

God and Woman

A Chronological Bible Storying Model
For Storying the Good News
To a Primarily Oral Culture Muslim Women's
Worldview

To Mahalath

A daughter of Ishmael who represents the many girls and women, most often illiterate, living in urban and rural areas, who will never hear the Good News unless another woman tells them, a woman who lives in their world and speaks their language in a culturally appropriate manner.

It is to these daughters the following story lessons are dedicated as an attempt to speak to some of their worldview issues which, unless addressed, may be holding them back from ever knowing the Compassionate One who came to restore the broken relationship with the One we call Father.

First Printing Test Edition June, 1998
Singapore

GOD and WOMAN

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FOREWORD

Not long after becoming a trainer for Chronological Bible Storying conferences I became aware that in the practice story sessions women often told the stories differently than the men. For where the men focused upon the action in the story and in the broad strokes of doctrinal truth, the women focused upon relationships, feelings and emotions of the story characters as related to themselves, and family structure. There was a heightened interest among the women whenever a Bible story focused upon the person of a woman or some aspect of life typical in the woman's world. The pieces of this puzzle began to come together after listening to the questions and comments of women in some special "women only" storying sessions.

So it was necessary to become acquainted with these typical worldview issues to know how to choose and shape the stories for women. It also served to point at issues in some stories which side-tracked the story of redemption and only led to controversy and attention to non-essential cultural elements which differed from local customs.

A number of helpful articles addressing the rural oral culture Muslim woman's worldview provided additional insight and direction to the approach. As co-workers learned of the project many shared their ideas and additional sources of insight.

Talking with women Bible storyers in the field has affirmed again and again this unaddressed need for storying to oral culture women within their frames of reference.

This is not to say "this is a man's gospel" and "that is a woman's gospel". The Good News is the same for both. Jesus has died for the sins of all; and by believing and trusting in him all can have eternal life. The difference lies in the approach to telling the Good News. For women there was much greater interest in relationships developed in the stories than in doctrine.

A study of the witnessing approaches of Jesus reveals a deliberate effort to meet people where they were. His approach to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well centered on the woman's relationship to Jesus. He was the source of living water that satisfied, he was one to look into her unsettled life, and he was the one to point to a greater relationship in true worship of God. When she opened the door by her reference to the Messiah, Jesus simply stepped into it. Now her relationship had changed from Samaritan woman vs. Jewish man to needy sinner vs. the Messiah who was promised to come. And she had a new relationship with the village as one bearing good news about the Messiah.

The task then is to maintain a balance in which the accuracy of the story is preserved while letting the story speak to the worldview issues of women. One would need to resist the temptation to focus solely on the role and needs of women at the expense of men in the Bible story. This should be done without bias or attempt to distort the telling of a story in favor of women's role in it. Though it certainly would not rule out picking up those stories involving women which help to support the redemptive message of the Bible. These would be included along with the core stories typically told when evangelizing. The challenge is to use what is already there in the Bible story to highlight the relevance of that story to women, to capture their interest as they see a meaningful relevance of the Bible story to their lives, so that they hear it speak to them in their world.

Since the choice of stories and teaching themes used in the chronological Bible storying approach is related both to the biblical truths leading to salvation, and to the worldview issues

barring acceptance or bridging to salvation, it follows that, if the worldview of one part of the target audience is different from that of another in any significant way, then the story set and teaching themes ought to reflect it.

While the initial target was illiterate rural Muslim women in South Asia where the need is very great, other stories have been added to reflect a broader worldview base. Because Muslim and Hindu women often live in close proximity in the subcontinent villages it was decided to provide a broader worldview scope to favor both groups. The user will need to select from among the stories those which best suit their target listeners.

The stories have been prepared as “models” and will need to be shaped by the storyer for local women listeners’ needs. Rather than simply translating the stories it would be best to use these as guides and for ideas in how to take advantage of teaching this portion of God’s Word. As we learn from use we will continue to revise and improve the models.

Much of the dialogue has been deliberately preserved to heighten the relationships and interaction of the characters in the story. It favors the belief that it is more exciting to “overhear the conversation of others” and to let the characters themselves tell a significant part of the story. Summary is then used for brevity or to bridge portions of the story where continuity is needed..

I have persistently kept on this track out of a burden for reaching the other 50% of the population and in training them for effective witness to their own in the villages. I present this model story set as an attempt to address that need. May it open the door for other Bible storyers who are far more competent to continue refining the use of chronological Bible storying to bring the gospel to the women of the world so they can hear it and respond to it within their culture and their worldview.

No doubt there is need for expanding the scope of this model and also for targeting in a more specific way the various worldviews among the women of each people group. Some may take issue with the intent or interpretation of the following worldview issues. This is good. My prayer is that all reaction and input will move along toward a greater understanding of the world of unreached women and of better ways to speak to them in their world.

God and Woman was chosen as the model set’s title both to highlight the target audience and to take advantage of the popularity and good response to *God and Man* which was already a well-known and successful model story set by Dell and Sue Schultze.

J. O. Terry
Singapore
June, 1998

INTRODUCTION

“A woman is often the point of entry for the Gospel into a family. Because of her unfulfilled spiritual needs and her spiritual sensitivity, she is open to a new source of spiritual power in which she immediately senses the possibilities of a new and transcending relationship with the living God.” (“Women and Mission”, Bryant Myers, MARC Newsletter, No. 93-3, Sept. 1993, p.3)

God and Woman is intended as a model or a *cookbook* to get started storying to a target audience of women. It is not intended to be sexist. Its focus is primarily upon the unique worldview and spiritual needs of woman which may be neglected or overlooked when making a more generic presentation of the Bible story in a typical village setting.

These lessons have been prepared for use primarily in evangelizing women in village settings in which illiteracy is a contributing factor and where a general Islamic worldview prevails. However the choice of story lessons is broadened somewhat to include those living in Hindu and animistic related worldview settings as well. Women live in societies in which many divergent variations of both organized and folk religion prevail. It is not possible in one manual to give complete and thorough adaptation for every circumstance.

The lessons are suggested procedures to follow in conducting a storying session. One special consideration is the need to bridge across any stories that are purposely omitted. This preserves the continuity of the larger Bible story and serves to keep the framework of the stories intact. This bridging may be as simple as “After a long time had passed...” or a quick review to trace a Bible truth or theme from its introduction through several preceding stories which will then be continued in the new story. Many of the promises of God and prophecies as well as family lines are helpful to use when doing this.

Review activities and Let’s Talk activities should be altered as needed to provide a smooth linking between lessons and understanding and application of Bible truth.

The vehicle for communicating the Bible truth is through stories. The stories as given in the lessons are representative of “what one might tell.” Bible storyers must prepare their stories according to unique local needs, heart languages and expectations of how a story ought to be read or told from a sacred book. Users will note there are most likely far too many stories for their individual situation. So some choice is necessary to limit the list to a manageable size. This is expected. Alternate story lessons or additional story lessons may be added as needed.

The stories were selected to include among them a significant number in which women are mentioned by name, honored by God, or through which God worked to accomplish His purpose of redemption.

The stories are arranged chronologically to lead the listener systematically and narratively through the Bible from a beginning with God to a finished work of sacrifice for sin in Jesus—to see Jesus as the desired Savior, the only Savior. The stories focus upon the unfolding plan of redemption by God, but included are the little incidents and vignettes of everyday life in Bible times which amazingly parallel life in many lands today where Christians are a minority. It is through these incidents and details in the stories that women’s interest will be kindled as the listeners are led through the greater story of God working out their salvation in Jesus.

God and Woman is primarily an evangelism tool for use in the Evangelism Track when storying. It may be used in briefer form in the Review Track. If the greater need is for a Discipling Track for new believers, then make appropriate changes in the lessons to affirm the listeners' faith. More in-depth discipling will come from lessons drawn from the Epistles in a later Characterization Track.

It is realized that many women in the world today are often not free to make open professions of their faith in Christ or openly to practice a Christian faith. Faith must begin in the secrecy of the heart and be given sufficient time to establish and grow. Relationships with other women believers can develop until that time when through the changed woman's living testimony that her husband and family also can come to a living faith in Christ.

The MARC article cited above suggests that efforts to change a community fail when they ignore the role of women and that "empowering women is one of the keys to transforming a larger community." In a U. S. study of converts from Islam "all of the women converts received the Good News from another woman or from a couple."

The article concludes that two possible keys for reaching people groups resistant to the Gospel are "to recognize the possibly critical importance of women as a responsive entry point to resistant people groups" and "to recognize the importance of women as the ones most likely to have opportunities to speak to unreached women and to present the Gospel in ways they understand."

KNOW THE WORLDVIEW OF YOUR PEOPLE

If generic aspects of the woman's worldview could be addressed, it should give an adequate basis for entry into the storying process which can then be adapted as needed according to the particular locally prevailing worldview and its expression in religious practice.

While the *God and Woman* model story set is helpful to get started in storying to your target audience, don't fail to take note of the worldview of your listeners. This is essential in helping the storyer to target their worldview as it may be expressed in various barriers to the gospel or in helpful bridges to communicate the gospel. The following statements about the typical worldview of some women should be helpful in guiding your thinking but should not limit it. State your worldview findings as a list of barriers to the gospel or as possible bridges to an understanding of the gospel. Use these to help in selecting the best stories to use to overcome the barriers and to take advantage of the appropriate bridges to the gospel.

There are many core stories which *must* be used as they form an essential part of the foundation for the presentation of the gospel. There is often opportunity for shaping these stories to accommodate the interest of the listeners. Where this is not possible, the Review dialogue or Review stories before the new story, or the bridging stories, may give the needed focus.

WORLDVIEW CONSIDERATIONS FOR MUSLIM WOMEN

1. **RELATIONSHIPS**—A woman lives in the world of relationships. These arise out of her family life and the relationships with family members. She will likely be a caregiver at an early age for younger siblings. She will assume a relationship with her mother in household tasks. If fortunate, she may have some opportunity for outside relationships with peers in which education, recreation and intimate thoughts are shared.

A woman's image of God is typically that of a distant unapproachable entity and not that of a loving and caring father. It is essential to establish the basis for a relationship that may be possible through the person of Christ as a type of substitute male protector that her identity is culturally embedded in.

2. **ORIENTATION**—A woman's orientation is on people and especially family. If there is a new child in the neighborhood, the women like to know if it is a boy or a girl, and what is the name.
3. **CIRCUMSTANCES**—A woman is far more likely to try changing her circumstances if she is unfulfilled. She takes initiative to seek change. In the New Testament many women followed Jesus—they felt that *life and power* were in Jesus.
4. **SIN**—Women tend to view sin as flawed or failed relationships rather than breaking God's laws and commands.
5. **CONVERSION**—Often seen in earthly terms as a liberation from oppressive circumstances in relationships and physical needs. (esp. illness and demonic oppression)
6. **SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY**—Women often appear more spiritually sensitive than men in their ability to sense the "other world". Thus they respond readily to evidence of the presence of Spirit.
7. **SPIRITUAL POWER**—In the New Testament and in the many nominally Muslim lands women seek spiritual "power points" where they sense that spiritual power is present or may be obtained. They go to these power points to make their petitions for their needs. The woman is driven to seek comfort and solace in the spiritual realm to which she feels closely attuned.
8. **PERSONAL NEED**—A woman often pictures herself as "needy" and therefore is more open to change that satisfies that need. Physical, social and spiritual needs are included.
9. **PATIENCE**—While active in trying to change her circumstances, a woman may exhibit more patience in coping with her circumstances. This patience translates into a determination that grows until an opportunity arises and then results in a persistence to follow whatever steps are necessary to obtain satisfaction.
10. **NETWORKING**—Related to her self-evaluation a woman draws strength from her networking with other women. In the course of this networking she is far more liable to share spiritual needs and discoveries.

Her emotional relationship with other women may be on a far deeper level than her physical relationship with her husband. Her relationship with her eldest son may also be closer than her relationship with her husband.

11. PROTECTION—Related to her circumstances in a typical setting, a village woman desires and seeks protection from unsavory elements in her society. For her a *champion* is both desirable and essential for her well being.
12. LONELINESS—It is not uncommon for women to suffer loneliness, a feeling of unimportance, rejection, lack of worth, and weariness of life. This is especially true for young married women learning to live in the husband's family and for older women past childbearing age and in poor health.
13. CURIOSITY—As a general rule women possess a very active curiosity about things which they sense relating to their world. This curiosity leads to an openness to hear and explore new teachings rather than retreat into a dogma already in place.
14. RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION—Discrimination is common in many of the typical village religious activities. Men do the acting, women are left to watch and wonder.
15. PURITY—Because of local beliefs about blood and menstruation there is often a great concern about "purity" since an "impure" woman is seen to pollute a man's world.
16. PROMISES—Promises are seen to be an important source of hope. In a world where cleverness in circumventing the keeping of promises is extolled, only the promises of the spirit world can be trusted.
17. MEANING OF NAMES—Both a curiosity about names and the meaning of names is common. The name conveys a quality, trait, or characteristic of the person.
18. ACCEPTANCE—Everyone desires acceptance by their peers but this is doubly desired when society views one as a "possession" or of lesser importance. Acceptance by one's own family and by the in-law family is critical. Acceptance by peers is more likely if one is not viewed as "fallen" or "sinful."
19. IDENTITY—In Islamic law the woman is inferior to the man; she is always subject to a male guardian, whether her father, an uncle, brother or husband. The woman has only half the value of a man in blood-money, inheritance, and as witness in court. Her identity as a person is rooted in the male protector.
20. DEVOTION—The woman is more likely to become a devotee of some deity in gratitude for a boon granted or prayer answered. She responds gratefully and generously as she is able. By contrast the man's devotion is because of doctrine or religious duty requirements.
21. ILLITERATE—The woman is far more likely to be illiterate or only marginally literate. Her learning method is primarily oral culture.
22. FEAR—There is great fear of the evil aspects of the spirit world (jinn, bhut and demons) which might harm one's family, trouble a person in their sleep (disturbing dreams), or affect

their livestock and food crops. Offerings are made to appease these malevolent spirits to prevent their harming life and property. This is in opposition to good spirits or deities which grant favors. Other fears include illness, death and rejection (exclusion which is often synonymous with death).

23. PEACE—This is especially a worldview issue for Hindu women. This peace is sought as release from fear and other issues which trouble the woman in this life.
24. HEAVEN—This is often a vague concept having little relevance for the Muslim woman as it is defined as a virtual pleasure paradise for men. A woman's impurities keep from fulfilling a significant portion of her religious duties which counts against her. Heaven will need to be patiently portrayed as a place of a blessed and restored relationship with the heavenly Father. The new status and relationship in Christ can give her hope for heaven.

Other beliefs may suggest a lesser or minor role for women in the hereafter. If heaven is related to works like attending prayers or observing the fast, it is nearly impossible for the woman to catch up due to her monthly impurity. For many women caught in the daily struggle to meet family needs, tomorrow is an eternity away and may even be beyond their comprehension. Therefore the "blessed state" must begin immediately in the new relationship in Christ in order to be understandable.

IN SUMMARY the Bible stories and lessons will need to speak to:

- ◆ the self-worth of the woman in her relationship to God,
- ◆ of sin and its consequences as a broken relationship needing a mediator and a change of heart,
- ◆ of there being only one true source of power for all one's needs,
- ◆ of a God who loves and desires a communion with His creation whether man or woman,
- ◆ of the only acceptable sacrifice for sin (the broken relationship) being the death of Jesus through whom one relates to God the Father,
- ◆ the indwelling Spirit as the comforter promised by Christ to all who will believe and open their hearts to him.

*"Because they are **women** and their felt needs are more psychological than theological, more relational than informational, they need to be understood and they need to have the love and power of Christ related to them at the point of felt need. Intellectual, theological approaches of the Gospel usually do not communicate."* ("With Women in the West", Alberta Standish, MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS ON THE EMMAUS ROAD, MARC, p. 205)

BIBLICAL TRUTHS FOR SALVATION

1. God is Creator of man and woman. He created them in His image. All people are accountable to Him.
2. God is Sovereign in his absolute power and knowledge.
—He knows and sees all that men and women think in their hearts and do.
3. God is the true Provider (Source) of all blessings—love, mercy, forgiveness, peace, all one's physical needs and even salvation.
4. Because any sin breaks the relationship with Him, God condemns all sin and judges it while continuing to love the sinner.
5. God alone can forgive the sinner and provide the means to restore the relationship with Him.
—Jesus, the One sent from God the Father, is the only acceptable sacrifice for sin.
6. One may have this restored (right or blessed) relationship by accepting what God has done for all men and women.
—This is done by seeking God's forgiveness, believing that Jesus is the One sent from God to suffer and die for sin, and that his shed blood is adequate sacrifice for all sin for all time.

OBJECTIVES

1. **THE TARGET AUDIENCE ARE UNBELIEVERS.** Primarily Muslim, though Hindu and animists will be present, these are women who do not know Jesus as God's sacrifice for sin and as their Savior. The listeners will have differing characteristics according to their worldviews but all share a lack of belief in Jesus as Savior.
2. **BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS.** In each worldview there are differing beliefs about the Supreme Ruler of the world and His relationship with people. The basic Bible truths will be presented to qualify these local beliefs in the context of a biblical overview of God and people.
3. **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND WOMAN.** What is the relationship between God and woman? Establish the helpless condition of woman to restore her broken relationship with God no matter how clever and resourceful she might be. God's love is expressed in provision for her salvation and blessing.
4. **READING OF SCRIPTURE.** Reading of the Scripture text is a means of pointing to the Bible as the authentic record of God's Word to reveal spiritual truth. One must always go first to the Bible to see what God's record says.
5. **BIBLICAL ACCOUNT.** The stories carry the biblical account as a base for each lesson. That account is presented in a somewhat abbreviated narrative form to clearly emphasize the biblical overview as well as the foundational messages in the Old Testament and the Good News in the New Testament. The narrative account has been kept simple as possible while retaining its dynamics to facilitate understanding by the wider range of listeners and to encourage members of the audience to share with others what they hear.

6. **PERSONAL CONFRONTATION.** The objective is to bring each member of the audience to face the question: If this story is true, what is MY relationship to God?
7. **KEEP FOCUS ON UNBELIEVERS.** When used in a mixed audience of believers and unbelievers *the focus is on the salvation message for unbelievers*. It is not a discipleship Bible study for believers. The issues of sin and forgiveness, judgment and estrangement, and salvation must be kept clearly separate from the issues of discipleship for the believer.
8. **KEEP THE APPROACH RELEVANT.** Remember that the message is a *PERSON* that you (the storyer) have experienced, not a doctrine or a religion or a book or a church. It is a *PERSON* you have a relationship with. Muslim women in particular are interested in a relationship but they do not know they can have such a relationship with Father God who, they assume, is too far away and One to be greatly feared. (Alberta Standish, *EMMAUS ROAD*, p. 205)

EMBEDDED THEMES IN THE STORIES AND LESSONS

“The Characteristics of God”

God’s character and nature determine his relationship with all people. By knowing these characteristics the seeker can see how and why God deals with people as He does. It is easy to see that God is both “knowable” and “consistent” in His relationship with people. See Chart at back.

“Relationship with God”

This term is used to relate to a woman’s desire for a positive relationship with God. The relationship must be on God’s terms. It is ruined or broken by sin. God desires to restore it and does a work of redemption to make that restoration possible. One must come to God by God’s way through belief in Jesus. The relationship confers “peace”, “security”, a “provision of needs”, and “strength” to continue in the relationship.

“Promised One (Anointed One) of God”

This is used initially to refer to Christ as the Promised One of God (from Genesis 3:15 onwards) who will restore the broken relationship (bless all peoples). As other descriptive names occur in the chronological narrative they are included. The Promised One becomes the Anointed One or the Messiah. “Jesus” as a name is not used until given to Mary by the angel.

“Sin”

It is necessary to qualify sin as willful disobedience of God so that the listeners will see themselves as sinful. Sin may be viewed in terms of causing “impurity” in the sinner and thus is an offence against a holy and pure God, breaking the relationship. Only the blood of Jesus “purifies” from sin. Help the listeners to see they are already under God’s condemnation for sin.

“Sacrifice”

This is to distinguish the biblical requirement in the Old Testament for a sacrifice to cover sin (and for thank offerings and fellowship offerings) from the practice of the listeners in offering various sacrifices to appease deities or to secure a boon (blessing/provision for need).

“Judgment of God”

This is to keep before the hearers the fact that God pronounces judgment upon all sin which cannot be hidden from His sight nor kept from His knowledge. God is gracious to warn about sin and to give opportunity for repentance. God’s judgment and punishment is fair and consistent for all. Sinners cannot escape except as God in His mercy provides for those who believe and obey Him.

“Sovereignty of God and Defeat of all Evil”

This is essential to show that it is through Christ this defeat will come as a logical outcome of Jesus’ power over demons in the Gospel. Satan and all his demons are already judged and bound for eternal punishment. In Christ there is victory, peace and release from fear of evil spirits.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. **READ AHEAD** in your Bible to see how the biblical perspective flows. If you have access to a chronological narrative Bible this is very helpful. Familiarize yourself with the chronological arrangement of events even in the stories you do not plan to use. This will be helpful in providing proper bridging over them.
2. **STUDY THE BACKGROUND BIBLE PASSAGES** to get an overview for the current story lesson. **REVIEW** any previous passages related to the current Bible passage.
3. **READ THE FOCAL PASSAGE** from which the story is taken several times. Outline it if necessary to organize the details mentally. Think about the characters and what they are doing and saying. Try to imagine the scene where the story takes place.
4. **WRITE OUT THE STORY** as you will tell it. The model story in the lesson is to guide you. Do not attempt simply to translate the model story into the heart language of the listeners. You will likely need to reshape it, even to think about how to bridge into the story, how to organize and pace the story to take advantage of its flow and repetition of phrases.
5. **STUDY THE REVIEW ACTIVITIES** which are suggested for each lesson. These relate to previous stories and passages which are foundational to the present story. Look for an opportunity to “bridge” into the lesson from some current events or concerns the listeners may have. Do not rush the review time—it is essential to properly prepare the listeners for the new story.
6. **PLAN YOUR DIALOGUE** (Let’s Talk) time after the story. How will you help the audience to “digest” what they have heard? You may teach as there is acceptance and occasion. It is not a time to tell the listeners what they have heard in the story. Let them talk about what they have heard. Use some “think about it” questions to guide the discussion.
7. **PREPARE ANY TEACHING AIDS** you plan to use. These may be songs, drama (which will need rehearsing and some props), flat pictures, flannelgraph scenes or display objects.
8. **COVER YOUR PLANNING AND PREPARATION WITH PRAYER** for clarity and effectiveness on your part and responsiveness and understanding on the listeners’ part.

9. **TELL THE STORY AND TEACH THE LESSON.** Let the review activities prepare your listeners, tell the story from God's Word, and guide the listeners' discussion time.
10. **KEEP THE STORY LESSON ON TRACK.** Don't get into debates, don't get detoured into side issues, and don't jump ahead in the story until an appropriate place in the chronological order.
11. **ENJOY THE COMMUNITY** that telling a story produces. This is a redemptive relationship with your listeners. Rejoice that you are equipping them to share the message with others who have yet to hear.
12. **KEEP NOTES** of what you do and any unusual questions which are raised which will need answering later. Also keep careful notes about worldview findings, teaching themes and objectives that may help someone after you. Network with other storyers to exchange ideas.
13. **BEGIN TRAINING AN ASSISTANT** as soon as possible. They need an overview of what you are going to teach and then several times through the current lesson and story. Let them begin telling the story or reading the lead scripture passage before the story. Let them conduct the Review or Let's Talk time.

Encourage the assistant to **BEGIN THEIR OWN STORYING SESSION** in another location. Encourage the assistant to begin training her own assistant and to begin another session with her own group of listeners.

REMEMBER THE PURPOSE

The purpose is to lead women from wherever they are in their spiritual quest and beliefs to a living faith and relationship to Jesus Christ as Savior.

A WORD ABOUT THE STORYING SETTING:

In some cultures men and women do not publicly mix for sessions like the storying sessions. There may also be large numbers of children present. Remember this presentation is for the women. It deals with adult themes. Arrange for a simpler storying session for the children, using stories selected just for the children including themes of God's goodness, kindness and friendship. Don't exclude them, but their needs are different from that of adult women with family responsibilities.

A secondary audience of men may also be present in some situations. A problem will arise if the men dominate the Let's Talk time. If at all possible, try to keep the group focused on women and their worldview. If the men do pose a problem try to arrange for another storying session targeting their worldview at the same time as the women's storying session.

Normally in the use of chronological Bible storying it is suggested to meet in a publicly accessible place. If there are publicly accessible places where women commonly gather (and men do not), then this is okay. A home would be a second choice since this may exclude some women. If the group is small, or if other conditions warrant it, then select the more secluded place. In most of the target groups a woman teacher would automatically limit the listeners to women.

The stories and lessons will "leak" out to others. There will be curiosity about the content of the stories. This is not a sexist approach to the Bible story. You do want to keep in focus the basic story of redemption for all, but to approach it in such a way that women will be able to relate it to their lives.

If using this approach causes any problems in evangelizing the larger group of men and women, then it may be best to stay with a more general and generic worldview which is likely to be more centered on a man's worldview in that culture. Later on *God and Woman* may be usable for targeting the women after there is some presentation made first for the men.

GOD'S WORD TO US—THE BIBLE

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. Read the background scripture passages and note helpful references.
2. Read the Bible story passages several times.
3. Write the story in your words as people would hear it best and remember it.
4. Prepare a scroll or a picture of a prophet writing on a scroll.

PREVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to tell some of their stories about where their people first came from.
2. Ask about their understanding of the spirit world and how it relates to the world of the living.
3. Ask about how they appease God or the spirits when they offend them in some way.
4. Ask what God does for them and how do they appeal to Him for help.
5. Ask about what happens when a person dies. Do the actions of this life affect life after death?
6. Talk about different beliefs of peoples and their religions. Ask who is right? How can one know the truth?
7. Where does their knowledge about God come from? How can they know him? What is He like?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Deu 11:18-19; Psa 119:11, 16, 89, 103, 105; Isa 40:8; Rom 15:4; 1Co 10:11; 2Ti 1:5; 3:14-16; Heb 4:12

MAJOR THEMES:

1. We can learn how to please God from his Word.
2. God provided and preserved his Word for our benefit.
3. God's Word is powerful and everlasting—it will not pass away.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Are our people's traditions reliable to tell us about God? How can we learn the truth about ourselves and about God? How do we know what is right to do?

READ: 2Ti 1:5; 3:14-16; Psa 119:11

TELL THE STORY:

GOD'S PRECIOUS WORD

A long time ago a wise teacher named Paul wrote a letter to a young man named Timothy. He was just beginning his life's work. Paul wrote to encourage him, for he remembered the sincere faith of young Timothy. He said that it was like the faith of Timothy's mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. Eunice and Lois had a strong faith in God. Where did their faith come from? It came from God's Word. Paul said to Timothy, "Continue in what you have learned and believe is true. Since an infant you have known the holy Scriptures which made you wise about salvation through faith in the One sent from God." (*Don't mention Jesus by name as there is not yet a story about who he was.*)

Paul reminded Timothy that all Scripture is God-breathed. This means that God caused it to be written. And this same Scripture is useful for teaching, training and correcting so that a person can live a life pleasing to God. Another writer wrote these words, "I have hidden God's Word in my

heart so that I might not sin against (offend) God.” And again he wrote, “God’s Word is like a lamp for my feet and a light for my pathway.” It shows the correct way to live so that your life would always please God.

Paul wrote other letters to his friends and said that everything written in the past, that is, in God’s Word, was written to teach us so that we might have hope. And he said that things about the past were written down as warnings for us in our time.

Who wrote down these things? God revealed to many people what they were to write. Sometimes God spoke the words to be written. Sometimes His Spirit simply caused the men to faithfully record what happened. Many of these men were called prophets. They lived a long time ago. From the time the first one wrote until the last one was more than 30 lifetimes! (Moses to John) Yet there was agreement in what they wrote because God guided their writing.

God’s message was to the people who lived in those days, but also to us today. For God’s Word is eternal. His message is for all people. Neither the words nor the message will ever pass away. God’s Word is like a sharp sword, it is able to penetrate our very souls to judge the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts. It is very powerful.

These words were first written in the language of the people living in that day. God is causing His Word to be translated into all the languages of the world. God wants all people to know the truth about Himself and what He has done for us. Today we know these writings as the “Bible” which means “book.” There are 66 parts of the Bible with names like “the Beginning”, the “Exodus”, the “Judges” and even some named after the prophets who wrote them. God has given His Spirit to help us understand the Bible. For He wants us to live by His Word.

Say: I have read God’s Word for myself. Now I want to share with you some of the stories and teachings from it so that you will also know and understand what God said.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story.
2. Review the listening task questions. Let the group talk freely and give their opinions.
3. Do the listeners always do what is right? How do they know what is right or wrong?
4. Have the listeners heard about the Bible before? Have they seen a copy? Have they ever read from it or heard another to read from it?
5. Do the listeners know someone with faith like Timothy, Eunice or Lois?
6. Do the listeners want to live a life that is pleasing to God?
7. Ask if they know how God’s Word came to be in their language? Tell the story if you know it.

MEMORY VERSE: “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”

Psalm 119:11

PREVIEW OF COMING STORY: What is God like? What can we say about His characteristics? What does He have to do with people? How can one know these things?

THE GOD WHO SEES AND HEARS

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. Read the background scripture passages. These are for the storyer's understanding.
2. Read the story Bible base passage several times. This will serve to introduce the story.
3. Think about the story, write your story and learn to tell it.
4. Prepare any teaching aids you will need. (Allah: As-Sami'— "hearer", Al-Basir—"seer")

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the story of God's Precious Word.
2. Review any teaching aids (like Characteristic of God chart if used).
3. Review the major themes and Let's Talk items from the first story.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND: Gen 16:13; Psa 24:3-4; 51:1-2; Psa 90:2; 102:27; 139:1-4, 7-12, 13; Psa 145:15; Pro 15:3; Hab 1:13; Jhn 4:24

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is an eternal Spirit who created everything by His mighty power.
2. God made man and woman and expresses His love by providing their needs.
3. God sees what people are doing and hears what they say.
4. God is pure, holy and sinless. He does not permit sin and impurity in His presence.
5. Because God is loving He wants to remove our impurity and sin.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What is God like? What can we learn about him from the Bible? Listen to this story about God.

READ: Psa 139:1-4, 7-16

TELL THE STORY:

THE GOD WHO SEES AND HEARS

The Anointed One who came from God once told a woman that God is a Spirit and all who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. One of the prophets declared "From everlasting to everlasting you are God." Again he said, "...You remain the same, and your years will never end."

Long before the earth or heavens were created, or before there were any people on earth, God existed. He has always lived for He had no beginning or end. Because God created everything He needs nothing from people. All He desires is our true worship and love.

God is loving toward all He has made. He created the first man and woman and desired to walk and talk with them. He shows His love by providing for all His creation. He makes the sun to shine and the rains to come so our food will grow. He has placed the fish in the rivers and the animals upon the grasslands and mountains for our food. He gives children to families.

God is all-powerful. There is nothing He cannot do. An angel once said, "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?"

God is all-knowing. A prophet declared that he could not hide from God. He said that if he went down into the grave, God was even there. If he went up into heaven God was there. Another

prophet said that the eyes of God were everywhere keeping watch upon the wicked and the good. God sees and hears everything. Nothing can be hidden from His search and knowledge. A woman named Hagar called God, “the God who sees”, because He helped her when no one else saw her need. He also knows what is hidden in your heart for the prophet also said “God created my inmost being and knit me together in my mother’s womb.”

Still another prophet declared that God’s eyes were too pure to look upon evil. God does not permit anything impure or evil in His presence. All that comes into His presence must be made clean and pure. And only God can make clean what is unclean. All that is wrong or sinful God will judge. God desires that sinful people confess their sin, turn from it and seek His forgiveness and cleansing.

All of these characteristics of God will be more fully revealed in future stories. These stories come from God’s Word, the Bible. You will learn to know God better as you listen to the stories and see how God works in the everyday lives of men and women.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story. (There are many details in the story. The ones which the listeners remember may indicate what is important or significant to them.)
2. Review the listening task. Ask what they have learned about God in the story.
3. Did the listeners catch the major points or themes?
 - a. God is an eternal Spirit who created everything by His mighty power.
 - b. God made man and woman and expresses His love by providing their needs.
 - c. God sees what people are doing and hears what they say.
 - d. God is pure, holy and sinless. He does not permit sin and impurity in His presence.
 - e. Because God is loving He wants to remove our impurity and sin.
4. What application does this story have for the listeners? Let them talk about this.
5. Here are some possible characteristics of God they might remember:

Characteristics of God

1. God is an eternal Spirit who never changes.
2. God is creator and loving toward His creation. He provides for all our needs.
3. God is all-powerful—nothing is impossible for Him to do.
4. God is all-knowing—He sees and hears everything.
5. God is holy and pure without any sin. He judges all sin but wants to cleanse and forgive all who turn from their sin and obey what He says to do.
6. God is always faithful to keep His promises.

Say them several times and have the group to repeat the characteristics. This is only a suggested wording and list. You may need to alter this list or make your own list for your listeners.

MEMORY VERSE: “The Lord is righteous in all His ways and loving toward all He has made.”
Psa 145:17

GOD CREATED THE SPIRIT WORLD

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. Read the background scripture passages to get an overview of the larger story.
2. From your knowledge of the listeners' worldview prepare the story to speak to their needs and understanding about God.
3. It is not necessary to tell everything about angels, Satan and demons at this time. By storying this selected information you give the picture that God is creator, therefore ruler over all. All God's work is good. Wickedness came from Satan's willful disobedience.
4. Don't attempt to answer questions that will be answered in future lesson stories.

REVIEW AND PREVIEW:

1. Ask someone to tell what they learned about God in the previous lesson. What are His characteristics?
2. Ask who controls the spirit world? Where does He live?
3. Has anyone ever seen a spirit? Was it a good spirit, or a bad spirit?
4. What do good spirits do? What do bad spirits do? What makes a spirit bad?
5. How does God use good spirits? How will He punish bad spirits?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Psa 148:2, 5; Col 1:16; Psa 103:20; Heb 1:7 (Psa 104:4); Neh 9:6; Job 38:7; Eze 28:12b-17a; Isa 14:12-14; Jud 6 (2Pe 2:4); Rev 20:10 (12:7-12); Mat 13:39; Luk 1:19; 24:4; Act 12:7-10; 1Co 5:5 (Tim 1:20); Heb 12:22 (Rev 5:11)

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God created the spirit world and so has the right to rule over it.
2. God created all spirits good and without sin to obey and accomplish His purpose.
3. God is powerful to use even the wicked disobedient spirits to accomplish His purpose.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Who made the spirits? Who rules over the spirits? Who will punish evil spirits? How does God use the spirits?

READ: Psa 148:2, 5; Heb 1:7; Mat 13:39 (Read other scriptures as needed.)

TELL THE STORY:

GOD CREATED THE SPIRIT WORLD

Long ago, before God created the heavens and the earth, He created all the spirits. Since God is holy and good He created the spirits like himself—holy and without sin. They are too many to be counted. God created them to serve Him, to do His work and to worship Him.

One spirit was created far more beautiful, powerful and wise than the others. God created him to guard God's holy throne in heaven. But this spirit became jealous of God and desired to be like God, even to take for himself the place of God. The pure heart God had given him became filled with jealousy and wickedness. In disgrace he was driven from heaven to await a day of everlasting punishment. Other spirits joined the rebellion and were also put under God's judgment waiting for their day of punishment.

This powerful spirit was once called “Lucifer” (The Shining One) because of his great beauty. Now we know him as Satan which means “accuser”. Satan seeks to destroy the work of God. But Satan can do nothing except what God permits him to do. The other evil spirits are like Satan for they also seek to harm people. But God is more powerful and rules over them.

Sometimes God permits Satan to test people or to punish them when they become sinful. A special place of punishment called Hell is being prepared for Satan and his demons. Some day when the time of judgment comes, Satan will be completely defeated and punished.

Not all created spirits became bad. Most continued to obey God and serve Him. They are called angels. In the past God spoke to people through angels. God sends His angels to help people. He also sends angels to punish people when they sin. At the end of the world God will use angels to gather all people unto Himself for a time of judgment.

People are not to worship angels. They are powerful and wise but they are only created spirits who serve and worship God. God alone is ruler of the spirit world for He created all the spirits according to His purpose.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story God Created the Spirit World. If you get a poor retelling ask if someone else would like to try. Keep fishing until you get a good retelling. If not, then tell it again yourself.
2. Ask:
 - Who made the spirits? (God)
 - Who rules over the spirits? (God)
 - Who will punish Satan and the evil spirits (demons)? (God)
3. Were some of the spirits created good and some created bad? (No, all were created good)
How did they become bad? (their choice) Did God make them bad? (No)
4. How do the listeners think God uses the good spirits (angels)?
5. What does this story teach us about God? Review His characteristics found in this story.
6. The storyer may need to explore or clarify other erroneous beliefs about who angels are— they are not the spirits of ancestors.
7. The storyer may give a “sneak preview” by mentioning that in future stories we will hear about angels at work and see how God uses them to accomplish his purpose for people.

MEMORY VERSE: “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” Heb 1:14

PREVIEW OF COMING STORY: Next we will hear about how the world in which we live was created.

GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Read the background scripture passages about God's work of creation.
2. Read creation story from the Bible several times.
3. Write your story and learn to tell it. Take advantage of the repetition in the structure of the story.
4. Prepare some visuals like pictures of animals, or a flower, something from nature.

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the story about God and His characteristics.
2. Review any teaching aids (like Characteristics of God chart if used—*do it as an oral chart*).
3. Review the themes introduced or taught in earlier stories.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 1:1-25, 30; 2:19; Psa 19:1-6; 33:6-7; 102:25; 104:1-30; Neh 9:6; Job 38:4-39:30; Isa 40:22-28; Heb 11:3

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is all-knowing and all-powerful to create the heavens and the earth.
2. God created the plants and animals, birds and fish. He was pleased with his good work.
3. God blessed and provided food for the animals He created. He is the source of grace.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Listen for the characteristics of God in this story. How many can you find?

READ: Gen 1:1-5, 9-12, 16-17, 20-22; 24-25, 30; Psa 19:1; 104:24, 27 (*Write these out in order.*)

TELL THE STORY:**GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH**

The world began when God created it. God the Spirit began to move over the earth which was dark and empty. He commanded there be light and so divided the day from the night. He commanded that the waters upon the earth be divided from the waters in the heavens above. He commanded that dry land appear and He formed the seas. God saw that his work was good.

Again God commanded that plants and trees appear upon the dry land. There were all kinds of plants that had seeds and trees with fruit that had seeds. God was pleased with his work. For God knew that one day animals and people would need food to eat.

God made the sun to rule over the day and the moon to light the night time. He placed them in the sky to mark the seasons. God made the stars in the heavens. There are too many to count.

God said: "Let the waters be filled with fish and all kinds of living creatures that swim both great and small. And let the air be filled with birds of all kinds." God saw that his work was good. He blessed the fish and birds and told them: "Be fruitful and plentiful, increase in number and fill the waters and the sky."

And again God said: "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: sheep and cattle, creatures that move along the earth, and wild animals." For God had formed the beasts of the field out of the earth. God saw that his work was good. He provided the green plants as food for all

the animals of the earth and all the birds of the air—everything that has the breath of life in it.

A prophet praised God by singing a song which says,

“The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” (Psa 19:1)

And:

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.” (Psa 24:1-2)

Another prophet wrote:

“Lift your eyes and look to the heavens:
Who created all these?
He who brings out the starry host one by one,
and calls them each by name...” (Isa 40:26)

“Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom (measure).” (Isa 40:28)

Yes, everything was created good because God is good.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the creation story.
2. Review the listening tasks suggested or another that has been used.
3. Did the listeners catch the point that it was God who made everything?
4. Did they catch the point that all God’s work is good? Ask the listeners to suggest some good things God made.
4. What did God make first, second, third, etc.?
5. What did God do after making birds, fish and animals? (Blessed them) What do they think this means?
6. How did God know to make all these things? How was He able to make them?
7. Talk about what God’s creation says about God’s characteristics.
8. What did they like about this story of creation?

MEMORY VERSE: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it; for He founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.” Psa 24:1

PREVIEW OF COMING STORY : The next story is about when God created the first man and first woman.

GOD CREATED THE FIRST MAN AND WOMAN**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. There are not many passages about woman. 2Co 11:3 and 1Ti 2:14 do not help us here.
2. Read the Genesis account of creation of man and woman several times.
3. Write your story and learn to tell it.
4. With some peoples pictures of unclothed Adam and Eve may be a problem. Use discretion.

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the creation of the world story.
2. Review the characteristics of God from the chart you are using with your people.
3. Review the major themes introduced in the previous creation story.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 1:26-29; 2:4-9, 15-25; 3:20; Deu 32:6; Psa 8:4-5; 104:27-30; Job 33:4; Mal 2:10; Act 17:26

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Both man and woman were created by the hand of God.
2. They were both created in the image of God and were without sin.
3. God loved the man and woman because He provided all their needs.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Why do you think God made men and women?

READ: Gen 1:26-27

TELL THE STORY:**GOD CREATED MAN AND WOMAN**

After God had made the heavens and the earth and all the plants, birds, fish and animals, He said: “Let us make man in our image to rule over all the animals and creatures of the earth.”

So the Lord God formed man first from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and that man became a living being. The Lord had planted a garden in Eden and there he put the man to care for it. The Lord also planted all kinds of trees in the garden, trees that were pleasing to the eye, and trees that were good for food. In the very middle of the garden were two special trees—the tree of life, eating from it one would live forever, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God gave man work to do in caring for the garden but commanded him: “You may eat freely from any tree in the garden. But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

Then Lord God said, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the Lord had brought all the animals He made before the man to name them. The man gave names to every living creature—all the animals and birds. But the man found no one like himself, no suitable helper.

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, the Lord took one of the bones from the man and closed up the flesh. From the bone the Lord made a woman and brought her to the man.

The man Adam 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.” The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. Later Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all the living.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over all the creatures that I have created. I give you every seed-bearing plant and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. These will be yours for food.”

God’s work of creation was now completed. He saw that all He had created was VERY GOOD.

LETS TALK:

1. Can someone retell the story? Get another person to tell it if anything is left out.
2. Let them talk about the listening task. *Fellowship* is the answer but they may have other opinions.
3. Ask about the major themes. Did they catch them in the story?
4. Talk about God’s creation of man? In whose image was he made? What was he made from? (Muslims have the teaching that God made man from a clot of blood.)
5. What work did God give man to do? (Care for garden, naming the animals)
6. What special instruction and warning did God give about food in the garden?
7. What did God say about man’s need after he had named the animals? (No suitable helper)
8. Talk about God’s creation of woman? What unusual thing did God do? Why a bone from the side and not from the head or feet? What might this suggest?
9. Was woman also made in the image of God? (Gen 1:27) Talk about what this means.
10. Why do they suppose that the naked man and woman were not ashamed?
11. What was the meaning of Eve’s name?

MEMORY VERSE: “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”
Job 33:4

PREVIEW OF COMING STORY: Now we will see what happened to disturb the harmony between God and man.

THINK ABOUT THIS: What happens when we disobey, or when we choose to listen to the words of someone not in agreement with God’s instruction?

GOD'S WARNING AND THE FIRST SIN**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. For the Muslim this is an important lesson. It deals with sin in a context where there is already much faulty belief. It also is in a sensitive area as it reinforces the belief that woman is the cause of man's sin. While the fact cannot be denied that Eve was deceived first and disobeyed God, Adam was at her side and he participated in the disobedience. Both fell under God's judgment because of their disobedience. The focus is not so much on the immediate punishment, but on the broken fellowship and long term consequences for man and woman.
2. Read the story of the temptation of Adam and Eve. Try to envision the dialogue between the snake and Eve.
3. Write your story and learn to tell it.
4. If pictures are not available or suitable, use a nice piece of fruit as an object lesson.

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the stories of the God Who Sees and Hears and the Creation of Man and Woman.
2. Ask the listeners to recall God's goodness to the man and woman. (God blessed them and provided their food.)
3. Talk about the theme of Adam and Eve's creation in the image of God. (Sinless)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 2:17; 3:1-13; 2Co 11:3; 1Ti 2:14; Jam 1:13-15; 3:15-17; 1Co 10:13

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is gracious in that He warns about sin.
2. God is gracious because He provides for our needs.
3. God knows what is best and expects obedience from His creation.
4. We must choose between obeying Satan or God when we are tempted.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Whom do we obey? Does it make a difference whom to obey?

READ: Gen 3:6

TELL THE STORY:**THE SIN OF ADAM AND EVE**

When God made man He warned him: "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

One day, after God had made woman and brought her to Adam, and the man and woman were in the garden together, it happened that the serpent spoke to the woman. Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord had made. The serpent spoke to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from ANY tree in the garden'?"

The woman replied to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Now when the woman saw that the fruit was tasty for food, beautiful to look at, and desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it also.

It happened just as the serpent had said, for their eyes were opened, and they saw they were naked, and became ashamed, and sewed leaves together to make for themselves clothes to cover their nakedness.

When the man and woman heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, they hid themselves among the trees of the garden.

So the Lord called out to the man, “Where are you?” The man answered, “I heard you in the garden, but I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”

The Lord said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it.”

Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, so I ate.”

(Note: If the people ask who the serpent is, you may explain that since Satan is a spirit that he must speak through a living creature with a body. The serpent allowed Satan to use him to speak to Eve. In the next story we see that the serpent was placed under a curse because of this, and remains under a future curse as well. (See Isa 65:25) Or you may refer to the passage in Revelation 12:9 which calls Satan that *ancient serpent*.)

LET’S TALK:

1. Give the listeners an opportunity to retell the story of Adam and Eve’s Sin.
2. Talk about the listening task questions regarding obedience.
3. Did the listeners catch the major themes? Talk about God’s warning and our choices of whom to listen to and to obey.
4. What consequences do they think the choice of Adam and Eve will have?
5. Has anyone in the group ever had to make a choice like Adam and Eve?
6. What were the consequences of making their choice?
7. Whom we usually blame when we do the wrong thing? (Someone else)
8. Does God always know what is best for us? (Yes, because we are His creation.)

Let the group talk about these things. Try to draw each listener into the discussion.

MEMORY VERSE: “...Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you.” Jer 7:23

GOD'S JUDGMENT, MAN AND WOMAN'S PUNISHMENT**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Distinguish between judgment and punishment. Judgment is the condemnation for an act, failure to believe or rejecting what is true. Punishment may be immediate or may be delayed, or even commuted or taken by another as substitute.
2. God's attitude toward sin lies in his sinless righteousness. (Psa 119:137; 145:17)
3. The Law of the Lord is perfect (without defect or weakness). (Psa 19:7)
4. God demands obedience because He alone knows what is best for all people. (Pro 8:32, 34)
3. Satan's nature is sinful, whoever sins is of the devil. (1Jh 3:8)
4. This is a very important story as it introduces the Promised One to defeat Satan. (Gen 3:15)

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the story of Adam and Eve's disobedience of God's command.
2. What did God say would happen if man ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil?
3. What did Satan say would happen if they ate from the tree? Was he right or wrong?
4. Talk about why it is important to listen to God and to carefully obey Him.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 3:14-24; Psalm 62:12; 66:18; Pro 24:12; Isa 59:2; 64:6; Jer 16:17; Heb 4:13; Jam 1:15

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Disobedience of God is sin.
2. God judges all sin.
3. Sin results in death for the sinner. (Punishment for the sin and separation from holy God.)

ASK THE LISTENERS: What do you think God's judgment will be? Who was right, God or Satan?

READ: Gen 3:16, 17, 19

TELL THE STORY:**GOD'S JUDGMENT AND PUNISHMENT FOR SIN**

God had warned Adam what would happen if he disobeyed God and ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam was with his wife when the serpent tempted her to eat. And he joined his wife in eating the forbidden fruit.

It happened just as the serpent had said, for their eyes were opened to their nakedness. They also became afraid of God their Creator. The Lord began by speaking judgment against the serpent first: "You are now cursed above all livestock and wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and eat dust as long as you live. I will put enmity (hatred) between your offspring and that of woman." Then God said, "But one day a male child of woman will crush the serpent's head who in turn will bruise his heel."

To the woman God said, "I will greatly increase your pain in giving birth to children; and your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you."

To Adam God said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ The ground is now cursed because of you. You will toil painfully all the days of your life. The ground will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will now eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until at last you return to the dust from which you are taken.”

So Adam named his wife Eve (living) because she would become the mother of all the living. The Lord made garments of skin for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness and so clothed them by His hand. Then the Lord said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life to eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God banished the man and his wife from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

After God drove them from the garden, He placed cherubim (special guardian angels) with a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

LET’S TALK:

1. Invite someone to retell the story. Get another version if important details are omitted.
2. Discuss the listening task questions.
3. What was unusual about God’s judgment of the serpent? (God made a promise telling what was going to happen in the future.)
4. What was to be Eve’s punishment for disobeying God? How does it affect women today?
5. What was Adam’s punishment? Did it affect only him or all people after him? How?
6. What was going to happen to Adam one day? (He would die and return to dust.)
7. How did Satan distort (misrepresent) the consequences of disobeying God?
8. Why do you think Adam and Eve became ashamed of their nakedness and afraid of God?
9. Why do you think God had to clothe Adam and Eve with animal skins? What happened to the animals whose skins were used? (Their blood was shed, they died.)
10. After Adam and Eve’s disobedience of God what happened to their fellowship with God? (Their sin now separated them from the presence of righteous God. They left the garden.)

