamed of the day when they would have a permanent place for God, one that didn’t need to be broken down and hauled everywhere. Countless died never seeing that day. When Solomon completed the Temple, he had brought to fruition the dream of numerous Israelites. This dedication was no insignificant occurrence.

3. The spot on which the Temple was constructed held special significance to all the Israelites. Ellen G. White writes: “It was here that Abraham, the father of the faithful, had revealed
his willingness to sacrifice his only son in obedience to the command of Jehovah. Here God had renewed with Abraham the covenant of blessing, which included the glorious Messianic promise to the human race of deliverance through the sacrifice of the Son of the Most High” (Prophets and Kings, p. 37).

This spot was a place of mercy, a place where sins were forgiven, a place of healing.

4. It was evident from God’s presence that day that He approved of the worship rendered to Him at the dedication of the Temple. But it was not until several years later that God spoke to Solomon directly to let him know just how much He appreciated the seven-year effort that led to the building of the Temple: “When Solomon had finished the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the Lord and in his own palace, the Lord appeared to him at night and said, ‘I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices. . . . If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land”’ (2 Chronicles 7:11, 12, 14, NIV).

Some things are worth the wait.

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**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Visual Learning**

Some students are auditory learners and take in the spoken word to maximum benefit. Some are kinesthetic (sensory) learners, needing experiences that involve movement and the senses. But still others are primarily visual learners.

Consider bringing to class a picture of the Lord’s Temple built by Solomon. Several of these are available in Jewish history books. Better yet, give the students a living, breathing image of the Temple and its worship.

Christian Book Distributors offers a very good DVD titled Solomon’s Temple. This DVD details the Temple’s “design, construction, meaning for Israel, and what went on there and why.” The video runs about 30 minutes, so you’ll no doubt want to select a portion of it to show your students.

Most young people today struggle to see and understand the meaning of the Temple in biblical times and its connection with them today. This is one way of making this week’s subject more real.

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**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.
Before class, make copies of a seven-day calendar. Each day of the week should have enough space for the students to make notations. Distribute the one-week calendar. Ask the students to choose a time each day when they will spend time in worship to God. Then ask each to come up with a way to make each day’s worship special. (They may choose to listen to a favorite song after completing their lesson, morning devotional, or Bible reading, for example.) Close with a prayer asking God to reveal Himself to the students this week.

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:
The worship of God requires our best efforts. To honor God as He deserves requires a preparation of heart that many neglect. It would have been easy for Solomon to grow weary during the building process. We sometimes forget that Solomon built the Temple of the Lord before he constructed a palace for himself. He could have easily decided on second-rate materials when the best proved difficult to get. He could have chosen to cut corners when logistical nightmares occurred during the building process. Perhaps a lesser person would have folded under the pressure, but Solomon was motivated by a vision of God, motivated to put the worship of God at the center of the nation’s life. How he could later in his life fall away from so noble a beginning is beyond comprehension.

Solomon had made a request of God for wisdom to rule the people, and God had answered him and given him more than he could ever dream. Fresh from his special revelation from God, he had a burning desire to please God. While he fell during his later life, his early desire to please God calls us to a higher standard of service and worship to God.

*Fundamental Belief No. 24.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapter 2.
*A special adaptation of Prophets and Kings has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

No Bible character had a better start in life than Solomon. Raised the son of a wealthy, respected king, he stood to inherit riches beyond his wildest dreams, not to mention a good name. His father was not perfect, but when shown his wrongs, he righted them.

Solomon at first felt the weight of his responsibility as king. That explains his request to God for wisdom, his careful construction of the Lord’s Temple, and the awesome prayer that highlighted the dedication of that Temple. But something happened to Solomon after these accomplishments.

Solomon’s tremendous wealth, international prestige, and relative national peace meant that he had time to indulge in unwholesome interests. He did. He formed alliances with surrounding nations against God’s will, and sealed each of them with a marriage. Almost imperceptibly Solomon’s heart began to leave God. He worshipped the gods of his wives and concubines, and forsook the God of the universe.

The rise and fall of Solomon teaches several lessons, but none more important than the dangers of unfettered prosperity and wealth. Solomon believed that his immense learning and wisdom could overcome the pull of beautiful women, foreign gods, and unmatched wealth. He was sadly mistaken. He had forgotten that the source of his blessing was God. Whether in times of famine or plenty, God’s people must always put Him first in their lives.

II. TARGET

The students will:
- Know that God’s blessings are always given for His glory and not our own. (Know)
- Experience the peace that comes through obedience to God’s commands. (Feel)
- Commit to never allow anything or anyone to occupy God’s place in their lives. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Self-discipline
- Idolatry
- Humility

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Ask them to discuss their answers. Point out to them the things in life that they feel they “must have.” Bring this discussion around to what they might “sell out” in order to keep that thing in their lives.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

“Radio personality Paul Harvey tells the story of
how an Eskimo kills a wolf. The account is quite grisly, yet it offers fresh insight into the consuming, self-destructive nature of sin.

“First, the Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood.

“Next, the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh frozen blood. He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade in the arctic night. So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf does not notice the razor-sharp sting of the naked blade on his own tongue, nor does he recognize the instant at which his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his own warm blood. His carnivorous appetite just craves more—until the dawn finds him dead in the snow!”

“It is a fearful thing that people can be ‘consumed by their own lusts.’ Only God’s grace keeps us from the wolf’s fate.”—Chris T. Zwingelberg at www.bible.org.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story
Share the following in your own words:
King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, but he was also one of the weakest because of his inability to rule his own passions. He was a person with an outsized desire for opulence and grandeur, and this desire engulfed his life much as the taste of fresh blood leads to the wolf’s death. It didn’t have to be that way for Solomon, and it certainly does not have to be that way for us.

Out of the Story for Teachers
After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

• If you were to summarize the main thrust of this passage for a friend, what would you say?
• Place a checkmark by each turning point in the story.
• Underline each place in the passage where you see the grace of God.
• Circle the minor characters in the story and note the role that each plays in relationship to Solomon.
• What picture of God do we see from this passage? What one word would you use to describe God, as He is seen in this passage?
• What is different in this passage between God’s anger and that of humanity?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Daniel 4:28-32; Mark 10:17-31; Matthew 6:20; John 15:1-6.

Sharing Context and Background
Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. We can learn much from the gods whose worship Solomon introduced to Israel. One of the gods to which he built a temple was Chemosh, the war god of the Moabites. Wikipedia states that the name Chemosh means destroyer, subduer, or fish-god. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, Chemosh was an “ancient West Semitic deity, revered by the Moabites as their supreme god. Little is known about Chemosh; although King Solomon of Israel built a sanctuary to him east of Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:7), the shrine was later demolished by King Josiah (2 Kings 23:13).” The temple to Chemosh remained in place for more than 300 years before Josiah destroyed it.

2. Another god that Solomon introduced to the people is Ashtoreth, the moon goddess of the Phoenicians. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, the worship of this goddess did not just occur among the Hebrews. The Greeks called her Hera, the Romans referred to her as Juno, and the ancient Egyptians called her Isis. She was referred to as the Queen of Heaven by those who worshipped her.

3. By far the most detestable god worshipped in Israel during the reign of Solomon was Molech. Human sacrifices were offered to him, mainly firstborn children. The god possessed hollow metal arms that were outstretched. The arms were heated from the inside. Firstborn children were placed on the heated arms of this god and slowly burned to death. Molech was also worshipped in ancient Carthage, where at one time about 200 little boys were sacrificed in hopes of
saving that city from a siege. Young King Josiah destroyed this temple and its worship (see Smith’s Bible Dictionary, p. 205; Encyclopedia of Gods, p. 168).

4. The apostasy that Solomon’s reign ushered into the life of Israel can be summed up by 1 Kings 11:5, 6: “He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Amorites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done” (NIV). As is often the case, apostasy rarely gets better with time and indulgence, and that is as true today as it was during biblical times.

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.
Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask each group to come up with three ways that Solomon could have impacted Israel and the surrounding world had he not sinned.

Close by making the point that just as one person’s sin has the power to corrupt many, acts of righteousness also have the power to lead many to God. Jesus proved this truth.

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:
King Solomon’s life was the stuff of dreams. He had an adoring public, beautiful women constantly around him, the best clothing money could buy, important friends and well-wishers. He had it all. Yet none of it was enough to satisfy Solomon.

Foreign alliances led to national spiritual ruin, love...
of opulence left the citizens of Israel in financial ruin due to the heavy taxes he levied on them to support his lifestyle, and his indulgence of lust left him effeminate.

Perhaps it was an act of mercy that God pronounced judgment on Solomon while he had an opportunity to change his life. Had God not told him that the kingdom would be taken from him, Solomon might never have changed. So even in God’s justice there is love and mercy.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapters 3, 4.

*A special adaptation of Prophets and Kings has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
I. SYNOPSIS

This is the final installment in the story of Solomon. This king offers a colorful case study in the futile quest to fulfill deep human hungers with cotton candy—stuff, smarts, sex, and so on. In the end, however, Solomon learns that only God can fulfill the deepest desires of the soul.

Ellen White’s insightful commentary on this intriguing man offers a great foundation for potentially life-transforming discussions. First, this lesson opens up opportunities to talk about the benefits of confessing sin. Solomon’s repentance offers a compelling picture of God’s unrelenting grace. Nevertheless, “the harm that his example of evil-doing had wrought could not be undone” (Prophets and Kings, p. 84). The brutal consequences of Solomon’s poor choices speak to the importance of choosing wisely in youth. This lesson offers an ideal opportunity to talk frankly with the young people about their choices (premarital sex, drinking, pursuit of wealth, fame, etc.) and the expensive price tags that could saddle such choices. Ellen White adds: “Among the many lessons taught by Solomon’s life, none is more strongly emphasized than the power of influence for good or for ill” (Prophets and Kings, p. 85).

