

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND



**PRIMARY
TEACHER'S
HANDBOOK**

Book 2

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

**SABBATH SCHOOL
TEACHER'S
HANDBOOK**

PRIMARY GRADE
BOOK 2

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Committee on the Instruction of the Young
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PREFACE

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

Sabbath School Materials Published by

The Committee on the Instruction of the Young

Primary Course - Suggested age 7 - 10

These materials form part of a three year course for primary children, designed to reach their minds and hearts with the Bible's message of salvation through Jesus Christ and to give them an understanding of the Word of God as their only infallible rule of faith and life.

Each lesson takes account of the two-fold aspect of teaching - the teacher's preparation and the classroom presentation.

The Committee sincerely thanks the many members of the church who wrote and prepared these materials for publication. It is our earnest prayer that they will be used by the Holy Spirit to fulfil their aim.

LESSON 1

Living in God's Family

GOD MAKES A HOME - THE CREATION

Scripture Text - Genesis 1:1-25 and 2:1-17

AIM OF LESSON

To impress upon the pupils that it is God who, in His loving care for us, provides a happy and secure environment for His people.

BACKGROUND NOTES

In teaching God's Word about creation, every teacher must make sure that the pupils understand that the first chapters of Genesis are the very Word of God. The very first verse in the Bible reads, 'In the beginning God'. God was in the beginning of everything. God always was and always will be. This is of great importance if our pupils are to keep their faith in the Bible as God's Word. Remember that not all children have a happy home. Bear this in mind as you tell the story and, if necessary, adapt it to suit.

VISUAL AIDS

Draw or cut out pictures of a large house, a bungalow, a block of flats, an igloo and a mud hut such as we would see in Africa. You might also find it helpful to display some pictures of mountains, trees, birds, fish and animals.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

If someone were to ask you where you lived, you would be able to tell them the name of the road or street on which you live and also the name and number of your house. But if asked why you live in that particular place, you would probably answer, 'because it is my home'. I wonder what kind of house you live in? (Now make use of your visual aids here and allow your pupils to discuss briefly the different kinds of houses in which people live all over the world).

Do some of you have gardens at home? Do you help Daddy and Mummy to plant your garden? Is it a big garden or a small one? Farmers have big gardens to look after called ...? Today our story is about a big garden which God made, many years ago. It was a special garden, so let's listen very carefully. In our lives we have many firsts - our first steps, our first day at school, our first examination. We are now going to hear about God's first home on this earth.

Outline

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He made the sun to light the earth by day, and the moon and stars to shine by night. He made the birds to fly in the air and the fish to swim

in the sea. Then God made the dry land, covered it with grass, trees and beautiful flowers. He thought of all the beasts that could live on the land, and as He thought of them, He made them: all the animals we know. (Allow your pupils to suggest some of the animals God thought of e.g., horses, bears, rabbits, mice, snakes, etc.) Then God looked at all He had made and He was very pleased. He saw that it was very good. God had not, however, created all these beautiful things just for Himself. When God created the world He had a plan and a purpose in mind. He was making the world for someone. Can you tell me who that someone was? Yes, God was making the world as a home, a dwelling-place for man. You see, God wanted someone to be in charge of all that He had made. So God made man like Himself. He named the very first man, Adam. Adam stood beside God and together they looked at all that God had made and saw how very good it was and they were very happy. God cared for Adam so much that He wanted him to live in the most beautiful place. He wanted Adam to have a home of his very own. So God planted a garden and called it the Garden of Eden.

In it there was everything Adam needed including a plentiful supply of food. This was his home, the very first home, and it was made by God Himself. (Now ask a pupil to read Genesis 2 :3 -10). I am sure you have all seen some beautiful gardens but never one as splendid as this. God filled the garden with every kind of tree that was pleasant to look at. Delicious fruit grew on these trees so Adam would never be hungry and a beautiful river flowed through the garden, which kept the garden well watered, healthy and green. God had provided all this for His friend Adam. Now in this Garden God had planted two special trees. One was the tree of life, the other was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then God told Adam, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat. Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'. God told Adam to look after and care for this beautiful garden which was his home. God cared for Adam and He cares for us too. Do you think Adam was happy in his new home? Yes, I do too, because he was looking after the plants, the flowers and the trees and caring for the animals, the birds and fish. He must have been kept very busy! Of course he was happy in his new garden home. He had never sinned, he had never done anything that brings unhappiness.

APPLICATION

God in His loving care, planned and made a beautiful home for Adam, containing everything he needed. Above all he had God as his friend. Even today we have everything, only because God has given it to us and it is to Him we should give thanks.

Adam enjoyed taking care of his home which God had made for him. Do you enjoy all the things God has given you? Do you help to care for God's living and growing things? Are you kind to animals? God cared for Adam. God also cares for you. He has given you your homes, food and clothes and everything you have comes from Him.

(If you have time you might like to discuss with the pupils something which they particularly enjoy doing in their own homes). How can we say 'Thank you' to God for all these things? It is important that we do not forget to give thanks every day.

LESSON 2

Living in God's Family

GOD BEGINS HIS FAMILY - STORY OF EVE

Scripture Text - Genesis 1: 26 - 31 and 2 :18 - 25.

AIM OF LESSON

To help the pupils clearly understand that it was God who made each one of us, and that it is God who has given us families because He cares for us.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The relationship between husband and wife is the biblical illustration of Christ's love for His bride, the church. The Christian home where children are brought up in the training and instruction of the Lord is a tremendous witness to the world of Christianity. Therefore the importance of the home and family cannot be over-estimated.

VISUAL AIDS

On a large roll of paper print 'God's Family' across the top. Then collect together as many family photographs and pictures as possible of different people, happy families, e.g., a Bible family, mothers caring for babies, boys and girls helping at home and men and women of different races. Magazines and missionary leaflets will help in this. Fix the pictures with sticky-back tape and allow your pupils to stick them on so that they can appreciate the picture as a whole while it is built up.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Last week our story told us about the very first home God made on earth. Today we are going to hear about the very first family God made. We are going to see how different each family is. Some are large families with many children, some are small with just one, two or three children. How many do you have in your family? Mummy, daddy, etc. (the pupils could discuss briefly how many there are in their own families). Some families have very small babies, some are grown up, sometimes families have Granny or Grandad living with them because when they get older they would be very lonely living alone and they need someone to care for them. God has given us families so that we can be cared for, and so that we can help one another just as God Himself cared for Adam. (Be careful if you have pupils from an unusual background, e.g., being fostered. You may need to vary your approach in this instance).

Outline

We have been talking about our families. The Bible tells us about a very special family, the very first family of all begun by God Himself. Last week we learned how God made us like Himself in many ways. He gave Adam a beautiful garden for his home, with flowers, trees, birds, fish

and all kinds of living creatures. Adam named every creature in the garden. But Adam was all alone in his garden home. There was no other person he could talk to. Do you think you would like to live all alone in a house by yourself? No, I'm sure you would not like that at all. It would be very lonely without Mummy, Daddy or someone to look after you, to cook your meals, and provide you with everything you need to keep you warm and healthy, like clothes and toys. God knew that Adam needed a human companion and friend. God knew that it was not good for him to be alone, so He said 'I will make a helper comparable to him'. Someone who will help him; someone with whom he will be able to talk and share everything. One day God caused Adam to fall sound asleep. While he was sleeping God took a rib from his side. The God closed up the place from where He had taken the rib and with it He made the very first woman. When Adam woke up, God brought the lady to him. How delighted he must have been! He said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man.' And Adam named the first woman Eve. God loved them both very much.

Now Adam and Eve loved each other and enjoyed working together; watering the trees and flowers and feeding all the animals. They were never angry with each other because in their family there was no sin. There was nothing to make them unhappy. Every day they were able to talk to each other, but best of all they were able to talk with God and be with Him. Adam and Eve made their home together. Eve was Adam's wife, just as your Mummy is your Daddy's wife. Then one day God gave them a baby boy. Eve called the baby 'Cain' and she loved him. Father Adam, mother Eve and baby son Cain, and later baby Abel, were the very first family and ever since that time there have been families on the earth. God was good to care for Adam and to give him Eve. God was good to care for Adam and Eve and to give them Cain and Abel. Isn't God good to give us families? We all belong to families.

APPLICATION

We should thank God for our families. God cares for you because He has given you a Mummy and Daddy to look after you. Are you always kind and loving to your parents, helping them in every way you can? Do you sometimes get angry and say things which may hurt your brothers and sisters or even your friends? God does not like us to be angry. We must ask Jesus to help us not to say and do things which may hurt those whom we love. Do you, as a family, do things together, such as spending a day at the beach? Perhaps some of the girls like to help Mummy prepare the meals or help with the washing up. The boys might like to help Daddy in the garden or go fishing together. I hope you enjoy going to church, and meeting together as a family to pray to God and read His Word. Remember each day to thank Him for all His goodness to you as a family. If we love God then we will want to do these things together. He loves us just as He loved Adam and Eve and little Cain and little Abel, that very first family He made so long ago.

LESSON 3

Living in God's Family

GOD GIVES HIS CHILDREN A SPECIAL DAY - THE DAY OF REST

Scripture Text - Genesis 2: 1 - 3; Exodus 20 : 8-11; Luke 13 : 10-17; and Rev. 1 : 10

AIM OF LESSON

To teach the pupils that God in His wisdom has set aside one day in seven to be a Sabbath Day. On this special day we lay aside the work which occupies us during six days and concentrate our attention upon worship and our commitment to the Lord.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The Jews set aside the last day of the week, our Saturday, as their Sabbath. We find in the New Testament that after the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead the Christians met to worship on the first day of the week. See Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10; 1 Cor. 16:2. They still kept a Sabbath but it was on a different day. After God had finished the work of creation, He rested on the seventh day. However, God has now finished an even greater work. It is the work of salvation. The Lord Jesus finished that work when He rose from the dead, and the day of His resurrection was the first day of the week. Look up Mark 16:9 and John 20:19. So, because Jesus rose on the first day of the week, we meet on that day to celebrate His finished work.

VISUAL AIDS

1. Fold a piece of paper into seven different sections, and label each according to the diagram.

heaven and earth night and day	sky	plants and trees	sun moon stars	fish and birds	animals and man	God rested from all His work
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By means of this show the work done on each particular day.

Have a quiz with your pupils and see if they know what was created on the different days. Point out that God had finished His work of creation by the end of the sixth day and that on the seventh day He rested from all His work.

2. Print the phrases overleaf on flash cards and then point out on the flash cards the different reasons for keeping a day special.

God made it.

God has commanded us.

The Lord Jesus set us an example.

It is for our good.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

'I don't have time,' said Johnny, 'I have football practice and when I get back I have homework to do and then there is that film I've wanted so long to see, I'll do my Sabbath School work some other time.' Do you ever feel that you don't have enough time? How many times this week have you said, 'I don't have enough time'? We all say this. God knew that we would have many things to occupy us throughout the week. In fact, He has commanded us to work six days. He has also commanded us to set aside the seventh day to be a day of rest - the Sabbath Day. (Use Visual Aid 1) Let us look at what the Bible has to say about this.

Outline

Here are four reasons why we should keep a day special for God.

1. Because God made it (Use 1st flash card)

When God had rested from all His work on the seventh day, He made this a special day for man: a day that man could spend without doing any work; a day with no school for the children (except Sabbath School!); a day for boys and girls and men and women to spend worshipping God in church and in our homes. A day also when we think about all that God has done for us during the past week; how He has provided so much for us, how He has protected us, how He has kept us from sickness and disease and especially how He sent the Lord Jesus Christ to save us from our sins.

2. Because God commanded us to keep it special. (Use 2nd flash card).

God wanted to be very sure indeed that we would remember to keep the Sabbath as a special day for resting and for worshipping Him, so a long time ago, He commanded a man called Moses to write down some rules for us. Does anyone know which rule God wrote about the Sabbath day? Yes! It was 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, six days you shall labour and do all your work but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work.' Well, that means God doesn't want you to do any work on the Sabbath Day. Perhaps you do your homework on the Sabbath Day - do you really think that you are pleasing God? How might we best please God? (Encourage the pupils to do their homework on Friday or Saturday and leave Sabbath free).

3. Because Jesus kept the Sabbath Day special. (Use 3rd flash card).

Well, time went on and the years went by, until God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ was living on the earth, the Sabbath Day was very different from what God had commanded. Instead of being a

happy day, the Sabbath was a very miserable day. There were hundreds of rules and regulations as to what you could do, how far you were allowed to walk; and what you were allowed to carry. Every Sabbath, Jesus used to go to the synagogue, (which was a Jewish church) to read and hear about God, just as we go to church today. One Sabbath when Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, a woman came in; a woman who had been crippled for 18 years and who was so bent over that she couldn't straighten up at all. Well, can you guess what Jesus did? Yes, Jesus put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up. Do you know what was the very first thing that she did? Yes, she praised and thanked God. However, not everyone in the synagogue was happy about what had happened, instead some people were so concerned about their own rules that they couldn't be happy. They said that Jesus should have healed the woman on one of the other days of the week and not the Sabbath. Imagine! these people were so concerned with their own rules that they no longer cared about people, they couldn't thank God for the miracle He had done. Jesus was disappointed with these thoughtless people and He said that they would take a donkey or any farm animal from its stall and give it water to drink on the Sabbath but they didn't care enough about this woman to want her to be healed from her illness - they even cared more for animals, than for people.

4. Because God has given it to us for our good. (Use 4th flash card)

The Sabbath was a day of great rejoicing for this woman who was healed. It should be a day of rejoicing for us too because we can think of the love of God and His salvation. The Sabbath Day has been given to us by God so that we may worship Him and learn more about Him. We should think of the Sabbath Day as a gift to us from God.

HOW SHOULD WE KEEP THE SPECIAL DAY GOD HAS GIVEN TO US?

Let us look at how Jesus kept the Sabbath special. Where did Jesus go on the Sabbath Day? We can go to church too, to learn about God and to sing and pray to Him. This is very important. What can we do at home on the Sabbath Day? (Ask the pupils for suggestions. Give them some of your own ideas).

- (1) Read the Bible and pray on your own.
- (2) Prepare your Sabbath School work.
- (3) Sing praise to God.
- (4) Go for a walk and praise God for His wonderful works.
- (5) Think about what you heard at church.
- (6) Visit someone who is sick.

APPLICATION

Jesus wants boys and girls and men and women to remember that God gave them a special day, the Sabbath Day. God gave us this day to worship Him. To make sure that we won't forget to keep the Sabbath, He actually wrote it down in The Ten Commandments. Jesus does not want the Sabbath to be a miserable day. He wants it to be a day when we care about people like that crippled woman, a day when we can hear and learn more about God.

LESSON 4

Living in God's Family

GOD PUNISHES OUR SIN - GARDEN OF EDEN

Scripture Text - Genesis 2 :16, 17 and Genesis 3

AIM OF LESSON

To bring to the attention of the pupils the fact that God punishes sin.

BACKGROUND NOTES

It will be important to teach the pupils what sin actually is. Perhaps you could use the definition given in the Shorter Catechism. Adam was given a command (law) but Adam did not obey. Adam's sin was our sin because Adam represented us in the Garden. It is just as if we had sinned.

VISUAL AIDS

Prepare pictures of the different punishments inflicted on Adam, Eve and the snake. Introduce the pictures at the appropriate time in the story. Label the pictures to emphasise the actual punishment.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Adam and Eve were very happy. Why were they happy? Because they were good in their hearts. They did not want to be bad and they loved God and each other. We are not like this. There is something in our hearts that wants to be bad. Isn't this true? God gave Adam and Eve a wonderful promise, that if they obeyed His command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would never die. Although God made Adam and Eve perfectly good, in our world today there is much sin, suffering and death. How has this come about?

Outline

One day in the Garden of Eden Satan came and talked to Eve through a snake, and asked did God really say that you must not eat from any tree in the Garden? Eve told Satan that they may eat of any tree in the Garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil, if they eat of this tree they will die. The devil, through the snake then told Eve a lie. He said to Eve, 'You will not die.' Satan went on to tell her that if she ate of the fruit, her eyes would be opened and she would know good and evil, just like God. Eve believed the devil's wicked lie. She looked at the tree and thought that the fruit might taste very good. Eve became curious and wondered what it would be like to know evil as well as good, so she took some fruit and ate it. She had disobeyed God. Eve also gave some of the fruit to Adam and he ate it. It was very wrong for Adam and Eve to disobey God, who

had made them, and done so many wonderful things for them.

Adam and Eve were no longer the same. Now they did not love God nor want to please Him. In their hearts were selfish feelings. Hatred and bad thoughts came into their minds. They were no longer happy. Satan promises to make you happy if you obey him, but you won't really be happy. Only God can give happiness to those who obey Him.

Adam and Eve knew they had done wrong and were afraid so they hid themselves among the trees in the Garden. God called to Adam 'Where are you?' Adam answered, 'I heard your voice in the Garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself'. God wanted Adam to admit that he had eaten from the tree. Adam, whose heart was now sinful, began to lay all the blame on his wife. Eve blamed the snake. We are like this too. We don't like taking the blame so we blame someone else. How do you think God felt? He was angry. God was going to punish all those who brought about the first sin.

1st Picture

Genesis 3 :14, 15. God punished the snake first. That punishment, spoken so long ago, is still true today. Nobody really likes snakes, people are afraid of them and try to kill them. Would you like to have a snake for a pet (e.g. rattle snake)? Could you trust it? No, you wouldn't. Since that time snakes have had to crawl along the ground.

2nd Picture

God punished Eve. Whenever Eve would give birth to her children she would know pain and sickness. This is true of every woman. Eve had never been sick or in pain before this.

3rd Picture

Adam too must be punished because he had listened to Eve and had eaten from the tree which God had commanded him not to touch. Adam would have to work hard to get enough to eat. Thorns and thistles would grow up and choke what Adam tried to grow. God said that Adam would get his food by the sweat of his brow. Adam and Eve brought unhappiness upon themselves and also upon all the people who would ever be born into the world. Adam and Eve's children would be like them; they would have sinful hearts too. This is why there is so much badness and suffering in the world today.

APPLICATION

This story teaches us a very important lesson, God does not pass by sin. Many people think that He overlooks it or forgets about our sin, but this is not so. Adam and Eve sinned and God punished them. All through the Bible we see this happening again and again. There is one place in the Bible we see this very clearly. Remember that the Lord Jesus was taken to Calvary and nailed to the cross and suffered there and died.

Why did He die? The Bible tells us that He died in the place of sinners. God laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all and He took our punishment. Think about this. God, the Father, loved His Son, yet God punished Him because He took upon Himself our sins.