MEMORY VERSE: “And Adam was not the one deceived, it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.” 1Ti 2:14

or

“Therefore just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.” Rom 5:12

THINK ABOUT THIS: Now that sin has entered the life of man and woman, how will it spread? Will Adam and Eve’s sin affect their children? How will it affect us today?

TROUBLE IN THE FIRST FAMILY**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story begins with a conjugal fulfillment of Adam and Eve as husband and wife.
2. It has a happy note as Eve praises the Lord for helping her to give birth to her first son.
3. While it is not made clear in the story, evidently Adam's family had begun some practice of worship or offering a sacrifice to the Lord. Each son brought something from his work.
4. While there is some scriptural evidence that the *fat portions from the firstborn* were more acceptable than *some of the fruits* instead of the best of the firstfruits, it is more likely that the real difference was in Cain and Abel's hearts. (See Exo 23:19 and Lev 3:9-10)

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the God Created the First Man and Woman story and God's Warning and the First Sin story.
2. Talk about the purpose of God's warning to Adam about eating from the tree of knowledge.
3. Recall that God knows what is in our hearts, so He knows what we are going to do.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 4:1-16; Heb 11:4; 1Jh 3:12; Psa 37:8; 1Pe 5:8; Isa 59:2; Exo 23:19; Lev 3:9-10

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God's counsel is better than Satan's counsel.
2. Sin separates man from his God.
3. God is gracious to warn about sin but swift to judge all sin and punish the sinner.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Why do you think would God reject an offering to Him? Listen to this story and see what happened.

READ: Gen 4:1-5

TELL THE STORY:**TROUBLE IN THE FIRST FAMILY**

God had said to Eve that one day she would give birth to children though in pain. God had blessed Adam and Eve telling them to be fruitful and increase in number. Some time after Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden, Adam slept with his wife, she conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Cain and exclaimed, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man!" At a later time she gave birth to another son and named him Abel.

Cain tilled the soil, being a farmer like Adam. When he was grown, Abel cared for the flocks of animals. In the course of time each of the sons brought an offering before the Lord. Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as his offering. But Abel brought fat portions from the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering. But on Cain and his offering the Lord did not look with favor.

So Cain was very angry and his face was downcast. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right you will be accepted. But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door. It desires to have you, but you must overcome it."

So Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's you and I go out into the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" Cain replied, "I don't know where my brother is. Am I my brother's caretaker?"

The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and are being driven from the very ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. From this day onwards when you till the soil it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer upon the earth."

Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence. I will be a restless wanderer upon the earth, (and whoever finds me might kill me.)"

("Not so." the Lord replied, for he put a mark upon Cain to protect him from harm.) So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in a land called Nod, east of Eden.

(Note: The portion in parenthesis may be left out as it may open up the question of what was the mark God put on Cain. If kept in, it is again an example of God's grace even in punishment.)

LET'S TALK:

1. Invite someone to retell the story Trouble in the First Family.
2. Talk about why the brothers may have felt the need to bring an offering before the Lord.
3. Why did God reject the offering of Cain? (His heart was not right with God.)
4. Did God know what Cain was thinking in his heart? (Yes)
5. Why do they think that God warned Cain not to do what he was thinking? (God loved Cain and did not want him to sin. God loved Abel and wanted him to live.)
6. Did Cain listen to God? Who did he listen to? (Remember who Adam and Eve listened to.)
7. Why do you think God mentioned the blood crying out to Him from the ground? What does blood represent? God had a special purpose reserved for blood to be discovered later.
8. What did Cain's disobedience do to his relationship with God? (He went out from the Lord's presence.)
9. What happens in your family when one member sins (disobeys)?
10. Where did Cain get his sinful nature? (He inherited it from his father Adam.)
11. The godly son is dead. How will God fulfill his promise of a son one day to crush Satan?
12. Talk about the hurt in the heart of a mother when she loses a son to death and the other departs.

MEMORY VERSE: "Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous."

1Jh 3:12

or

"By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man..." Heb 11:4

THINK ABOUT THIS: You have seen how the sin of Adam and Eve has now spread to their sons. Do you think it will continue to spread to others? What do you think will happen to those who sin?

THE SPREAD OF SIN, A GODLY SON**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. We will now look at the continuation of the spread of sin and how God overcame the evil of Cain's rash act. The story of Lamech and his two wives is not often told. In the creation God brought Adam one wife, not two. There is the despicable bragging of Lamech to his wives.
2. Notice that Lamech's family is two sons by Adah and a son and a daughter by Zillah. Naamah means *pleasing*. Adah means *ornament* and Zillah means *shadow*.
3. Lamech was the sixth generation from Cain. He has inherited a vengeful spirit from his ancestor Cain in that he repaid a wounding with death and then stated that he had taken "77" or maximum revenge. He had taken revenge just like his ancestor Cain.
4. The illustration is that of spread of sin resulting in evil behavior. But God in His grace has still blessed Lamech with sons and a daughter. And the sons were clever and inventive.

REVIEW:

1. Have someone recall the story Trouble in the First Family.
2. Talk about the hearts of Cain and Abel. Who did what was right in God's sight?
3. Talk about the traits that we inherit from our parents—our appearance, our heart nature and personality. What else might we inherit from our parents? (Their sinful nature)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 4:17-5:5

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God promised a descendant, born of woman who would crush the serpent (Satan).
2. God is merciful and gracious, but He still hates sin.
2. God is powerful to fulfill his promises.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What do you think God will do to fulfill his promise of a godly descendant now that the ungodly son Cain has killed his brother Abel? (Gen 3:15)

READ: Gen 4: 23-26

TELL THE STORY:**EVIL DESCENDANTS AND A GODLY SON**

After Cain became jealous of his brother Abel and killed him, he fled from the presence of the Lord and his parents to live in another place. After some time had passed Cain married and his wife bore a child named Enoch. During this time Cain was beginning a village which he named after his son. After some years had passed one of Cain's descendants was a man named Lamech.

Lamech married two wives named Adah and Zillah. Adah gave birth to Jabal who was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. His sister was Naamah.

One day Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, listen to me, wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a young man for injuring me. I have done this to avenge myself seventy-seven

times!” And so it was that Lamech had taken revenge on someone who had wounded him and now was boasting about it to his wives. This descendant of Adam and Eve and of Cain was now a murderer, too. Sin had continued to spread in the family.

Remember that God had blessed Adam and Eve and told them to have many descendants. So God was good to Adam and Eve. When Adam again slept with his wife, she gave birth to another son and named him Seth, saying, “God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.” Seth was a son in Adam’s own likeness and image. When he was grown, Seth also had a son and named him Enosh which means *to proclaim*.

During the days of Seth and Enosh men began to proclaim the name of the Lord in worship. And so God had given another son who was not a murderer to replace the good son, Abel. After Seth was born Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters.

One of Seth’s descendants “walked with God” which means that his life was very pleasing to God. Another descendant lived a very long time, longer than any other person ever lived. But sin had continued to spread among Adam and Eve’s descendants. They began to do wicked things and God was not pleased with their lives. One day judgment would surely come.

LET’S TALK:

1. Can someone retell the story about Adam and Eve’s descendants?
2. Review the listening task question: How will God overcome the evil that Cain did in order to fulfill His promise of a godly son to crush Satan?
3. What can they say about Lamech and his family? (God had surely blessed them. But Lamech had a mean or vengeful nature.)
4. What does our human nature tell us to do when someone does something against us?
5. What did Eve say when God gave her another son to replace Abel?
6. What does Enosh’s name mean? (To proclaim)
7. What happened during the days of Seth and his son Enosh? (Men began to proclaim or call upon the name of the Lord in worship.)
8. Did Adam and Eve have only three sons? (No, they had other sons and daughters.)
9. What does this story about the descendants of Cain tell us about sin? (It was spreading.)
10. Did God see the evil and wickedness of the people? (Yes)

MEMORY VERSE: “For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” Psa 1:6

THINK ABOUT THIS: What will God do if many people begin to sin and do wicked things? How do you think God will punish their wickedness?

Note: *The question often arises about where Cain got his wife when he went away from his parents. If Eve was the mother of all the living, then a sister was obviously his wife. In some cultures marrying a close relative is permissible, in others it is not. Remember that God was blessing the people so they would increase in number and fill up the earth. (Isa 45:18) Don’t get sidetracked!*

HOW GOD SAVED ONE FAMILY

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. So far there have been three judgment stories—that of Lucifer, Adam and Eve, and Cain. In the story of the flood there is a universal judgment of all those living at that time. As in the story of Adam and Eve and Cain God is gracious in that He warned against disobeying His words.
2. God's eye is on both the wicked who continue to sin and act wickedly, and upon the righteous, those who "walk with God".
3. While there is a period of grace, there is a limit to God's patience when repentance is not coming.
4. The focus in the flood story is usually upon Noah, but the story is about the salvation of a family—a wife, three sons and their wives. We have the names of only the three sons. But God could not accomplish His purpose to replenish the earth without the wives of the three sons. And no doubt "Mrs. Noah" was an encouragement to her husband during the long time of preparation before the flood and in managing the family needs during the flood.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story of judgment in the garden and God's judgment of Cain when he killed Abel.
2. Review orally the characteristics of God—his righteousness and hatred of sin, his knowledge of all that happens in his created world, and his mighty power to accomplish his purpose.
3. Have the listeners talk about the matter of warning people when they do the wrong thing. What happens then if the people continue to do the wrong thing? (Do not repent.)
4. Recall the descendants of Adam and Eve and the influence of sin in their lives.
5. How might sin change our lives and affect our families? Does God see what we do?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 5:28-9:17; Isa 45:18; Mat 24:37-38; 1Pe 3:20; Psa 1:1, 6

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is not pleased when people dishonor Him after being created in His image.
2. God knows all the evil and wickedness that people say and do.
3. God also sees those who walk with Him, that is, who live a life pleasing to God.
4. God is certain to judge all sin and to punish sinners.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What do you think God would do if almost everyone in the world did only what was evil and wicked every day?

READ: Gen 6:5-8; 9:1, 8-9

TELL THE STORY:

GOD SAVED NOAH'S FAMILY

One of Seth's descendants was a man named Noah which means *comfort* because his parents said "he will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands because the earth was cursed by the Lord." At that time there were many men and women living on the earth. They were doing things not pleasing to God. God saw their wickedness and that their hearts were filled with evil thoughts.

He said, “My Spirit will not struggle with people forever, I will give a long time to repent before I bring judgment upon them.” Because of their great wickedness God was going to destroy all people that He had created and all the animals and birds from the face of the earth.

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord for he was a righteous man and blameless among the people of his day. It was said that Noah “walked with God.” Noah had a wife and three sons: Japheth, Shem, and Ham. So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence and their wickedness. So make yourself an ark (boat) of wood with rooms inside it. Seal it with pitch (tar) inside and out.” God also said, “I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life. Everything on earth with the breath of life will perish.

But I will establish my covenant with you. And you will enter the ark with your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives. You are to bring into the ark two of every kind of creature—a male and a female of all animals and every kind of food for them and for your family.” Noah did everything just as God commanded him. Then the Lord said, “Go into the ark and take your whole family because I have found you righteous among all the people. Seven days from now I will send rain upon the earth.” So Noah took his wife and his sons Japheth, Shem and Ham, and his sons’ wives, eight in all, and entered the ark, along with all the animals. Then the Lord closed the door.

It happened as the Lord said. It began to rain for 40 days and nights. The heavens burst open and the waters poured down. The waters under the earth burst forth. Soon the whole earth was flooded and every living thing with the breath of life perished except those safe with Noah inside the ark. The waters continued a long time until God remembered Noah and sent a wind over the earth to dry the waters.

One day Noah sent out a raven to see if the earth were dry. Again he sent out a dove which brought back a leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew the earth was dry at last. God said to Noah, “Come out of the ark, you and your wife, your sons and your sons’ wives. Bring out all the animals.”

Noah built an altar to the Lord and offered a thanksgiving sacrifice. God was pleased and promised never again to destroy the earth by water. Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Have many children and replenish the earth. Everything that lives and moves will now be food for you. But you must not eat meat that still has the lifeblood in it.” And God placed the rainbow in the sky as a sign of God’s covenant with man. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, people will remember God’s covenant with Noah never to destroy the earth again by water.

LET’S TALK:

1. Can someone retell the story of how God saved Noah’s family?
2. Does God know what wicked people are doing? Does God see everything, every sin?
3. Does God know who is righteous and who walks uprightly? What makes them righteous?
(They try to live according to God’s words and they listen to what God tells them.)
4. Why do you think Noah obeyed all that the Lord commanded? (He believed God.)
5. Who was able to escape God’s judgment in the flood? (Only those who believed God.)
6. Do you think that God really sees and hears everything we do?
7. Why do you think God waited a long time before sending his judgment? (He gave time for people to repent.)
8. Why do you think God again mentioned blood when He warned about removing the blood?

MEMORY VERSE: “God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble.” Psa 46:1

GOD CALLED ABRAHAM AND SARAH**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The creation story and fall dealt with some spiritual misunderstandings among Muslims regarding women's estate and sin. Now the Abraham and Sarah story will again challenge their beliefs. While the story is factual and tightly related to the other Abraham stories, it will require patience and courage in presenting it. Don't argue with listeners. Just tell the story.
2. Two story lines run concurrently—one is God's promises to Abraham and how these were to be fulfilled. The other is the matter of Sarah's barrenness and disgrace in not giving Abraham a son. During the visit of the three visitors the specific promise of a son is made to Sarah.
3. In the greater story of God's promises to Abraham lie the beginnings of God's working out His promise made in the garden—through a Promised Descendant to bless all people.
4. Later the story of Hagar and Ishmael will be recounted—the two parts joined as one story. This breaks the chronology but serves the purpose of keeping the focus upon Sarah. God called Sarah, too, as He had a divine purpose for her.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story of the judgment of Adam and Eve and the Promised Descendant.
2. You may need to bridge between the flood story and Abraham as a descendant of Shem.
3. Talk about promises and their fulfillment; and about our doubts and the assurances we need.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 11:24-12:20; 15:1-7; 17:21; 18:1-15; Neh 9:7-8; Act 7:2-5; Jos 24:2-3

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God knows who is righteous—those who believe His words, do what He commands, and abstain from evil.
2. God is sovereign and can choose to bless whomever He pleases.
3. God uses chosen people to accomplish his purpose (His plan to bless all peoples).

ASK THE LISTENERS: What did God promise to do for Abraham? What did God promise to do for Sarah?

READ: Gen 12:1-5; 17:19

TELL THE STORY:**GOD'S PROMISES FOR ABRAHAM AND SARAH**

Abraham's people were idol worshipers who lived in a far land. One day God called to Abraham to leave his father's household, his people and his country, and to go to a land that God would show him. God promised many things to Abraham. First, he promised to make Abraham into a great nation—that is, to have many descendants. Then God promised to bless Abraham and to make his name great. "And," God said, "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." God also promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants.

So Abraham took his wife Sarah and Lot, the son of Abraham's brother, and followed God to the land of Canaan. But Abraham and Sarah had no children and both were already old, for Abraham was now 75 years and Sarah 65 years. Before God changed their names Abraham's name meant

noble father. Now it meant *father of many nations*. And Sarah's name had meant *quarrelsome* and now it meant *princess*.

Two times God had to protect Sarah from being spoiled by another man. It was God's promise that Sarah should have a son by Abraham. A long time passed and still they had no son. God had promised a son, Abraham's own son, who was to be named Isaac. Many times God had to remind Abraham to look up at the stars and try to count them. For God said his descendants would be that many. Abraham believed God and it was counted as righteousness.

Still the years passed. Sarah even hoped to have a child by her servant girl so she would not be disgraced. But this was not God's promise. It was to be Sarah's own son, and it would happen in God's time. Almost 25 years had passed since they arrived in Canaan. During the years they moved about while living in tents. One day, in the heat of the day, Abraham saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them he asked them to come and take rest while some water was brought to wash their feet. "I will get you something to eat," he said. "Quick," he told Sarah, "bake some bread and have a servant prepare some meat, curds and milk."

While the men were eating Abraham stood near them under a tree. "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There, in the tent," he replied. One of the men who was the angel of the Lord said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent. When she heard the angel's words, she laughed. "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have the pleasure of a child?" For Sarah was well past the age for childbearing.

The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child now that I am old?' Is anything too difficult for the Lord to do? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." Sarah was afraid and kept saying, "I did not laugh."

One day the Lord was going to fulfill His promise to Sarah and Abraham. For God's plan included both Abraham and Sarah, the family He had called to leave their people and to go live in a land that God promised to give their descendants.

LET'S TALK:

1. Can someone retell the story? What did they like about the story?
2. What were God's promises to Abraham? What was God's promise to Sarah?
3. Why did God consider Abraham as righteous? (Because Abraham believed God.)
4. Talk about God's sending three special messengers with the good news of a son.
5. Why did Sarah doubt the words of the angel? (Because she was already too old.)
5. Was Sarah disgraced by not giving Abraham a son? (Yes)
6. Do the listeners think that God will keep His promise to Abraham and Sarah regarding a son?
Do they believe that God will continue to keep all His promises to Abraham and Sarah?
7. Why do they think God protected Sarah from being spoiled by others? (If the listeners are interested recount briefly the story of Abraham, Abimelech and Sarah. This will be referred to again in the story God Protects Sarah in Egypt. Gen 20)

Note: *The matter of family honor is a very important one with Muslims. They need to see that God honored Sarah and protected her honor (as well as Abraham's) in the Egypt and Abimelech stories.*

MEMORY VERSE: "Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness."

Gen 15:6

GOD PROTECTS SARAH IN EGYPT**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Again, this lesson is a bit out of the strict chronology. It is a supplemental lesson to show that God loves women like Sarah and protects them to fulfill His purpose for them.
2. The story also deals with Abraham's attempt at his own cleverness to protect himself, as his faith in God was not yet fully developed. God redeemed a potentially bad situation.
3. This is a parallel story to that of Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech (Gen 20:1-18) when again Abraham feared for his life and was willing to sacrifice Sarah. Each time God protected Sarah. What is appalling is that this happened most likely while Sarah was pregnant with Isaac.
4. This story about Abraham and Sarah in Egypt gives a clue where Hagar the Egyptian came from.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the first part of the story God Called Abraham and Sarah. God called them to live in Canaan and there God would bless them. (See Gen 26:2-3, God's instruction to Isaac)
2. Talk about God's sovereignty to choose any person He wants to bless.
3. Review the family line of Abraham—Adam-Seth-Noah-Shem-Abraham. God's chosen ones.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 11:27-30; 12:1-20; 17:19; 20:1-18

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God promised to bless Abraham and make him into a great nation.
2. God punished those who interfered with His plan for Sarah.
3. God is powerful to protect his chosen ones and to fulfill His promises to them.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Is God able to keep Sarah from being spoiled by another man? What did God do to the house of Pharaoh, king of Egypt?

READ: Gen 12:10-13

TELL THE STORY:**GOD PROTECTS SARAH**

God had called Abraham and Sarah to follow Him to a land He would show them. Though Abraham and Sarah were both old, Sarah was still beautiful. It was God's plan to bless Abraham and Sarah in the land of Canaan. Abraham still did not have strong faith in God but sometime relied on his own cleverness to protect himself.

There happened to be a famine in the land where Abraham and Sarah were living. So they went down into Egypt to live where there was food. As Abraham was about to enter Egypt he considered what the Egyptians might think of his wife Sarah. He said to her, "I know what a beautiful woman you are." He feared the Egyptians would see Sarah and report her to Pharaoh who would then want to add Sarah to his harem as a wife. So Abraham thought of a plan.

Because Abraham and Sarah each had the same father but different mothers, he suggested that

Sarah should tell the Egyptians that she was his sister. (*If this is offensive to the listeners—a taboo—then omit the reference to their parents.*) As Sarah’s husband, he might be killed and Sarah taken from him. But as a sister the Egyptians would consider Abraham as her guardian. They would still take Sarah, but would pay the bride price for her. Sarah agreed to this plan.

It happened just as Abraham thought. For when he entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarah was indeed a beautiful woman. And the Egyptian officials praised her to Pharaoh who then sent for her and had her brought into his palace. Pharaoh treated Abraham well for Sarah’s sake giving him sheep and cattle, donkeys, camels, men and women servants.

The Lord was not pleased with this. It was not His plan to have Pharaoh spoil Sarah. God was saving Sarah for Abraham, to fulfill a promise God made to Abraham. So the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and all of his household because of Sarah. Pharaoh learned all this was happening because Sarah really was Abraham’s wife. Pharaoh became afraid and summoned Abraham. “What have you done to me?” he demanded of Abraham. “Why didn’t you tell me Sarah was your wife? Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her to be my wife? Now take your wife and leave Egypt!”

So Pharaoh gave orders about Abraham to his men and they sent Abraham on his way out of Egypt with his wife and everything Pharaoh had given him in return for Sarah. So Abraham went up from Egypt to the land of Canaan. God had protected Sarah from being spoiled by another man. God was protecting Sarah for a special purpose.

LET’S TALK:

1. This should be an interesting story for someone to tell.
2. Talk about the listening tasks and the helplessness that sometimes a woman may experience.
3. Did Abraham rely on God or his own cleverness to protect himself?
4. Did things happen in Egypt like Abraham thought? He knew their culture and ways.
5. Was God able to protect Sarah? Why did God protect Sarah? Why was God angry with Pharaoh and inflicted serious diseases on his household?
6. Did the listeners notice that Abraham was given both male and female servants as payment for Sarah? Could one of these have been Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant of Sarah?
7. Do the listeners think that God would have let Abraham and Sarah starve in the land of Canaan during the famine? What would the listeners have done in this situation?
8. Did Abraham fully trust God to meet all his needs? (Not yet.)

MEMORY VERSE: “For he (the Lord) guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.” Pro 2:8

THINK ABOUT THIS: Will God keep his promise to give Abraham and Sarah a son? How will they know when God is going to do this?

GOD FULFILLS HIS PROMISE TO ABRAHAM AND SARAH**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This lesson may appear redundant but it is at heart of challenging the Muslim worldview regarding the true wife of Abraham and the God-promised son Isaac. By covering the fulfillment of this promise in two or more lessons it will give more credibility to the truth and give more time for reflection among the listeners. This is still no guarantee they will agree.
2. Review again the promises of God to Abraham and Sarah.
3. The wait for Abraham and Sarah had been 24 years of childlessness when the angel said he would return the following year and Sarah would give birth to a son. We must be patient as we wait for God's time to fulfill His promises.
4. We must trust God to do what He says He will do. We claim the promise as being good as fulfilled. With Abraham, God counted this as righteousness.
5. The later stories of Hagar and Ishmael were combined to minimize while acknowledging them.

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the story God Called Abraham and Sarah, and optionally the story God Protects Sarah in Egypt as background for the current story.
2. What was God's promise to Abraham concerning Isaac? (See Gen 17:19)
3. Why do they think God waited so long to fulfill His promise to Abraham and Sarah? Sarah was already old and past the age of childbearing.
4. Talk about the disgrace of being childless and especially not having a son.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 15:1-6; 17:3-6, 15-16, 19-21; 18:1-15; 21:1-7

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is powerful to fulfill His promises.
2. God is gracious and wants to bless us when we believe Him and trust Him to do what He says.
3. God works out His plan for our lives according to His purpose for us.
4. God has a plan to bless all people and it will be through a descendant of Abraham.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would God be able to fulfill his promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah?

READ: Gen 18:10-14; 21:1-2

TELL THE STORY:**GOD FULFILLS HIS PROMISE TO ABRAHAM AND SARAH**

One day three angels came to visit Abraham. Abraham offered them a tasty meal. After they had eaten, one of the angels, the angel of the Lord, asked Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?" "There in the tent," Abraham said. Then the Lord said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind the angel. Abraham and Sarah were already very old. Sarah was too old to have any children. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have the pleasure of a child?"

Then the angel of the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too difficult for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.”

Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.” “Yes you did laugh,” the angel said.

The Lord was gracious to Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what He had promised. Soon Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised. Abraham gave the name Isaac, which means *laughter*, to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded Abraham to do to all the males in his household as a sign of God’s covenant with him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son was born. His wife Sarah was ninety years old. Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

God said to Abraham, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be counted. I will establish my covenant with Isaac as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.”

God continued to fulfill his promises to Abraham and Sarah. It would take a long time before the promise was completely fulfilled. It was part of God’s plan one day to bless all people through a descendant of Abraham.

LET’S TALK:

1. Part of this story overlaps the earlier story God Called Abraham and Sarah. So it should be easy to remember the visit of the three angels with good news for Sarah.
2. In the listening task question about God’s fulfilling of his promise, this continues an emphasis upon the consistency of God. He makes promises and keeps them even if a long time passes.
3. Talk about the relationship between belief and blessing.
4. Do the listeners believe that God has a plan for their lives? Do they know what it might be?
5. God has said that He wants to bless all people through Abraham’s descendant. What does that tell us about God? (He loves all people. He saw that Abraham was faithful and believed him, so God chose him.)

Note: *The Let’s Talk questions and statements are suggestions only. The storyer may want to develop their own set of questions or topics for the listeners to discuss. The object is to get them to think about the story, what it is saying to them, and the larger picture or direction the story is pointing. In the early stories themes are being introduced. The stories explore issues of life to the listeners to lead them to develop an interest in the Bible. In the stories the listeners learn to trust the Bible’s message as it points to the need for and God’s provision of a Savior, Jesus.*

MEMORY VERSE: “For nothing is impossible with God.” Luk 1:37

PREVIEW OF COMING STORIES: God promised to give Abraham many descendants, to make him into a great nation. God has now given Abraham a son. We will see how God began to fulfill His promises to Abraham and his descendants. Also we will learn of a lesson of faith that God taught Abraham by testing him.

GOD PUNISHES A WICKED PEOPLE, A DISOBEDIENT WIFE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is another judgment story that teaches about God's displeasure with a wicked and godless people. But more specifically it tells the story of a disobedient wife who disobeyed the words of God's angels.
2. The story also teaches about the grace of God to spare the righteous when punishing the wicked.
3. It may be interesting to the listeners because of Abraham's bargaining with the angels.
4. The story has a sad ending as the daughters each seek a son by their father. As such it serves as a background story for Ruth Chooses Naomi's God.
5. This is an optional story that is not a part of the core stories of redemption.

REVIEW:

1. Recall or have someone retell the story God Calls Abraham and Sarah.
2. Review the characteristics of God—God hates sin, judges it and punishes the sinner.
3. Talk about the role of an intercessor. In this story Abraham intercedes for Lot's family.
4. Talk about the seriousness of disobedience, even a "small disobedience."

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 13:1-13; 18:16-19:38; Luk 17:28-29; 2Pe 2:7-8

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is not pleased with wickedness.
2. God judges all sin and sends His punishment upon sinners.
3. God judges all people, both men and women who disobey Him.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Must we always do what God tells us to do? What happens if we do not?

READ: Gen 19:15-20, 26

TELL THE STORY:**A WICKED PEOPLE, A DISOBEDIENT WIFE**

When the three angels came to visit Abraham they had another mission to accomplish. After leaving Abraham, two of the angels went down the mountain toward the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham's nephew Lot, his wife and two daughters, lived there in Sodom. This was Lot's choice when the herds of Abraham and Lot became too numerous for one place. Abraham had stayed behind in the hills of Canaan. And Lot had chosen the well-watered plain in the valley below among the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Now the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were exceedingly wicked and were sinning greatly against God.

The angel of the Lord revealed to Abraham that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was very bad and that he had come down to do something about it. Abraham bargained with the angel for the safety of his nephew Lot and his family saying, "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Would you spare the place if there are as many as fifty righteous people?" The angel of the Lord said that for fifty people he would spare the city. Again and again Abraham bargained until he asked if for only ten righteous people the city would be spared. At last Abraham was satisfied that

the Lord would do what was right and would punish only the wicked while sparing the righteous.

The other two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening. Lot was sitting in the city gate and saw them and bowed before them. “Please turn aside to stay at my house. You can stay the night and then continue on your way early in the morning,” Lot offered. “No,” they replied, “we will spend the night here in the city square.” But Lot insisted strongly they come with him and they did.

Lot prepared a meal for the two men and baked some bread without yeast. After they had eaten and before they retired for the night, the men of Sodom—both young and old—came from every part of Sodom and surrounded Lot’s house. They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out so we can have sex with them.”

Lot went outside to meet them, “No, my friends,” he said, “don’t do such a wicked thing. Here, take my virgin daughters and you do with them what you like. But don’t do anything to these men who have come under the protection of my roof.” “Get out of our way!” the men of Sodom replied, “Who are you to play the judge? We’ll treat you worse than them!” And they kept on bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.

But the angels reached out and pulled Lot inside and closed the door. Then they struck the men with blindness so they could not find the door. To Lot the angels said, “Do you have any family members here? Get them out of the city because we are going to destroy this place.” So Lot went to warn his two sons-in-law who were pledged to marry his daughters. But they thought he was joking.

It was near dawn when the angels urged Lot saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters and flee, or you’ll be swept away when the city is destroyed.” When Lot hesitated, the angels took Lot and his wife by the hands and his two daughters to lead them to safety. One of the angels said, “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain. Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!”

Lot begged to go instead to a small town nearby and the angels agreed. By the time Lot reached the town the sun had risen. The Lord sent fire raining down from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah killing all those living in the cities and burning all the vegetation. But Lot’s wife turned and looked back at the city she had left and so became a lifeless pillar of salt.

Later Lot’s daughters mourned the fact they had lost their husbands. They agreed to cause their father to become drunk and so each slept with him and gave birth to a son. One was named Moab and became the father of the Moabite people. The other was Ben-Ammi and was the father of the Ammonites. Both peoples would worship false gods and do terrible things in their worship.

LET’S TALK:

1. Is someone able to retell this long story?
2. Talk about the need for obedience suggested in the listening task.
3. Talk about God’s hatred of wickedness? What about God’s love of the righteous?
4. Some terrible things were said and done in the story. Lot placed the value of the guest men above that of his own daughters. What about the actions of the daughters later?
5. What about Abraham’s role as an intercessor for Lot’s family?
6. What about the disobedience of Lot’s wife? Would the listeners have done the same thing?

MEMORY VERSE: “But all sinners will be destroyed; the future of the wicked will be cut off.”

Psa 37:38

GOD PROVIDES FOR HAGAR AND ISHMAEL**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The two parts of the Hagar and Ishmael story—the birth and sending away—are combined into one story to minimize the importance of Ishmael, but not to neglect or deny this story for Muslim listeners.
2. The Gal 4:22-31 reference may be too inflammatory to use. This is for your background only. Paul used the comparison to refer to the Mosaic Covenant vs. the New Covenant of Christ.
3. This story may provoke more discussion and interest that you plan to give it. Pray carefully about how to tell it and answer any questions about it. It is a sad story because of the strife that resulted between Hagar and Sarah and then Sarah and Abraham. It is sad because Abraham loved Ishmael and wanted God to bless him. No doubt it hurt Abraham to see Ishmael sent away.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story God Called Abraham and Sarah. Review God's promises to Abraham.
2. Recall the story God Protects Sarah in Egypt. If it was not used, tell it now.
3. Review the characteristics of God—God is the source of all grace.
4. Review the specific promise that Sarah would bear a son and God's covenant would be with him.
5. Talk about the disgrace of barrenness, jealousy, and mocking when one has something that another does not have.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 12:14-16; 16:1-16; 17:18, 20; 21:9-21; Gal 4:22-31

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God fulfills His promises in His own time and according to His purposes.
2. Man must have hope and patiently wait upon God to fulfill His promises.
3. God loves all people and wants to bless them.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Do you always patiently wait for God to act? What happens if we don't wait for God?

READ: Gen 16:1-4, 15; 21:14, 20

TELL THE STORY:**GOD PROVIDES FOR HAGAR AND ISHMAEL**

God promised a son to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. It was through this son that God would fulfill His promise to bless all people. Ten years had passed and still there was no son. Sarah was now past the age for having children. It was a practice in that day that any child born to a servant girl by the husband would belong to the wife as her own child. So Sarah said to Abraham, "Go sleep with my Egyptian servant girl Hagar. Perhaps through her I can at last build a family." Sarah's plan seemed good to Abraham. Hagar conceived and in her pregnancy began to despise her mistress. Sarah blamed Abraham for her suffering saying, "May the Lord judge between you

and me.” Abraham said, “The girl is in your hands, do with her what you think best.” Then Sarah mistreated Hagar and she ran away.

The angel of the Lord found Hagar sitting near a spring in the desert. He said, “Hagar, servant girl of Sarah, where are you coming from and where are you going?” “I’m running away from my mistress,” she replied. The angel said, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her. I will give you so many descendants that you cannot count them all. For you will bear a son and will name him Ishmael (*God hears*) because the Lord has heard of your misery. But your son will live in hostility toward all his brothers.” So Hagar bore Abraham a son and named him Ishmael according to the words of the angel.

He was thirteen years old when God told Abraham to circumcise all the males in his household as a sign of God’s covenant with Abraham. God told Abraham that Ishmael was not the promised son. For the promised son was to be born of Sarah. God loved Ishmael because he was a son of Abraham, so God promised to give Ishmael many descendants.

After Isaac was born and later weaned, Abraham gave a feast. The boy Ishmael was mocking Isaac. So Sarah said to Abraham, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman’s son will never share in the inheritance of my son Isaac.” Abraham was greatly distressed for he loved Ishmael very much. But God told Abraham to do what Sarah asked because it was through Isaac that his offspring would be counted.

Early the next morning Abraham prepared some food and a skin of water and sent Hagar on her way with Ishmael. She wandered in the desert until the water was gone, then put her son under a bush and sat down to cry. God heard the boy crying and the angel called out to Hagar from heaven, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” Then the angel helped Hagar to see a well of water nearby. She filled the waterskin and gave the boy a drink.

God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. His mother got for him a wife from Egypt. When Ishmael was grown God blessed him and gave him twelve sons who became the leaders of twelve tribes. Later Ishmael helped Isaac to bury Abraham their father.

LET’S TALK:

1. You should get an animated retelling of this story! Watch that it doesn’t get edited by the teller.
2. The listening task talks about patience and waiting for God to act. Talk about this.
3. Why did Sarah ask Abraham to have a child by the servant girl Hagar? Do the listeners also have this practice?
4. What happened when Hagar became pregnant? Who did Sarah blame? What did Sarah do to Hagar? What did Hagar do?
5. What did the angel tell Hagar? What did Hagar call the angel of the Lord? (The God who sees.)
6. After Isaac was born and weaned what did Ishmael do? (Mocked Isaac.)
7. Why did Sarah want Ishmael sent away? (So as not to share in Isaac’s inheritance.)
8. What did the angel say and do the second time Hagar left? (Promised to bless Ishmael and showed her to find water for the boy. God was gracious to Hagar and Ishmael.)
9. Was Ishmael the son of promise? (No) Did God love Ishmael? (Yes) Did God bless Ishmael?

MEMORY VERSE: “I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.” Psa 13:6

NOTE: *Muslims have that tradition that the well of water provided for Ishmael was Zamzam and is located in Mecca. More likely it was a spring in the arid area near Beersheba where Abraham was then living. Hagar looked to her own people in Egypt for a wife for Ishmael.*

GOD TESTS ABRAHAM'S FAITH**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story introduces the concept of the substitute sacrifice which God Himself provided. Later the idea of a perfect (or sinless) sacrifice will be introduced.
2. With Muslims this story is considered to be about Abraham and Ishmael. Notice that God told Abraham to take "your son, your *only son Isaac*" and offer him a burnt offering. The story happened some time after Abraham had sent Hagar and Ishmael away. So chronology is important here. In the story be sure to include the dialogue between Abraham and Isaac.
3. While the idea of being asked to sacrifice a God-given child is gross, we must be careful to remember that God knows our heart and does not test us beyond what we can endure (1Co 10:13). From this testing Abraham's faith is now found strong (compared with the Egypt and Abimelech stories) as he fully trusts God to somehow save Isaac's life or restore him to life.
4. Sarah is not mentioned in this story. We don't know if she understood what Abraham was about to do. Surely it was interesting for Isaac to relate to her later all that had happened.

REVIEW:

1. Get someone to recall the story God's Promises for Abraham and Sarah (promise of Isaac) and God Fulfills His Promise to Abraham and Sarah (birth of Isaac).
2. Talk about obeying what God tells us to do. Talk about trusting God when He tells us to do something.
3. Talk about testing. What is the purpose of testing? (To prove us and make us stronger.)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 22:1-19; Heb 11:17-18

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God tests the faith of righteous people.
2. God blesses those who are found faithful.
3. Abraham testified to his faith in God to spare Isaac. (Abraham honored God by trusting Him.)

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you be willing to obey God, even if it meant losing something very precious to you? Listen to this story about Abraham and Isaac to see what happened.

READ: Gen 22:2, 5, 7-8

TELL THE STORY:**GOD TESTS ABRAHAM'S FAITH**

Some years had passed since Isaac's birth fulfilling God's promise to Abraham and Sarah. One day God called to Abraham. "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to a mountain I will show you. There you are to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering to me."

Early the next morning Abraham arose and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God told him about. On the third day of the journey Abraham saw the mountain in the

distance. He said to his servants, “You stay here with the donkey while I and Isaac go over there. We will worship and afterwards we will return to you.”

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac while he carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac asked his father Abraham, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “Father, the fire and wood are here. But where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Isaac asked.

Abraham answered, “God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them continued on toward the mountain. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he took hold of his son Isaac and bound him and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. Taking the knife in his hand, Abraham was going to kill his son.

But suddenly the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” Abraham replied. “Do not harm the boy,” the angel said, “Don’t do anything to him. Now I know that you truly fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son, Isaac.”

Abraham looked up and saw a male sheep caught by its horns in a nearby thicket. Abraham took the sheep and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. Abraham called that place, “The Lord will provide.” Again the angel of the Lord spoke, “Because of your faithfulness in not withholding your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. And through your offspring (seed—Gal 3:16) all nations on earth will be blessed.” Then Abraham returned to his servants and with Isaac returned to his tents and lived there a long time.

LET’S TALK:

1. Is someone able to retell the story?
2. Talk about the listening task—The matter of obeying even when something very precious was involved.
3. Is there discussion or arguing about whether it was really Isaac or Ishmael in this story? Stand your ground—you are just telling the story as God has preserved it in the Bible.
4. Talk about the matter of God’s providing the sacrifice. What does it mean for God to provide a substitute? Who chooses the substitute? (God does.)
5. What can we say about Abraham’s faith in God? (It was now very strong.)
6. What did God say through the angel after seeing Abraham’s willingness to give his only son back to God as a sacrifice? (Because of your faithfulness in not withholding your son, I will surely bless you, make your descendants numerous, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Heb 11:1

PREVIEW OF COMING STORIES: God has promised to bless Abraham and give him many descendants. But he has only one son of promise, Isaac. How will God bless his descendants and multiply them? Surely God has a plan for the descendants of Abraham.

GOD PROVIDES A BRIDE FOR ISAAC**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story should really tickle the fancy of the women. It is not a frivolous story, though. It is a beautiful story of Abraham's continuing faith in God, his trust in his faithful servant, the prayer of the servant and his trust in God to provide the right wife for his master, Isaac.
2. Sarah has now died and Abraham bought a field with a cave to bury her. (Gen 23) You may want to recap the burial story as part of the background for this story. At the end of this story it says that Isaac was now comforted after his mother's death. (Gen 24:67)
3. Abraham wanted a wife for Isaac from among his own people, not from among the Canaanites.
4. Eliezer was Abraham's chief servant (Gen 15:2-3). He was trusted by Abraham to do the right thing. Still Abraham swore him to strict obedience in an interesting manner.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story God Called Abraham and Sarah.
2. You may need to fill in with a bridging story telling about Abraham's first move with his father and brother to Haran. The women may be interested in the family structure. Can you work it out to see who Rebekah was? Terah□Nahor (Abraham's brother)□Bethuel (his son)□Laban & Rebekah. (The women may enjoy working this out—a chart could be helpful.)
3. Take time with the small details in the story which give it credibility and interest.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 11:27-31; 24:1-67

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God promised Abraham many descendants through Isaac his son.
2. God is gracious for He answers the prayers of those trusting Him (having faith).
3. God chose the wife for Isaac. He is interested in our daily lives and needs.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Is God interested in our everyday lives? Does He know what is best?

READ: Gen 24:1-4, 12-14, 66-67

TELL THE STORY:**A BRIDE FOR ISAAC**

Abraham was now very old. The Lord had blessed him in every way. One day he said to his chief servant, "Go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for Isaac. Make sure that you do not take my son back there, but instead bring the girl here." Then the servant took ten camels loaded with all kinds of good things from Abraham and set out for the place where Abraham's relatives lived. When he arrived near that place he made the camels kneel down near a well outside the town, for it was toward evening, the time when women go out to get water.

There he began to pray, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, give me success today. See, I am standing beside this spring and the daughters of the townspeople are coming to draw water. May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please give me a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also'—let her be the one you have chosen for Isaac." Before he had finished praying,

Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Abraham's brother.

The girl was very beautiful and a virgin. She went down to the spring and filled her water jar and came up again. The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar." "Drink, my lord," she replied, "and I will draw water for your camels until they have finished drinking." Without saying a word, the servant watched her fill the water trough again and again until the camels finished drinking. Then he took out a gold nose ring and two heavy gold bracelets and gave them to her. "Please tell me, whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

"I am the daughter of Bethuel," Rebekah replied. "We have plenty of straw and fodder for the camels, as well as room for you to stay the night." The servant bowed low to the ground and worshiped the Lord. "Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has given me success." The girl ran to tell her mother's household about these things.

Rebekah had a brother named Laban. When he had seen the gold nose ring and the golden bracelets, he hurried out to meet Abraham's servant, and said, "Come, you who are blessed by the Lord. Why are you standing out here? I have prepared a place for you and the camels." Water was brought for the servant to wash his feet and food was set before him. "I will not eat until I have told you why I have come," he said. "Then tell us," Laban replied. So the servant explained, "My master's wife has borne him a son in her old age, and my master has given him everything he owns. My master made me swear, 'You must not get a wife from among the daughters of the Canaanites in the land where I live, but from among my own people'."

Then he continued, "When I came to the spring today I prayed for success. I asked that whoever gave me water and offered to water my camels, that she be the one. Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder. Now, if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; if not, tell me, so I will know which way to turn."

Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed." Then the servant brought out the gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave costly gifts to her brother and her mother. Then the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When the morning came, the servant said, "Send me on my way to my master." So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?" "I will go," Rebekah said. Her family sent off with their blessing, "May your offspring greatly increase." So Rebekah and her maids got ready and mounted the camels to go with the men.

When the servant and Rebekah neared the place where Isaac was living, she looked up and saw Isaac coming. "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?" she asked. "He is my master," the servant explained. So she took her veil and covered herself. The servant told Isaac all that had happened. Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her. Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

LET'S TALK:

1. Get several retellings of this story. The women should enjoy hearing it again.
2. Talk about the servant's faith and God's answer to his prayer.
3. Why did Abraham want a girl from among his own people? (The Canaanites were not suitable.)
4. Do the women believe that God was working out the right girl for Isaac? (Why?)
5. What can we say about Rebekah from this story? (beautiful, a virgin, kind, obedient, trusting)

MEMORY VERSE: "I call on you, O God, for you will answer me; give ear to me and hear my prayer." Psa 17:6

GOD PROTECTS REBEKAH**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This is an optional story. It is not part of the core stories generally selected for evangelism.
2. It deals with worldview issues that may be of great interest to women—their security and safety. In this story God intervenes to protect Rebekah. The story is slightly out of the chronological sequence as it happened after the births of Esau and Jacob. The idea is to get this story out of the way before picking up on a new storyline with Jacob.
3. The story also presents the fact that God was blessing Isaac. And the people of the land were aware that God was blessing him. God was faithful to continue the blessing He had begun with Abraham. Abimelech is likely the son of the one in the Abraham and Sarah story.
4. This is also a reminder to those who live under the belief that God is transcendent and not concerned with the everyday affairs of men and women, that God does, indeed, watch over the faithful. Notice that God reminds Isaac not to go to Egypt in the famine as his father did.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story God Provides a Bride for Isaac.
2. Review the characteristics of God—especially that He is the source of grace.
3. Review the times that God spoke to Abraham giving him encouragement and reminding him of the blessing that God had promised.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 26:1-16, 23-31

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God told Isaac to stay in the land of Canaan and there God would bless him.
2. God had chosen Rebekah for Isaac and would protect her to fulfill God's purpose.
3. Isaac failed to fully trust God to protect him and his wife Rebekah.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Who do you trust to protect you? Who should you trust?

READ: Gen 26:7-11

TELL THE STORY:**GOD PROTECTS REBEKAH**

There happened to come a famine in the land of Canaan like during the days of Abraham and Sarah. During those days Abraham went out of Canaan to find food in Egypt. But the Lord had appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. Stay in this land for awhile, and I will be with you and will bless you. For I swore an oath to your father Abraham to give these lands to your descendants. I did this because Abraham obeyed me and kept my commandments.” So Isaac stayed in Gerar where he was then living.

But the men of that place were asking him about his wife Rebekah who was very beautiful. Isaac was afraid that they might kill him on account of Rebekah. So he told them, “She is my sister,” because he was afraid to say, “She is my wife.”

When Isaac had lived there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from a

window and happened to see him caressing his wife Rebekah. So Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, “So, she really is your wife and not your sister! Why did you say, ‘She is my sister’?” Isaac answered him, “Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her.”

Then Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.” So Abimelech gave orders to all the people: “Anyone who molests this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

God continued to watch over Isaac and Rebekah. That year Isaac planted crops and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him. He became very rich and his wealth continued to grow so that the Philistines envied him. Then Abimelech said to Isaac, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.”

So Isaac moved away from there and camped in a nearby valley and settled there. He reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died. He gave the wells the same names his father had given them.

Even though Isaac had failed to trust God to protect him and his wife, God had blessed him because of God’s promise to his father Abraham. God had appeared to Isaac one night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.”

Later Abimelech came to Isaac to make a treaty. Isaac asked him, “Why have you come to me now since you were hostile to me and sent me away?” Abimelech replied, “We saw clearly that the Lord was with you.” So Abimelech made a treaty with Isaac that he would do them no harm. And Isaac made a feast for them and they ate and drank together. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left him in peace.

LETS TALK:

1. Can someone tell this story? Notice what is included in the retelling and if anything is left out. It can be a clue to what is important to the listeners.
2. The listening task speaks of trust and protection. Talk about it. What does the story say about this?
3. Why did God remind Isaac to stay in the land and not go down to Egypt? (God would there meet his needs, even in a famine.)
4. In the Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech story Sarah agreed with Abraham in his plan. Do the listeners think Rebekah also agreed with Isaac’s plan? If not, why not? Would they have agreed?
5. What does this story tell us about God? (He watches over us, He warns us about what is best to do or not do, He wants to bless us when we are faithful and according to His promises to us.)
6. What would keep God from blessing us? Recall the story of Lot’s family in Sodom. Did God promise to bless Abraham’s family in Sodom? (No, Lot had left the place where God promised to bless Abraham.)
7. Why did the Philistines envy Isaac? (Because of his wealth the Lord had given him.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you, he rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him.” Isa 30:18

GOD GIVES ISAAC A FAMILY

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. There are several issues covered in the story rather quickly. First, Rebekah is childless like Sarah. God had promised to give Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. But Abraham had only one son according to God's promise. Then twins are born with the strange prophecy that the older would serve the younger. The father naturally loved the firstborn son who was like him—in his image. The younger was the favorite of his mother and very different from his brother. But the younger brother coveted that which rightfully belonged to the older. The birthright—a double portion of the inheritance—belonged to the firstborn son.
2. It was a strange pregnancy. At some point the two babies began to jostle one another within the mother causing her distress. The prophecy said there were two peoples within her, they would be separated—that is, live apart, and the younger will be stronger while the older serves him. Then at birth the two babies were very different in appearance while the second twin was born grasping the heel of his brother as if trying to pull him back in! So he was named Jacob—*supplanter*, one who takes the rightful place of another!
3. We learn that Esau despised his birthright by giving it up in exchange for a meal.
4. This story sets the stage for the one to follow in which Rebekah urges Jacob to deceive his father to get the blessing intended for Esau. We are going to see that cleverness and covetousness run in Rebekah and Laban's family. But it has its price!
5. Sarah was ninety when Isaac was born and one hundred twenty-seven when she died. Isaac was forty (Gen 25:20) when he married Rebekah and sixty (Gen 25:26) when the twins were born. So Rebekah was barren nearly twenty years before Isaac prayed for her.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story God Provides a Bride for Isaac. Can someone tell it?
2. Recall the promises God made first to Abraham about many descendants, and then to Isaac.
3. Talk about Sarah's childlessness and her disgrace. What often happens when a wife is childless?
4. Can God take away our disgrace?
5. What did Rebekah do for Isaac after Sarah (Isaac's mother) died? (She comforted him.)
6. Talk about why God might choose one person over another? What would God know about that person? Does God know everything about us?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 25:21-28; Deu 21:17; Heb 12:16; Mal 1:2-3; Rom 9:10-13

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is faithful to keep His promises, but sometimes He waits for us to act in faith.
2. God in His infinite wisdom chooses the ones He will bless and use to accomplish His purpose.
3. Sometimes we cannot understand the choices God makes because we cannot know the heart.
4. God did not "despise" Esau in a sense of hating him, but "loved" or favored Jacob over him. It was Esau who "despised" that which God had given him by birth.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Do you have a favorite in your family? Listen to this story to see which son was favored by each parent.