There are several other points you could emphasize in this lesson. For example, you could explore Solomon’s pride and cleanly connect his undoing with an arrogant spirit that sought meaning in every place other than the only true source of ultimate fulfillment—God.

Given our world’s obsession with success, you may wish to focus this lesson on Solomon’s pursuit of success through possessions, power, pleasure, etc. And yet in the end he exclaims, “Everything is meaningless, . . . completely meaningless!” (Ecclesiastes 1:2, NLT). What a great example Solomon gives us in meeting our deepest needs only in a relationship with God.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the benefits of finding our ultimate meaning in God alone. (Know)
- Sense the need to confess and repent. (Feel)
- Look to God for the answers to the deepest questions of the soul. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Success
- Pride
- Confession/repentance

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.
Invite the students to play a word association game. Invite them to shout out the first word that comes to mind when they hear the following words:

- Confession
- Repentance
- Humility
- Meaning in life
- The purpose of life
- Arrogance
- Success

Unpack the responses with the students. Talk about these things as they emerge from the life of Solomon. Clearly Solomon was glad to come to that place of confession and repentance later on in life; but how would his life have been different had he always remained humble and repentant before God? Are all of the words listed above connected in some way to Solomon’s story? If so, how?

Illustration
Read or share this illustration in your own words:

John Ortberg writes:

Some years ago we traded in my old Volkswagen Super Beetle for our first piece of new furniture: a mauve sofa. It was roughly the shade of Pepto-Bismol, but because it represented to us a substantial investment, we thought “mauve” sounded better.

The man at the furniture store warned us not to get it when he found out we had small children. “You don’t want a mauve sofa,” he advised. “Get something the color of dirt.” But we had the naive optimism of young parenthood. “We know how to handle our children,” we said. “Give us the mauve sofa.”

From that moment on, we all knew clearly the number one rule in the house: Don’t sit on the mauve sofa. . . . “On every other chair in the house you may freely sit, but upon this sofa, the mauve sofa, you may not sit, for in the day you sit thereupon, you shall surely die.”

Then came The Fall.

One day there appeared on the mauve sofa a stain. A red stain. A red jelly stain.

So my wife, who had chosen the mauve sofa and adored it, lined up our three children in front of it: Laura, age 4; Mallory, 2½; and Johnny, 6 months.

“Do you see that, children?” she asked. “That’s a stain. A red stain. A red jelly stain. The man at the sofa store says it is not coming out. Not forever. Do you know how long forever is, children? That’s how long we’re going to stand here until one of you tells me who put the stain in the mauve sofa.”

Mallory was the first to break. With trembling lips and tear-filled eyes, she said, “Laura did it.” Laura passionately denied it. Then there was silence, for the longest time. No one said a word. I knew the children wouldn’t, for they had never seen their mother so upset. I knew they wouldn’t, because they knew that if they did, they would spend eternity in the time-out chair.

I knew they wouldn’t, because I was the one who had put the red jelly stain on the mauve sofa, and I knew I wasn’t saying anything.¹

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Use the following questions to connect the introductory story with the lesson:

Can you relate to John’s reticence to confess? What are the common “stains” that young people today try to hide? Why is confession an important component of spiritual life? How do we imperil the quality of our relationship with God and others when we are dishonest about our sins?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- As Solomon reflected in his journal near the end of his life he clearly had a lot of regrets. Identify some of these regrets. What are some regrets that you hope to never have? How do you need to live each day to ensure that you will not have these regrets?
- What do you think Solomon meant when he wrote the following observations? How might heeding these observations help us to live wisely?
  - “Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones” (Ecclesiastes 10:6, NIV).
  - “One sinner destroys much good” (Ecclesiastes 9:18, NIV).
  - “Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind” (Ecclesiastes 4:6, NIV).
- Ecclesiastes 12:13 is a fitting summary of what the wisest man who has ever lived had to say at the end of his storied life. The sum total of all
his wisdom is captured in this verse. Find as many different translations of that verse as you can. Have each student read a different version of the text out loud until all the translations have been read. Next, have a volunteer read the following texts and then discuss how each text relates to Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Philippians 2:12, 13; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 1 John 3:16; Mark 12:28-31; 1 Peter 2:21

Sharing Context and Background

The following themes seem to emerge naturally from Solomon’s story. Depending on the theme(s) that you choose, share this broader biblical background in your own words.

1. Confession—If using this lesson to talk about confession, it’s important to share what confession is, and what it is not. Listen to James’s appeal for confession: “Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail” (James 4:8, 9, NIV).

Truth be told, there’s plenty to confess in all of us. James’s appeal to double-minded sinners to purify their hearts is a key to enjoying life with God. In so doing we come near to God and He comes near to us. We counter conflict and foster community. It works like aloe vera on a sunburned soul.

Confession is not burping our sins in public so everyone can wince. It is the purifying process through which God allows us to experience His grace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person.”

2. Success—The Bible is brimming with success stories of young people who modeled time-tested morals. For example, Isaac refused to rebel against his dad—even though it meant climbing onto an altar to be killed. Joseph refused to compromise his employer’s trust in him—even though his choice put him in the prison. David refused to take Goliath’s taunts—even though it meant facing a giant with only a slingshot. Throughout the Bible we find stories of young people who refused to compromise their principles—no matter the cost.

Invite the students to brainstorm about other Bible characters who illustrate what true success looks like.

3. Pride—Review the origin of sin. Consider Satan’s haughty claims: “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:13, 14, NIV).

A quick tour through Scripture reminds us that God has zero tolerance for pride. “The Lord preserves the faithful, but the proud He pays back in full” (Psalm 31:23, NIV). “Whoever has haughty
eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure” (Psalm 101:5, NIV). “The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished” (Proverbs 16:5, NIV). “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6, NIV).

Why is pride so disdainful to God? How can we nurture a humble spirit?

III. CLOSING

Activity
A fun way to wrap up the lesson is with this improvisational activity.
Role-play a scene from a pastor’s office where an actor playing a teenage Solomon comes and confesses his sins. Then have the actor come again as the old Solomon to confess sins that spanned a long life. Encourage the students to be as true to the biblical account of Solomon as they can. In other words, Solomon should confess sins that he really did struggle to overcome. Finally, have the student playing Solomon remain in character and share with the class what he learned in his life. Again, encourage the actor to be as factual as possible.

Summary
A well-worn children’s story makes a fitting conclusion to this lesson:

Once there was a spider that dropped a single strand down from the rafter of an old barn and began to weave his web. Day by day the spider stretched his web until it spanned an expansive fly zone. Daily the web snagged a buffet of bugs, making the spider the envy of all spiders.

One day the spider was cruising along his elaborately woven web and noticed the single strand disappearing into the rafters. Hmmm, the spider wondered, of what value is that strand? It’s not going to catch me my dinner. With that thought the spider climbed up . . . and severed the single strand. Of course, the entire web swallowed the spider as he floated to his demise. Like the spider, Solomon learned the hard way what happens when you sever the strand that connects you to God. In the end, he confesses that life has no meaning apart from God.

2 As quoted in Bible Illustrator by Parsons Technology.
3 Adapted from Max Lucado, Turn #1 Toward God’s Glory (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah Publishers, 2005).

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapter 5.

*A special adaptation of Prophets and Kings has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
idol threats

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

One of the most popular television shows in recent years is American Idol. It has garnered a cult-like following of millions of Americans who tune in to hear wannabe stars sing their way to success. Each week Americans vote for the singers they like best while others with the least number of votes get eliminated. The winners at the end of the season cruise into stardom with a practical guarantee of big contracts and instant fame. But what does that word “idol” mean? Is it some word that can be flippantly used on a TV show or does it carry a deeper, spiritual meaning?

The story of Rehoboam is a sobering reminder that idolatry—in any form—will not be tolerated by God. Simply put, an idol is anything that comes before God. Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21, NIV). In this statement Jesus identifies the heart of idol worship—people’s hearts belong to whatever they value most. This lesson challenges students to reflect on their priorities as they learn how God dealt with Rehoboam’s idolatrous ways.

There are many other teaching opportunities in this lesson. For example, the story has a lot to teach us on the topic of leadership. At times, Rehoboam modeled stellar leadership, but he always seemed to relapse into seasons of dreadful failure. Ellen White points out that his failure in leadership had devastating results for a whole nation.

Another area you could explore in this lesson has to do with communication. This story offers many examples (e.g., Rehoboam listening to his young counselors, the tragic stoning of Adoram, the message of Shemaiah, etc.) that provide insights into the value of honest communication.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- See that idolatry is rampant in our world today. (Know)
- Understand that putting anything above God will produce disastrous results. (Feel)
- Be challenged to sell out to God. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Idolatry
- Leadership
- Communication

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss why they ranked the items in the way they did.

Ask the students to consider the list again and reflect on each item, asking themselves if it is primarily a high value according to the kingdom of earth or the kingdom of heaven. Circle the items that are important.
in our worldly culture; underline the items that are highly prized in the kingdom of God.

An alternate activity would be to play a game of Pictionary using the following words:
- Report card
- Television
- Clothes
- Sports car
- iPod
- Friends
- Starbucks
- Video games
- a muscular body
- Celebrities
- Family

Keep a list of the words as they guess them. Next, explain that an idol is anything that we place above God. Then discuss how any of these things can become an idol. Have each student think of another modern-day “idol” not on the list and have them draw it for the whole group to guess.