The Bible teaches us 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). If this is true then we all deserve to be punished just like Adam and Eve. We will be punished unless the Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour, unless He has taken our sin and punishment upon Himself. What if Jesus is not our Saviour? Then we must expect punishment from God. That punishment is terrible because it will mean that we will be separated from God forever.

LESSON 5

Living in God's Family

GOD SAVES HIS CHILDREN - NOAH'S ARK

Scripture Text - Gen. 6:5 - 10; 7:1 - 19 and 8:15 - 22

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God does look after those in His spiritual family.

BACKGROUND NOTES

For an explanation of the term 'Covenant' see the lesson.

Significance of the raven and dove. The raven was perhaps able to feed on dead flesh and perch on the roof of the ark. The dove would require a more sheltered existence in order to survive, probably in the lowlands, and when it did not return it indicated to Noah that the water had subsided.

VISUAL AIDS

The Lion Handbook of the Bible has a scale drawing of the ark and compares it with other seacraft. The teacher could make his/her own comparison to emphasize the ark's size, e.g., the distance from the church to a particular building, which the pupils would know.

Have the word 'Covenant' on a flash card.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Ask the pupils if they know why God decided to destroy every man, beast, bird and creeping thing, which He had made? (Ask a pupil to read Genesis 6:5). This gives the reason.

Imagine a dandelion clock (or a substitute). If we blow it the seeds will be spread and root in the ground to produce lots of dandelions. Something like this must have been happening in the world. The first sin, just like the first dandelion, came into the world; soon peoples' lives were full of sins and God saw it - His beautiful world was spoilt - it had become ugly. But, there was one man who pleased God - Noah was his name. Although the world all round him was so bad, Noah lived to please God.

Outline

Of course, God couldn't see all these bad things and say nothing about it, could He? Could He overlook it? Oh no! God doesn't think so lightly of sin as that! 'I will destroy it' He said. The people had become so bad that the only thing was to destroy them altogether. God told Noah that He was going to cover the earth with a flood to destroy every living being. However Noah was going to be saved from the flood as he had obeyed God. To be saved from the flood God told Noah to make a boat 150m (450') long, 25m (75') wide and 15m (45') high, with a window all the way round it 6m

(18') below the roof; 3 decks and a door in the side. This would protect Noah, his wife, 3 sons and their wives. Noah was also to bring into the boat a pair of every living creature and a store of all the food that he would need.

Of course, Noah did as God told him. He built the boat just as God wanted it. He worked for a long, long time. What do you think Noah's neighbours would have said, as they watched him building this huge boat in the middle of the country? (Allow time for the pupils' suggestions here). Then one day God spoke to Noah and told him it was time to go into the ark, because in 7 days time the rain would begin. Noah was then 600 years old. He carefully followed God's directions. Into the ark he took 2 of every kind of animal, bird, fish and creeping things, the male and the female. Then he went in himself with Shem, Ham and Japheth, his 3 sons, his own wife and the wives of his sons. God shut the door so that no accident could happen to Noah and he was perfectly safe. You see, God always looks after His children. It must have been very frightening when the flood came. Two things happened to bring it about. (Ask a pupil to read Genesis 7:11).

Earthquakes probably took place at the bottom of the sea and this made big floods cover the land. Secondly, it poured and poured with rain. These two events went on for 40 days and nights. There was so much water that the highest mountains were covered, every living creature on earth was drowned; but Noah's Ark floated. The whole flood took about one year to clear.

However, God did not forget Noah and his family. He was still looking after them. He sent a great wind to dry up the water. Soon the mountains could be seen and finally the Ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. One day Noah opened the window of the Ark and sent out a raven. Then he sent out a dove to see if there was any dry lowland; but there was not so the dove returned. One week later, he sent out the dove again and it brought back an olive leaf. One week later he let out the dove again to fly away. This time it did not return, so Noah knew the ground was dry.

God then told Noah to leave the Ark and take all the animals, so that they may have young ones and fill the land again. Noah and his family must have been very happy. It was good to walk on green grass and feel the heat of the warm sun. Noah then built an altar and offered a thank-offering to God. God was pleased with the sacrifice and promised never again to destroy every living thing, there will be springtime and harvest, heat and cold, winter and summer, day and night while the earth remains. God also set a rainbow in the clouds to remind Him of the covenant or promise He made with Noah. Throughout the Bible God has made a number of covenants with His people; this one with Noah is the first time the word 'covenant' is mentioned.

APPLICATION

Noah was a follower of God, or one of His children - today we would say he was a Christian. It is good to see that God looks after His children, isn't it? Noah lived with many difficult people, but he still loved God's way, God remembered that and protected him. So it is with us, God has promised to look after us if we follow His way; if we ask the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Saviour. Just as God kept Noah from danger, so He will help you. Don't give up living God's way, even though no one else in your class at school lives that way.

LESSON 6

Living in God's Family

GOD'S CHILDREN BELIEVE AND OBEY HIM - ABRAM

Scripture Text - Genesis 12:1 - 9 and 15:1 - 6

AIM OF LESSON

To show the pupils that God has a plan for our lives and we are to trust and obey Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

After the death of his son Haran, Terah leaves the city of Ur of the Chaldeans and sets out to go to Canaan. With him are his son Abram, Abram's wife Sarai, and Haran's son Lot, i.e., Terah's grandson. En route to Canaan they settle at Haran. Terah dies and the stage is set for the story of Abraham.

The new name Abraham, instead of Abram, records God's promise to make him a father of many nations, (Genesis 17:5). Sarai was also re-named Sarah, (Genesis 17:15). Abram had already left Ur, a prosperous city with security and a high standard of living. Now he sets out on the second stage with Sarai and their nephew, Lot, to go to Canaan.

VISUAL AIDS

- 1 Map of journey from Ur to Haran to Canaan.
- 2 Blindfold - To demonstrate believing and obeying God to lead us when we don't know where we are going. Blindfold one of the pupils. He needs to be led by someone else as he can't see where he is going. When the blindfolded pupil has someone to guide him, he can walk forward confidently, trusting his guide to lead him safely to his destination. So Abram trusted in God to lead him to an other country.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Thousands of years ago in the ancient country of Babylon, people called the Chaldeans lived in tents and travelled with their flocks and herds from place to place. Sometimes they pitched their tents for a long time and formed a kind of town. In one of these towns, called Ur, a boy was born and he was named Abram.

Little Abram's home was a tent. He watched the men servants care for the cattle, the sheep, the goats and the donkeys. He saw the women servants weave wool into cloth. He watched his father ride a camel and he saw the people all around him worshipping idols. They had forgotten about God.

When Abram grew up he married a beautiful young girl called Sarai and together they set up a

home of their own. In our story today we are going to hear about Abram and how he listened to God and obeyed Him.

Outline

One day, God spoke to Abram and told him to leave his home and friends and go to another country. Abraham was not to be worried as God would bless and take care of him. Abram did not know where this foreign land was. If you were asked to move to a new home in another country nowadays, would you be able to find out how to get there? Yes, you would have maps, motorways and road signs to guide you. A pilot has charts and many other ways of knowing how to fly his aeroplane to other countries. Even if you did not know the way by yourself, you would have someone to help you, your mother or father or perhaps another friend. What about Abram? Remember, he did not know where he was going. He had no road signs to follow or maps to guide him, and he would not be able to ask directions from anyone.

This was a big step that God was asking Abram to take - to leave his father's family, his friends and the country where he had lived since he was a child and go to live in a different place that he knew nothing about. But there was one thing he did know. God had promised to show Him the way. God had promised to lead him to a wonderful country, protecting and caring for him on the journey and providing for all his needs.

God was beginning to prepare the world for the coming of His Son whom He had promised and as part of this preparation God had a plan for Abram's life and that meant changing his home country. God said to Abram, 'I will make you a great nation and in you all families of the earth shall be blessed'. God's promise to Abram meant that Jesus would be one of his children or descendants. It was through Jesus dying on the cross that all the world would be blessed.

What do you think Abram decided to do? Yes, Abram believed God, he had faith in Him and he started out from Haran on his long journey to Canaan, because God told him to go. Abram was obedient. Do you know what age he was at this time? He was 75 years old.

Not only did Abram go himself, he took many people with him - his wife Sarai, their nephew Lot and all the things that belonged to them. Abram was a very rich man and had a great many cows, cattle, sheep, donkeys and camels. He also had many men servants and women servants who helped on the journey. How do you think they travelled? There were no railways, no lorries or trucks. Yes, they rode on camels, some on donkeys or they just walked. Most of the servants would be married and there would be many little children with them, maybe even tiny babies. So you can see that when God asked Abram to move to another country it was as if a whole village was moving house. God provided for their needs. They would have milk from the cows and they would make meals for all of the large family and perhaps they used the sheep's wool to weave into cloth to make clothes. They travelled on and on until finally they reached the land of Canaan. While journeying through the land God spoke to Abram again and said, 'I will give this land to your children and descendants'. Canaan was the land God had promised to show Abram. How glad he must have been to have, at last, reached the land God

had chosen for him!

Before doing anything else Abram wanted to thank God for all His loving care, so he built an altar and worshipped the God who had spoken to him, the true and living God

Later God repeated His promise to him again. Do you remember what that was? God had promised to bless Abram and to make him the father of a great nation. This must have seemed very strange because as yet Abram and Sarai had no children of their own and they were quite old. But one night in a dream God told Abram to come out of his tent and look up at the sky. The sky was full of stars, more than could be counted. God then told Abram that this would be the number of descendants that he would have. Now, even though Abram had not even one little child, yet he believed God and knew that God would do as He had promised. And God was pleased with Abram and God called him His friend.

APPLICATION

Today just as in Abram's day, God wants boys and girls to obey Him, even when we can't understand why, or don't know what the future holds. As you grow older you will have decisions to make. You have the Word of God, the Bible, to guide you and show you the right path to follow. Remember, you can be sure, just as Abram was sure, that God always keeps His promises. Learn to obey and trust Him now, while you are still young. It is by obeying God that we show Him that we really do love Him.

LESSON 7

Living in God's Family

GOD'S CHILDREN NEED EACH OTHER - ABRAM AND LOT

Scripture Text - Genesis 13 :1 - 13 and 19 :12 - 26

AIM OF LESSON

To show the pupils that we need to choose our friends wisely and as Christians we need each other for help.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Lot's father died and he was brought up by his grandfather until his death and then by his uncle Abram. Lot travelled with Abram to Canaan. The land was unable to support both men with their flocks, herds and tents. So Abram gave Lot the choice of where to go. Lot chose the best land but this turned out to be a bad choice. War broke out and Lot was taken prisoner. Abram, hearing of this, sent an army of men to rescue Lot and bring him back. Not having learned his lesson of living with wicked men, Lot returned once more to Sodom.

VISUAL AIDS

Map of country.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Outline**

When Abram went to the land of Canaan, Lot travelled with him. Abram was a very rich man, with many herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, and tents where all his servants lived. As Lot grew older he too became rich and had many cattle, sheep and servants of his own. Soon Abram and Lot together had so many flocks and herds that there was not enough land for both of them or enough water for the animals. As a result of this, Abram's servants and Lot's servants quarrelled over the best farming land. Abram was a good man and did not want them to quarrel, so he suggested that they would separate and go to different parts of the country so that there would be enough room for them all to live without quarrelling. Abram was very generous and let Lot have first choice of all the country round about. Wasn't that very kind of the older man to let the younger man have first choice! How unselfish of him! The two of them stood together on a hill overlooking the flat country or plains and Lot saw land that was better than all the rest. This was the land looking east over the river Jordan. It was well watered with little streams and there was plenty of grass for the animals. Instead of insisting that his uncle should have the good land, Lot jumped at the opportunity and chose the place to live where he would become richer and enjoy life.

However, Lot had made a big mistake because right in the very middle of the lovely plain was the

wicked city of Sodom and this was where Lot put up his tents. The men of Sodom were bad men and were sinning against God. Do you think this was the right place for Lot to go, among men who did not love God? Here was Lot leaving his uncle Abraham who loved God, and going to a place where they didn't love God. What a dreadful place for Lot to live! How could his children possibly grow up to be good? The city of Sodom became so bad that God said He would destroy that whole city. God told Abram about His plan to destroy it and Abram prayed, asking God to save Lot and his family. So God sent two angels to tell Lot to take his family and get out of Sodom because the city was going to be destroyed.

Lot's sons-in-law would not pay any attention to him and they made fun of him and also laughed at him. The angels told Lot to take his wife and his two daughters and hurry out of that city otherwise they would be destroyed. The angels did not think Lot and his family hurried fast enough so they took hold of their hands and rushed them out of the city. Although God was going to destroy Sodom He did not wish to destroy Lot and his family. When the angels had brought them outside the city they did not go any further with them but they said to Lot, 'Escape for your life! Don't look behind you and don't stop anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains or you will be destroyed!' Lot begged to be allowed to go to a little town called Zoar because he thought the mountain was too far away for him to be able to reach it in time. The angels agreed that he could go to Zoar since they would not destroy that city.

Then the Lord punished those wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah very severely. He rained fire and brimstone straight out of heaven upon them. They burned with terrible roaring flames that reached high up into the air. All the houses and all the wicked people were burnt to ashes. Lot's wife was reluctant to leave the city and lingered behind. She turned around and looked at the fire. What happened? In one moment she was changed from a living woman into a pillar of salt.

Poor Lot! His home was burned, his flocks and herds were destroyed, his wife had turned into a pillar of salt and because he was afraid to live in the city, he and his two daughters went to live in a bare cave! He was no longer a rich man. In fact he had nothing at all now.

APPLICATION

I am sure Lot now wished that he had not thought so much about owning the best land and getting rich but had thought more about serving God than living with wicked men. Things would have turned out so differently for him if he had stayed with his friends who loved God.

We need to choose our friends wisely, and make sure that our best friends are those who love God because then we will be able to help and encourage each other and do what is pleasing to God.

LESSON 8

Living in God's Family

GOD'S CHILDREN PUT HIM FIRST - ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Scripture Text - Genesis 22:1 - 14

AIM OF LESSON

To teach the pupils that Abraham, faced with a very difficult choice, put God first and that is a rule for life.

BACKGROUND NOTES

vs 2. The idea of child sacrifice is abhorrent to us and we may wonder why God would ask a thing like this of Abraham, when we know from other scriptures that it was abhorrent to Him. Two things need to be considered.

- (a) It was an accepted practice at the time.
- (b) Because of this aspect God tested him on this very thing.

Did he trust God enough to obey Him when all the promises God had given were dependant on Isaac?.

VISUAL AIDS

This story lends itself to illustration by flannelgraph.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Putting God first in our lives means to obey Him. (Give the pupils some examples of when they may have to make the decision to put God first).

- (a) During a test at school the teacher leaves the room for a few minutes and expects the class to behave. Some of the maths are very difficult and you cannot do them. Some girls and boys immediately start copying the answers. What would you do?
- (b) At school someone has lost 50p and everyone is to look out for it. One finds it but no-one knows. Does the person say nothing and spend it, or own up and give it back?
- (c) Perhaps the pupils have seen the film 'Chariots of Fire'.
To put God first in his life meant that Eric Liddell decided not to run on the Sabbath even though it would probably have meant winning the Gold Medal. What do the pupils think of that? Today we are going to learn of a man who put God first even though it was a terribly difficult thing to do.

Outline

(Begin by building up the background to this episode in Abraham's life). When God had first called Abraham He told him He would become the father of a great nation, but for the next 25 years Abraham could see no hope of this, for he and Sarah were old and had no children. Then when Abraham was 100 years old God gave him a son, Isaac. Abraham and Sarah were old and had waited so long for a son that he was very special to them, but he was even more special, because Abraham knew that from him would come many children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and so on until there would be the mighty nation like God had promised.

So you can imagine how surprised and bewildered Abraham must have felt one day when he heard God's voice telling him to take his only son, Isaac, whom he loved so much, and sacrifice him to God. (You may have to explain simply what a sacrifice is - use animals as an example). God has told us that He did this to test if Abraham really loved and trusted Him, but at the time Abraham did not know this. Isaac was just a young lad and Sarah and Abraham adored him. However, Abraham loved God very much and although his heart must have been very sad and although he didn't really understand why God was asking him to do this, he prepared to obey. God had told him to go to Mount Moriah, a journey which would take them at least two days. So, early next morning Abraham saddled a donkey, cut the wood that they would need for the fire of the sacrifice, and with Isaac and two servants he set out for the place of which God had told him.

For two days they trudged towards Mount Moriah. I wonder what Abraham was thinking as he walked along? He couldn't talk to Isaac about it for Isaac didn't realise anything unusual was happening; he just thought they were going to make an ordinary sacrifice which he had probably seen many times before. I wonder did Abraham ask God, 'Why are you doing this? Surely it cannot be Your will for Isaac to be dead, for he is the one You have promised to bless?'

Finally, on the third morning, Mount Moriah came into sight in the distance. Abraham asked the two servants to stay there with the donkey while he and Isaac went on ahead. Then he said a very remarkable thing. 'The lad and I will go yonder and worship and we will come back to you'. 'We' - that meant Isaac as well as Abraham, but didn't Abraham realise that he was going on ahead to sacrifice Isaac? How could Isaac come back again? Abraham didn't know how Isaac could come back again but he trusted God so much, that he really believed that even if Isaac were killed, God would bring him back from the dead; for hadn't God promised again and again that through Abraham's children all nations would be blessed.

So Abraham and Isaac set off together; Isaac carrying the wood and Abraham carrying the knife and the equipment to make the fire. As they were walking along Isaac became bewildered and commented that they had wood but nothing to kill for the burnt offering. 'Where is the lamb?' he asked. Little did Isaac know that he was the one to be placed on the altar. Abraham's heart must have been breaking, but he replied, 'God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' He didn't know how, but he trusted in God.

Soon they reached the place God had told Abraham about. Perhaps Isaac looked around to see if

there were any lambs running about. Maybe Abraham did as well, but there were none. There were only bushes and stones and with these Abraham built the altar and placed the wood on top. Then he took Isaac, tied his hands and feet, and placed him on the altar. Can you imagine how Abraham must have been feeling, or what Isaac must have felt? Perhaps, he thought by this time God would have done something. But He had not. Abraham reached out his hand and slowly took the knife. He was just about to bring it down on Isaac when the angel of the Lord called out 'Abraham, Abraham!' 'Here I am', he replied. The angel then told him not to touch the boy, as he had proved to God that he loved Him and put God first because he was even willing to give up his only son for God.

Abraham looked around and there, caught in the bushes by its horns, was a ram. God had provided the animal for the sacrifice, so Abraham took it, offered up a burnt offering and worshipped God. Then he named the place by a special name, JEHOVAH JIREH - and that means - the Lord will provide.