READ: Gen 25:21, 24-26

TELL THE STORY:

TWO SONS FOR REBEKAH

Abraham's servant brought Rebekah back to be Isaac's wife. When Isaac married Rebekah he was forty years old. Isaac loved his wife very much. But for twenty years she had no children, no son to present her husband. One day Isaac prayed for his wife because she was barren. Soon she conceived and became pregnant.

The babies inside her began to jostle each other. "Why is this happening to me?" she asked. So Rebekah went to inquire of the Lord.

The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body like a hairy garment, so they named him Esau which means *hairy*. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel as if to pull him back inside. So he was named Jacob which means one who grasps the heel or a *supplanter—one who takes the place of another*.

Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to her sons.

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country like his father Isaac who had a taste for wild game. Isaac loved Esau. Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents, and the favorite of his mother Rebekah.

Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm starving!" Esau exclaimed. Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright." "Look, I am about to die!" Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So Esau swore an oath to Jacob selling his birthright. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So Esau despised his birthright which rightfully belonged to the oldest son but which now belonged to his younger brother Jacob.

LET'S TALK:

1. This story is not very long. Get someone to retell it. Did they get it right?
2. Talk about the matter of favorites in our families. Is one of the listeners a favorite of their parents? Which parent? Do they have siblings who are favorites of a different parent?
3. What do they think God meant in the prophecy about the two sons?
4. Talk about Rebekah's barrenness and Isaac's long delay in praying for her? Do they think God may have been waiting for Isaac to act in faith on behalf of his wife?
5. Talk about the birthright for sons in the inheritance of family property. What is the birthright for girls?
6. Do they think Esau valued his birthright? Or was he more interested in his physical needs?

MEMORY VERSE: "The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires." Pro 11:6

REBEKAH AND JACOB DECEIVE ISAAC**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This is probably one of the most interesting stories in the Bible. In cultures where cleverness and deception are valued you will need to carefully balance what happens here with what happens later to Jacob as he is in turn deceived by his uncle Laban and his sons when Joseph is sold and Jacob thinks he is dead.
2. Watch the change in Jacob as the several stories unfold. In this one he speaks of “Your God gave me success.” Later after his dream he says that Jehovah will be his God, too.
3. Rebekah comes from family that covets and deceives as does Laban. Recall in the story God Provides A Bride for Isaac that Laban was impressed with the jewelry and gifts.
4. God had chosen Jacob as he was now knowing how he would one day be.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story God Provides A Bride for Isaac. Talk about Laban’s interest in the jewelry. Was there a covetous streak in the family? Why do they think Jacob desired to get Esau’s birthright? What would he desire next?
2. Recall the promises that God made to Abraham and Isaac about many descendants and through one all people on earth would be blessed.
3. When we lie or in any way deceive other people, does God hear and see us? What effect does our action have on other people? On ourselves? On our families?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 25:29-34; 27:1-28:5

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God had a plan for Abraham’s descendants. Now God is choosing one over another to accomplish His purpose.
2. Satan is not mentioned in this story or the other stories about Abraham’s family. Yet there is an evil force at work attempting to keep God from fulfilling His promise one day to crush Satan. There was childlessness until divine intervention, opportunity to spoil two wives, now envy and covetousness threaten to divide a family.
3. God is powerful to overcome all obstacles and hindrances to fulfill His plans.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Why do you think Rebekah wanted to help Jacob to deceive his father?

READ: Gen 27:1-10

TELL THE STORY:**A CLEVER DECEPTION**

When Isaac was old and his eyes were weak so he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son to come to him. Isaac said, “I am now old and may soon die. Now then, get your bow and arrows and go hunt some wild game for me. Prepare for me the kind of tasty food that I like and bring it to me to eat. Then I will give you my blessing before I die.”

Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau had left to hunt for some wild

game, Rebekah said to Jacob, “Look, I overheard your father say to Esau, ‘Hunt some wild game and prepare tasty food for me before I die. Then I will give you my blessing.’ Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you. Go to the flock and bring me two choice young goats so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing instead of Esau.”

Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “But my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I’m a man with smooth skin. What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing.”

His mother said to him, “My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do as I say; go and get them.”

So Jacob did what his mother said, he brought the young goats and she prepared some tasty food for Isaac. Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son and put them upon her younger son Jacob. She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and bread she had made.

Jacob went to his father with the food and said, “My father, I am Esau your firstborn, I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing.” Isaac asked his son, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?” “The Lord your God gave me success,” Jacob replied.

Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.” So Jacob went close to his father who touched him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” For Isaac did not recognize it was really Jacob. So Isaac blessed Jacob the younger son. Again he asked, “Are you really my son Esau?” “I am,” Jacob assured him. Then Isaac said, “Give me some of your tasty wild game to eat.” After Isaac had eaten he said, “Come here, my son, and kiss me.” When Jacob kissed his father, Isaac caught the smell of Esau’s clothes, and he blessed Jacob.

The blessing said that God would bless with an abundance of grain, that nations would bow down to his descendants, that he would rule over his brothers, and that the sons of his mother would one day bow down. After Jacob received the blessing and left his father’s presence, Esau returned with his wild game and prepared some tasty food. But when he brought it to his father Isaac he learned that Jacob had already received the blessing. Esau wept bitterly when he learned there was no blessing remaining for him. So Esau thought to kill Jacob after his father died.

Rebekah sent for Jacob and said: “Listen, Esau your bother is thinking of killing you. Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran. Remain there until your brother’s anger cools.”

Rebekah said to her husband Isaac, “I’m disgusted with these Canaanite women that Esau has married. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, then my life will not be worth living.” So Isaac agreed that it was best to send Jacob to live with his uncle Laban. Isaac instructed Jacob, “Do not marry any Canaanite woman. Take a wife from among the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother. May God Almighty bless you and increase your descendants until you become a nation of peoples.” So Jacob departed for his uncle Laban.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story.
2. Talk about the deception that Rebekah planned.
3. Which do they think is the better son? Why would God permit Jacob to deceive his father and get the blessing Isaac intended for Jacob? Will Jacob be punished for this?
4. What is the significance of Jacob’s being sent away? What is God’s plan for him?

MEMORY VERSE: “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” Pro 19:21

GOD GIVES JACOB A FAMILY**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story of the birth of Jacob's children should be very interesting to the women.
2. The story does not teach that a man should have four wives. Jacob loved the wrong woman! Rachel was the choice of his heart. He got Leah and the two servant girls in the process of getting the wife he really loved. But God had plans for Leah, it was by Leah that Levi became the ancestor of Moses and Aaron, and Judah the ancestor of David and Jesus. From Rachel there came Benjamin, King Saul and Paul as well as the descendants of Joseph—Ephraim who made up the larger kingdom of Israel. God was beginning to build a people for His purpose.
3. It was considered a blessing to have a large family of sons. (Psa 127:3-5)
4. In Jacob's dream he begins to be a changed man. Now God was going to be "his" God.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story Rebekah and Jacob Deceive Isaac. In this story mention is made of Esau's wives which Rebekah cannot stand. How did these compare with Leah and Rachel?
2. Talk about the deception which happened and how God used it to send Jacob back to get a wife from among his relatives. God is able to overcome hindrances in one's life.
3. One main point in the stories is to remind the listeners that God is in charge of our daily lives.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 29:21-30:25; 35:16-18

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is all-wise, He knows the plan and purpose for our lives.
2. God is powerful to overcome the deception of others to fulfill his purpose and plans.
3. God is faithful to fulfill his promises.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Will God bless Jacob as Isaac's blessing said? Will Jacob have to pay for his deception of his father and cheating of his brother?

READ: Gen 29:29-35

TELL THE STORY:**GOD GIVES JACOB A FAMILY**

God had promised many descendants to Abraham and to Isaac. Abraham had only one son by Sarah. Isaac had two sons by Rebekah. Esau married Canaanite women which his mother despised. So Jacob went to live with his uncle Laban to find a wife from among his own relatives. Along the way he had a dream one night in which God appeared to him and spoke to him. There was a stairway stretching from earth to heaven with angels going up and down. The Lord said to Jacob, "I will give you many descendants who will be like the dust of the earth spread out from the east to the west. All people on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I will go with you, protect and bless you, and bring you back to this land."

Then Jacob made a vow, "If God will be with me and will watch over me, give me food to eat and clothes to wear, so that I return safely to my father's house, then He will be my God." After

morning came Jacob worshiped God, then he continued on his journey to see his uncle Laban.

When Jacob arrived where his uncle lived he saw Rachel the beautiful younger daughter tending sheep. He kissed her and began to weep aloud. She told him of her father Laban who welcomed Jacob and offered him work. Jacob agreed to work seven years for Rachel.

Because of Jacob's love for Rachel the years seemed like only a few days. After the seven years ended Jacob said to Laban, "My time is completed, give me my wife, I want to lie with her." Laban brought together all the people of that place and gave a feast. When evening came Laban cleverly gave Jacob the older daughter Leah as his wife on the wedding night. In the morning Jacob angrily discovered it was Leah! Laban had deceived him! Jacob had to work seven more years for Rachel.

Each wife had a servant girl. Leah had Zilpah and Rachel had Bilhah. Jacob loved Rachel the younger daughter. But God opened Leah's womb first so that she gave birth to four sons. Then Leah stopped having children.

When Rachel saw that she was not having any children she became jealous of her sister and said to Jacob, "Give me children or I will die!" Jacob became angry with her and said, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?" So Rachel said, "Here is Bilhah my servant girl. Sleep with her so she can bear children for me and I too can have a family through her." So Jacob slept with Bilhah, Rachel's servant girl and she conceived and gave birth to a son. Again she conceived and gave birth to a second son.

Now Leah saw that she was not having any more children so she gave her servant girl Zilpah to Jacob. Zilpah gave birth to a son and then again to a second son.

During the wheat harvest Reuben, oldest son of Leah, found some mandrake plants and brought them to his mother. Rachel said to Leah, "Give me some of your son's mandrakes." But Leah said, "You have taken away my husband and now you want my mandrake plants, too!" "Very well," Rachel said, "You may sleep with Jacob tonight in return for some of your mandrake plants." When Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. "You must sleep with me tonight because I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So Jacob slept with Leah that night. God granted Leah yet another two sons and a daughter.

Then God remembered Rachel; He listened to her and opened her womb. Rachel became pregnant and gave birth to a son and named him Joseph, for she said, "God has taken away my disgrace." Then she said, "May the Lord add to me another son." It was not until many years later back in the land of Canaan that Rachel gave birth to a second son. But as she gave birth she died and named her son Ben-Oni or *son of my trouble*. But Jacob named him Ben-jamin which means *son of my right hand*. And so Rachel died and was buried near Bethlehem.

Jacob now had 12 sons, six by Leah, two by her servant girl, two by Rachel's servant girl and two by Rachel. God had given Jacob a large family of twelve sons and one daughter Dinah born to Leah.

LET'S TALK:

1. This is a complicated story. Can anyone remember to tell it?
2. Talk about the listening task questions.
3. All of the sons were not listed in the story for simplicity. It may be helpful to make a chart or to go over the list of sons born to each woman. This situation will be common to many listeners.
4. How was Jacob the deceiver himself deceived? Is it a local practice for the older to marry first?
5. Jacob chose Rachel. God had also chosen Leah. What does this tell us?
6. Talk about the dream Jacob had. Is he beginning to change? In what way? Has anyone ever had a dream like this? Are dreams important for the listeners? Can God speak in a dream?

MEMORY VERSE: "How sweet are your promises to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

Psa 119:103

JACOB RETURNS HOME, DEATH OF A BELOVED WIFE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. These early stories should help the listeners to see that God is interested in our everyday lives. He has a plan for us just as He had a plan for Jacob's life. God chose Jacob knowing that in his heart he was the right one to bless and through him to build a people to bless others.
2. Our choices are not always God's choices. We must always seek His will for our lives.
3. The Review and Let's Talk items listed are not the only things the storyer and listeners can talk about. Feel free to develop the themes along the needs of the listeners.
4. If the women are enjoying the family stories don't rush through them. Use them to teach.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story God Gives Jacob a Family. Talk about the dream and God's promises to Jacob.
2. Why do the women think God chose Jacob over Esau? What difference could the wives of the two men make? Remember that Esau had married some Canaanite wives. Later he married a daughter of Ishmael (Gen 28:9). Some of Esau's descendants later became wicked people.
3. Review the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and then Jacob about many descendants and through one descendant (or seed) to bless all people.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 28:15; 30:25-33:17; 35:1-7

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is faithful to fulfill His promises.
2. We must fully depend upon God in all matters of life even in difficult circumstances.
3. The Lord is able to give us a new nature and name.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Is God able to give a deceiver a new name and new nature? Let's see.

READ: Gen 31:3, 17; 32:3; 33:4; 35:1

TELL THE STORY:**JACOB RETURNS HOME**

After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to his uncle Laban, "Send me on my way so I can go back to my homeland." But Laban had learned that God was blessing him because of Jacob. So Laban said, "Name your wages and I will pay them." God continued to bless Jacob. After several years had passed Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob has become very wealthy and taken everything our father owned." Laban's attitude toward Jacob had changed.

Then the Lord spoke to Jacob and said, "Go back to the land of your fathers and your relatives, and I will be with you." Jacob told his wives Rachel and Leah what God had said. His uncle Laban had cheated him over the years by changing his wages ten times. "Yes," his wives replied, "our father now treats us like foreigners. Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us. So do whatever God has told you."

Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels and drove all the livestock ahead of him to

return to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. When Laban learned that Jacob had left, he took some men and went to get him. But the Lord said to Laban, “Do not say anything to Jacob either good or bad.” Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done? You’ve carried off my daughters like captives in war. Why didn’t you tell me so that I could send you away with joy and singing and music. You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye.”

Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned to his home. Jacob also went on his way after sending messengers ahead to tell his brother Esau that he was coming. The messengers returned saying that Esau was coming with 400 men. Jacob was very frightened and devised a plan. He set aside a large gift of many animals—goats, sheep, camels, cows and donkeys. Then he divided his family into two groups so that if Esau attacked one group the other could escape. Jacob followed along behind the two groups of wives, children and animals.

One night after Jacob had sent his family across a river he returned and during the night he wrestled with an angel. “I will not let you go until you bless me,” he told the angel. At last the angel agreed to bless Jacob and gave him a new name, Israel, which means *he struggles with God*.

The next day Jacob saw Esau coming and ran to meet him and bowed down to him seven times. Esau threw his arms around Jacob and kissed him. Both men wept. “Who are these people with you?” Esau asked. “They are the children God has graciously given your servant,” Jacob said. “What are all these animals I met?” Esau asked. “They are my gift for you,” Jacob replied, “Please take them.”

So Jacob and his family arrived back in his homeland. He returned to Bethel, the place where he had the dream and God promised to bless him. God had kept his promise to Jacob. He had blessed Jacob, given him a large family, and now brought him home again. After some time had passed Rachel was going to give birth to her second son. She was having great difficulty in childbirth. The midwife said to her, “Don’t be afraid, you have another son.” As Rachel breathed her last she named her son but Jacob changed his name to Benjamin. So Rachel, Jacob’s favorite wife, died and was buried on the way to Bethlehem. Jacob came home to his father, Isaac, who was now very old. Soon, he, too, breathed his last and was gathered to his people. Jacob and Esau his sons buried him.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story. Do they need to hear it a second time to catch everything?
2. Talk about the new name and new nature of Jacob now Israel. Is this name a problem???
3. Talk about the faithfulness of God to do what He promised to do? He blessed Jacob.
4. Talk about the change of attitude of Rachel and Leah toward their father? They were being treated like foreigners by their own father. What about Laban’s greed and God’s judgment?
5. Had Jacob learned to fully trust God? At first he was afraid of meeting Esau. God had changed Esau, too, so that he forgave Jacob. Talk about homecoming and reuniting with loved ones.
6. It will be helpful in closing to go back to Gen 15:13-14 to mention the dream that Abraham had in his early days in Canaan when God revealed what was going to happen to his descendants in the future. V.16 mentions the sin of the Amorites (Canaanites) had not yet reached its full measure. Recall the wickedness of the Canaanites in Sodom and Gomorrah. God would take his chosen people out of Canaan temporarily to build them into a nation and then bring them back to bring judgment upon the Canaanite people. Why Egypt? We’ll see!

MEMORY VERSE: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Rom 8:28

GOD PROTECTS JOSEPH IN EGYPT**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The story of Joseph begins the group of stories that fulfill God's prophecy to Abraham that one day his descendants would go to live in a land not their own and there become slaves. But God would punish those who enslaved them and bring them out again to their own land.
2. Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of Rachel, were the favorite sons of Jacob. Rachel was now dead but Leah appears still to be living since Joseph's second dream refers also to his living parents.
3. This begins a story about when bad circumstances seem to happen to an innocent person who continues to trust God in everything. Even in his circumstance God blesses him and prospers him until the time comes for God to use him to benefit his family and fulfill God's purpose.
4. Joseph's qualities are good stewardship of what is placed under him, moral purity, and honoring God even while in prison.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story God Gives Jacob a Family. Talk about Rachel's long-awaited birth of Joseph.
2. The sons of Jacob had different mothers. Talk about the possibility of jealousy and competition among them—especially those thought to be more favored by their father.
3. Talk about Jacob's trust of God in his difficult circumstances while he worked for Laban. Could Joseph have known Jacob's trust in God during those days?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 15:13-16; 37:1-36; 39:1-21; Psa 105:16-25

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God knows the future and what will happen to us.
2. God uses us to accomplish His purpose to benefit many people.
3. God is able to bless a person in any circumstance of life.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you have been jealous with a brother like Joseph?

READ: Gen 37:3, 5, 28; 39:1, 6-7

TELL THE STORY:**JOSEPH THE SERVANT AND JOSEPH THE PRISONER**

Jacob was living in the land where his father Isaac had stayed. Joseph the son of Rachel was now a young man of seventeen and tended flocks with his brothers. He brought his father a bad report about them, which angered the brothers. Jacob loved Joseph more than any of the other sons and had made a richly ornamented robe for Joseph. When the brothers saw their father loved Joseph more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

One day Joseph had a dream and told it to his brothers. This made them hate him even more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to rule over us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. Then he had another dream and told it to his

brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” When Joseph told his father, Jacob rebuked him asking, “Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” His brothers were jealous of Joseph but his father kept the matter in mind.

One day when his brothers had taken the flocks out to graze, Jacob said to his son Joseph, “I am sending you to your brothers to see if all is well with them. Bring word back to me.” Joseph soon found his brothers, but when they saw him in the distance began to plot how to kill him.

“Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. When Joseph arrived the brothers seized him and stripped off his beautiful robe and threw him into a dry cistern while they decided what to do to him. As the brothers sat down to eat a meal they saw a caravan of traders coming on camels on their way down to Egypt. So the brothers agreed to sell Joseph for twenty shekels of silver. So he was taken down to Egypt as a slave. The brothers tore the robe and sprinkled goat’s blood on it and told the father they had found the robe that way. Jacob believed Joseph had been killed by a wild animal and so he mourned many days for his beloved son.

An Egyptian named Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, had bought Joseph from the traders. The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered as he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph and blessed all that he did, Joseph was put in charge of the household, everything that Potiphar owned was entrusted to his care. With Joseph in charge Potiphar did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well built and handsome, and after awhile his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, “Come to bed with me.” But Joseph refused saying, “With me in charge my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could you do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

One day Joseph went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the other household servants were inside. The wife caught Joseph by the cloak and demanded, “Come to bed with me!” Joseph fled from her but left his cloak in her hand. When she saw that he had run from her but that she still had his cloak, she called the other servants, “Look! This Hebrew has come to tempt me, When he heard me scream, he ran and left his cloak beside me.” And she kept the cloak until Potiphar came home. When Potiphar heard her story he burned with anger and took Joseph and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were kept. But while Joseph was in prison, the Lord was with him and showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So Joseph was put in charge of all those held in prison, and everything was under Joseph’s care.

LET’S TALK:

1. This should be another interesting story to retell. Did they get all the facts in it?
2. Talk about the brothers’ jealousy of Joseph and the effect Joseph’s dreams had on them.
3. Did the listeners catch the righteousness of Joseph and wickedness of Potiphar’s wife?
4. Talk about Potiphar’s blessing because of Joseph. Recall Laban’s blessing because of Jacob.
5. Had God forgotten Joseph while he was in prison? (No. God was blessing him in prison.)
6. Out of the twelve brothers God has chosen Joseph to accomplish God’s purpose for the family.
7. If the matter of Joseph’s chastity in the face of temptation does come up, let the women talk about its significance. Is this strange behavior to them? Joseph was honoring his master.

MEMORY VERSE: “You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.” Psa 32:7

GOD HELPS JOSEPH INTERPRET DREAMS**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The story of Joseph has been broken down into several smaller stories. It could be told as one long story but there are too many details to remember. This way several themes can be emphasized in the shorter stories.
2. The last story dealt with a moral and ethical theme, now Joseph honors God by giving Him credit for helping Joseph to interpret dreams.
3. Dreams are very important in many oral cultures and great weight is given to what happens in dreams as a glimpse into future events. We see that God uses dreams to speak to people.
4. Now the reason that God has sent Joseph to Egypt is beginning to be revealed.

REVIEW:

1. Recall Jacob's dream in Rebekah and Jacob Deceive Isaac and how Joseph came to live in Egypt in the story God Protects Joseph in Egypt.
2. Talk about dreams and their meanings to us. Has God spoken to anyone in a dream? How did they know it was God speaking? Who gives interpretation to their dreams?
3. Joseph has been found faithful during difficult times. How does that prepare us to serve God? In future stories we will see that another One was found faithful during difficult times. His suffering honored God and God in turn honored him. Talk about how suffering can prepare us to honor God.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 39:20-41:46; Psa 105:17-22; Num 12:6

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God has a plan for our lives according to His purpose.
2. God helped Joseph interpret dreams because God knows everything. Joseph gave God credit.
3. God used Joseph's difficult times to prepare him for a greater work.

ASK THE LISTENERS: How do you think God will help Joseph to get out of prison?

READ: Gen 40:1-8

TELL THE STORY:**GOD HELPS JOSEPH INTERPRET DREAMS**

While Joseph was in prison the Lord was with him and blessed him. Soon he was in charge of all the prisoners and everything that was done in the prison. The Lord gave Joseph success in all that he did. Some time later Pharaoh the king of Egypt was offended by his cupbearer and baker. Pharaoh was angry with his two officials and put them in the same prison where Joseph was confined. They were assigned to Joseph and he attended to them.

After they had been there some time, each of the men—the cupbearer and the baker—had a dream on the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. So he asked, “Why are your faces so sad today?”

“We both had dreams, but there is no one to interpret them,” they answered. Joseph replied that it

is God who gives interpretation. “So tell me your dreams,” he said.

The chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. “In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup and put the cup into his hand.”

“This is what it means,” Joseph said to him. “The three branches are three days. In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh’s cup in his hand just as you used to do. But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of prison. For I have done nothing to deserve being put into prison.”

When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, “I, too, had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread. In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but birds were eating out of the basket on my head.”

“This is what it means,” Joseph explained. “The three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat away your flesh.” Now the third day was Pharaoh’s birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He restored the chief cupbearer to his former position but the chief baker he hanged just as Joseph had said. The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

When two full years had passed Pharaoh had two dreams: In the first one he was standing by the big river of Egypt when out of the river came up seven cows, sleek and fat. While they were grazing seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the river and ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. He fell asleep again and had a second dream in which seven healthy and good heads of grain were growing on a single stalk. After them seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by the east wind. The thin heads swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up again. In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for his magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them the dreams but no one could give the interpretation.

Then the chief cupbearer remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh there was a man in prison who could interpret dreams. “Bring him,” Pharaoh said. When Joseph had shaved and changed his clothes he stood before Pharaoh. Joseph said that he could not interpret dreams but that God could. “Tell me your dreams.” After hearing the two dreams he said, “There will be seven years of plentiful grain harvest followed by seven years of famine. There were two dreams because it has been firmly decided by God and will happen soon.”

So Pharaoh took Joseph and put him in charge of all Egypt to gather the grain during the good years and store it for the years of famine to follow. Pharaoh said, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the Spirit of God?” Then Pharaoh took his ring and put it upon Joseph’s finger, dressed him in robes of fine linen and had him to ride in Pharaoh’s own chariot. Joseph was about thirty years old when he entered Pharaoh’s service. He married an Egyptian girl named Asenath, the daughter of an Egyptian priest. And he had two sons named Manasseh and Ephraim. Now Ephraim means *fruitful* for Joseph said that God had made him fruitful in the land of his suffering.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story.
2. How did God bless Joseph in Egypt? (Gave him work to do and a family.)
3. What work did God have for Joseph to do? (Prepare Egypt for a coming famine.)
4. How did Joseph honor God? (He gave God credit for interpreting dreams.)

MEMORY VERSE: “But God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.” Psa 66:19

JOSEPH IS REUNITED WITH HIS FAMILY**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Jacob's suffering continues as he believes he has lost another son and may lose Benjamin.
2. Joseph recognizes his brothers but they do not recognize him dressed as an Egyptian.
3. Joseph recalls his early dreams about his brothers bowing down to him. He decides to test them to see if their hearts have changed.
4. We now see that God was preparing a blessing for Jacob's family during the famine and a greater blessing yet to come as God fulfilled His promise to Abraham of a great nation.

REVIEW:

1. Have someone retell the stories God Protects Joseph in Egypt and God Helps Joseph Interpret Dreams.
2. Talk about forgiveness and why we must do it. Does anyone need to forgive another?
3. Talk about the distress that Jacob had thinking he lost another son. Remember his deception of his own father. While our sins may be forgiven, they often have consequences for us.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 41:46-46:7; Pro 28:13

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God knows the future and prepares for those faithful to Him.
2. God is able to overcome any adversity (misfortune) in our lives according to His purpose.
3. God helps us to forgive those who sin against us.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Will Joseph take revenge on his brothers, or will he forgive them?

READ: Gen 41:53-42:5

TELL THE STORY:**JOSEPH REMEMBERS HIS FAMILY**

It happened just as Joseph had said. There were seven years with an abundance of grain during which Joseph collected all the excess grain and stored it in the cities. It was a huge quantity beyond measuring. Then the seven years of abundance came to an end, and the seven years of famine began. There was famine, too, in all the other lands; but there was food in Egypt. When all of Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Joseph for food. People came from other lands to buy food.

When Jacob learned there was food in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you sit here looking at each other? Go to Egypt to buy food that we may live and not die." Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy food. But Jacob did not send Benjamin the youngest because he was afraid that harm might come to him. When the brothers arrived in Egypt they bowed down to Joseph with their faces to the ground. Joseph recognized them; but they did not recognize Joseph who now looked like an Egyptian. Then Joseph remembered his dreams about them and said harshly, "Where do you come from?" "From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food." "You are spies," Joseph accused them.

The brothers answered, "No, your servants have only come to buy food. We are the sons of one

man. We were twelve brothers. The youngest is with our father, and one is no more.”

Again Joseph said, “You are spies! This is how you will be tested. Send one of your number to get your younger brother, the rest will be kept in prison.” So he put them all in custody for three days. On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God: If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison while the rest of you take the grain back for your starving households. But you must bring your youngest brother to me so that your words may be proved true.”

The brothers said one to another, “Surely we are being punished because of our brother! Remember how he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen.” Joseph had been speaking through an interpreter but could understand what his brothers said. He turned away and began to weep. Then he had Simeon the second brother taken from them, bound and put into prison. He gave orders to fill their grain sacks but to put each man’s money back into their sack and to give provisions for their journey home. When the brothers discovered their silver in the grain sacks they were afraid and said, “What is this God has done to us?” When they returned to Jacob they explained everything to him, about the Egyptian ruler who harshly accused them of being spies, and how their brother was put in prison. Jacob said, “Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me.” Jacob was afraid to let Benjamin go to Egypt.

The famine continued and finally the brothers had to return to Egypt to buy food. They promised to protect Benjamin and to bring Simeon home. Jacob sent some of the best products of the land and double the amount of silver and said, “May God almighty grant you mercy.” When Joseph saw Benjamin he told his servant to take them to his own house and prepare a meal for them. The brothers were frightened they would become slaves. They had tried to give the silver back but were told to keep it. When Joseph came he arranged the brothers according to their ages and inquired about their father. “Is he still living?” he asked. Joseph was deeply moved at the sight of Benjamin and left the room to weep. Later Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph!” The brothers were terrified. But Joseph said, “Come close to me. I am the one you sold into slavery. Now do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here. God caused this to happen in order to save your lives. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. Now take some carts from Egypt and go get your father and bring him here. Never mind about your belongings, because the best of Egypt will be yours.”

So it happened during the days of Joseph that God’s promise to Abraham came true. It was here that God would bless Jacob’s family and make them into a great nation.

LET’S TALK:

1. This is a happy story. Can someone tell it?
2. Talk about revenge and forgiveness. Did Joseph take revenge or forgive? He did test his brothers to see if their hearts had changed. Did they? What did the brothers say about their evil actions against Joseph? Did they believe God was repaying them for what they did?
3. Talk about Jacob’s deceptive ways in his early life. How had his sons deceived him?
4. Talk about the joy of being reunited with one’s family—even those who have offended you.
5. What application does this story have for the listeners?
6. What did they like in the story?
7. Do the listeners recall what was going to happen now? Abraham’s descendants were to become slaves but one day God promised to deliver them and bring them back to Canaan.

MEMORY VERSE: “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” Mat 6:14

TWO FAITHFUL MIDWIVES WHO FEARED GOD**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This is a short but beautiful story. It could easily be a bridging story into the next story about the birth of Moses. It is a story that is often overlooked or overshadowed as it is squeezed in between the Egyptian oppression and the birth of Moses story. It involves making a decision that may not be safe to do, but it is the right thing to do. In their hearts the midwives feared God and wanted to do what was right before God. It took courage to make a stand. They honored God. And in return God honored them with families of their own.
2. In the earlier stories the term “descendants of Abraham” was used deliberately as a “softer” term for a Muslim audience. During the Exodus they began to be called Israelites. In the next few stories they will be “Hebrews”, from a word meaning *beyond, on the other side*, used of Abraham in Gen 14:13 possibly because he was a foreigner from “the land beyond the river.”
3. We don’t know anything about the midwives’ family situation except that God is credited with giving them families (children) of their own (which certainly included some boy babies).

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell God Helps Joseph Interpret Dreams.
2. Talk about the high status that Joseph and his family enjoyed during Joseph’s lifetime in Egypt.
3. Egyptian history points to a change in ruling dynasties, first to make Joseph acceptable to the Egyptian rulers, and then later back to the former attitudes toward foreigners. So now the attitude of the Egyptian rulers and people is one of fear because the Hebrews (as they are now called) are too numerous and they may side with an enemy to help overthrow Egypt.
4. There is another matter: The Hebrews were shepherds, the Egyptians farmers. The Hebrews were considered to be low-caste before the Egyptians (Gen 43:32). So it was an easy matter to make them slaves, since they did not intermarry and lived in one general area of the river delta apart from the Egyptians.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Exo 1:5-22; Act 7:17-19; 4:19-20; Psa 128:1

MAJOR THEMES:

1. It is better to obey God than man.
2. Fear of God leads to courage and obedience.
3. God blesses those who fear and obey him.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Here is a story about two faithful women. Would you be brave to do what they did?

READ: Exo 1:15-17, 21

TELL THE STORY:**TWO FAITHFUL MIDWIVES**

God had kept his promise to bless the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were now called Hebrews and had grown from just Jacob’s family into a nation of twelve families or tribes.

Joseph and all his brothers had died. Their sons had families and then their children had families. Many years had passed. The king no longer remembered what Joseph had done for Egypt or who his people were. The king of Egypt, Pharaoh, feared the great number of Hebrew families. At first Pharaoh decreed, "Let us deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous, and if war breaks out, join our enemies and fight against us." So the Egyptians put slave masters over them to oppress them with hard labor building cities for Pharaoh. But the more the Egyptians oppressed the Hebrews, the more they multiplied and spread. All the Egyptians came to fear the Hebrews and made their lives bitter with ruthless oppression and hard labor. But God blessed the Hebrews because of his promise to Abraham, and so they continued to increase.

Then Pharaoh called the two Hebrew midwives named Shiphrah and Puah to him and said: "When you help the women in childbirth, and observe them on the delivery stool, if the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live."

Shiphrah and Puah listened carefully to the words of Pharaoh but they feared God more than Pharaoh. So they did not do what the king told them to do. They let the boy babies live.

Now when the king heard what was happening, that the boy babies were allowed to live, he called the midwives to him again and asked them: "Why have you disobeyed me? Why have you let the boy babies live?"

Cleverly the midwives answered Pharaoh, "Why, Hebrew women are not at all like the Egyptian women. They are strong and give birth quickly, even before the midwife arrives!"

So God blessed Shiphrah and Puah because they feared Him and did what was right. And God gave the midwives families of their own.

God continued to bless the Hebrew people and they became even more numerous. Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every boy baby that is born you must throw into the river, but let every girl baby live!"

LET'S TALK:

1. Have someone retell the story.
2. Talk about the need for courage to do what is right before God.
3. Recall that God said the descendants of Abraham would one day become slaves in a land not their own. (Gen 15:13)
4. Why do the women think that Pharaoh mentioned killing only the boy babies? (They might live to become fighters and turn against the Egyptians.)
5. What do they think about the answer the midwives gave to Pharaoh when he questioned them?
6. What did God do to reward the midwives for their trust in Him? (He blessed them and gave them families of their own.)
7. Is God pleased when we do what is right in His sight? How can we know what is right in God's sight? (The Bible helps us to know what God wants us to believe and do.)

MEMORY VERSE: "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways." Psa 128:1

THINK ABOUT THIS: God promised to deliver Abraham's descendants from slavery. What is needed is a Deliverer or a Savior, to save the people from their slavery and oppression.

GOD PROTECTED BABY MOSES**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Amram and Jochebed were descendants of Levi, third son of Jacob and Leah (1Ch 6:1-3). Amram had married his aunt (Exo 6:20; Num 26:59). This information will likely be acceptable among Muslims. Miriam was old enough to be responsible for watching after the baby Moses in the river. Aaron was three years older than Moses (Exo 7:7). So Miriam was the older sister and Aaron her younger brother with Moses the youngest of the three children. Aaron was born just before the edict that all boy babies be put to death.
2. There is an element of irony in that Pharaoh decreed that all Hebrew boy babies be thrown into the river. Jochebed put her baby in the river, however, she made sure that he floated!
3. It is obvious that Jochebed did not expect her baby to die as she did what she could to protect him and she sent Miriam to watch him. We might say that somehow she hoped for a miracle to save her son.
4. God had selected Moses and was already at work protecting His future Deliverer.
5. In the Qur'an Amram (Imrân) is married to Maryam, the same Maryam that was the mother of Jesus. Later you can deal with this in the genealogy of Mary and Joseph as descendants of Judah, fourth son of Jacob and Leah. We will follow the family lines in several future stories.

REVIEW:

1. Again recall the dream when God told Abraham that his descendants would go to live in a land not their own, become slaves, but God would bring them out (deliver them). (Gen 15:13-14)
2. Have someone recall the story Two Faithful Midwives Who Feared God.
3. Talk about how God might help us without our realizing it was happening. Sometimes we talk about having "good luck" when really it is God at work unknown to us. Has someone had an experience where they think this is what was happening? Let them tell it.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Exo 2:1-10; 6:20; Num 26:59; Act 7:17-22; Heb 11:23; Psa 105:23-26

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is faithful to carry out His promises.
2. God had a plan for Moses.
3. God is powerful to protect His chosen one.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Is God able to protect His chosen leaders? How do you think He will do it? Would you have this kind of trust in God?

READ: Exo 2:1-4

TELL THE STORY:**GOD PROTECTS BABY MOSES**

There was a man of the tribe of Levi named Amram who married his father's sister, Jochebed. Levi was the third son of Jacob and Leah. So both Amram and his wife were descendants of Levi who was a descendant of Abraham. Already Jochebed had an older daughter Miriam and a three

year old son Aaron.

It was during the days that Pharaoh decreed that all the Hebrew boy babies be thrown into the river that Jochebed again became pregnant and gave birth to another son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer she got a basket of papyrus reeds and coated it with tar so it would float. Then Jochebed placed her child in the basket and put it among the reeds in the river Nile. His sister stood at a distance watching to see what would happen to him.

Soon Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe. Her attendants were walking along the river bank. Pharaoh's daughter saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

Then Miriam the baby's sister came from hiding and asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to Jochebed, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you."

So Jochebed took her baby home and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him back to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. Pharaoh's daughter named him Moses (*draw out*) saying, "I drew him out of the water."

So Moses the son of Amram and Jochebed of the Hebrew people became a son of Pharaoh the king of Egypt and grew up in the king's palace.

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell this amazing story.
2. Review the listening task questions. Talk about the power of God to do anything. Talk about what it means to have hope like Jochebed had hope for her son.
3. There is an interesting Psalm (139:13-16) that speaks of God's knowing us even before we are born? Would the listeners agree that God had chosen Moses even before he was born?
4. Are we just "lucky" when good things happen to us? Was baby Moses just lucky that Pharaoh's daughter found him and that she was agreeable for him to be given back to his mother for nursing? Who really causes good things to "happen" to us?
5. Talk about the plan that God had for another Deliverer who one day would save his people. God had mentioned this plan in the garden when He said that a son of woman would crush Satan. And again when God spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob He said that a descendant would one day bless all people. (*Don't mention Jesus by name, just plant the idea.*)
6. What did the listeners like in the story?

MEMORY VERSE: "My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."

Psa 121:2

PREVIEW OF COMING STORY: Now we will see how God begins to work out His plan to deliver the descendants of Abraham from their slavery in Egypt. He has saved baby Moses, now He will "call" Moses to deliver his people. It is God's plan, but He will use Moses to accomplish it.

GOD CHOOSES MOSES TO FREE HIS PEOPLE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story is really two stories that are related. One leads into the other one. The first story of Moses' killing the Egyptian is called a bridging story as it leads into the main story. It is important to show that God can redeem our lives from the sin we commit. The main story is God's choosing Moses to free the descendants of Abraham. God used the rash act by Moses to get him out of Egypt and a time of preparation in the wilderness before meeting God.
2. You will need to decide how to handle God's revealed name. Rather than try to interpret the "I AM" it may be easier to say "The Eternal (Everliving, Ever-existing One) God."
3. Be sure to include details that are interesting to the women like the mention of silver and gold.

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the stories Two Faithful Midwives Who Feared God and God Protected Baby Moses.
2. Again recall the story of Abraham when God revealed what would happen to Abraham's descendants one day and how God would deliver them.
3. Talk about rash acts that we might commit thinking we were doing the right thing. Do we think that we are "helping God" by doing those things? What consequences do our rash acts lead to?
4. The women may also be interested in the story of Moses' meeting Zipporah (Gen 2:16-22).

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 15:12-16; Exo 2:11-4:31; Act 7:23—34; Heb 11:24-27

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God protected the baby Moses because He had a work for Moses to do.
2. God was able to overcome and use to accomplish his purpose the rash act that Moses committed in killing the Egyptian.
3. God was patient and allowed Moses to become wise in living in the desert until the time came to free the descendants of Abraham living in bondage in Egypt.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever committed a rash act in a moment of anger? God is not pleased when we do this. How did God use Moses' rash act to accomplish his purpose?

READ: Exo 3:1-6

TELL THE STORY:**GOD CHOOSES MOSES**

One day after Moses was grown, he went out to where his own people worked and watched them at their hard labor making bricks for the Egyptians. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Glancing this way and that and seeing no one watching him, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. When Pharaoh heard what Moses did, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses left Egypt and went to live in the land of Midian where he married a Midianite wife named Zipporah. They had two sons Gershom (*exiled—I have been a stranger in a strange land*) and

Eliezer (*help of God*). Back in the land of Egypt Moses' people were groaning under their slavery. God heard their cry and was concerned about them. He remembered His covenant with Abraham.

After many years had passed one day when Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro. He led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush. When Moses saw the strange sight he came close but a voice spoke, "Moses, do not come any closer. Take off your sandals for the place where you stand is holy ground." When Moses asked, "Who are you?" the voice answered, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Then Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt, I have heard them crying out in their slavery. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians to bring them to the land I promised to Abraham. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt. I will be with you and will bring you again to this mountain to worship God."

But Moses said, "Who am I that I should go before the king of Egypt and bring the people out of Egypt?" God said to Moses, "I will be with you. This is a sign for you, when you have brought the people out of Egypt you will worship God on this mountain."

Again Moses said, "Suppose I go to my people and tell them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you' and they ask, 'What is his name?' What shall I tell them?" So God revealed his holy name to Moses. "Tell them Jehovah (or Allah) has sent me."

Tell the king of Egypt that the Lord, the God of Abraham's descendants, requires us to take a three day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices and worship. I know that the king of Egypt will harden his heart and not let the people go. Then I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with many wonders. After that, he will let you go."

Then God said, "I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward my people so that when you go it will not be empty-handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing for your sons and daughters."

Still Moses was not sure and asked again, "What if the people do not listen to me?" Then the Lord said, "What is that in your hand?" "My staff," Moses replied. "Throw it down," the Lord commanded. When Moses threw the staff on the ground it became a snake. "Now reach out your hand and take it by the tail," the Lord said. When Moses did as the Lord commanded that the snake become his staff again.

One last time Moses offered the excuse that he was slow of speech and tongue. After the Lord had asked Moses who made his mouth, the Lord agreed to let Moses' older brother Aaron be his spokesman. "Now go," the Lord said, "your brother is coming out of Egypt to meet you."

LET'S TALK:

1. In a retelling of this story be sure that major emphasis is given to God's meeting with Moses.
2. Talk about Moses' rash act. How did God use it to accomplish His purpose?
3. God had been called by several names by the patriarchs. Now He has revealed His holy name. Talk about what this name means. Moses met the Living God, the God of his fathers.
4. What work did God have for Moses to do? What message did God give Moses for Pharaoh?
5. What promise did God give Moses?
6. What did God say about Pharaoh? Does God know what is in a person's heart?
7. Can God overcome Pharaoh even when he hardens his heart against God's message?
8. God knew His plan was going to work. The Egyptians would give gifts of gold and silver.

MEMORY VERSE: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isa 41:10

GOD PUNISHES A HARD-HEARTED KING**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Beginning at the burning bush encounter the name Israelite appears. These lessons will begin using that name after the crossing of the Red Sea to refer to the new nation of Israel.
2. There is a temptation to condense the whole story of the plagues into a simplified account in which certain ones are selected. There is a progression in the stories in which Pharaoh becomes more belligerent in the beginning and then begins to yield as he offers to make concessions. At the same time the Egyptian officials are growing concerned that their country is being ruined. And they urge Pharaoh to do what Moses says.
3. In this story the focus is on the power encounter between God and Pharaoh.
4. Add any of the story details your people would be especially interested in—cattle, crops, etc.

REVIEW:

1. Have someone retell God Chooses Moses.
2. Review the characteristics of God—especially His power. Can God cause a person to obey? God is gracious. He gives opportunity for obedience, then brings more and more judgment.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Exo 5:1-12:32; 2Ti 3:8; Psa 105:26-36

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God knows the heart of the sinner.
2. God is all-powerful and no one can stand against Him.
3. God was gracious in that at first He only demonstrated His power but then was forced to punish the Egyptians with bodily harm and death when Pharaoh did not obey.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Why do you think the king of Egypt, Pharaoh, did not listen to Moses and obey the words of God?

READ: Exo 5:1-2; 9:13-16

TELL THE STORY:**GOD PUNISHES A HARD-HEARTED KING**

God said to Abraham that one day His people would live in a foreign land and become slaves. But God would punish the people who enslaved them. It had happened just as God said. Now the descendants of Abraham had become slaves under the Egyptians because the king feared their growing number. God had chosen Moses to go to Pharaoh to say, “Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.” And Pharaoh replied, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let the Hebrews go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let the people go.”

Pharaoh became angry because Moses had said “Let my people go.” So Pharaoh accused the Hebrews of being lazy and made them work even harder. Now they were angry with Moses for causing more trouble for them. But God said to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh, because of my mighty hand he will let the people go.”

So God again told Moses, “Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let my people go out of his country.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “See I have made you like God to Pharaoh. You are to say everything I command you. I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and though I perform many

miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, he will not listen to you.”

“When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Perform a miracle,’ then say to Aaron your brother, ‘Take your staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh and it will become a snake.’” The magicians of Pharaoh were able to do the same thing, but Aaron’s snake ate their snakes. Yet Pharaoh’s heart was hard and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said. Again the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh refuses to listen. Tomorrow go to the river when Pharaoh goes to bathe. Tell him, ‘By this you will know that I am the Lord.’ Strike the water with your staff and it will be changed to blood.” When Moses did what God said, the river smelled bad so that the Egyptians could not drink the water. And all the fish died. Again Pharaoh did not listen, so God sent a plague of frogs upon the land. Frogs were in everything—their beds, their ovens, and where they kneaded dough for bread. Pharaoh asked Moses to pray to have the frogs removed. But when the frogs were gone, he hardened his heart again.

Now each plague was more serious than the one before. There was a plague of flies, then boils on the Egyptians. Next was a plague on the Egyptian livestock so they died. But not one of the animals of the Hebrews was affected. Still Pharaoh hardened his heart. So God said that next He was sending the full force of His plagues against Pharaoh and his officials. “By now I could have wiped you out. But I have raised you up so that I might show my power and that my Name be proclaimed throughout all the earth.” A terrible plague of hail and fiery lightning then struck to destroy the crops. Finally Pharaoh said, “I have sinned. The Lord is right and my people are wrong.” When the hail and thunder stopped Pharaoh sinned again, for he hardened his heart.

Next was a plague of locusts to finish eating the Egyptian crops. Now Pharaoh’s officials were saying, “Let the Hebrews go so they can worship the Lord their God. Don’t you realize that Egypt is ruined?” Pharaoh was willing for only the men to go, but the women and children must stay behind. God was not pleased with Pharaoh’s words. So next there was darkness over the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said, “Go, take your women and children, but leave your cows behind.” But Moses said, “No, our cows must go with us. Not a hoof is to be left behind!” Pharaoh was now very angry and demanded, “Get out of my sight! I never want to see your face again.” Moses said, “I will never appear before you again.” Moses told his people what was about to happen to the Egyptians.

The last plague was the most terrible of all. In it God took the life of the firstborn in every Egyptian home. Even Pharaoh’s son died. Then Pharaoh said, “Go, worship the Lord as you have said. Take your animals with you. And also bless me.” But soon he hardened his heart again and sent his soldiers to bring the Hebrews back again. He still had not learned his lesson. God was going to finish His work to deliver His people and fulfill His promise to Abraham.

LET’S TALK:

1. This is a long story with many details. Can someone tell it?
2. Talk about why Pharaoh did not listen to Moses’ words and obey what God said to do.
3. Who is causing Pharaoh to listen, Moses or God? What was Moses’ role? (Spokesman for God)
4. What happened when Pharaoh tried to bargain with God, to compromise his request?
5. What did the officials of Pharaoh begin to say when the plagues continued?
6. How did God demonstrate his grace toward the Egyptians? (No one was hurt in the beginning.)
7. Do the women want to talk about any one of the plagues in more detail? Give them details of it.

MEMORY VERSE: “Yes, and from ancient days I am He. No one can deliver out of My hand. when I act, who can reverse it?” Isaiah 43:13

GOD PROVIDES AN ESCAPE FROM JUDGMENT**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. We will introduce the term Israelite beginning in this story. It will be used from now on to refer to the descendants of Abraham.
2. This continues the story of deliverance, God is the real deliverer, but He uses Moses to lead.
3. Each situation and each deliverance was to build the people's faith in God to deliver them.
4. This is also a story of final judgment upon Pharaoh for his stubborn refusal to honor God.

REVIEW:

1. Have someone recall the stories God Chooses Moses and God Punishes a Hard-Hearted King.
2. Talk about the name by which the descendants of Abraham were called. In the days of Abraham and following they were known as Hebrews from a word which meant *foreigner*. Do you have a word used for foreigners, for someone who is from another place? The people began to be known as Israelites as they were descendants of Israel (Remember the story when God changed Jacob's name to Israel?).
3. In what way do your people remember when wonderful things happened? We will see the beginning of a memorial that pictures something wonderful that happened. It is a picture of something that will happen again after a long time has passed. (Talk about memorial feasts.)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Exo 11:1-14:31; Psa 105:36-39

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God had been merciful to the Egyptians but they had not believed and obeyed.
2. God would bring final judgment upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians so none could escape.
3. God provided a means for the Israelites to escape the judgment on the Egyptians.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you trust God to provide a means to escape His judgment? God is a God of mercy to those who believe His words and trust Him to save them.

