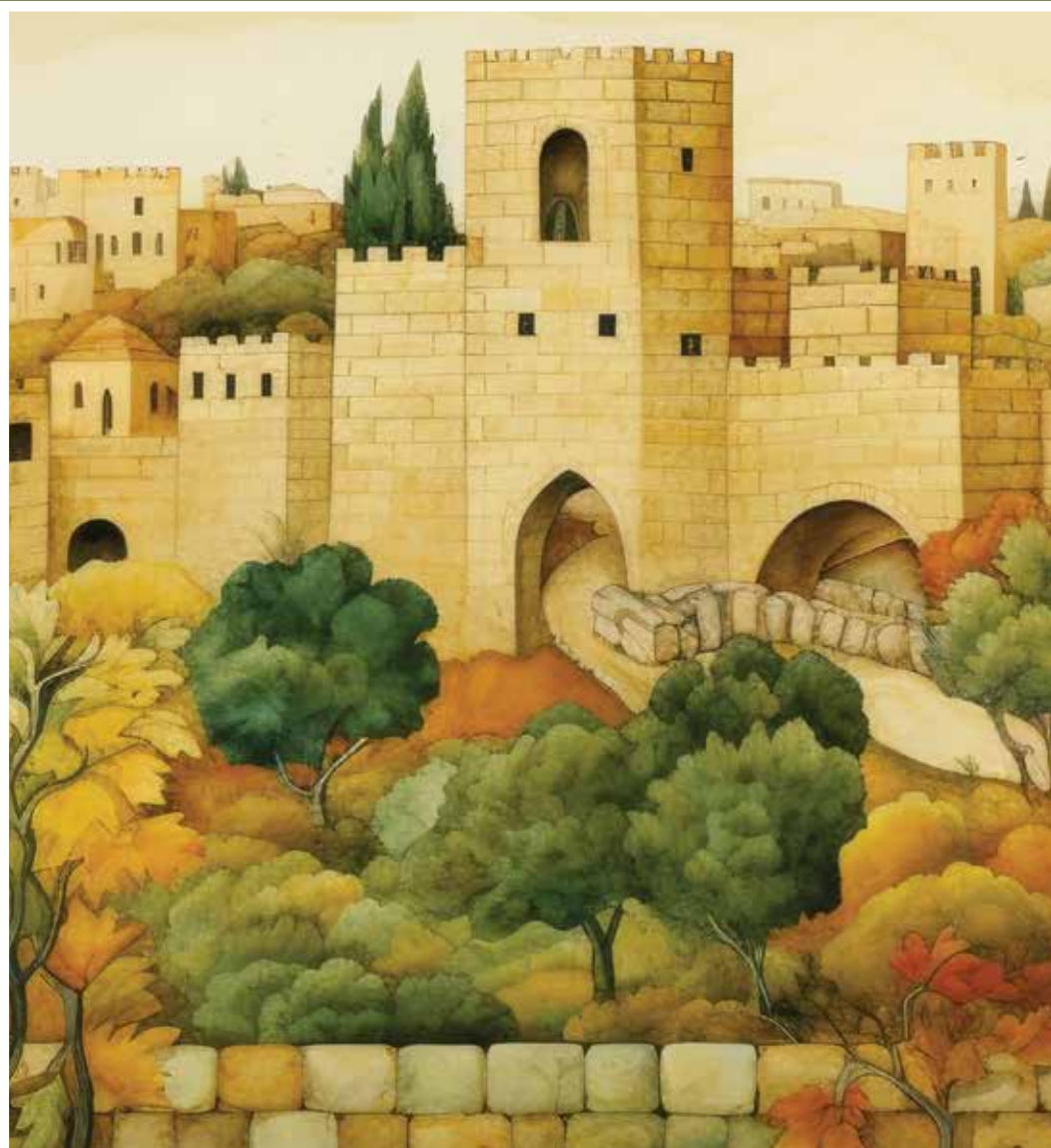


FALL 2025

# Access<sup>®</sup> LEADER GUIDE

FOR ADULTS WITH  
SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS



Stories About the Fall of Jerusalem

# Access LEADER GUIDE

*A guide for teaching Bible stories  
to adults and older youth who have special learning needs*

*Summer 2025  
Volume 19, Number 4*

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## Sharing Your Faith

Your ultimate purpose as a Bible study leader is to share your faith with the men and women who attend your class—to help them understand how they can live for Jesus every day. Use the ABCs to help your learners understand God's plan of salvation.

### A—ADMIT

Admit to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sin. Read Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Acts 3:19.

### B—BELIEVE

By faith receive Jesus Christ as God's Son and accept Jesus's gift of forgiveness from sin. Read John 3:16; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:11-13.

### C—CONFESS

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Read 1 John 1:9; Romans 10:9-10,13.

If you are choosing right now to believe Jesus died for your sins and to receive new life through Him, pray to God, calling upon Him alone to be your Savior and Lord.

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, share your decision with another person and, following Christ's example, ask for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:6).

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## *Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail*

**T**he ultimate goal of your ministry is sharing the message of Christ in understandable ways and bringing families into the church where they can be nurtured and cared for. Strategic planning is a vehicle to accomplish the ultimate goal of loving God's people. Before you lead a strategic planning meeting, give all planning team members an assignment: Visit

a special needs class member. These visits should put your planning sessions in perspective and help everyone focus on ways to accomplish your ultimate goal.

Then schedule two separate meeting times to allow team members plenty of time for discussion. Overburdened agendas only produce frustration and incomplete planning.



**STEP 1: CELEBRATE.** Begin your strategic planning sessions with a celebration of ministry. Highlight your department's successes. Talk about learners and families whose lives have changed because your leadership team showed them God's love in action. Share ways your lives have changed because of your learners.

**STEP 2: REVIEW.** Strategic planning allows you to take a realistic picture of the past in order to paint a better picture for the future. Review the classroom, number of leaders, and activities of the past year. If many activities were cancelled, set realistic expectations for the number of activities for the coming year. If the classroom was constantly in need of leaders, discuss ways to enlist additional helpers or volunteers. If some leaders feel overburdened and need a break from the ministry, discuss new, creative support positions that keep them connected with the ministry without weekly responsibilities.

**STEP 3: LOOK.** Many special education classes began in whatever space was available. Hold your planning meetings in the special education classroom and think about every learner who attends each Sunday. Is the classroom still functional and able to meet the needs of the learners? Do you have unused equipment, stacks of chairs, or other unnecessary items that should be removed from the room? While the planning team may not have the responsibility or authority to relocate these items, you can identify any room concerns. Strategic planning embraces the changing needs of learners and classroom needs.

**STEP 4: PLAN TO PLAN.** Do you really have to plan a meeting to plan? Yes! Some departments may

decide that quarterly meetings are adequate to meet the challenges of their ministry. Others may choose to meet more often. The most important thing is to evaluate each year the number of meetings needed to do effective ministry.

