



UNIT 16 | SESSION 1

JEREMIAH ENCOURAGED GOD'S PEOPLE

JEREMIAH 29-30

KEY PASSAGE:

Zephaniah 3:17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Where is God? God is in all places at all times and is always with His people.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God did not abandon His people. The prophet Jeremiah encouraged God's people. He said God was going to save His people from captivity and raise up a new King—a forever King—from David's family.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



PREPARE
PREPARE YOUR HEART TO TEACH; PLAN THE SESSION



WELCOME
GREET KIDS AND OPEN THE SESSION



LEARN
TEACH KIDS THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL



LOVE
LEAD KIDS TO LOVE THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL



LIVE
LEAD KIDS TO LIVE OUT THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LEADER Bible Study

God’s Word is living, active, sharp, powerful, and profitable. (Heb. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17) The Bible indicates that by the power of the Holy Spirit, God’s words teach, rebuke, correct, and train us so that we are complete and equipped for the work that God has created us for. The Bible is full of stories, illustrations, commands, warnings, and heart-provoking questions that provide for us everything we need.

Yet, throughout our lives, we intentionally disregard God’s words for us. We are guilty of the same thing that Jeremiah 29:19 describes—not listening to God’s words.

When we know God’s words and know that God’s words are good for us, why do we continuously neglect them? The answer is simple: We prefer our own way.

Throughout the Bible, God warns us by direct command and historical example. We find explicit instructions to obey God’s words and explicit assurances of the pending consequences for refusing to obey His words. We find instances where God executes His justice on those unknowingly ignorant toward His instructions and those blatantly defiant toward Him. God takes His words seriously and expects that we do the same.

What is your relationship to God’s words given to us in the Bible? Are you distant,

aware, knowledgeable, or in awe? Are you dismissive, forgetful, interested, or obedient? God’s expectation is that we would hear and obey His words, that we would seek His truth and live His truth, and that we would know His instructions and heed them.

The reality is that we all will fail to do this, but there is hope because of the One who has the title “The Word.” Jesus, the living Word of God, lived a perfect life in full obedience to God and His words, yet He died the death that we deserve so that in our failure, we might find hope.

The answer to our struggle to listen and obey God’s words is not simply trying harder, but pursuing a greater love of God, a greater hope in His Son, and a greater trust in His Spirit. These will lead us to greater obedience. His expectations are great, but His mercy is more.

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Jeremiah: prophet who proclaimed God’s judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem and proclaimed hope and salvation.



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Has someone ever encouraged you in some way? How were you encouraged? Who encouraged you? What did you do in response?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “God Is Faithful Maze” on the activity page.

SAY “What message did you find? God made a promise to His people. Do you think God kept His promise? Today, we’ll hear a story about the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah spoke God’s message to His people. Jeremiah encouraged God’s people. Let’s get ready to learn more.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: PASS THE MESSAGE



Guide kids to form two single-file lines. Whisper an important message to the first kid in each line. Sample messages:

- Tomorrow morning at 8:30, the bus will depart from 415 Newberry Street.
- Today at 11:15, we will serve grilled cheese and pickles with chips for lunch.
- In four minutes, call 555-8909.

Challenge the players to whisper the message to the next player in line until the message reaches the end. Invite the last players to say the message aloud. The first team to get the message accurately to the end of the line wins. Play again, using a different message, as time allows.

SAY “That was fun to deliver those messages quickly. In the Bible, God gave important messages to prophets who then shared those messages to God’s people. Today, we’ll hear about a message the prophet Jeremiah shared with God’s people.”

OPTION 2: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

Before the session, write the following scenarios on index cards:

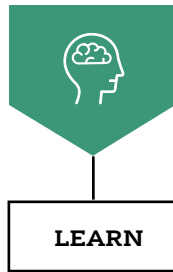
- Take cover! A tornado is coming your way!
- Don’t eat that sandwich! It’s full of dirt!
- Be careful! That plate is hot and will burn you!
- Don’t get in the ocean! There’s a shark!

Form four groups and distribute the scenario cards. Instruct each group to read the scenario and take turns acting out how they would respond to the warning.

SAY “If someone gave you one of these warnings, what would you do? Would you listen, or would you ignore it? Today, we’re going to see how God sent prophets to warn His people. We’ll find out how the people responded. Do you think they listened?”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, everyone! My name is [your name]. I’m excited you’re here with us today. Did anyone bring their Bible today? Hold up your Bible if you brought it. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

The Bible is God’s Word. It is one Book with many stories, all fitting together to tell one bigger story. That story is the gospel—the good news of how God saves sinners through His Son, Jesus. One important part to understand in the gospel story is sin. In today’s story, we’re going to see how the sinful ways of God’s people brought trouble to them, but God—in His grace and love for them—sent an encouraging message through the prophet Jeremiah. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “ Our big picture question for today and the next few weeks is, **Where is God?** That’s a great question. How would you answer if someone asked you that? [Allow kids to respond.] The answer we’ll memorize is this: **God is in all places at all times and is always with His people.** Let’s say that together: **Where is God? God is in all places at all times and is always with His people.**

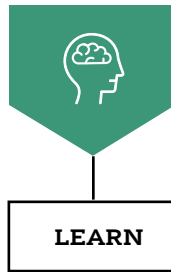
Can you think of a time when God’s people wondered where God was and then He provided for them in some way? Think about the stories we’ve learned about in the Bible. When things got tough for God’s people, they often wondered where God was. Every time, He was still there. And today, He is still with His people. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Remember that every story in the Bible is part of God’s big story. Over the last few weeks, we have seen how God’s people were taken captive in Babylon. The people were far away from the land God had given them, but they were not far from the God who had given it.