READ: Exo 14:13-14

TELL THE STORY:**GOD PROVIDES AN ESCAPE FROM JUDGMENT**

Again and again Pharaoh had hardened his heart and would not listen to God's words. Now he had changed his mind once again and ordered his war chariot made ready. He took his army with him boldly marching out to bring the people back to Egypt. The Israelites, as they were now called, were camped in the desert near the sea. God sent His angel to stand between Pharaoh and the people. To the Israelites the angel was light, but to the Egyptians he was darkness.

Before the firstborn of the Egyptians had died, God spoke to Moses and told him what was going to happen. On an appointed night God would send his death angel throughout the land of Egypt. Wherever he did not see blood upon the doorposts he would take the life of the firstborn inside. This was God's judgment upon the Egyptians. To escape God's judgment each family of Israelites was to kill a sheep or goat and sprinkle its blood upon the sides and over the top of their doorway. The

blood was to be the sign of safety. They were to remain inside their houses during that night. And they were to eat a meal quickly with all their clothes on ready to depart.

The meal was the roasted meat of the killed sheep or goat. “Break none of its bones,” God said. They were to bake some unleavened bread and prepare some bitter sauce to dip the bread in. This would remind the people of their tears shed while slaves in Egypt. They were to celebrate this feast as a memorial of God’s sparing their lives when He “passed over” their homes to judge the Egyptians.

At last Pharaoh had let them go but again hardened his heart and now came to bring the people back. The Israelites were afraid and cried out to Moses, “Were there not enough graves in Egypt that you brought us out here in the desert to die? Leave us alone. It is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”

Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you.” Then God said to Moses, “Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so they will follow. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army. The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.”

When morning came the waters of the sea were divided and there was dry ground for the Israelites to cross through the midst of the sea. After all had safely crossed to the other side, the angel that stood between Pharaoh and the Israelites moved. So Pharaoh urged his army to quickly follow through the sea. Now God said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea and the waters will come together.” The army of Pharaoh was thrown into confusion. The wheels came off their chariots. They wanted to escape from the Israelites but it was too late. Now God’s judgment was upon them as the waters of the sea closed over them. None escaped. That day Pharaoh died along with the Egyptian army.

When the Israelites saw the great power the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in Him and in Moses His servant.

God had delivered the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. He had provided a means to escape His judgment if the people believed and obeyed. Now God would continue to fulfill his promise to Abraham to bring his descendants back to the land of their fathers. God is faithful to keep His promises and He is powerful to fulfill what He says He will do.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story. (If you fail to get a good retelling, ask another to do it.)
2. Talk about the matter of escaping God’s judgment. We can’t unless God helps us. Do we trust God to deliver us? What must we do? (Believe what He tells us and obey Him.)
3. Was God gracious to Pharaoh and the Egyptians? (Yes, He gave them many opportunities to fear Him and do what He said.)
4. What was the sign that God would “pass over” a home and not kill the firstborn? (Blood)
5. What else did God command the people to do on the night of the passover? (Eat their meal quickly with all their clothes on ready to travel.) What did this show to God? (The people had faith that He was going to deliver them soon.)
6. Do the women think God was pleased when the people were fearful and complained at the sea?

MEMORY VERSE: “The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him.” Exo 15:2

GOD'S PROVISION FOR HIS PEOPLE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story lesson continues to teach about obedience to what God tells us to do. It illustrates God's providence for everyday needs.
2. It also reminds listeners that we are not always thankful for what God does for us.
3. This story is much simpler than the preceding stories. So it would be a good time to review quickly the sequence of stories from God Protects Joseph in Egypt to the present to show God's providence throughout the whole time.
4. The women might like a map that shows Canaan, Egypt and Mt. Horeb (Sinai) so you can trace the people's journey, where they needed water and food, met God at the mountain and received His Law and then continued on toward Canaan. Get one of them to help you make it.

REVIEW:

1. The background story is God Punishes a Hard-Hearted King. Have someone tell it.
2. Talk about God's provision to escape His judgment, and to escape Egypt. Will God continue to provide food and water for His people? Where will they find food and water along the way?
3. Talk about the women and their work as the people moved and camped in their tents. Look at Exo 12:33-36 to see what they carried with them. Have any of them camped in tents and cooked as they moved?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Exo 15:22-17:7; Num 11:4-9; Psa 78:15-31; 105:40-41; 106:14-15

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God loves people and wants to bless them.
2. God is the source of all grace—that is, everything comes from God.
3. God is all-powerful to do anything He needs to do.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you depend upon God to supply all your needs? What does God ask in return from us?

READ: Exo 17:1-2, 5-6

TELL THE STORY:**GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE**

By God's mighty power He brought the Israelites out of Egypt. He heard their cries while serving as slaves of the Egyptians. He provided a way through the sea to escape Pharaoh's army. Now God's angel would lead the people to the mountain where God will speak to the people. For three days the Israelites travelled in the desert without finding any water. At last they came to a place where there was water, but it was too bitter to drink. The people cried out, "What are we to drink?" When Moses asked God what to do, God showed Moses a piece of wood. When Moses threw the wood into the water it became sweet. The people called that place "Marah" which means *bitter*.

Later when the people again were thirsty and they cried out to Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt only to make us, our children and livestock to die of thirst?" The Lord said to Moses,

“Take some of the elders and your staff and walk ahead of the people. I will stand before you at the rock in Horeb (the sacred mountain). Strike the rock with your staff and water will come out for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders. The people had water to drink but they were asking, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

When the Israelites needed food they complained to Moses, “If only we had died in Egypt. There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted. We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost, also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But you have brought us out here in the desert to starve everyone to death.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather only enough for that day. In this way I will test them to see if they follow my instructions. On the sixth day they are to gather twice as much food as there will be none on the seventh day, for the seventh day is holy and they are to rest.” Moses told the people all that God had said. In the morning there were thin white flakes of food everywhere. The people asked, “What is it?” So it was called *manna* which means “What is it?” Moses said, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. Gather only as much as you need for the day. Do not keep any of it until morning.” But some people did not listen to Moses and found worms in what they kept overnight. Those who went out to gather on the seventh day found none to gather as the Lord had said.

In the same way the Lord provided meat for the people to eat. For the Lord sent quail each evening which the people caught and gathered. They had bread to eat in the morning and meat to eat in the evening. The Lord said, “I have done this so you will know that I am the Lord your God.”

Later when the Israelites sinned and rebelled against God they were punished by causing them to wander in the desert for forty years until all who grumbled and rebelled had died. Even when the people mocked God by saying, “Can the Lord provide food in the desert?” God continued to provide their food and water faithfully each day until they at last entered into the land of their fathers which God had promised.

LET’S TALK:

1. Does this story make the listeners hungry? Have one to retell the story.
2. Do we really depend upon God for our needs? Are we thankful for what He provides?
3. Have the people learned to trust God for their needs like water and food? When our children cry for hunger do we become anxious, too?
4. Talk about the bread (manna) that God supplied? What were His rules about gathering it? Why did He tell them to collect only enough for each person for each day except for the sixth day when they were to collect enough for two days? Did everyone obey God’s instruction? (No)
5. What did God tell Noah about eating meat? What were the people to do first? (Gen 9:2-4)

MEMORY VERSE: “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.” Psa 107:8-9

THINK ABOUT THIS: Do we remember to thank God for what He does for us? Do we sometimes complain and even speak against God when we should trust Him and tell Him our needs?

GOD GIVES HIS HOLY LAW**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. To keep this story from being “too dry” and uninteresting for the women, some of the regulations regarding purity and cleansing are included. One these of will be recalled in the story of Mary and Joseph at the Temple after the birth of Jesus.
2. Have the women memorize the Ten Commandments. Go over them several times in review.
3. It is assumed that the women are more concerned about relationships than legal requirements. So the emphasis in stories is more on maintaining a relationship with God than on the legal requirements of the Law. Some of the regulations affect their daily lives like those regarding ritual purity, so would have cultural implication as well. Be sensitive to this.
4. For extra interest make a set of tagboard or cardboard Ten Commandments tablets.

REVIEW:

1. Have someone tell the story God Provides an Escape from Judgment and God Provides for His People.
2. Talk about what God expects of those who fear Him. How can we know what is right to do and what is wrong in God’s sight?
3. How do we feel when we do what is right? How do we feel when we do what is wrong?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Exo 20:1-17; 21:1-23:13; 22:16-17, 22-23; Lev 12:1-8; 19:1; 25:18-19

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is righteous and without sin.
2. God desires that His creation (man and woman) also be righteous and without sin.
3. The law is to help us understand what is wrong, offending both God and people.

ASK THE LISTENERS: God provides for all people’s needs. What can we give Him in return?

READ: Exo 20:2-3, 7-8, 12-17

TELL THE STORY:**GOD’S HOLY LAW**

The Lord said to Moses, “You are to speak all my words to the Israelites.” So Moses went back and summoned the leaders of the people and set before them all the words the Lord had commanded him to speak. the people responded together, “We will do everything the Lord has said.” Moses brought their answer back to the Lord.

The Lord spoke these words:

“You are to worship the Lord your God and the Lord alone.

You must not make any images of the Lord or any idols like things in heaven or on earth.

You must have reverence for the Lord’s holy NAME.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, do no work on the Sabbath.

Honor your father and mother.

You must not murder.

You must not commit adultery.
You must not steal.
You must not give false testimony against your neighbor.
You must not covet anything belonging to your neighbor.”

These were the main laws God gave to the people. There were many other regulations about how they were to worship, about the foods they were not to eat as unclean foods, about things that would cause them to be unclean, and about how to live in harmony and peace as God’s people. God wanted His people to live a righteous life that would honor His Name. And God knew that if the people would follow His directions they would have a better life for each person, each family and for all the people of Israel.

For both men and women there were some special regulations about things that would make them impure or unclean. God told the people what to do when they became unclean. For the woman giving birth to a son or a daughter she will be ceremonially unclean just as she is during the time of her monthly period. This time was seven days for a son and fourteen days for a daughter. After a son was born the woman had to wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding (40 total). For a daughter the time was sixty-six days (80 total). When the days of her purification were over she was to bring to the priest an animal for a burnt offering and a sin offering. If she were poor then she could bring two doves or two pigeons.

Some of the laws were to protect the honor of women and girls from abuse by husbands and others. Some of the laws were to protect widows and orphans. All these things were important to the Lord. The Lord wanted His people to be pure and holy and not do the sinful things that other people did. Especially God wanted His people to worship Him properly and to be properly prepared for worship as well as their daily living. God’s Law was good for His people in that day. God said, “Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. Then the land will yield its fruit and you will eat your fill.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Can someone tell the story God’s Holy Law?
2. What can we give God in return for all He has done for us? (Our obedience)
3. Why do you think God has given us His Holy Law? (To keep us from sinning against Him and against other people—to have a good relationship with God and with others.)
3. How many of the commandments specially honor God? (The first four)
4. How many of the commandments specially honor others? (The next six)
5. Why do you think God was concerned about purity and impurity among His people? (He wanted the people to live a life that honored God. They were to be different from other peoples. The regulations about purity reminded them of their special relationship to God.)
6. What did God’s Law say about our parents? (There were to be honored.)
7. How did God’s Law honor men? (It honored the value of their life, their marriage, their possessions and their reputation.)
8. How did God’s Law honor women? (It honored their purity and reputation as well as their life, marriage, possessions and reputation.)

MEMORY VERSE: “May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.” Psa 67:4

A PLACE TO WORSHIP

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. This is an attempt to simplify the many regulations and details about the tabernacle worship and blood sacrifices for sin. If additional detail is needed, add it.
2. The lesson also hints at some worship practices of the listeners that may not be pleasing to God.
3. The concept of an intercessor priest is mentioned in the story. This also points to Christ.
4. A picture of the tabernacle and altar of sacrifice can be very helpful in this lesson.

REVIEW:

1. Have someone retell the story God Gives His Holy Law. Talk about God's requirements for a life that is pleasing to God. This includes our worship as well. How can sin be atoned for?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Exo 25:1-27:19; 28:1; 29:44-46; Lev 24:5-8

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God required that people worship Him according to His instruction.
2. God told Moses how to make an acceptable a place of worship.
3. The people gladly gave offerings for the worship place.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Why did God want one place of worship for the people?

READ: Exo 25:1-9

TELL THE STORY:

A PLACE TO WORSHIP

The Israelites had lived in Egypt a long time. The Egyptians worshiped many false gods and not the true God. Many Israelites did not know the true God either. They had forgotten the stories from the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when their fathers knew the true and living God. God had revealed His holy Name to Moses when He spoke to Moses at the burning bush. Now God wanted to have a place to meet His people where they could worship Him.

So God revealed to Moses the plan for a place of worship. Since the people would be moving about, the worship place must be moved from time to time. So it was a tent called the Tent of Meeting or *tabernacle*. There was to be a sacred enclosure about the tent with only one entrance. Inside there was an altar where the sacrifices would be offered and burned.

Beyond that was the tent itself which had two rooms, a large room called the holy place, and a smaller room called the most holy place. Only the priest was allowed to enter the tent during worship. He entered the larger room daily to burn incense before God. In that room was a lampstand with seven lamps to remind the people of the Spirit of God. And there was a small table on which twelve loaves of freshly baked bread were placed each Sabbath. There was to be one loaf for each of the twelve tribes to remind the people that God provided their food.

In the smaller most holy place was a wooden box with two angels on top and covered with gold. Inside the box were the laws that God had given the people. God said that His presence would dwell between the angels. Once each year the high priest was to enter the room and sprinkle blood on the

box to cover (atone for) the sins of the people for that year. A heavy curtain separated the two rooms reminding the priests that God is holy and that people could not go into His presence except as God tells them to do so. The golden box was called the “Ark of the Covenant”.

Each time a person disobeyed God (breaking one of God’s laws or regulations) that person was to bring a perfect animal without any sickness or defect to be sacrificed on the altar. The person would place their hands on the animal’s head and confess their sin. The priest would kill it and then sprinkle its blood on the sides of the altar. The fat inside the animal would be burned on the altar as a burnt sacrifice. And the meat of the animal was to be food for the priests and their families. In this way God provided a means to cover over one’s sins and to provide for the priests who stood between the people and God. There was to be the shedding of blood to cover sin. This was a picture God wanted the people to see and know.

Moses’ older brother Aaron and his sons were the first priests God chose. Future priests were to come from Aaron’s descendants of the tribe of Levi. Other family members were to assist with worship and the tabernacle when it needed to be moved. The priests were to be very careful about keeping pure.

God did this so that His people would worship Him in a way that was pleasing to Him and not like those who worshiped their own gods and did dishonorable things as part of their worship. The terrible things like sacrificing their children or even prostitution in worship were not pleasing to God. God said that He did not share His glory with another and that there were no other gods, only Him alone. In this way God wanted to keep His people from committing sin in their worship and to know their God and worship Him only.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story A Place to Worship.
2. Why one place of true worship? (People in that day often worshiped various things in nature, some kinds of animals, and even the moon and stars. God created these things, they were not gods, only part of God’s creation.)
3. Do any in the group worship things like these? Would they like to talk about it? Do they believe there is some power or merit to do this?
4. What does the Tent of Meeting teach us? (God is holy and His presence is holy. Only a person who is acceptable to God may enter His presence.)
5. Does anyone remember God’s words about blood in the story about Cain and Abel and then to Noah after the flood? (God noticed the spilled blood of Abel, be careful to remove the blood.)
6. Remember when God clothed Adam and Eve in animal skins after they disobeyed God and were ashamed? The animals died (their blood was shed) to cover the sinfulness of Adam and Eve.
7. What was the work of the priest during worship? (He was the intercessor between sinful people and their God.) In the future we will learn about another intercessor who was worthy to stand between sinful man and a holy God—a faithful priest.
8. God provided for the needs of the priests from the meat offered in sacrifices.
9. Was the blood sacrifice a satisfactory and long-lasting covering for sin? (No, it had to be repeated each time a person broke one of God’s regulations.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

Psa 95:6

WHEN THE PEOPLE REBELLED**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Even with the history of God's mighty deliverance from Egypt then the most powerful nation on earth, the people failed to trust the Lord to lead them into the land of His promise.
2. Without spiritualizing every event in the Bible, this does open up the possibility that God is also able to deliver believers from the slavery of their sins into the land of salvation and blessing.
3. For Muslims this story can (along with the Flood story) be construed as "God changing His mind" and thus open up the possibility of abrogating (setting aside) His earlier words and promises. This is a defense regarding God's abrogation of earlier sayings in the Qur'an. Jam 1:17 speaks of God's unchangeableness, His judgment is tempered with mercy but even with forgiveness there is still the consequence of sin. In this case it was failure to attain the blessing of the promised land.
4. This story also opens up the danger of refusing God's gracious offer of forgiveness for sin. Heb 2:2; 12:25

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the stories God Punishes a Hard-Hearted King and God Provides an Escape from Judgment.
2. Review again the characteristics of God. he is all-powerful, He hates sin and judges all sin, and He keeps His promises. Talk about what these should mean to the Israelites.
3. Talk about what it means to have fear or hope when disturbing news comes.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Num 13:1-14:43; Deu 29:5; Psa 78:40; 106:21-27

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God knows what is best for the people.
2. With God's help no enemy could stand against the people of God.
3. God is not pleased when people disobey Him by failing to trust Him.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you be willing to trust God even if the situation seemed hopeless to you? Why did the people rebel in this story?

READ: Num 13:17-20

TELL THE STORY:**WHEN THE PEOPLE REBELLED**

The Lord had said to Moses to send some men to explore the land of Canaan, the land that God was giving to the descendants of Abraham. Moses chose one man from each of the twelve tribes or families of Israel and sent them into Canaan with instructions to see the people, their towns, and whether the land was truly fruitful as God had said. After forty days the men returned carrying some of the fruit they found. It was just as God had said.

But when they gave their report, ten of the men mentioned the giants then living in the land. Two of the men said all that was true but they should go up and take the land. The ten replied that the

people in the land were far stronger than the Israelites and so they spread a bad report among the people. “We seemed like grasshoppers before the people,” they said. “They’ll take our wives and children as plunder!” That night all the people raised their voices and wept aloud. “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!” they grumbled against Moses and Aaron. “We should choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

The two faithful men, Joshua and Caleb, pleaded with the people, “The Lord will lead us, only do not rebel against the Lord. Do not be afraid of the people in the land.”

But the people talked about stoning Joshua and Caleb. Then the Lord appeared at the Tent of Meeting (the tabernacle) and spoke to Moses, “How long will the people treat me with contempt and rebel? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? I will destroy the people and make you, Moses, into a nation greater and stronger than they.”

Moses pleaded for the people asking God to forgive them. Yet he said the Lord does not leave the guilty unpunished. “I have forgiven them as you asked,” the Lord said. “However none of those who have seen my miraculous signs and now rebelled will enter into the land I have promised their fathers. Everyone of them twenty years of age or greater who has grumbled against me will die in the desert as they have asked. I will bring their children into the land instead.”

So those responsible for spreading a bad report about the land were struck with a plague and died. The next day the Israelites said, “We have sinned, we will now go up to the place the Lord has promised.” “Don’t go,” Moses warned, “You will not succeed because the Lord is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies.” The people did not listen to Moses and tried to enter the land but were attacked by those living in the land who soundly defeated them. So they continued to wander for forty years as the Lord led them with His angel. At last all those who had grumbled against the Lord and rebelled had died.

Then the Lord fulfilled His promise through Joshua who led the people into the land promised to their fathers. In all the years God continued to feed the people each day and provided water to drink. Their clothes and shoes did not wear out!

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell this story.
2. Talk about the listening task questions—especially trust and rebellion (failure to trust).
3. What would the listeners have done? Would they have feared like the people?
4. Talk about the ten who gave the bad report? Some of their report was good, some bad.
5. Talk about Joshua and Caleb’s report? Did they fail to see the difficulties ahead? (No, but with God’s help these could be overcome.)
6. What did God have to say when the people became fearful and rebellious? (I will destroy them and build a new people with Moses’ family.)
7. What were the people wanting to do? (Choose a new leader and go back to Egypt and slavery.)
8. What did Moses do before God? (He interceded for the people, asking God to forgive them, but knowing that their sin would not go unpunished.)
9. If God forgives our sin, who is going to bear our punishment? In the future we will hear a story about the person that God chose to bear our punishment when we accept His forgiveness for our sins.

MEMORY VERSE: “We have sinned, even as our fathers did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly.” Psa 106:6

MIRIAM'S SIN AND CLEANSING**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Some of these stories specifically target women and their relationship with God. Here is a story of a woman who was used by God to protect His chosen servant Moses, then who danced and sang before the Lord to honor Him after God gave victory over the Egyptians. Yet she is brought to account before the Lord for her bitter attitude and jealousy of Moses.
2. Miriam's sin results in an "uncleanness" before the Lord and in her camp. Her leprosy was only an outward manifestation of her inward uncleanness. Her sin resulted in her separation from her family and the people and in a symbolic way from the Lord.
3. To Miriam and Aaron's credit they quickly acknowledged their sin. Why only Miriam was punished we do not know. Perhaps she was the instigator of the jealousy as the elder sister, we can only guess, and Aaron was led to agree with her. It was serious enough that God came down to confront Miriam and Aaron and punish her sin. But God also was gracious to limit her punishment and to allow her to be restored to fellowship within the camp.
4. Again Moses' role as an intercessor is presented. Whatever feelings Moses may have had, he was willing to beg God's mercy upon Miriam.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the stories of Trouble in the First Family and When the People Rebelled.
2. Talk about jealousy and coveting what another has. Does this lead to a bad attitude?
3. Talk about whether God is pleased when our heart is filled with jealousy. Talk about the jealousy in Cain's heart before he killed Abel.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Exo 15:20-21; Num 12:1-15; Psa 51:1-2

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Sin against God is uncleanness.
2. We must forgive and intercede for those who speak evil against us.
3. God punishes sinners but is merciful to forgive and restore.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What happens when a person sins against God? How can they be restored to fellowship?

READ: Num 12:1-2, 4, 9-12

TELL THE STORY:**MIRIAM'S SIN AND CLEANSING**

Miriam the older sister had helped save the baby Moses' life. When God delivered the Hebrew people from the land of Egypt, Miriam led the women in celebrating with tambourines and dancing. Miriam praised God in song for His mighty acts.

Now Miriam the sister and her brother Aaron were jealous of Moses. Also they were unhappy with Moses' wife, a Cushite woman. Miriam's younger brother Moses was a very humble man. "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And

the Lord heard what they were saying.

At once the Lord said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam., “Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you.” So Moses, Aaron and Miriam went to stand before the Lord. The Lord came down in a pillar of cloud to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. There He summoned Aaron and Miriam to step forward. “Listen to my words,” He said.

“When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

The anger of the Lord burned against Aaron and Miriam, and then He left them. When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam—white with leprosy. When Aaron saw his sister a leper he cried out to Moses, “Please do not hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. Do not let Miriam be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother’s womb with its flesh half eaten away!” So Moses cried out to the Lord, “O God, please heal her!”

The Lord replied to Moses, “If her father had spit in her face, would she have not been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back inside.”

So Miriam was confined as an unclean leper outside the camp for seven days according to the words of the Lord. After that she was cleansed from her leprosy and made whole again. And Miriam returned to fellowship in the Israelite camp.

LET’S TALK:

1. Who can retell this story about Miriam?
2. What happens when a person sins against God?
3. What was the sin of Miriam? (She was jealous of Moses’ special relationship with God.)
4. What did her jealousy lead her to do? (She looked for ways to discredit Moses by complaining against Moses’ wife who was not an Israelite.)
5. Why was this a serious sin in the camp? (It questioned God’s choice of a leader and it would lead to division among the people, setting a bad example. Our sins affect others.)
6. What difference did God make between the way He spoke with prophets and the way He spoke with Moses? (He spoke face to face with Moses—through the angel of the Lord.)
7. When the cloud lifted what was Miriam’s condition? (She was horribly eaten with leprosy.)
8. What did Aaron cry out to Moses? (Please do not hold this sin against us, we have acted foolishly.)
9. What did Moses say to God? (He cried out, ‘O God, please heal her!’)
10. Do the listeners have a custom like spitting in the face to express repudiation for dishonor?
11. What was the significance of being put outside the camp? (Miriam had become “unclean” because of her sin against Moses. Her sin led to a separation or temporary “death”.)
12. What does this teach us about sin, God’s punishment and forgiveness? (Our sins will not go unnoticed by God. Sin will be judged and punished. If we confess our sins and seek God’s forgiveness, there may still be serious consequences of our sin.)
13. In the future we will hear the story of One who was “put outside the camp” for our sins.

MEMORY VERSE: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1Jh 1:9

RAHAB SAVES HER FAMILY**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This is an interesting story about a woman who was not an Israelite. While she is popularly called a prostitute, the Hebrew word also means *innkeeper*. It is clear that she ran some kind of a hostel as the Israelites sought a place to stay while in Jericho. (We hope not for some other reason!) She apparently was not married. Her parents, brothers and sisters lived in Jericho.
2. It is clear that this woman kept up with the news. She had heard about Israel's God and was quick to realize the peril that her family was in because of Israel. She made a decision to help the two spies and in return to beg protection for her family—she interceded for her family and in so doing displayed her fear of Israel's God and her hope that He would be gracious to her and her family.
3. Not only is this a story about faith, it is also a story about obedience. Rahab had to do exactly as she was told or she and her family would not be spared. Remember Noah's obedience?
4. We may assume from Mat 1:5 that Salmon was one of the spies who later married the woman who helped him after he saved her life and family. So a foreign woman who feared the God of Israel became an ancestor of David and Jesus. Don't jump ahead of the story!!!

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to recall the story How God Saved One Family. Talk about obedience to what God says to do and how it saved Noah and his family.
2. Do the listeners think that God sees all people and knows what is in their hearts? What if the person may have done some bad things in their ignorance but their heart was searching for the right thing? Is anyone in the group searching for the right thing to do?
3. Talk about how our faith might save us when we or our families are in peril.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Jos 2:1-24; 6:17-25; Mat 1:5; Heb 11:31; Jam 2:25

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God was fulfilling His promise to go before the Israelites to help them take the land.
2. The news about God's miraculous signs had spread widely among the peoples.
3. God was gracious to anyone who believed in Him and sought to do what was right.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What made Rahab in this story different from the other people in her city?

READ: Jos 2:12-14

TELL THE STORY:**RAHAB SAVES HER FAMILY**

Joshua became the new leader of the Israelites after Moses died. He sent two men as spies across the river into the land of Canaan to spy out the city of Jericho. The men went and entered into the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there. The king of Jericho was told that some spies

had come that night to spy out the land. So he went a message to Rahab, “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come as spies.”

But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. “Yes, the men came to me but I did not know where they came from. At dusk when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don’t know which way they went. If you go quickly you may be able to catch them,” she said. For the woman had secretly taken the two men up on the roof and hidden them under some stalks of flax she was drying.

Before the men lay down for the night, Rahab went up on the roof and said to them, “I know that the Lord has given this land to you. A great fear of you has fallen over us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the sea when you came out of Egypt, and how the Lord helped you defeat the peoples living east of the river. When we heard of it, our hearts sank and everyone’s courage failed. For the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Now please show kindness to my family because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them.”

“Our lives for your lives!” the men assured her. “If you don’t tell what we are doing we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land.” So the woman let the men down safely by a rope through the window, for her house was part of the city wall. The men told her, “This oath of safety will not be binding unless, when we attack the city, you have tied a scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down. You must bring all your family into your house.” “Agreed, let it be as you say!” Rahab replied.

Later when Joshua led the Israelites to attack the city of Jericho he said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the prostitute’s house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her.” So the young men brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers and all who belonged to her. Then they destroyed the city and all who lived in it.

Afterward, one of the Israelites named Salmon married Rahab and had a son named Boaz.

LET’S TALK:

1. Who can tell the story about Rahab?
2. Why was Rahab different from other people in her city? Talk about her fear of the God of Israel.
3. How did Rahab express her faith in God? (She protected the two Israelite men even though it could have meant death for her and her family.)
4. What did Rahab confess about God? (How God had given that land to the Israelites, what God had done to other wicked peoples living across the river.)
5. What did she request the two men to do for her and her family? (Show kindness by sparing their lives when the city was destroyed.)
6. What did the men require Rahab to do? (Follow exactly their instructions to tie a red cord in her window to mark her house, stay inside with her family during the attack.)
7. Was Rahab willing to do what the men instructed? (Yes)
8. Did Joshua who was the commander of the Israelites keep the promise to spare Rahab’s family? (Yes. He instructed the two men to bring out Rahab and her family.)
9. What good thing happened to Rahab afterward? (One of the men named Salmon married her. They had a son named Boaz. Soon we will hear an interesting story about Boaz.)

MEMORY VERSE: “The Lord redeems his servants; no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.” Psa 34:22

RUTH CHOOSES NAOMI'S GOD**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This is another interesting story about a foreign woman who chose the God of Israel. Ruth also became an ancestor of David and Jesus. She married Boaz who was son of Salmon and Rahab. So this is a sequel to the Rahab story. Ruth was a Moabitess. She was a descendant of Moab the son of Lot's older daughter from her incestuous relationship with her father after losing her husband-to-be in the destruction of Sodom.
2. The Moabite people had wandered from faith in God to have their own national god Chemosh. Human sacrifice of children was part of their worship practice.
3. Further the Moabite women were depicted as immoral. (Num 25:1-2)
4. Among Muslim women who have the custom of telling grief stories both Naomi and Ruth could share theirs. Naomi said to call her "Mara" (bitter) for her misfortune. Ruth's husband Kilion (*also Chilion*) died young. Kilion's name means *weak*. Mahlon's name means *sickly*.
5. This story takes place during the time of the judges immediately following the conquest of Canaan. Naomi and her husband were descendants of Judah who had settled in Bethlehem.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Rahab Saves Her Family.
2. Recall that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that one day all people would be blessed through their descendant. Mention that on Jacob's deathbed he had prophesied that one day kings would come from Judah's descendant. (Gen 49:8-10)
3. Talk about the plans God has for our lives. What happens if we resist or fail to take advantage of the opportunities He gives us? God permits things to happen that change the course of our lives.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Rut 1-4; Mat 1:5-6; Lev 23:22; Num 27:8-11

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Ruth loved her mother-in-law and saw hope in her and her God.
2. God had chosen Ruth and was pleased with her faithfulness.
3. Ruth faithfully obeyed Naomi's instructions and God blessed her and gave her a family.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would agree with Ruth's choice? Why do you think she made this choice?

READ: Rut 1:15-17

TELL THE STORY:**RUTH CHOOSES NAOMI'S GOD**

In the years after the Israelites returned to the land of their fathers, when judges ruled the land, there was a man from Bethlehem who was of the family of Judah. There was a famine in the land so Elimelech took his wife Naomi and two sons Mahlon and Kilion (Chilion) and departed for the nearby land of Moab across the river. Soon after, Elimelech died and Naomi's two sons each married a Moabite woman, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. But after ten years both sons died so that Naomi was left with only her two daughters-in-law.

When Naomi heard there was again food in the land of Judah she prepared to return home. So

she set out on the road back to Judah along with the two Moabite women. Then Naomi said to them, “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s home. May the Lord show kindness to you as you have shown to your dead husbands and to me. May the Lord grant you each another husband.” Then she kissed them and they wept aloud and said, “We will go back with you to your people.” “No, my daughters,” Naomi insisted, “I am too old to have any more sons. Would you remain unmarried to wait for them?” Then Orpah kissed Naomi and left; but Ruth held on and would not leave. Again Naomi insisted, “Go with Orpah back to your people and your gods.”

But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or go back to my people. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there be buried. Let nothing ever separate me from you.” When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

Naomi and Ruth arrived back in Bethlehem just as the barley harvest was beginning. Naomi had a relative on her husband’s side, a man of standing named Boaz. Ruth asked Naomi’s permission to go to the fields to glean the leftover grain for their food. As it turned out she went to a field belonging to Boaz who was not married. Boaz asked his harvesters, “Whose young woman is that?” “She is the Moabitess who returned with Naomi,” they replied, “for she asked to be allowed to glean and has worked hard from morning till now.” So Boaz said to Ruth, “Don’t glean in another field. Follow after my girls. I have told my men not to touch you. Whenever you are thirsty you may drink from my water jars.”

Ruth bowed down with her face to the ground. She exclaimed, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?” Then Boaz said, “I’ve been told all about you and how you left your mother and father and came to live with a people you did not know before. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.” Boaz gave Ruth some roasted grain to eat. She saved some for Naomi. When she took her gleanings back to Naomi she told whose field she had worked in. Naomi said, “The Lord has not stopped showing kindness! That man is a close relative, one of our kinsman redeemers.” So Boaz insisted that Ruth glean only in his field so she would not be harmed by anyone.

One day Naomi said to Ruth, “I should try to find a home for you where you will be well provided for. Tonight Boaz is threshing and winnowing his grain. Bathe and put on some perfume and your best clothes. After Boaz finishes eating and drinking and lies down to sleep, go and uncover his feet. He will tell you what to do.” So Ruth did as she was told. After the work was ended and the workers had eaten they all lay down to sleep. Ruth lay down at the feet of Boaz. In the middle of the night he discovered her there. Boaz was pleased that Ruth had chosen him. Ruth remained there until morning but left before anyone saw her.

First thing the next day Boaz went to the town gate and asked the nearer relative if he would redeem the fields of Elimelech and his sons. When the relative said yes, Boaz reminded him that Ruth the widow would come with the land. So the relative declined and Boaz became the kinsman redeemer. He married Ruth and had a son. Naomi was pleased and praised God saying, “Naomi had a son!” They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse who was the father of David.

LET’S TALK:

1. Everyone likes to retell a love story. Have someone tell Ruth’s story.
2. Talk about Ruth’s choice. Was it a good one? What if she had not chosen to go with Naomi?
3. From Ruth’s plea to Naomi what can we say about her heart? (She had chosen the God of Naomi to be her God.)
4. Talk about how God had prepared a new life for Ruth. (He led her to Boaz’ field to glean.)
5. What did Ruth do to claim what God had prepared for her? (She faithfully obeyed Naomi.)

MEMORY VERSE: “I said to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing’.”

Psa 16:2

DEBORAH, A BRAVE JUDGE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story continues during the time of the judges. Before Joshua died he called all the people to him and reminded them to be faithful to God and not to follow after the false gods of the people among whom they lived. But soon their descendants forgot God and all He had done for Israel. And they began to follow the worship practices of their neighbors. God brought judgment upon them and punished their sin by allowing enemies to come and oppress them.
2. Deborah's name means *bee*. She is also called a prophetess. Her husband was Lappidoth. She was one of the judges leading Israel at that time; people came to her with their disputes to be settled. Her courtroom was under a palm tree.
3. Deborah sent for Barak and gave him the Lord's command to go and defeat Sisera the commander of Jabin's army. God said He would lure Sisera and give him into Barak's hands.
4. Deborah had confidence that God would do what He said. She said to Barak, "Go, the Lord has gone ahead of you."

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story God Chooses Moses to Free His People.
2. Talk about sin and its consequences for a people. Does God see and know all sin?
3. When the people confessed their sin and repented what would God do for them? Talk about a deliverer that God would provide to deliver the people from their trouble.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Jdg 2:7, 10-19; 4:1-31

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God honored Deborah who served as a prophetess and judge.
2. God promised to deliver His people from their enemies.
3. God was powerful to fulfill what He said He would do.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Like Deborah would you trust God to fulfill His promise to deliver your land from the hand of enemies? Listen to this story and see what happened.

READ: Jdg 4:8-9

TELL THE STORY:**TWO BRAVE WOMEN**

The people had served God faithfully during the days of Joshua. Then another generation grew up who neither knew the Lord nor remembered what He had done for Israel. They turned from worshipping the Lord and followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. This greatly displeased the Lord who then handed the people over to their enemies who plundered them. In great distress the people confessed their sin and cried out to the Lord to deliver them from their enemies. Then the Lord raised up judges who saved the people from their enemies.

Once when the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord He gave them into the hands of a wicked

Canaanite king, Jabin, who had a commander named Sisera. Jabin was very powerful and oppressed Israel for twenty years while the people cried to the Lord for help. Deborah was a prophetess who was leading the people of Israel at that time. She held court under a palm tree in the hill country. God had spoken to Deborah and told her to send for a man named Barak to go with an army against Jabin's army. God would give the enemy into Barak's hands.

But Barak was afraid and said, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go." "Very well," Deborah said, "I will go with you. But because of your request the honor of victory will not be yours, for the Lord will hand Sisera over to a woman."

Then Deborah said, "Go! This is the day the Lord has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the Lord gone ahead of you?" At Barak's advance the Lord defeated the soldiers of Sisera as Barak pursued them down the mountain. All of the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man remained alive. Sisera, however, escaped and fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite because there were friendly relations between Jabin and the clan of Heber the Kenite. Now the Kenites were related to Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses. (Zipporah's brother)

Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come into my tent, do not be afraid." So Sisera entered her tent and she put a covering over him. "I'm thirsty," he said, "Please give me some water." Jael opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up again. "Stand in the doorway of the tent," he told her. "If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone here?' say 'No'."

Then Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to Sisera while he lay fast asleep, for he was very tired. She drove the tent peg through his head into the ground and he died. When Barak came in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to meet him. "Come," she said, "I will show you the man you are looking for."

On that day Deborah and Barak sang a song of praise about the Lord and about what Deborah, Barak and Jael had done with God's help. Then the land had peace for forty years.

LET'S TALK:

1. Who can tell this story about two brave women?
2. Did Deborah trust God to deliver her people from their enemies? (Yes.) Talk about her role as a judge for her people. What work did a prophet do? (God spoke to the people through the prophets.)
3. Why did Barak ask Deborah to accompany him? (He was afraid.) What had God promised to do? (He had already promised to defeat the enemy—God was asking Barak to lead the army to do it.)
4. Who did Deborah say would get the honor for defeating Sisera? (A woman)
5. Did Deborah go with Barak? (Yes) Did God fulfill His promise to defeat Sisera? (Yes)
6. What did Sisera do when he saw that his army was defeated? (He fled to someone he hoped would hide him.)
7. Did Sisera do an honorable act? (No, he entered the tent of a woman who was alone.)
8. Why do the women think that Jael invited Sisera into her tent? (Remember, the Lord said to Deborah that He would lure Sisera and give him into Deborah's hands. God was using Jael to punish this sinful man.)
9. Read for the women part of Deborah's song. (Jdg 5:24-31) Let them talk about it.

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love." Psa 147:11

HANNAH'S PRAYER, THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Hannah's story is a beautiful story of answered prayer. Though she was barren she had a husband who loved her very much, perhaps because she had a quiet spirit not like her rival Peninnah who looked for every opportunity to provoke Hannah until she wept.
2. It was the custom of this family to go to Shiloh where the tabernacle was then located to worship God. In a fellowship sacrifice the worshiper got to eat part of it "in fellowship with the Lord." See Lev 7:11-21 for the regulations of the fellowship offering.
3. Elkanah was kind to both wives but showed special affection for Hannah.
4. Hannah had a terrible hurt in her heart because of her barrenness. She believed that God could change her circumstance so she prayed and in return offered her son back to God.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story God Provides a Bride for Isaac. Recall how God answered the servant's fervent prayer. Did Eliezer the servant have faith in God? (Yes)
2. Talk about barrenness and the disgrace it brings for a woman among her friends and her family.
3. Talk about cruel things we might say about people who are in a state of disgrace. What if we were in their place? Would we have a different attitude?
4. How do the women seek to change a bad circumstance they might find themselves in?

SCRIPTURE BASE: 1Sa 1:1-2:11; 2:18-21; 3:2-21

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God hears the prayer and knows the need of those who seek him.
2. God is powerful to fulfill the need of those who seek His help.
3. God answers prayer and permits us to be a part of his plan to bless people.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Listen to this story. How do you think God will answer Hannah's prayer for a son?

READ: 1Sa 1:1-2, 4-5, 10-11, 20

TELL THE STORY:**GOD REMEMBERS HANNAH**

There was a certain man named Elkanah who lived in the north hill country. He was a descendant of Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph. Elkanah had two wives, one called Hannah who had no children, and Peninnah who had children. Year after year this man went from his town to the Temple in Shiloh to worship. Whenever he would offer his sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her and the Lord had closed her womb.

And because the Lord had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Each time Hannah would weep and her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean

more to you than ten sons?"

Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Eli the old priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the Lord's Temple. In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. And she made a vow, saying, "O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life." As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli rebuked her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine." "Not so," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer. I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Do not take me for a wicked woman; I have only been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant what you have asked of Him." Then Hannah went away and ate something; her face was no longer downcast. After Hannah returned to their home, her husband lay with her and she conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel saying, "Because I asked the Lord for him." She did not go with Elkanah to worship the next year. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the Lord, and he will live there always." "Do what seems best to you," Elkanah replied.

After the boy was weaned, Hannah took him, along with an animal for sacrifice, and brought Samuel to the house of the Lord. She said to Eli the priest, "I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted what I asked of Him. So now I give him to the Lord."

The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest. Now the Lord had said, "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind." The boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men. For the sons of Eli were wicked men who had no regard for the Lord.

LET'S TALK:

1. Who can tell Hannah's story?
2. Talk about the answer to Hannah's prayer. Was it the answer she desired?
3. What causes people to be cruel and provoke misery like Peninnah did? (A sinful heart)
4. How did Elkanah honor Hannah? (He encouraged her and gave her a double portion of meat at the annual sacrifice.)
5. How did Hannah feel in her heart about her barrenness? (She was disturbed and sad.)
6. What did Hannah do to change her circumstance? (She prayed to God.)
7. What did Eli think about Hannah's prayer? (He saw her lips moving but heard no sound. He thought she had been drinking and was talking to herself.)
8. When Hannah explained what she was doing what did Eli tell her? (Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your request.)
9. How can we know that Hannah had faith in God? (After her prayer she was happy and ate.)
10. Did God do what Hannah had requested? (Yes) Did Hannah do what she promised? (Yes)

MEMORY VERSE: "Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help, as I lift up my hands toward your Most Holy Place." Psa 28:2

GOD GIVES THE PEOPLE A KING**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. During the days of the judges there was no national leader. And the people of Israel did whatever they saw fit to do. In the early years of Samuel the chief priest at the tabernacle where the people went to worship was Eli. He had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Eli's sons had no regard for the Lord. During a sacrifice they would demand of the worshiper the best portion of meat saying, "Hand it over, or I'll take it by force!" This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord's sight for they treated the Lord's offering with contempt. (1Sa 2:12-17)
2. The Lord said, "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind." (1Sa 2:35). Samuel served the Lord faithfully but as he grew old it was said of his two sons, Joel and Abijah, that they did not walk in their father's ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice. (1Sa 8:3)
3. So the people asked for a king like all the other nations around them. God had told Moses this would happen one day. (Deu 17:14)

REVIEW:

1. Ask the women to retell the story God Chooses Moses to Free His People. God was choosing the leaders for his people. In the days of Moses God selected Joshua to lead the people.
2. Talk about those who claim to be religious leaders who do not set a good example for the people.
3. Does God see the bad behavior of leaders? What does God do when people behave badly?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 49:10; Deu 17:14-20; Num 24:17, 19; Jdg 21:25; 1Sa 8:1-10:25; 13:1-14; 15:1-35

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God had a plan for the people to have a king of God's choice.
2. The people were rejecting God as their king.
3. The people desired to be more like their neighbors rather than like God wanted them to be.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you be patient to wait upon God's time, or would you prefer to have things done your way when you want them done?

READ: 1Sa 8:1-9

TELL THE STORY:**GOD GIVES THE PEOPLE A KING**

The prophet Samuel had grown old. His sons were dishonest and dishonored God. The people told Samuel, "Your sons are not like you. They are dishonest and do not walk in your ways. So give us a king just like all the other nations have." God was not pleased that the people had rejected him as their king, but He agreed to give them a king to rule over them.

God knew that one day the people would ask for a king. He had told Moses this would happen. And God listed all the requirements regarding a king. He was to come from among his own people.

And God said that he must not have many wives or his heart would be turned away from God. An evil prophet named Balaam mentioned a king coming from Jacob's descendants. Jacob had said that one day Judah's descendants would be kings. Then in the days of the judges Israel had no king and everyone did as he saw fit in his own eyes.

So God sent the prophet Samuel to find a young man of the clan of Benjamin, son of Kish, to anoint as king. It was the custom to pour some oil on the head on the person being anointed and to proclaim him as king. Then Samuel said to Saul, "The Spirit of the Lord will come on you in power." And it happened just as Samuel said. Saul was a very humble man and very outstanding in his appearance. Saul even began to prophesy when God's Spirit came upon him.

In those days an enemy nation had invaded the land and occupied many places. God blessed Saul as he rescued his people and drove the enemy out. But one day when Saul and his army faced the enemy they waited for Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice for the Lord's blessing before battle. When Samuel did not come the soldiers became fearful and began to run away and hide. King Saul decided to offer the sacrifice himself. The sacrifice was only to be offered by someone like Samuel.

Just as Saul finished offering the sacrifice, Samuel arrived. "What have you done?" Samuel asked Saul. "When I saw the soldiers afraid and running away and you did not arrive within the appointed time, I decided to offer the sacrifice myself," Saul replied. "You have acted foolishly," Samuel sternly warned, "You have not obeyed the Lord. Now the kingdom will be taken from you and given to another, for the Lord has sought out a man after His own heart and appointed him leader of the people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."

Later Saul disobeyed God again when he failed to carry out God's command to fully destroy a wicked and sinful people. God was grieved that he had made Saul king. After the Lord had anointed the new king to replace Saul, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit tormented him. His sin had brought a rejection by God and a separation from fellowship with God's Spirit.

LET'S TALK:

1. Who can retell the story God Gives the People a King?
2. Talk about waiting upon the Lord. Do we have the patience always to wait upon God?
3. Why did the people want a king? (Samuel's sons did not walk in his ways, and all the other nations had kings.)
4. What family did God select a king from? (The family of Kish, a descendant of Benjamin.)
5. Was Saul a good king? (Yes, in the beginning, then he began to disobey the Lord.)
6. How did Saul disobey God? (He did what only a priest or person appointed by God could do.)
7. What did Samuel say to Saul after his disobedience? (You have not obeyed the Lord. Now the kingdom will be taken from you and given to another.)
8. Did Saul then continue to obey the Lord? (No. He disobeyed again by failing to do what God asked him to do.)
9. What was God's attitude toward Saul when he continued to disobey? (God was grieved that He had made Saul king.)
10. When God's Spirit departed from Saul, what replaced it? (An evil spirit sent to torment Saul because of his disobedience.)
11. God had said that Judah's descendants would be kings. But we see that it was one of Benjamin's descendants that became king. Was God wrong? We'll soon see.

MEMORY VERSE: "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." Isa 59:2

GOD CHOOSES A NEW KING AFTER HIS OWN HEART**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story overlaps the previous story a bit. For Saul's reign as king overlapped David's anointing as his successor—a man after God's own heart. The appointing of first Saul of the tribe of Benjamin and then David of Judah is surely confusing. God had planned for the people one day to have a king—a king that God was preparing for His people. But the people had jumped ahead of God and demanded a king when THEY wanted a king. Saul was a good choice but while a humble man in his youth, he quickly became a proud man who did things his own way.
2. Samuel was a good prophet and priest after being dedicated to the Lord by his mother. But somehow his own sons failed to have their father's spiritual qualities. Perhaps Samuel was so busy judging the people that he did not have proper time for his own sons. We don't know. Unfortunately, the sons' behavior contributed to the people's desire for a king.
3. Remember that Salmon who married Rahab was a descendant of Judah, son of Jacob. Salmon's son was Boaz. His son was Obed. And Obed's son was Jesse who was father of David. Jesse had seven sons (1Ch 2:13-14).
4. Abraham was chosen, then Isaac, then Jacob, then Judah, and now David. God continues to move toward fulfilling what He said He was going to do—bless all people through someone He chose.

REVIEW:

1. Ask some to recall the story God Gives the People a King. Talk about what kind of a king that Saul turned out to be.
2. Recall the prophesy of Jacob that one day the ruler's staff would come to one of his descendants.
3. What quality did God demand of the king? (He was to be obedient to God. He was to be a man after God's own heart.)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 49:10; 1Sa 16:1-13; 2Sa 2:4; 5:1-5; 7:9, 16

MAJOR THEMES:

1. The words of prophecy God gave through Jacob were beginning to come true.
2. God looked at the heart of the new person He chose to become king.
3. God gave His Spirit to bless and empower the king.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What do you think is meant a king after God's own heart?

READ: 1Sa 16:1, 4-5, 7, 13

TELL THE STORY:**A KING AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART**

The people demanded that Samuel give them a king. God led Saul son of Kish to Samuel who anointed him king. In the beginning he was a good king. But then he began to do things his own way and not according to the instructions from God through the prophet Samuel. Before a battle he

had foolishly offered a sacrifice which only someone like Samuel was given authority by God to do. God was not pleased with this.

Later Saul did not follow God's instructions to fully punish a wicked people. God said, "I am grieved that I made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and not carried out my instructions." For these two things God had rejected Saul as king and now sought a man after God's own heart. Samuel had said to Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice." God was looking for an obedient king.