APPLICATION

It's very unlikely that any of you will ever have to make a decision about anything so terrible, but there are times when we are tested and what we do shows whether or not we love God and are trying to put Him first in our lives. Remember at the beginning of the lesson we were thinking about making the right kind of decisions. These experiences in our lives are important to God and if we don't put Him first in all these small things, we won't learn to put Him first when it comes to bigger, more important decisions.

(Perhaps the pupils can suggest more situations where they have to make this choice.)

LESSON 9

Living in God's Family

GOD IS ALWAYS WITH HIS CHILDREN - JACOB'S DREAM

Scripture Text - Genesis 28 : 10 - 22 and 35 : 3

AIM OF LESSON

To teach the pupils that if they belong to Jesus Christ, God is always with them, whatever the situation.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Read Genesis 25:19 - 34; 27 and 28 : 1 - 5. These passages fill in the background to this episode in Jacob's life.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Write out the following dialogue on two separate pieces of paper. Two pupils who are good readers are needed to read the parts. It will probably be helpful to let them read over it before class begins.

Introduction

It is late in the evening. A man is trudging along all alone. He is leaving Beersheba behind him in the distance and is heading in the direction of Padanaram. Who is it? It is Jacob. What is he doing here so far away from his father Isaac, his mother Rebekah and his older brother Esau? Why is he walking in the opposite direction to home? Let's pretend we are talking to Jacob and we'll try to find out what is going on. (Now let the two pupils read the questions and answers).

Q: Jacob, it's late, Why are you not heading for home?.

A: Because I have left home. I said goodbye to my family this morning and I won't be going back for a long time.

Q: What made you leave home?.

A: Well, my older brother Esau is really angry with me. He was so angry that he was threatening to kill me. So mother thought it would be best if I were to move away for a while till he changed his attitude. I'm going to my uncle Laban's place in Padanaram.

Q: What happened to make Esau so angry that he threatened to kill you?.

A: Ever since I was born my parents have known that I was chosen for a special blessing by God. Now usually it would be the eldest son of the family who receives a special blessing, and although we're twins Esau was born first. To make sure I received the blessing, my mother and I tricked my blind father into thinking I was Esau and so he blessed me instead of him. This meant that Esau didn't receive the blessing and that's why he is so angry.

Outline

We don't know how Jacob was feeling as he travelled alone after leaving home. It would be nice to think he was feeling sorry for what he had done, but the Bible doesn't tell us that. Was he feeling scared? We don't know. It may be he was feeling that God was very far away from him just as we feel when we know we've sinned and disobeyed.

As it became darker Jacob looked around for somewhere suitable to spend the night. There were no houses around and so, choosing a smooth stone, he lay down in the open to sleep. With no roof over his head, he may have watched the stars for some time and listened to the calls of the night animals and birds. Then he fell asleep and dreamed and in his dream he saw a very long ladder stretching from the earth right up to heaven, and on it were the angels of God, going up and coming down. At the very top of the ladder stood the Lord God, who spoke to Jacob and gave him some encouraging promises. Just as God had blessed his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham, so God now blessed Jacob. He told him that He would give him the land on which he was lying, and that all his children and all those who came after them would be as many as the dust of the ground. He also said that in years to come all the families of the earth would be blessed because of someone who would be born from his family line. Then God gave him a great promise. He said, 'I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and I will bring you back home to this land.'

When Jacob woke up he realised this was more than just an ordinary dream. God was really there. 'Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know', he said. Perhaps he had thought he could run away from God. Perhaps he felt God had forsaken him because of his sin, but now he was absolutely sure that God was with him, and would be, always.

Early next morning Jacob took the stone he had been using for a pillow, and set it up as a pillar. He poured oil on it, which was a sign that it was specially for God, and he called the place by a new name - 'Bethel' which means - 'House of God'.

God had made a promise to Jacob and now Jacob made one to God. He said, 'If God will be with me and keep me in this way that I am going ... the Lord will be my God'. Much later in Jacob's life he was able to tell his brother Esau that indeed God had been with him and had brought him safely back to his own country.

APPLICATION

Wasn't God very kind to Jacob - to appear like this to him to give him special promises - especially so since Jacob had been very wicked when he deceived Isaac and cheated his brother? Often we can feel as if God is very far away. It is usually when we have sinned or disobeyed. If we are God's children, we must realise that it is we who feel far away from God. He has not moved. He is always there. We need to remember this promise He gave to Jacob and we must make it our own. 'I am with you and will watch over you where ever you go'.

LESSON 10

Living in God's Family

GOD TRANSFORMS HIS CHILDREN - JACOB RETURNS HOME

Scripture Text - Genesis 32:24 - 32; 33:1 - 11

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God is concerned to change and perfect the character of His children.

BACKGROUND NOTES

If time permits see article under 'Name' in New Bible Dictionary. Names in the Bible denote far more than terms of reference - as we use them. God gave particular names to individuals and even the names He gave Himself have particular meaning, see Ex. 3.

To give a name is the prerogative of a superior, as when Adam named the animals. So here, the man wrestling with Jacob in fact exercises superiority over him in re-naming him.

Often the giving of a name had a deeper and more personal significance - the positive donation of new character and capacity, as in Genesis 17:5, 'No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations', or in Genesis 32:28, Jacob was changed to Israel. The new name confirmed the new character. God named His Son Jesus because He would save His people from their sin, Matthew 1:21. Jacob literally means 'he clutches' or 'takes by the heel', 'supplants' figuratively it means 'deceiver'. Israel means 'he struggles with God'.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

One day Jenny went with her Mum to a jumble sale in the old scout hall. There were lots of stalls full of all sorts of things and Jenny was very impatient to get to the toy stall. 'Hurry up Mum' she said, as her Mum dawdled past the second hand clothes, 'Dad's given me some money and I want to buy something'. Many of the toys were broken of course, because it was a jumble sale, and Jenny was a bit disappointed. Then she noticed a doll - half hidden under a toy train and some books. It had a lovely face which was all she could see, but when she pulled it out of the heap - its hair was coming off at one side, one arm was missing and the clothes were ragged and very dirty. 'Oh, look at it', she said to her Mum sadly - 'It's such a mess, yet I liked its face'. 'Let's buy it anyway', said Mum. 'Maybe we'll be able to mend it, and then I think you'll not recognise it because it will be so changed.' So they took the doll home, even though it was such a mess because they wanted to change it and make it like new again. Sometimes God takes people who behave badly and do wrong things and He works with them and changes them. Today we're going to hear about a man God changed. His name was Jacob.

Outline

Do you remember how Jacob ran away from home because he was afraid of his brother. Jacob had cheated his brother - in fact his name means 'cheater'. A long time had passed, and Jacob was now married and had many possessions, sheep and camels. Now he was coming home again, but he was still very much afraid of his brother, Esau. Because of this, he divided up his animals and family when he heard Esau was coming to meet him because he feared for the safety of his family. The night before he was to meet Esau he was alone, but a man came and he spent the night wrestling with him. When the man saw he could not win by force, he twisted Jacob's hip. Then he pleaded for Jacob to let him go, but Jacob said, 'I won't let you go unless you bless me'. The man said, 'What is your name?', Jacob said, 'Jacob'. The man said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.' Jacob wanted to know the man's name, but he didn't tell him and He left Jacob after He had blessed him. Jacob called the place Peniel, which means 'God's face'. Jacob gave the place this name because he knew that really he had met God there - he had seen God face to face and was still alive. In the days when Jacob lived, people thought that if you saw God you would die. Jacob had not died and so he called the place Peniel.

The next day Jacob was walking with a limp because of his twisted hip. Then he saw his brother coming and went on ahead of his family to meet him, bowing down. But Esau ran to meet him and hugged and kissed him. Jacob introduced his family to his brother but Esau inquired about all the animals that he met along the way. Jacob told Esau that it was wonderful to see his face again and be greeted so kindly, and to accept the gifts, for God had been so good to him and he had all he needed

APPLICATION

We don't know how God changed Jacob that night at Peniel. It wasn't new clothes he needed - he needed to be changed in his heart, like each one of us. God must have worked in Jacob's heart because names were very important in the Bible. Jacob had been called a cheater but God now called him a man who struggles with God, a man who wanted God to bless him. God knows we are not good people - but he wants us to come to Him as we are, and He will work in us and change us.

LESSON 11

Living in God's Family

GOD PLANS HIS CHILDREN'S LIVES - STORY OF JOSEPH

Scripture Text - Genesis 37; 39 - 41

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God is in control of our lives and that everything which happens to us is part of His plan.

VISUAL AIDS

Use a flannelgraph for the story of Joseph and if possible a picture of a weaver and his loom.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

I wonder if you have ever seen a weaver at work? He makes cloth, or woollen material sometimes, out of fine thread or lengths of wool fibre. In the past linen was woven by hand into special designs or patterns. But if you went to see the cloth before it was finished it would look quite a muddle - all threads going this way and that way and the pattern would be hard to see. Only the weaver, who knew how it would turn out in the end, would know what he was doing at each stage.

Our lives are a bit like that cloth. Lots of different things and people are all part of our lives - sometimes we wonder what is happening and nothing really makes sense. Just as the weaver introduces a different colour that looks wrong and you don't understand the whole picture - so things seem wrong in our lives. Maybe you have to change schools or move house, and you don't like it. Perhaps Dad loses his job, and that may mean changes for your family. But our lives have a pattern or plan just like the cloth. God is working out our lives step by step, and everything that happens is part of His plan for us.

Today we're going to hear about a young man whose life seemed to be going all wrong; terrible things happened to him. He must have wondered why such things should happen. But God knew the plan He had for Joseph's life and everything that happened was part of that plan.

Outline

Joseph was 17 years old and helped on the family farm. His father Jacob kept a lot of sheep and Joseph helped look after them. Joseph's dad was quite old when he was born and he spoiled Joseph. He made a beautiful coloured coat for him and his brothers were very jealous and began to hate him.

One day Joseph's older brothers went off quite a distance with the sheep and his father sent

him to make sure everything was all right. When the brothers saw him coming they quickly decided to kill him - they hated him so much. Reuben, the eldest brother, suggested they throw him into an empty well, thinking he would rescue him later. So the brothers took off his lovely coloured coat and threw him into the well. While Joseph was lying there, a procession of men with camels loaded with spices and precious things came along, on its way to Egypt. Judah suggested selling Joseph to the traders. So he was sold to them for twenty pieces of silver and taken to Egypt. There he was bought by one of the courtiers, the captain of the guard. Joseph's brothers, meantime, stained his beautiful coat with blood and took it home to their father, pretending Joseph had been killed by wild beasts.

So Joseph, instead of being a special son, was now a servant in the Egyptian officer's house. But God was with him there and helped him. He got on well with Potipher the captain, who was pleased with him and soon he was in charge of all Potipher's house. Everything went well for Potipher because God was blessing Joseph. But Potipher's wife was a wicked lady who liked this new young servant and she wanted Joseph to love her. Joseph refused, partly because she was the wife of his boss, who trusted him; but mainly because he knew it would be sinning against God. Potipher's wife was furious because Joseph wouldn't do what she wanted, so she made up lies about Joseph and told her husband Joseph had wanted to love her, and because Potipher believed his wife, Joseph was thrown into prison. Imagine how Joseph must have felt now, not only away from home and family in a strange land, but now in prison for something he hadn't done. But even in prison God looked after Joseph and he was put in charge of the other prisoners, for the warden knew he could trust Joseph.

Later on, two of Pharaoh's chief servants, his butler and baker, annoyed Pharaoh and were put in prison with Joseph. One night they both had dreams. Joseph told them the meaning of the dreams and they came true exactly as he said. Joseph then asked the men not to forget him, for he had been put in prison wrongly, but the men forgot all about Joseph.

Two years passed and then Pharaoh dreamt about 7 skinny cows eating 7 fat cows and 7 thin corn stalks eating 7 plump corn stalks. He was bothered by the dreams and asked all his wise men what they meant, but they couldn't help him. Then the butler who'd been in prison with Joseph told Pharaoh how Joseph had told him the exact meaning of his dream. So Pharaoh sent for Joseph to come out of prison and tell him what was the meaning of his dream. Joseph replied that he could not tell what the dream meant, but God could tell him. Then Pharaoh told him his dream and Joseph told Pharaoh about the 7 years of famine that were coming to the land after 7 years of bumper harvests. Pharaoh was being warned by God to collect all the extra corn from the good years ahead and save it for the years of famine. He should also find some very wise people to arrange this, so that there would be food to eat during the famine. Pharaoh said to his court, 'It's obvious God is with this man.' So Joseph was made ruler over all Egypt.

APPLICATION

When Joseph was sold by his brothers into Egypt, he must have wondered where it would all

end, and when he was put in prison, he must have thought everything was going wrong. But all these things that happened to him were part of God's great plan for his life and God was always with him to help him. He didn't know that one day he'd be taken out of prison and made one of the most important people in the land, but God knew that and Joseph trusted himself to God's care.

I wonder do you have problems with your brothers and sisters, do you think they treat you badly and even tell lies about you? Joseph didn't fight back or argue. God has put us in the families we are in, they are His plan for us and we must ask His help to live peacefully with our brothers and sisters. Perhaps you feel some teacher treats you unfairly. We need to learn again from Joseph not to become angry or bitter when people treat us badly, or when things seem to go so wrong for us. If we belong to God, He is in control of all the things that happen to us. He is planning all our lives.

LESSON 12

Listening to God's Son

JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD - HEALING BLIND BARTIMAEUS

Scripture Text - Mark 10 : 46 - 52

AIM OF LESSON

To show that just as Jesus had the power to give Bartimaeus to see physical light, He also has the power to give spiritual light.

BACKGROUND NOTES

vv 47 & 48 - Bartimaeus is the first one in the Gospel of Mark to call Jesus by the Messianic title 'Son of David'.

v. 51 - The question Jesus put to Bartimaeus probably had the two-fold purpose of making him state his need, and demonstrating to the crowd that this time he was not merely begging for money but asking Jesus to deal with the root of his problem - his blindness.

Reference: 'The New Bible Commentary Revised' I.V.P.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the pupils to close their eyes. With their eyes still closed try to get them to undertake some simple task such as taking an object from your hand. Discuss with them the problem of being blind. For example, ask them what they would find difficult to do if they could not see. Today the story is about a man who was blind - his name was Bartimaeus.

Outline

Bartimaeus heard the crowd coming towards him. 'What's going on?' he cried. 'Who's coming?' 'Jesus from Nazareth!' he was told. 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' he began to shout.

The story of Jesus' fame and kindness had been told all over the city, and now that He was passing Bartimaeus just had to meet Him. Jesus was the only one who could help him. Bartimaeus was a beggar and every day he came to this spot on the side of the road, just outside the city of Jericho. It was the only means he had of getting money to buy food. Bartimaeus could not work - he was blind.

'Be quiet', shouted the crowd, as they thought Jesus would not want to be bothered by a beggar. But Bartimaeus paid no heed. 'Son of David, have mercy on me', he called even louder. Jesus was quite near now, and He stopped and looked to where the blind man was sitting. 'Tell him to come here', He said. At once his followers rushed to bring Bartimaeus, they shouted, 'He is calling you.' The blind man scrambled to his feet and he was led to Jesus. 'What do you want Me to do for you?' Jesus asked him. 'That I may receive my sight'

said Bartimaeus immediately. 'Go' Jesus said, 'Your faith has made you well'.

Immediately Bartimaeus was filled with joy as he realised he could now see like any other man, and he began to follow Jesus along the road.

APPLICATION

Bartimaeus had many needs. He needed food, money and probably clothes as well. There were many things wrong in his life that needed putting right. But Bartimaeus knew that the cause of all these problems was his blindness. He also knew that only one person could cure that blindness - the Lord Jesus. So Bartimaeus asked Jesus to make him see - and Jesus did just that.

There are many things wrong in our lives too that need putting right. Perhaps we need to change that habit of telling lies, or cheating at school, or getting angry very quickly or even not doing the things Mum or Dad ask us to do at home.

The problems in Bartimaeus' life were caused by his blindness. These problems in our lives are caused by sin, and there is only one person who can take our sin - the Lord Jesus. If we ask Him, He will take away our sin just like He took away Bartimaeus' blindness. When we follow and obey Him He helps us to see the difference between right and wrong, and He gives us the strength to do what is right. That is why Jesus is called the Light of the World - He shows us the sin in our lives and helps us to overcome it. In John 8:12 Jesus said 'I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life'.

LESSON 13

Listening to God's Son

JESUS, THE BREAD OF LIFE - MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES

Scripture Text - Matthew 14 : 13 - 21

AIM OF LESSON

To show how Jesus fed hungry people and that He is the only one who can satisfy our spiritual hunger.

BACKGROUND NOTES

See also Mark 6:30 - 46, Luke 9:10 - 17 and John 6:5 - 15.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

We all have needs which must be met. Can you think of some of the needs you have? When you are thirsty, you need a drink. When a person is ill, he may need to see a doctor. He may need tablets or even surgery to make him well. A disabled person may need a wheelchair in order to move around. Listen carefully to the story in order to pick out the different needs of the people in today's lesson.

Outline

Jesus and His disciples had gone to a lonely place to spend some time to rest together. The disciples had been very busy, teaching and healing and they hadn't even had time to eat. They wanted to tell Jesus all that they had been doing. However, when the people in the nearby towns heard where Jesus was, they walked out to the country to find Him and a great crowd gathered around Him and His disciples. Many had heard of Jesus because of His work. He talked to people and taught them about God's Kingdom. He had also healed many sick people, so naturally when they knew He was nearby they wanted to go and find out more about this wonderful man. Some of these people who came were sick and when Jesus saw them He felt sorry for them and healed them. He saw them as a flock of sheep wandering about aimlessly on their own, with no shepherd to guide them. He wanted to be their shepherd, so He began talking to them and teaching them about God.

The crowd that gathered to hear Jesus was over 5,000 people. He talked to them all day and when evening came the people were still with Him. The disciples were very tired and thought that everyone should go home for some had a long way to go. They were concerned because it was getting late, the people would need food and there were no shops in that lonely place. They wanted the people to go away and buy for themselves.

However, Jesus informed the disciples that there was no need to send the people away. He

knew that they were hungry and that they needed food, so He advised His disciples to meet the need. But they replied that there were only five loaves and two little fish. They thought that was not enough. Jesus asked for the loaves and fish. Then He invited the crowd to sit down on the grass. He looked up to heaven and asked God's blessing on the food. He broke it and gave it to the disciples and they handed it to the people. God's power was at work because a miracle happened and the bread multiplied so that everybody received plenty, not just a little bit. We are told, 'they were filled'. Jesus is generous when He gives us good things. We know He was generous that day because twelve baskets of surplus food were gathered up.