**Illustration**

Share one or both of the following illustrations in your own words:

Pastor John Ortberg tells the delightful story of a CEO at a huge corporation who showed a spirit of self-sufficiency. One time, he was coming out of a service station only to notice his wife involved in an animated discussion with the attendant pumping their gas. Back on the road again, the CEO’s wife explained how she knew the attendant. “In fact,” she said, “we dated for a couple of years.”

After a long pause, the husband quipped, “I’ll bet I know what you’re thinking. I’ll bet you’re thinking that you’re pretty lucky that you married me, the CEO of a great corporation, and not a lowly gas station attendant.”

“No,” the wife replied, “actually I was thinking if I had married him and not you, he’d be the CEO of a great corporation, and you’d be pumping gas.”

Another fun story that reminds us of the foolishness of pride remembers Richard Daley, the eccentric mayor who served in Chicago for 21 years. He had the reputation of being a bulldog boss. Once a speech writer approached him and requested a raise. Daley’s response was, “I’m not going to give you any more money. You’re getting paid more than enough. It should be enough for you to work for a great American hero like myself.”

Two weeks later, Daley gave a speech to honor veterans on Veterans Day. Famous for not reading his speeches in advance, there he stood before a packed house of veterans and media personnel. He spoke eloquently of the forgotten soldiers. He shared how the world had discarded this important group of people. The audience sat spellbound.

“But I care. And today, I am proposing a 17-point program—national, state, and citywide—to take care of the veterans of this country.”

By this time all the people wanted to know what the mayor would say next. (Daley was pretty interested to find out himself!)

Turning the page, Daley read: “You’re on your own now, you great American hero.”

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

Share the following in your own words:

There’s a delusion inside of everyone of us: “I am great and I made myself who I am.” This is the “I” disease that ransacked Lucifer in heaven. This obsession with self explains how sin began. Listen to Satan’s haughty claims: “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:13, 14, NIV).

This is the same attitude we find in King Rehoboam. When responding to the pleading of his people to lessen the tax burdens that had been imposed by his father, King Solomon, Rehoboam foolishly replied, “My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions” (1 Kings 12:14, NIV). Because Rehoboam refused to worship the true God but chose instead to put his own interests above God’s, Rehoboam was humbled and the nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms.

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Before Rehoboam responded to the request of the Israelites for lower taxes, he sought counsel. The old men advised him to lead with kindness and lessen the burdens. The young men advised him to exercise supreme authority and raise taxes. Ellen White writes: “Flattered by the prospect of exercising supreme authority, Rehoboam determined to disregard the counsel of the older men of his realm, and to make the younger men his advisers” (Prophets and Kings,
pp. 89, 90). The result was devastating. Ten tribes of Israel rebelled, and Rehoboam reigned over only two tribes of Israel. What does this story teach us about peer pressure? How might the history of Israel have been radically different had Rehoboam followed the godly counsel of the older men?

- How might Rehoboam’s choices have been different had he followed the counsel of Exodus 20:3, 4 and Matthew 6:19-21? Which parts of these verses stand out to you the most and why?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Psalm 135:15-18; Colossians 3:5-11; 1 John 4:1-3.

Sharing Context and Background
Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. Herbert Lockyer offers this insightful commentary on Rehoboam’s story:
   What a different history of the Jews would have been written had Rehoboam not followed the advice of reckless counselors. When he went to Shechem to be formally crowned as king in succession to Solomon, the people were willing to accept Rehoboam on one condition, namely that he should lighten the burdens imposed upon them by Solomon. This reasonable request . . . should have been acceded to without any hesitation. . . . But Rehoboam lost a golden opportunity of healing the sores of fears and of preserving the unity of God’s ancient people. . . .

   At first pious (2 Chron. 12:1), Rehoboam fell into such iniquity that an Egyptian scourge came upon the king and the two tribes he ruled. Brief penitence stayed vengeance, but the rot had set in (2 Chron. 12:5, 8). So we leave Rehoboam, who went astray in a three-fold direction, ruining himself and the people he sought to govern. He lost the best part of his kingdom and reduced Israel as a whole to a subordinate rank among nations.*

   When facing important decisions, to whom do you go for advice? How do you decide when you get conflicting counsel? Had Rehoboam known the consequences of his decisions, how do you suppose his legacy would have been different?

2. When “Rehoboam went to Shechem” (2 Chronicles 10:1, NIV), this city, which was 30 miles north of Jerusalem, was a center for the northern tribes. As prophesied by Ahijah (1 Kings 11:31, 32), Jeroboam had already been anointed for kingship over the 10 tribes of

Teaching From . . .
Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
the north (1 Kings 11:26-40). Only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to the Davidic dynasty (2 Chronicles 11:3, 12; cf. 1 Chronicles 4:24-43). These two tribes were henceforth known as the nation of Judah.

3. According to the Life Application Bible, the key verse in Rehoboam’s story is 2 Chronicles 12:1, which says: “After Rehoboam’s position as king was established and he had become strong, he and all Israel with him abandoned the law of the Lord” (NIV). This triggered Shishak’s invasion (verse 2). This campaign of Shishak, energetic founder of the Twenty-second Dynasty of Egypt, has been confirmed by his list of conquered Palestinian cities, engraved on the walls of the temple of Amon at Karnak. This list shows that he plundered northern Israel (as far north as the Sea of Galilee) as well as Judah.

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask the students to write out a detailed schedule of a typical day. Have some of them share their schedules. Discuss what eats up most of their days. Then ask them to what activities they wish to give priority. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being most important) how would they prioritize the activities? Is there time for God in the schedule? If so, where? When? Gently remind them that any of these activities and priorities can become idols. Idols are, after all, anything that pulls our attention away from God.

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Rehoboam made some painfully stupid choices in his life. The consequences of his decisions tarnished his legacy and scarred the nation of Israel for all succeeding generations.

At the heart of Rehoboam’s problem was his sin of idolatry. Worshipping an idol is the last thing most people figure they would ever do. But idols come in a variety of forms. Sleeker, shinier, and more sophisticated idols have replaced the primitive statues; but the result is the same—a divided allegiance between the sacred and the secular.

This lesson offers an opportunity to have a frank discussion with the young people about how they can stay on the right track with God, despite all the idols that clamor for our attention. Take advantage of this chance to challenge them toward uncompromised devotion to God.


Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapter 6.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of Jeroboam is a classic case study of what happens when someone refuses to follow God’s leading. Through the prophet Ahijah, God called Jeroboam to be the king of the 10 tribes of Israel. Rather than trusting God, however, Jeroboam felt compelled to take matters into his own hands. As Ellen White puts it: “Jeroboam’s greatest fear was that at some future time the hearts of his subjects might be won over by the ruler occupying the throne of David. He reasoned that if the ten tribes should be permitted to visit often the ancient seat of the Jewish monarchy, where the services of the temple were still conducted as in the years of Solomon’s reign, many might feel inclined to renew their allegiance to the government centering at Jerusalem” (Prophets and Kings, p. 99).

This prompted Jeroboam to establish centers of idol worship in Bethel and Dan. This spiritually derailed Israel and led them down a path that resulted in great pain and destruction.

Such is the inevitable story of sin. Disobedience and compromise will always yield unwanted consequences. The Bible warns: “You may be sure that your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23, NIV). Sin would have few takers if the destructive consequences came immediately. Instead, as we see in the story of Jeroboam, sin woos and coddles us before it rapes us of joy and life.

Fortunately, no sin is beyond the boundary of God’s grace. While we cannot escape the unsavory consequences of sinful choices, we can rejoice in the infinite mercy of Jesus. Because of the cross, we can be absolutely secure in our salvation! “The Lord did not give Israel up without first doing all that could be done to lead them back to their allegiance to Him” (Prophets and Kings, p. 108). God is no more inclined to abandon His relentless pursuit of every person still today.

II. TARGET

The students will:
- Learn about the inevitable brokenness that comes from sin. (Know)
- Sense the unwillingness of God to give up on His children. (Feel)
- Receive the forgiveness for sin that comes from Calvary. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- God (loving, unfailing, personal)
- Responsibility
- Sin/evil/devil

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.
An alternative activity would be to bring a backpack filled with large rocks. Tape a sin on each rock such as cheating, murder, sleeping around, looking at pornography, etc. Ask for volunteers to carry the backpack around the room as they share adjectives that describe how they’re feeling about carrying it. Keep a master list of all these words. Then reveal the contents of the backpack by sharing each sin that is taped on the rocks. Discuss how these sins, if not confessed and repented of, cause an unnecessary burden and lead us to experience those things on the master list.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The 13-foot snake was the embodiment of evil. He had a scar over his left eye that prevented healthy shedding. Consequently, at least two times a year zookeepers would get the dreaded phone call from a manager in the reptile house, “The cobra shed his skin last week, but the eye cap didn’t come off.”

According to Gary Richmond, one of the zookeepers, the task of shedding the skin required a team of five people: two keepers, a curator, a vet, and Richmond—whose job was to furnish the scalpel and sponge to the vet. The cobra slithered toward the team, spread its cape, and lifted itself up to full stature. The curator grasped it behind the venom glands. “Let’s get this over with,” the vet said. On the Web site of The Community Church of Virginia Water the scene is described:

The curator asked if Richmond had any cuts on his hands, to which he replied, “No.” He told him to wad up paper towels and stuff them in the cobra’s mouth. “OK,” Richmond answered. The cobra bit and chewed until the towels were yellow and dripping with venom. “Every year several full-grown elephants die from king cobra bites,” the curator explained. A man could never survive a bite with a full load of venom. . . . The curator’s hands were sweating, his muscles were weakening, and his fingers were starting to cramp. . . . He wasn’t sure they could move quickly enough when it was time for the release.1

According to Richmond, the trickiest part of any snake-handling procedure is in the release. He explained that more people are bitten while trying to let go of snakes than when grabbing or handling them. For you see, when it comes to snakes, they are easy to grab but hard to let go of.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Sound familiar? Any snake in your life that was easy to grab but hard to let go of?