God said to Samuel, "Stop grieving for Saul and go to Bethlehem to the house of Jesse." Jesse was a descendant of Judah, the son of Jacob. Before his death Jacob had prophesied that one day the ruler's staff would come to the descendants of Judah. So God told Samuel to be prepared to anoint the one that God chose. Samuel did what the Lord asked. When he arrived in Bethlehem the elders trembled when they met him. "Do you come in peace?" they asked. Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace. Consecrate yourselves (See Exo 19:14-15) and come to the sacrifice with me." Then Samuel consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When the sons of Jesse arrived and stood before Samuel he looked at Eliab, the oldest. "Surely the Lord's anointed one stands here before the Lord," he thought. But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Then Jesse called his second son to stand before Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." Jesse then had each of his sons to pass to pass before Samuel but each time the answer was the same. "The Lord has not chosen any of these," Samuel said. So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." "Send for him; we will not sit down till he arrives," Samuel said.

So Jesse sent and had his youngest son brought in. He was very healthy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers. From that day onwards the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.

David was still very young. Saul continued to rule as king for many years until at last he committed a great sin and then died in battle. Then the men of Judah came to David and anointed him king over the house of Judah. It was not until seven years later that David became fully accepted as king over all of Israel. David was thirty years old when he became king and he reigned forty years over the people of united Israel.

God promised David to make his name great like the names of the greatest men of the earth. "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me, your throne will be established forever," God said. Jacob's prophesy was coming true. God had a special purpose for one of David's descendants. For God also said, "I will be his father, and he will be my son."

LET'S TALK:

1. Who can tell the story A King After God's Own Heart?
2. What did God mean a king after God's own heart? Does anyone know someone like this?
3. Where did God send Samuel to find the new king? (To Bethlehem, to Jesse of Judah's family.)
4. How does God look upon a person? (The Lord looks at the heart, not the outward appearance.)
5. Did David become king immediately? (No, he was still quite young. After Saul died he became king though it took awhile for all the people to accept him as the Lord's anointed.)

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1Sa 16:7b

GOD JUDGES DAVID'S SIN**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The two previous stories mentioned sin in families of God's servants. Now the issue comes to a full head as David, God's anointed, is seen to commit a grievous sin. David is called a prophet (Act 2:29-30). Prophets it appears are also sinners like everyone else.
2. We can only surmise why this terrible story is included in an otherwise positive account. While Satan has not been mentioned in any of the stories, it is obvious that he is busily at work undermining those God has chosen to do His work. The positive side of this story is that David, to his credit, admitted his guilt and sought the Lord's forgiveness for his sin. Some of the most beautiful psalms came out of David's agony and longing for restoration of fellowship with God. God overcomes the work of Satan and redeems the situation. Solomon the greatest king and ancestor of Joseph, and Nathan (not the same as Nathan the prophet) his brother and ancestor of Mary came from David's union with Bathsheba. (1Ch 3:5-9)

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the stories Trouble in the First Family and When the People Rebelled.
2. Talk about what sin is. Why do people sin? Is God pleased when we sin? Who do they think is responsible for sin? (If they say Satan, remind them that he only tempts us, we make the choice of whether to listen to him or not.)
3. Talk about what happens when good people sin. What consequences does sin have for us? For others like our families, or our people?

SCRIPTURE BASE: 2Sa 11:1-12:14; 23:13-23, 34, 39; 1Ch 3:5(2Sa 23:39); Psa 38:1-8, 18; 51:1-4, 10-12, 16-17; Jam 1:13-15; 1Jh 1:8-10

MAJOR THEMES:

1. We are tempted to sin through our lust and desires of the flesh.
2. One sin often leads to another sin as we attempt to hide our sin.
3. When sin is confessed God forgives but we may still have consequences to live with.

ASK THE LISTENERS: When God forgives our sin are there any later consequences of our sin?

READ: 2Sa 11:2-4; Psa 51:1-2

TELL THE STORY:**GOD JUDGES DAVID'S SIN**

During David's early years when he was leading the men of Israel against their enemies, one day David longed for a drink of water from the well near the gate of his home Bethlehem. Three of his mighty men broke through enemy lines and drew water from the well and brought it to David. But he refused to drink the water and instead poured it out before the Lord as an offering. "This water represents the blood of men who went at risk of their lives," David said. His mighty men did many other heroic deeds. David was very close to these mighty men who lived and fought together. Among the thirty-seven mighty men were Eliam (also called Ammiel) the father of Bathsheba and

Uriah the Hittite who was the husband of Bathsheba.

But one time when David's army was out fighting the enemy David had remained in Jerusalem at his palace. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his palace. He happened to see a very beautiful woman who was bathing to purify herself from her uncleanness. David inquired who she was and learned that she was the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Then David sent for her. She could not refuse the king. So she came to him and he slept with her. Then she went back home. Later she sent word to David that she was with child.

So David sent word to his commander of the army to send Uriah back from the fighting. When he came David asked how the fighting was going and about the commander. Then David said, "Go down to your house and spend time with your wife." But Uriah instead slept at the entrance to the palace with David's servants. When David learned that Uriah did not go to his house he asked, "Why didn't you go home?" Uriah replied, "How can I eat and drink in my house and sleep with my wife when the other soldiers are sleeping in tents and fighting the enemy?" Again David tried to get Uriah to go to his wife, but he would not. So David decided to send him back to the fighting, and to send a message with Uriah for the commander to read.

The commander was to put Uriah in the front of the fighting and then pull back so that he was certain to be killed. When it happened the commander sent word to David that Uriah was dead. After Bathsheba mourned for her dead husband, David sent for her and had her brought to the palace. Later she bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord. The Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David. Nathan told a story about a rich man who had many sheep and cattle. A poor man had only one sheep that was the family pet. The rich man took away a poor man's sheep to feed a friend. When David heard the story he was furious. "That man must repay four times!" he demanded. But Nathan said, "You are the man!" So Nathan reminded David of what he had done in taking another man's wife and causing the unjust death of her husband. God had judged David's sin and was going to punish David.

Then David cried, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die." But the baby died soon after birth and three of David's other sons later died violently. "The sword will never depart from your house," Nathan warned David. David had confessed his sin and asked God to create in him a pure heart and to restore the joy of his salvation. God was pleased to do this for David. God gave David and Bathsheba other sons. God had a special work for one of the sons who would follow David as king.

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story God judges David's Sin.
2. Talk about the consequences of our sin even if we are forgiven. Do the women know of any cases like this?
3. Have the women ever heard this story before? How does this compare with Joseph in Potiphar's house in Egypt? Which man was more honorable?
4. The practice of repaying four times comes from a requirement in Exo 22:1 regarding sheep.
5. What did David do when confronted with his sin? (He confessed it and repented.)
6. Did God forgive David's sin? (Yes. But there were terrible consequences for his family.)
7. Talk about David's request of God to create in him a pure heart, and not to cast him away.
8. What is the warning in this story for us today?

MEMORY VERSE: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."
Psa 51:10

GOD ANSWERS SOLOMON'S PRAYER**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The Solomon story usually focuses on Solomon's dream and then the building of the beautiful Temple. We've skipped over the Queen of Sheba story also to keep the focus on an incident that should appeal to every mother and still illustrate the great wisdom God had given to Solomon. It also moves then to focus upon Solomon's folly in marrying the foreign wives who brought their religions and false gods with them. God's warning proved all too true—Solomon's heart was turned from God in his old age. (Deu 17:17 and Ezr 9:1-2)
2. Solomon wisely asked God to help him to be a good ruler. He needed God's wisdom to do this. God was pleased with Solomon's request and said that he would not only grant the request but also give Solomon great wealth and honor. God is gracious. All Israel came to be in awe of Solomon's wise rulings.
3. We have three writings credited to Solomon. There is Proverbs which is actually a collection which includes Solomon's wisdom. There is Song of Songs which is beautiful love allegory of the spiritual communion between the bride and the heavenly bridegroom. And there is Ecclesiastes which pictures a man disillusioned with life struggling to make meaning of it. At last he comes to the conclusion that to "Fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man." In Proverbs Wisdom is personified in the female gender (3:18). And the youth is warned of the dangers of the adulteress (7:6-27).
4. Solomon married many wives to cement strong relations with surrounding nations. He built elaborate houses for the more famous ones like Pharaoh's daughter and worship places for their gods (1Ki 11:7-8).

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story God Judges David's Sin.
2. Talk about the danger of not heeding God's warnings. With God's blessing comes great responsibility to use it wisely and to walk wisely in God's counsel.
3. Talk about what happens when a man marries many wives. Is this good or bad?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Deu 17:17; 2Sa 12:24-25; 1Ki 1:28-35; 3:1-28; 4:29-34

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God has a purpose for our lives and is pleased when we seek His will.
2. Solomon prayed for wisdom and God answered his prayer—God honored Solomon.
3. Even a wise man like Solomon fell into sin that displeased and dishonored the Lord.

ASK THE LISTENERS: If you could ask God for any gift, what would it be? Why do you think God was pleased with Solomon's request?

READ: 1Ki 3:5-10

TELL THE STORY:**A WISE KING**

God did give David and Bathsheba another son and they named him Solomon. After David died Solomon became king over Israel. Solomon married many foreign wives. One was the daughter of

Pharaoh king of Egypt. Each brought their foreign gods with them. Solomon provided them worship places for their gods. In his early days Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the statutes of his father David.

One night God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” Solomon answered, “O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern the people and to distinguish between right and wrong.” The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. So the Lord said, “I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor. If you walk in my ways and obey my commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.” Then Solomon awoke and he realized it had been a dream.

One day two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. One of them said, “This woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby while she was there with me. The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us. During the night this woman’s son died because she lay on him. So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. The next morning I got up to nurse my son, and found him dead! But when I looked closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn’t the son I had borne.” The other woman said, “No, the living one is my son; the dead one is yours.” But the first one insisted, “No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine.” And so they argued before the king.

Then the king said, “Bring me a sword.” So they brought a sword for the king. Then he gave an order: “Cut the living child in two and give half to one mother and half to the other mother.” The woman whose son was alive was filled with compassion for her son and said to the king, “Please, give her the living baby! Don’t kill him.” But the other woman said, “Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!” Then the king gave his ruling: “Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him, she is his mother.”

When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice. God had said to the Israelites, “You must not marry foreign wives, because they will turn your hearts after their gods.” Solomon had many foreign wives. When he grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God. The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord. Then God said that the kingdom would be divided at Solomon’s death because of his sin. The kings following Solomon led their people into greater and greater sin.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story A Wise King.
2. Talk about the two listening task questions. What would the women ask for? Would God be pleased with their request?
3. How was Solomon’s wisdom displayed in judging between the two women? What would the women in the group have done? Solomon knew a mother’s heart would save the baby.
4. What did Solomon do that displeased the Lord? Had Solomon disobeyed what the Lord said not to do? (He married foreign wives who brought their gods with them. Solomon accommodated them.)
5. What did the women like in the story? What did they learn from the story?

MEMORY VERSE: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.” Pro 1:7

TWO EVIL QUEENS

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. Following Solomon the kingdom was divided into two. Solomon's son made a foolish decision about how to rule the people. As a result the people rebelled and divided the kingdom. The king of the larger portion now called Israel made two golden calf idols for his people to worship so they would not go to the Temple in Jerusalem (which was in the other kingdom). So he led the people into idolatry and great sin against the Lord. The kings of that kingdom were wicked and God judged them for their sin.
2. Ahab king of Israel, whose father Omri had been evil, himself married a foreign princess named Jezebel. She brought with her the gods of her people and King Ahab set up altars for them and other worship places. God was provoked to anger and pronounced judgment upon Jezebel and her husband.
3. Down in Judah, the other kingdom, king Jehoram married Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Athaliah brought with her the Baal god of the Phoenician people. Her husband ruled only a short time and died. Then her son was killed during the purge over in Israel. Ruthlessly she seized the throne herself and killed all the remaining royal princes save one who was hidden from her. He was a descendant of David.

REVIEW:

1. Have someone retell the stories God Judges David's Sin and A Wise King. God judged both David and Solomon for their sin. Both had tried to walk according to God's way.
2. Recall how God judged the sin of king Saul. God sees all sin and judges it. God will punish the sinner. That is God's righteous nature.
3. God honored women like Rahab, Deborah and Ruth when they honored Him. God will also judge and punish sinful women even if they are queens.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Jezebel: 1Ki 16:29-31; 18:13, 18-19; 19:1-2; 21:1-25; 2Ki 9:30-37
Athaliah: 2Ki 8:18, 25-28; 11:1-20. See also 2Ch 22:1-23:21; 24:7

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God warned against marrying foreign wives who bring their false gods with them.
2. God sees all wickedness and pronounces judgment upon it.
3. God is no respecter of persons when He punishes evildoers.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Does God judge evil women as harshly as evil men? Would you?

READ: 2Ki 9:30-33; 2Ki 11:13-16

TELL THE STORY:

GOD PUNISHES TWO EVIL QUEENS

After Solomon died his son became king of the southern kingdom of Judah and a rival became king of the larger northern kingdom of Israel. One of the kings of Israel named Ahab married Jezebel, daughter of a foreign king. She worshiped the false god Baal. Ahab set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal he built for her in Samaria. Four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal ate at

Jezebel's table plus another four hundred prophets of the sexual goddess Asherah. When the Lord's prophet Elijah proved that the Lord was the true God in Israel and had the false prophets put to death, Jezebel vowed to kill the Lord's prophet like others she had killed.

Now Ahab coveted the vineyard belonging to a certain man. The man would not sell it for it was the inheritance of his fathers. Ahab was very unhappy. When Jezebel learned of the problem she said to her husband, "Cheer up! I'll get you that vineyard." So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sent them to the leaders in the man's city. They were to proclaim a day of fasting and put the man with the vineyard in a prominent place. They were to falsely testify that he had cursed both God and the king. Then they were to take him out and stone him to death.

So the leaders did as Jezebel directed in the letters. They had the innocent man stoned to death and sent word to Jezebel that the man was now dead. As soon as Jezebel heard the news she said to her husband, "Get up and take possession of the vineyard." God sent the prophet Elijah to speak against Jezebel and say, "In the place where the dogs licked up the man's blood, dogs will lick up your blood." Eleven years after her husband Ahab died, God sent a man to overthrow the family of Ahab. He commanded the servants of Jezebel to throw her out the window of the palace. Chariot horses trampled her underfoot. And dogs came to lick up her blood.

Jezebel's daughter Athaliah married the king of Judah. She was as evil as her mother. Her own son was later king of Judah but was wicked. He was put to death by the same man who ordered Jezebel killed. So Athaliah, when she realized that her own son was dead, sought to destroy all the royal family including her own grandson Joash. But he was hidden by another family member and remained hidden with his nurse at the Temple of the Lord for six years while wicked Athaliah ruled the land as queen.

In the seventh year the priest of the Lord sent for those loyal to the Lord and presented Joash the king's son to them. "Here is what you are to do," the priest told the soldiers, "Station yourselves around the young king, each man with his weapon in his hand." Then the priest brought out the king's son and put a crown on him and proclaimed him king. When Joash was anointed the people clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

Athaliah heard the noise the people were making; she went to the Temple and saw what was happening. The young king was standing there. The people were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Athaliah tore her robes and shouted, "Treason! Treason!" The priest ordered that Athaliah be brought out of the Temple of God and put to death. So they seized her as she reached the place where horses enter the palace grounds, and there she was put to death. The people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down, smashing the altars and idols to pieces.

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story God Punishes Two Evil Queens.
2. Talk about God's judgment of either men or women. God is no respecter of persons.
3. Ahab the husband of Jezebel had committed the same sin as Solomon. Jezebel brought her false god and priests with her and led the people to sin by worshiping the false god Baal.
4. When Ahab coveted the vineyard, Jezebel cleverly found a way to get it for him? Talk about her plan. What commandments of God did they break? (Do not kill, falsely testify or covet)
5. Did the prophet's words of God's judgment come true? (Yes)
6. What kind of person was queen Athaliah? (Wicked, vengeful, and idolatrous)
7. What did she do to the royal princes? (Had them killed.)
8. How did God punish Athaliah? (She was put to death when the young king was anointed.)

MEMORY VERSE: "No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse." Psa 25:3

GOD PROVIDES FOR A POOR WIDOW**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. We continue our stories about women. This time we see how God provided for a widow at a time when God was bringing judgment upon the land for the sin of the king and queen. The story happened during the days of Ahab and Jezebel when God sent the prophet Elijah to pronounce there would be no rain until God again sent word.
2. During the drought God provided food for Elijah and he drank from the brook. When the brook dried up God sent him to the house of a widow. Through her trust in God both she and the prophet would have food to eat. She was a foreign woman and not an Israelite.
3. God was merciful in that He answered Elijah's plea to restore the widow's son to life after he had suddenly died. This son was her male protector and future source of support.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Two Evil Queens.
2. Talk about the needs of widows. They need food and someone to care for and protect them.
3. How much trust do the women have in God's messengers? Would they give up their last food to feed a messenger from God? What do they do in times of deep need? Is anyone a widow?

SCRIPTURE BASE: 1Ki 17:1-24

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is sovereign in all that He does, He cares for both prophet and poor.
2. God is merciful to those who are poor yet faithful.
3. God blesses those who are obedient and do what He asks of them.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you share your last morsel of food with a stranger who asked you for some food to eat?

READ: 1Ki 17:9-12

TELL THE STORY:**GOD PROVIDES FOR A POOR WIDOW**

During the days when Ahab was king of Israel, Jezebel caused the people to turn away from the God of Israel and worship the false god Baal. Elijah the prophet of God said there would be no rain in the land for the next few years except at his command. This was God's judgment upon the people for abandoning their God. For a time Elijah hid in a cave near a small stream where each day the Lord sent ravens to feed him. After a time the stream dried up because there was no rain. Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Go at once to such and such (*use Zarephath if you prefer*) place and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." This woman was not an Israelite.

When Elijah came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so that I may have a drink?" As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."

“As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me. Then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land’.” She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. The jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

Sometime later the son of the woman became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. The woman said to Elijah, “What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and to kill my son?” “Give me your son,” Elijah replied. He took him to an upstairs room where he was staying and laid him on his bed. Then Elijah cried out to the Lord, “O Lord, why have you brought this tragedy upon this widow I am staying with, causing her son to die?” Then the prophet stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the Lord, “O Lord, my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”

The Lord heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him. Elijah carried the boy down to his mother and said, “Look, your son is alive!” Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story God Provides for a Poor Widow.
2. Review the listening task question about sharing your last piece of bread with a stranger.
3. Had God planned for the widow to feed Elijah during the drought? (Yes. He knew she would be faithful to do it even though she was not an Israelite. Notice that she spoke of “your God”.
4. When the widow followed the instruction of Elijah what happened? (Neither the flour nor oil failed during the drought.)
5. When the boy died what did the widow think Elijah had come to do? (Judge her sin.)
6. Why did God permit the boy to die? (That God might be glorified and as a testimony that Elijah was a true prophet of God who spoke the truth.)
7. How did the widow receive God’s blessing. (It was through her faith in God and her obedience.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.” Psa 55:22

Note: *Many of these stories are not the ones traditionally used in evangelism presentations. The stories have been selected because of their general interest to women as subjects in the stories, speaking to various needs commonly found in the lives of women, or speaking to worldview issues (especially barriers) common to women. The stories are also being used to build up confidence in the God of Israel while establishing biblical truths along the way that will eventually pave the way for a presentation of the gospel in the story of Jesus. The storyer is free to increase the evangelistic content as appropriate and as needed among the local people. However, weigh carefully the risks involved in moving too quickly and forcing a truth upon listeners who are not yet prepared to hear it and receive it.*

CHOOSE THE GOD YOU WILL SERVE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Some of these stories are slightly out of chronological sequence which should not make a difference as they relate during the general time period.
2. This story may have more relevance to a folk Islam or Hindu-Islam worldview. The theme of choice looks toward how the listeners will receive Jesus after he is presented and qualified through the Gospel stories.
3. The story relates to Elijah, Ahab and Jezebel and follows God Provides For A Poor Widow.
4. The significance in this story is that Baal was the storm god who brought rain for the farmers. The drought was proving Baal powerless to really bring rain. Later God Himself sent rain.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to recall the stories Two Evil Queens and God Provides For A Poor Widow.
2. Recall the apostasy of the people during Deborah's time of the judges. (Jdg 2:10-13)
3. Recall Joshua's admonition for the people to choose whom they will serve. (Jos 24:15)

SCRIPTURE BASE: 1Ki 16:30-33; 17:1; 18:1-46; Isa 42:8; 43:10; Jdg 2:10-13; Jos 24:15

MAJOR THEMES:

1. When leaders cause the people to sin God sends judgment upon the land.
2. God was powerful to cause a drought and to send rain when the people turned back to God.
3. The God of Israel is the true God while all others are false and cannot answer prayer.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you choose the true God and turn from any sin displeasing to Him? Listen to this story how the prophet of God challenged the false god of the people.

READ: 1Ki 18:36-39

TELL THE STORY:**CHOOSE THE TRUE GOD**

Because of the sin of King Ahab and Jezebel God had sent a drought upon the land of Israel. After a long time, in the third year, the Lord said to Elijah, "Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the land." So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab who was out searching for grass for his horses. When Ahab saw Elijah he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

"I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied, "But you and your family by abandoning the Lord's commands and worshiping the false god Baal. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of the goddess Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table." So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel.

Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him." The people said nothing. So Elijah continued, "Get two bulls for us. Let the prophets of Baal choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then call on the name of your god, and will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire, he is the true God." Then the

people said, “What you say is good.”

Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.” So they began. They called upon the name of Baal from morning till noon. “O Baal, answer us!” they shouted. But there was no reply; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made. At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder! Surely Baal is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is just sleeping and must be awakened.” So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears according to their custom until their blood flowed. They continued until evening but no fire came down.

Then Elijah said to the people, “Come here to me.” They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord which was in ruins. Elijah took twelve large stones, one for each family descended from Jacob. Around the altar he dug a trench. After he arranged the wood and cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the altar, he said, “Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the altar.” Then he said, “Do it again,” and, “Do it a third time.” The sacrifice was wet and the trench filled with water.

At the time of the evening sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed, “O Lord, God of Israel, let it be known today that you are the God in Israel and I am your servant. I have done all things at your command. Answer me, O Lord, so these people will know that you are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.” Then the fire of the Lord flashed down and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and even the water! The people saw this and fell prostrate and cried, “The Lord—He is God! The Lord—He is God!” Elijah commanded the prophets of Baal and the goddess Asherah be seized and put to death.

Now Elijah told the king to go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain. “Go, look toward the sea,” he told his servant. “There is nothing there,” the servant replied. Seven times Elijah said this. The seventh time the servant said, “There is a small cloud the size of a man’s hand rising from the sea.” Meanwhile the sky grew black with clouds and a heavy rain came on. The drought was ended! The Lord had turned the people’s hearts back to himself.

LET’S TALK:

1. Can someone tell the story Choose the True God?
2. Is there anything in your worship not pleasing to God. Would the women choose the true God?
3. God does not share His glory with another. Worshipers must choose for themselves what is true and right. Talk about the practice or worshiping at various places or seeking a spirit’s help.
4. Did the false god Baal answer the prayer of the priests? (No. Because Baal is not God.)
5. What did the priests do in their attempt to make Baal hear their prayer? (They shouted, danced and cut themselves until blood flowed.)
6. When did Elijah step forward and tell them to stop? (At the time for the evening sacrifice.)
7. What unusual thing did Elijah command to be done? (Soak the altar with water three times!)
8. What did Elijah ask God to show the people? (Let the people know that the Lord is the true God in Israel and that Elijah was His prophet.)
9. Did God honor Elijah’s prayer? (Yes)
10. When did God send rain? (After the people confessed that He, the Lord, was the true God.)

MEMORY VERSE: “...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Jos 24:15

A SERVANT GIRL'S FAITH

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. The Israelite servant girl plays only a minor role in the story of Namaan but it is a key role as her testimony initiates Namaan's journey to seek healing from his leprosy. The story illustrates the girl's concern for her master (even though she had been captured and taken from her home as a servant) and it illustrates the servant's girl's faith in the God of Israel and His prophet.
2. Jesus referred to this story when he preached his first sermon in Nazareth. The people were angry because Jesus reminded them that only a foreigner (Gentile) was healed at a time when there were many lepers among the people of Israel.
3. In the background of the story is the bad blood between Israel and Aram. God had used Aram to punish Israel for her sins. Aram had recently had successful raids against Israel during which the servant girl was taken. Namaan had conducted the raids.
4. The king of Israel thought the king of Aram was trying to provoke a fight by sending Namaan.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the stories Choose the True God and God Provides for a Poor Widow.
2. Talk about the work God gave the prophets to do. They were to be God's spokesmen to warn the people about sin. God gave them authority to heal and raise the dead as a testimony of God's power.
3. In the past stories we have seen God's love for the descendants of Abraham. Now we see that God loves all people—even the enemies of Abraham's descendants.

SCRIPTURE BASE: 2Ki 5:1-18; Luk 4:27

MAJOR THEMES:

1. We may be faithful to our God even when serving others.
2. God used the faith of a servant girl to give witness to a man He was going to heal.
3. God is powerful to heal and to bless.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you have faith to do what the servant girl did in this story?

READ: 2Ki 5:1-4, 13-15

TELL THE STORY:

A SERVANT GIRL'S FAITH

In those days the people of Aram (Syria) were enemies of the descendants of Abraham. Raiders from Aram had gone down into the land of Israel and took captives as slaves. One of those captured in Israel was a young girl. She was brought into the home of Namaan, a commander of the army of Aram. The girl worked as a servant for Naaman's wife.

Now Naaman was a great man in the eyes of the king of Aram and highly regarded, because through him the Lord, the God of Israel, had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but Namaan was a leper.

One day the servant girl said to her mistress: "If only my master would see the prophet of the Lord named Elisha who lives in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

So Naaman went before the king of Aram and told him all that the servant girl from Israel had said. “By all means, go,” the king of Aram replied. “I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” So Namaan departed for Samaria taking with him a large amount of money and gifts for the prophet. The letter he took to the king of Israel read: “With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy.”

The king of Israel was not happy to get the letter from the king of Aram, for he thought that king was wanting to cause trouble. But when Elisha the man of God heard about the letter he said, “Have Namaan come to me and he will know there is a prophet in Israel.” So Namaan went to Elisha with his horses and chariots and stopped before the prophet’s house. But Elisha did not go out to meet him. Instead, he sent his servant with instructions for Namaan to go wash himself in the Jordan River seven times. His flesh would be restored and he would again be clean from leprosy.

But Namaan went away angry for he thought surely the man of God would come out and call on the Lord his God, put his hand over the leprosy spot, and it would be cured. “The rivers in my country are better than the Jordan River! Why couldn’t I wash in them and he healed?” he complained. Namaan’s servants begged him to do what the prophet had said. So he went and washed himself seven times in the Jordan River. When he did, his flesh was restored like that of a young boy!

Namaan and all his servants went back to Elisha’s house. Namaan stood before the man of God and said, “Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel!” He offered gifts to Elisha. But Elisha said, “I will not accept a thing from you.” And even though Namaan urged him to take the gifts he refused. “Go in peace,” Elisha said. So Namaan returned to his own country. The servant girl of Namaan’s wife was right, there was a man of God in Israel who could heal her master of his leprosy.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story A Servant Girl’s Faith.
2. Talk about the listening task question—Would anyone have faith to do what the girl did?
3. Why do the women think God caused this story to happen? (It showed that God loved all people. It showed to Namaan and the people of Aram that Israel’s God was powerful.)
4. What did the king of Israel think was happening? (Namaan’s trip was excuse for making trouble for Israel.)
5. What held Namaan back from obeying the prophet’s words? (His stubborn pride.)
6. What happened when Namaan finally obeyed and washed in the Jordan River? (He was healed.)
7. Why do the women think that Elisha would not take any gifts from Namaan? Would they have?
8. What was Namaan’s testimony after his healing? (I know there is no God in all the world except in Israel!)
9. What is necessary for God’s healing to work? (Faith in God’s power and obedience to what He tells you to do.)
10. What do the women think about the servant girl’s faith in the God of Israel?

MEMORY VERSE: “He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; he redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion.” Psa 103:3-4

THE SINNER'S PREDICAMENT**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This is a summary lesson from the Old Testament to highlight the predicament that a sinful people have before a righteous God. In the beginning man and woman were made in the image of God. That image was marred by sin which led to a break in fellowship. God provided a way for people to temporarily cover their sin in their worship. This was by the blood of an animal without blemish.
2. In summary, God sees and knows about all sin. All sin is judged by God and the sinner pronounced guilty. Sin must be punished. The animal serves as the temporary substitute but it can never be effective as it is not the same flesh as the sinner. No, what is required is a perfect (sinless) substitute sacrifice of the same flesh—a person. Then the sacrifice will be effective. Because God is gracious He provides a means to escape His judgment, but this requires faith in Him and obedience.
3. The current story may have too many details for the group to remember and retell. You may want to summarize it even further for their sake.
4. If you are using pictures with the stories they greatly facilitate recall of stories mentioned. Show the picture and ask someone to recall that story and what it teaches.

REVIEW:

1. Have several to recall the following: God's Judgment, Man and Woman's Punishment, Trouble in the First Family, How God Saved One Family, Rahab Saves Her Family.
2. Talk about what it means to be helpless—unable to help yourself or save yourself from danger.
3. Talk about God's hatred of sin and His punishment of sin. Talk about God's grace to provide a means to escape His judgment. (Some may believe this is the role of their Prophet.)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 1:26-28; 2:16-17; 3:21; 4:6-12; 6:6-8; Num 12:10-15; 20:8-18; 21:4-9; Lev 4:27-34; Jdg 2:11-19; 4:4-6; Isa 1:4, 15; 59:2, 16; Eze 18:4; Mal 2:1-2; 1Th 5:3

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God sees and knows all sin—nothing can be hidden from His sight.
2. God's righteousness demands that all sin be judged and the sinner punished.
3. Man is not able to escape God's judgment unless God provides a way to escape.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have your sins hidden God's face from you? How can you repay the debt to God for offending Him?

READ: Jer 17:10

TELL THE STORY:**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

God very lovingly made man and woman in His image. As He created them they were without sin. He provided for all their needs in the Garden of Eden. All He asked in return was that they obey Him. God had blessed the man and woman and told them to rule over the earth and all the animals. They were not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But when tempted

by the snake, Eve was deceived and disobeyed God, then Adam also disobeyed God. God judged their sin. God provided a more permanent covering for their shame and sin which required the shedding of innocent animal's blood. God must be the one to cover our sin, we cannot do it.

Sin then spread to their children as Cain jealously killed his brother Abel. God was gracious to first warn Cain not to do what he was thinking. But Cain, too, disobeyed God and also sinned against his brother by shedding his blood. God judged the sin of Cain. Sin continued to spread to other families and finally to all people living at that time. In the days of Noah God saw the wickedness of all the earth and judged the sins of the people. He gave a time to repent from sin. But only Noah was found righteous because he walked with God. So God revealed to Noah how he and his family might escape God's judgment. Noah obeyed and his family was saved.

Even the great prophet Moses sinned by disobeying God. He was also judged guilty and had to die without entering the Promised Land. Miriam, too, had sinned by being jealous of God's chosen leader. When she repented, she was forgiven but still had to suffer a time outside the camp as a leper. When the Israelites rebelled against God and would not enter the land, He judged their sin and one by one they died in the desert. Again and again they sinned against God by grumbling and complaining. One time God had judged their sin by poisonous snakes which bit the people and they died. But God was merciful to provide a way to escape His judgment, be healed, and live if the people did what God told them to do. God loved the people but not their sin.

In the days of Moses God had given the command to bring an animal without blemish and have the priest to sprinkle its blood on the altar to cover a person's sin. God allowed the blood to provide a temporary covering for sin. Each year the high priest had to make a special sacrifice and sprinkle animal blood on the altar in the most holy place for the sins of all the people. But these sacrifices had to be repeated over and over for each sin. They were not permanent.

In the days of the judges of Israel God judged the sinfulness of the people each time they turned away to worship false gods. The people could not help themselves unless God intervened. When they finally cried out to Him, then God would send a judge like Deborah to deliver the people. Later during the days of the kings the people fell into terrible sin, so terrible in fact, that God said all of them were to be taken away as captives and their land and towns destroyed.

Because of the people's sin God's face was hidden from them. This meant that He did not hear their prayers and did not bless them. God sent prophets to warn the people to turn from their sin and seek His forgiveness. But they could not save themselves from God's wrath. What could people do? Nothing! Only God could provide cleansing from sin. And since people were sinful and so could not enter the presence of holy sinless God, a priest was needed to go between the people and God. But in that day even the priests had become corrupt and sinful. God must also provide the sinless priest as well as the sufficient sacrifice.

Without God's help people cannot save themselves from God's wrath and punishment for sin.

LET'S TALK:

1. Can someone summarize—tell in a few words—the situation of all people before a holy God?
2. Talk about the different ways that people try to repay the sin debt—do works to atone their sin.
3. Was this just a problem for Israel—the descendants of Abraham? (No, all people everywhere.)
4. Why is it important to believe what God tells us to do? (Because He knows what to do.)
5. Why is it important to do what God tells us to do? (Because that is the only way to escape His punishment for our sin.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” Psa 51:1-2 (*Alternative see Psalm 79:9*)

GOD'S PROPHETS TELL ABOUT THE ANOINTED ONE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The first work of the prophets was to warn the people about sin and God's judgment, and to turn their hearts back to God.
2. The prophets were threatened with death, their messages rejected, and even killed. Finally the destruction and captivity that they foretold happened. God's judgment comes as surely as the sunrise each morning. Then God began to send a message of hope. For He was going to send a substitute to suffer and die for sin in our place. He was to be a special person Anointed of God, sent from God, and upon him God's Spirit would rest.
3. He was to fulfill the prophecies about the Promised Descendant who would crush the head of Satan and bless all people. He would be a descendant of Abraham, a prophet, a priest and a king.
4. Look over the prophecy chart at the back and select the prophecies to be used with your people.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to recall God's promise to Abraham about a descendant to bless all people.
2. Recall the blood sacrifice for sin from A Place To Worship.
3. Recall God's words as He spoke to the snake in the garden, "A child of woman will crush your head but you will bruise his heel." Talk about what that could mean.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Isa 61:1; 52:13; 53:1-12; John the Baptist—Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1, 4:5-6

MAJOR THEMES:

1. In His mercy God would provide a substitute sacrifice for man's sin.
2. God clearly provided the message of the prophets to tell what this person was like.
3. God would Anoint the Chosen One and God's Spirit would be upon him.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What kind of person do you think God would choose to take away our sin? Would he be like a mighty warrior? Like a King? Like a prophet? Or like a priest?

READ: Psa 61:1-2

TELL THE STORY:**THE ANOINTED ONE**

In His mercy God sent the prophets to warn people to turn from their sin to worship the true and living God. Many of the prophets were beaten and even put to death because of their message. The people were steeped in their sin and could not save themselves. God would need to have even greater mercy on the people. God knew this. It was in His heart from before the creation of the world. One day men and women would need someone to save them from the penalty of death, God's righteous punishment for their sins.

There was a prophet named Isaiah that God spoke to about the coming Anointed One or the Messiah. Isaiah saw a wonderful vision of God high and lifted up. Angels were worshiping God and saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty." One of the angels touched the lips of Isaiah

with a burning coal and said, “Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” Then the voice of the Lord said, “Go and tell the people my words.”

The Lord said that one day a virgin would give birth to a son and he would be called Immanuel or *God with us*. He would also be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, and Prince of Peace. He would rule on King David’s throne and over his kingdom. God said, “See, my servant will act wisely, he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.”

But just as this Anointed One would be lifted up before men, he would also be despised and rejected by men. He would take on himself our infirmities and carry our sorrows. He would be stricken and afflicted by God, and his body pierced for our sins. His punishment would bring us peace, by his wounds we would be healed. Like a sheep before the shearers does not open its mouth, he would suffer silently. His life would be a guilt offering for us. It was said that he would bear the sin of many and yet make intercession for sinners.

Other prophets told that he would be born in Bethlehem and yet would minister in Galilee. A friend who shared his bread would betray him. He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver. Yet he would be a great prophet, a priest and a king. His clothes would be taken from him and others would gamble for them. He would be mocked and insulted, even despised and spit upon, yet he would ask forgiveness for his enemies. He would die among sinners without any bones being broken, and be buried with the rich and yet his body would not become corrupt in the grave. For he would be raised to life again and one day would return to heaven to the Father who sent him.

But before this happened the Lord would send someone as a voice in the desert calling: “Prepare the way for the Lord.” This voice would be like the mighty prophet Elijah.

LET’S TALK:

1. This story has many details. It may be best if the group works on it together—each adding to it.
2. Talk about what kind of a person this Promised One was to be?
3. Recall in the story of king Saul and David about how God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint them with oil. This coming One is said to be the Anointed One (Messiah). Who would anoint him? What might be the sign of his anointing? (God’s Spirit was to be upon him. In the OT the oil was a picture of God’s Spirit upon the person.)
4. Review the many characteristics of the Anointed One. Talk about his birth to a virgin. What does this mean?
5. Will the listeners recognize this person when they hear about him? Remember the prophecies!

MEMORY VERSE: “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isa 53:6

Note: *There are many prophetic references which could be given from Deuteronomy, Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Micah, Hosea, Zechariah and others. The object here is not to overload the listeners with too much detail. In fact, the storyer will want to be sensitive to cover those prophecies which, while qualifying Christ as the Anointed One, would also speak to possible worldview issues which may hinder an understanding of who Christ was and why he had to suffer and die. It may be helpful for some to go back and review several of the prophetic stories in the Old Testament. For this purpose a listing is given at the end of these prophecies and their references.*

GOD'S KINDNESS TO ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The scene switches to more familiar ground now and will move quickly with familiar stories.
2. Where the accounts are carried in several or all of the Gospels the stories may be a merging of details from more than one account to give a fuller story.
3. The lessons will often look back to prophecies and their fulfillment in the story.
4. Continue to select stories that address worldview issues or are most appropriate for your group.

REVIEW:

1. Ask one or the group to recall the prophecies about the Anointed One. Recall who was going to come before this person to prepare the way for the Lord.
2. Recall the Elijah story Choose the God You Will Serve. Talk about Elijah's characteristics.
3. Talk about the work that God gave the prophets to do—Warn people about sin and turn their hearts back to God, foretell about the coming Messiah.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1; 4:5-6; Luk 1:1-25, 39-45, 57-80

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is merciful to those who walk uprightly and obediently.
2. God had a special purpose for the son He promised.
3. God is powerful to fulfill His promises.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Is anything too difficult for God to do? Do you remember another story when God provided a son to a woman in her old age?

READ: Luk 1:5-7, 23-25

TELL THE STORY:**A SON FOR ELIZABETH**

Many years had passed since the prophet Isaiah told of one who would come to prepare the way for the Lord. Another prophet named Malachi also spoke of this one who would be like the mighty prophet Elijah to turn people back to the Lord. During the days when Herod was king in Judea there was a priest named Zechariah. He and his wife Elizabeth were descendants of Levi, one of the sons of Jacob, and those the Lord had chosen to serve as priests. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments. They were now old and because Elizabeth was barren they had no children.

Once when Zechariah was serving in the Temple at the time of worship, he was burning incense when an angel of the Lord appeared to him. Zechariah was afraid but the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son and you are to name him John. He will be great in the sight of the Lord. And he will turn Israel back to God. He will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to prepare people for the Lord."

Zechariah asked, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is also old." The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and have been sent to you to tell you

this good news. Now since you have doubted you will not be able to speak until after the child is born.”

When his time of service was completed Zechariah returned home. Soon his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. Elizabeth said, “The Lord has done this for me. In these days He has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

Then when it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child and to give him his name after his father Zechariah. But his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.” The relatives complained, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.” Then they made signs to the father to find out what he would like to name the child. Zechariah asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s amazement, he wrote: ‘His name is John’. Immediately he was able to speak again and began to praise God. The neighbors were filled with wonder and throughout the hill country people were talking about these things and asking, “What then is this child going to be?”

Zechariah sang: “And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give the people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins.” And John grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel. He wore coarse clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist. He began to preach calling people to repentance, to seek forgiveness of sins, and to be baptized. Many came to hear when John preached good news and told of one coming after John who was more powerful and whose sandals John was not worthy to stoop to untie. This one would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story A Son For Elizabeth.
2. Did anyone remember another story in which God promised a son in a woman’s old age?
3. What was Zechariah doing when the angel appeared to him? (Burning incense in the Temple.)
4. What was Zechariah’s reaction when he saw the angel? (He was afraid.)
5. Who was the angel and where had he come from? (He was Gabriel and he came from God’s presence with the good news for Zechariah and Elizabeth.)
6. When Zechariah doubted the words of the angel what did the angel say would happen to him? (He would not be able to speak until after the baby was born.)
7. What happened when Zechariah returned home? (Elizabeth soon became pregnant.)
8. What did Elizabeth say when she found she was going to give birth? (The Lord has done this for me. He has taken away my disgrace.)
9. Did Zechariah and Elizabeth name the baby like the angel told them? (Yes)
10. What did Zechariah have to say after his tongue was loosed again? (My child will be called a prophet of the Most High, to go before the Lord to prepare the way for him.)
11. Where did John go to live? (In the desert.) What did he wear? (He wore rough clothing.)
12. What was John’s message? (He called the people to repent and seek forgiveness for their sins and be baptized. But he said one more powerful and honored than he was coming after him.)

MEMORY VERSE: “He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children.”

Psa 113:9

GOD'S ANGEL APPEARS TO MARY**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story happened six months after Elizabeth conceived. Gabriel again appeared with good news. Gabriel is the same angel who brought an answer to Daniel's prayer (Dan 9:21).
2. Zechariah and Elizabeth were descendants of Levi. Mary is a descendant of David through another of Bathsheba's sons named Nathan. Her husband to be was also a descendant of David through Solomon, also of Bathsheba. God had promised David to always have one of his descendants on the throne. The line through Solomon fell into sin. God has chosen a "new branch" through Nathan to rule. The Qur'an teaches that Mary's husband was Imrân (Amram).
3. This begins the testimonies of who Jesus was—Son of the Most High, ruler on David's throne, and even Jesus means *Jehovah is salvation*. Muslim worldviews will be challenged by the angel's words, "the Son of God."
4. Some have asked who was the first person to question the virgin birth. Mary said to Gabriel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" But she humbly submitted and said, "May it be so."

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story A Son For Elizabeth.
2. Review the prophecy about the Messiah's being born of a virgin.
3. Recall Jacob's prophecy to his son Judah that the scepter would not depart from Judah until he comes to whom it belongs (Gen 49:10). Who would this person be?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14; 9:6-7; 42:1; Luk 1:26-56; 3:23-37
(v. 31—see 1Ch 3:5); Mat 1:18-25

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God would now fulfill a promise He made in the Garden of Eden, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
2. While Satan had tempted the first woman causing her to sin, God would honor woman to give birth to His Son.
3. God is powerful to do the impossible.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Why do you think God chose the young woman in this story? Who was she descended from? What can we say about her attitude?

READ: Luke 1:26-30, 38

TELL THE STORY:**A WOMAN FAVORED BY GOD**

It happened six months after the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the Temple and told of the coming birth of one to be called John. This time God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was pledged to be married to a man named Joseph who was a descendant of David. Mary, too, was a descendant of David through King Solomon's brother, Nathan.

The angel went to Mary and said, "Greetings, you are highly favored by God! The Lord is with

you.” Mary was troubled by the angel’s words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.” But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will have a child and give birth to a son. You are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

“How can this be, since I am a virgin?” Mary asked the angel. “The Holy Spirit of God will cause it to happen, the power of the Most High God will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age. She who was barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God,” the angel explained.” I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her. When Mary visited her relative Elizabeth and greeted her, the baby leaped in Elizabeth’s womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth said to Mary in a loud voice: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear. As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. May the Lord fulfill what He has said.” *(If the women ask about how they are related, recall the ancestry of each. But we don’t know the exact way they were related—the angel said “your relative.”)*

Mary sang a song in which she praised God saying: “My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name.”

Later the angel appeared to Joseph, Mary’s husband to be. For Joseph was considering quietly divorcing Mary when he found that she was already with child because he did not want to shame her publicly. In a dream the angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife. The child in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not sleep with her until after she gave birth to a son.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story A Woman Favored By God.
2. What characteristics of Mary might have pleased God? Why would He have chosen her?
3. What could the angel mean “Son of the Most High”? (The Most High was God.)
4. What question did Mary ask the angel? (How can this be, since I am a virgin?)
5. How was God going to cause the baby to be conceived? (Through His Holy Spirit. Many Muslims equate the Holy Spirit with Gabriel. Be sure the women make the distinction.)
6. What did Joseph plan to do when he discovered that Mary was with child and not by him? (Quietly divorce her to keep from shaming her. But the angel appeared to Joseph and explained what was happening. (Is anyone surprised that Joseph is the husband, not Imrân?)
7. Be sure to point out again that Joseph did not sleep with Mary until after the child was born.
8. The women might like to hear all of Mary’s Song of Praise.

MEMORY VERSE: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” Isa 7:14

Note: *This story has many details. Since these stories are speaking to the worldview of women, it is helpful to keep as much of interest in the story as possible. Important points are the ancestry of Mary and Joseph, the humility of Mary, and that the child was to be Son of the Most High.*

THE BIRTH OF JESUS**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The prophecy in Mic 5:2 said the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth in Galilee. The Roman governor ordered that a census be taken and each family head had to return to his family home to register. Joseph was a descendant of David so he had to return to Bethlehem—a journey of about 75 miles from Nazareth made more difficult because Jewish families did not like to pass through Samaria which lay between.
2. Because of the crowd there it was impossible to find a room in an inn. There were many animal shelters in caves in the hillsides around Bethlehem. The Temple flocks for sacrifice in Jerusalem were kept nearby for grazing on the hills. Shepherds were low-caste because they handled animals some of which may have been sick or dying.
3. The Wise Men came from the area where Daniel had lived. OT prophecies would be known by these men who studied the stars and ancient writings. The writings and stars said a king was born. They came to find him and to worship. They were Gentiles and not Israelites.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story A Woman Favored By God.
2. Talk about the coming birth of Mary's baby. The women don't yet know where he will be born or what happened then. This was to be Mary's firstborn. The angel said it would be a son.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Luk 2:1-20; Mat 2:1-12; Mic 5:2

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus' birth was according to the words of God's prophets.
2. The birth was announced to the lowly shepherds and not the religious leaders and rulers.
3. The angels, the shepherds and the Wise Men testified of the birth of Jesus.

ASK THE LISTENERS: In this story about the birth of Jesus who were the first people that God announced the birth to? Why do you think He chose those people and not some others?

READ: Luke 2:4-7

TELL THE STORY:**THE BIRTH OF JESUS**

The prophet had said that the Anointed One would be born in Bethlehem, a small town in Judea, the home of David. But Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee in the northern part of Israel. In those days the land of Israel was ruled by foreigners called Romans. The Roman ruler gave orders for a census to be taken of the entire world that the Romans governed. Everyone was to return to his own town to register. Joseph was a descendant of David so he took Mary his wife and went down to Bethlehem. It was near the time for Mary to give birth to her child.

While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem Mary gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger. There was no room for them in an inn because of the census.

In the fields near Bethlehem there were shepherds keeping watch over their sheep at night. An

angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord was shining down from heaven. The shepherds were terrified. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ (Messiah) the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger (*feeding trough for animals*).”

Suddenly a great number of angels appeared and began to praise God saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.” When the angels had left them and gone away into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in a manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were amazed. So the shepherds returned to their flocks praising God for what they had seen and heard. Mary treasured these things and kept them in her heart.

Some time later there came Wise Men from a far country seeking the one born king of the Jews. They had seen a star and followed it to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem they learned that it was in Bethlehem this one was to be born. So they followed the star to Bethlehem and came to the house where Mary and Joseph were living. There they found the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped and presented costly gifts of gold, incense and a costly ointment called myrrh.

The king in Jerusalem had asked the Wise Men to find the newborn king and bring word to him. He said that he wanted to worship, too, but really he wanted to kill the child. An angel warned the Wise Men in a dream not to return to Jerusalem but to return to their country by another way. When the king in Jerusalem learned what happened he ordered that all the boy babies in Bethlehem two years of age and under be put to death. The angel warned Joseph in a dream to take Mary and the baby Jesus down to Egypt to live until the king died.