SUMMARY

What different things were needed by the people?

The disciples needed rest.

Many people needed to learn more about Jesus.

The crowd needed food.

APPLICATION

Jesus knew what the people needed. He knows what we need too and He wants to give us what we really need. He knows what we need better than we do ourselves. The people who went to see Jesus needed to know more about Him. We need to know more about Jesus too and this is why He has given us the Bible. We can learn about Him from the Bible and we can get to know Him better when we read our Bibles. But most important of all, we need someone to save us from our sins. The Lord Jesus is the only One who can do that. We need to trust in Him as our Saviour.

LESSON 14

Listening to God's Son

JESUS CALLS SINNERS - CALLING OF MATTHEW

Scripture Text - Matt. 9 : 9 - 13 and Mark 2 : 13 -17

AIM OF LESSON

To show each pupil how they need to heed Jesus' call, and to trust in Him for salvation.

BACKGROUND NOTES

In the land where Jesus lived there was among the Jews one class of people whom all other Jews despised. This class was the publicans or tax-collectors, who worked for the Roman Government. Often they took more money than the Roman rulers required. In this way they stole from the people and became very rich themselves. The people hated them and regarded them as sinners.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Just imagine if you were to go into a sweet shop to buy a bar of chocolate. The chocolate cost 20p but the shop assistant said he wanted 30p. The 10p was for himself. What would you do? Yes, you might give him the money or you might leave the shop without buying the chocolate, because the shop assistant was dishonest. Today's lesson is about a man who took money from people but he wasn't a shop assistant, he was a tax-collector. Can anyone tell me what a tax-collector does?

Outline

One day Jesus was walking along a street in the city of Capernaum, when he saw a man sitting at a table collecting taxes for the Roman Government. This authority required people to pay their taxes, but the people also had to give extra money to the tax-collector.

Jesus saw the man sitting at the table, taking all the money. He knew that Matthew (for that was the tax-collector's name) was hated by all the people, who had to queue up and pay him their taxes. But Jesus knew that Matthew's heart, although full of sin, could be made clean and that Matthew would make a very fine follower of Christ.

Matthew probably knew that everyone disliked him and sometimes, I am sure, he was very unhappy. He might not even have liked doing his dishonest work but there was one person who did love him and who knew he was unhappy. Who do you think that person was? Yes, of course, it was Jesus!

Jesus knew that Matthew had done many wrong things and that he was not a good person,

but He also knew that Matthew was unhappy because of his sin. Jesus was ready to forgive Matthew, so He asked him to leave his table and his job as tax-collector and to follow Him.

Well, did Matthew do as Jesus asked? Yes. Matthew would be happy to leave his money-table and to obey Jesus because he had become a different person. In fact, instead of wanting to take everything for himself, he wanted to share it all - his food and his home. He even invited his friends, like other tax-collectors, to a meal with Jesus so that they could meet his Saviour. Matthew was a new person because Jesus had changed him.

However, some other people came to watch this feast at Matthew's house. These people were called Pharisees and they thought they were much too good to eat with bad people like the tax-collectors. They started shouting at Jesus' disciples asking 'Why does your Teacher eat with such sinners?' Jesus answered for His disciples, 'A doctor doesn't heal people who are well, he heals people who are..... Yes, sick or ill people. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance'.

APPLICATION

The Pharisees did not know what Jesus meant, when He said this. Jesus knows that everyone is sinful but it is only those people who are prepared to admit that they are sinners and who are sorry for what they have done, who can be cleansed and made into new people like Matthew. Matthew was sorry, he repented, and Jesus made him into a new person, but the Pharisees did not think that they were sinners, so they could not be sorry and Jesus wouldn't change them.

Are you a sinner? Have you done things that are wrong in God's sight - told lies, lost your temper, disobeyed your Mum and Dad.....? The Bible makes it very clear that all of us have sinned. If you know that you are a sinner and if you are truly sorry for what you have done, you can ask Jesus to make you a new person, just like Matthew. Do you know that when Matthew became a Christian, he taught others about Jesus and helped others as Jesus' disciple. He even wrote one of the books of the New Testament - the very first one, Matthew! Jesus can change the worst sinners - he can even change you.

LESSON 15

Listening to God's Son

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE FATHER'S LOVE - THE PRODIGAL SON

Scripture Text - Luke 15 : 11 - 32

AIM OF LESSON

To show God's gracious love for sinners and to encourage each pupil to respond confidently to that love.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Prodigal - Spendthrift ('Drop-out' might be an appropriate modern-day translation).

v. 12 - Children could expect that when their father died his property would be divided between them. The younger son was not prepared to wait. The legal position was such that the property could be disposed of, either by a will or by a gift, during one's lifetime.

v.22 - The gifts given to the son were signs of honour. Shoes especially were the privilege of freemen and not of slaves.

For a good paraphrase of the story of the prodigal son see 'New Bible Commentary Revised' by I.V.P.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

We can picture the scene. The pigs would be squealing and pushing each other in an effort to get more of the food which the young man had set down before them. It didn't look very tasty. But the young man watched them and thought of the very empty feeling he had in his stomach. It had been such a long time since he had eaten a proper meal, he could almost have joined in with the noisy pigs so that he could have some of the food too. He was far away from his family and he hadn't a single friend. He was so hungry and miserable and alone - and it was all his own doing.

Outline

The young man thought back to the time when he was at home. His father was quite rich when the young man and his elder brother had worked on their farm. But the younger boy was restless and often thought of leaving home. 'It would be nice to be away from here and be able to do as I pleased', he thought to himself. He knew that when his father died his property would be divided between the brothers, but he could not wait until then for his share. He thought he could do much better on his own and have a good time to himself. What did he do? He asked his father for his share now. His father gave him the money and off he went to start a new life in a far country.

He had never had so much money before. What do you think would be a wise thing to do

with a lot of money? - maybe have a 'piggy bank'.

Sadly, this young man thought only of himself and spent his money foolishly on things which he thought would bring him pleasure. But eventually his money ran out and there also came a great famine in the country where he lived. You see, no rain fell to make the crops grow. It was difficult to find a job, but eventually he got work feeding someone else's pigs. As he watched the pigs eat, he thought of his family home, where even the lowest servant had more than enough to eat. Then a marvellous idea came to him. He knew where he could go! Can you guess where it was? Yes, home to his father. He decided to go home and ask his father to hire him as a servant. He was going to say 'sorry' for doing wrong and hurting his father. So off he set. But he was in for a surprise! When he was still quite a distance from his home, someone came running to meet him - his father. He had been watching and waiting for his son to return for such a long time. He would not hear of his son being treated like a servant! He welcomed him with open arms, gave him new clothes and planned a huge party to celebrate his return. What a welcome! See Isaiah 53:6 and Rom. 3:23.

APPLICATION

The young man made a mistake in thinking he knew best how to run his own life. When he realized his mistake he showed that he was sorry by going back home and saying he deserved only to be treated like a servant. But his father welcomed him home and forgave him for going away.

We are like that young man if we think we can live our lives without God. If we come to God and show we are truly sorry for our sins He will forgive us and treat us like sons and daughters.

LESSON 16

Listening to God's Son

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT SIN - LOST SHEEP

Scripture Text - Matthew 18 : 10-14

AIM OF LESSON

To show that Jesus teaches that He has come to seek and to save lost sinners and that all are lost until they believe in Jesus Christ.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The eastern shepherd stayed with his flock, leading them to pasture and water. They would know his voice and so would follow when he called. At night he would probably lead them to a fold, a stone-walled enclosure with a small space for a door. In this 'doorway' he would lie down, ready to protect them.

The trouble with the Pharisees and Scribes was that they didn't think they were really sinners, and so they didn't need a Saviour to save them from their sin.

VISUAL AID

Picture of an Eastern shepherd leading his flock. See Lion, "Handbook to the Bible".

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

(Show the picture of the shepherd, leading his flock.)

In our country a shepherd usually drives his sheep from behind, perhaps with the help of one or two sheepdogs. Where is the shepherd in this picture? (in front). The shepherd goes in front of the sheep, leading them. He leads them to fresh grass or perhaps to a stream where they can drink. The shepherd stays with his sheep and they get to know him and they follow the shepherd. Grass was often scarce so the sheep needed the shepherd to guide them to good grass.

Outline

What might happen if one sheep turned aside and wandered off on its own? It might fall into a hole, or down a rocky face. It might get caught in a bush or it might lose its way. (Tell the story of the 'Lost Sheep' which Jesus told and refer to the picture outlines on the pupils' worksheets.)

A shepherd had 100 sheep. Every day he would lead them to places where there was good

grass and where they could drink fresh water. He would protect them from wild animals and keep them away from dangerous places. The sheep followed because they knew he would lead them safely.

One day, one sheep wandered off on its own and it was in great danger. A wild animal might attack and kill it. It might get caught in a thorny bush or slip down a steep slope. It would be all alone, perhaps injured and unable to help itself, eventually it would die.

However, the shepherd knew the sheep had strayed so he left the ninety-nine and went to search for the lost one to bring it back. He looked for the sheep because he did not want it to die. He loved it, even though it had left the flock, he wanted it back with him. Thankfully, he found the wanderer in time, and as he brought it back to the flock he was so happy.

APPLICATION

Jesus told this story because He wanted us to know that we are like the sheep that was lost. By nature we are sinners, we go astray from God. We need a Saviour who will bring us back. Perhaps the sheep thinks it knows where the good grass is and it doesn't need the shepherd to guide it. We can be like this if we think we don't need to read our Bible or listen in Church. We might want to please ourselves in everything we do. Then we are trying to do without the Shepherd and we are lost. We may be proud of ourselves and we may think that we don't need to be saved. That is like a sheep saying it doesn't need the shepherd and walking off. Each one of us needs a shepherd. We need a Saviour to save us and a Shepherd to guide us in life.

The Lord Jesus came to save those who were lost. He did this by dying on the cross, by giving His life as a sacrifice in the place of others. He also does this by working in our hearts by His Holy Spirit. He convicts us of our sin - that means He shows us we have wandered away from God and He makes us sorry for our sin. By showing us His love He brings us back to Himself. He changes us so that we want to follow Him as our Shepherd.

Think of how happy the shepherd was when he found the lost sheep. Jesus said that there is joy in heaven when a sinner repents, when he says sorry and turns to follow Christ. Are you like the sheep that has been found or are you like the sheep that is still lost? Do you love the Lord Jesus because He died on the cross and have you said sorry for your sins?

LESSON 17

Listening to God's Son

JESUS TEACHES TO CONFESS SIN - THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Scripture Text - Luke 18 : 9-14

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God will forgive our sins if we confess them to Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The Pharisee believed in the doctrine of salvation by works. This has always been more acceptable to sinful men than the way of humility and acknowledgement of guilt. Though the Pharisee is in outward appearance a paragon of virtue, yet this fails to make him acceptable to God. God looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.

The contrite publican is Jesus' example of a man who finds acceptance with God. Knowing he is a sinner, he casts himself on the mercy of God.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

If you were ever out swimming and got into difficulties would you call for help? or would you say 'Go away - I don't need you, I will make it to the shore by myself'. 'Of course not', you say, 'no-one would be that foolish'. I think you would definitely say you couldn't help yourself and you would accept what help was given to you.

Outline

There were some people who followed Jesus who were just as foolish as that. So Jesus told them this story. It is about two men who were very different. They both went up into the temple to pray. One of them was a Pharisee and the other was a tax-collector. The Pharisee walked proudly into the temple, his fine robes swishing as he went. He held his head high as he walked proudly to his favourite place for prayer - a place at the front where everyone could see him. He spoke his prayer as he usually did. 'God', he said proudly. He then thanked God that he was not like other men, not a greedy man, did not steal or do wrong things. He had also fasted two days in the week, and gave a tenth of all that he had to the church; no-one could be better than this. How pleased he felt with himself, and he was sure God was pleased with him too. But he had forgotten that God didn't look at his fine robes. God didn't even feel pleased with his fasting or his offerings, because God looked into the Pharisee's heart, and God saw how proud he was. He saw that the Pharisee thought he was good enough to belong to God's family. He saw how the Pharisee hated

sinners because he didn't think he was a sinner himself.

But the tax-collector was also praying in the temple that day. Far away from the others who had come to the temple to pray, another prayer was going up to God. This tax-collector had hardly dared enter the temple. He knew he was hated by many of the people of his city. As he found his place alone, he thought about God's law and he knew that he had broken God's commandments. His heart was broken by the thought of his dreadful sin. He was sorry to have broken God's law and thought that he truly deserved to be punished for his sin. He didn't even dare to lift his eyes upward for he was deeply ashamed of himself. There was only one thing he could do. He cried out to God and said 'God be merciful to me a sinner'.

Jesus then tells His listeners that this man was forgiven. God did show him mercy because he confessed that he was not good enough to belong to His family. But the Pharisee, who thought he was good enough, was still a proud sinner who would some day have to be punished for his own sins.

APPLICATION

Jesus wants us to see ourselves as sinners, and ask God for mercy as the tax-collector did, when we say we are sorry for our sins. God knows we mean that, and He forgives us.

Do you tell God you are sorry for your sins? No matter how good we think we are, none of us is good enough to reach God's standard. We all need to confess our sin and ask God's forgiveness.

LESSON 18

Listening to God's Son

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT FORGIVENESS

Scripture Text - Matt. 18 : 15-35

AIM OF LESSON

We can show others that God has forgiven us for our sin by forgiving them when they wrong us.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

‘Why, Debbie’, mother asked, ‘what are you doing in your room all by yourself? I thought you went to Ruth's house to play. Don't you feel well today?’

Debbie looked up. ‘Yes, I feel all right, but I hate Ruth. She has her cousin visiting her and they won't even let me play with them. Just wait, Ruth will be looking for me tomorrow and then she'll be sorry, because I'm never going to play with her again.’

‘Why not come down and help me bake some biscuits, Debbie? Then tomorrow you and Ruth may have an after-school snack together,’ suggested mother.

‘No,’ scowled Debbie. ‘I'm never going to forgive Ruth. Do you think she is acting like a good friend?’

‘Well, no, Debbie,’ mother answered wisely. ‘But that does not mean that you should not forgive her. You have been praying that Jesus would make you to be more like Him. He would have forgiven a friend who hurt Him, Debbie. I know He would - because He did. And He taught us to do the same.’ (Great Commission Publications.)

Outline

One day Peter came to Jesus and asked Him how many times he should forgive someone who harmed him in some way. ‘Up to seven times?’ asked Peter. Jesus said he should forgive that person seventy times seven, or more times than you can count, i.e. forever.

Jesus then went on to tell a story about a servant who did not forgive. There was a king who wanted to clear up all his accounts with his servants. A man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, but of course he could not pay! The king ordered that the man's wife, children and all that he had be sold to pay for the debt. The servant was alarmed when he heard this and fell on his knees before the master and begged him to be patient. ‘I will pay back everything’, said the servant. His master felt so sorry for him that he let the

servant go without having to pay anything! The servant was relieved. But shortly afterwards he found one of his fellow servants who owed him some money. He grabbed him and began to choke him and demanded that his money be paid back. The other servant fell to his knees and begged him to be patient. 'I will pay you back' he said. But the first servant refused to listen to his pleading and threw him into prison until he could pay the debt. Some other servants, who also worked for the king, saw what had happened and went to tell the king about it. The king called that first servant in to see him. He was angry and told the servant how wicked he had been. 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' It ended up that the king put this servant in prison until he had paid back all he owed. That must have been for a long time as he owed a lot of money!

APPLICATION

You and I are like that servant who owed so much to his master. We have broken God's law by our sin. We are in debt to God and we cannot pay that debt. No matter how long we work or how hard we try we can never pay the debt. The only thing we can do is to ask God to forgive us. If we are truly sorry for our sin, God will forgive us because Jesus died on the cross. Isn't that wonderful! God has made provision so that our debt may be paid.

Now if someone does something to annoy us, or hurt us and then asks us to forgive them, what do you think we should do? Yes, we should forgive them. The debt they owe to us is small compared to the debt that we owe to God. It would be wrong of us to be bitter or resentful towards them. Think again about Debbie. How did this story that Jesus told help her? Let us remember this lesson and be ready to forgive those who do wrong to us.

LESSON 19

Growing in God's Family

SEEING GOD'S PLAN - INFANT MOSES

Scripture Text - Exodus 1: 1 - 22 and 2: 1 - 10

AIM OF LESSON

To show how God preserved the life of Moses in order to use him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The history of the Israelites originates from the time Joseph had been sold by his brothers as a slave and taken to Egypt. In Egypt Joseph rose to the post of Prime Minister as he was highly respected for his godly wisdom by Pharaoh. His preparation for the famine resulted in his own father and brothers, seventy people in all, coming to Egypt and being granted permission to settle in Goshen (a district in Egypt). Their descendants remained in Goshen for nearly four hundred years. As time passed their numbers greatly increased and now they had become a great nation living with the Egyptians.

VISUAL AIDS

'The Children's Bible' C. F. Vos (Published by 'Banner of Truth')

Flannelgraph - 'The Child Moses' (Scripture Press)

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Do you remember the story of how Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers and how God made him ruler in the land of Egypt? Since then many years had passed and Joseph had been forgotten. The Pharaoh of this time was not interested in the welfare of the Children of Israel. In fact he regarded their numbers as a threat to his own people and he appointed taskmasters to make them do the hardest work, building etc. When this plan did not make the Israelites fewer in number, he issued a command that every new-born son of the Israelites be killed and only girls should be let live.

Outline

Amram and Jochebed were the parents of a small Israelite family in Egypt at this time. They had a girl about twelve years old called Miriam, and a boy about three called Aaron. Amram probably worked as a slave building bricks in the two big cities which Pharaoh was building at Pithom and Rameses. He would have to work very hard all day long in the hot sun. He dare not stop for a rest because the cruel taskmasters would lash him with their whips as they walked up and down.

Times were very hard for the family but they were made more miserable by this new law of

Pharaoh's. (Ask the pupils what this law was.) Jochebed had just given birth to the loveliest little baby boy. What could she do?

Well, Jochebed hid the baby in the house where none of the neighbours could see him when they visited. This was alright when the baby was tiny and slept most of the time, but as the days passed he started to cry and look for attention, as babies do. It wasn't easy to keep him quiet and by the time he was three months old, it was impossible. (Discuss with the pupils the problem of keeping the baby in the house - the neighbours or Pharaoh's soldiers might hear him crying, and even the older children might talk about him.)