Let’s face it, snakes slither everywhere in our culture. Grab a beer here and a wine cooler there, and soon you’re caught in the poisonous jaws of a snake that is not so easy to lick. Or surf an adult Web site now and glance through a Playboy later and before you know it you can’t seem to let go. Cheat on the chemistry quiz today then fudge on your time card at work tomorrow and in short order you are entangled by a snake of compromise that will destroy your character. All of these habits are easy to form but difficult to break.

So spare yourself the brutal task of breaking potentially fatal habits by steering clear of the snakes. It’s just no fun to get bit. Jeroboam’s story reminds us of this spiritual truth.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

• Underline all of the mistakes that people made.
• Who are the main actors in the story? Who are some of the actors in the Bible story that are not included in the Into the Story section?
• What aspects of the story are new to you?
• What part of the story do you relate to the most? Why?
• What lessons can we learn from Jeroboam?
• Circle the words or phrases that capture the essence of the story.
• If Jeroboam were alive today and attended your school, what kind of person do you think he would be?
• What were the strengths of Jeroboam? What were his weaknesses?
• What does the story of Jeroboam teach us about making decisions?
• What picture of God emerges from this story?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Matthew 7:24-27; 1 Timothy 6:18, 19; Ephesians 4:17-32; Ezekiel 33:10, 11; and Galatians 5:16-21.
Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. Second Kings 17:22, 23 (NIV) gives this sobering picture of Jeroboam’s legacy: “The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them until the Lord removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria, and they are still there.” Herbert Lockyer, in his commentary All the Men of the Bible, points out that the next 18 kings who followed Jeroboam continued to worship the golden calves. Of 15 of them the Bible says that they departed not from the sins of Jeroboam. Indeed Jeroboam’s name lives on with an ugly blight against it, for it means “He made Israel to sin.” What does this teach us about the long-term impact of the choices we make?

2. First Kings 13:2 (NIV) records this prophecy: “He cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord: ‘O altar, altar! This is what the Lord says: “A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.”’” Three hundred years later this prophecy was fulfilled when Josiah killed the pagan priests on their own altars. Read about it in 2 Kings 23:1-20. How do biblical prophecies such as this one affirm your faith? How can we understand such prophecies in light of our free will?

3. Jeroboam selected the cities of Dan and Bethel to be the alternate places of worship rather than Jerusalem. In the south he selected Bethel because of its sanctity in the history of Israel (see Judges 20:26-28; 1 Samuel 7:16). In the northern part of Palestine he selected Dan, which did not have the same sacred character as Bethel but was still regarded by many Israelites as a holy place. The result of Jeroboam’s choice to establish holy cities besides Jerusalem proved to be disastrous.

The unnamed man of God from Judah in 1 Kings 13 trumpets a stern warning against Jeroboam for disobeying God. Ironically, the prophet had received orders from God not to eat or drink while on this mission (13:9). He died because he listened to a man who claimed to have a message from God, rather than listening to God Himself. Both the story of Jeroboam and the unnamed prophet underscore the point that we must trust in God’s Word explicitly; we dare not listen to our own premonitions or to the interpretations of others.

Challenge the students to live uncompromisingly

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

A nice way to tie up this lesson is to return to the backpack of rocks that you may have used as an introduction. Remind the students that when we ask God to forgive us of our sins, God dumps the rocks into the deepest part of the ocean. He buries them there and will never dredge them up again.

God is anxious to hear our confessions of sin. After all, God knows all of our faults better than we do. So close this lesson by encouraging the young people to ask God for forgiveness. God is faithful to always forgive and forget!

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The story of Jeroboam is a treasure that teaches us that great lives can be destroyed by small decisions. We are reminded in the story that God will not be mocked. When He says that He will allow no other gods besides Himself, God means business! To choose otherwise is to put your soul in great peril.

The story of the prophet from Judah underscores this important point that God is serious about our full devotion. To follow any voice other than God’s is to invite hardship and heartache. God has our best interests at heart and we can fully trust Him.

Sin destroys. Obedience to God results in life—true, abundant life! Invite your young people to experience this rich and rewarding life with God.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapter 7.

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RABBI 101

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Modes of Learning

“God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well” (Romans 12:6, NLT). Keep this text in mind when you're teaching the lesson. There are many ways to learn, and everyone learns in different ways. We each have some stronger and some weaker learning styles. The temptation of teachers is to assume students all learn best in the style in which they themselves do. These modes of learning or types of intelligence are not mutually exclusive, but keeping in mind certain categories can help you see ways that personalities differ. The following chart offers a brief overview of some of the styles to keep in mind when teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Style</th>
<th>Learns by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>Reciting, hearing, and reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical-mathematic</td>
<td>Patterns, numbers, right and wrong answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>Sounds, rhythms, singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual-spatial</td>
<td>Drawing, visualizing, designing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile-kinesthetic</td>
<td>Handling, touching, moving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

according to God’s Word. Discuss the story of the unnamed prophet. Does God seem to come down on him too harshly? Was God too lenient with Jeroboam when He quickly healed the king’s shriveled hand? How are we to understand God’s actions in this story?

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1 As quoted from www.christchurch-virginiawater.co.uk/sermons/matthew18pdl.htm.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Again and again in the Bible we find this description of an Israelite king: “He did evil in the eyes of the Lord” (1 Kings 22:52; 2 Kings 8:18; 15:18, etc., NIV). Therefore it’s refreshing to find that rare exception when a king such as Asa is remembered as one who “did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God” (2 Chronicles 14:2, NIV). In ancient Israel, full devotion to God was a rare virtue.

Full devotion is still a rare virtue today. In many respects ours is a culture of compromise. Nevertheless, Jesus still calls us to be sold out, signed up, and fully committed to building the kingdom of God on earth. Ellen White spoke of the need for fully devoted men (and no doubt, women are called to this high ideal as well) when she wrote: “The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall” (Education, p. 57).

In many respects Asa was a committed follower of God. He obeyed God during the first 10 years of his reign. He abolished much of the idolatry in Judah. He deposed Maacah, his idolatrous grandmother. And by fully relinquishing the battle to God, he scored a great victory in crushing Cush’s army. In comparison to the evil exploits of Ahab and Jezebel, Asa offers some redemptive qualities to focus on in this lesson.

Asa’s legacy, however, is not free from failure. He made alliances with foreign nations and evil people. Then he responded with rage when Hanani confronted him with his sin. In spite of such blunders, he is still remembered in a positive way. Second Chronicles 15:17 offers this summary: “Although he did not remove the high places from Israel, Asa’s heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life” (NIV).

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Learn about some of the lesser-known characters in Israel’s history. (Know)
• Discover the rich lessons to be learned from God’s people in the past. (Feel)
• Be challenged to fully commit to Jesus Christ. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Secularism/worldliness
• Violence
• Reverence

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. You can build on this exercise by doing the following activity.
Our battles with temptation work the same way. In our own strength, the flesh always wins. But when we live in the presence of our heavenly Father, we are then positioned to allow God to fight the battle for us.

Thomas Kelly put it this way: “Don’t grit your teeth and clench your fists and say, ‘I will! I will!’ Relax. Take hands off. Submit yourself to God. Learn to live in the passive voice . . . and let life be willed through you.”

King Asa discovered this spiritual principle when he won an epic battle against the formidable Cushites. Rather than fighting in his strength, however, he “called to the Lord his God and said, ‘Lord, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. O Lord, you are our God; do not let man prevail against you’” (2 Chronicles 14:11, NIV). In doing this, Asa discovered that “the battle is not yours, but God’s” (2 Chronicles 20:15, NIV).

Illustration

You may want to bring a birthday cake with the candles that relight and share this illustration in your own words:

Many people approach spiritual life like an assignment to keep blowing out birthday candles that are designed to reignite and keep burning. Some people think, if I can just blow out pride and gluttony and lust and so on, then maybe I’ll at least look like a Christian. That’s a sure recipe for failure. Soon you will feel defeated and exhausted.

So what’s the answer? The key is not to blow harder; rather, it is to remain in the presence of Jesus. For sin and Jesus cannot coexist in the same heart. Your battle is to always remain in the presence of God in order to let His life be willed through you.

It’s like the father who tells of watching his 3-year-old daughter fight the temptation of the cookie jar. The girl doesn’t notice that her father is watching from a distance. So she climbs a shelf in the pantry and stretches to snatch a snack. Now she knows the cookie jar is off-limits. Her spirit wants to resist temptation but her flesh craves a sugar hit. Just as she grabs a cookie, Dad clears his throat. Instantly she drops the cookie and scoots away.

Think about it: one moment the kid could not resist temptation but in an instant she models the resolution of a saint. What made the difference? Simple—it was the presence of her father.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:
—God will not only reinforce good, but confront evil.
—Full commitment to God will yield favorable results.
—How well a plan works is not necessarily an indication of God’s approval.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Joshua 24:15; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Timothy 1:8; Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-38; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 1:6, 7.