Caution! If your team bases their decision to meet solely on their busy lives, go back to Step 1 and try the process again. We have only a few hours each week to share Christ's love with our students. Strategic planning is not a "necessary evil"—it is a celebration of ministry.

**STEP 5: COMMUNICATE.** Plan times to communicate regularly with the Sunday School director. Particularly share dates you need to reserve on the church calendar and budget needs. Discuss possible conflicts between class events and major church events. Communicating with the Sunday School director will create more awareness about your ministry and prevent the possibility of your class being "left out."

**STEP 6: INCLUDE.** Discuss ways to create an inclusive environment and attitude within your church. Remember, newly elected directors from other departments may not fully understand the special education department. Plan ways to educate them on ministry to people with special needs. Discuss ideas for involving other classes with your learners.

**STEP 7: PROMOTE.** Because church membership will change over the course of a year, develop a strategic plan to keep new members and visitors aware of your department throughout the upcoming year. Bulletin inserts, special Sundays, newsletter articles, as well as newspaper advertisements will spread the news of your class to everyone in the community.

Also plan ways to communicate activities and events to the leaders and students within the special education department.

Strategic planning is an effective tool for focusing your energy and discussions about the needs of your department. Strategic planning assists you to accomplish the ultimate goal of loving all of God's people.

# Access Study Plan

## YEAR 1

## YEAR 2

*Access* follows a five-year study plan for adults and older youth who have special learning needs that utilizes a storytelling approach to studying the Bible. Each quarter, learners will examine the stories of Bible events or Bible people from the beginning to the end of the story.

The stories of the Old Testament are presented in chronological order so learners can better understand how the story of Israel unfolded. This will allow adults who have intellectual disabilities to gain some sense of Bible history and recognition of Bible book order. It also will help them know why it was necessary for God to send Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

Stories from Acts are told in sequence so learners can see how the first believers obeyed Jesus's command to share the gospel message first in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria, and then throughout the earth.

Each year from the Christmas season through the Easter season, learners will study Jesus's life. Years 1–4 focus on one Gospel at a time, highlighting stories unique to each Gospel account. Year 5 overviews stories about Jesus's life and ministry that the Gospels share in common.

Here's a quick glance at what you'll study each quarter.

### FALL 2022

**Stories About  
How the World Began**  
*6 stories from Genesis 1–11*

**Stories About Abraham**  
*7 stories from  
Genesis 11–22*

### WINTER 2022-23

**Stories About Jesus's Birth**  
*5 stories from Isaiah 9, Luke 1,  
and Matthew 1–2*

**Matthew's Stories  
About Jesus's Ministry**  
*8 stories from Matthew 3–16*

**SPRING 2023**  
**Matthew's Stories  
About Jesus's Ministry**  
*7 stories from  
Matthew 17–28*

**Stories About  
Isaac and Jacob**  
*6 stories from  
Genesis 24–33*

**SUMMER 2023**  
**Stories About Life in Egypt**  
*13 stories from  
Genesis 37—Exodus 13*

### FALL 2023

**Stories from  
the Wilderness**  
*13 stories from Exodus 13–40;  
Numbers; and Deuteronomy*

**Winter 2023-24**  
**Stories About Jesus's Birth**  
*4 stories from Jeremiah,  
Micah, and Luke 1–2*

**Mark's Stories About  
Jesus's Ministry**  
*9 stories from Mark 1–10*

**SPRING 2024**  
**Mark's Stories About  
Jesus's Ministry**  
*6 stories from Mark 10–16*

**Stories About Settling the  
Promised Land**  
*7 stories from Joshua and Ruth*

**SUMMER 2024**  
**Stories About the Judges**  
*5 stories from Judges*

**Stories About  
Israel's First Kings**  
*8 stories from 1 Samuel*

## YEAR 3

### FALL 2024

Stories About  
Kings David and Solomon  
13 stories from 2 Samuel;  
1 Kings; 1 Chronicles;  
and 2 Chronicles

### WINTER 2024-25

Stories About  
Jesus's Birth and Childhood  
6 stories from Luke 1–2

Luke's Stories About  
Jesus's Ministry  
7 stories from Luke 7–15

### SPRING 2025

Luke's Stories About  
Jesus's Ministry  
9 stories from Luke 17–24

Stories About Elijah  
4 stories from 1 & 2 Kings

### SUMMER 2025

Stories About the Prophets  
Who Warned Israel  
14 stories from 2 Kings;  
Amos; Jonah; Hosea;  
Isaiah; and Micah

## YEAR 4

### FALL 2025

Stories About  
the Fall of Jerusalem  
13 stories from  
2 Kings; 2 Chronicles;  
and Jeremiah

### WINTER 2025-26

Stories About Jesus's Birth  
4 stories from Matthew 1–2  
and Luke 1–2

Stories About  
Jesus's Ministry  
8 stories from Matthew,  
Mark, Luke, and John

### SPRING 2026

Stories About  
Jesus's Last Days on Earth  
7 stories from Matthew,  
Mark, Luke, and John

Stories About  
the First Church  
7 stories from Acts 1–8

### SUMMER 2026

Stories About  
the First Church  
5 stories from Acts 9–12

Stories from Ezekiel  
4 stories from Ezekiel

Stories from Daniel  
4 stories from Daniel 1–6

## YEAR 5

### FALL 2026

Stories from Esther  
3 stories from Esther

Stories About  
Rebuilding Jerusalem  
7 stories from Ezra  
and Nehemiah

Songs from Psalms  
3 stories from Psalms

### WINTER 2026-27

Stories About Jesus's Birth  
4 stories from Matthew 1  
and Luke 1–2

John's Stories About  
Jesus's Ministry  
9 stories from John

### SPRING 2027

John's Stories About  
Jesus's Ministry  
6 stories from John

Stories About  
Paul's Journeys  
7 stories from Acts 13–17

### SUMMER 2027

Stories About Paul's Journeys  
6 stories from Acts 18–28

Stories About Letters  
7 stories from Ephesians;  
Philippians; Colossians;  
1 and 2 Thessalonians, James,  
1 and 2 Peter; and 1 John