However, Jochebed was prepared for this situation and she made a little basket of bulrushes. She coated the outside of it with slime and tar to stop cracks and keep the water out. She probably lined it with soft cloth and after putting the baby in it, she carried the little basket to the edge of the river Nile and hid it among the bulrushes. She dare not tell anyone, but she told Miriam his sister to watch at a distance to see what might happen to the baby in the basket.

Now, Pharaoh's daughter liked to bathe in the river Nile and the princess and her maids often came down to the river. While the princess was in the water, she saw the little basket and she told one of her maids to fetch it. When the princess and her maids were all looking into the basket the baby woke up and started to cry. The princess was a kind-hearted lady and she felt sorry for the lovely little baby. Although she knew at once that he was an Israelite child, she decided to keep him for her own son so that her father could not kill him.

Miriam was watching and listening to all that was taking place. She came running up and asked the princess 'Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?' The princess agreed and Miriam was only too glad to run home to fetch her mother to tell her what was happening to her little brother.

Jochebed was so happy to hear that her son was safe, and she hurried to meet the princess who said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages. I will call him Moses because I drew him out of the water.' Of course Jochebed took her little son home again and cared for him until he was old enough to go and live at the palace with the princess and be educated.

APPLICATION

This story had a very happy ending. The life of the little boy had been spared strangely enough by the intervention of Pharaoh's own daughter. God's ways are wonderful. He had been caring for Moses all the time. Moses' mother had trusted God when she hid her baby in spite of Pharaoh's law. The Bible tells us, 'By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.' Heb. 11:23.

God has given you parents to take care of you when you are growing up. If you put your trust in God, He will care for you in the way He knows is best for you. Here is a promise God gives

you - 'Whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.' Proverbs 29: 25.

God never breaks His promises. His promises are to be found all through the Bible, and we can see how they came true in the story of Moses.

For the solution to the crossword on the pupil's worksheet see below.

¹ B	U	L	² R	U	S	³ H	E	S	
A			I			I			
⁴ B	R	A	V	E		D			⁵ M
Y			E						O
		⁶ P	R	I	⁷ N	C	E	S	S
		A			U				E
		L			R		⁸ C		S
	⁹ W	A	G	E	S	R			
		C			¹⁰ E	G	Y	P	T
¹¹ O	P	E	N	E	D				

LESSON 20

Growing in God's Family

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE - MOSES' CALL

Scripture Text - Exodus 3 and 4: 1 - 17

AIM OF LESSON

To show that when God calls we must obey in the confidence that He will provide all we need.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Moses was eighty years old when God called him to lead his people to freedom. The first forty years of his life were spent as a prince in Pharaoh's court in Egypt, the second forty as a shepherd in Midian. Throughout his life God had prepared Moses for this great mission, both in education, leadership and in the experience of nomadic life. As a shepherd Moses learned patience and also the need to place complete trust in God.

When Israel's deliverance out of Egypt was promised to Abraham he saw a burning torch (Gen. 15: 17). At Mount Sinai (Horeb) the place where he was later to receive the Ten Commandments, Moses saw a burning bush and the promise was about to be fulfilled.

Exodus 3:1. The precise location of Mount Horeb is uncertain, but long tradition identifies it with Gobel Musa (7,363 feet) at the Southern tip of the Sinai peninsula.

Exodus 3:14-15. "I AM" or "HE WHO IS" means to be actively present. God never changes. He was actively present with Moses and the Israelites and is still actively present with His people today.

Exodus 4:14. Aaron was three years older than Moses and born before Pharaoh's edict.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Do you remember who found baby Moses in the basket? What do you think would have happened to him if he hadn't been found? If anyone else had found him could they have kept him? God had a plan for Moses even as a little boy. Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses and he grew up to be a prince in Egypt. He learned all about art, law, history and the study of the stars and seasons. For forty years Moses lived at the palace in Egypt. He saw how his own people were being treated as slaves in Egypt. They had to work very, very hard making bricks for the Egyptians and were often beaten to make them work harder. One day while Moses was walking among the Israelites he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite. Moses

killed the Egyptian and because of this action he had to flee from Egypt.

Outline

During the next forty years Moses lived in Midian and married the daughter of Jethro the priest of Midian. One day when he was minding Jethro's sheep at the edge of the desert near Horeb the mountain of God, he saw a bush on fire. The strange thing about it was that the bush burned and burned, yet it did not burn away. Moses went nearer to this burning bush to see what was happening. When he came nearer he heard a voice from within the bush. 'Moses, Moses,' the voice called. 'Do not draw near this place'. This was God speaking to Moses from the burning bush and Moses also had to take his sandals off, as God told him he was standing on Holy ground.

'I am the God of your father' the voice went on, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Moses bowed his head and hid his face for he was afraid to look at God. God told Moses that He had seen the misery of His people as slaves in the land of Egypt and heard their cries as they were beaten. He was concerned about their sufferings and was planning to deliver them to a good land flowing with milk and honey. God had decided to send Moses to Pharaoh and bring his people out of the land of Egypt. Moses was surprised that God should choose him for this task and said 'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring out the Children of Israel out of Egypt?'

God promised 'I will certainly be with you'. However Moses was concerned that when he tells the Children of Israel 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' that they ask, 'What is His name?' What will Moses tell them? God then told Moses to reply 'I AM has sent me to you.'

Moses was then commanded to assemble the elders of Israel and tell them what God had planned for his people. Moses and the elders then went to Pharaoh and told him 'The Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us, now please let us go three days journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.' God knew Pharaoh would not be willing to let the people go. So He would punish the Egyptians and work miracles among them, and then Pharaoh would let them go.

Moses wanted to know what he should do if the people would not believe him.

'What is that in your hand?' God asked. 'A rod' Moses answered. 'Cast it on the ground' God directed. When Moses threw it on the ground it became a snake. 'Reach out your hand and take it up by the tail' God directed. When Moses reached out and took the snake by the tail it became a rod again. God also asked Moses to put his hand inside his cloak. So Moses put his hand inside his cloak and when he took it out it was leprous, like snow. God told him to put it in again. When he obeyed it became healthy again, like the rest of his body. After God had given Moses 2 miraculous signs to help the people believe the message, He then told him another sign. Moses should take water from the Nile and pour it on the ground, the water then

would become blood on the ground.

Still Moses hesitated. 'I am slow of speech and of slow tongue.' 'Who has made man's mouth?' the Lord asked. 'Go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what to say.' Finally Moses pleaded that someone else should go in his place. God then became angry with Moses and told him that his brother Aaron would go with him. Moses was then directed by God to tell Aaron the plan.

APPLICATION

God loved His people and the time had come to tell them of His love. What command did God give Moses? How did Moses react?

He felt that he had not the ability to do what God asked. He was only a shepherd and to send him back to Pharaoh . . . Had God forgotten how he had fled from Egypt because he had killed an Egyptian? God had not forgotten Moses' early years in Egypt. The children of Israel needed a leader to command them. They needed someone as a diplomat to speak to Pharaoh on their behalf. They needed someone with faith and complete trust in God to lead them through the wilderness. Moses was being taught for forty years how to survive in the desert, so that he might lead God's people through that desert.

How does God train us for the special tasks He wants us to do? He has given us different gifts and abilities which we should use, and not waste, by working hard at school, sport, music, etc. Everything we do should be done to the best of our ability so that God is honoured.

God teaches us obedience and faith in Him by giving us problems and difficulties to overcome.

LESSON 21

Growing in God's Family

WITNESSING GOD'S JUDGEMENT - THE PLAGUES

Scripture Text - Exodus 7: 8-25; 8; 9; 10 and 11

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God will punish those who disobey Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

'Plague' means trouble or annoyance. In this lesson 'plague' refers to some disaster sent by God as a punishment. 'Sorcerers', 'magician': Black magic was very common in Egypt and these sorcerers and magicians were able to perform some 'magic'. This, however, was very limited, because, having copied Moses with regard to some of the plagues, they failed to produce lice and were themselves affected by the boils.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Have you ever disobeyed your parents? Did they punish you? How? If you had said that you were very sorry and then proceeded to disobey them again and again, what do you think they would do? In today's story we find Pharaoh continually disobeying God. Let us see what God did.

Outline

Do you remember from last week's lesson why God had commanded Moses and Aaron to go to Pharaoh? It was to demand Pharaoh to let the Israelites go for a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to God. In this week's lesson we find that Moses and Aaron obey God and go to Pharaoh. However, Pharaoh did not want to lose his hard workers, even for a few days. He did not respect God and would not give his slaves time to worship Him. He laughed at Moses and Aaron and told them to perform a miracle to prove that they had been sent by their God.

God had said this would happen and told Aaron to throw his rod down in front of Pharaoh. When Aaron did this, the rod became a snake. Pharaoh called for his magicians and they were able to do the same, but Aaron's rod swallowed all of theirs. However God told Moses that Pharaoh's heart would grow hard and he would not let the people go.

However, God was going to teach Pharaoh that He was the only true God and He would send 10 plagues to the Egyptian people.

Plague 1 - The first time Pharaoh refused to let the people go God turned the river Nile into blood. This included all of its tributaries, reservoirs, and even the water stored in pots and bowls! The water became undrinkable, the fish died, and a bad smell was created. Pharaoh's magicians, however, were able to do the same.

Plague 2 - God sent frogs up from the Nile to completely cover the land and fill the homes. Even the beds, ovens, and baking bowls were filled with frogs! Although Pharaoh's magicians were able to do the same, they were not able to get rid of them. Unable to stand the pests any longer, Pharaoh called for Moses and promised to let the Israelites leave Egypt. When Moses prayed, the frogs died, but Pharaoh did not free the people.

Plague 3 - God sent swarms of lice (gnats). Pharaoh's magicians were unable to do this and they recognised that this was God's judgement. In order to teach Pharaoh that these plagues were God's punishment for disobedience, God now made a distinction between His people and the Egyptians. All the plagues that followed came upon the Egyptians but not upon the people of Israel.

Plague 4 - God sent a swarm of flies (mixture of insects). Pharaoh again pleaded with Moses to take the plague away and promised to set the people free. But when God removed the plague Pharaoh changed his mind and wouldn't let them go.

Plague 5 - God sent a severe disease on the Egyptian livestock.

Plague 6 - God sent boils on man and beast.

Plague 7 - God sent huge hailstones which killed people and objects, and also destroyed all the crops in the fields. Pharaoh pleaded and promised, but again changed his mind.

Plague 8 - God sent locusts to fill the land, eating everything that the hail had left. Pharaoh admitted his sin, promised, and again changed his mind.

Plague 9 - God sent darkness to cover the land for three days and nights. Pharaoh was now more worried about losing his slaves and all of their flocks than about not doing what God had asked. So he still refused to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh was angry and told Moses that if he dared to come before him again he would die. However, God then told Moses that He will send one more plague and as a result of this plague Pharaoh and all the Egyptians would beg the Israelites to leave Egypt.

Plague 10 - All of the firstborn children and animals would die.

Review the first nine plagues by having the pupils fill in the pupils' worksheets.

APPLICATION

Because of greed and pride, Pharaoh chose to disobey God rather than let the Israelites leave Egypt. God punished him very severely. Today God still punishes sin. He often uses those in authority over us (i.e., parents, teachers, police, . . .) to actually punish us when we do wrong.

Some people think that it doesn't matter if the Lord Jesus is their Saviour or not because God will not punish them for their sins. But it does matter. One day we will have to stand before God in judgement. If we do not have the Lord Jesus as our Saviour we will be punished for all our sins. When He is our Saviour He takes our sins away and takes us to live with God forever. 'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.' Rom 6: 23.

LESSON 22

Growing in God's Family

TRUSTING GOD'S MERCY - THE PASSOVER

Scripture Text - Exodus 12: 1 - 30; 1 Corinthians 5: 7, 8; and 1 Peter 1: 18, 19

AIM OF LESSON

To teach that God, who punishes sin, shows mercy to His people, who trust in Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

- (1) Chapter analysis: vv. 1 - 14: the directions for keeping of the Passover before the departure from Egypt. vv. 15 - 20: the directions for the feast of unleavened bread. vv. 21 - 27: the instructions for the elders, given by Moses. These include the explanation of the Passover Feast to be given to the children in succeeding generations. v. 28 shows the meticulous observations of all God's instructions by the people of Israel. vv. 29 - 36: the account of the death of the first-born of the Egyptians and the departure of the Israelites.
- (2) Lamb, v. 3. The Hebrew word can mean either lamb or kid.
- (3) Unleavened bread: bread baked without a raising agent.
- (4) Hyssop: a small, bushy plant, used to paint the doorposts with the blood of a lamb.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Do you remember the story from last week? God punished Pharaoh because he would not do as He had asked and let the people of Israel go to worship God. Do you remember the terrible plagues He sent? Today we join the story when God's tenth plague is about to be sent upon the Egyptians. This would be the death of all the first-born, both of man and beast. God said to Moses, 'I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh, afterwards he will let you go' (ch. 11: 1). This final punishment would cause more sadness than anything ever before. As a result the Israelite slaves would be set free.

Outline

God had promised that the Israelites would be set free but time and time again they had been disappointed as Pharaoh refused to let them go. However, God was going to keep His promise. He told Moses that He would pass over the land and the eldest of man and beast in every house would be killed. The people of Israel would be saved by trusting in God, but they had to do as God commanded.

Moses and Aaron told the people of God's command. 'On the tenth day of the month, every

family shall take a lamb. If the household is too few to eat a whole lamb, then join with your neighbours and share it. The lamb you choose must be perfect, without any defect or injury, a male, one year old. The lamb should be kept until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the families will kill it in the evening. The blood of the lamb should be collected in a basin, and using a piece of hyssop sprinkle the door posts and lintel with the blood. None of you may leave his house from the evening until the morning. That same night the whole lamb should be roasted and eaten in a hurry with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. There should be nothing left of the lamb in the morning. At this time you must also be dressed and ready for a journey. This ceremony is to be called 'The Lord's Passover'. God will pass through the land during the night, and all the first-born of the Egyptians will die, but when He sees the blood on your door posts, He will pass over you and will not destroy you.'

The Israelites did exactly what God commanded. They began to get ready to leave Egypt in a hurry. On the Passover evening, each family killed a lamb, letting the blood drip into a basin. The father sprinkled the door posts and the lintel with the blood. When the Lord saw the blood, He passed over that house and no-one in the house died. The little lamb had died instead of the Israelite first-born. Preparations were made to roast the lamb and the meal was eaten exactly as God had commanded. In Goshen, where the Israelites lived, everyone waited and all was quiet.

At midnight, the Lord passed through the land of Egypt and all the first-born died. (The oldest child in the king's family, the oldest child in all the Egyptian families, the oldest child in all the servants' families and even the oldest of the animals died). Everywhere there was loud crying, for there was not a house without someone dead. Immediately Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, 'Go out from among my people. Even the Egyptians themselves urged the Israelites to leave, giving them gold, silver and clothing. A great number, about 600,000 men, as well as many women and children, began the great Exodus (going out) from Egypt. God had delivered His people and punished His enemies.

APPLICATION

In order to be delivered from Egypt, God's people had to believe His message. They had to trust in God alone. Read Exodus 6: 6 - 8 and count the number of times God says, 'I will . . .' (7 times). (See pupils' worksheet) The deliverance of God's people was brought about by God alone. The Israelites had to trust Him to do what He had promised.

The death of the lamb meant life for the Israelite first-born. Read 1 Peter: 1: 18 - 19. (See pupils' worksheet). The Lord Jesus was God's sinless Lamb, sent to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1: 21). Like the Israelites of old, we must believe God's message of salvation and trust in Him alone.

LESSON 23

Growing in God's Family

REJOICING IN GOD'S POWER - CROSSING THE RED SEA

Scripture Text - Exodus 14

AIM OF LESSON

To show God's power in leading the Children of Israel through the Red Sea.

BACKGROUND NOTES

God did not lead the Israelites through the land of the Philistines, although that was the most direct route from Egypt to the Promised Land. The reason for this was that God felt the people might become discouraged by having to fight their way through, (even though they had left Egypt armed) and therefore return to Egypt. Instead, God led them by a longer route through the Red Sea and the wilderness. At Etham God instructed Moses to tell the people to turn towards Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal-zephon. (See Exodus 13: 17 - 20 and Exodus 14:1-2).

Visual Aid

Draw a large map, showing the possible route the Children of Israel followed (see overleaf)

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

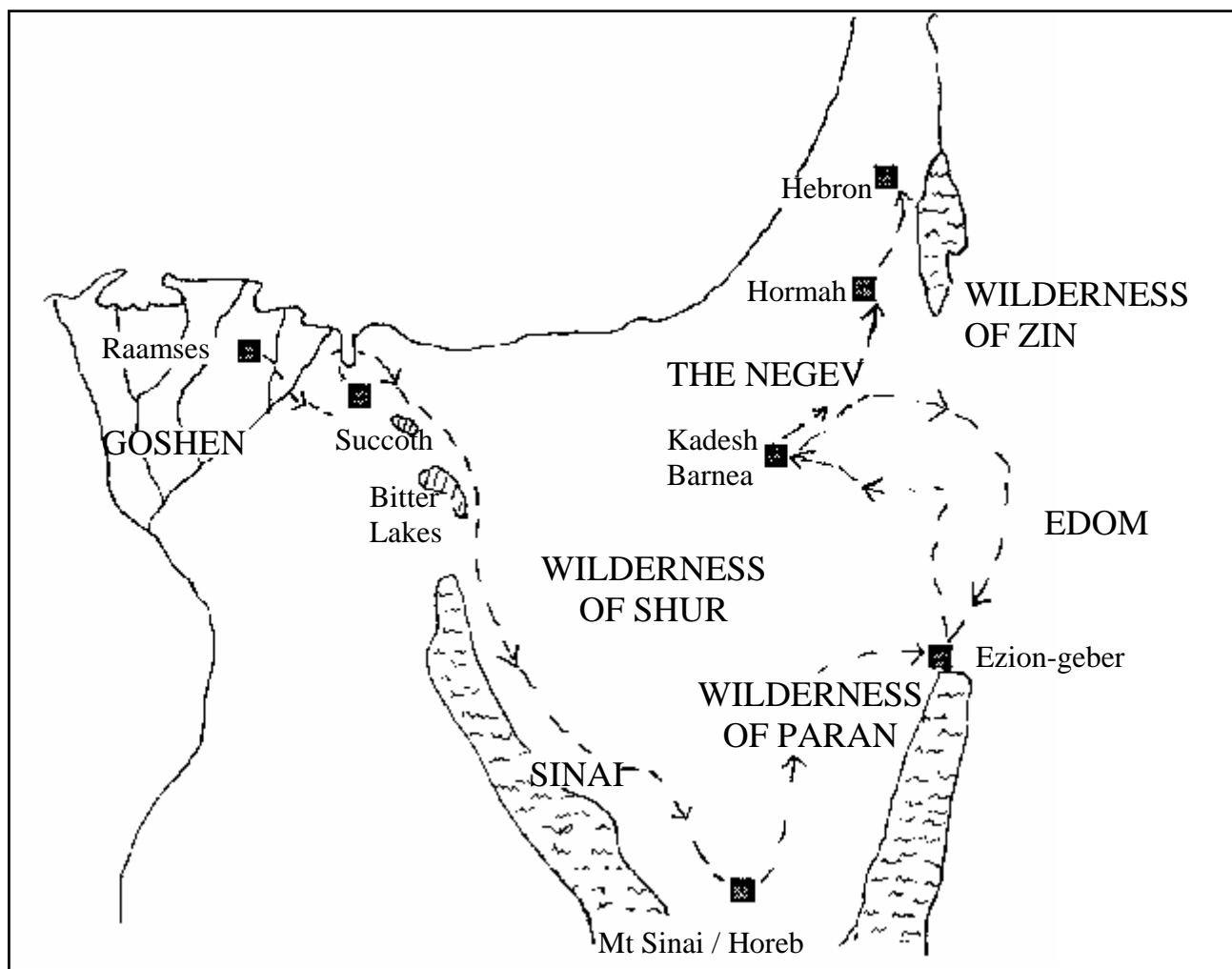
How glad the Children of Israel must have been on the night when Moses told them they were leaving Egypt! Now they were free, no more cruel Egyptian masters! But how were they going to find their way through the desert? God led them by a pillar of cloud during the daytime, and by a pillar of fire at night; so they could travel either by day or night. The cloud and fire were never out of sight.