Sharing Context and Background
Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. During Asa’s reign in Judah, there was no real peace between Judah and Israel. Second Chronicles 14:1 does record that “Asa his son succeeded him as king, and in his days the country was at peace for ten years” (NIV). This decade of peace is not mentioned in 1 Kings 15:16. On the contrary, it says “there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns” (NIV). This does not mean that there was continual combat and fighting throughout Asa’s reign of 41 years (see 2 Chronicles 16:13 and 1 Kings 15:10); rather, there was continual tension between the 10 tribes of Israel in the north, and the two tribes in Asa’s kingdom in the south.
2. Who were the Cushites that God defeated through Asa? Cush (from the Hebrew word meaning “unknown”) was a son of Ham and the ancestor of five primary people groups: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca (Genesis 10:6-8; 1 Chronicles 1:8). The land of the Cushites was known to the ancients as Ethiopia and referred to the land south of Egypt. Later, it was called Nubia, now referred to as Sudan.

3. Chapters 14 and 15 of 2 Chronicles really need to be read together, as they show the two aspects of Asa’s reform in Judah. First, in chapter 14, we find the outward prosperity of Asa’s reforms. In chapter 15 we find the inward and religious account of Asa’s reforms.

“There was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa’s reign” (2 Chronicles 15:17-19, NIV).

4. Second Chronicles 15:16 records that Asa deposed his grandmother, the queen mother, “because she had made a repulsive Asherah pole” (NIV). Wikipedia.com offers this background on Asherah poles:
—An Asherah is a secret tree or pole . . . to honor the Ugaritic mother-goddess Asherah.
—Asherah poles are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible in the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, Judges, the Books of Kings, the second Book of Chronicles, and the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah. . . .

The Hebrew Bible suggests that the poles were made of wood. In the sixth chapter of the

Teaching From . . .
Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

• Other Eyes
Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

• Flashlight
Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

• Punch Lines
Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Book of Judges, God [told] Gideon to cut down an Asherah pole that was next to an altar to Baal. The wood was to be used for a burnt offering.

The Hebrew Bible states that God hated Asherah poles (Deuteronomy 16:21, NIV).

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapter 8.

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On a poster board, compile a list of what your students say are their priorities. Have them call out everything that comes to mind. They may suggest things such as school, money, friends, church, food, and so on. Write them down. Then discuss how faith fits in. If someone’s highest priority was to be a fully committed follower of Christ, how would the priorities listed on the board be affected? If a person’s desire was to leave Asa’s legacy (“Asa’s heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life” [2 Chronicles 15:17, NIV]), what would that life look like on a day-to-day basis in the world today? How would this desire impact a person’s priorities?

Faith is not about trying harder to be good; rather it is about living in the presence of Jesus. In this personal friendship with Jesus, full commitment to Him flourishes. Close with time for prayer, giving your group time with God in silent prayer.

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Asa was a man of God. One commentary describes him like this: “Asa’s heart was perfect with the Lord all his days. The first ten years of his life were occupied in abolishing idolatry and in religious reforms. Acknowledging God in all his ways, Asa was divinely directed.”

Asa was not perfect. But he called upon the Lord for help, and God raced to his rescue. Consequently, like David, Asa is remembered as a great king with a heart for God.

We, too, can do extraordinary things by God’s power. All it takes is a personal relationship with Jesus and the courage to trust in His providence.


Tips for Top-notch Teaching

History as Story
“Don’t know much about history,” the old song goes. Indeed, for some students history can be a sure cure for insomnia.

If you’re finding that your students’ eyes are glazing over as you slog through these lessons that cover the history of the ancient kings of Israel, don’t despair. Although history can be a difficult subject to teach, it helps if you present these lessons in the form of a story. For example, perhaps you (or a volunteer actor) can dress up as King Asa and come tell the story as a first-person narrative. Maybe you can invite a rabbi from the local Jewish synagogue to come and share the story of the Jewish people in story form. Another option is to find a movie that depicts life in ancient Israel during the time of these kings. The point is, students should be much more receptive to learning these lessons from history if they are shared as interesting stories, rather than historical facts to be memorized.

101

RABBI

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of Elijah’s ministry starts with his confrontation of King Ahab. Elijah suddenly appears in the Bible, makes a speech, and then disappears from sight, while Ahab is left to think on the rainless years ahead of him. Perhaps this startling beginning is what makes him one of the most well-known prophets in the Bible. Or perhaps it is the fact that he was taken up to heaven at the end of his ministry among the people of Israel without ever having to face death.

However, the story of Elijah is incredible, not just in that God provided for him in so many wonderful ways, but that Elijah obeyed God even when it might have cost him his life. At only one point in his life did Elijah give way to the fears inside and run away from the work that God had given him.

Elijah was a normal human being with the same nature that we have (see James 5:17), but he chose to go against the flow of the idol-worshipping people around him and stand up for what he believed in. He nearly got killed for it. Several times he was chased down and hunted, but each time God kept an eye out and took care of him. People often wonder why God chooses to protect some people and yet allows others to be harmed. In a way, this lesson brings up this discussion once again. It isn’t always this way. Sometimes the people who were working to spread God’s message were killed, as were the other prophets in the time of Elijah (see 1 Kings 19:10), but Elijah was protected.

II. TARGET

The students will:
- Understand that while bad things happen, God will never leave them. (Know)
- Experience the freedom that a life with full trust in God gives. (Feel)
- Recommit themselves to God’s safe care. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Courage
- Conviction
- Gift of Prophecy

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity
Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of the student lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:
During the terrible days of the Blitz, a father, holding his small son by the hand, ran from a building that had been struck by a bomb. In the front yard was a shell hole. Seeking shelter as quickly as possible, the father jumped into the hole and held up his arms for
his son to follow. Terrified, yet hearing his father’s voice telling him to jump, the boy replied, “I can’t see you!”

The father, looking up against the sky tinted red by the burning buildings, called to the silhouette of his son, “But I can see you. Jump!” The boy jumped, because he trusted his father. The Christian faith enables us to face life or meet death, not because we can see, but with the certainty that we are seen; not that we know all the answers, but that we are known.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

There are times in your life when you have a glitch that comes, you don’t know where to turn, and the only ways out don’t seem that easy. So it was with Elijah, over and over again, but he trusted in God to get him out of the situation, relying on His way out. Even when God tells us to “jump,” and it seems easier to do it our own way, His idea to step out in faith for Him is better in the end.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Ints of the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them:

- Have there been times in your life when you felt that God was really protecting you?
- What are some times when God helped you, but it wasn’t your idea of a way out? What did you do?
- If you feel comfortable enough, share with the rest of the class your own experience(s) of a time when God has really looked out for you.
- Why do you think Elijah was taken to heaven? Explain.
- Elijah is one of the most well-known prophets in the Bible. Throughout the ministry of John the Baptist and later in Jesus’ ministry as well, people questioned whether or not one of them was Elijah. Why do you think this is so?

With the students, explore the different times of Elijah’s life and ministry, discussing the possible differences in emotions in each situation. Think of the incredible awe and happiness he must have felt on Mount Carmel (read the story in 1 Kings 18), and the terror he felt when King Ahab pursued him. Make Elijah real to the students, highlighting his high and low moments, the moments that stay in people’s memories when they think of him. Then ask the students the following questions in your own words:

- What strikes you most about the story of Elijah? Is it his obedience? God’s watch care over him?
- How can you relate his story to your life now?
- Do miraculous things (e.g., the resurrection of the widow of Zarephath’s son [read 1 Kings 17:17-24], the ravens feeding Elijah, or the fire that came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice) happen nowadays? Or is it something that is just reserved to the Bible times?

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

- Elijah’s ministry is set in Israel during the Omride dynasty (ninth century B.C.), a period marked by relative peace and prosperity. Elijah is presented as the powerful champion of Yahweh against the royal house’s worship of Baal.
- The face of the historical Elijah himself, however, lies hidden behind a veil of miraculous moments. Even the prophet’s name (“Yahweh is my God”) has been seen by some as a name that is reflective of his zeal. He is regularly called “the Tishbite,” but the word is of uncertain meaning.
- Elijah displays many of the traits characteristic of prophetic figures throughout Israel’s history. He is a miracle worker whose word of power can produce weal or woe (1 Kings 17:1, 16; 2 Kings 1:10, 12; 2:8). He is a powerful intercessor for individuals or the whole people (1 Kings 17:20-22; 18:42-45). He confronts the king with condemnation for religious infidelity and for social injustice (1 Kings 17:1; 18:18; 21:20-22; 2 Kings 1:16).
- Allusions to the stories of the Exodus pervade 1 Kings 17-19 and establish a parallel between the ministries of Elijah and Moses. The geographical framework of the three chapters recalls Moses’ wanderings: each prophet begins his journey with a flight eastward to escape a king’s wrath; each finds safety with a family. Each returns to his country to face and
challenge the king, and to awaken faith among the Israelites. Each leaves the country again on a journey to Sinai/Horeb, where he experiences a meeting with God. Each then departs for Israel via Transjordan.

Elijah’s mysterious assumption to heaven in a whirlwind occurs once the Jordan has been crossed. In 1 Kings 19, Elijah had made an earlier, solitary pilgrimage to Horeb, whence he returned with new tasks including the commissioning of his successor. This time the journey is Elisha’s. He accompanies his master on the outward road to the place of power where Elijah is translated. This is the moment of supernatural encounter from which Elisha returns transformed and empowered.

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.
Divide the students into groups of two or four and ask them to discuss together the possible reasoning behind God’s choice to take Enoch and Elijah to heaven. Have each group pick a person to discuss and give them the following Bible verses for helpful tips on the matter. Then discuss with the whole class the ideas that the students came up with.