# HOW TO USE Access

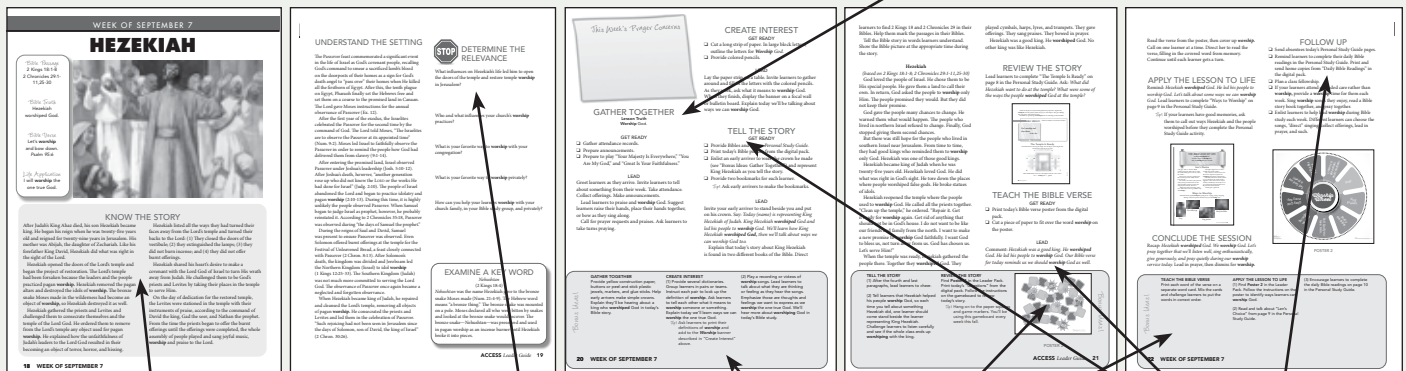
Your Access resources help you plan weekly Bible study sessions for adults with intellectual disabilities. The Personal Study Guide (for group members), works with the Leader Guide and Leader Pack to give you all you need to lead a group.

The Leader Guide includes more ideas than you can use during a one-hour session, giving you options for creating the perfect plan for your group. You know your learners better than anyone, so you need to determine what is best to do in any given Bible study session.

Read all the session plans, including the *Bonus Ideas!* at the bottom of the pages. Choose activities appropriate for your learners' skills, abilities, and chronological ages that will help learners understand the biblical truth and life application of each lesson.

## Leader Guide

Your teaching plans begin at "Gather Together."



This lesson overview gives you a quick glance at the session content and your teaching goals.

Remember this lesson is for you as well as your learners!

Be sure to check out the Bonus Ideas.

You can quickly identify which Leader Pack poster and Personal Study Guide activities go with each lesson.

### Bible Translation

All Bible quotations and commentary in this guide are based on the Christian Standard Bible®, available at book stores and [www.lifewaystores.com](http://www.lifewaystores.com).

### Class Schedule

The teaching plans are written for a one-hour session. They start with all learners in one large group and then move to smaller groups for the Bible story and life application activities.

However, use whatever schedule works best for your group.

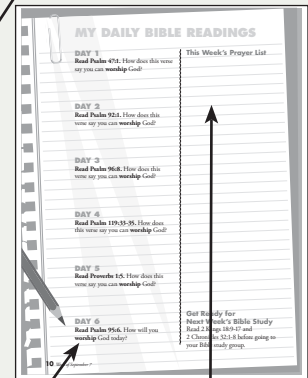
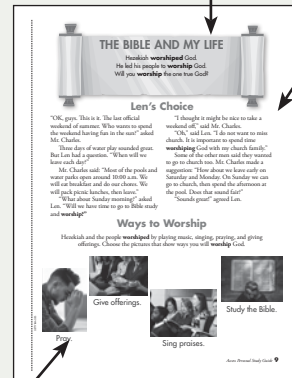
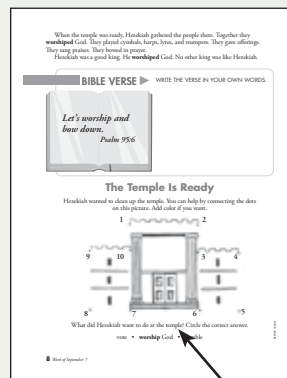
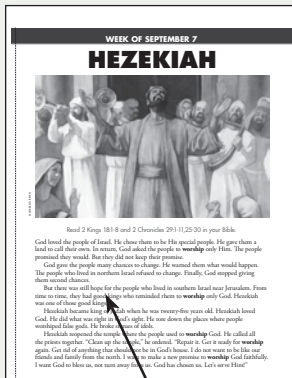
For example, you may start with learners in small groups, move to large group for the Bible story, and then return to small groups for life application.



# Personal Study Guide

Help learners connect the Bible truth to their daily lives.

Read and discuss the real-life story in class, or recommend learners read it at home during a devotional time.



Each lesson includes a Bible story picture and a Bible story written just for adults who have intellectual disabilities.

The teaching plans in the Leader Guide explain how to use the review activity and the life application activity in the group time.

Encourage learners to read their Bibles daily.

Record class prayer requests here.

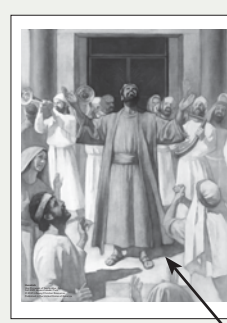
# Leader Pack



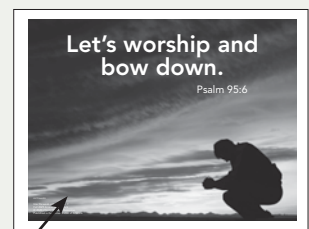
Each Pack contains at least one poster for each lesson.



The Pack includes a card directing you to a digital pack on the Internet.



The digital pack includes Bible verse posters, Bible pictures, administrative forms, copies of the daily Bible readings from the Personal Study Guide, and teaching plans you can customize for your class.



## Basic Classroom Supplies

- CD player or mobile device
- poster board
- newsprint
- construction paper
- large sheets of paper in various colors
- felt-tip markers
- colored pencils
- tempera paints
- colored chalk
- pens and pencils

- air-drying modeling clay
- paper towels
- dowel sticks
- scissors
- tape
- glue sticks
- rhythm instruments
- beach balls
- bandannas
- bean bags
- colored masking tape

## Video Viewing

To show videos and DVDs, talk to your church leaders about securing the appropriate license from the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (mplc.com).

## Song Lyrics

To project song lyrics, talk to your church leaders about securing a license from Christian Copyright Licensing International (ccli.com).

# Funday School

**A** growing giggle that crescendos into a belly laugh?  
No, too abstract.  
A dream sequence comparing a fun, active Bible study class to a rigid, sedentary one?

No, that's not right either.

Oh! I can't think of a single way to begin an article on how to have a fun Bible study class! I know one thing for sure—this is not fun!

I had this conversation with myself as I sat down to write this article. I thought this would be an easy assignment because having fun is one of my favorite things to do. I researched different ways to have fun, various reasons we should have fun in Bible study, what Jesus said about fun (you will be surprised how much Jesus loves fun), and ideas to help create fun during Bible study.

Soon I discovered that fun in its definition is so individualized that stating a basic premise to inspire everyone is impossible. So I gave up, prayed, and asked God to reveal to me the true “element of fun.”