After the king died the angel again told Joseph to return to the land of Israel. Joseph feared the new king in Jerusalem so he returned to Nazareth in Galilee. There Jesus would live.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story The Birth of Jesus.
2. Talk about the shepherds that God sent the angel to announce the birth of Jesus. They were the low-caste common people of their day. God’s good news was for the people and not the rulers and religious leaders.
3. What was the angel’s message to the shepherds? (Today is born is born a Savior, he is the Messiah (this may be the better word for Muslims since they use “al-Masih”) of the Lord.
4. Who did the Wise Men come seeking? (The one born King of the Jews. Many prophecies called him a king. *After the exile and return the Israelites were known as Jews.*)
5. What did the king in Jerusalem plan to do to the new king? (Kill him.)
6. How did God warn Joseph about what the king was planning? (An angel spoke to him in a dream to leave Bethlehem and go to Egypt. Afterward Joseph returned to Nazareth in Galilee.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”

Luk 2:10-11

Note: *This is a composite of the Luke and Matthew accounts to cover the testimony of the angels, the shepherds and the Wise Men. If there are too many details in the story for your people, either divide the story into two parts or perhaps leave off the account of the Wise Men. If the Wise Men account is kept it may be of interest to discuss the possible meaning of the three gifts—gold for a king, incense for a priest, and myrrh for someone who was to die.*

MARY'S OFFERING AT THE TEMPLE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story is the usually neglected part of the Christmas story. It should be interesting to Muslims because of the implications of carefully following the Law. Circumcision of a male child and certain regulations regarding women after birth are usually observed.
2. The circumcision dates back to God's command to Abraham (Gen 17:10). Redemption of the firstborn son is from the time of the Passover in Egypt (Num 18:15-16). The sacrifice for cleansing is from the time in the desert when God gave the Law (Lev 12:1-4, 6-8). By keeping these regulations we see that Joseph and Mary were righteous according to the Law.
3. The Simeon and Anna accounts are additional testimonies of who Jesus was and his work.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story of the time in Egypt when God told Moses that the firstborn son was holy to Him. This was just before the time the death angel was to pass through the land killing the firstborn of the Egyptians. (Exo 13:1-15)
2. Talk about birth rituals—especially those after giving birth and the confinement time.
3. How could we tell if a person were a righteous person? Talk about carefully following the various regulations according to our religion. What does this tell us about a person?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 17:10-14; Exo 11:4-5; 13:1-15; Num 18:15-16; Lev 12:1-4, 6-8, Luk 2:21-40; Isa 49:6

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Joseph and Mary were righteous for they followed all God's commands.
2. Simeon and Anna both gave testimonies about Jesus' coming work.
3. Simeon's words remind us that Christ was to be a light for the Gentiles as well as a Savior for Israel.

ASK THE LISTENERS: How did Joseph and Mary demonstrate that they were righteous and followed all God's commands?

READ: Luke 2:21-24

TELL THE STORY:**MARY'S OFFERING**

Before Joseph and Mary went down into Egypt, in fact only eight days after their son was born, they circumcised him and gave him the name Jesus as the angel had commanded. All the male descendants of Abraham were to be circumcised as a sign of God's covenant with Abraham. Then after thirty-three more days had passed Joseph and Mary took the child Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem which was not far away.

In the days of Moses God had said that all firstborn males were holy to Him and must be redeemed by paying a redemption fee which was set at five shekels. All faithful families followed this command. Later God gave the laws about purity after a woman gives birth and what sacrifices

she was to bring for her sin offering and for her cleansing. If the woman was poor she could bring a pair of doves or two pigeons instead of two animals. So Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple to be consecrated, to pay the redemption fee and for Mary to offer her sacrifices for sin and for cleansing.

There was an old man in the Temple named Simeon who was righteous and devout. He was patiently waiting for God to console Israel. And God's Holy Spirit was upon Simeon. For it had been revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Anointed One. So, moved by the Holy Spirit, he went daily to the Temple. When Joseph and Mary brought Jesus that day, Simeon took the baby in his arms and praised God, saying, "Lord, you have fulfilled your promise to me, now let me die in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation for the people Israel and a light of revelation for the Gentiles." The parents marveled at the words of Simeon who then blessed them and said to Mary, "This child will stir all Israel, some will speak against him, and the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. One day a sword will pierce your own soul."

There was also a very old woman, a prophetess, named Anna, whose husband had died after only seven years. She never left the Temple but worshiped night and day while fasting and praying. She came up to Joseph and Mary and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to others who were looking for God's salvation.

So when Joseph and Mary had done everything the Law of the Lord required they returned home. It was after this they went first to Egypt to escape wicked King Herod and then returned to Nazareth to live. Their son Jesus grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story Mary's Offering.
2. What three things did Mary and Joseph do that demonstrated they followed God's Law?
Circumcised their son on the eighth day, took him to the Temple to pay the redemption tax for a firstborn son, and for Mary to offer her two sacrifices for cleansing and for sin.
3. What had God said to Simeon? (He would not die until he saw the Lord's Anointed One.)
4. What did Simeon say his eyes had seen? (I have seen God's salvation for the people Israel and a light for revelation to the Gentiles. Who are Gentiles? We are!)
5. What strange thing did Simeon say to Mary? (A sword would pierce her soul.) What could that mean? (We'll see in a future story.)
6. What did old Anna have to say after seeing the baby Jesus? She gave thanks to God and spoke about Jesus to others who were looking for God's salvation.)

MEMORY VERSE: "I wait for your salvation, O Lord; and I follow your commands."

Psa 119:166

Note: *In these stories there continues to be the dual role of speaking to things of interest to the women listeners' worldview and of following the fulfillment of God's prophecy in the birth of Jesus. There are many details in these stories. If this story is too long then the account of Anna might be dropped. There will likely be much interest in the requirements for sacrifice for cleansing after birth. Don't let the worldview interests lead away from the main story. It was felt best to keep this as a separate story even out of chronological sequence so as to keep the shepherd and Wise Men accounts as part of one story giving their testimony and this another also giving testimony of Joseph and Mary's righteousness and Jesus' coming work.*

JESUS VISITS THE TEMPLE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This is a simple story that focuses on two things. One is the growing awareness of Jesus along with a foundation story about his relationship to the Father. The other is the matter of Mary treasuring this matter in her heart as Jesus returned home with his parents and was subject to them.
2. If the story needs expansion you might include something about the other children of Mary and Joseph—four brothers and at least two sisters of Jesus mentioned in Mrk 6:3.
3. At age twelve a Jewish boy becomes “Bar Mitzvah” or “son of the commandment”. It is a special time for him and it was at this age that Jesus was allowed to journey to Jerusalem for the Passover observance. It was one of the rites of passage for a Jewish boy.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story The Birth of Jesus.
2. Talk about the Feast of the Passover. See Lev 23:4-8 and Num 9:11-12 describes the food. It was especially blessed to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem and to worship at the Temple. Pilgrims came from all over Israel to celebrate this time in Jerusalem. They journeyed along in groups on the roads. For those coming from the northern districts like Nazareth the usual route was to bypass Samaria by crossing the river to the east side and then crossing again at Jericho. People looked forward to seeing their friends and enjoying their company.
3. Recall some of the prophecies that spoke of the Father-Son relationship. 2Sa 7:14; Psa 2:7

SCRIPTURE BASE: Luk 2:41-52; Exo 12:14-20

MAJOR THEMES:

1. It was a great blessing for the people to celebrate the Feast of the Passover in Jerusalem and then to worship at the Temple.
2. Jesus had a spiritual hunger to learn the Law from God’s Word and was gaining a wisdom to ask questions about the Law and to give answers.
3. Jesus already knew that the Temple was His Father’s house.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Do you think that Jesus knew who he was and who was really his Father?

READ: Luk 2:46-50

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS VISITS THE TEMPLE**

Every year Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Passover was a special meal at the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread which lasted seven days. When Jesus was twelve years old, his parents took him to Jerusalem to the Feast according to the custom.

After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in

Jerusalem, but they were not aware of it. Thinking Jesus was among the other young people, Mary and Joseph traveled on for a day. Then when night came they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they could not find Jesus, they hurried back to Jerusalem to look for him.

After three days they found him in the Temple courts, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When Joseph and Mary saw him, they, too, were astonished.

His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

“Why were you searching for me?” Jesus asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” His parents did not understand what he was saying to them.

Then Jesus returned to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these strange things in her heart and remembered them. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

LET’S TALK:

1. This short story should be easy to retell. Who can do it?
2. References to God as Father of Jesus will likely continue to be inflammatory. Try to get the women to talk about this. It seems that Jesus was becoming awareness of his true Father. The stories and lessons are going to continue addressing this issue. Use your discretion about how much to press the issue.
3. The Law required any male living within twenty miles of Jerusalem to attend the Feast. But for most of the people it was a special blessing to journey to Jerusalem at this time. They stayed with relatives and friends to observe the Passover meal and Feast.
4. Talk about what it meant that Jesus as a 12 year-old went “according to the custom”.
5. Talk about how Jesus may have known about the things that he was hearing and discussing with the religious leaders. (Jewish boys attended schooling at their local synagogue (worship hall) where they memorized the Books of Law, Poetry, and Prophets, and studied the interpretations of the Law.
6. Point out that Mary and Joseph were not careless parents as it was the custom for women and children to set out for the return journey early because they moved more slowly. The men would stay behind and then leave later to arrive at the camping place for the night when families would again get together. They assumed that Jesus was among the other young people as they traveled.
7. Why do the women think that Mary and Joseph finally went to the Temple to search? (They may have known of Jesus’ interest in the matters of worship and Law of God.)
8. When Mary said that she and Jesus’ father had been searching for him, what did Jesus reply? (“Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” Jesus was not repudiating Joseph but was simply surprised that Mary and Joseph had not considered this.)
9. What did Jesus do after returning to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph? (He was obedient unto them.)
10. When Mary heard the words of Jesus what did she as a mother do? (She treasured them in her heart.) Do any of the women have things they have treasured in their hearts. Do they ever forget these things? Are there times when it is quiet they remember these treasured things?

MEMORY VERSE: “...He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father’.”
Psa 2:7b

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story is another of the great testimonies about who Jesus was. John was sent as a herald to proclaim the coming king and to prepare the way for him. His ministry was short, lasting perhaps only a year or so. Since John was conceived six months ahead of Jesus he was older by that amount. At age thirty he became a “man” and could begin his public work. Six months later Jesus followed John into a public ministry after leaving his home in Nazareth.
2. John was preaching baptism for repentance and forgiveness of sin. Jesus was sinless so why the need for baptism? It was to identify with John’s preaching. Baptism was a Jewish symbolism for cleansing from sins after repentance—a change of heart.
3. John’s preaching was powerful and many people were coming to hear him and to be baptized after confessing their sins. He was baptizing in the Jordan River in a wilderness area.

REVIEW:

1. Recall the story of Abraham when God asked him to sacrifice his own son. Abraham said that God would provide the lamb for the sacrifice.
2. Talk about baptism as a symbolic washing to cleanse one from sins after repenting. Part of the act of consecration was washing one’s clothes and bathing before worship. Do Muslim women also wash before worship? Ritual washing should be a bridge to understanding.
3. Recall the prophetic words in Isa 53:6-7 which refer to the Messiah as a sacrificial sheep.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 22:8; Isa 53:7; Mat 3:1-17; Mrk 1:9-11; Luk 3:1-22; Jhn 1:19-36; Isa 40:3; 42:1; 61:1

MAJOR THEMES:

1. John called people to prepare for the Lord by repenting of their sins and being baptized.
2. The Spirit of God was to be on His Anointed One.
3. John gave clear testimony that Jesus was the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Why would Jesus be called a “lamb”?

READ: Jhn 1:29-31, 35-36

TELL THE STORY:**BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD**

John, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth was known as John the Baptizer. He was preaching a message of baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins to prepare for the Lord’s coming. John was saying to the people, “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” Many came to hear him and to ask if he were the Messiah. “I am not,” John said, I am the voice of one calling in the desert, “Prepare the way for the Lord!” “Why do you baptize if you are not the Christ, Elijah or one of the prophets?” the religious leaders asked. “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, who is more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with fire.” So John was exhorting the

people and preaching the good news of the coming kingdom.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. “No,” John said, “I need to be baptized by you.” But Jesus that it was necessary for John to baptize him. By this Jesus would identify with John’s message of repentance from sin and seeking God’s forgiveness.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased.”

And John himself gave this testimony, “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

The next day John was again at the river baptizing with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he exclaimed, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

After Jesus’ baptism the Holy Spirit sent him into the desert to be tested by Satan.

LET’S TALK:

1. Who can retell this story Behold the Lamb of God.
2. Why was Jesus called “a lamb”? Talk about what lambs were used for in sacrifice.
3. What was John’s message to the people? (Repent from sin and be baptized.)
4. Was John the Anointed One, the Messiah? (No. He was sent to prepare the way for him.)
5. Why did Jesus ask John to baptize him? (To identify with John’s preaching of repentance.)
6. Did Jesus “need” to repent and be baptized? (No. Jesus was without sin as he always obeyed God.)
7. What happened as Jesus was coming up out of the water? (He saw heaven opened and the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting upon him. He heard God’s voice saying, “This is my Son, the One I love, I am pleased with him.)
8. Did John see God’s Spirit resting upon Jesus? (Yes, he said he saw it.)
9. What had God told John? (The One on whom he saw God’s Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.)
10. Who did John say that Jesus was? (This is the Son of God.)
11. When John saw Jesus the next day, what did he say? (Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!)

MEMORY VERSE: “...God himself will provide the lamb...” Gen 22:8a

Note: *If there is opportunity it would be good to explain what baptism is. It may be good to go back to the Laws regarding sin and defilement in the Old Testament at which time bathing or washing were a requirement after being declared unclean. (See Lev 17:15-16) Also bathing was part of consecration before meeting God or taking part in worship. (See Exo 19:14; 40:12-13)*

The theme of baptism will be picked up again in the later lessons from Acts for planting a church. There the stories of the Ethiopian Eunuch, the Philippian jailer and his family, Lydia and Cornelius and his family are all helpful to connect baptism with faith and repentance.

JESUS IS TESTED BY SATAN**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story is critical because in it we see the inner strength that Jesus had to withstand the tempting by Satan. Jesus relied upon God's Word. He knew it and recalled it when temptation came. It gave him words to speak to Satan and strength to stand though weak, tired and hungry.
2. Later Jesus would say, "I only do what I see my Father in heaven doing," and "I only speak the words I hear my Father speaking." (Jhn 5:19; 8:28)
3. This story should be one of the strongest arguments for memorizing God's Word. (Psa 119:11)
4. Later there may be opportunity to look at Col 1:16 or Jhn 1:3 which remind us that nothing was created except through Jesus. As creator he already owned everything for he had made it! God had given the earth to man to subdue and rule over. But man had given it up to Satan when he listened to Satan in the garden and obeyed Satan rather than God. Before Jesus returned to heaven he told the disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Mat 29:18.
5. Note that Satan quoted Scripture from Psa 91:11-12.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Behold the Lamb of God.
2. Recall the words of the prophet in Isa 7:14 Immanuel—God with man; 9:6 Mighty God; Luk 1:32 Son of the Most High.
3. Talk about whether a good son would obey his father at all times. What if some temptation comes? What will keep the son from sinning against his father? Talk about it.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 4:1-11; Mrk 1:12-13; Luk 4:1-13; Deu 6:13, 16; 8:3; Psa 91:11-12; Heb 2:14-18; 4:15; Jhn 8:28, 44

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God permitted Satan to test Jesus. (God wanted the Savior to know what temptation was like.)
2. Jesus used God's Word to resist Satan. (God wanted man to know how to overcome temptation.)
3. Because Jesus suffered under Satan's testing, he is able to help us when we are tested by Satan.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Why do you think God permitted Jesus to be tested by Satan?

READ: Luk 4:1-3

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS IS TESTED BY SATAN**

After Jesus' baptism, he was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert to be tempted by Satan. For forty days and nights Jesus fasted and prayed. At the end he was very tired and hungry. Then the tempter came to Jesus to test him.

"If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread," Satan suggested to Jesus. But Jesus answered quoting from God's Word, "It is written: 'Man does not live by bread alone, but on

every word that comes from the mouth of God’.” (Deu 8:3)

Next Satan took Jesus up to a very high mountain and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. He said to Jesus, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.” Again Jesus answered Satan from God’s Word, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only’.” (Deu 6:13)

Finally Satan led Jesus to Jerusalem and had him to stand on the highest point of the Temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone’.” Now Satan was quoting one of the Psalms (Psa 91:11-12) which spoke about the Anointed One. But again Jesus answered from God’s Word, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’.” (Deu 6:16)

When Satan had finished all this tempting, he left Jesus until another opportune time. Angels came and ministered to Jesus. Later Satan came to Jesus again and again through unbelieving people who asked difficult questions or trick questions to see if they could somehow catch him. Jesus always gave the right answer because what he said came from God. He said, “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.” About Satan Jesus said, “...there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Who is able to retell this short story Jesus Is Tested By Satan?
2. Talk about why God permitted Satan to test or tempt Jesus? Do the women think that Satan hoped to get Jesus to sin? (He tried.) What did God know would happen? (Jesus would remain faithful and resist Satan.)
3. When did Satan come to Jesus? (When he was tired and hungry after fasting and praying.)
4. What did Satan try to get Jesus to do first? (Use his God-given power to feed himself supernaturally—to satisfy Jesus’ physical hunger.) How did Jesus answer Satan? (He quoted Deu 8:3.)
5. What did Satan say about the kingdoms of the world and their splendor? (He claimed they belonged to him and he could give them to anyone he wanted to—this was to satisfy Jesus’ desire for authority.) Did Jesus bow down and worship Satan? (No. He quoted Deu 6:13.)
6. Where did Satan take Jesus the third time? (To the highest point of the Temple.) What unusual thing did Satan do? (He quoted from the Psalms a passage about the Messiah and how God would protect him.) (This was to make Jesus famous and popular as people saw what happened when angels came down to catch him.)
7. Was Jesus victorious over Satan? (Yes) Did Satan continue to test Jesus? (Yes, through others.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”
Jam 4:7

or

“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”
Heb 2:18

Note: *These initial stories about Jesus have begun to qualify Jesus as the Son of God and as one who relies upon God’s Word for all he says and does. The following stories will continue to qualify Jesus in his ministry and teachings. Many of the stories have been chosen because of the relationships with people in the stories. Because of the slightly different details in each of the four Gospels some liberty has been taken to interweave these into the stories just as with the first stories about the birth, baptism and tempting of Jesus.*

A MOTHER'S REQUEST, JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story speaks to a Muslim's mother's special relationship to her oldest son.
2. If the mention of wine is a problem you might substitute "drink made from grapes", etc. or just "drink". The initial focus of the story is on the *shame* that running out of provision for the guests brings to the host of such a festive occasion. Surely this family were friends of Mary and her family. So there would be a concern for preventing this great family shame in the community.
3. Mary knew that Jesus could help so she turned to him. Mary knew that he was a special person and that God's blessing rested on him. So she did what was natural to do—she went to the one person she knew could change a shameful situation. She believed in Jesus and told the servants to do whatever he said. The focus shifts to the *faith* of Mary and the servants.
4. The servants obeyed Jesus' instruction exactly though surely they wondered why anyone should serve drink from the water storage pots used for washing feet and hands when welcoming guests. The final focus is on the *obedience* of the servants which permitted the miracle.

REVIEW:

1. Ask one of the listeners to retell the story God Provides for a Poor Widow. Talk about God's ability to meet our needs, even when it seems hopeless.
2. Recall the story Behold the Lamb of God. Talk about God's Spirit being upon Jesus.
3. Talk about the need for faith in God and for obedience to do what He tells us to do.
4. Jesus had begun calling some disciples to follow him. (Jhn 1:40-41, 43-44)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Jhn 2:1-11; Mrk 6:5 (faith needed); 2Ki 5:13-14 (obedience needed)

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God is able to change our circumstances and meet our needs.
2. We must have faith in God—believe that He is all powerful and the source of all grace.
3. We must obey what God tells us to do through His Word.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Has a shameful thing happened to your family or a neighbor family and you wondered how to help? Listen to this story and see how Jesus helped a family at a wedding.

READ: Jhn 2:1-5

TELL THE STORY:**A MOTHER'S REQUEST**

After Jesus' baptism in the river with John, and his tempting by Satan in the desert, Jesus returned to his native Galilee to a small village near his home called Cana. There was a wedding in that place. Mary the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

During the wedding feast the wine provided for the guests ran out. Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." Jesus replied to his mother, "Dear woman, why do you involve me?"

My time has not yet come.” But Mary said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the people for ceremonial washing. Each held a large amount of water. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” So the servants drew water from the well and filled the jars to the very top.

Now Jesus said to them, “Dip out some of the water and take it to the master of the banquet.” When they did so, the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom and said, “Everyone brings out the choice drink first and then the cheaper drink later after the guests have had too much. But you have saved the best till now!”

This was the first of Jesus’ miraculous signs, performed in Cana of Galilee. Jesus had begun to reveal his glory and his disciples put their faith in him. Later Jesus would tell several stories about weddings for these were popular occasions in his day.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell this interesting story.
2. Review the listening task—Has anyone felt helpless when there was certain shame from a situation like this—perhaps the food ran out or there was no more drink at a feast?
3. Why do the women think Jesus said his time had not yet come? (He did not want people just to think of him for his miracles. Later this would happen when he fed many people.)
4. What did Jesus’ mother tell the servants? (Do whatever he tells you to do.)
5. What did Mary’s command to the servants tell us? (She knew that Jesus was going to change the situation. She had faith in Jesus her son and knew he would do the right thing.)
6. What did Jesus tell the servants to do? (Fill the six large stone jars with water.)
7. What was this water used for? (Ceremonial washing—feet of guests and hands before eating.)
8. When the servants had finished filling the stone water pots, what did Jesus ask them to do? (Draw some of the water from the pots and take it to the banquet hall.)
9. Did the servants obey? (Yes, even though this was a strange command since this was not considered drinking water.)
10. What had happened to the water the servants took to the banquet hall? (It had become drink for the guests.)
11. What did the master of the banquet have to say about the drink the servants brought in? (It was better than what was served in the beginning.)
12. What secret did the servants know? (They knew what had happened and where the drink came from—it was Jesus who made it happen.)
13. What can we say about the servants? (They had faith in Jesus and obeyed what he told them to do. There would have been no miracle without their faith and obedience.)

MEMORY VERSE: “...Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

Luk 11:28

Note: *In Jesus’ reply to his mother he uses the same word he used for her from the cross—“woman”. It was a proper address in that day that showed respect.*

JESUS AND NICODEMUS, THE NEW BIRTH**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story begins the progressive teaching about the need for a new nature. It is a foundational story for the invitation to believe in Jesus in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.
2. The reference to birth and rebirth speak to a woman's world. Enjoy the bit of humor as Jesus clarifies the matter of a second birth to Nicodemus. The first birth is the natural birth (of water) into this world and the second birth is the supernatural birth (of the Spirit) into heaven.
3. The significance of Nicodemus is that he was already considered a "righteous" person. Yet Jesus said that one important thing was lacking—a second birth. Just as a baby cannot help in the birth event, our righteousness cannot help, we must be born of the Spirit—He helps us. We get our "nature" from our birth—flesh from the natural birth and spirit from the supernatural.
4. Nicodemus confessed his belief that Jesus was "come from God". Jesus could not perform the miraculous signs unless God were with him.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to recall some of the prophecies about the Messiah from the story The Anointed One. (Especially Isa 9:6—Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father)
2. Ask how does one enter this world? Talk about birth and what it means to the child (beginning of life as a member of a family), to the mother (one to care for and provide for.)
3. The story of the brass snake on the pole in Num 21:4-9 was not covered previously. Whether to mention this reference in Jesus' words to Nicodemus is up to you. You may need the original story for Jesus' reference to make sense. You might tell the story in a very abbreviated summary form as part of the preparation for this story. (This was not to be an idol but a test of obedience.) Three more times Jesus refers to being lifted up—Jhn 8:28; 12:32, 34.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Jhn 3:1-21; Jhn 1:12-13; 7:50-51; Eze 36:26; 2Co 5:17

MAJOR THEMES:

1. A person must be born of both natural birth and the spirit to see the kingdom of God.
2. This new birth comes by believing that Jesus is God's Son and that he died for our sins.
3. A person who does not believe in the name of God's one and only Son is already under God's condemnation because of their sinful condition.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you been born again? Do you know what this means? Listen to this story and find out.

READ: Jhn 3:1-7

TELL THE STORY:**YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN**

There was a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were people who studied God's Law and tried to live a righteous life according to the Law. Many of them were proud of their knowledge and considered themselves

better than ordinary people or those who were considered as sinners.

One night Nicodemus came to Jesus. He greeted Jesus warmly saying, “Rabbi (*my master*), we know you are a teacher come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.” In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Those words puzzled Nicodemus who then asked, “How can be a man be born when he is old? Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

Jesus answered, “I say to you, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. For flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked Jesus. “You are Israel’s teacher,” Jesus replied. “Do you not understand these things? I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe, how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. (Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.)”

Then Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. But whoever does not believe in the name of God’s one and only Son is already under God’s condemnation.”

Later Nicodemus defended Jesus when some wicked religious leaders were condemning Jesus for his teaching. Nicodemus said, “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?” For Nicodemus had become a secret follower of Jesus.

LET’S TALK:

1. Who can retell the story You Must Be Born Again?
2. Talk about the listening task—what does it mean to be born again? Is anyone in the group born again? Do they understand what this means?
3. Talk about what it means to have a new nature or to be a new creation. Talk about the two additional background passages that refer to new life. (Eze 36:26; 2Co 5:17)
4. What did Nicodemus say he believed about Jesus? (He was come from God. God was with him and that’s why he could do the miracles.)
5. Was Nicodemus a “good person”. (Yes, he was one who faithfully kept all of God’s Law.)
6. Was keeping God’s Law enough for Nicodemus to enter the kingdom of heaven? (No)
7. What additional birth was needed? (Birth of the Spirit.)
8. Ask what the listeners think when Jesus mentioned being “lifted up.”
9. In this story Jesus calls himself both “Son of God” and “Son of Man.” Ask the listeners to talk about what they think these mean.

MEMORY VERSE: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Jhn 3:16

Note: *There is humor for the women listeners. This is both natural and good. The mention of birth is definitely related to their worldview. The lack of understanding by a man is usually humorous to them. Slow the story down to let them enjoy this part. The humor will also help them to remember this part of the story. The longer teaching discourses they will less likely remember. Take time to review the bronze snake on the pole story in Numbers 21:4-9. The signs are now beginning to qualify Christ as the Anointed One.*

JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. The village well is a familiar place for an exchange to take place. Only this encounter breaks certain social norms. Sometimes it is not good to “have the disciples to leave Jesus alone at the well” with the woman. Use your judgment here. Some of the pictures of this are a real problem to use because of what is depicted in their being alone.
2. The dialogue is lively and interesting. The woman is surprised, ridiculing, interested, defensive and complimenting. It is one of the powerful testimonies about who Jesus is. And it is more powerful because a “peer” makes the discovery. The women will love to overhear the conversation so the words which challenge the women’s worldview will be softened a bit.
3. Finally the town people (*who were not Jews*) testify that Jesus really is the Savior of the world.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Behold the Lamb of God. Talk about John’s testimony of Jesus.
2. Recall the story A Mother’s Request. Talk about the need for faith. Mary believed in her son.
3. Talk about thirst. Who gets water for their family? Does it satisfy? What is our deeper need?

SCRIPTURE BASE: 2Ki 17:24-34; Isa 55:1; Jhn 3:22-23; 4:1-42; 7:37-38; 1Co 10:4

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus is source of living water that becomes a spring of water welling up to eternal life.
2. Jesus searches the heart, knows the sinner, and accepts all who seek him.
3. God is Spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.
4. Jesus is the Messiah (Anointed One) of God.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What do you think Jesus means by “living water?” Listen to this story.

READ: Jhn 4:10-15

TELL THE STORY:

COULD THIS BE THE MESSIAH?

Some religious leaders created a disturbance saying that Jesus was gaining more disciples than John the Baptizer. When Jesus heard about this he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. The shortest route from Judea to Galilee was through Samaria. Most Jews avoided going through Samaria because they disliked the Samaritans. Along the way Jesus and his disciples came to a town called Sychar near where Jacob had lived and had given a piece of land to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there. Jesus was tired from his journey and about mid day sat down by the well to rest.

A Samaritan woman came to get water from the well. When she drew near Jesus asked her, “Will you give me a drink?” The woman was astonished and said, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him instead. He would have given you living water.”

“But, sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing by which to draw water and the well is deep.

Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. For the water I give him will become in him a spring of water bubbling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me some of this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

So Jesus told her, "Go call your husband and come back." But the woman said, "I have no husband." "You have answered truthfully," Jesus said, "for you've had five husbands and the man you now live with is not your husband." The woman was astonished and said, "I can see that you are a prophet!" But quickly she challenged him by saying, "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

Then Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans don't know what you worship, we worship what we do know. Salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. These are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." The woman said, "I know that the Messiah (the Anointed One) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I am the Messiah."

The woman left her water jar and ran back to town to tell the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could he be the Messiah?" So people came out of the town to see Jesus and begged him to stay with them a few days. Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony. But others said, "We have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask several women to retell the story Could This Be the Messiah?
2. Did the women discover what was living water? Talk about it.
3. Who is the source of living water? (Jesus) What does this living water do in an individual? (It bubbles up and overflows to eternal life.)
4. What does God look for in a worshiper? (One who worships in spirit and truth, in heart and mind.)
5. Is a certain traditional place of worship necessary? (No. God is a Spirit.)
6. Who did the woman say would explain all these things? (The Messiah)
7. Who did Jesus say he was? (The Messiah, God's Anointed One.)
8. When the woman went to tell the people in the town, did some believe? (Yes, many)
9. After Jesus stayed in the town what happened? (Many more believed when they heard him.)
10. What did the people confess? (We know this man really is the Savior of the world.)

MEMORY VERSE: "...Come! Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life." Rev 22:17b or

"...If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" Jhn 7:37b-38

Note: *There is an interesting play on words in this story as it is said that the people preferred to drink water that was "alive", that is water bubbling from a spring. It is said that the well (which still exists though is partially filled in) has a spring at the bottom which bubbled up. So Jesus offered the woman some "alive water" which would quench her spiritual thirst. This sounded very tasty and satisfying. The "alive water" was, of course, salvation which bubbled up to eternal life.*

A WOMAN HEALED, A DEAD GIRL LIVES AGAIN**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This a unique pairing of stories which intertwine. There is a woman who has been ritually dead twelve years though alive; and a girl who has been alive twelve years who is now dead.
2. In both cases it was people who sought out Jesus. They knew Jesus could meet their need.
3. The woman was “impure” because of her incessant bleeding—no worship, no cooking for others, care where she sat or lay to keep from polluting. For all practical purposes she was dead, unclean, a person to avoid. Now she has “polluted” Jesus by touching him.
4. Jairus’ daughter is just at the age of becoming a woman, still pure, though dying.

REVIEW:

1. Ask one of the women to retell the story A Mother’s Request.
2. Talk about what it means to believe in (have faith in) Jesus. Did Jesus’ mother believe in him?
3. When the women have a need in their life or their family, who do they have faith in? Why?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 9:18-26; Mrk 5:22-43; Luk 8:40-56; Lev 15:25-30

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus had compassion on all who came to him in faith.
2. Jesus had power to heal those who touched him and those he touched.
3. The woman, though alive, was “dead” because of her impurity. She was excluded from worship and polluted anyone she touched. See the regulations in Leviticus 15:25-30 regarding those with an emission of some kind. (Men could also be impure! Lev 15:1-15)

ASK THE LISTENERS: In this story there is a woman who had been impure for twelve years who dared to touch Jesus. Would you dare to do such a thing?

READ: Mrk 5:21-29

TELL THE STORY:**A SICK WOMAN WHO TOUCHED JESUS**

When Jesus arrived a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. Just then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue came there. Seeing Jesus he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so she will be healed and live.” For she was his only daughter, a girl of about twelve years of age. So Jesus went with Jairus.

As Jesus was on his way the large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under many doctors and had spent all her money, yet instead of getting better she grew steadily worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and

asked, “Who touched my clothes?” When they all denied it, one of the disciples said, “You see the people crowding against you. How can you ask ‘Who touched me?’” But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at Jesus’ feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. She told him why she had touched him and that she had been instantly healed. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

While Jesus was still speaking some men came from the house of Jairus saying, “Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher any more?” But Jesus ignored their words and said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.” When Jesus arrived at the house of Jairus he saw a commotion with people crying and wailing loudly as they mourned. “Stop this crying and wailing,” Jesus said, “She is not dead but asleep.” All the people laughed at him because they knew the girl was dead.

After Jesus had put all the people out of the house, he took three of his disciples and the dead girl’s mother and father and went where the child was. Jesus took the girl by the hand and said to her, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!” Immediately her spirit returned, she stood up and walked around. The parents were completely astonished. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat and ordered her parents not to tell anyone what had happened. But news of it spread through all that region.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story A Sick Woman Who Touched Jesus.
2. Do we fear to reach out and touch when we need help? Talk about what it means to be impure.
3. Who sought Jesus first? (Jairus, who wanted Jesus to touch his little girl to heal her.)
4. What happened as Jesus was going with Jairus? (An impure woman sought Jesus and touched his clothes.) Why did she touch Jesus? (She knew he could heal her.)
5. What happened when the woman touched Jesus? (She was healed of her bleeding. She felt it in her body and knew it to be true.)
6. When Jesus asked who touched him what did the woman do? (She came to Jesus and told him what she had done and what happened to her.)
7. What did Jesus say to her? (Your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.) Talk about the need for faith to receive Jesus’ power to meet our needs.
8. What was the bad news that Jairus received from his home. (It was too late. His daughter had already died. Don’t bother Jesus anymore.)
9. When Jesus told the people that the girl was only sleeping what did they do? (They laughed.)
10. What did Jesus say to the girl’s parents? (Don’t be afraid. Just believe.)
11. What did Jesus say to the girl? (Little girl, ‘get up.’)
12. Talk about the fact that Jesus cleansed the impure and restored life to the dead. Talk about his power to cleanse and restore life. Where did it come from? (From God the Father.)

MEMORY VERSE: “And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.” Jam 5:15a

Note: *The story of the woman who was subject to bleeding should touch on the issues of ritual purity and exclusion from worship for women during their monthly period. While the woman risked touching Jesus, she in effect, polluted him. So she was afraid. However, her faith was stronger than her fear and she both touched Jesus and then owned up to what she had done. Jesus honored her faith and granted her desire.*

THE WOMEN WHO HELPED JESUS**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This is an attempt to pull together a story that is there but not all in one place. Surely there were many stories about the women who followed Jesus. We have only sketchy details. We wish we knew more about Mary Magdalene from whom Jesus drove out seven evil spirits and freed her. Other wealthy women gave money for the living expenses of Jesus and the disciples.
2. Many of these women were present to hear Jesus when he taught the people. They believed in him and knew that he was a source of power, because he was from God.

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the story *Could This Be The Messiah?* Talk about the Samaritan woman and what she did after meeting Jesus.
2. Talk about the people that the women admire. Who is a worthy person? Would any of the women help to support someone they felt to be worthy or great or powerful?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 20:20-21; 27:55-56; Mrk 1:30-31; 15:40-41; Luk 8:1-3; 23:27; 10:38

MAJOR THEMES:

1. There were many faithful women who believed in Jesus.
2. Some of the women had followed Jesus after he healed them, freed them from oppression by demons, or forgave their sin.
3. The women had given money to support Jesus' ministry.
4. The women had a hunger to hear the teaching of Jesus.

ASK THE LISTENERS: After hearing the story of Jesus, would you be willing to believe in him? Would you have followed Jesus like the women in this story?

READ: Luk 8:1-3

TELL THE STORY:**THE WOMEN WHO HELPED JESUS**

During the days of Jesus' ministry on earth he traveled about from his home in Galilee to Judea and Jerusalem. He went from one town and village to another proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve men called disciples traveled with him. And there were some women who also followed Jesus though they were not with him all the time. They believed that he was the One come from God. They believed that he was a great prophet for they had seen his power when he healed. Many of them had been healed of their own diseases and even evil spirits. There was Mary called Magdalene (from the village of Magdala). She was the one that Jesus cast seven demons from. And now she followed Jesus.

There were other women who followed Jesus. There was Mary the mother of James and Joseph. There was the mother of Zebedee's two sons. She was the one who came and knelt down before Jesus asking a favor that her sons might sit at his right hand and left hand in the kingdom of God.

Another woman who followed Jesus was Joanna the wife of Cuza who was the manager of King Herod's household in Jerusalem. And there were Salome, Suzanna and many others. They gave of their own means to help support the ministry of Jesus and his disciples as they traveled from village to village.

And there still others like Mary and Martha who had invited Jesus into their home to take rest and eat. Mary and Martha lived in a small village near Jerusalem. They had a brother named Lazarus who was a friend of Jesus. It was Martha who called Jesus "Teacher" when he came to restore her brother to life again after he had died. In the early days of Jesus' ministry when he visited in the home of Simon Peter, one of the disciples, the mother-in-law of Peter was sick with a fever. When they told Jesus about her, he took her by the hand and helped her up. Immediately the fever left her and she began to serve Jesus and the others.

And there were many other women who came to hear Jesus when he taught the people on the mountainside or at the seashore. There were women who welcomed him as king when he rode a donkey into Jerusalem at the end of his ministry. On the day that Jesus was led out to be crucified many of the women in Jerusalem came out to weep and mourn for the one who had cared for them. He turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children." For Jesus knew that terrible days were coming one day to the people of Jerusalem because of their unbelief. The women stood at a distance from the cross watching as Jesus was crucified. They had faithfully followed him all the days of his ministry.

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story The Women Who Helped Jesus.
2. Would anyone be willing to follow someone like Jesus? Would they believe in him?
3. Can someone name some of the women and what they did? Can they identify with any?
4. Why would a woman go out to listen to Jesus teach? (Because they are hungry in their souls.)
5. Does the group think some of the women were wealthy? (Some probably were like Joanna the wife of Cuza from Herod's household.)
6. Talk about what problems women would have in following a teacher. (Not safe to be alone, so should be in a company of others, probably with some male protector.)
7. We'll come back again later to the story of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Martha was said to own the house so was likely the older sister. She opened her home to Jesus and his disciples.
8. We'll come back to the crucifixion of Jesus and the women who were present that day. They were faithful to follow even to the such a terrible day and place.
9. Talk about the blessing the women surely received from hearing Jesus and from helping him.

MEMORY VERSE: "Martha said to Jesus, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world'." Jhn 11:27

Note: This story refers to some things ahead in the chronological revelation. It should not be a problem as the story is heavily thematic regarding the ministry of women toward Jesus.

A SINFUL WOMAN ANOINTS JESUS

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. This story may have some of the same emotional impact for women that the Prodigal Son story has for fathers. It is a story of a woman who had a deep need in her life. Jesus accepted her and forgave her. Her act of gratitude and worship shamed the host where it happened.
2. In the worldview summary it mentioned that women often saw themselves as needy. It was this need that led them to seek someone with the power and compassion to meet the need. There was no shame in openly displaying their worship of Jesus for meeting that need.
3. The act of wiping Jesus feet with her hair and kissing his feet displayed deep humility. In an Asian context it was touching the dirty or lowly part of the body (feet) with the holy part (head).

REVIEW:

1. Ask one of the listeners to retell the story The Women Who Helped Jesus.
2. Talk about how we show gratitude for someone who cares for us and helps us (or forgives us).
3. How much do we love another person? This is the kind of love that comes because of some wonderful thing that person has done for us.
4. Does anyone look down on other people as being unworthy in some way? Why are they unworthy? What if that unworthy person came into your home with something for one of your guests? What would you think? Talk about this.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Luk 7:36-50

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus knew what people were thinking in their hearts.
2. Jesus was merciful to those who repented of their sins and sought forgiveness.
3. Jesus is the true source of peace as he forgives sin.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Listen to this story and decide for yourself who loved Jesus more.

READ: Luk 7:36-38, 50

TELL THE STORY:

THE SINFUL WOMAN WHO ANOINTED JESUS

It happened that one of the religious leaders who was a Pharisee invited Jesus to have a meal in his home. So Jesus went to his house and was reclining at the table. (*In those days it was the custom to recline on a couch when eating.*) A certain woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she came bringing a sealed jar of expensive fragrant perfume. She stood behind Jesus at his feet weeping and began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, and kissed them and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw all this happening, he thought to himself, "If this man were really a prophet, he would know who is touching him, and what kind of a woman she is—that she is a sinner!" But Jesus knew what he was thinking and so answered him, "Simon, I have

something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher,” Simon replied. So Jesus told this story:

“There were two men who each borrowed money from a money lender. One owed him money equal to a year and a half’s wages. The other owed about two months’ wages. Neither of them had the money to repay what was owed. So the moneylender cancelled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

Simon the Pharisee replied to Jesus, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said. Then Jesus turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss of greeting, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with fragrant oil, but she poured perfume on my feet. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But the one who has been forgiven little loves little.”

Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story The Sinful Woman Who Anointed Jesus.
2. Did the women in the group agree with Simon’s answer to Jesus about who loved the more?
3. Talk about the custom of reclining while eating. Jesus’ feet would be accessible to the woman to wipe and anoint with perfume.
4. What do the women think all the other guests did when the woman came in and began to touch Jesus? (Perhaps they stopped eating to watch what was happening.)
5. What was Simon the Pharisee thinking in his heart? (If Jesus were really a prophet he would know this woman who was touching him was sinful.) Remember what Pharisees thought of themselves as compared to others? They looked down upon sinners.
6. What did Jesus say to Simon? (He told him a story.) Can someone repeat that simple story? Can anyone explain what that little story about the two debtors means? Do the women agree with Simon’s answer?
7. After Simon answered Jesus what comparisons did Jesus make between Simon and the woman? (Simon gave no water to wash Jesus’ feet; the woman wet his feet with her tears. Simon gave no kiss of greeting as was the custom; the woman had not stopped kissing the feet of Jesus. Simon gave no fragrant oil to anoint the head of Jesus, also a custom; the woman anointed the feet of Jesus with her perfume.)
8. Talk about forgiveness. Is it hard to forgive others? Did Jesus have authority to forgive sin?
9. What did Jesus say to the woman? (Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.) We see that our faith in Jesus is important to receive his forgiveness and peace.

MEMORY VERSE: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1Jh 1:9

Note: *Many of these lessons will deal with salvation related topics. If the listeners are open let them talk about sins and what forgiveness means.*

A FOREIGN WOMAN'S FAITH

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. Several Bible stories illustrate God's love for all people—God Provides For A Poor Widow, Jonah's Message For Nineveh (not used), A Servant Girl's Faith. This was a Syro-Phoenician woman of Greek descent—living in the land where Jezebel came from. Somehow she heard about Jesus and knew that he could free her daughter from demonic possession. In her great need she came to Jesus, begging him to grant her request. Jesus' reply to her was not demeaning but to test her faith in him.
2. Jesus' first mission was to the lost sheep of Israel. But he was to be the Savior of all peoples.
3. The reference to the dogs may sound terrible to a Muslim but there was an element of tenderness in it. The small dogs, common family pets, often waited patiently under a table for a morsel of food to be dropped by the children. The woman acknowledged that Jesus' message was for the "children" but she was willing to wait for whatever was dropped her way. And she was persistent to get what she wanted, though the disciples wanted to send her away.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Rahab Saves Her Family. Talk about her faith in the God of Israel. Talk about her desire to save her family from destruction.
2. Talk about foreigners (non-Israelites) who heard about Jesus, just as the women are hearing about Jesus in these stories.
3. What does a woman do when one of her children is desperately ill or demon possessed? Where can she turn for help? Is she persistent in getting the help she needs for her family?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 15:21-28; Mrk 7:24-30

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus tested the woman's faith to see if it was genuine.
2. Jesus will not turn anyone away who has faith in him.
3. Genuine faith is necessary for a petition to be granted.

ASK THE LISTENERS: How great is your faith? How persistent is your faith? Listen to this story about a woman who had genuine faith and would not give up until her request was granted.

READ: Mat 15:22-26

TELL THE STORY:

A FOREIGN WOMAN'S FAITH

Jesus had journeyed out of Israel to a place near the city of Tyre. There he entered into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not keep his presence a secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about Jesus, a Greek woman of that place whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman came to him crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." So she begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples urged him, “Send her away, she keeps crying out after us.” Finally Jesus answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” Then the woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she begged.

But Jesus told her, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.” Jesus said this to test her. He was saying that his first mission was to the Israelites, then to others. But the woman cleverly replied, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” For she was willing to take whatever Jesus would give her.

Then Jesus replied to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted. For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour. She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon was gone.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask several to retell the story A Foreign Woman’s Faith.
2. What can the women say about this woman’s faith in asking Jesus’ help? Do they have such a great faith? Such a persistent faith? Were they insulted by Jesus’ testing the woman?
3. Many foreign people were believers in the God of Israel. Somehow this woman knew who Jesus was. Talk about how she might have heard about Jesus.
4. What was her request of Jesus? (To drive the demon from her daughter.)
5. What were the disciples saying? (Send her away, she keeps crying after us.)
6. What did Jesus say? (His first mission was to the lost sheep of Israel.)
7. Did the woman go away? (No. She begged Jesus even more fervently: “Lord, help me!”)
8. How did Jesus test her? (He said it was not right to take the bread intended for the children and toss it to the little dogs under the table.)
9. How did the woman express her persistent faith in Jesus? (She was willing to take the crumbs which fell—she was willing to take whatever she could get for her daughter. And she was going to wait until she got what she needed!)
10. How did Jesus show that he was pleased with the woman’s answer? (He honored her by praising her great faith.)
11. Did Jesus grant the woman’s request? (Yes. He told her to return to her daughter. The demon was gone.)
12. What did the woman find when she returned home? (It was just as Jesus said. Her daughter had been healed from the very time that Jesus spoke.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Heb 11:1

Note: *In many of the stories Jesus tests the faith of people, sometimes asking them to do certain things like show themselves to the priest, to wash in a certain fountain, etc. Jesus had great compassion for people but tested their faith to see if it were genuine.*

A WIDOW'S ONLY SON RESTORED TO LIFE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This first story touches the Muslim issue of restoring a woman's male protector. This woman had lost her husband and now her only son, a young man, was dead. She would be destitute lacking someone to support her as well as lacking someone to protect her honor. The woman may have been from a well-to-do or influential family as there was a large party of mourners.
2. The woman had not asked for any help. Her son had died and she was burying him according to the custom—most likely on the same day within hours of his death. She was weeping.
3. The second story about the crippled woman deals with the issue of a legalistic adherence to the Law when a person was in need. Jesus had compassion on the woman and healed her.

REVIEW:

1. Ask one of the women to retell the story A Foreign Woman's Faith.
2. Talk about the role of a male protector for the Muslim woman. What happens to a woman when there is no male protector? Who supports her? Who protects her honor?
3. Talk about death and the loss of a loved one, especially a husband or son.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Luk 7:11-17; 13:10-17; Jhn 11:25-26

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus is filled with compassion at the needs of people.
2. Jesus understood the situation of the widow woman—no husband, no son, no male protector.
3. Jesus had power to restore to life the dead or to heal, to change the women's circumstances.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What did Jesus do for the widow woman in this story? Did Jesus know her situation?

READ: Luk 7:11-13

TELL THE STORY:**A WIDOW'S ONLY SON LIVES AGAIN**

Whenever Jesus saw people in great need he stopped to help them. Because of his many miracles and teaching many people followed Jesus. A short time before Jesus had healed the servant of a Roman soldier. The Roman soldier had faith in Jesus to heal the servant. He confessed this faith in Jesus. When Jesus heard his words he was amazed and said to the people, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel!"

Soon afterward, Jesus went to a small town called Nain. His disciples and a large crowd of people went along with him listening to his words as he taught them. Soon they approached the gate of the town. There was a funeral procession just coming out of the gate headed for the burial ground. The dead person was a young man, the only son of a grieving widow woman who followed along with many mourners weeping and crying out as was their custom.

When Jesus saw the widow and her sadness and great loss of her only son, his heart went out to her. So Jesus comforted the woman, "Don't cry."

Then Jesus went up to the coffin and touched it. The men carrying the coffin stood still. Jesus spoke to the dead man, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” Immediately the dead man sat up and began to talk. Jesus gave the young man back to his surprised mother.

The people were filled with great awe and began to praise God. They said, “A great prophet has appeared among us. God has come to help His people.”

So the news about Jesus began to spread throughout the surrounding country. At another time on a worship day Jesus was teaching in one of the Jewish synagogues. A woman was there who was crippled by an evil spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he was filled with compassion and called her to come to him. He said to her, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.”

Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and began to praise God for His mercy.

Some of the people there were not happy because Jesus had healed on a worship day. The leader of the worship hall rebuked Jesus saying, “You have six days to do healing but not on the Sabbath.”