Enoch: (Genesis 5:18-24; Hebrews 11:5)
Elijah: (2 Kings 2)

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:
Just because God doesn’t necessarily provide for you in the same miraculous ways as He did for Elijah,
doesn’t mean that God isn’t with you. Turning your life over to Him means that He will never leave you; your life is in His hands. Bad things happen in life, sometimes things go wrong, but trusting in God will get you out on the right end.

In giving God his life, and in obeying Him even if the situation was dangerous, Elijah was entrusting himself to God’s care. He did doubt, at one point in his life, whether God was really going to protect him, even asking for God Himself to kill him. But God showed Elijah that even then, when Elijah’s faith failed him, He would not leave him.

Turning our lives over to God so that He may use us as tools to spread His message as Elijah did may be dangerous and frightening at times, but as long as we stay close to Him, we can know that He will never, ever leave us.

1 Fundamental Belief No. 18.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapters 9; 10 first part.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
After years of famine, during which Elijah was miraculously cared for by the Lord, the time had come for a showdown. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest. At stake was the worship and loyalty of the nation of Israel. Elijah risked everything on his faith that God would bring fire from heaven to honor his sacrifice—and that the false god Baal would do nothing.

Elijah’s courage in this story seems extreme to the point of foolishness—taunting the pagan prophets, soaking the Lord’s sacrifice with water to emphasize his total dependence on God. Such extreme faith seems far removed from the everyday reality of most youth, yet day-to-day faith experiences with God now will lay the foundation for the kind of courageous faith young people will need to take a stand for what’s right in more difficult situations.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Faith
• Courage

The students will:
• Understand that trusting God through hard times gave Elijah the strength to take a courageous step of faith. (Know)
• Believe that they can trust God to be there for them when they do what is right. (Feel)
• Commit to taking a stand for what they believe is right. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Peer pressure

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity
Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

In groups of two or three, ask students to share an example of a time they faced a situation such as that described in What Do You Think?—a situation in which someone they knew was doing something wrong. If they have trouble thinking of situations, refer them to Wednesday’s section of the student lesson for ideas and ask if any of them has ever been in a similar situation.

When the groups have had a chance to share, ask each group to select one scenario they discussed and role-play for the others how a Christian teenager might respond in that situation.

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:
In 1989 Chinese students staged a seven-week-long protest in Tiananmen Square that drew the world’s attention. As people around the world watched the story unfold on the news, one image, reprinted
What do his words convey?

- What do the prophets of Baal say? Why do you think the Bible writer doesn’t record any response from them to Elijah? Were they speechless? Why?
- What about the people of Israel? How did they respond to the fire from heaven? How do you think they would have responded if the prophets of Baal had somehow managed to make fire appear on their altar?
- Ask: How many jars of water had soaked the sacrifice by the time Elijah was finished? What was the point of doing this? Why does the Bible writer record that not only the sacrifice and the wood, but the altar stones and the water, were consumed? What point is this making about the God of heaven?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Ephesians 6:10-17; Romans 8:31-39; Hebrews 11:1-6, 32-40

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

- We all admire courage. We respect the person who takes a brave and difficult stand. But could we be that person? Most of us find it much easier to go along with the crowd than to take a difficult stand.

There are times in the Christian life when, in order to be true to God, we’ll have to say and do things that are unpopular. We’ll have to be willing to stand out, maybe even face hardship and persecution. The only way to get through that is by faith. The kind of faith that grows stronger as we build a loving, trusting relationship with God day by day.

That’s the kind of faith Elijah had. That’s the faith that gave him courage, that enabled him to stand alone on Mount Carmel facing all those prophets of Baal and say, “Come on! Let’s see whose God is the true God!”

Out of the Story for Teachers

Read the Into the Story section aloud with your students.

- Assign different students to read the words spoken by Elijah, the prophets of Baal, and the people. Read the narrative portions yourself. After reading through the passage in this way, ask: What does Elijah say to the prophets of Baal? Why do you think he speaks in this way?

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

- Faith like Elijah’s doesn’t happen overnight. Sometimes we imagine standing up for our faith in a difficult situation, or facing persecution at the end of time, and think, “I could never do that! I don’t have the courage!”

Christian writer Corrie Ten Boom had that same fear as a child. She told her father she feared she wouldn’t be brave enough to face persecution if that time ever came. Her father asked her, “When we go on a train trip, when do I give you your ticket? Three weeks before?”

“No, Papa,” she replied, “you give it to me right before we get on the train.”

“That’s how it is with God,” he told her. “He gives us courage to face trials when we need it, not before.”

As an older woman Corrie found herself hiding Jews in her home during the Holocaust, eventually ending up in a German concentration camp. The courage she thought she would never have was there when she needed it.

Corrie Ten Boom, and the prophet Elijah, and many other people of faith throughout history have learned that putting your faith in God day by day builds
the kind of trusting relationship that allows us to be courageous in the face of danger. Before he ever faced down the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Elijah lived through three years of famine, trusting God to provide his food every day. By the end of that time, he had practice trusting God. He knew God would come through.

Sure, you may not have to face a firing squad for your faith today. But maybe you can have the courage and faith to be friendly to an unpopular new student at school, or to walk away when someone tells a racist joke instead of laughing along with the crowd. As we exercise our faith in small things, God gives us greater faith and courage.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Think back to the situations we discussed at the beginning of this week’s lesson—times when others are doing wrong and we need to take a stand for what’s right. On a note card, write the following sentence, filling in the blanks:

“I promise that when others are ________________, with God’s help I will ________________.” Fold the card and keep it in your Bible as a private commitment between you and the Lord. Remember, He doesn’t expect you to do it in your own strength—He gives you the faith and courage to do the right thing even when it’s difficult.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Elijah’s confrontation on Mount Carmel was dramatic, exciting, larger-than-life. Yet we face the same challenge in many smaller ways. Will we stand up for what’s right when others are doing wrong? Can we trust God to take care of us even if we risk rejection, misunderstanding, and danger?

Taking a small stand for the right today may lead to bigger things tomorrow. Someday you may have the opportunity to stand on your own “Mount Carmel” and declare your faith in God to the whole world. But it begins today with simple trust and faith in God. Trust
Him to help you do the right thing, to make the right choices and live with the consequences. Place your life in His hands, and He’ll give you all the courage you’ll ever need.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapters 10 last part; 11.

*A special adaptation of Prophets and Kings has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

After Elijah’s stunning victory for the Lord on Mount Carmel, the wicked Queen Jezebel threatened his life. Facing down the prophets of Baal didn’t daunt Elijah, but running for his life seemed to plunge him into despair. Elijah, believing he was the only true worshipper of God left in Israel, became so discouraged he wished he could die. God sent an angel to minister to him, then spoke to Elijah with His own “still, small voice” to assure Elijah that he was not alone.

This story about Elijah emphasizes the fact that all God’s followers will face times of discouragement and despair as well as “mountaintop” experiences such as the triumph on Mount Carmel. God’s Word gives a great deal of helpful guidance to help believers get through the “down” times that are a part of the Christian experience. Young Christians need to know that times of discouragement are not proof that their faith is false or that they are “bad Christians,” but rather opportunities to grow spiritually.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that lows as well as highs are part of the Christian life. (Know)
- Believe that God still cares and is helping them even when they are feeling down. (Feel)
- Develop strategies to help strengthen their faith during times of discouragement. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Fatigue
- Depression
- Emotions

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Ask students about their strategies for dealing with discouragement. List positive suggestions on a flip chart or whiteboard at the front of the room, starting with the ones in the lesson and adding others the group suggests.

In another column list negative strategies people use to deal with bad feelings—such as drugs, alcohol, overeating, violence toward others, negative talk, self-harm, etc.

Ask: Have you used any of these strategies when you’ve been feeling bad? Did you think of them as “strategies” at the time?

Say: We react in lots of ways when we’re feeling bad, but we don’t always think about how we react. Which list of strategies is easier to do when we’re feeling bad (often, it will be the negative ones). Which list
do you think is actually more effective in helping you feel better?

**Illustration**

Share this illustration in your own words:

Do you like riding on roller coasters? Some people love the thrill, while others hate the terror and stay as far away from roller coasters as they can.

The climb up to the top of a roller coaster is nerve-wracking but exciting. The car teeters for a moment at the top, then begins the long plunge downward. That's when the screaming starts. Some riders might scream in excitement and others in fear, but very few people stay calm and quiet when a roller coaster is hurtling to the bottom of the ride.

Many people describe the ups and downs of emotions as a roller coaster ride. The highs and lows are steeper for some people than for others, but everyone experiences both—ups and downs. Unlike a roller coaster, few people scream with excitement as they begin the downward plunge into discouragement and despair. Yet that downward ride is one everyone has to take at some point. The question is: How will you handle it?

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

Share the following in your own words:

Everyone experiences down times and bad feelings—even Christians. Some people suggest that the Christian life is all happiness and sunshine without any problems, but all mature Christians know that's not true. Even a faithful prophet such as Elijah knew discouragement so seriously he even considered suicide! Discouragement is not the mark of an unsuccessful Christian—it's the mark of a growing one. As we grow in faith, we have to learn to trust God through the valleys as well as on the mountaintops.

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

Looking back at Elijah's experiences in this story and over the last few weeks, try drawing a “life map” of Elijah’s faith journey. Draw it on the whiteboard or flip chart in front of your room using students’ suggestions. The “map” can be a simple timeline of Elijah’s experiences, but instead of drawing a straight horizontal line, draw high points and low points along the line (like a roller coaster) to indicate the ups and downs in Elijah’s spiritual journey (see “Rabbi 101” below for more on creating life maps). Use pictures, symbols, or Bible references to indicate specific points in Elijah’s life.