**Should We Even Have Fun?** We all have different ideas of what makes an activity fun. For some a loud, physical, boisterous activity is fun. For others it is grounds for a good-size headache. Some may think a quiet, gentle, peaceful project is fun. Others consider that type of activity to be naptime. Coming up with activities that everyone enjoys can be quite a task.

This wide span of ideas also makes it hard to bridge the gap of reasons we should, or should not, be having fun in Bible study. We may think some activities are fun, yet others may see them as disrespectful or not honoring to God. A good game of freeze tag is fun, but I wouldn't do it in the church sanctuary. So to discover a balance

between our individual ideas of fun and its appropriateness, I decided to look to the One we seek to honor and see what God's Word says about fun.

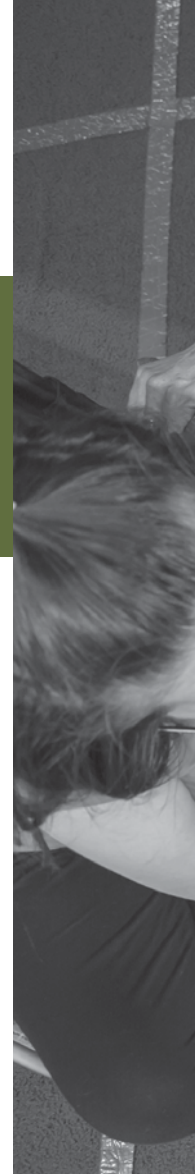
**Be Glad in God's Presence.** I was surprised and thrilled at the many references to the concept of fun. God likes to have fun! Though the word *fun* is not in the Bible, many of its synonyms are: *happy*, *enjoyable*, and *pleasure*. The Bible is filled with believers rejoicing and being happy. Psalm 68:3 states, “But the righteous are glad; they rejoice before God and celebrate with joy.”

To be glad in God's presence—now that sounds like fun. God wants us to be happy, glad, and live an abundant life. So do we reflect this in our Bible study classes?

**Fun Ideas.** Lifeway's special needs Bible study curriculum is filled with activities that have great fun potential. Here are a few ideas to put the icing on the cake. (And isn't cake icing always fun?)

**Name That Tune**—Everyone loves some type of music. The old saying “music soothes the savage beast” has a ring of truth to it. Music can help you create different moods in the classroom. Need an activity that will use kinetic or physical energy? Put on a peppy, toe-tapping tune. Want to create a sense of calm or peacefulness? Select a musical piece with softer, melodic tones.

Musical games can stimulate learning and provide a good laugh too. Tranquil background music can





also stimulate learning and produce warm hearts and satisfied smiles. No matter the musical style, range, or rhythm, music can enhance the fun factor in any situation. Ever heard of whistling in a graveyard?

**Crack Cultural Crazes**—Take advantage of the cultural fads that already captivate your learners. I'm not talking about spiritualizing all that is worldly but taking what is good from today's crazes and using them for God's glory. Television shows, music fads, commercials, and even sporting events can be turned into fun learning activities. Have you ever played Bible Baseball?

Imagine ways you could use a fashion fad such as a hat or the new style of coats. What about movie characters? What if Spiderman came and told your class about his hero, Jesus? Reality shows are a treasure trove of fun spin-off ideas. Could you illustrate the biblical principle of drawing lots, as in the stories of Gideon and Jonah, by

parodying *Survivor*? How about taking your class on an *Amazing Race* through the wilderness with the children of Israel? The world may set the latest trend or fad, but remember only God can turn an ugly duckling into a real swan.

**Interview the Author.** God wants us to enjoy His Word, His people, and Himself. Who better than the Creator and Author of our lives to help us understand and discover how to have fun? Pray. Seek God. Listen to His heart and discover real fun. God knows how to have fun! When we read the illustrations found in His Word about eternity, we get a glimpse of heavenly fun—one humdinger of a party! And truthfully, the thought of spending eternity with Jesus—well, that's one party I'm not going to miss! In the meantime, let's try to enjoy being in God's presence here on earth.



# Modify, Adjust, Adapt



Learners enter our classrooms with a variety of needs. Some may have special needs. Teachers often struggle to make curriculum “fit” all the students in the classroom. One size does not always fit all, but with some modifications and adjustments, learners and teachers can succeed in their various activities at church.

**Modify the format.** Make file folder activities with the activities given in the teacher or student books. Develop a variety of activities using file folders—matching, sorting, picture dictionary, sequencing activities, word finds, and fill-in-the-blanks. Almost any activity found

in the literature can be used. File folder activities use file folders, construction paper, glue, scissors, envelopes, and Velcro®.

For matching activities, make two copies of the materials. Cut out the pictures. Glue one set to the file folder; glue the other set to construction paper squares. Add an envelope to the back of the folder for storage. Laminate for durability. Add Velcro® to the pieces and folder. Encourage learners to independently match the pictures.

Sorting activities are similarly constructed. Activities that require students to circle or put an X on items with



certain attributes fall into this category. Label each side of the folder with the attribute. Mount the items on construction paper. Color code if necessary. Learners sort the items by attributes by placing the items on the correct side of the folder. Older learners may use word lists. Write or type the list of words on address labels. Transfer to blank business cards, laminate, and place in an envelope. Because a learner is often overwhelmed with a long list of words, focus on one word at a time.

**Add clues.** Maze activities can be doubly difficult for a learner with fine motor delays and visual processing problems. The maze may be visually distracting, and when the learner visually solves the maze, he may have difficulty following the path of the maze with his pencil. To help, draw a line with glue along the path. When dry, the glue is clear, but it leaves a path for the learner to feel.

Dot-to-dot activities require the ability to follow a sequence of numbers or letters. While a learner may be able to say and recognize numbers and/or letters, she may not be able to complete the visually distracting task. A trail of glue provides assistance for success.

Color coding helps learners complete an activity independently. The answer is the same color as the correct word. Use color coding with fill-in-the-blank activities, crossword puzzles, word searches, and memory verses. A highlighter works well. Color coding can also be used for defining the important parts of a story. Characters can be one color, the setting in another color, and the main idea a third color.

**Use visuals.** Adding visuals to auditory activities brings better understanding for learners. Visuals are black-line drawings, graphics, photographs, postcards, artist works, and words. Motor activities in a song or game are easily adapted to visuals. Take instant developing pictures of learners doing the activity—clapping hands, touching head, and so forth. Place the pictures in order for learners to view while participating.

Illustrate the important aspect of a song by using pictures. For example, display postcards or photographs of nature items to illustrate a song about God's world.

Learners often have difficulty sequencing—understanding what is first, middle, and last. For

sequencing activities, provide a list or picture of each learner doing an activity. As the activity progresses, the learner can see who is next. Another way is to use a simple arrow to point to the next person.

Add understanding of abstract thoughts. Make a picture dictionary for abstract concepts or new vocabulary. On the left side of a folder, write the definition of the word and attach the word with Velcro®. On the other side, write the word with no definition. The learner moves the word from the left side of the folder to the right side of the folder. Depending on the skill of the learner, the right side could have the Bible verse that uses the new word.