Outline

God told Moses to let the people march up to the Red Sea and pitch their tents by the sea shore. When the Children of Israel had gone from Egypt a few days Pharaoh began to regret that he had let them go. Who was going to work for him and build his cities, now that all his slaves had gone? Pharaoh had his chariot prepared, and all the chariots of Egypt, and they chased after the Children of Israel.

The Israelites had camped on the shore of the Red Sea, as God had told them. They had not gone very far because most of them were walking and they had many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle with them.

Soon Pharaoh and his chariots came into sight. When the Children of Israel saw the Egyptians



coming after them they were terrified, and cried to the Lord to save them. They began to blame Moses for taking them out of Egypt to let them die in the wilderness. Moses knew that the people were very frightened, and he tried to calm them. 'Don't be afraid', he said, Moses encouraged the people to stand still and see how God would wonderfully save them. He also told them that God would do all the fighting and this was the last time they would ever see the Egyptians. Then God told Moses to prepare the Children of Israel to march. They did not know where they could march - in front of them was the Red Sea - behind them the Egyptians were coming nearer and nearer.

However, God showed His great power. The Angel of the Lord was in that pillar of cloud that was leading them. The pillar moved and went between the Israelites and the Egyptians. The cloud was so thick that the Egyptians could not see the Israelites. On the other side it was bright and shining, giving light to the Israelites through the night. God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the Red Sea. He sent a strong east wind which blew so hard that the waters moved back and stood up just like a great wall on each side, and the bottom of the sea was dry. Can you imagine being at the seaside and seeing the waters

dividing to make a path? The Children of Israel must have been really amazed at the wonderful power of God. Moses then gave the order to march between those great walls of water to the other shore.

The Egyptians followed after the Israelites into the divided sea; but God made things difficult for them and their chariot wheels began to get stuck and fall off in the soft sand. It was impossible for them to overtake the Israelites now. The Egyptians were frightened and wanted to go back, as they felt that God was fighting for the Children of Israel and against them. They were struggling in the middle of the sea. God then told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea, so that the water may come back again. Moses stretched out his hand and the waters came rushing back once more, and Pharaoh and all his chariots, horses and soldiers were drowned. There was not even one of them left alive. The Israelites stared at their dead enemies, being washed up on the sea shore.

Moses and the Israelites saw how great God's power was, and they praised Him and believed in Him.

APPLICATION

The Children of Israel were very worried. There was no way they could escape, with the sea in front and the Egyptians behind. Then God did the impossible, His power made that great sea divide in two and leave a dry path between. We must remember that the God who led the Children of Israel through the Red Sea, is our God today, and He still has the power to do everything that He wishes. God has promised to be with us if we trust and love . Whatever problems we may face He can help us through them. Whatever sin may be tempting us, He can help us overcome it. So let us ask for His help every day.

LESSON 24

Growing in God's Family

ASKING GOD FOR ALL THINGS - THE MANNA

Scripture Text - Exodus 16

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God will provide His people with everything they need if they trust in Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

After crossing the Red Sea the Children of Israel were led into the wilderness of Shur. At Marah they had water but it was bitter. At Elim they had good water; there were twelve wells, one for each tribe. The Israelites then moved south into the Desert of Sin. It was here that God provided food for the Children of Israel in the form of manna. God gave the people certain laws concerning the manna.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Today we are going to think about the different needs we have. Let's think of some. What things do we need? (Water, food, family, clothing and shelter. Point out the difference between needs and wants such as luxury items, eg, games, sweets, toys.) As the Israelites travelled to the Promised Land through the wilderness, they had many different needs. Let's find out what they were and how God provided for them in unexpected ways.

Outline

The Children of Israel had sung with great joy as they crossed the Red Sea. They praised and thanked God singing, 'Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.' but in three days their song had changed to groans. All their water was finished. They were all very thirsty. Finally they came to a small pool of water at a place called Marah. Can you imagine the excitement as they all tried to reach the water? The people quickly filled their water bottles with the precious water and some even scooped it up with their hands.

However, when they tasted the water it was so bitter that they could not drink it. Oh, what a disappointment! They complained to Moses saying, 'What shall we drink?' Moses prayed to God and God answered his prayer by showing him a tree which he must throw into the water. When Moses threw the tree into the water it became fresh and sweet again. The Children of Israel were able to drink as much water as they wanted. No tree could make the water fresh, only God had the power to make the water fresh.

After this God led the Children of Israel to Elim, a place in the desert which had plenty of

water. It was a lovely little oasis with twelve springs of water and seventy tall palm trees. The Israelites camped there by the water, staying a little while to rest.

They had to move on again. They folded up their tents, packed up all their belongings and walked into the desert. It was another wild rough desert called the Wilderness of Sin. After they had been travelling for a month and a half they again began to find fault with Moses. This time they had no food. The food which they had brought with them from Egypt was finished and they were all very hungry. They grumbled and complained saying, 'O that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full.'

The Children of Israel were so ungrateful. They forgot how they had been beaten in Egypt. They forgot how God had saved them from the Egyptians and brought them across the Red Sea. They grumbled and groaned and God heard their complaints and told Moses that at night He would give them meat to eat, and in the morning He would send them bread from heaven. Just then the Children of Israel noticed that the cloud, which was always near their camp, was shining with a bright light. It was the glory of God. God had come to let the people know that He had heard their murmurings.

That evening, great flocks of quails (small game birds) flew over the camp. The people were able to catch them and cook them for their supper.

The next morning the ground was covered with heavy dew which looked like frost. After the dew had gone away the Children of Israel saw small white things on the ground. They looked at it and said to each other, 'What is it?' No one knew, so they give it the name of 'manna'. It looked like seed. They picked it up and tasted it and found that it was good to eat. Moses said to them, 'This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.' Exodus 16: 15.

God gave the people rules about the manna. The first rule was that they were only to gather as much as they needed for one day. Moses told them not to keep any of it, for it would come every day. The people gathered up the manna, enough for one day, and then the sun became hot and melted what was left. However, some of the Israelites did not trust God and they tried to keep the manna until the next day, but when they looked at it the next day it was full of worms and had a bad smell. Moses was angry with them for disobeying God's rule.

The second rule was that on the sixth day the people were to gather twice as much manna as on other days. They were told to eat what they needed that day and then keep the rest for the Sabbath day.

The Children of Israel had been in the heathen land of Egypt where there was no Sabbath day. The Egyptians did not keep a day of rest, but worked every day of the week. God wanted to teach the Israelites to keep the Sabbath day and not to work on that day, so He sent no manna on the Sabbath day. Exodus 16: 26.

However, once again some of the people disobeyed God and did not save any manna for the Sabbath day. They went out as usual to gather manna, but of course there was none on the ground. God was annoyed and told Moses that the people must obey Him. After that the Children of Israel remembered God's command and kept the Sabbath day.

The third rule was that the people were to gather a pot of manna and keep it forever so that their children would see the bread with which God had fed them in the wilderness. The people did this and God kept this pot of manna from going bad, and the Children of Israel kept it for hundreds of years.

This wonderful bread which God gave the Israelites tasted like honey biscuits. God fed the Israelites with manna for forty years until they came to the land of Canaan where there was plenty of food.

APPLICATION

God provided food for the Children of Israel for forty years, because He loved and cared for them. He promised that He would send them food each day. Read Philippians 4: 19 with the class and explain that it is a promise from God to supply them with everything they need. Complete Pupils' worksheet. Talk to the class about all the things that God has given us.

Explain to the class that they should be thankful for all the good things that God has given them. Relate this to food, and prayers said at meal times. The class can then write a short 'Thank you' prayer.

LESSON 25

Growing in God's Family

FINDING GOD'S HELP - WATER FROM THE ROCK

Scripture Text - Exodus 17

AIM OF LESSON

To show how God provided water and victory for the people of Israel and He has not changed.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Discontent and malice towards Moses rose as the journey became difficult for the Israelites. They began to question God's presence and the authority of Moses. The Israelites tempted God and also tested Him, hence the names Massah and Meribah.

Massah - testing; Meribah - quarrelling.

Some time probably elapsed after this before the Israelites were exposed to the new peril of battle. There was a hereditary enmity between the Israelites and the Amalekites. The Amalekites were eventually wiped out in the time of David. Although victory hovered between the camps for some time, the Israelites won in spite of great opposition.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Many of us know people who complain and grumble all the time. It is often about the weather - it is either too hot or too cold, too dry or too wet. It never seems to please everyone. Some of you may have had days at school when your friends were not so kind to you, the work was more difficult than usual and even the teacher was very cross. Yes, you were unhappy because nothing seemed to go right, but what did you do about it? Did you grumble and complain or do you love and trust God enough to tell Him about your unhappiness the way Moses did?

Outline

Moses was leading the Israelites through a very barren part of the country with no trees in sight and no water. They began to quarrel with Moses and blame him for taking them from their homes in Egypt. Their children and their animals would die if there was no water. They were so angry that they were thinking of actually killing Moses by stoning him. Indeed they began to wonder if God was with them at all. Moses was in no doubt that God was there with them, so he prayed and asked God what he should do with these people.

God told Moses to go on ahead of them and take some of the leaders with him. He was also to take his rod and God would appear at a rock. God told Moses to strike the rock and water would pour out from it and the people and animals could drink. Moses did what he was told in front of the leaders and the water came as God said it would. Moses named the place Meribah to remind them that the Israelites quarrelled and complained against the Lord.

As the Israelites travelled on they passed through some very barren rocky country. At this time the Amalekites, who were a wandering people, were living in this barren part of the country. When the Amalekites saw the great number of Israelites coming through their land they began fighting with them. Moses called Joshua and made him commander of the army. He sent him to choose his soldiers and to go and fight the Amalekites. Moses took Aaron and Hur and went to the top of a hill where they could see everything that was happening.

As Moses prayed he held up his hands. When his hands were raised the Israelites seemed to fight better and when he lowered his hands the Amalekites fought better. As Moses prayed, his hands became tired. Aaron and Hur found a big stone for him to sit on and each held up Moses' hands until sunset. Because Moses prayed, God was with the people of Israel and He gave them victory over their enemies.

Moses was told by God to keep a record of this and future generations would learn that God fights for His people. The altar that Moses built was called 'The Lord is my Banner'.

APPLICATION

In the story today we heard how the Israelites grumbled and complained when things went wrong for them. Do you think they are very different from people today? Do you grumble? What happens when you are forbidden to have too many sweets? You may grumble and complain but those who care for you know that they are bad for your teeth and they take away your appetite for proper meals. What happens when you are not allowed to play or watch television because there is homework to be done? Someone loves you enough to take the trouble to guide you in the correct way. We have been given the example of Moses, and like him, we have been given a way to come to God - by prayer. So if something troubles you or annoys you tell God all about it and He will help you.

Did you ever try to hold your hands upright for a long time? Moses did this for a whole day so it was little wonder he needed help. His trust in God was great and when the Israelites won he gave the praise to the right person - not Joshua, but to God and he built an altar in His honour. We have an enemy who is trying to overcome us. It is Satan, and he wants us to think wrong things, and say and do wrong things. But we can have victory over this enemy - by asking God's help. He will help us to think, say and do things which are good and right.

So remember every day to talk to God in prayer about anything that worries you and to ask His help to do what is right.

LESSON 26

Growing in God's Family

LEARNING HOW TO PLEASE GOD - THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Scripture Text - Exodus 19 and 20

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God gave rules for us to live by so that we may please Him.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Let's talk for a few moments about your school. What makes it a good school? Is it a good headmaster, lots of facilities, kind teachers? But are you allowed to do what you like? Of course not. There are rules to obey. Why are they necessary? (Discuss with the pupils what happens, eg, when you don't cross the road with the patrol man. Help the pupils to see that breaking rules brings unhappiness. It may cause accidents and generally bring punishments. Rules are there for our good.) Just as a school has rules, a nation or a country has laws. Long ago when God chose the Israelites as His special people He gave them laws. These were commandments showing them how to treat God and how to treat other people. These rules are still meant for us today and show us how we can please God in our lives.

Outline

After leaving Egypt the Israelites had marched far into the desert. Do you remember who their leader was? Moses was a kind of 'go between' or 'spokesman'. He brought God's word to the people. One important message which he brought is found in Exodus 19: 5. God said He was now going to give His holy laws to this special people. What did the people say in response to this? Read the part of verse 8 which tells of their reaction.

Moses had to prepare the people to hear God's voice. First of all he put a fence all around the holy mountain (Mount Sinai). Not one person, not even a beast, was to touch the mountain. If anyone did he was to be stoned to death. All the people then had to wash their clothes.

On the third day, at the sound of a trumpet, the people were to gather at the foot of the mountain to hear God speak to them. Early on the morning of the third day, Mount Sinai was covered with thick clouds. Terrible thunderings pealed through the sky, and great streaks of lightning flashed over the heavens. The mighty mountain shook and trembled and its top was covered with smoke and flames.

The mighty trumpet of God sounded through the sky. When the Israelites heard the trumpet of God, they gathered with fear and trembling at the foot of the mountain. Louder and louder the trumpet pealed forth, till the very heavens resounded.

God Himself spoke out of the thunder and lightning and the blazing fire. (Catherine Vos: The Child's Story Bible)

What did He say? He gave ten laws for the Children of Israel. The first four deal with our attitude to God and the last six tell us how we should treat each other. Ask the pupils if they can recall any of the Commandments. Simplify the commands concerning our attitude to God, no idols, no swearing, only one God, etc. Do the same with the other Commandments.

Discuss with the pupils how the Israelites reacted to the receiving of the Ten Commandments. Catherine Vos describes it in the following words. 'The people saw the thunders and the lightnings and they trembled with fear.' They said to Moses, 'You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.' Why do you think they were so afraid? Encourage the pupils to see that God is a holy God to be revered and feared.

APPLICATION

These are the laws that come to us from God today. How do you think He expects us to react to them? We should be reverent and obedient. Just as the rules in school are for our good, so these rules of God are given for our happiness and well-being. Discuss with the pupils how they can obey God's rules, this afternoon, or next week, eg, always telling the truth, never swearing and doing exactly what Mummy or Daddy says.

LESSON 27

Growing in God's Family

FALLING INTO SIN

Scripture Text - Exodus 24: 12 - 18; 32: 1 - 29 and Numbers 20: 1 - 13

AIM OF LESSON

To show how easily the Children of Israel fell into sin, and to teach that we should be on our guard against all sin.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Moses had again ascended Mount Sinai, as commanded by the Lord, to receive the Ten Commandments written in a permanent form - on tablet of stone. (Exodus 24: 12)

Exodus 25 - 31 give the detailed instructions received by Moses on the mountain, for the building of the Ark of the Covenant and the building of the tabernacle.

The Egyptians worshipped many gods, and often depicted them in animal form, e.g., a bronze figure of a bull has been excavated. Thus, the making of the golden calf shows how the Israelites were clamouring for a replica of the old gods of Egypt.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

It had been a very exciting and a very frightening time for the Children of Israel. The Lord had appeared to them on the mountain. (Ask the pupils to recall the scene on Mount Sinai - the lightning, the smoke, etc.) God had given them ten laws to be obeyed. They had witnessed that their Lord was a great and holy God. You would think they could never, never forget this experience. Now Moses had returned to the mountain at God's command and the Children of Israel had watched as he had disappeared into the cloud which settled and remained on the mountain for six days. As they watched, the glory of the Lord looked like a burning fire on the top of the mountain, (Exodus 24: 15 - 17). Moses had returned to the mountain to receive the law of God written on two stone slabs. God also gave him directions about building the Ark of the Covenant, (a very special box in which to keep the laws, Aaron's rod, and a pot with a little of the manna) and directions about building the tabernacle, (a special tent where the Lord could be worshipped in the desert).

Outline

Day after day passed. Moses remained on the mountain listening to God. The Children of Israel waited in the valley for his return. One week, two weeks, three weeks passed. The

people began to think that Moses was never going to return. Almost another three weeks passed. Moses stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24: 18). Perhaps Moses had died on the mountain? They began to be afraid. What was going to become of them if their leader did not return? Already the Children of Israel were forgetting something. (Ask the class to recall some of the things which the Children of Israel were forgetting, e.g., the crossing of the Red Sea, the provision of manna.) They were forgetting the powerful God who had rescued them from the Egyptians and brought them safely through the Red Sea, the loving God who provided food and water for them day after day in the desert, the holy God who had spoken to them from the mountain.

They came to Aaron and enquired about having false gods to go with them. They also did not know what had happened to Moses who brought them out of Egypt. How had the Children of Israel been led until now? By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in the pillar of fire to give them light, Exodus 14: 21. But what were the Children of Israel beginning to break? They were beginning to break the first and second commandments - ask the class what these commandments are. God had said 'You shall not make yourself a carved image and you shall have no other gods before Me.' The Children of Israel fearing that their leader was not going to return then began to ask Aaron to make an idol to lead them.