Then invite students to draw their own life maps, indicating high and low points in their lives, especially as they relate to their spiritual experience. High points might include things such as giving their heart to Jesus, baptism, attending summer camp or a youth rally, sharing Jesus with a friend, having a prayer answered, while the low points will indicate experiences that led to doubt, discouragement, and sadness. Assure students they can keep their maps private. As they finish, use some of the Bible verses from the Punch Lines section of the student lesson to remind them that God is with them in every stage of their life journey—in the low points as well as the high points.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 43:1, 2; John 16:33.

**Sharing Context and Background**

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

This lesson focuses on the ups and downs that are a natural part of the Christian experience. Young people need to learn that faith is not based on feelings; holding on to their faith even when they feel sad and discouraged is an important part of growing in Jesus.

In discussing this topic, it's important not to ignore the very real subtopic of clinical depression. Sad feelings and discouragement are part of everyone’s life, but in some people these can become extreme, leading to a serious depression. Many teenagers suffer from depression, which may be triggered by life events such as loss of a loved one, violence or abuse, family breakup, etc. Depression can also occur even when there’s no apparent life cause, probably as a result of a chemical imbalance in the brain.

This week’s lesson suggests a number of strategies that are useful for dealing with spiritual lows and discouragement: prayer, faith, relying on God’s promises, exercise, keeping a positive attitude, serving oth-
ers, etc. While these strategies may also be useful to a person suffering from serious depression, they are usually not enough. Professional help in the form of counseling or therapy, and in some cases medication, may be part of God’s plan for helping young people with depression. Just telling someone who is clinically depressed to “cheer up and trust God!” is not helpful.

To help make this distinction clear in the minds of your students, it might be helpful to review some of the warning signs that distinguish depression from a bad mood or “down” feelings. Young people who experience several of these signs for more than two weeks at a time should seek help for depression:

- Feeling sad or discouraged most of the time, especially for “no reason”
- Lack of energy or feeling tired all the time
- Inability to enjoy activities they usually enjoy
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Irritability and anxiety
- Inability to concentrate
- Significant weight gain or loss
- Change in sleep patterns
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Aches and pains with no physical cause
- Pessimism; indifference toward the future
- Thoughts of death or suicide

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Pass out index cards and pencils. Say: “When Elijah was most discouraged, God spoke to him with a ‘still, small voice’ or a ‘gentle voice.’ As you think about the things we’ve discussed and the Bible texts

Teaching From . . .
Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- Other Eyes
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- Flashlight
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- Punch Lines
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Drawing a Life Map

Drawing a life map is a good way to explore the life of a historical or biblical character; it’s also a good way for students to reflect on their own spiritual journey. It’s similar to drawing a time line of events, but instead of a straight line moving forward through time, you can use a life map to illustrate ups and downs, twists and turning points. Visual symbols can be used to illustrate important events. For tips and examples, check out the links below or Google the phrase “life map.”

The following site has good tips, though no visual images. It suggests using only pictures, never words, on a life map, but this is just a guideline and need not be followed rigidly; adapt the idea to your own needs: www.education-world.com/a_tsl/archives/05-1/lesson023.shtml.

This one contains links to some sample life maps to give you an idea of how it looks: www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=74.
we’ve read today, imagine what God’s gentle voice might be saying to you right now. It could be a Bible verse or just a sentence of encouragement. Write down what you believe God’s message to you is when you are discouraged and need help. Keep it in your Bible to read when you need it most.”

**Summary**

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Elijah was on the mountaintop when God sent fire down from heaven. He was uplifted and filled with the Holy Spirit, just like a Christian who has recently been baptized or given their heart to Jesus. But soon Elijah had to face fear and danger, and he experienced such a severe discouragement that he wanted to die.

Maybe you’ve felt like that at times. Maybe you’ve been down, discouraged, or even depressed. Ups and downs are part of every life, even the Christian life. Especially the Christian life. God wants our faith to grow as we learn to trust Him through bad times as well as good. We can trust God to send “fire from heaven” when we need it on the mountaintop. We can also trust Him to speak to us with the “still small voice” of hope and faith when we need encouragement. When you are down, trust God to lift you up.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapters 12, 13.

*A special adaptation of Prophets and Kings has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.*
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
Elijah’s life often seems like a roller-coaster ride through supernatural victory to human despair. As a prophet acting as the mouthpiece for heaven, Elijah had moments of unmistakable fame and power mixed with seasons of loneliness and uncertainty. This week’s lesson is about how Elijah negotiated through the emotional ups and downs and came to understand the value of remaining loyal to God’s cause and faithful to His Word. Through Elijah’s faithfulness it appeared to him that he was alone in his allegiance to God. This theme is repeated throughout the story and continues to recur in the lives of young people today. Taking a stand for Christ is often a challenge to live so differently from their peers that they distinctly stand out. But as difficult as it is to make that choice, it is equally daunting to remain confident in their relationship with God when they feel isolated and alone. Elijah’s story portrays how God attends to us during times of depression and ultimately finds a way to speak hope and clarity into our lives.

There are many angles from which this lesson can be helpful to youth. One approach is to invite the students to describe the ways that they identify with Elijah’s journey, as well as ways they do not. Many have yet to experience a moment such as Mount Carmel but have experienced the insight that came to Elijah in the cave. Another track that might be helpful is to discuss the way God always has people who are allied with His kingdom and live as lights to a dark world. Another approach to this lesson is to focus on the way Elijah’s story warns us about counting or trying to determine who is faithful to God by outward appearances. Given that we see so little of what is really happening in the hearts of people, we might be surprised at how many people are faithful to God.

II. TARGET
The students will:
- Discover how to negotiate through despair and uncertainty by faithfulness to God’s will. (Know)
- Embrace the truth that even though they might feel lonely at times, those who are faithful are not alone. (Feel)
- Decide to listen for God’s voice in His Word when they feel alone or discouraged. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
- The Remnant*
- Depression
- Emotions
You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED
Activity
Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.
Have each student give a defense, from the Bible
if possible, for the position they chose on each of the issues.

**Illustration**

Share this illustration in your own words:

Some people have a hard time understanding how it could be that the majority could be misled. Surely, when you put more heads together the outcome should be greater clarity. Right?

An interesting thing happened several years ago at a college sporting event. During the NCAA Cross Country Championship Race the runners came across a dilemma. At one point they had to make a choice about which direction to run. They came to a stage in the race where the way was not marked well and they had to choose to continue down one street or take another way. Both directions looked reasonable.

The crowded pack of runners followed those who were running out in front. The front-runners made their choice and everyone followed them, all except Mike Delcavo and a handful of others. Mike knew the other runners had taken the wrong road and urged the rest to follow him. Many of them laughed and scorned, but a few followed him. Mike finished the race with the four others. Out of 128 runners 123 of them took the wrong way (from Defining Moments, by Daniel Schaeffer).

What life lessons do you see in this story?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

**Bridge to the Story**

Share the following in your own words:

It is true that at times in our lives loneliness will feel like emptiness and standing firm and faithful to God will seem inconceivable, even absurd. But as Mike Delcavo and his running mates discovered, the majority is not always right and what most people think is not always the most informed opinion. Elijah’s life as a servant of God is marked by moments of tension between amazing acts of faith and seasons of distress and even despair. Take a look at a moment in his journey and see if you can relate!

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them:

- Read the story and note what insights are new to you.
- As you read through the story, what words, phrases, or themes are repeated?
- Underline what you think are the pivotal parts of this story.
- What do you think is the message God is trying to convey through this story?
- What emotions do you see displayed in Elijah’s experience?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a lesson to learn?
- Is there an action to take?
- Is there a decision to make?
- What are similarities between Elijah’s experience and our lives today?
- Some have suggested that the people who hear God’s voice often appear peculiar to the world they live in. What are some other biblical characters who were clearly listening to a different voice from the one the world was listening to? (Examples: Noah, Moses, Esther, David—taking on a giant, Daniel and his three friends, etc.)

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Matthew 7:13, 14; Jeremiah 23:3; Daniel 1; 3; and 6.

**Sharing Context and Background**

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

When we read this story it is difficult to recapture the intensity and the danger that surrounded Elijah. He was a wanted man, and the courage and faith so brilliantly displayed on Mount Carmel stands in stark contrast to the cowardly response to Jezebel’s threat. Clearly, prophets—mighty though they may be—are human. Consider a few touch points that might benefit your study:

What does Israel’s “no answer” to Elijah’s appeal mean? (1 Kings 18:21)

The word “halt” or “waver” actually means “to limp” or “hobble” as though you had a broken leg. One leg of their faith was healthy (they worshiped the God Jehovah), but the other leg was broken (they also worshiped Baal). This is what led to the showdown at Mount Carmel—it is one or the other—not both! God is clear: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3, NIV). Is it possible that one of the reasons we feel like our walk with God limps is because
we are trying to be loyal to more than just Him?

Why did Elijah feel alone? (1 Kings 18:22; 19:10, 14)

After a do-or-die, stand-or-fall, appeal to Israel to choose God or Baal, their answer is: no answer, which in fact is an answer of sorts. What other moments in the Bible can you think of in which one or a few might have felt alone in their faithfulness to God? We often think Elijah’s mantra, “I am the only one,” is a petulant whine. But leadership is often a lonely experience, initially. When a volunteer is needed, it is common for people to look around the room and see if anyone is responding. You might ask the class if they have ever had to stand up first and alone. Did others follow?

How is it possible that people who experience such sensational events of God’s power (fire from heaven—fed by birds) can slip so quickly into doubt and depression?