**Modify expectations.** At times an activity may be too difficult for a learner. Modifications can include doing part of the activity, providing a similar activity at the learner's level of competence, or doing an optional activity. Part of an activity can be covered with a blank piece of paper. This is useful for blocking out other activities on the page that tend to distract.

At times, a learner may need to be away from the group. Some learners work better in small groups. During larger group times, the learner may read quietly or work on other quiet activities. Louder activities, including singing or music, may be too loud for learners with sensory problems. At this time, a learner might wear earphones to muffle the sound or leave the room on a "helping" errand, such as taking the attendance to the office or taking a message to another part of the building. The time away from the class serves as a break for the learner and instills practical applications to service.

**Adjust to meet the needs of each learner.** Every learner is different and has different needs. What works for one learner may not work for another one; and what works today may not work next week. Parents provide invaluable information about their student and her learning styles and abilities. Keeping in close contact with the families is beneficial for all.

Adapt when necessary. At times, the unexpected happens and plans go awry. When this occurs, move to predictable, enjoyable, and calming activities. Our job as teachers is to portray God's love to the learners in our care.

# JEREMIAH AND THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH



**J**eremiah dated his ministry from the “thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah . . . until . . . the eleventh year of Zedekiah” (Jer. 1:2-3; or 626–586 BC). Five kings ruled the Southern Kingdom during this period: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. How did Jeremiah interact with these kings? What were the major events during their reigns? How did the author of 2 Kings evaluate them?

## **Jeremiah and King Josiah**

Jeremiah received his “call” during the reign of Josiah (640-609 BC). Jeremiah protested his call based on his being a “youth” (Jer. 1:6). Jeremiah probably could not remember a king other than Josiah. Second Kings 22–23 records the rule of Josiah. While repairing the temple, workers discovered a law book. The reading of this book motivated Josiah to unprecedented reforms. Josiah



committed himself “to follow the Lord and to keep His commands . . . with all his heart” (2 Kings 23:3). Josiah cleansed the temple of the vessels the people used when worshiping pagan deities as well as the priests who used them. Josiah led his people to a spiritual renewal. We read that, “No such Passover had ever been kept from the time of the judges . . . through the entire time of the kings of Israel and Judah” (v. 22). The writer of 2 Kings assessed Josiah’s reign with, “He did what was right in the LORD’s sight . . . he did not turn to the right or the left” (22:2). Additionally, 2 Kings reveals that, “Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD . . . no one like him arose after him” (23:25). Unexpectedly, nothing in the Book of Jeremiah addresses Josiah’s reforms. In all probability, Jeremiah supported the reforms but waited to see if Josiah’s efforts actually changed the Israelites. Josiah’s reformation ended when Egypt’s Pharaoh Neco II killed the pious king (v. 29). In addition to bringing Josiah’s reforms to a premature end, Josiah’s death marked the end of hope for the Southern Kingdom, averting God’s judgment and its resultant demise. Josiah’s death must have been a cataclysmic loss for Jeremiah.

### Jeremiah and King Jehoahaz

Jehoahaz became king and reigned for three months. Jehoahaz “did what was evil in the LORD’s sight” (v. 32). Neco imprisoned Jehoahaz at Riblah (at Hamath, Syria), which served as the pharaoh’s military headquarters, and later took him captive to Egypt. Perhaps due to the brevity of Jehoahaz’s reign, the Book of Jeremiah records only one reference to this king. Jeremiah prophesied that Jehoahaz (Shallum) would never return to Judah but would die in captivity, which he did (Jer. 22:11-12; 2 Kings 23:34).

### Jeremiah and King Jehoiakim

Pharaoh Neco enthroned Eliakim (608–598 BC) and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim also “did what was evil in the LORD’s sight” (v. 37). He emerged as Jeremiah’s “deadliest enemy.” God instructed Jeremiah to write all of His words on a scroll (Jer. 36:1-2). Hopefully, the message on this scroll would motivate each of God’s people to “turn from his evil way” (v. 3). Baruch, Jeremiah’s scribe, read the scroll first in the temple to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (vv. 8-10). The second reading was private, before the king’s officials (“princes,” KJV).



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BRITISH MUSEUM/ LONDON (31/11/70)

**Above: Achaemenid seal carved from grey chalcidony. The impression depicts a Median archer and soldier in a crested helmet.**

They “turned to each other in fear and said to Baruch, ‘We must surely tell the king all these things’” (v. 16). The officials advised Baruch and Jeremiah to hide from Jehoiakim (v. 19). The third reading of the scroll that day was before King Jehoiakim. The king cut the scroll and cast it into the fire “until the entire scroll was consumed” (v. 23). As the officials anticipated, Jehoiakim attempted “to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet” (v. 26). Had the Lord not protected Baruch and Jeremiah (v. 26) we might not have the Book of Jeremiah. God instructed Jeremiah to rewrite the same words “that Jehoiakim king of Judah burned” on the first scroll (v. 28). Jeremiah did so and more: “many other words like them were added” (v. 32).

Jeremiah 22:13-23 records God’s judgment on Jehoiakim. Jeremiah criticized Jehoiakim for building his kingdom on unrighteousness and injustice. Arrogantly, Jehoiakim exclaimed that he would “build myself a massive palace, with spacious upper rooms” (v. 14). Lavishly, this “massive palace” would be “paneled with cedar” (v. 14; see 1 Kings 6:15, where Solomon had the walls of the temple lined with cedar). Jehoiakim had “eyes and a heart for nothing except your own dishonest profit” and “committing extortion and oppression” (v. 17). Jeremiah prophesied that Jehoiakim would not be given the burial appropriate for a king. Instead, Jehoiakim would “be buried like a donkey, dragged off and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem” (v. 19). Jeremiah prophesied, using these harsh words, because Jehoiakim had failed to listen to the Lord (v. 21). Additionally, Jeremiah prophesied: “Therefore, this is what the LORD says concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on David’s throne, and his corpse will be thrown out to be exposed to the

heat of day and the frost of night. I will punish him, his descendants, and his officers for their wrongdoing. I will bring on them, on the residents of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah all the disaster, which I warned them about but they did not listen” (36:30-31). Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar. According to 2 Chronicles 36:6, Nebuchadnezzar bound Jehoiakim in shackles and took him to Babylon. Second Kings 24:6 informs readers of the death of Jehoiakim in that he “rested with his fathers.”

## Jeremiah and King Zedekiah

Zedekiah became Judah’s final king (597-586 BC). Zedekiah “did what was evil in the LORD’s sight” (24:19). He “rebelled against the king of Babylon” (v. 20), bringing total annihilation to Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom.