Jesus answered him, “You hypocrite! Don’t you even give water to your animals on the Sabbath? Then should not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”

Those who opposed Jesus were humiliated, but the people who saw what he did for the woman were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the stories about the widow’s son and the crippled woman.
2. Do the women think that Jesus knew about the widow’s need? What about the crippled woman?
3. Do the women think that the widow was just “lucky” that Jesus happened along at that time? Or could it be that Jesus came at that very time to help the widow and the crippled woman?
4. Had either woman asked for help? (No. Jesus intervened in their lives because he knew their need.)
5. What did Jesus say to the widow? (Stop weeping.) This surely surprised her.
6. What did Jesus say to the young man? (Get up!)
7. What did the people begin to say? (A great prophet has appeared among us. God has come to help His people.)
8. Where did Jesus heal the crippled woman? (In the synagogue—worship hall—on a Sabbath.)
9. What was the woman’s condition? (She had been crippled by an evil spirit in back for eighteen years. She attributed the crippling to Satan’s work.)
10. What did the synagogue ruler say to the people? (There are six days for work, so come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath!)
11. What did Jesus say to the synagogue ruler? (You hypocrite! You help animals on the Sabbath, why shouldn’t this woman, a daughter of Abraham, be set free from her crippling?)
12. What did the people say? (They were delighted at the wonderful things Jesus was doing.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Cast all your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.” Psa 55:22 (*alternate* 1Pe 5:7)

Note: *The first story speaks of Jesus’ power over death. He was able to restore life to a dead son. The second story speaks to Jesus’ authority over a condition imposed by Satan and the power to heal or restore health to a diseased body. Both stories illustrate Jesus’ great compassion for women who were in need with no hope of ever changing their circumstances. Jesus took initiative to change the women’s circumstances. The second story introduces the growing opposition to Jesus’ words and works by the religious authorities who were legalistic in their practice of religion.*

THE FAITHFUL WIDOW'S OFFERING**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Here are two more beautiful little stories. They demonstrate that nothing escaped Jesus' watchful eye. Jesus watched what people were doing; he also knew what was in their heart.
2. The first teaching is on faithfulness with whatever one has been entrusted with. One can be "generous" even with little. God honors and blesses those who honor Him with their best.
3. The giving of alms touches on one of the Pillars of Islam. It is commanded and expected of a faithful worshiper.
4. Prayer is another Pillar. What kind of prayer does God hear? What is in the heart during prayer?

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the stories in A Widow's Only Son Lives Again. Talk about what God has done for us—even when we have not asked for His help. Sometimes we may not even be aware that God is helping us in our difficulties.
2. Talk about giving alms. What motivates us to give? Do we give because it is required of us? Do we give because we want to be generous in honoring God?
3. Talk about a situation in which a person had very little money to live on. Would that person be foolish to give it as alms or an offering at the place of worship?
4. What is in our hearts when we pray? Do we pray to God or so that others may see and hear us?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mrk 12:35, 38-44; Luk 20:45-21:1-4; Luk 18:9-14

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus looks upon one's heart to see if it is right with God.
2. God accepts our gifts according to our means. God hears our prayer if we are humble.
3. A person's actions in worship demonstrate their love for God.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Is your heart right with God? Does Jesus know what is in your heart?

READ: Mrk 12:41-44

TELL THE STORY:**A WIDOW'S BEST OFFERING**

One day Jesus was teaching in the Temple courts that God knows what is in a person's heart. God knows whether a person lives a humble and righteous life. There were many religious leaders who were proud of their position in life and liked to appear important before others. But while they occupied the most honorable seats in the worship places they were greedy in taking advantage of widows and in praying so others would see their piety and admire them.

Jesus was sitting with his disciples opposite the place where the offerings were put. He watched the crowd coming to worship and putting their offerings into the Temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts of money. Often so that others could see what they were giving.

But then a poor widow came into the Temple and quietly went to the treasury box and put in two very small copper coins worth very little. Then she moved on inside to worship.

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into

the treasury box than all the others. They all gave out of their great wealth. But this woman gave out of her poverty. She put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Another time Jesus spoke to those who were confident of their own righteousness and who looked down on everybody else. Jesus told this parable:

“Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a very religious man and the other a tax collector who was considered to be a very sinful person. The religious man stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like all other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector! I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

But the tax collector stood by himself at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but began to beat his breast pleading and crying out, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner’.”

Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this man, the tax collector, rather than the religious man, went home justified before God. For his heart was right. The proud will be humbled and the humble will be lifted up.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell these two stories about the poor widow’s offering and the sinner’s prayer.
2. Talk about the matter of having a heart that is right with God. Does God know what is in the women’s hearts? Can we hide anything from God? (No. God is all-knowing and sees everything.)
3. What were the wealthy people doing as they gave their money? (Showing others how religious, or pious, they were. Their giving was for show and to “earn” their righteousness.)
4. What did the poor widow do when she gave? (She gave quietly all the money she had.)
5. What did Jesus say about the widow’s gift? (It was more than the wealthy gave—they gave out of their wealth. She gave out of her poverty—her all.)
6. In the second story Jesus was speaking to those who were proud of their righteousness—their works to earn God’s favor. Who was the first worshiper? What did he pray?
7. Talk about the second worshiper. Were tax collectors considered good people? (No. They often took from the people more money than the tax required. They were called “sinners” by others who considered themselves as righteous.)
8. Whose prayer did Jesus say was heard by God? (The tax collector’s humble prayer.)
9. What did Jesus say would happen to the proud? To the humble before the Lord?

MEMORY VERSE: “When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Mat 6:6

Note: *Again here are two stories which relate to worship. The major story about the widow is specifically directed toward women. It is to remind them that God knows when they give their best according to their circumstances. For God knows what is in their heart. The second story follows in the same theme as it contrasts those who do things outwardly for others to see but their heart is too filled with pride for them to see their own need.*

These stories are part of the conditioning for seekers to show them that Jesus knows what is in a person’s heart just as God the Father knows what is in a person’s heart. The stories are to help build confidence in Jesus and his teaching as a prelude to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

UNBELIEF IN JESUS' FAMILY**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Some of the women hearing these stories have their doubts about Jesus. Maybe he was a great prophet and miracle worker, son of Mary and Joseph (and not Imrân as the Qur'an teaches), but not the Son of God!
2. In the stories try to point out that many were able to believe in Jesus while others did not.
3. It was not until after Jesus' death and resurrection that his family really understood. (Act 1:14) Jesus appeared to his brother James (1Co 15:7; Gal 1:19) who was a leader in the Jerusalem church. The writer of Jude is popularly believed to be the brother of Jesus. He calls himself a servant of Jesus and brother of James. (Jud 1)

REVIEW:

1. Have someone retell the story God's Angel Appears To Mary.
2. Talk about how we know who someone is. By their appearance. By their name. By their words. By their actions or work. By the testimony of others who know them. By prophecies about them. If all these are in agreement, can there be any doubt about who a person is?
3. Who was Jesus? Talk about what has been seen in the stories so far. Recall the birth story and the various testimonies about Jesus.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 13:55; Mrk 3:20-35; 6:5; Luk 8:19-21; Jhn 2:12; 7:1-5; Act 1:14

MAJOR THEMES:

1. There were many who did not believe in Jesus including his own brothers.
2. Jesus' mother, Mary had the testimony of the angel Gabriel and was witness to the testimony of Simon and Anna in the Temple, the worship of the wise men, and Jesus' own words when they searched for him at the Temple when he was twelve.
3. Jesus family did what they thought was right to do, but they did not understand. Jesus said that his true family were those who believed him.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What do you believe about Jesus? Do you believe his words or do you doubt his words? Are you like his family in this story?

READ: Mrk 3:20-21, 31-32

TELL THE STORY:**LITTLE FAITH IN JESUS' OWN FAMILY**

When Jesus first began his public ministry he returned to his own home town and spoke in the worship hall. Many there recognized him and spoke well of him. "Isn't this the carpenter (for his earthly father, Joseph, was a carpenter)? Isn't this Mary's son and the older brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" Those who heard Jesus were amazed at his words and were asking, "Where did he get all this wisdom? And how does he do these miracles?"

Jesus had told them, "Only in his home town, among his relatives and in his own house is a

prophet without honor.”

One day when Jesus had entered a house and a crowd gathered so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this they went to get him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.” Even some of the religious leaders were saying that Jesus was possessed by an evil spirit.

Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside they sent someone in to call Jesus. The crowd was sitting around him. A person told Jesus, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” “Who are my mother and my brothers?” Jesus asked. Then he looked at those seated around him in a circle and said, “Here are my mother and brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

Later when he stayed away from Jerusalem because his enemies were waiting to kill him, it was time for the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus’ brothers said to him, “You ought to leave here and go to Jerusalem so that your disciples may see the miracles that you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, go show yourself to the world.” For even Jesus’ own brothers did not at this time believe in him.

Jesus could not do any miracles in his hometown except to lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them because of their lack of faith.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Little Faith in Jesus’ Own Family.
2. What are the women believing about Jesus? Are there still some doubts? What is the strongest testimony so far?
3. What does a mother know about her own children? Talk about what Mary knew about Jesus.
4. What would brothers and sisters know about each other? What if one of them were different?
5. Why would Jesus disown his own mother and brothers? (They were dishonoring him by their unbelief in him.)
6. Who did Jesus say were his mother and brother and sister? (Those who did God’s will—believed God and acted according to that belief in God.)
7. What did Jesus’ brothers want him to do? (Go to Jerusalem and show himself publicly so that many people could see his miracles. Then he would become a real public figure. This was the wisdom of the world and not the will of God.)
8. Did it appear that Jesus’ brothers were mocking him? (Yes, because they did not believe in him at that time.)
9. Depending upon how the discussion goes and if there is need—mention that later Jesus’ mother and brothers did believe in him after they saw what happened to Jesus.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.” Jhn 3:36

Note: *Here are two stories which together give a picture of the early unbelief of Jesus’ own family. They did not understand who he was and what his ministry was about. The people in his own home town recognized Jesus as Joseph and Mary’s son and a brother to the sons and daughters of Joseph, but not as the Messiah. Mary had treasured many things in her heart along the way. Still there were doubts. The unbelief in Jesus’ family did not deter him from carrying out his ministry according to his heavenly Father’s will.*

JESUS FEEDS THE PEOPLE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story continues to illustrate the compassion of Jesus and introduces his lordship over nature.
2. In many Asian countries this story appears to be very popular and is often chosen to be told in practice sessions during Bible story training conferences.
3. Faith is another theme as Jesus challenges the faith of his disciples to do what appears to be an impossible task.
4. There are two feeding stories—first that of the 5,000 and then that of 4,000. In the second feeding the disciples still had not learned their lesson about faith. As a result it required more fish and bread to feed fewer people and have less left over. Check it out!

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Is Tested By Satan. Jesus was unwilling to use his power to meet his own need at the temptation. Would he use his power to feed others when they were hungry?
2. Has anyone in the group been so interested in hearing someone speak that they forgot about the time and even about eating? Have they ever had to feed a very large number of people?
3. Has anyone in the group ever witnessed a miracle? Have they eaten food that was provided miraculously? How did it taste? Was it satisfying to eat?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 14:13-21; Mrk 6:30-44; Luk 9:10-17; Jhn 6:1-15, 32-35

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus is compassionate toward those in need.
2. Jesus is all-powerful like the Father.
3. Jesus expects his followers to have faith in what he can do and what they can do with his help.

ASK THE LISTENERS: How can one person feed 5,000 people? What would you do if you faced such a great need?

READ: Jhn 6:5-6, 8-11

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS FEEDS THE PEOPLE**

One day Jesus took his disciples in a boat to a quiet place on a hillside to rest and eat. Soon the crowds learned where Jesus was and they followed him. Jesus had compassion on the people because he saw them like sheep without a shepherd. So he welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God. And he healed those who needed healing.

Late in the afternoon the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging because we are in a remote place.”

Jesus replied to one of the disciples named Philip, “Where can we buy bread for these people to

eat?” Now Jesus said this to test Philip for he already knew what he was going to do. Philip answered, “It would take eight month’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have only one bite!”

Just then another of the disciples named Andrew spoke up, “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will that go among so many.”

Jesus said, “Have the people to sit down by families in groups of about fifty each.” For there was much green grass in that area. Now there were about five thousand men in the crowd not counting all the women and children.

Then Jesus took the five loaves of bread in his hands and blessed them and broke them and gave to the twelve disciples to distribute to the people. He did the same with the fish. When the people all had enough to eat and were satisfied, Jesus told the disciples, “Gather up all the food pieces left over. Let nothing be wasted.” So the disciples gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” Jesus knew that the people intended to come and make him their king by force. So he left that place and went into the hills by himself.

Later when the people again came to Jesus he taught them that it was the Father who gave the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Feeds the People.
2. Talk about feeding such a large group of people. How much rice would it require???
3. How did Jesus see the people gathered on the hillside? (As sheep having no shepherd.)
4. Who cared more for the people, the disciple who asked Jesus to send the people away to find their own food, or was it Jesus who knew what he was going to do to feed them?
5. How did Jesus test Philip? (He asked him where to buy enough bread to feed the people.)
6. What was Philip’s reply? (It would take eight month’s wages for just one bite for each.)
7. What did Andrew discover? (Someone had two small fish and five small loaves of bread.)
8. What did Jesus do with the food? (He blessed it, broke it and gave it to the disciples to give out.)
9. Was the food enough to satisfy the people? (Yes, more than enough. Some food remained.)
10. What did the people want to do with Jesus? (Make him their king. He could feed them by his miracles.)
11. Who did Jesus say he was? (The bread of life, the one come down from heaven who gives life.)
12. What about those who come to Jesus? (They will never be hungry or thirsty—they are satisfied.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never

Note: *This story lesson is an important one to precede the story of the Last Supper. It complements the story of the living water in the Woman at the Well story. It is another reference to Jesus’ coming from the Father in heaven. It would be good to review the story of the Manna in the Desert if that story were used in the Old Testament stories. This story also has themes of testing (Jesus tested Philip), faith in Jesus’ ability to meet need, and Jesus’ compassion for people and his power to meet their need. These stories of Jesus have the purpose of building faith in Jesus as they acquaint the listeners with the characteristics of Jesus. It is building toward their trusting him as Savior and as Lord of their lives.*

JESUS IS LORD OF NATURE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Jesus is Lord of nature. Jhn 1:3 and Col 1:16-17 remind us that Jesus was the agent through which God created everything. Further, not only did he create it, but nature holds together (follows its natural laws) because of Jesus.
2. At first the disciples are afraid of the raging storm. After Jesus quiets the storm, they become fearful of him. It speaks of the dilemma we face in the storms of life, we are fearful of them, then we are fearful of the one who has the power to quiet them and give us peace.
3. Jesus simply gives a command and the elements of nature obey him.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to recall the story at the wedding when Jesus changed the water into drink.
2. Recall the story Jesus Feeds The People. Jesus was able to provide the food and drink for people. After Jesus fed the people they called him a prophet. Nicodemus said he knew Jesus was a prophet come from God. That is why he could do the miraculous signs.
3. We have seen Jesus' mighty power in stories. We know from the story of his temptation that he was hungry after fasting. Did Jesus get tired like we do? Did he need sleep like we do? Where did Jesus get his human nature? (From Mary his human mother.) Where did Jesus get his characteristics like God? (From the Father in heaven who sent him.)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 8:23-27; Mrk 4:1-2, 33, 35-41; Luk 8:22-25

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus is all-powerful like the Father.
2. Though Jesus was God, he was also man and needed rest.
3. Jesus taught his followers in all that he did and said.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever been afraid and felt powerless to save yourself? Who did you trust to save you?

READ: Mrk 4:35-39

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS CALMS A STORM**

On another occasion Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that had gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake while all the people gathered along the shore near the water's edge. He taught them many things by parables, speaking the word of God to them, as much as they could understand.

When evening had come, Jesus, seeing the great crowds who had followed him, said to his disciples, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." So the disciples left the crowd of people behind and followed Jesus into a boat. As soon as they had sailed, Jesus fell asleep on a cushion in the back of the boat. Suddenly a great windstorm came down upon the lake and the waves began breaking over the boat. Soon the boat was in danger of sinking. The disciples became afraid.

The disciples saw that Jesus was sleeping. So they came to him and woke him and cried out, “Master! Master! Don’t you care if we drown?”

Jesus stood up, rebuked the blowing wind and said to the raging waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm on the water. Turning to his disciples Jesus said, “Why are you so afraid? Where is your faith? Do you still have no faith?”

The disciples were now amazed and terrified at the words of Jesus and began asking each other, “Who is this man? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask several to retell this short story Jesus Calms A Storm.
2. Talk about a time when members of the group were afraid and did not know who could help them to safety. Has anyone been caught in a storm in a boat on the open water? Tell the group what happened.
3. A large crowd of people had followed Jesus to hear him teach. What did Jesus have to do because of the crowd? (He got into a boat and pushed off the shore a bit.)
4. What was Jesus teaching the people? (The word of God, as much as they could understand.)
5. When evening came what did Jesus tell his disciples? (Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.)
6. The disciples followed Jesus into the boat. What did Jesus do as soon as they began? (He lay on a cushion and went to sleep in the back of the boat.)
7. What happened suddenly on the lake? (A storm swept down with strong wind and high waves.)
8. The boat was about to sink because water was coming in. What did the disciples cry out to Jesus? (Master! Master! Wake up. Don’t you care, we are about to drown!)
9. What did Jesus do? (He stood up and rebuked the wind and commanded the waves to be still.)
10. Now what were the disciples afraid of? (They feared Jesus saying to themselves, “What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”)
11. Why do the women think the wind and waves obeyed Jesus? (Because he was all-powerful like God the Father.)
12. If Jesus can control the wind and the waves, can we trust him to help us when we are in need?
13. We see that we must have faith in Jesus when we need his help. Do you have faith in him???

MEMORY VERSE: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” Jhn 14:27

Note: There is also the story of Jesus walking on the water and Peter’s asking to come to Jesus on the water (Mat 14:45-51; Jhn 6:17-21). It was felt this simpler story of stilling the wind and waves dealt adequately with Jesus’ power over nature and taught the lesson about having faith in him. The Jesus Walking on Water story introduces an additional theme of the miraculous that the storyer may not want to deal with. That story could be added at a later time during discipling when teaching on the theme of faith.

JESUS IS LORD OVER EVIL SPIRITS**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The stories that qualify Jesus as the One come from God continue. One of the themes that comes out in the stories about evil spirits is that they know who Jesus is and are afraid of him. Again and again they cry out to him, “We know who you are. You are the Son of the Most High.” Jesus commanded them to keep quiet.
2. The other is that Jesus has authority over them and they obey his command to leave the person.
3. Jesus was accused of himself being possessed by an evil spirit. (Mrk 3:30)
4. Just as with people in physical need, Jesus had compassion on those oppressed by evil spirits and set them free. Jesus liberated the woman in the synagogue with a spirit that deformed her back.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story A Widow’s Only Son Lives Again. Remember the woman bent double by an evil spirit? Jesus healed her. Recall the story A Foreign Woman’s Faith and how Jesus released her daughter from demon possession.
2. Are the women afraid of evil spirits? Do they know of someone who has been possessed by an evil spirit? Jesus has the power to release the bondage.
3. Where does Jesus get his authority and power over evil spirits? Why would they fear him?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 8:29-32; 9:32-33; 17:18; Mrk 1:23-27, 34; 3:11-12; 5:7-13;
Luk 8:28-31; 9:42

MAJOR THEMES:

1. The evil spirits know who Jesus is—the Son of the Most High God.
2. The evil spirits fear Jesus and recognize that he is more powerful than they.
3. The evil spirits had to obey Jesus because he had sovereignty over them.
4. Evil spirits seek to harm people and destroy their lives.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Do you fear evil spirits? How do you break their power and overcome them? Do you know One who is more powerful than the evil spirits?

READ: Mrk 1:23-24

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS REBUKES EVIL SPIRITS**

It happened one Sabbath when Jesus was in the city of Capernaum that he went into the synagogue and began to teach the people. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had great authority and not like their religious teachers.

Just then a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One come from God!”

“Be quiet!” Jesus sternly commanded the spirit, “Come out of the man!” The evil spirit began to

shake the man violently and then came out of him with a loud shriek.

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.” So news about Jesus quickly spread over the whole region of Galilee.

At other times Jesus drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. Whenever the evil spirits saw Jesus, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” Each time Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone who he was.

So it happened one day when Jesus and the disciples had crossed the lake. As Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from a nearby town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived among the graves.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at Jesus’ feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times the spirit had seized the man, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon to live alone.

Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“Legion,” he replied, because many demons lived in the man. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them into the Abyss (Rev 20:3). A large herd of pigs was feeding on a nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them enter the pigs. So Jesus gave the spirits permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

The pig-keepers went to tell the owners what had happened. The people were afraid of Jesus so they asked him to leave that place. But the man who had been possessed of demons was now sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. He begged Jesus to let him go with him. But Jesus said, “Return to your home and tell your family how much God has done for you.” Instead the man went away and began to tell everyone how much Jesus had done for him.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Rebukes Evil Spirits.
2. Talk about the fear of evil spirits. What do people do to break the power of an evil spirit?
3. The man with the evil spirit in the synagogue began to call out to Jesus. What did the spirit cry?
4. Did the spirit know who Jesus was? (Yes, it knew he was the Son of Most High God.)
5. What did the people say when they saw what happened? (What is this—a new teaching with authority! He gives orders to evil spirits and they obey!)
6. Why do the women think Jesus commanded the spirits to keep quiet? (The religious leaders became disturbed whenever Jesus was called the Son of God.)
7. Why did the man with many evil spirits begin to cry out to Jesus? (The spirits in him were afraid of Jesus. They feared that he would send them to the pit or prison where spirits await the day of God’s judgment. They wanted to remain in that place.)
8. Did Jesus give the spirits permission to do what they wanted? (Yes. But Jesus knew what was going to happen when they entered the pigs.)
9. When the owners of the pigs learned what happened, were they pleased? (No. They wanted Jesus to leave that place.)
10. What had happened to the man who had been possessed? (He was now in his right mind. Someone had given him some clothing. He was sitting at the feet of Jesus.)
11. The man wanted to go with Jesus. What did Jesus tell the man to do instead? Go tell his family how much God had done for him. Instead he began to tell everyone about Jesus.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, ‘You are the Son of God.’” Mrk 3:11

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS PLOT AGAINST JESUS**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This is another story that is made up of many incidents of which all were part of the plot against Jesus. There is a progression. First the leaders complained against Jesus' disciples who did not honor the traditions of the elders. Then they criticized him for breaking the Sabbath law by healing on the Sabbath. Then they took strong issue with Jesus' claim to be one with the Father. And they questioned by what authority was the source of his teaching and his miracles.
Finally they sought to kill Jesus and began to plot cleverly how to seize him when the crowds were not around, for they feared the crowds and a riot that would bring trouble with Rome.
2. In the beginning leaders were amazed at what Jesus taught and did. The people were calling Jesus a prophet. He was becoming very popular with the crowds because of his healing, casting out demons, and because of his clever answers when the leaders tested him with questions.
3. Jesus accused the leaders of hypocrisy—saying one thing and doing another. He accused them of lacking humility and being bound by their traditions even when people needed their help.
4. When Jesus was questioned about his teaching and works, he said that he only taught what he heard from the Father and only did the works he saw his Father doing. He was accused of putting himself equal with God.

REVIEW:

1. Ask a listener to retell the story You Must Be Born Again. Nicodemus believed Jesus.
2. What would the women have thought of someone like Jesus doing what he did? Would they be like the religious leaders, or like the women who followed Jesus and helped with their gifts.
3. Are the women free to decide for themselves if Jesus is who he says he is, who the Scriptures say he is, and who the people say that Jesus was? Talk about it.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 12:1-2 7 (Mrk 7:1-5); Mat 13:34; Mrk 3:1-6; Mrk 9:30-32; 10:32-34; 12:12-13; Luk 6:7, 11; 19:47-48; 20:19; Jhn 5:18; 7:25-32, 45-46; 10:31, 33

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus spoke with greater authority than the religious leaders, they became jealous.
2. The leaders accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath law and claiming to be equal with God.
3. The leaders could not seize Jesus because his time to die had not yet come.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever hated a person and wished they could be stopped from teaching or from doing good things for others, but not according to your traditions?

READ: Mrk 3:1-5

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS MUST DIE**

At first Jesus was rejected by his own people when he began to teach that he was the One to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah. They sought to kill him but he escaped unharmed. Because of Jesus' miracles of healing he was very popular with the people. Whenever a crowd of people

gathered, Jesus began to teach them about the kingdom of God. But the religious leaders did not like the teachings and they did not respect Jesus because he was not one of them. The people thought Jesus to be a prophet because he taught with great authority. And they said that surely he had come from God to do such miracles.

So the religious leaders began to watch Jesus closely to find some reason to arrest him. One time when Jesus was in the worship hall there was a man with a withered hand. While the religious leaders watched, Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand. When he did, it was restored and became whole again. This angered the Pharisees who went out and began to plot with others how they might kill Jesus. They accused Jesus of putting himself equal with God when he called God Father.

Again the leaders criticized Jesus for letting his disciples break their traditions like ceremonial hand washing before eating. “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders,” they asked. Because the religious leaders came to listen to Jesus’ teaching and to find fault with it, he began to teach the people in parables, stories with eternal truth in them, and then told the people, “Let him who has ears hear what I’ve said.” The people liked the stories.

Jesus knew what was going to happen to him, so he told his disciples, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law. He must be killed and after three days rise again.” But the disciples did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

Again and again the leaders sent some of the Pharisees and King Herod’s people to Jesus to catch him in his words. They tested Jesus by asking clever questions about the resurrection of the dead, to whom should one pay taxes, and even by what authority did Jesus do his miracles. Each time Jesus spoke words from the Father that were wise and true. When the Pharisees heard the crowd of people saying wonderful things about Jesus, they sent Temple guards to arrest him. But when the guards heard the words of Jesus, they declared, “No one ever spoke the way this man does.” The leaders would have arrested Jesus, but they did not because Jesus was popular with the people and the leaders were afraid to start a riot. So they waited and continued to look for a way to seize Jesus quietly and put him to death.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Must Die.
2. We all like people who are like ourselves. Talk about how you might feel when someone teaches truth different from your traditions. Does it make you angry? What if it happens to be true? Would you be willing to listen and then judge for yourself?
3. The prophets had said the Messiah must suffer and die. They said he would be hated for no cause and despised, rejected by his own people. Was this beginning to happen?
4. Talk about some of the accusations the leaders were bringing against Jesus.
5. Had the prophets said this would happen—that Jesus would be rejected and put to death? (Yes)
6. Did everyone hate Jesus? (No, only the leaders. The people liked his teaching and miracles.)
7. What did the leaders send people to do to Jesus? (Test Jesus and catch him in what he said.)
8. Where did Jesus’ teaching come from? (From God.)
9. What did Jesus say he must do? He must be rejected by the religious leaders and elders, he must suffer and die. But he would be raised to life again on the third day.)

MEMORY VERSE: “And he said, ‘The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.’” Luk 9:22

THE WEDDING BANQUET/THE FOOLISH VIRGINS**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Everyone likes a festive occasion like a feast. Each people have their customs about how to invite people to join in the celebration. To refuse an invitation is unthinkable. When the invitations are sent out, all who received them are expected to attend.
2. The wedding banquet is compared to God's invitation for salvation and blessing, first for the Jews, then for others. It is a serious matter to refuse the invitation.
3. Jesus is compared to the bridegroom who may come at any time for his bride. Like the Wise Virgins we must be prepared to enter in with him. Those not prepared will be left outside.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell a story where guests were invited. The Wedding at Cana story is one. Jesus and several of his disciples had been invited to attend. Talk about attending a festive occasion.
2. God sent Jesus to live among the Jewish people to bring them God's invitation. Before Jesus the prophets had brought God's invitation. These stories bring God's invitation to you.
3. One day Jesus is going to return to earth like a bridegroom coming for his bride. Who will be ready to go with him?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 22:1-14; Luk 14:7-24; Mat 25:1-13

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a feast for which invitations were sent out to the guests.
2. When the invited guests refused to attend, the invitation goes to others who take their place.
3. Believers are to always be ready for the coming of the Anointed One depicted as a bridegroom.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever refused to attend a wedding feast? What reasons could one possibly give for refusing such an invitation? If such an invitation should come, would you be prepared to accept it?

READ: Mat 22:1-3

TELL THE STORY:**THE WEDDING BANQUET**

One time Jesus noticed how guests at a feast always picked places of honor for themselves at a table. Jesus told the people these stories. When you are invited to a feast always take a place of less honor as there may be one greater than yourself and you would be asked to sit at another less honorable place and so be shamed. Also the host might ask you to move to a place of greater honor and so you would exalted before the other guests.

Then Jesus spoke to the people this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. When it was ready he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, "Come, for everything is now ready." But they all alike began to make excuses and refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, "Tell those who have been invited that I have

prepared my banquet: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.”

But the invited guests paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized the king’s servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was very angry. Then he said to his servants, “The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not come. Go to the street corners and invited to the banquet anyone you find.” So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, until the wedding hall was filled.

But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. “Friend,” he asked, “how did you get in here without wedding clothes?” The man was speechless. Then the king told his servants, “Tie him hand and foot and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are invited, but few are chosen.

Another time Jesus said the kingdom of heaven would be like ten virgin wedding attendants who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took only their lamps but did not take any extra oil with them. The wise, however, took extra oil in jars along with their lamps.

The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight suddenly the cry rang out: “Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!” Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.”

“No,” the wise replied, “there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead go and buy some oil for yourselves.” But while the foolish went to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast. And the door was shut.

Later the foolish virgins arrived and called out, “Sir! Sir! Open the door for us!” But the bridegroom inside said, “I tell you the truth, I don’t know you. Please leave.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask several to retell these wedding stories. Did they include everything?
2. Talk about the seriousness of refusing an invitation. Does it dishonor the host? Does it bring shame to the invited guest?
3. Talk about what happened when the king sent his servant to tell the guests the banquet was ready for them?
4. When the king sent out more servants to tell the guests to come what happened? (They seized the servants, mistreated them and killed them.)
5. Then who did the king invite? (Anyone who would attend, those in the streets, both good and bad were invited to attend.)
6. The king noticed a man who was not dressed in wedding clothes. What happened to that person? (He was bound and put out into the darkness.) *We’ll talk more later about the wedding clothes.*
7. What did the wise virgins do that the foolish ones did not do? (Bring extra oil for their lamps.)
8. When the bridegroom finally was coming and the virgins arose to trim their lamps, what did the foolish ones notice? (They were running out of oil for their lamps.)
9. When they went to buy more oil what happened? (They were locked out and not permitted to enter the wedding feast.)
10. What does this last story teach us? (To be ready when the bridegroom—Christ—returns.)

MEMORY VERSE: “There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.”

Luk 13:28

JESUS FORGIVES AN ADULTEROUS WOMAN**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story focuses on the compassion of Jesus, his willingness to forgive sin, and his sense of justice for those being accused whether justly or unjustly. Nothing is mentioned of the man involved in this breaking of the Law regarding adultery.(Lev 20:10) This incident was said by John to be a trap to catch Jesus. The story reminds us that Jesus' judgment will be fair and just for all—whether men or women. One popular issue in the common Muslim worldview is that the woman is the cause of lust and adultery causing men to sin.
2. This story and A Sinful Woman Anoints Jesus (Luk 7:36-50) both speak of forgiveness for sin. It is easier for a person who senses their guilt and confesses it to obtain forgiveness than for a person who believes that they are self-righteous and above sinning.
3. Jesus' concern was on redeeming a wayward life rather than ending it. God's desire is for all men (people) to be saved (1Ti 2:3-4) and their sins forgiven.(1Jh 1:9)

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story A Sinful Woman Anoints Jesus.
2. Talk about wrongdoing and punishment. Who brings accusation against a person? Who determines the punishment? Is the judgment always fair? What if the accusers are just as guilty as the accused person?
3. Is forgiveness possible for an accused person? Is punishment more important than forgiveness? What if a person is willing to repent of their wrongdoing?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Jhn 8:2-11; Luk 7:36-50; Exo 20:14; Lev 20:10; 1Jh 1:8

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus welcomes and has compassion on all who are sinners.
2. Jesus forgives sin but warns not to continue living in sin.
3. Jesus condemns those who are self-righteous declaring they have no sin.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever been accused and publicly shamed by those seeking to have you punished? Here is a story about a woman who was shamed and brought before Jesus.

READ: Jhn 8:3-5

TELL THE STORY:**GO AND SIN NO MORE**

One day when Jesus came to the Temple courts, many people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. By and by the teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman who was caught in the very act of adultery. They made her to stand before the group and then said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this as a trap for Jesus in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When the religious

Leaders kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard Jesus' words began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared to the woman, "Go now and leave your life of sin."

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the short story *Go And Sin No More*.
2. Talk about the woman's shame in being caught in her sin and brought before Jesus in a public meeting. Talk about how she might have felt in her heart? The Law of Moses was clear in that those caught in adultery were to be stoned to death for their sin. These moments before Jesus may be the last moments of her life.
3. What did her accusers hope to do to Jesus? (To trap him. According to the Law she was guilty of death. If Jesus said to let her go, he would be breaking the Law and he would be guilty.)
4. What do the women suppose Jesus was writing on the ground? Talk about it. (We do not know for the Bible does not tell us. Perhaps he was writing a verse from Pro 20:9 "Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin'?" Or perhaps Psa 145:8 "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." RSV)
5. What did Jesus say to those accusing the woman? (If one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone.)
6. When the people heard Jesus' words what did they begin to do? (They began to go away one at a time, beginning with the older ones until all were gone.)
7. At last only Jesus and the woman who was still standing before him remained. Jesus looked at her. What did Jesus ask her? (Where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?)
8. Then what did Jesus tell the woman? (Neither do I condemn you. Go and leave your life of sin.)
9. Jesus forgave the woman but warned her not to return to her former way of life. So we might guess that she had a practice of living a sinful life before, but now she was forgiven and was free to live a life pleasing to God.
10. If you were brought to stand before Jesus accused of breaking God's Law, what would you expect him to say to you?

MEMORY VERSE: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1Jh 1:9

Note: *These stories continue to deal with the relationship that people had with Jesus. The objective is to allow the women to "write themselves into the script." Jesus is portrayed as compassionate and just for those who are truly repentant, desiring to forgive those seeking forgiveness and accusing those who were self-righteous and unrepentant.*

JESUS AT MARY AND MARTHA'S HOME**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This little story Mary Has Chosen The Better Thing is often used as an introductory story to the story of Lazarus. You may want to join it to the Lazarus story A Dead Brother Restored To Life. It is listed separately as it deals with the matter of the choices of the heart we make. Mary had chosen the better thing and Jesus would not take it from her.
2. The story introduces the family of Martha the older sister in whose home this story takes place, and Mary the younger sister. Martha is the practical one, hardworking and concerned with proper hospitality and serving others (Jhn 12:2). She may have been a perfectionist, attentive to details. Mary is more sensitive spiritually, or more hungry spiritually, more of an idealist attracted to Jesus' teaching.
3. Lazarus is not mentioned in this story though he is included as their brother in the later story about his death and being raised to life again by Jesus. (Jhn 11:1) In that story we learn that Lazarus was a good friend of Jesus. (Jhn 11:3) We don't know if he were older or younger. But he was the male protector for the sisters and was certainly present when Jesus and the disciples visited in the home. This detail is seldom considered in the Western worldview but may be important to those of the Muslim worldview to keep the setting socially acceptable.

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the story .
2. What are the first concerns of the women? The home? The food they eat? Things to adorn the body like clothes or jewelry? What are the priorities in life? What is the most desirable thing to have? What is the yearning of their heart?
3. We live in a world in which we must do things for others as part of our duty and our custom. How can we tell what is important and what is best to do?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Luk 10:38-42; Mat 5:1, 6; 6:19-21, 25-33; 7:28-29

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Words of life are more important than the work of life.
2. One must choose wisely what is the most important thing to do.
3. Those who choose wisely will not lose what they have chosen.

ASK THE LISTENERS: What is the most important thing in your life? Do you always decide to do the most important thing first? Listen to this story and see if you agree with Mary's choice.

READ: Luk 10: 41-42

TELL THE STORY:**MARY HAS CHOSEN THE BETTER THING**

The small village of Bethany is on the road about two kilometers from Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples often passed that way as they journeyed to and from Jerusalem. One day as Jesus and his

disciples were on their way, he came to the village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary and a brother named Lazarus.

While Jesus was sitting down he began to teach. Mary sat at his feet listening to what he said. Martha was distracted by all the preparations in cooking that she had to make. And she noticed that her sister was sitting there at Jesus' feet and not helping her in the work. Finally she came to Jesus and demanded, "Lord don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!"

But Jesus patiently replied, "Martha, Martha. You are worried and upset about many things. But only one thing is needed. Mary, here, has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

At another time when a large crowd of people came to Jesus he went up on a mountainside, sat down, and began to teach them. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled." And again he said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, but store up for yourselves treasure in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also."

About life Jesus said, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than these things? Do not be like the unbelievers (pagans) who run after these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you."

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone (or several) to retell the story Mary Has Chosen The Better Thing.
2. Have the women talked what is the most important thing in their life? Do they agree with Mary's choice. How many in the group are like Martha?
3. What Martha was doing was good. Her intentions were good. Soon she would be serving Jesus some of her food which was surely quite tasty. Talk about Martha's growing anxiety about having to do all the work. What was most important to Martha? (Being a good host to her guests.)
4. What was Mary doing? (Sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to his teaching.)
5. What did Martha think Mary ought to be doing? (Helping her to prepare the food.)
6. What two things did Martha say to Jesus? (Don't you care that my sister is not helping me? Tell her to help me!)
7. What was Jesus' reply to Martha? (Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things. But only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken from her.)
8. What do the women think Jesus meant by "what is better"? Why would Jesus not take it from Mary? (Because he thought it was important for Mary to hear.)
9. What do you think about the words of Jesus: "Don't worry about your life, but seek first the kingdom of heaven and God's righteousness and these things will be given to you." What do the women think this means? Are they seeking the kingdom of heaven and God's righteousness?

MEMORY VERSE: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Mat 6:33

or

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." Jhn 6:63

JESUS FORETELLS HIS SUFFERING**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story lesson is a deliberate extension of the Lesson The Religious Leaders Plot Against Jesus with its story Jesus Must Die.
2. It addresses the Muslim worldview that Jesus did not die on the cross. In the earlier lesson the religious leaders said that Jesus must die. Jesus told his followers that he must suffer and die. The prophets had said the Messiah would suffer and die.
3. Old Simeon in the Temple said to Mary, “A sword will pierce your own soul, too.”

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Must Die.
2. Recall in the story of Adam and Eve God’s Judgment, Man and Woman’s Punishment that innocent animals had to die to provide the animal skins to clothe their sinfulness.
3. Talk about the suffering that wrongdoers must suffer for their sins. In the women’s society how are wrongdoers punished? In Jesus’ day someone who disturbed the nation could be beaten forty lashes with a whip or even put to death by crucifixion or stoning.
4. Recall the characteristics of God. God hates sin and judges it. The sinner is punished.
5. In the sacrifice for sin God permits an innocent substitute to suffer and die. (Lev 5:17-18)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 16:13-23; Mrk 8:27-33; Luk 9:22; 18:31-34

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus predicted his own suffering and death and that he would be raised to life on the third day.
2. Jesus taught about his coming suffering and death to his disciples but they did not understand.
3. Jesus’ suffering and death as a substitute for sinners was to be in fulfillment of prophecy. (Isa 53:3-8, 11)

ASK THE LISTENERS: Do you know what is going to happen to you in the future? Have you ever told anyone what you know is going to happen to you?

READ: Mat 16:21

TELL THE STORY:**I MUST SUFFER AND DIE**

First the Wise Men who visited the infant Jesus brought a gift of myrrh for one who was going to die. Then aged Simeon at the Temple told Mary that one day a sword would pierce her soul as a prophecy that she would see someone she loved very much suffer and die. Then John the Baptist proclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.”

One day Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” For Jesus often referred to himself as ‘The Son of Man.’

The disciples replied, “Some say you are John the Baptist (who had been killed by King Herod); others say the great prophet Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked, “Who do you say that I am?”

Simon Peter answered him, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus said this was not revealed to Peter by man, but by his Father in heaven. Then he warned the disciples not to tell anyone who he was.

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and teachers of the law. And he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

It was Simon Peter who took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get out of my sight. You are talking like Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Again Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will be raised to life again!"

The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them. They did not know what Jesus was talking about when he said that the Son of Man was to give his life as a ransom for many.

Remember the words that old Simeon said to Mary the mother of Jesus when she took Jesus to the Temple: "A sword will pierce your own soul, too." Now what kind of a sword would pierce the soul of a mother? (Luk 2:35)

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story I Must Suffer and Die.
2. Do any of the women know what is going to happen to them in the future? Jesus did. Not only did he know what was in the hearts of the people who came to listen to him, but he also knew what his Heavenly Father had waiting for him to do. (*Don't explain this just yet.*)
3. Do the women recall the story of the visit by the Wise Men? One of them brought a precious perfume called myrrh. Its sweet smell was used to cover the body of one who had died.
4. Does anyone remember the words of Simeon in the Temple? (A sword was to pierce Mary's soul.) What could that sword be? Could it be she would see the death of her firstborn son???
5. What did Jesus say was going to happen to him? (He would be handed over to the Gentiles to be mocked, spit upon, beaten and put to death.)
6. What unusual thing was going to happen to Jesus after he was put to death? (He would be raised to life again!)
7. Did the disciples understand what Jesus was telling them? (No)
8. When Peter doubted the words of Jesus, who did Jesus say that Peter was acting like? (Like Satan!)
9. Who had said all these things would happen to the Messiah? (The prophets) Who told the prophets this is what would happen to the Messiah? (God)

MEMORY VERSE: "...The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third say be raised to life."

Luk 9:22

Note: *The important point in this story is that Jesus knew that he was going to suffer and die and be raised up again on the third day. He told this to his disciples but understanding of it was hidden from them until after Jesus' resurrection.*

A DEAD BROTHER RESTORED TO LIFE

FOR THE TEACHER:

1. The temptation in this story is to focus solely upon the doctrinal truth that Jesus is the resurrection. With the Muslim woman's worldview there is another important issue—the two sisters had lost their *male protector*. Their greatest perceived need at the moment was to have their male protector restored to them to protect their honor. Many times in telling this story this is the comment the women make. Jesus did a wonderful thing for the sisters to give their guardian back to them. The thrust of the story is not lost as it pictures Jesus as a kind, caring person who met the great need of these women by raising to life again their brother.
2. The people had a belief that when a person died the spirit stayed near the body until it began to smell—about the third day. During that time a person might revive. After decay set in the spirit would depart and the person remained dead. It was significant that Jesus arrived on the fourth day. Lazarus was really dead! Raising him would be a miracle of God.
3. Jesus was across the Jordan in Perea as the Jews were seriously looking for a way to arrest him or to stone him for blasphemy because he said “I and the Father are one.” (Jhn 10:30-33)

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story A Widow's Only Son Lives Again. Talk about the joy of having a loved one restored to life. What if that loved one is a woman's male protector or guardian?
2. If Jesus was who he said he was, then all of God's mighty power is available to him. Talk about the miracles in the previous stories: A sick woman healed, a dead girl raised to life, demons cast out, storms on the lake stilled, a large crowd fed with little food.
3. Talk about Jesus' attitude toward people who had great need in their lives. Did he have compassion on them? Would the women trust a person like this? Would they, too, be able to believe in him, even if it was a hard truth to accept?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Luk 10:38-42; Jhn 11:1-44

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus is the life and the resurrection. He is the source of life.
2. Jesus is all-powerful, he has power over death.
3. Jesus is the source of grace: He had compassion on the sisters in the death of their brother.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Who do you turn to when tragedy strikes? Can that person change their circumstance? Listen to this story about Mary and Martha when their brother Lazarus died.

READ: Jhn 11:38-43

TELL THE STORY:

A DEAD BROTHER LIVES AGAIN

The sisters Mary and Martha who lived in the village of Bethany had a brother named Lazarus. One day Lazarus became very sick and the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” When Jesus heard this he said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for the glory of God so that God's Son may be glorified through it.”

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. Then he said to his disciples, “Our friend, Lazarus has fallen asleep: but I am going there to wake him up.”

The disciples did not understand for they said, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get well soon.” Jesus

had been speaking of Lazarus' death, but the disciples thought he meant natural sleep. Then Jesus told the disciples plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. Now let us go to him."

When Jesus arrived near Bethany he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was only a few kilometers from Jerusalem. Many friends had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard the Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him. But Mary stayed at home.

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha answered, "I know he will rise in the resurrection at the last day." Again Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." After she said this she went back inside to call her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here. And he is asking for you."

Mary quickly got up and went to Jesus. Her friends who had been comforting her followed thinking she was going to the tomb to mourn. Mary also fell at the feet of Jesus and said, "Lord, if only you had been here my brother would not have died." Jesus was moved with compassion when he saw Mary and her friends weeping. He asked where Lazarus was buried. Along the way Jesus wept because of everyone's sadness. Some said that Jesus loved Lazarus very much. Others mocked saying that Jesus opened the eyes of the blind, but could not save his friend from dying.

At the tomb Jesus asked to have the heavy stone covering removed. Martha objected saying that there would be a bad smell since her brother had been dead four days. Jesus said, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" Then Jesus looked up and began to pray. "Father, I thank you that you always hear me. I am praying for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

After he finished praying Jesus said in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out of the tomb, his hands and feet were still wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth covered his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Many who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. But some went, instead, to the Pharisees and reported to them what Jesus had done.

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story A Dead Brother Lives Again.
2. Talk about the listening task questions: Who do the women turn to when tragedy or sorrow comes? Can that person change their circumstance—provide what they really need?
3. What was Lazarus' condition when Jesus received word to come to Bethany? (He was sick.)
4. What was Lazarus' condition when Jesus said "Let us go to him"? (He was dead.)
5. Why did Jesus say he was glad he was not there when Lazarus was sick? (So that God and the Son of God might be glorified—honored.)
6. How long had Lazarus been dead when Jesus arrived at Bethany? (Four days.)
7. What did Martha say to Jesus? (If only you had been here my brother would not have died.)
8. What did Jesus reply? (Your brother will rise again. I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die.)
9. Why did Jesus pray? (So the people would know that he and the Father are one.)
10. Did the dead man Lazarus obey Jesus? (Yes, he returned to life and came from the tomb.)

MEMORY VERSE: "...I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die..." Jhn 11:25

MARY ANOINTS JESUS AT BETHANY**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. There are two anointing stories. One was the sinful woman in Luk 7. Two versions of Mary's anointing Jesus are given. In Mat 26 and Mrk 14 she anoints his head and is not identified. In Jhn 12 she is identified as Mary and she anoints Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair. It is obviously the same story. In the Jhn account Judas is identified as the one who speaks against her apparent waste of expensive perfume. And Martha is noted as serving the guests.
2. This story could be part of a trilogy—In the home of Mary and Martha, Raising Lazarus, and Mary anointing Jesus. It was a beautiful act of thanksgiving and adoration of Jesus.
3. Notice that Jesus said it was anointing for the day of his burial. He expected to die soon.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone retell the story A Sinful Woman Who Anointed Jesus. Is this a practice among the local women? Why would a woman do such an act? How would others accept it?
2. How would a woman express her thanks for such a blessing as raising her brother to life again? Recall in the story Mary Has Chosen the Better Thing how she was interested in the words of Jesus. She wanted to do something very special for him.
3. Jesus was called the Messiah which means the "Anointed One" of God. Anointing was done to set apart a person for a special work or to honor them in a special way.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 26:6-12; Mrk 14:3-9; Jhn 12:1-11

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Mary wanted to express her thanks to Jesus for restoring her brother to life.
2. Some people misunderstood Mary's act of worship as being wasteful.
3. Jesus was pleased with Mary's offering and said it was a testimony to his coming burial.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever wanted to express your thankfulness to someone for what they did for you? Were your actions misunderstood by others? Were you bold to do this and risk mocking or criticism?

READ: Jhn 12:1-3

TELL THE STORY:**MARY'S LOVELY GIFT TO JESUS**

It was now six days before the Jewish feast of the Passover when many people came to Jerusalem for the feast and to worship at the Temple. Jesus arrived at Bethany where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. Lazarus was the one Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was being given in Simon the Leper's home in Jesus' honor. Martha served the food while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Jesus.

Mary entered the room with an alabaster jar, about a liter, of a very expensive and fragrant perfume called nard. She poured it on the head of Jesus and also on his feet and wiped his feet with her hair. The whole house was filled with the sweet fragrance of the perfume.

When some of the disciples saw this, they were indignant. One of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray Jesus, criticized her saying, “Why wasn’t this expensive perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth at least a year’s wages.” (Judas did not say this because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag for the disciples he used to help himself to what was put into it.)

“Leave her alone!” Jesus rebuked him. “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. It was meant that she should save this perfume for me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.” (*Jesus was referring to Deu 15:11*) “I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is told throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Meanwhile a large crowd of people found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many people were putting their faith in Jesus.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Mary’s Lovely Gift To Jesus.
2. Review the listening task questions. Talk about honoring a person as Mary did. Would people criticize a woman for doing this? Would they scold her for not using her money more wisely?
3. Where did this story take place? (In Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper.)
4. What happened while Jesus was reclining at the table with Lazarus? (Mary entered the room with an alabaster jar of expensive perfume and broke it open and poured it on Jesus.)
5. What did Judas say when he criticized Mary for her act of worship? (Why this waste of perfume? Why not sell it and give the money to the poor?)
6. What did Jesus remind Judas and the others? (The poor would always be with them, but he would not.)
7. What did Jesus say about Mary’s anointing him. (It was a beautiful thing she had done. It was an anointing for the day of his burial.)
8. Did the people there understand what Jesus was saying about the day of his burial? (No)
9. Did Jesus’ words about the memory of Mary’s gift come true? (Yes, now you have heard the story and by this story we are honoring Mary because of what she did for Jesus.)
10. What did the enemies of Jesus want to do? (Kill Jesus and kill Lazarus, also, since many people were believing in Jesus because of Lazarus.)