Contrast the silence of Baal on Mount Carmel with the silence of God in the cave. It is because God spoke so mightily that Elijah did not expect events to turn the way they did. This is what confused Elijah. So what do we do when God’s voice is not so profound? It is notable that God’s voice, though not explosive, is audible and real, unlike the silence of Baal on Mount Carmel. Or perhaps another question to ask is: “What do we do when God speaks unmistakably on one day and seems nonexistent the next?”

Finally, draw the students’ attention to this week’s Flashlight quote: “Among earth’s inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. . . . Then let no man attempt to number Israel today, but let everyone have a heart of flesh, a heart of tender sympathy, a heart that, like the heart of Christ, reaches out for the salvation of a lost world” (Prophets and Kings, pp. 188, 189).

How does this quote affect our approach to the

**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.

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**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Metaphors**

If I were to say, “Be careful about working with Bob! He is a snake,” what images of Bob would you see? What qualities of a snake immediately come to mind? Sneaky. Subtle. Dangerous. Deceptive. Some might say “slimy,” but snakes are actually dry and scaly. Nevertheless, how powerful are metaphors to capture an idea? A metaphor is the use of a word or phrase to describe somebody or something that is not meant literally, but makes a vivid, pictorial, or experiential comparison. Try it with this week’s lesson: “If you had to describe Elijah’s experience with a type of weather, a car, or plant/tree of any sort, which would capture Elijah’s story? Why?”
people we see that may or may not seem faithful to God?

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Have students, in groups of two or three, look up John 10:14-16 and Matthew 7:13, 14 and read them out loud. Ask them to discuss and prepare to report their response to the following questions: Do these two verses contradict each other? How would you reconcile the two ideas Jesus shares here with His disciples?

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:14-16, NIV).

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matthew 7:13, 14, NIV).

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

It is hard to imagine Elijah’s journey mirroring ours. It is possible that we may never experience Mount Carmel or the feeling of being completely alone. But if there is anything to take from Elijah’s roller-coaster ride of life it is that God calls us to listen for His voice, in the fire and in the silence. Also, as we seek and serve God we can be certain that we are not the only one, no matter what we face. Somewhere around the world, maybe even as close as the person sitting next to us or as far away as the young people sitting on the opposite side of the globe, someone is struggling with God in a similar way. Sometimes it seems unbearable to be the first person to stand up for what is right, volunteer to help, or be counted among God’s people. But we need Elijahs today who will be the first to take a stand. It may seem lonely at first, but the promise is sure that soon it will be clear that we are not alone, and furthermore, that we are not crazy for choosing to be on God’s side.

* Fundamental Belief No. 13

cornerstoneconnections

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapter 14.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This lesson focuses on the story of Jehoshaphat's reign, a king who sought to do what was right in God's eyes. During Jehoshaphat's 25-year reign he continued to lead God's people faithfully in the way his father, Asa, led. Jehoshaphat took over the throne during a time of war so his reformation began with reforming the military and fortifying the borders. He also started a religious reformation and stood firm against the idolatry that seemed to hamstring God's people in every generation. Jehoshaphat started a traveling school headed up by 16 well-trained teachers who taught the law of God from place to place (2 Chronicles 17:7-9). The result of his leadership was internal peace and security (2 Chronicles 17:12; 20:30).

If Jehoshaphat had a weakness, it was connected to his struggle for diplomacy. He made a habit of forming alliances with people less devoted to God than he was. First, with Ahab, then with Ahab's son, Ahaziah, and finally with Ahab's other son Jehoram. In his zeal to do the right thing he sometimes misjudged the evil intents of others, and God firmly corrected this tendency over the years (1 Kings 22:44; 2 Chronicles 18:1). Most of what people remember about the kings of Israel are often summed up in a sentence. The Life Sentence that captures Jehoshaphat's time on earth states: “In everything he walked in the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” (1 Kings 22:43, NIV). History categorizes the kings of Israel into two groups, good and bad. Invite the students to consider what their life sentence will be as they study the story of a great king of Israel.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Survey the key stories of a great king's life. (Know)
- Wrestle with the tension between strengths and weaknesses, success and failure. (Feel)
- Choose to live an uncompromising life. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Spiritual disciplines
- Temptation (dealing with)
- Learning from failure/mistakes

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Invite the students to share and explain their first choice and the item they chose last in the ranking exercise. Ask what elements they would add to this list to make it more comprehensive.
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:
Timothy is a successful businessman who always leaves the table a little bit hungry. He can afford to eat to the full, but an unexpected epiphany made such an impact on him that he was never the same. Walking home late in the evening from work, he happened upon a man sitting on his sidewalk rummaging through a pile of garbage. The beggar scraped off maggots from rotten pieces of food and shoved the pieces of garbage in his mouth with dirty hands. Timothy, shocked by the desperation of that man, vowed never to take food for granted. Timothy is not perfect, but he started a soup kitchen in his community and volunteers regularly to inspire others to contribute. Some people are driven by personal experiences that deeply affect them. Examine any great leader for the events and stories that make them so passionate. They are often stories that clearly mark what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad.

Consider one moment in Jehoshaphat's experience that made an indelible impact on him as a leader. When his enemy in battle, the king of Moab, saw that he was losing the battle, he took his firstborn son, who would have become the next king, to the top of the city wall and offered him as a sacrifice as a last ditch attempt for victory (2 Kings 3:26, 27, NIV). Witnessing such an act must have made an everlasting impression on Jehoshaphat's mind. Such immorality, he decided, could be met only with passionate, deliberate obedience to God's word.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:
Do you ever wonder what is at the heart of great heroes of faith? What makes them brave? Passionate? Wise? Committed? Some of the good things Jehoshaphat did may have come from a keen experience of right, but perhaps many of his decisions were the result of knowing what was wrong. As you survey the life of Jehoshaphat, you may notice a moment of weakness or a chink in the armor of his character. But the overwhelming impact of his leadership was good, right, and true. Check out this story, but also scan through the various events of his reign and note the depth of his devotion to God.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- What do you think is the key verse in this week's story?
- What are the leadership qualities you see in Jehoshaphat that are most noble?
- What might be one of Jehoshaphat's weaknesses as a leader?
- How do you think his name, the Lord judges, fits Jehoshaphat as a king?
- Jehoshaphat faced an army that far outnumbered him, but he trusted the Lord. What stance does God want us to take when we face challenges beyond our ability?

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.
1. Jehoshaphat made his share of mistakes, but the overriding theme of his life is summed up as being devoted to God and His commands. His story includes at least four full chapters in 2 Chronicles, so covering his life might be time-consuming.

   One way to maximize time and get the entire class involved would be to use a teaching strategy known as “jigsaw.” Divide your students into groups and give one or more of the “snapshots” below to each group. Have each group read and then discuss together what they learn from their passage or passages. Then let each group report to everyone, or form other groups made up of at least one person from each of the original groups. Each person can explain to their new group what they learned from their passage or passages.

   Then, let each group report to everyone, or form other groups made up of at least one person from each of the original groups. Each person can explain to their new group what they learned in their original group. This way, everyone will get to “see” all the “snapshots” as well as to participate.

2 Chronicles 17:1-6 General summary
2 Chronicles 17:7-10 Teachers are sent out to instruct the people about God
2 Chronicles 17:11-19 Wealth and security
2 Chronicles 18:1-34 Debacle with Ahab against Ramoth Gilead
2 Chronicles 19:1-2 J ehu’s rebuke and affirmation
2 Chronicles 19:4-11 Judges organized for civil order
2 Chronicles 20:16-29 Battle victory won through singing

2. This week’s story highlights Jehoshaphat’s leadership and his unwavering dependence on God. Notice the first step the faithful king takes is: “Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 20:3, NIV). What does the word “resolve” mean? To set your mind with unshakable focus. Another aspect of Jehoshaphat’s leadership is the way the people rallied around his example. Some have said, “If you want to know if you are a leader, see if anyone is following.” The Bible says: “Judah came together to seek help from the Lord; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him” (2 Chronicles 20:4, NIV).

Jehoshaphat is also a great leader because of his humility. The king admits to God, “We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you” (2 Chronicles 20:12, NIV). And finally, Jehoshaphat acts on his convictions and “appointed men to sing to the Lord” (2 Chronicles 20:21, NIV). This is just another war God wins by singing! As a result, the enemies, in their confusion, “destroy one another” (2 Chronicles 20:23, NIV). The victory is one of many moments in Scripture where God intervenes when human efforts could not prevail, and God’s involvement and glory are unmistakable.

3. Unfortunately, the faithful heritage of Asa and Jehoshaphat was only a brief season of brightness for God’s people. Jehoram chose not to follow the same path as his father and grandfather (2 Chronicles 21:12, 13).

III. CLOSING

Activity
Invite each student to respond to the following question:
If you were to become a leader of a country and...
you had to enforce five main rules, what would those rules say? Debrief by allowing the students to share their list of five rules. Jehoshaphat’s life had many ups and downs, but ultimately, the faithful king lived by a few basic principles/rules that he never compromised. What were they?

**Summary**

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Everyone has the chance to live in such a way that they can one day earn a positive “life sentence.” What is so impressive about Jehoshaphat is the way he remained devoted to God, even when his failures and mistakes were evident to all. And when things were going well, he continued to innovate and create new efforts to better life for Israel. His humility and courage form a brief statement of truth: “In everything he walked in the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” (1 Kings 22:43, NIV). So, what are the nonnegotiable principles by which you will choose to live your life? About which values will you say today, “I will not compromise”? Take a moment to reflect and pray about your devotion to God.

Remind the students about the reading plan, which will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Prophets and Kings, chapter 15.

*A special adaptation of Prophets and Kings has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.*