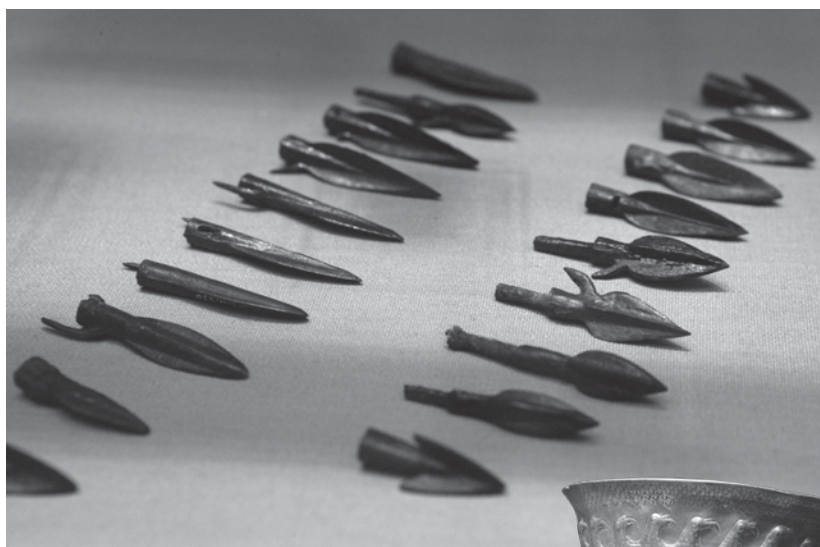
Yet, we read of extensive contact between Zedekiah and Jeremiah. Zedekiah sought Jeremiah’s advice (Jer. 21:1-2) and requested that Jeremiah, “Please pray to the LORD our God for us!” (37:3). Zedekiah asked

Jeremiah, “Is there a word from the LORD?”

(v. 17). Jeremiah 27:12-15; 34:1-7; and 38:17-26 describe candid conversations between the prophet and Zedekiah. These conversations reveal the king had conviction but lacked courage. Zedekiah sought Jeremiah’s advice but failed to follow it. He accused Jeremiah of speaking demoralizing words and imprisoned him (Jer. 32:1-5). Later, Jeremiah tells of attempting to leave Jerusalem. A sentry accused Jeremiah of deserting to the Babylonians (37:13). He turned Jeremiah over to governmental officials, who beat and imprisoned the prophet (vv. 14-16). When Zedekiah spoke with Jeremiah, he responded sympathetically and had the prophet brought from prison. But Zedekiah did not order Jeremiah’s release. Instead, Zedekiah instructed that Jeremiah be “placed in the guard’s courtyard” (v. 21). We read that “Jeremiah remained in the guard’s courtyard until the day Jerusalem was captured” (38:28).

Jeremiah ministered courageously during the reigns of Judah’s five final kings: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. The Book of Jeremiah records no material we can date definitely to the time of Josiah. We can summarize Jeremiah’s relationship with the remaining four kings as discouraging and even life-threatening. The reason was because these kings did “evil in the LORD’s sight.” Contrastingly, Jeremiah faithfully preached, taught, and lived the Word of the Lord.

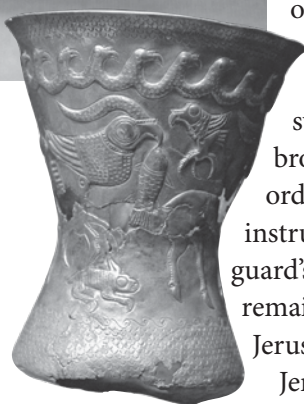
This article is adapted from an article previously published in *Biblical Illustrator*.



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BRITISH MUSEUM/ LONDON (31/11/70)

**Above:** Found in the outer town at Carchemish, bronze arrowheads of various types that were used during the siege of Carchemish; dated to 605 B.C.

**Right:** A Scythian beaker found in the Danube River.



## Jeremiah and King Jehoiachin

Jehoiachin inherited the throne (598 BC) and like Jehoahaz, reigned only three months. Like Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin, “did what was evil in the LORD’s sight” (2 Kings 24:9). The Book of Jeremiah records little communication from Jeremiah regarding Jehoiachin. Jeremiah 22:24-30 records Jeremiah’s prophecy that God would give Jehoiachin “over to those you dread” and that God would “hurl [Jehoiachin] . . . into another land . . . and there you will . . . die” (Jer. 22:25-26). Second Kings says Nebuchadnezzar “deported Jehoiachin to Babylon” (24:15). Eventually, King Evil-merodach pardoned Jehoiachin and Jehoiachin “dined regularly in the presence of the king of Babylon for the rest of his life” (25:29).



### Shopping List

Begin gathering these items for upcoming lessons.

- buttons
- plastic jewels
- dictionaries
- worship video
- plastic eggs
- dry beans
- blindfold
- sword or shield
- small bench or stool
- plants
- coins
- hats for police, fire fighter, construction worker, and soldier
- pot
- small tree branch
- soft sponge ball
- Bible story puzzles
- fall decorations
- fall snacks
- old sheets, towels, clothes
- male doll
- socks rolled into balls
- fabric bookmarks
- fabric paints
- large marshmallows
- Thanksgiving stickers
- clear self-adhesive plastic
- 3 puppets
- digital camera or smartphone and photo printer
- sound effects album
- football

# STORIES ABOUT THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

### Memory Verse

*If you return, I will restore you;  
you will stand in my presence.*

*Jeremiah 15:19*

Although the people of Israel and Judah repeatedly turned away from God, He continued to give them chances to repent.

He sent prophets to warn them of dire consequences but also to offer the hope of restoration.

Eventually the people became so stubborn and resistant that God had to carry out His judgment against their sins.

# HEZEKIAH

## Bible Passage

2 Kings 18:1-8  
2 Chronicles 29:1-11,25-30

## Bible Truth

Hezekiah  
worshiped God.

## Bible Verse

Let's **worship**  
and bow down.  
*Psalm 95:6*

## Life Application

I will **worship** the  
one true God.



## KNOW THE STORY

After Judah's King Ahaz died, his son Hezekiah became king. He began his reign when he was twenty-five years old and reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. Like his forefather King David, Hezekiah did what was right in the sight of the Lord.

Hezekiah opened the doors of the Lord's temple and began the project of restoration. The Lord's temple had been forsaken because the leaders and the people practiced pagan **worship**. Hezekiah removed the pagan altars and destroyed the idols of **worship**. The bronze snake Moses made in the wilderness had become an object of **worship**, so Hezekiah destroyed it as well.

Hezekiah gathered the priests and Levites and challenged them to consecrate themselves and the temple of the Lord God. He ordered them to remove from the Lord's temple any object used for pagan **worship**. He explained how the unfaithfulness of Judah's leaders to the Lord God resulted in their becoming an object of terror, horror, and hissing.