Aaron, who should have known better, agreed with them. He even asked them to bring their gold rings and jewellery and he melted them in the fire and modelled a calf. When the people saw the calf they said, 'This is your God, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.' They danced and sang and offered sacrifices to this idol. How terrible it was that they had forgotten God and so quickly turned to such sinful behaviour. God saw what was happening and said to Moses, 'Go get down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.' The people had turned away from what God commanded them and made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They also bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your God, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.' (Exodus 32: 7 - 8)

God then told Moses that He was going to destroy the people because of this terrible sin they had committed, but Moses prayed to God for them. The Lord listened to Moses and said He would not destroy them.

So, Moses, carrying the two tablets of stone, descended from the mountain. As he neared the Israelite camp with Joshua, he heard the sound of singing. He saw the calf with the people dancing round the calf, and he was furious. He lifted the two large slabs of stone and smashed them to the ground. He took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire and ground it to powder. He sprinkled the powder in the water which the people had to

drink. Turning to Aaron he said, 'What did these people do to you, that you have brought so great a sin upon them?' Aaron replied something like this, 'Well, it really wasn't my fault. The people made me do it.' Then Moses cried out, 'Whoever is on the Lord's side come to me.' The tribe of the Levites came to him and Moses sent them throughout the camp with their sword killing many of the people. That day three thousand Israelites died. This was God's punishment on the people for this terrible sin.

APPLICATION

Sin is disobeying God. God expects us to obey Him in every detail. The Children of Israel committed what we might call a very big sin. We think we would never do anything so terribly wrong, but sometimes we sin by small acts of disobedience. To God all disobedience is sin.

LESSON 28

Growing in God's Family

REMEMBERING GOD'S GOODNESS - THE BRAZEN SERPENT

Scripture Text - Numbers 21: 4 - 9 and John 3: 14 - 16

AIM OF LESSON

To show how God punished the Israelites for their sin of discontentment and how He provided salvation for those who trusted Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Edomites - descendants of Esau

Gulf of Aqaba - estuary of the Red Sea

Numbers 20: 14 - 21 - The Children of Israel were on their way to the land of Canaan. When they reached Kadesh, a town near the border of Edom, Moses sent messengers to the King of Edom to ask permission to travel through his land to reach Canaan which lay North of Edom. The King of Edom refused permission and threatened to attack the Israelites if they set foot in Edom. God advised Moses to lead the Israelites back and not to become involved with the Edomites, as they were part of their own kin, being descendants of Abraham through Esau. (Use the map from lesson 23.).

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Discuss with the class if they ever grumble about things. Do they complain when they are asked to do something at home or at school? Do they always eat the good meals mother makes for them? Do they moan when they are told to put on sensible clothes when it is cold and wet? The people in today's story were just like that!

Outline

The Israelites were feeling very fed up and sorry for themselves. Here they were back in the desert of Paran again, and no nearer Canaan. The King of Edom had refused to let them pass through his country and so they had turned back to take a different route. (Show map of possible route.) It was discouraging. They started to grumble. Why had God let this happen to them? Why had He brought them out into the wilderness to die where there was no water or bread? They blamed Moses and complained very bitterly to him.

Poor Moses. What could he do with them? They had forgotten how good a leader he was, dealing patiently and wisely with them. They had forgotten God's care and provision for them as they fled from Egypt. (Ask the class to recall the numerous occasions when God

had shown His care for the Children of Israel.)

God looked down at the Israelites and when He saw their discontented grumblings He was very angry. He punished them by sending poisonous snakes (serpents) amongst them. These snakes were horrid! They were slithering about everywhere, and they bit many of the people. Their bites were poisonous and caused great suffering and a high fever. Many people died after they were bitten.

The children of Israel had something to grumble about now. They were very unhappy and they now realised that God had sent these snakes as punishment for their sinful behaviour towards Him. They came humbly to Moses, and pleaded with him to pray to God to take the snakes away from them.

Moses prayed, and God answered his prayers by telling him to make a 'fiery' serpent and put it up on a pole where anyone who was bitten could easily look up at it and be healed and not die.

Moses did as God had told him. He made a bronze serpent and nailed it on top of a pole which he erected in the middle of the camp. Anyone who was bitten could look at it and be made better again.

This seemed a very simple solution to the problem. Healing from the poisonous bites was free to all who looked up at the bronze serpent. Those who didn't bother to look up at it, or didn't believe that this could heal them, died.

APPLICATION

Many hundreds of years later, Jesus was talking to Nicodemus the lawyer about salvation, and He referred to this story. He said, 'And, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up.' Do you know what Jesus meant by this?

Jesus was referring to His own death on the cross for our sins. The bronze snake was placed on top of a pole, and those Israelites who believed God's word to Moses were healed by looking at the serpent. Those who did not believe died. Jesus was 'lifted up' on the cross. Those who believe in Jesus and come humbly to Him, will be saved. Those who do not put their trust in Him, Jesus says they are condemned already, and will perish.

LESSON 29

Growing in God's Family

LEARNING TO HONOUR GOD

Scripture Text - Numbers 22

AIM OF LESSON

To show how Balaam was brought to see that he must honour God by obeying Him without question.

BACKGROUND NOTES

When the Children of Israel finished their wanderings in the wilderness and were ready to enter the Promised Land they encamped in the plains of Moab near Jordan. They lived in Moab until they passed through Jordan under the leadership of Joshua after the death of Moses.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Have you ever heard a donkey talking? This story is about a donkey who spoke. He was not only clever, but wise and wiser than his master.

Outline

As the Children of Israel were travelling to the promised land of Canaan, they camped at Moab near the river Jordan. When Balak, the King of Moab saw how many Israelites there were and heard how God had made them victorious over all those who opposed them he was terrified. Imagine thousands of people camping on your doorstep and knowing they had destroyed all the cities in the land next to yours! How would you feel?

So Balak sent messengers for Balaam the prophet to come and put a curse on the Israelites and enable him to drive them out. (To curse someone means to ask God to have all sorts of bad things happen to that person.) 'Lodge here, tonight,' said Balaam, 'and I will bring back word to you, as the Lord speaks to me'. So they stayed overnight with Balaam. God then told Balaam, 'You shall not curse the people for they are blessed.' The next morning Balaam told the messengers 'Go back to your land, for the Lord has refused to give me permission to go with you.'

Balak was not satisfied with Balaam's answer. With all these people in his country he must have Balaam at any price. He sent more distinguished princes to Balaam with the promise of honour and great reward if he would come and put a curse on the Israelites. 'Please let

nothing hinder you from coming to me' they pleaded. But Balaam said 'Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight that I may know what more the Lord will say to me.'

Poor Balaam. Although he said the correct words and knew what he should do, yet in his heart he was being tempted by Balak's offer. Was he hoping that God might change his decision and allow him to go? God knew of the struggle in Balaam's heart and that night he said to Balaam 'If the men come to call you, rise and go with them, but only the word which I speak to you - that you shall do.'

Balaam rose up early in the morning, saddled his donkey and set out with the princes. But God was angry with Balaam because he was so eager to be off to Moab. He sent the Angel of the Lord to stand in the road to stop him. As Balaam and two servants were riding along, Balaam's donkey suddenly saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the road with a drawn sword. The donkey turned off the road into a field, but Balaam beat it back to the road. Further on the Angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between two vineyards with walls on both sides. When the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord, it tried to pass by pressing close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot in the process. Balaam was annoyed with the donkey so he beat it again.

Later the Angel of the Lord stood in a very narrow place where the donkey could not get past. What would the poor donkey do this time? She lay down under Balaam. Balaam did not understand the donkey's strange behaviour. He became very angry and beat it again with his staff.

The Lord caused the donkey to speak. 'What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?' Balaam answered 'Because you have abused me.' The donkey asked 'Was I ever disposed to do this to you?' 'No' admitted Balaam. Then the Lord allowed Balaam to see the Angel of the Lord standing in the road with His sword drawn and he fell flat on the ground before Him. The Angel of the Lord spoke to Balaam and said, 'Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out to stand against you. . . The donkey saw me and turned aside from me three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live.'

Balaam said to the Angel of the Lord, 'I have sinned. If it displeases you I will turn back.' But the Angel of the Lord told him 'Go with the men, only the word that I speak to you, that you shall speak.' So Balaam went on with the princes to Moab, and said only what God wanted him to say.

APPLICATION

Why did God command Balaam not to go to Moab? God intended to bless the Israelites so it was useless for this prophet to curse them. Why did God then allow him to go? Suppose some of your school friends ask you to go somewhere or do something which you would enjoy. You ask your Mother, who knows that what you want to do is wrong, or would not be good for you. When she says 'No' do you ever ask again hoping that she might change her mind and allow you to go? This is what Balaam did. He should have done exactly what God told him the first time. When Balaam did not do what he was told, God allowed him to go with the messengers to Moab. God let Balaam know He was angry with him by sending the Angel of the Lord to hinder him. When Balaam was allowed to see the Angel of the Lord he said 'I have sinned for I did not know you stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases you, I will turn back.' Balaam had learned that we cannot do just as we please. We cannot sin and get away with it. We must do what pleases God. We must obey Him completely and do it with all our hearts.

LESSON 30

God's Faithful Workers

BEING BRAVE SOLDIERS - JOSHUA CAPTURES JERICHO

Scripture Text - Joshua 6

AIM OF LESSON

To show how the people of Israel were victorious by obeying God and how we must learn to follow God's instructions.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Many years ago God had promised the Children of Israel that they would enter the Promised Land, and it is in the book of Joshua that God's promise was fulfilled. After the death of Moses, Joshua had become leader of the Israelites. He had worked in close contact with Moses and had been naturally marked out as his successor. He must have gained tremendous experience during the time in the wilderness. He was noted for his courage and faith and was a true man of God. The army which Joshua led into Palestine was disciplined and united and held the conviction that this war was a holy one, i.e., it was carried out under God's orders and with His blessing.

In Joshua 3: 5 the people were told to sanctify themselves and they were led across the Jordan preceded by the Ark of the Covenant. Near the city of Jericho the Angel of God appeared to Joshua and reminded him that God was the Leader in battle and the story of the capture of Jericho shows how Divine guidance influenced and controlled all their efforts.

The Ark of the Covenant was a small chest constructed as God directed in Ex. 25: 10-16.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Have you ever been asked to do something unusual? I'm sure you have. Maybe Mummy or Daddy asked you to do something and they said 'I want you to do it this way' but it wasn't the way you would have thought of doing it. This is what happened to Joshua. God wanted him to capture the city of Jericho and the instructions God gave were most unusual. Let's listen to those unusual instructions and see that because Joshua obeyed them in every detail God gave them victory.

Outline

Jericho was a city which was protected by strong high walls and to the people of Israel it must have seemed impossible to enter and capture it. Naturally, when the king of Jericho saw the Israelites coming towards the city he would give orders for his soldiers to shut all

the gates and keep the people safe within the walls of the city. To Joshua and his army the city of Jericho seemed very secure and impossible to enter. Can you imagine how you would feel, if you were one of those soldiers who had to try to capture the city with its great walls? Wouldn't that be a terrifying task! However, this was an army which was different from all other armies. Joshua was in charge of the army but, more important, God was in charge of Joshua. God told Joshua how to capture Jericho and not only did Joshua obey but he obeyed without asking one single question. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all had a faith like Joshua and put God completely in charge of our lives; God would be the Army General and we would be soldiers in God's army.

God told Joshua how he and the Israelites could capture Jericho and Joshua passed God's commands on to the priests and the people. These strange commands God gave included marching round the city, but not attacking the city. The Ark of the Covenant was to be carried round the city with seven priests carrying trumpets going before it. Can you remember reading about the Ark and what it contained?

Let us stop for a moment and imagine the order of the army. First of all the soldiers lined up and they were followed by seven priests carrying trumpets. Behind the trumpet bearers came other priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant and finally came the rear guard of more soldiers. Joshua called to the people, 'You shall not shout or name any noise with your voice . . . until the day I say to you.' Can you imagine the atmosphere of excitement and how difficult it must have been for the Israelites to keep silent? (Can you keep quiet for a long time?)

The first day the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant round the city with the army and then came back to their camp. You can imagine how surprised the people in Jericho must have been. 'What are they doing? Why are they not attacking us?' The next day they did the same thing and this they did for six days. Then when the seventh day arrived it was different. As on the previous days they rose early and circled the city in the same way, but today they circled it seven times and as the priests blew their trumpets Joshua said to the people 'Shout! for the Lord has given you the city!' So the priests blew the trumpets, the people shouted with all their power. God made the walls of Jericho fall down flat, and so the Israelites marched in and captured the city.

APPLICATION

Now we see how by obeying God, Joshua and his army were so successful. If we love God and try to obey Him in our lives we can think of ourselves as soldiers in God's army. Isn't that a great privilege? God is the General and we are the soldiers. Soldiers must obey their General and they must do so without argument or protest. Unless this happens the army will be weak and the enemy will win. In the battle of life who do you think the enemy is? We must try to be brave and tell our friends that God is our Leader, that we are following Him and must be loyal to Him. It is important that we talk to God and ask Him to help us fight the many temptations. Will you remember each morning before going to school to talk to God and ask Him to help you behave in a way which would please Him?

LESSON 31

God's Faithful Workers

BEING BRAVE SOLDIERS - SAMSON FIGHTS THE PHILISTINES

Scripture Text - Judges 15: 3 - 17

AIM OF LESSON

To show that we have to be prepared to fight the devil every day and we can depend upon God to help us.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The book of Judges deals with the first two or three centuries following the entry of the tribes of Israel into Canaan under Joshua. The history of the time of the Judges can be summarised very simply in Judges 2: 11 - 19 - Israel rebelled against God by worshipping the false gods of the Canaanites; God gave them into the hands of their enemies; they repented and cried to the Lord; God raised up judges to deliver them; the judges died and the people rebelled again, therefore the cycle was repeated. The main portion of the book gives the history of the judges of whom 12 are mentioned.

Samson was from the tribe of Dan. He was dedicated as a Nazarite by his parents which meant that he was pledged never to shave or drink intoxicants. His marriage, against his parent's wishes and God's general direction, to a Philistine girl brought him into close contact with the Philistines and caused him great unhappiness. The Philistines were the most threatening of Israel's enemies at this time and Samson gained a partial victory over them but the threat remained.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

I wonder how many of you here play cowboys and Indians? Do you like being the Indian, or perhaps you prefer being the cowboy? We hear a lot about fighting these days. I wonder can you name things that it is possible to fight with? Yes, there is the gun, the cannon, the spear and arrow and the sword. All these are things we associate with fighting but today we are going to hear the story of a man who fought with a most unusual item. Listen to the story and then see if you can tell me what the item was.

Outline

God's people, the Israelites, were living in their own land of Canaan and they were happy living there. For many years they worshipped God and obeyed Him. Then gradually they began to disobey God. They made friends with their heathen neighbours, people who didn't love the true God. They learned to worship idols. God was angry with His people and

punished them by sending their heathen neighbours to fight them. However, all the people did not forget God. There were a few who had not worshipped the heathen gods. These good people prayed to God and they asked Him to save them from their enemies. God heard their prayers and He chose special people called judges to help bring peace.

For a time the people stopped fighting. They began to love God and worship Him again. Then, as many years went by they forgot about God. Again, they worshipped idols. So, once more, God punished His people. He sent the Philistines to fight against them and to rule over them for 40 years. Finally, the Israelites returned to God. They prayed to God for help. Once again God chose a new leader to help His people. His name was Samson. Samson obeyed God and God made Samson the strongest man on earth.

While the Philistines ruled over the land Samson fought against them many times and each time the Philistines tried to capture him they failed. When the Philistines came into Israel's country and put up their tents, the men of Israel said, 'Why have you come up against us?' The Philistines answered, 'We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us.' There were 300 Israelites there at the time and they went to Etam, to find Samson. They said to Samson, 'Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us?' The people enquired from Samson why he was fighting the Philistines all the time. They told Samson that he would be tied up and handed over to the Philistines. Samson requested not to be killed by the Israelites. The men of Israel promised not to hurt Samson. They tied him up with two new ropes and carried him down to the Philistines. When the Philistines saw Samson they began to shout and cheer. Suddenly, the Lord increased Samson's strength and made him really strong. He broke the ropes, picked up a jawbone of an ass and began to fight. The Philistines fought back with their swords and spears but they could not take Samson. The harder the Philistines fought, the harder Samson fought. Eventually the Philistines were defeated and Samson killed 1000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. Samson was delighted and he went away singing.

APPLICATION

There is someone that you have to fight against every day. I wonder if you know the name of that person? Yes, the devil. Every day the devil tries to lead us away from God. He tempts us to do wrong. He perhaps tempts us to tell a lie, to disobey our parents or our teacher, to be cheeky to our friends, to tease our younger brothers or sisters. We must be on our guard against the devil and we must fight him every day, just like the way Samson fought the Philistines. But what do we use to fight the devil with? Samson didn't have a sword or a spear to fight the Philistine but he made use of what God gave him - the jawbone of an ass. God doesn't expect us to use a spear or a sword when fighting the devil but He does expect us to use what He has given us. I wonder do any of you know what God has given us to fight the devil with. Yes, God has given us His Word, the Bible. It is important that we learn verses from God's Word. God's Word, if read and learnt will keep us from stumbling or sinning in our Christian life. Are you reading God's Word every day to show you how to fight the devil? If you do, then you too, will be a brave soldier of Jesus Christ.

LESSON 32

God's Faithful Workers

BEING BRAVE SOLDIERS - DAVID AND GOLIATH

Scripture Text - 1 Samuel 17: 38-58

AIM OF LESSON

To show that if we are prepared complete a humble task, then God can use us for greater deeds.

BACKGROUND NOTES

King Saul had been rejected by God and although he still continued to reign, David was anointed to be his successor. David's proper place was at the royal court but if he had presented himself as the future king then it's not likely that Saul would have received him at all. However, God had a way of preparing David to be king. He was brought to be Saul's armour bearer and musician and there he could learn the duties of the king and what was involved in ruling the nation of Israel.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Do you like to hear stories about famous battles of long ago when kings led their armies and soldiers had no guns or explosives? Every man carried a shield to protect himself and a sword and spear with which to fight. Being a soldier is always dangerous work, but it is especially dangerous for those who are in the front line - those who lead the way. Today we are going to hear about one of the most famous battles of all time when a young lad David killed the giant Goliath.