In the stories we will hear, we will learn how even in exile, God was with His people watching over them. He promised them that one day, they would return to the land, and when they did, they would return to Him as well. Today’s story is called ‘Jeremiah Encouraged God’s People.’ Let’s see where it fits on the timeline. [Point to the story on the timeline.] ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Jeremiah 29–30. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jeremiah Encouraged God’s People.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JEREMIAH ENCOURAGED GOD’S PEOPLE

“**The Northern Kingdom of Israel had turned from God and been destroyed by their enemies. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was also in trouble. God was angry with the people of Judah.** They did not obey Him. They lived however they wanted to live. **They sinned and were unfaithful to God.**”

God loved His people. He didn’t want to destroy them. **God sent prophets like Jeremiah to warn the kings and people to stop sinning and to turn back to God, but they didn’t listen. So God sent His judgment by bringing the king of Babylon to Judah.**

King Nebuchadnezzar (NEB yoo kad NEZ uhr) **invaded Judah and took some of God’s people—the best and most intelligent men—to Babylon. He left Jehoiakim in Judah as king.** When Jehoiakim rebelled, **Nebuchadnezzar invaded again and took more people captive.** Zedekiah was on the throne in Judah when **the prophet Jeremiah sent a message to Babylon to encourage God’s people.**

This is what **Jeremiah’s letter said: “This message is from God to the people He sent from Jerusalem to Babylon. While you are in Babylon, build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and grow your families. Work and pray for the good of your city. The exile will last 70 years, and then I will come. I promised to bring you back to the land of Judah, and I will keep My promise.**”

“I know My plans for you,” God declared. **“My plans are for your good. You have hope and a future. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.”** God promised to restore His people’s riches and bring them back home.

Jeremiah told the people that they would experience more troubles. In the face of their powerful enemies—the Babylonians—God knew they would feel hopeless. So Jeremiah shared what God would do. **God said, “I will set you free and raise up a king for you. Do not be afraid or discouraged. I will save you and be with you. I will bring you back to your land, and you will rejoice. You will be My people, and I will be your God.”**

Christ Connection: God did not abandon His people. The prophet Jeremiah encouraged God’s people. He said God was going to save His people from captivity and raise up a new King—a forever King—from David’s family. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Change your tone: Use voice inflection while you read Jeremiah’s message to God’s people. Vary your voice to show the importance of that part of the story.

Move around the room: Walk around the room while you tell the story to engage the kids’ attention.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ In our Bible story today, we saw how God’s people had disobeyed God and refused to listen to the warnings He sent through the prophets. This isn’t the first time God’s people had disobeyed Him. Can you think of another time God’s people sinned and disobeyed Him? **[Allow a volunteer to answer.]** Because God is good, righteous, perfect, holy, and just, God must punish sin. Sin always has consequences; but even when we are faithless, God is faithful.

God’s people faced consequences for their sin, but God never gave up on them. God had warned them time and time again, yet they were unfaithful to Him. God had every right to turn His back on them, but what was His message? Look at Jeremiah 29:11-14. **[Choose a volunteer to read the verses aloud.]** Through Jeremiah, God told His people that He was not done with them. Rather than abandoning them, God showed His people that He loved them and had a plan to save them. Isn’t that amazing?

God’s message to His people gives us hope as well. We can trust that just as God was faithful to be with His people in exile, God will be faithful to us. Through Jesus, we have the same hope that God will be our God and we will be His people. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ God did not abandon His people. The prophet Jeremiah encouraged God’s people. He said God was going to save His people from captivity and raise up a new King—a forever King—from David’s family. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 16, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How can we not feel so discouraged when we might fail at something?
2. Do you know an encouraging Bible verse you could share with someone? What is it?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display a map and point to Vancouver.

SAY “ Vancouver is on the west coast of British Columbia, Canada. More than two million people live in Vancouver, and over half of them in the city speak a first language other than English. More than 200 languages are spoken in the city. Vancouver has beaches and mountains, making it popular among tourists. It is a city that needs many churches because it has many people. But there are not many churches in the area. ”

Play the missions video. Explain that because Vancouver has many people from many



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

different backgrounds, the city needs many different churches to meet the needs and cultures of the people in the area.

Pray for churches in North America to partner with, pray for, and help churches already working in Vancouver. Pray that churches and individuals will also help start new churches in Vancouver to meet people's needs.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write the words of the key passage on separate index cards, preparing one card per kid. Depending on the size of the group, you may need to write multiple words per card. If your group is large, form two or more groups and prepare extra sets.

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Zephaniah 3:17 together.

SAY “ God promises to be with us and He always keeps His promises! Let’s learn the key passage together so we can remember that God is with us! ”

Direct kids to form a circle. Choose a volunteer to be the pointer and stand in the middle of the circle. Give the pointer a pool noodle or instruct her to use her pointer finger to point. Give a key passage card to each kid around the circle. The pointer will point the noodle or her pointer finger at the kid with the first word card, signaling him to say the word(s) on the card. The pointer should continue pointing in order of the key passage until kids say the entire key passage. If time allows, choose a new volunteer to be the pointer and play again.

Lead kids to sing “The Lord Your God (Zephaniah 3:17).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Lord, You are a faithful and loving God. Thank You for loving and saving Your people. Thank You that while we were still sinners, Jesus died to save us when we trust in Him. Help us always remember that truth and to tell others this good news. In Your name we pray. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**