Hezekiah listed all the ways they had turned their faces away from the Lord's temple and turned their backs to the Lord: (1) They closed the doors of the vestibule; (2) they extinguished the lamps; (3) they did not burn incense; and (4) they did not offer burnt offerings.

Hezekiah shared his heart's desire to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel to turn His wrath away from Judah. He challenged them to be God's priests and Levites by taking their places in the temple to serve Him.

On the day of dedication for the restored temple, the Levites were stationed in the temple with their instruments of praise, according to the command of David the king, Gad the seer, and Nathan the prophet. From the time the priests began to offer the burnt offerings until the offerings were completed, the whole assembly of people played and sang joyful music, **worship** and praise to the Lord.

## UNDERSTAND THE SETTING

The Passover feast commemorated a significant event in the life of Israel as God's covenant people, recalling God's command to smear a sacrificed lamb's blood on the doorposts of their homes as a sign for God's death angel to "pass over" their homes when He killed all the firstborn of Egypt. After this, the tenth plague on Egypt, Pharaoh finally set the Hebrews free and set them on a course to the promised land in Canaan. The Lord gave Moses instructions for the annual observance of Passover (Ex. 12).

After the first year of the exodus, the Israelites celebrated the Passover for the second time by the command of God. The Lord told Moses, "The Israelites are to observe the Passover at its appointed time" (Num. 9:2). Moses led Israel to faithfully observe the Passover in order to remind the people how God had delivered them from slavery (9:1-14).

After entering the promised land, Israel observed Passover under Joshua's leadership (Josh. 5:10-12). After Joshua's death, however, "another generation rose up who did not know the LORD or the works He had done for Israel" (Judg. 2:10). The people of Israel abandoned the Lord and began to practice idolatry and pagan **worship** (2:10-13). During this time, it is highly unlikely the people observed Passover. When Samuel began to judge Israel as prophet, however, he probably reinstated it. According to 2 Chronicles 35:18, Passover was observed during "the days of Samuel the prophet."

During the reigns of Saul and David, Samuel was present to ensure Passover was observed. Even Solomon offered burnt offerings at the temple for the Festival of Unleavened Bread, a feast closely connected with Passover (2 Chron. 8:13). After Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided and Jeroboam led the Northern Kingdom (Israel) to idol **worship** (1 Kings 12:25-33). The Southern Kingdom (Judah) was not much more committed to serving the Lord God. The observance of Passover once again became a neglected and forgotten observance.

When Hezekiah became king of Judah, he repaired and cleansed the Lord's temple, removing all objects of pagan **worship**. He consecrated the priests and Levites and led them in the celebration of Passover. "Such rejoicing had not been seen in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon, son of David, the king of Israel" (2 Chron. 30:26).



## DETERMINE THE RELEVANCE

What influences on Hezekiah's life led him to open the doors of the temple and restore temple **worship** in Jerusalem?

Who and what influences your church's **worship** practices?

What is your favorite way to **worship** with your congregation?

What is your favorite way to **worship** privately?

How can you help your learners **worship** with your church family, in your Bible study group, and privately?

## EXAMINE A KEY WORD

*Nehushtan*

(2 Kings 18:4)

*Nehushtan* was the name Hezekiah gave to the bronze snake Moses made (Num. 21:4-9). The Hebrew word means "a bronze thing." The bronze snake was mounted on a pole. Moses declared all who were bitten by snakes and looked at the bronze snake would recover. The bronze snake—*Nehushtan*—was preserved and used in pagan worship as an incense burner until Hezekiah broke it into pieces.

## This Week's Prayer Concerns

## CREATE INTEREST

### GET READY

- ❑ Cut a long strip of paper. In large block letters, outline the letters for **Worship God**.
- ❑ Provide colored pencils.

### LEAD

Lay the paper strip on a table. Invite learners to gather around and fill in the letters with the colored pencils. As they work, ask what it means to **worship** God. When they finish, display the banner on a focal wall or bulletin board. Explain today we'll be talking about ways we can **worship** God.

## GATHER TOGETHER

Lesson Truth  
**Worship God.**

### GET READY

- ❑ Gather attendance records.
- ❑ Prepare announcements.
- ❑ Prepare to play "Your Majesty Is Everywhere," "You Are My God," and "Great Is Your Faithfulness."

### LEAD

Greet learners as they arrive. Invite learners to tell about something from their week. Take attendance. Collect offerings. Make announcements.

Lead learners to praise and **worship** God. Suggest learners raise their hands, place their hands together, or bow as they sing along.

Call for prayer requests and praises. Ask learners to take turns praying.

## TELL THE STORY

### GET READY

- ❑ Provide Bibles and *Access Personal Study Guide*.
- ❑ Print today's Bible picture from the digital pack.
- ❑ Enlist an early arriver to wear the crown he made (see "Bonus Ideas: Gather Together") and represent King Hezekiah as you tell the story.
- ❑ Provide two bookmarks for each learner.

Tip! Ask early arrivers to make the bookmarks.

### LEAD

Invite your early arriver to stand beside you and put on his crown. Say: *Today (name) is representing King Hezekiah of Judah. King Hezekiah **worshiped** God and led his people to **worship** God. We'll learn how King Hezekiah **worshiped** God, then we'll talk about ways we can worship God too.*

Explain that today's story about King Hezekiah is found in two different books of the Bible. Direct

### BONUS IDEAS!

#### GATHER TOGETHER

Provide yellow construction paper, buttons or peel-and-stick plastic jewels, markers, and glue sticks. Help early arrivers make simple crowns. Explain they'll be hearing about a king who **worshiped** God in today's Bible story.

#### CREATE INTEREST

(1) Provide several dictionaries. Group learners in pairs or teams. Instruct each pair to look up the definition of **worship**. Ask learners to tell each other what it means to **worship** someone or something. Explain today we'll learn ways we can **worship** the one true God.

Tip! Ask learners to print their definitions of **worship** and add to the **Worship** banner described in "Create Interest" above.

(2) Play a recording or videos of **worship** songs. Lead learners to talk about what they are thinking or feeling as they hear the songs. Emphasize those are thoughts and feelings we want to express as we **worship** the one true God. We'll hear more about **worshiping** God in today's Bible study.



learners to find 2 Kings 18 and 2 Chronicles 29 in their Bibles. Help them mark the passages in their Bibles.

Tell the Bible story in words learners understand. Show the Bible picture at the appropriate time during the story.

## Hezekiah

(based on 2 Kings 18:1-8; 2 Chronicles 29:1-11,25-30)

God loved the people of Israel. He chose them to be His special people. He gave them a land to call their own. In return, God asked the people to **worship** only Him. The people promised they would. But they did not keep their promise.

God gave the people many chances to change. He warned them what would happen. The people who lived in northern Israel refused to change. Finally, God stopped giving them second chances.

But there was still hope for the people who lived in southern Israel near Jerusalem. From time to time, they had good kings who reminded them to **worship** only God. Hezekiah was one of those good kings.