Outline

Saul who was the first king of Israel ruled well for a time but then he began to be disobedient towards God. Samuel the prophet was then asked by God to go to Jesse and anoint the person that would be king in place of Saul. Of all Jesse's sons, God chose David, the youngest boy of the family who was a shepherd and watched over his father's sheep. This was not always as easy a task as we might think because there were wild animals roaming in the countryside around Bethlehem, and on different occasions he had to wrestle with a lion and a bear to rescue some of the sheep. So although he was still quite young he was a very brave person and did his work very thoroughly.

Now during the years that Saul was king, many of Israel's enemies had been defeated and for some years there was peace. But one day the Philistines gathered together their armies to fight against Israel. Saul and his men made ready for the battle and they faced their enemy in the valley of Elah, in the lands of the Tribe of Judah. In the camp of the Philistines there was a soldier whose name was Goliath of Gath, a giant. This man was about three metres tall and he

wore a coat of mail and a helmet of brass on his head. He carried a huge spear and sword and someone carried his shield before him. As the enemies faced each other for battle Goliath stepped forward and encouraged any man to come and fight with him. Goliath also stated that if he was killed then his people would become servants to the Israelites but if he killed the Israelite then they would bow down to the Philistines and be slaves.

When Saul and his men heard this, they were very afraid. There was no man in all Israel as tall and as powerful as Goliath of Gath. For forty days every morning and every evening Goliath came forward and teased the Israelite army and their God. Then one day David was sent by his father with food to his brothers who were soldiers in the Israelite army. When he heard about Goliath, he said that he would go and fight with him. But Saul was very concerned that David was a young boy and Goliath had fought in many wars. David then explained how he had killed a lion and a bear while protecting his father's sheep. He said, 'The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine.' Saul said, 'Go and the Lord be with you.' Saul then gave David his armour but he could hardly walk or move in it. It was far too heavy and clumsy so he took it off. Instead he took five smooth stones from the brook, put them in his shepherd's bag and took his sling in one hand and his shepherd's staff in the other.

When Goliath saw David coming he shouted, 'Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks?' and he cursed David by his gods. David said to Goliath, 'You come to me with sword, with a spear, with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.' David also told Goliath that his trust was in God and He would deliver him.

David then ran towards Goliath, took a stone from his bag and slung it and struck the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank deep and Goliath fell on his face, dead. So David had victory over the Philistine with only a sling and a stone. The Israelites chased the Philistines away, took all they had and won a great victory that day in the valley of Elah.

APPLICATION

David the shepherd put all he had into his work among the sheep. He became a brave young man who trusted God and God used him to do a mighty work for Him against Goliath. We may not be called to go into the battle field to fight a giant but we must remember that this was not the first task that God gave David to do. He was given the humble task of looking after his father's sheep and while doing this he was able to perfect his skill with the sling. When the opportunity arose, God used David's skill to defeat a whole army. God has given you and me different talents which we should use to His glory. It may be that you like to look after people who are ill, so perhaps some day you will be able to work in a hospital and help look after the patients. It may be that you can speak well so perhaps one day God will be able to use you as a Sabbath School teacher or minister to tell others about the way of salvation. If we use our gifts to the best of our ability, who knows what God will do with us!

LESSON 33

God's Faithful Workers

LOVING FOLLOWERS - A FORGIVEN SINNER ANOINTS JESUS' FEET

Scripture Text - Luke 7: 36 - 50

AIM OF LESSON

To show how a penitent sinner expressed her love for Christ and to encourage each pupil to repent and show the same love for the Saviour.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The posture at meals was a reclining one. The guests leaned on their elbows with their feet stretched out behind. An alabaster flask had a long neck and was used for storing perfume. The neck was broken off when the contents were to be used. Our Lord used a parable to illustrate the point He was making and left His host to provide the answer.

Simon did not show respect for Jesus, although he invited Him to eat in his house. He did not give Jesus water to wash His dusty feet according to the common custom of hospitality, but the woman came uninvited and showed more respect for Christ.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Little Johnny was like many other people of his age. He was a car fanatic. One day a wealthy uncle took him for a ride in his Rolls Royce. The same evening a neighbour took Johnny into town in his mini car. Johnny was grateful to both people for the ride, but he was more grateful to one of them. Which one do you think? Yes, the one whose car gave Johnny the more thrilling and unusual ride.

Let's pretend today is your Sabbath School excursion. Joan and Susan empty their money boxes on to the table to count their spending money. Father says he will make each one up to £2.00. To do this he has to give Joan 90p and Susan 15p. Which of the girls would be more grateful to their dad? Yes, the one who received more.

Today we are going to talk about two people - one who received a great deal from Jesus and the other who didn't.

Outline

Jesus was invited to have a meal at Simon's house. Simon was a Pharisee, which meant he was probably rich and liked to show off that he was very religious. But he didn't even have the good manners to give water for Jesus to wash His feet. You remember that the streets were dry and dusty and it was always the custom to wash visitors' feet as soon as they came into your house.

Now a woman who lived in the city and had led a very sinful life was very anxious to meet

Jesus because she loved Him as her Saviour. She knew what time He was to be at Simon's house, so although she would never, never receive an invitation to go there, she decided to go without one. She brought an expensive bottle of ointment with her and stood at Jesus' feet. The woman began to weep and she used her tears to wash His feet and she dried them with her hair. She then kissed His feet and put some ointment on them. When Simon saw what was going on he said that if Jesus was a prophet He would know that this was a sinful woman. Jesus then told Simon the following story.

There was a certain man and two people owed him money; one 500 pence and the other 50 pence. We might not think this was very much but we must remember that a man did a hard day's work for one penny! They were not able to pay the money back, so the man forgave them. Jesus asked Simon, 'Tell Me therefore which of them will love him more?' Simon answered, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more,' and Jesus said, 'You're right'. Jesus told Simon that when He entered his house He received no water to wash His feet, but the woman washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Simon did not give Him a kiss, which was the sign of a friendly welcome, when He arrived, and the woman had kissed His feet. Simon did not anoint His head and the woman had anointed His feet. The woman, who had many sins, was forgiven, and now she had shown Jesus that she loved Him. Jesus said to the woman, 'Your sins are forgiven.' The other guests began to ask who this person was who could forgive sins. Jesus silenced her fears by saying, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

APPLICATION

Simon, the Pharisee, thought highly of himself and didn't think that he needed to be forgiven. So he didn't trust in Christ and didn't show any love to Him. The woman knew she was a sinner and when she saw Jesus she showed that she loved Him a great deal. These were two very different people. The first thought he was not too bad. The second knew she had done many wrong things and was really sorry for the kind of life she had led.

What about us? We should all try to lead good lives but we are not without sin and we need to be forgiven. We must be really sorry for our sins and ask God to forgive us.

The woman showed her love by bringing the precious ointment for Jesus. It had cost such a lot. In what ways can we show our love for Him? How about

- singing praise to God
- giving part of our pocket money to God each week
- obeying Mum and Dad
- being kind to others who maybe aren't kind to us.

LESSON 34

God's Faithful Workers

LOVING FOLLOWERS - LEARNING TO BE A HUMBLE SERVANT

Scripture Text - John 1: 6 - 34

AIM OF LESSON

To show how John the Baptist was a humble servant and how we should live for the glory of Christ rather than the praise of men.

BACKGROUND NOTES

This book commences with a revelation given to John the Apostle concerning the existence and glory of Jesus Christ (the Word, v. 1) with God, before the beginning of time.

John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare the people for the appearance on earth of his Son (the Light, v. 7).

He was born in 7 BC, his father was a priest named Zacharias and his mother was Elizabeth, a cousin of Mary the earthly mother of Jesus. He grew up in Judea and began his prophetic work a few months before Jesus. (Luke 1: 80 and Luke 3: 1 - 2). He became known as a preacher who called for repentance and everywhere he went crowds flocked to hear him. He denied any value in being a descendant of Abraham but stated that a spiritual rebirth was necessary. He witnessed against a background of opposition and prejudice and denounced the religious leaders of the people. John described himself as someone who was preparing the way for Christ.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Today let us listen to the story of a man who lived during the time Jesus was on earth. Like Jesus he went about the country preaching, and large crowds gathered to hear him. Although many came to hear his preaching, John was not a proud man.

He made it very clear that he was a servant of a very great Master and that he felt that he was a very unworthy servant. His preaching was all about Jesus whom he loved and served. The man was called John the Baptist. Do you remember reading about the man who wore a coat of camel's hair and a leather girdle and who ate locusts and wild honey?

Outline

When the people came to listen to John the Baptist he spoke to them about Jesus. He told them that Moses had given the people the Law and that Jesus was the One who fulfilled the Law and saves us from our sins.

As you may imagine it was not long before news of John and his teaching reached Jerusalem, the priests and Levites came to see John so that they could find out more about him. Secretly they feared that John was the Messiah, the Saviour, and they wanted from him a clear answer as to who he was. John told them that he was not the Messiah but his answer did not satisfy them.

They questioned John further and asked him if he was Elijah the prophet come back to earth from the dead. He told them he was not. Finally they asked 'Who are you? That we may take an answer to those who sent us.' John commented that Isaiah said that God would send a messenger to prepare for the Messiah coming and that he was the messenger

The priests and Levites were still puzzled. They could not understand John or what he was telling them. They realised there was a mystery and they were determined to solve this mystery.

They enquired from John that if he was neither Christ nor Elijah why did he baptize people. John replied, 'I only baptize with water but there stands one among you whom you do not know.' This person was very much greater than John and John would not even be good enough to take off His shoes.

The following day John was preaching when he saw Jesus coming towards him and he said to the people who were gathered to listen to him, 'Behold The Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said.' This was the person that John had said was very much greater than himself.

John then told the people that Jesus was the Son of God. God had told him that when he was baptizing people and saw the Holy Spirit come down and rest on a particular man, then he would know that he had met the Son of God. One day when he was baptizing people and Jesus came to him for baptism, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, came down and rested on Him.

God the Father spoke from Heaven and said 'You are my beloved Son; in you I am well pleased.' (Luke 3: 22).

The next day John again saw Jesus and said to his disciples, 'Behold! The Lamb of God.' When his disciples heard this they followed Jesus. It pleased John that more and more

people were going to listen to Jesus.

APPLICATION

Wasn't it wonderful to see how John spent his time teaching about Jesus, and how large crowds gathered to listen to his preaching. However, it is even more wonderful to see how John was so humble about himself and felt that he was not even good enough to take off Jesus' shoes. Taking off shoes is a task that only the lowest and least important of servants would do.

The person who matters most of all is the Lord Jesus Christ. We must trust in Him as our Saviour and live for His glory. We must be like John the Baptist who was always ready to tell others about Jesus. He didn't mind if other people made fun of him or tried to hurt him. He didn't even mind when the people who had been coming to hear him went to hear Jesus instead. That was what he wanted. So, if our friends make fun of us because we talk about Jesus let us pray for them and ask God to change them.

Like John, we too should be humble servants, always ready to do what we're asked.

LESSON 35

God's Faithful Workers

TRUSTING GOD'S MERCY - JESUS AND THE DYING THIEF

Scripture Text - Luke 23: 32 - 46

AIM OF LESSON

To show how the dying thief found that God's mercy was extended even to him in his dying hour. To encourage each child to trust in that mercy for salvation.

BACKGROUND NOTES

When Jesus was crucified, two thieves were crucified with Him. This was the usual form of capital punishment at this time and it was quite common. It was carried out in public, as hangings used to be in this country, and gathered a large group of on-lookers.

The Zealots. 'While Pharisees and Sadducees tried to make the best of Roman rule many Jews sought salvation more actively. The Zealots, as they later came to be called, were the freedom fighters, the revolutionaries of the Jewish people. It was they who eventually sparked off the great rebellion which led to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. By the time of Jesus abortive revolts had already occurred (Acts 5: 36 - 37). At least one of the apostles (Simon the Zealot) was a former Zealot'. (Lion Handbook to the Bible, page 495.) Possibly Barabbas and the two 'thieves' were captured terrorists. This gives us some idea of the kind of man the 'dying thief' may well have been.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Have you ever been disappointed in anything? Perhaps you once bought an expensive toy for which you had saved a long time, and it would not work properly. Things can let us down. People can let us down, even those we love dearly can disappoint us. There is only one whom we can say with certainty will never let us down. I'm sure you all know to whom I am referring. Yes, GOD. He has never let anyone down. We read in one of the Psalms in the metrical version - 'His grace faileth never' (Psalm 136). Today we are going to hear of one who proved for himself that God never disappoints anyone who puts his trust in Him, even in the last hour of life.

Outline

When the soldiers stopped on the little hill of Calvary just outside Jerusalem they stretched Jesus on the cross. With heavy spikes they nailed His hands and feet to the wooden beams. They raised the cross and set it into the hole which they had dug. They filled the hole with

stones and clay so that the cross stood upright. They put a sign above His head. It said, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews'. The words were written in three different languages.

Two other crosses were raised on Calvary that morning. Two robbers were to be crucified too. Jesus' cross stood in the middle, the robbers crosses were on either side. The soldiers offered the three men a drink of vinegar or cheap wine. This was supposed to help ease the pain, but when Jesus tasted this He would not drink it. Jesus was on the cross a long time. It was 9 o'clock in the morning when the cross was raised and it was 3 o'clock in the afternoon when He finally died. As Jesus looked down from the cross He noticed the soldiers. They were dividing His clothes among them. Each of the four soldiers got his share. When they came to Jesus' coat, it was too good to be cut up because it was woven without seams, so they cast lots to see who would get it. Jesus was still thinking about others even though He was in great pain as the blood dropped from His hands and feet He prayed, 'Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do'.

While Jesus' friends wept as they watched Him suffer, His enemies mocked Him and said, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' His enemies commented that He can save others but cannot save Himself.

One of the robbers mocked Him also. He said, 'If you are the Christ save Yourself and us'. The other thief remarked, 'How dare you talk like that, aren't you afraid of God seeing we are about to die and appear before Him? We are hanging here because we are wicked and deserve to be crucified, but this man never did anything wrong.' Then he turned to Jesus and said, 'Lord remember me when you come into Your kingdom.' Jesus answered, 'Today you will be with Me in Paradise.' This is the answer Jesus gives to every dying one who loves Him.

At noon God took away the light of day. For three dreadful hours while Jesus hung on the cross everywhere was dark. Jesus was suffering from His wounds but God had left Him now and this was an even greater suffering for Jesus to bear. God gave Him the punishment that we would have had to suffer. The people heard Jesus saying, 'My God, why have You forsaken me.'

At three o'clock it became light. Jesus cried 'It is finished.' He bowed His head and died. His great suffering was over. He had done what He came into the world to do. He had died to save His people from their sins.

APPLICATION

We see from this story that God saved the dying thief when his life was almost ended. This

thief knew he was a wicked man who deserved God's punishment and if he did not repent of his sins and ask God to forgive him he would never go to heaven. He knew death was very near for him and yet he found that God's mercy was offered to him. Jesus' love was so great that He still cared for others even when He was in such pain hanging there on the cross. He knew that the thief was really sorry for his sins and He said, 'Today you will be in heaven with me.'

We too can be sure of heaven if we are sorry for our sins and ask God to take away our sins. But wouldn't it be sad and dangerous if we waited to the last hour like the thief on the cross. Wouldn't it be better to ask Jesus to take away our sins when we are still young and then we know that God will guide us, help us and keep us from evil all through our life and we will be able to tell others about God's great love for sinners.

LESSON 36

God's Faithful Workers

REJOICING IN JESUS' POWER - THE RESURRECTION

Scripture Text - Matthew 27: 57 - 28: 8

AIM OF LESSON

To show the children that we should rejoice in the resurrection and share our joy with others.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Today's story takes place after the death of Jesus on the cross. Jesus was put to death like a common criminal. He died on the cross, not because of any wrong-doing of His own, but in the place of ordinary sinful men and women. We see God's love for us by this death, and how through the resurrection we are reconciled to God.

At this time the Sabbath Day was the seventh day of the week and Jesus rose on the first day. Consequently after the resurrection the first day of the week became the Christian Sabbath.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

I am sure that you have all heard that Jesus died on a cross. I am going to tell you today what happened to Jesus' body and also what happened after most of the people who had been watching had gone home.

Outline

Usually the body of anyone who had died on the cross was taken away by the family shortly after the death. Jesus was still hanging on the cross but later that evening a man called Joseph who lived in Arimathea came to Pilate and asked if he could have the body of Jesus so that he could bury it. Pilate was the governor of the country and it was he who had ordered Jesus to be put to death. Pilate granted Joseph his wish.

Joseph wrapped the body in clean linen clothes and laid it in his own tomb which he had cut out of a rock. This sounds a strange thing to do with a dead man, but back in those days they did not have graves in churchyards or cemeteries like we have today. The dead were normally buried in caves and the rich people had their own tombs cut out of a large rock with a big stone or boulder put in the entrance to close the tomb.

We can see that Joseph loved God because he took Jesus' body and laid it in his own personal burial place, which had just been cut out very recently. After Joseph had laid Jesus' body in the tomb he closed it by rolling a large stone against the doorway and then he left. Two women who had followed the moving of Jesus' body sat by the tomb for a while; they were followers of Jesus. They were both called Mary - one was Mary Magdalene and the other was the mother of James and Joses.

The next day was the Sabbath Day and the chief priests and Pharisees who had plotted Jesus' death went to see Pilate. They had remembered that Jesus had said that he would rise from the dead after three days, and even though they did not believe in Jesus they were scared that this might happen. They wanted Pilate to make sure that the tomb was sealed until after the third day, because the disciples might come and steal Jesus' body and then they would say that he had risen.

So Pilate got the tomb sealed and sent soldiers to guard the tomb continuously.

Early the next morning on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb. What a great surprise they got. The tomb was empty and Jesus wasn't there. There had been an earth-quake, the angel of the Lord had come down from heaven and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the tomb and sat on it. His face was shining bright like lightning and his clothes were as white as snow. The soldiers who were guarding the tomb were so frightened that they fainted.

The angel spoke to the two women and said, 'I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified, He is not here, He has risen, go quickly and tell His disciples.' So they quickly left to tell the disciples the good news.

APPLICATION

What a good example the two Marys give us. They were truly devoted to Jesus, they stayed by the tomb after everyone else had gone, and then returned early on the morning of the first day of the week. The seventh day being the Sabbath they rested and thus did not visit the tomb. So they returned at the first opportunity. The angel spoke to the two women telling them that Jesus had risen and that they were to go and tell the disciples the news. They did not question the angel and they wanted to immediately share the good news of Jesus. Are we prepared to take God at his word and tell others of his power over death, and that we are forgiven by trusting in Him? Now we know that Jesus is alive and He is with us everyday and in all we do.