Hezekiah became king of Judah when he was twenty-five years old. Hezekiah loved God. He did what was right in God's sight. He tore down the places where people worshiped false gods. He broke statues of idols.

Hezekiah reopened the temple where the people used to **worship** God. He called all the priests together. "Clean up the temple," he ordered. "Repair it. Get it ready for **worship** again. Get rid of anything that should not be in God's house. I do not want to be like our friends and family from the north. I want to make a new promise to **worship** God faithfully. I want God to bless us, not turn away from us. God has chosen us. Let's serve Him!"

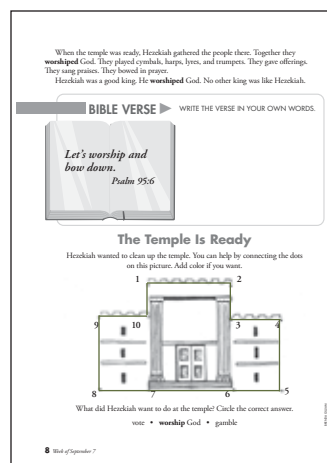
When the temple was ready, Hezekiah gathered the people there. Together they **worshiped** God. They

played cymbals, harps, lyres, and trumpets. They gave offerings. They sang praises. They bowed in prayer.

Hezekiah was a good king. He **worshiped** God. No other king was like Hezekiah.

## REVIEW THE STORY

Lead learners to complete "The Temple Is Ready" on page 8 in the Personal Study Guide. Ask: *What did Hezekiah want to do at the temple? What were some of the ways the people **worshiped** God at the temple?*



## TEACH THE BIBLE VERSE

### GET READY

- ☐ Print today's Bible verse poster from the digital pack.
- ☐ Cut a piece of paper to fit over the word **worship** on the poster.

### LEAD

Comment: *Hezekiah was a good king. He **worshiped** God. He led his people to **worship** God. Our Bible verse for today reminds us we should **worship** God as well.*

### TELL THE STORY

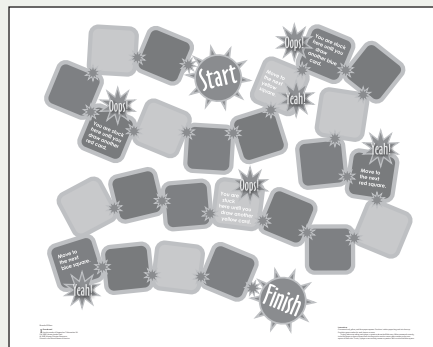
(1) After the fourth and last paragraphs, lead learners to cheer.

(2) Tell learners that Hezekiah helped his people **worship** God, so each time you tell about something Hezekiah did, one learner should come stand beside the learner representing King Hezekiah. Challenge learners to listen carefully and see if the whole class ends up **worshipping** with the king.

### REVIEW THE STORY

Find **Poster 1** in the Leader Pack. Print today's "Questions" from the digital pack. Follow the instructions on the gameboard to review today's story.

*Tip!* Hang on to the paper squares and game markers. You'll be using this gameboard every week this fall.



Bonus Ideas!

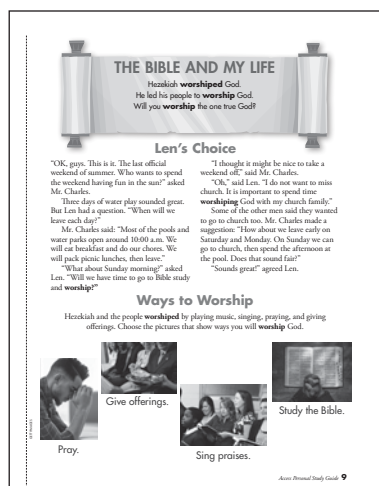
POSTER 1

Read the verse from the poster, then cover up **worship**. Call on one learner at a time. Direct her to read the verse, filling in the covered word from memory. Continue until each learner gets a turn.

## APPLY THE LESSON TO LIFE

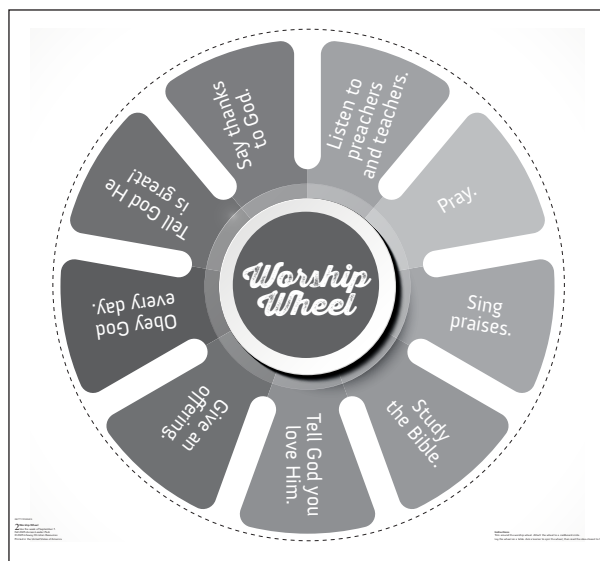
Remind: *Hezekiah **worshipped** God. He led his people to worship God. Let's talk about some ways we can **worship** God.* Lead learners to complete "Ways to Worship" on page 9 in the Personal Study Guide.

*Tip!* If your learners have good memories, ask them to call out ways Hezekiah and the people worshiped before they complete the Personal Study Guide activity.



## FOLLOW UP

- ☐ Send absentees today's Personal Study Guide pages.
- ☐ Remind learners to complete their daily Bible readings in the Personal Study Guide. Print and send home copies from "Daily Bible Readings" in the digital pack.
- ☐ Plan a class fellowship.
- ☐ If your learners attend extended care rather than **worship**, provide a **worship** time for them each week. Sing **worship** songs they enjoy, read a Bible story book together, and pray together.
- ☐ Enlist learners to help lead **worship** during Bible study each week. Different learners can choose the songs, "direct" singing, collect offerings, lead in prayer, and such.



POSTER 2

## CONCLUDE THE SESSION

Recap: *Hezekiah **worshipped** God. We **worship** God. Let's pray together that we'll listen well, sing enthusiastically, give generously, and pray quietly during our **worship** service today.* Lead in prayer, then dismiss for **worship**.

### TEACH THE BIBLE VERSE

Print each word of the verse on a separate word card. Mix the cards and challenge learners to put the words in correct order.

### APPLY THE LESSON TO LIFE

(1) Find **Poster 2** in the Leader Pack. Follow the instructions on the poster to identify ways learners can **worship** God.

(3) Encourage learners to complete the daily Bible readings on page 10 in the Personal Study Guide.

(2) Read and talk about "Len's Choice" from page 9 in the Personal Study Guide.

Bonus Ideas!