MEMORY VERSE: “When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.” Mat 26:12

Note: *There is some risk in borrowing from two differing accounts. In Mat 26 Jesus is anointed on his head instead of his feet. But Jesus asks the lovely question of “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.” Martha is serving Jesus in her very practical way. But it was Mary the sister who was devoted to Jesus and wanted to express her love and thanks through some special precious gift and to offer it in a special way. As it turned out, her gift was prophetic of the burial to come. Keep the focus upon the relationship expressed in thankfulness and love even at the risk of rebuke from onlookers.*

The comment about Judas is optional at this point. it does introduce Judas and begin to characterize him before the betrayal story. It is possible to keep the focus only upon Mary by simply going to Jesus’ response after Judas’ rebuke.

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. There is much confusion over Judas among Muslims. Popular tradition has it that he was substituted for Christ on the cross at the last moment. So his story needs to be carefully presented and concluded by his death by his own hand.
2. God who knows all things revealed through the Prophet David that one day the Messiah would be betrayed by a friend who was sharing his bread. The Prophet Zechariah said that the Messiah would be sold for thirty pieces of silver.
3. Judas was the only Judean among the disciples, the others were from Galilee.
4. Judas had been chosen by Jesus after a night of prayer. (Luk 6:12-13) Jesus knew what Judas was going to do. "One of you is a devil!" (Jhn 6:70)

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the story Jesus Must Die.
2. Talk about betrayal when someone goes to the enemy and helps them or goes against a friend. What kind of a heart would such a person have? How can one betray his/her own people?
3. Recall the story of David in God Judges David's Sin. David betrayed his friend Uriah the husband of Bathsheba. David did it to hide his sin with Bathsheba. Uriah would not be able to accuse his wife of having a child not his own. Sometimes people have other reasons for betrayal. Why do the women think someone would want to betray the Messiah?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Psa 41:9; Zec 11:12-13; Mat 10:1-4; 26:1-5, 14-16; Mrk 11:18; 12:13-17; 14:10-11; Luk 22:1-6; Jhn 7:12-13, 30; 10:31;

MAJOR THEMES:

1. The prophets said that the Anointed One would be betrayed by a friend and that he would be sold for thirty pieces of silver.
2. The enemies of Jesus were looking for some way to seize him when he was alone for they were afraid of the crowds of people.
3. For whatever reason Judas gave in to Satan and allowed him to control his life.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever been betrayed by someone? Perhaps by a good friend? Why would someone betray their friend?

READ: Luk 22:1-3

TELL THE STORY:**JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS**

A long time before, during the years of the kings of Israel there was a prophecy that one day the Anointed One would be betrayed by a friend who would share his bread in a meal. Another prophet said that the Anointed One would be sold (betrayed) for thirty pieces of silver.

Again and again the enemies of Jesus had tried to seize him, but no one could lay a hand on him,

because his time had not yet come. Some of the people who listened to Jesus thought him to be the Prophet, that is, Elijah. Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” So the people were divided because of Jesus. Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some were saying, “He is a good man.” Others replied, “No, he deceives the people.” But no one would say anything publicly about him because of fear. At one time Jesus’ enemies even took up stones to stone him. The religious leaders were clever, they had even tried to get Jesus to speak against the Roman emperor when they asked a trick question about whether to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus said to give to God what was God’s and to Caesar what was Caesar’s.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was very near. Then the chief priests, teachers of the law and the elders all assembled in the palace of the high priest whose name was Caiphias. They were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus. They plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. But they were afraid to seize him openly for Jesus was very popular and they were afraid of the people. The chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so they might arrest him.

Then Satan entered into Judas, one of the twelve disciples. And so Judas went to the chief priests and officers of the Temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money—thirty pieces of silver. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Judas Agrees To Betray Jesus.
2. Talk about betrayal. Has anyone ever been betrayed by a friend? Why would someone betray their friend?
3. What did the prophets say about betrayal of God’s Anointed One? (He would be betrayed by a friend who was sharing his bread. The Anointed One would be sold—betrayed—for thirty pieces of silver.)
4. Why had the enemies of Jesus not been able to seize him to put him to death? (His time to die had not yet come. His work was not yet finished.)
5. Who did some of the people think Jesus to be? (The Prophet Elijah—who was believed to come before the Day of the Lord.)
6. What were some other things people were saying about Jesus? (He is the Messiah. How could the Messiah come from Galilee? Wasn’t the Messiah supposed to come from Bethlehem and be a descendant of David? He is a good man. No, he deceives people. So they were divided in their opinions.)
7. How did the chief priests and religious leaders seek to arrest Jesus? (In some sly way, quietly so there would be no disturbance with the people. Jesus was very popular with the people.)
8. Why did Judas go to the chief priests to betray Jesus? (He allowed Satan to enter him.)
9. When Judas offered to betray Jesus what did the religious leaders do? (They paid him thirty pieces of silver.)
10. Who was Judas? (One of the disciples of Jesus, chosen by Jesus to go with him, to hear his teaching, to be sent out to heal and cast out demons. He kept the disciples’ money purse.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.” Mat 10:32-33

JESUS THE KING**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. This story may have more relevance among some people where there is the expectation of a strong theocratic rule under sharia law. The story focuses on three points. First is the rejoicing of the people at the prospect that God had remembered His people and sent someone to lead them to become great again by restoring the kingdom.
2. The story is also a prelude to the trial before Pilate when Jesus is accused of leading an insurrection against the government and Pilate asks him if he were a king.
3. The story relates to the prophetic statements about a coming king to rule on David's throne.

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to retell the story God's Angel Appears To Mary. Talk about the words of the angel that Mary's son was to inherit the throne of his father David. Recall the prophecy about the Anointed One in Isa 9:7. Recall what the people wanted to do after Jesus fed them in the story Jesus Feeds The People. (Make him king by force.)
2. Talk about celebrations when something wonderful seems to be happening. People begin to rejoice singing and dancing. The excitement spreads to others who come to join in. Has anything like this happened among the women?
3. Do the women praise God when something good happens. Do they have songs of praise?

SCRIPTURE BASE: Isa 9:6-7; Jer 23:5; Zec 9:9; Mrk 11:1-11; Luk 19:28-41, 44; Jhn 6:15; 12:12-19

MAJOR THEMES:

1. The prophets said that the Anointed One would be a king and rule on David's throne.
2. The prophet Zechariah said that the King would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.
3. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies and the people recognized him as king.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever joined in a public celebration of a famous person? What about a person that you admired and respected but others did not? Listen to this story and think what you might have done if you were there.

READ: Luk 19:30-31, 34-36

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS THE KING**

One time when Jesus fed the crowd of people who came to hear him teach, he knew that the people intended to make him their king by force. So Jesus left that place and went into the hills by himself. Jesus often taught about the kingdom of God, what was it like, who could enter, and that it had come to Israel. For a long time the people had waited for the promised king to come. They wanted him to overthrow their foreign rulers and restore the glory of Israel. At the birth of Jesus the Wise Men came seeking the One born King of the Jews.

Jesus knew that the time for him to die was very near. He was staying at night outside of

Jerusalem and would only go into the city in the daytime because his enemies looked for him. Jesus had just told a parable about a man of noble birth who went to a foreign country to be appointed king and then to return. In the story the subjects hated the man and did not want him to be their king.

After Jesus had told the story he went ahead toward Jerusalem. As he neared Bethany he sent two of his disciples ahead saying, “Go to the village, you will find a donkey colt there which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring to me. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it’.” They brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people began to spread their cloaks on the road and took palm branches to meet him.

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives toward Jerusalem the whole crowd of Jesus’ followers began joyfully to praise God in loud voice for all the miracles they had seen. Word had spread that Jesus was the one who had called Lazarus out of the tomb.

“Hosanna!” “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the King of Israel!” “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

As the crowd entered Jerusalem some of the Pharisees said, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” But Jesus said, “If I tell them to keep quiet, even the stones will cry out!” So the Pharisees said, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”

The prophet Zechariah had said, “Rejoice and shout daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” It had happened just as the prophets said. The king had arrived.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus The King.
2. Talk about celebrating an important person. Have the women joined in such a celebration?
3. Had the people tried to make Jesus king before? (Yes, after he fed them.)
4. Were the people expecting a king? (Yes, a king who would drive out the foreign rulers and make their nation great again.)
5. Why do the women think that Jesus did not permit the people to make him their king? (His kingdom was to be a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly one.)
6. Why do the women think that Jesus permitted the people to celebrate him as king at this time? (Because the time of his death was near and it was to fulfill prophecy that his should happen.)
7. When the donkey was brought to Jesus what happened? (The people began to celebrate.)
8. Who were the people praising? (They were praising God in heaven and the one coming in God’s name.)
9. Were the religious leaders happy at what was happening? (No, they worried more about Jesus.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” Luk 19:38

or

“Then Nathanael (one of the twelve disciples) declared, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel’.” Jhn 1:49

Note: *For the Muslim listeners the storyer will want to be sensitive. The content of the stories is getting more and more confrontational and may be arousing strong reaction from the listeners. The intent is to prepare the listeners for what is going to happen and be said in the following stories of Jesus’ arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection. Therefore it is necessary to keep them listening. The stories build toward the climax and the vocabulary become more explicit about Jesus as the Son of God. Additional material is used to bridge into the stories to prepare listeners for what follows.*

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES EAT A LAST MEAL**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. Eating a communal meal that is also commemorative speaks strongly to many worldviews. In the Old Testament and Muslim world the women would not have joined the men in such a meal. So this becomes a vicarious experience for them. However, it is a vicarious experience for all believers since that time as none of us were present. So no believer is really excluded.
2. In the Third World many peoples have strong feelings about suffering as they have suffered.
3. The Cup looks back to the sacrificial blood offering poured out for sins.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to recall the time when Joseph invited his brothers to his home to eat a meal. It was a time of renewed fellowship of the family members. Recall the story Jesus Feeds The People. It was Jesus who provided the bread that all shared in eating. It was broken so that all could participate—men and women.
2. Recall that God told Noah to “honor” the blood when eating meat. God was going to use blood to represent something between Him and the people.
3. Recall the story God Provides An Escape From Judgment when He tells the people about eating the Passover meal. This feast was called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Exo 12:1-17; Lev 23:4-8; Mat 26:17-35; Mrk 14:1-31; Luk 22:7-34; Jhn 13:1-38

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus knew that he would soon be betrayed into the hands of his enemies.
2. Jesus wanted his disciples to understand the meaning of his suffering and death.
3. Jesus wanted to assure his disciples that his leaving was purposeful and that he would send his Spirit to comfort them.

ASK THE LISTENERS: When you must go away what preparations do you make? What if tonight you knew that you would die the next day. What would you tell your family?

READ: Luk 22:19-21

TELL THE STORY:**THIS IS MY BROKEN BODY AND MY BLOOD SHED FOR YOU**

The Feast of Unleavened Bread during which the Passover lamb was sacrificed had arrived. Jesus sent two of his disciples ahead and told them, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.” “Where do you want us to prepare it?” they asked. Jesus explained, “As you enter the city you will meet a man carrying a water pot. Follow him to the house he enters and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where may I eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you to a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.”

The disciples found it was just as Jesus told them. So they prepared the Passover meal. When the evening hour had come Jesus reclined with the disciples around the table.

He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God, and broke it, and gave it to them saying, “This is my body which is given for you; eat this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way he took the cup and after giving thanks, said, “This cup is the new covenant in

my blood, which is poured out for you.”

Then Jesus rose from the table, poured water into a basin, tied a towel around his waist, and began to go to each disciple and wash his feet. It was Peter who objected. But Jesus said, “You do not understand what I am doing, but later you will understand. Unless I wash your feet you have no part with me. You call me Teacher and Lord and that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should serve one another.”

Then he said, “One of you is going to betray me—one who is eating with me.” They all looked around the table. One of the disciples asked, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus said, “The one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Judas said, “Teacher, surely not I?” Jesus replied, “Yes, it is you.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him, and he went out to arrange the betrayal.

To Simon Peter Jesus said, “I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” Peter objected, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and even to death.” Again Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.” Peter insisted that he would never deny Jesus and the others agreed, too.

Jesus taught that he must go away to prepare a place for them but he would come again to receive them. “Where are you going? We don’t know the way,” one of the disciples asked. “I am the way, the truth and the life,” Jesus said, “No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well.” Another disciple said, “Show us the Father and that will be enough.” Jesus replied, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. The words I say to you are not my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me.”

Then Jesus taught the disciples many things. “If you love me, you will obey what I command. I will not leave you as orphans for I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit as your Counselor. I give you my peace, not like the peace of the world, so do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. Now abide in me and you will bear much fruit for I am the vine and you are the branches. The Father loves you because you have believed that I came from God. Now I am going back to the Father.” Then Jesus prayed for his followers and they went out into the night to a quiet garden.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story This Is My Broken Body And My Blood Shed For You.
2. Talk about preparations before death. What would you want to tell your family?
3. Did Jesus know where he would eat the last meal with the disciples? (Yes, he told them where.)
4. When Jesus took the bread and blessed it, what did he say to his disciples? (This is my body which is given for you. Eat it in remembrance of Jesus.)
5. Recall that Jesus said he was the bread come down from heaven. Whoever eats that bread would never hunger again and would live forever. (Jhn 6:33, 35, 51))
6. When Jesus took the cup and blessed it, what did he say to his disciples? (This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you.)
7. Talk about the meaning of a covenant. Recall God’s covenant with Abraham and God’s covenant with the Israelites in Moses’ day. (Deu 29:1)
8. What do they think Jesus meant when he said, “No one comes to the Father except by me.”
9. Jesus said to the disciples, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” Talk about this.
10. Jesus said he was giving the disciples his peace, not like the peace of the world. Would anyone like to have this peace? What is it? How can we have it? Talk about forgiveness for sin.
11. What was Peter going to do to Jesus? What was Judas going to do to Jesus? What will you do?

MEMORY VERSE: “...This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me...This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” Luk 22:19b, 20b

JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN/BETRAYED BY A FRIEND**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The religious leaders were desperate to capture Jesus and do away with him. They feared the crowds because Jesus was popular. They did not want to start a riot as the Roman governor would take stern measures against the people. Somehow they had to take Jesus when it was quiet and away from the crowds. Jesus was not staying in Jerusalem at night but was going back to Bethany for the night, though he taught in the Temple during the day.
2. Jesus knew that he was to be God's sacrificial lamb to be offered as an effective and lasting sacrifice for the people's sin. He would suffer for their sin and his blood would be poured out.
3. In becoming sin in the people's place he could no longer be in fellowship with the Father who was holy and sinless. He would be alienated from his Father, separated by sin just as all people had been separated from God by their sin, beginning in the garden with Adam and Eve. So it was a terrible "cup" of suffering indeed. God's face would be hidden from His Son. (Isa 59:2) He would be forsaken by the Father. (Psa 22:1)
4. Yet Jesus was submissive to the Father—"Not my will but your will be done."

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the stories I Must Suffer And Die and Judas Agrees To Betray Jesus.
2. Now Jesus' time was coming when he was to die. He knew it was very soon. It was the Passover time when the people celebrated the time when they killed a lamb and sprinkled its blood on their doors so God's death angel would pass over their house. The sign of blood meant salvation for the family. Recall the story God Provides An Escape From Judgment.
3. Judas had made a bargain with the religious leaders to hand Jesus over in a quiet place. And he had gone to get the Temple guards to lead them to Jesus. Judas knew the quiet garden well.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 26:36-56; Mrk 14:32-50; Luk 22:39-53; Jhn 18:1-12

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus knew what was to happen the next day, that he was to suffer and die.
2. Jesus loved the Father and knew that he must obey his Father's Will.
3. Jesus knew that Judas was coming to betray him in fulfillment of Scripture.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever poured out your soul in a prayer? Were you asking to escape some terrible thing that was certain to happen to you?

READ: Luk 22:39-44

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS PRAYS AND IS BETRAYED**

During his days on earth it was Jesus' custom to seek a quiet place away from the crowds of people in order to pray to the Father. One of his places was a quiet garden just across the valley from Jerusalem. After Jesus and the disciples had eaten the Passover meal, it was already late at night when Jesus led the eleven disciples out of Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane. When they

reached the place Jesus said to the disciples, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch so you will not fall into temptation.” Then Jesus went a bit farther and knelt down and prayed, “Father, everything is possible for you, if you are willing, take this cup from me unless I drink it; yet not my will, but yours be done.” For Jesus was deeply troubled.

An angel from heaven came to comfort and strengthen him for Jesus was praying in great anguish. His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. After some time he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples who were fast asleep. “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them, “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.” Twice more he went away to pray and returned each time only to find the disciples asleep because the hour was late. Each time Jesus had prayed, he asked the Father to take the cup from him, but always ended saying, “May your will be done.”

At last he said to the disciples, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near when the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Just as Jesus was speaking, Judas appeared for he knew the place where Jesus went to pray. With him was a crowd bearing torches and armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders. Now Judas had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? Friend, do what you came for.” Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Jesus. So the soldiers seized Jesus and arrested him.

Then Jesus said to those who had come for him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come for me with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the Temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”

So the soldiers bound Jesus and led him away to the house of a man named Annas who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas the chief priest that year. The disciples fearfully fled away into the night.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Prays and Is Betrayed.
2. Talk about prayer and what it is like to pour out your heart in prayer. Do the women pray?
3. Jesus was a man of prayer. He always prayed to the Father. He often rose early in the morning to seek a place to pray (Mat 14:23; Mrk 1:35; 6:46; Luk 6:12).
4. What did Jesus mean when he spoke of taking the cup from him unless he should drink from it? (The cup represented what was going to happen to him the next day. In the “cup” were physical suffering, humiliation and mocking, shame, and alienation from the Father.)
5. What is it like to be cut off from your father or family? To be despised as unclean, shameful, dishonored? Have any of the women been cut off from their families or the fellowship broken? Remember that Jesus told the disciples, “I and the Father are one.” (Jhn 1:1-2)
6. Each time Jesus ended his prayer with, “Your will be done.” What did he mean by this? (He was submitting to the will of his Father—even if it meant suffering and death.)
7. What happened to the disciples? (It was late, they were full from eating, and they fell asleep.)
8. After praying three times and returning to the disciples, who did Jesus see coming? (Judas with armed guards to arrest him.)
9. What was the signal that Judas arranged? (The one I kiss, he is the one, arrest him.)
10. What happened to the disciples? (They became afraid and ran away.)

MEMORY VERSE: “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.” Jhn 12:27

JESUS IS TRIED, BEATEN AND MOCKED**FOR THE TEACHER:**

1. The real complaint against Jesus is that he had blasphemed God by calling Him Father, making himself equal with God. This was not a valid reason for the Romans to condemn Jesus to death. So the second charge for the Romans would be insurrection—inciting a rebellion against Rome by claiming to be a king.
2. The problem was to find two or more witnesses to testify against Jesus for this was required by the Law of Moses. (Deu 19:15) Their testimony had to be in agreement.
3. Whatever was done had to be done quickly and secretly as there were many pilgrims in Jerusalem for the Passover and Jesus was a popular figure because of his teaching and miracles.

REVIEW:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Must Die. Talk about the accusations against Jesus. His disciples did not observe the traditions of the elders, Jesus said that he was the bread come down from heaven, Jesus said that he only spoke the words that he heard the Father speaking, and I and my Father are one. (Jhn 10:30) The people called him a great prophet. (Luk 7:16)
2. Talk about the matter of jealousy. The religious leaders feared that everyone would follow Jesus. (Jhn 12:19) The religious leaders were afraid. (Jhn 11:48)
3. The religious leaders did not like Jesus because he criticized their hypocrisy. (Luk 12:1)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Psa 27:12; Isa 50:6; 53:4-5, 7-8; Mat 26:57-27:31; Mrk 14:53-15:20; Luk 22:54-23:25; Jhn 18:12-19:15

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Scripture said that the Anointed One would be falsely accused. (Psa 27:12)
2. Scripture said that the Anointed One would be beaten and mocked. (Isa 50:6)
3. Scripture said that the Anointed One would be condemned to die though innocent. (Isa 53:9)

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever been falsely accused? Have you ever falsely accused another person? Have you ever seen someone mocked and beaten though innocent?

READ: Mrk 14:57-59; Mat 28:27-31

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS IS TRIED, BEATEN AND MOCKED**

After Jesus was arrested in the garden he was bound and led before Caiaphas the high priest and the teachers of the law and elders. The religious leaders were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. Many false witnesses came forward to testify, but their testimony did not agree. Jesus remained silent before them. Then the high priest said, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any

more witnesses? You have heard his testimony. What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?" So early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to a decision to put Jesus to death.

Outside in the cold early morning the disciple Peter was warming himself by a fire. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with Jesus." But Peter denied Jesus saying, "Woman, I don't know him!" Two other times someone recognized Peter as a disciple of Jesus. Each time Peter strongly denied it. Then Peter heard a rooster crowing, just as Jesus had said. He went out and wept.

They led Jesus away and handed him over to Pilate, the Roman governor, saying, "We have found this man guilty of subverting our nation. He opposes paying taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king." The governor asked Jesus, "Are you king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "My kingdom is not of this world. It was for this reason that I was born, to testify to the truth." The chief priests and elders were there accusing Jesus, but he gave no answer. The governor asked him, "Don't you hear how many things they are accusing you of?" But Jesus remained silent to the great amazement of the governor. "I find this man innocent of any wrongdoing," the governor declared, "I'll have him beaten and released."

It was the governor's custom at the Feast time to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. There was a notorious murderer named Barabbas who had led a rebellion. So when the crowd had gathered, the governor asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" He knew it was because of envy that the leaders were accusing Jesus.

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to demand for Barabbas to be released and to have Jesus executed. "So which of the two do you want me to release to you?" the governor asked. "Barabbas," they answered. "What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" the governor asked. They all answered, "Crucify him! Let his blood be upon us and our children!" So Barabbas was released and Jesus was flogged in preparation for crucifixion.

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus and gathered all the soldiers around him. They stripped off his clothes and put a scarlet robe on him and placed a crown of thorns on his head. They knelt before him and mocked him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spit on him and struck him on the head again and again.

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Is Tried, Beaten and Mocked.
2. Talk about false accusations. Has anyone been falsely accused? Has anyone falsely accused another? Have any seen some punished after being falsely accused?
3. What accusation did the leaders bring against Jesus? (He claimed to be the Son of God.)
4. What did Jesus confess? (Yes, it is as you say, I am the Son of God.)
5. What accusation did the leaders bring before the Roman governor? (He was leading a rebellion.)
6. When the Roman governor asked Jesus if he were a king, what did he say? (Yes, but my kingdom is not of this world.)
7. Did the governor try to release Jesus? (Yes, he declared him innocent.)
8. When given the choice to release Barabbas or Jesus, who did the people demand? (Barabbas)
9. What did the people demand for Jesus? (Crucify him! Crucify him! Let his blood be on us and our children.)
10. What did the soldiers do to Jesus? (They flogged him, mocked him and spit on him.)

MEMORY VERSE: "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." Isa 53:7

JESUS CRUCIFIED BY ENEMIES AND BURIED BY FRIENDS**FOR THE TEACHER:**

There were many who saw that it was Jesus who died. The Romans were expert in carrying out executions. The captain of the guard who had seen Jesus beaten and mocked and then nailed to the cross testified that it was Jesus who died (Mrk 15:44). Jesus' own mother, Mary, saw that it was Jesus who died (Jhn 19:25). The close disciple John was standing there (Jhn 19:35). Nicodemus was there (Jhn 19:39); the many women who followed Jesus were there (Mrk 15:40-41; Luk 23:49,55). Joseph who buried Jesus asked for his body (Mat 27:58-60). It was Jesus who died. He was dead as the Roman guards certified when they punctured his side with a spear—his blood was already separating into water. (Jhn 19:33-34) The religious leaders were satisfied that Jesus was dead (Mat 27:62-63). It was Jesus who died! Jesus had committed his spirit to God and died. Judas had hanged himself in remorse after seeing what he did (Mat 27:3-5).

REVIEW:

1. Review the words of Jesus as he foretold his approaching death.
2. Review the words of the prophets about the Anointed One who was to suffer and die.
3. Review the story of the lamb that was killed to provide the Passover blood and the time when John the Baptizer proclaimed the words that Jesus was the Lamb of God.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Psa 22:6-8, 16, 18; 34:20; 109:4; Isa 53:4-5, 9, 12; Zec 12:10; Mat 27:32-61; Mrk 15:33-47; Luk 23:26-56; Jhn 19:16-42

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus knew that he was going to suffer and die—He was to be the sacrifice for our sin.
2. Jesus told his followers that he would suffer and die, but on the third day be raised again.
3. Jesus was going to be obedient to his Heavenly Father, even unto death.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Would you be willing to suffer and give your life as a ransom for others? Listen to this story of how Jesus died and was buried.

READ: Luk 23:26-27, 32-34, 48-49

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS DIES AND IS BURIED**

The Roman governor had sentenced Jesus to death. He was given over to the guards to be led away to the place of crucifixion. Many people followed along including some of the women followers who mourned and cried for Jesus. Two other men, who were both criminals, were also led out to be executed. When they came to the hill called The Place of the Skull, they nailed Jesus to a wooden cross and crucified the two criminals also—one on his left and one on his right.

The guards gambled for the clothing of Jesus, even for his seamless undergarment. The people stood watching while the religious rulers mocked Jesus saying, "Aha! He saved others, let him save himself, if he really is the Messiah of God, the Chosen One." "He trusted in God; let God deliver him now, since he said 'I'm the Son of God'." Jesus prayed saying, "Father, forgive them for they don't know what they are doing."

One of the criminals began to revile Jesus, making insulting remarks, "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked the first, "Don't you fear God? We are justly

punished for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Turning to Jesus he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Jesus assured him, “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

Standing by the cross was Mary the mother of Jesus along with Mary’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple John standing nearby, he said, “Woman, here is your son.” And to John he said, “Here is your mother.” So Jesus told John to take care of his mother.

About the middle of the day the sun stopped shining and darkness came over the whole land until about mid-afternoon. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Some of the people thought Jesus was calling to the prophet Elijah to help. In fulfillment of Scripture Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” After tasting some drink held up to him on a sponge, Jesus said, “It is finished! Father, into your hands I give my spirit.” After saying these words, Jesus died. An earthquake shook the land splitting rocks and opening some graves and the bodies of many holy people were raised to life and appeared in Jerusalem after Jesus’ resurrection. In the Temple the heavy veil that separated the Most Holy Place was torn in two from top to bottom.

When the captain of the Roman guard standing nearby heard Jesus cry out and saw how he died, he began to glorify God and said, “Surely this man was God’s Son!” The crowd who had watched returned home beating their breasts.

Those who knew Jesus stood at a distance and saw all these things. Among them were the women who had followed him from Galilee and ministered to him there. Since the next day was the Sabbath and a special day, the religious leaders did not want the bodies to remain on the crosses. So they asked the guards to break the legs of those being crucified so they would die sooner. After breaking the legs of the two criminals they came to Jesus but saw that he was already dead. One of the guards pierced the side of Jesus causing blood and water to flow down. Jesus’ legs were not broken.

A wealthy man named Joseph who was a secret follower of Jesus had a new unused tomb in a nearby garden. He asked for the body of Jesus to bury it. Nicodemus came bringing white linen cloth and a large amount of spices to wrap Jesus’ body for burial according to the custom. A large stone was rolled against the door of the tomb to seal it.

The women who came with Jesus from Galilee sat across from the tomb and saw where and how his body was buried. They returned home to prepare spices and ointments to anoint the body. They would come to the tomb after the Sabbath was past on the third day.

Everything had happened just as the prophets had said—“Not one of his bones will be broken, and They will look upon the one they have pierced.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Dies And Is Buried.
2. Talk about dying as a substitute in another’s place. Is anyone willing to do this?
3. When the religious leaders began to mock Jesus what did he do? (He prayed for them, asking God to forgive them.)
4. Did Jesus care for his mother’s welfare? (Yes, he gave her to John to be her guardian.)
5. When the thief asked Jesus to remember him, what did Jesus say? (Today you will be with me in paradise.) What did this thief demonstrate to Jesus? (His faith in Jesus.)
6. Why did Jesus cry out “My God why have you forsaken me”? (God the holy Father had turned away from the Son when he took upon himself the sins of all people to die in their place.)
7. When God had accepted the sacrifice of Jesus what did Jesus say? (Father I give my spirit to you.)
8. Can the women name those who saw that it was Jesus who died and was buried?

MEMORY VERSE: “And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” Luk 9:22

GOOD NEWS FOR MARY, JESUS IS ALIVE**FOR THE TEACHER:**

There is a story alluded to by Mark (16:9) and Luke (8:2) that Mary Magdalene was among the women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases; she was the one that Jesus had driven seven demons from. We know very little about her. She was from the village of Magdala on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. She was among those women from Galilee who followed Jesus and who gave financial help. She was boldly present at the cross and at the tomb watching Jesus die and be buried. Her devotion was great enough to seek Jesus' body from those who may have taken it away.

REVIEW:

1. Review the story The Women Who Helped Jesus. Recall Mary's deliverance from evil spirits.
2. Review the story The Sinful Woman Who Anointed Jesus. Jesus had compassion on sinners.
3. Review the story I Must Die when Jesus talks about his being raised on the third day.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Psa 16:10; 49:15; Mat 16:21; 26:32; 28:1-10; Mrk 9:9; 16:1-11; Luk 24:1-12; Jhn 2:19; 20:1-18

MAJOR THEMES:

1. The prophet said that the Anointed One (the Messiah) would not decay in the grave.
2. Jesus told his followers that he must die and be raised again on the third day.
3. Jesus told Martha that he was the resurrection and praised Mary (Martha's sister) for her anointing him for the day of his burial.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Can you think of a time when you discovered something wonderful had happened? Listen to this story and learn what Mary Magdalene discovered.

READ: Jhn 20:1-2, 11-14

TELL THE STORY:**GOOD NEWS FOR MARY**

On the next day after the Sabbath, very early in the morning, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought the spices they had prepared to anoint the body of Jesus and went to the tomb. They found the large stone rolled away. When they entered they did not find the body of Jesus. Mary Magdalene went running to tell the disciples, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have laid him!" At the tomb the other women saw two angels in bright clothing. In fear they bowed down with their faces to the ground. The angels said, "Why do you look for the living here among the dead? He is not here; he has risen. Remember his words?" Then the women remembered.

The disciples did not believe the words of the women that seemed like nonsense to them. Simon Peter and John went out and ran toward the tomb. John who was younger arrived first but he did not go in. When Peter arrived he went in and saw the strips of linen lying there as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. He began to wonder what had happened, but when John went inside the tomb he saw and believed.

Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary Magdalene returned and stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw the two angels in white clothing, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." While she was speaking she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

"Woman," Jesus said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Mary thought this was the gardener speaking to her. "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "MARY!"

She cried out, "DEAR TEACHER!"

Jesus said, "Do not cling to me for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went to those who had been with Jesus, as they mourned and wept, and told them the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And so she told them that he had said these things to her.

LET'S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Good News For Mary.
2. Lead the women to talk about the Listening Task—sharing a wonderful discovery with others.
3. What did the women find at the tomb of Jesus? (The door was open and he was gone.)
4. Who did the women find in the tomb? (Two angels who said Jesus had risen from the dead.)
5. Did the disciples believe what the women told them? (No, they thought it nonsense.)
6. When Peter and John came to investigate what did they find? (It was just as the women had said. They saw the grave cloths that had been wrapped around Jesus, but he was gone.)
7. When Mary went back to the tomb who did she see inside? (Two angels.) What did they ask her? (Why are you crying?) When she turned around who did she see? (Jesus, but she did not recognize him.)
8. What did Jesus ask Mary? (Why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?)
9. What did Mary think had happened? (The gardener had hidden Jesus' body.)
10. What did Jesus say to Mary? (Do not hold on to me. Go and tell my brothers that I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.)
11. Talk about this: Mary watched as Jesus died on the cross. Mary watched as Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and quickly wrapped to prepare it for burial. She saw where it was buried in a tomb. She planned to return after the Sabbath to anoint the body with sweet spices. She knew it was Jesus who died and buried. And she knew it was Jesus who now lived. She knew!

MEMORY VERSE: "...Who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom 1:4

or

"But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." Act 2:24

Note: *As Muslims the women may be interested in the little story circulated by the religious leaders after Jesus' resurrection. When the two guards who were posted to guard the tomb to keep Jesus' disciples from removing the body reported about his resurrection, they were paid a large sum of money to say that Jesus' disciples came during the night and stole the body while they were asleep. (Mat 27:62-66; 28:11-15)*

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS FOLLOWERS

FOR THE TEACHER:

This story continues the testimony of those who saw the risen Lord. It is a cluster of two stories: the Emmaus Road story and the Thomas story in two parts. If the cluster is too long, select only one of the stories to tell. There should be good reflection on the part of the listeners from either.

REVIEW:

1. Review the story I Must Die. Talk about Jesus' suffering and approaching death.
2. Review the words of the prophets Isaiah and Zechariah and in the Psalms. See the *Chronological List of Prophecies About the Messiah* at the back.
3. Review the crucifixion story Jesus Dies And Is Buried with special emphasis upon the sadness of the followers of Jesus after they witnessed his death on the cross.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mrk 16:12-13; Luk 24:13-35, 36-43; Jhn 20:19-23, 24-29

MAJOR THEMES:

1. The Emmaus Road story deals with several themes—one is the testimony of the prophets as Jesus reviewed it for the two disciples. The other is a matter of emotion as their hearts burned within them as Jesus taught them.
2. Thomas' story deals with doubt and faith and closes with the statement that those who believe having never seen are blessed.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Do you think you might recognize Jesus if you saw him today? What things would convince you it was Jesus?

READ: Luk 24:13-16,

TELL THE STORIES:

TWO DISCIPLES MEET JESUS ON THE EMMAUS ROAD

The same day that Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene two followers of Jesus were going from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them, but they were kept from recognizing him.

He asked, "What are you discussing as you walk along?"

The two men stood still, their faces very sad. One of them named Cleopas said, "Are you the only one living in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened the past few days?"

"What things?" Jesus asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and the people. But the leaders and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped he was the Messiah. Now it is the third day since this took place. Some of the women amazed us reporting they went to Jesus' tomb and his body was not there.

Then Jesus said to the men, "How foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things, and then enter his glory?"

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village Jesus acted as though he would continue on. But they men urged him to stay the night with them and Jesus agreed to do it.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks and broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus as he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us and opened the Scriptures to us?”

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem and found the disciples and exclaimed, “It is true! The Lord has risen. Then the two told how they recognized Jesus when he broke the bread.

READ: Luk 24:36-39; Jhn 20:24-25

THOMAS SEES JESUS AND BELIEVES

While the men from Emmaus were still talking, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be to you.” The group of disciples were startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost.

Jesus said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” And so Jesus showed them the wounds in his hands and feet from the crucifixion. While they were still did not believe what they saw, Jesus asked them, “Do you have anything to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he ate it in their presence.

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Then he taught them so they could understand the Scriptures: How the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.

Thomas, one of the disciples, was not present when Jesus had appeared. When the ten other disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, he declared, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into the wound on his side, I will not believe.”

A week later the disciples of Jesus were in the house again and Thomas was present. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them saying, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and it into my side. Stop doubting and believe!”

Thomas exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

LET’S TALK:

After getting one or two to retell the two stories, then get the listeners to talk about what had happened in each story. Have them describe the characters in the stories telling what they might have been thinking before Jesus appeared and afterward. Get them to talk about faith and what it takes for one to believe something is true. Do they believe things which they have only heard about but never seen for themselves? Are they able to believe after hearing these stories?

Review some of the OT Scriptures that Jesus might have used as he explained to the disciples why he had to suffer and die and then be glorified by God.

MEMORY VERSE: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ (the Messiah) died for us.” Rom 5:8

JESUS' LAST INSTRUCTIONS, RETURNS TO HEAVEN**FOR THE TEACHER:**

These last lessons begin to draw the net. All the preceding stories have been to draw the women close to the story of redemption. This story begins the set that brings closure to the story. Jesus' return to heaven signaled that his work on earth was finished. He had been obedient to his Heavenly Father, speaking the words he heard the Father speak, and doing the things he saw his Father in heaven doing. Now Jesus returns to the Father as he said he would do (Jhn 14:1-7; 20:17). There are the additional testimonies of the 500 who saw him at one time as well as the followers and the angels at the ascension, Jesus was alive and he was returning to the Father.

REVIEW:

1. Review the story This Is My Broken Body And My Blood Shed For You. Talk about the words of Jesus about going away to prepare a place for his followers there with the Father.
2. Review the resurrection story Good News For Mary. Recall that he said I am returning to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.
3. Recall some of the things Jesus said about "being one with the Father." (Jhn 5:19-23, 36-43; 6:32-38)

SCRIPTURE BASE: Psa 68:18; Mat 28:19-20; Mrk 16:19, Luk 24:49-52; Jhn 6:62; 14:2-3, 28; 20:17; 21:1-14; Act 1:2-11; 1Co 15:6; Heb 8:1 (Rom 8:34)

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Jesus reminded his disciples that he would return to the Father to prepare a place for them, then come again to receive them unto himself.
2. Jesus instructed his followers to wait for the coming Holy Spirit. Then they were to be his witnesses even to the ends of the earth.
3. Jesus returned to the Father as witnessed by his followers; angels reminded that one day he would return just as he had gone away.
4. Jesus' work on earth to suffer and die for sin was finished. He was raised from the dead and was now to take his place of honor at the right hand of God's throne in heaven.

ASK THE LISTENERS: When your work is finished what do you do? What would you expect Jesus to do? How would God the Father honor the Son?

READ: Jhn 14:28; Luk 24:46-51; Act 1:10-11

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS RETURNS TO THE FATHER**

After that wonderful day when Jesus was raised from the dead many people saw that he was alive. There were Mary Magdalene, the two followers on the Emmaus Road, then ten of the disciples and later the same ten when Thomas was present. During 40 days after his resurrection Jesus appeared many times to his disciples and spoke about the kingdom of God.

One time there were more than 500 people who saw him. Jesus even met the disciples at the Sea of Galilee where they had gone fishing and caught nothing. He told them where to drop their net and

it was filled with fish! John said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” On the sea shore Jesus had cooked breakfast for them. Jesus forgave Peter for denying him three times.

As the time came near for Jesus to return to heaven he was eating with the disciples and said, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised. In a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Then Jesus led the disciples to a hillside near Bethany and said, “After you receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in the nearby province, over in Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.”

As Jesus said these words he was taken up into heaven before their very eyes. They watched until a cloud hid him from their sight. The followers were still looking intently up into the sky and worshiping when suddenly two angels dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” the angels said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come again in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.

And so this Jesus, who died and was raised to life, is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven and intercedes with the Father for all believers.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story Jesus Returns To The Father.
2. When a person finishes their work they return home. Jesus had finished the work the Father gave him to do. Now the Father would honor him for his work and obedience.
3. What gift did Jesus tell his followers to wait for? (The gift of the Holy Spirit the Father would send. Jesus had called him the Counselor, the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Power.)
4. What work was Jesus giving his followers to do? (They were to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in the surrounding countryside, in Samaria nearby and to the ends of the earth.)
5. It is important to help the listeners recall that Jesus said he would return to the Father. Show the passages that relate Jesus to the Father: Isa 7:14 (Immanuel—God with man); 9:6; Mighty God, Everlasting Father; Luk 1:31-35 (Son of the Most High God); 2:49 (I must be in my Father’s house); tell the story in Jhn 2:13-16 (cleansing the Temple—“my Father’s house”); 5:19-23, 26-27 (the Father reveals to the Son what He is doing); and finally Jhn 14:8-10 (“In my Father’s house are...”). Many of these scriptures are “strong words” which directly challenge the listeners’ beliefs. Pray about this carefully and follow the Spirit’s leading.
6. The angels said that one day Jesus would return on the clouds of the air just as he had been taken up into heaven. Jesus had promised his disciples that if he went away, he would return for them.
7. Do the women know of anyone else who has come down from heaven from the Father and then returned to the Father in heaven? Do they know of anyone who is preparing a place for them?

MEMORY VERSE: “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” Heb 7:25

Note: *We now look ahead to Jesus’ fulfilling his promise to send his Spirit. He has asked the followers to wait for this Spirit of Power and Truth before they are scattered to become his witnesses.*

One of the goals in these lessons was to work on the relationships found in the stories so that emotional content was balanced with information about Jesus. Any change in attitude toward Jesus will more likely come from the listeners seeing him in a desirable light as a kind, caring, forgiving, healing person than as a sterile, detached “Son of God.” They can find their places in the stories for. And in God’s time find their place at the feet of Jesus to receive his forgiveness for sin and his blessing. The listeners must decide themselves how they will give testimony to this relationship.

JESUS KEEPS HIS PROMISE TO SEND HIS SPIRIT**FOR THE TEACHER:**

This lesson could easily be kept for later in the church planting or discipling sessions. It is a transitional lesson, but it demonstrates quickly that Jesus was fulfilling his promise to send the Spirit as a testimony of his presence with his followers even after returning to heaven. It has been included here as a continuing part of the developing relationship between Jesus and his followers. It was thought an important lesson for those women who either live in fear of the spirit world or who seek the spirit world's help when life's problems come.

REVIEW:

1. Ask listeners to recall the words of Jesus following the Last Supper. (Jhn 14:15-21, 25-26; 15:26) This is not the place for a full lesson on the Holy Spirit and his work. This is an introduction to the Spirit as a fulfillment of Jesus' promise to his disciples and all believers.
2. Review or have someone retell the story Jesus Returns To The Father.
3. Recall the angel's visit to Mary to announce the coming birth of Jesus. It was by God's Holy Spirit this would happen. Many may believe this "spirit" to be the angel Gabriel. Help them to see that it was Gabriel giving news about this special creative work of the Holy Spirit .
4. This is still not the place to develop "the Trinity" of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Keep the emphasis upon the promised Spirit from the Father and that he was a gift to the believers.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Eze 36:26-27; Luk 1:26-27; 2:25; 4:1; Jhn 14:15-21, 25-26; 16:13-15; Act 1:5, 8; 2:1-21

MAJOR THEMES:

1. The Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus to be a Counselor, Comforter, a Spirit of Truth giving testimony of Jesus, and a Spirit of Power.
2. The Holy Spirit was to come on the believers after Jesus had returned to the Father. (departed)
3. The Father would send the Holy Spirit to testify of Jesus.

ASK THE LISTENERS: How can God who is a spirit be present with those who believe in Him? Why do you think Jesus thought it important for his followers to know about the coming Holy Spirit?

READ: Jhn 14:15-17; Act 2:1-4, 17, 21

TELL THE STORY:**THE FATHER SENDS THE HOLY SPIRIT**

A prophet named Ezekiel said a time was coming when God would put his Spirit in believers. Another prophet named Joel told about a wonderful time when God would pour out his Spirit on all people. The prophet John the Baptizer was to be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his birth. It was the Holy Spirit who would cause Mary to give birth to the Son of the Most High God. That same Spirit cam on Jesus after he was baptized and drove him into the desert to be tested by Satan.

To his disciples Jesus said, "I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counselor to be

with you forever. The world cannot accept him because it does not see him or know him. But you will know him because he lives with you and will be in you...If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” And again Jesus said, “When the Counselor comes, the one I will send from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, he will testify about me.” Then as Jesus was returning to heaven he told his followers, “Wait until the Holy Spirit comes on you, then you will receive power.”

And so not long after Jesus had returned to heaven, all the believers were gathered in one place. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a strong wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. The people saw what looked like tongues of fire that separated and came to rest upon each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit helped them.

There were many God-fearing people still in Jerusalem after the Passover. They had come from every nation under heaven. When they heard the sound, a crowd came together and in amazement each heard the believers speaking in their own language. They said, “We hear these people declaring the wonders of God in our own languages.” Many were asking one another, “What does this mean?” Some, however, mocked them and said, “They have been drinking wine.”

Peter, one of the disciples, stood and spoke to the crowd telling them what they saw and heard was fulfillment of the prophet Joel’s words, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

That same Holy Spirit today honors Jesus by giving testimony. The Holy Spirit is in the world today convicting the world of sin. He is the Spirit of Truth.

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story The Father Sends The Holy Spirit.
2. Review the listening task question: How can God who is a spirit be present with believers?
Why do the women think Jesus wanted believers to know about the Holy Spirit?
3. What did the prophet Ezekiel say was going to happen? (God would put his Spirit in believers.)
4. Who can recall what happened when Jesus was baptized by John? (The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus like a dove from heaven.)
5. What did Jesus say about the Holy Spirit he was sending? (He would be a Counselor and he would be with believers forever.)
6. What did Jesus say about anyone who obeys him and loves him? (Jesus and the Father would come to them and make their home with them.) How can this happen? (By God’s Holy Spirit.)
7. What will the Holy Spirit say about Jesus? (He will testify about him—that he is the Messiah.)
8. What did Jesus tell his followers to do after he returned to heaven? (Wait in Jerusalem until he sent the Holy Spirit, then they would receive power.)
9. Did Jesus keep his promise to send the Holy Spirit? (Yes, the Spirit came on all the believers.)

MEMORY VERSE: “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised (the Messiah) Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” Rom 8:11

JESUS IS THE TRUE HIGH PRIEST**FOR THE TEACHER:**

This lesson deals with several main points. There is no need for any priest except the most qualified one who alone has made the acceptable sacrifice for all sin. Jesus sprinkled his own blood in the Holy Place. Priests descended from Aaron had to repeat their sacrifices daily so they were ineffective; a better sacrifice was needed. The priesthood over the years had become corrupt and uncaring, even to the point of offering blemished sacrifices or encouraging the worship of false gods. Christ is compared to a priest like Melchizedek who was pictured as without beginning or end (eternal), the king of righteousness (the meaning of his name) and king of Salem (peace). The lesson also reminds the seeker that it was only Jesus who had made provision for sin; he is the only mediator between God and all people.

REVIEW:

1. There is an implied story in Malachi (2:1-9) of priests who do not honor God's name. In Zechariah (3:1-7) Joshua the high priest stands clothed in his own righteousness which is filthy rags in God's sight. The priests during Jesus' time were among those opposing Jesus and it was the high priest himself who first condemned Jesus to death in his prophecy (Jhn 11:50).
2. Jesus fulfilled the promise made to Abraham that one descended from him would bless all people. The old covenant was under the Law and mediated through the descendants of Aaron. The new covenant was to be mediated through the one who forgave sins and who offered his own life as the sacrificial sin offering.
3. Recall any of the stories in which Jesus intervened (mediated) to forgive, bless in peace, heal, free from demon oppression or restore to life.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Gen 14:18-20; Psa 110:4; Zec 6:12-13; Heb 2:14-18; 5:6; 6:20; 7:1-3, 11-28; 8:1-6; 9:11-15, 24-28; 10:11-14, 18

MAJOR THEMES:

1. Christ returned to heaven from where he came, and sat down at the right hand of the Father and daily makes intercession for believers. (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 8:1)
2. Christ represents a better priesthood, holy, righteous, eternal.
3. Christ alone is qualified to be our priest because he offered his own sinless blood and has become the only mediator between God and man.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Who are you trusting to intercede between yourself and God? Is it the right person, the most qualified person?

READ: Heb 8:1-2; 9:11-12, 15

TELL THE STORY:**THE TRUE HIGH PRIEST**

It happened during the days of Abraham that his nephew Lot and his family were taken as hostage by foreign kings. Abraham took some of his servants and freed his relatives. Upon returning home

he was met by the mysterious Melchizedek who was King of Salem and priest of the Most High God. He blessed Abraham in the name of God Most High and accepted an offering from him. Many years later the psalmist wrote that a priest was coming one day who would be like Melchizedek. Over the years the priests who were descended from Moses' brother Aaron fell into sin and even led the people to sin. Their sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again and were only a reminder of the better sacrifice that was needed. In the days of Jesus the High Priest had even become a political office and those who served did not even believe in the resurrection of the dead. So a new and better high priest was needed.

On the night before Jesus was crucified he told his disciples at their Passover meal together that the bread which he broke was his body which was given for them. And the cup filled with drink represented the new covenant in Jesus' own blood which was being poured out for believers. On that same night Jesus told the disciples that he must go away to prepare a place for them in the house of his Father. After his death and resurrection Jesus said that he must return to his Father. And so he did return to heaven as his followers watched from a hillside near Jerusalem.

Later God inspired one of the prophets to write about what happened and to record the words in a letter we know today as "Hebrews". It was written to new believers who were in danger of returning to their former beliefs and religious ceremonies. It was to prove that Jesus alone is the true High Priest who returned to the Father and took his place at the right hand. It was Jesus alone who entered the heavenly tabernacle as our High Priest. He did not enter with the blood of animals, but he entered the Most Holy Place with his own blood and obtained salvation and forgiveness of sin for all who believe. So believers have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus the Messiah. There is no longer any sacrifice needed for sin. We must accept what God the Father through Jesus has done for us.

So by this shedding of his own blood, Jesus is the mediator (priest) of the new covenant between God and man. There is no other mediator, no other true high priest to help us. And from his place at the right hand of the Father Jesus makes intercession for all who believe in him.

LET'S TALK:

1. Who intercedes for you before God? Is it someone on earth? Is it some person you consider to be holy? How is this person qualified to intercede for you?
2. Think about how Jesus is qualified to be the only and true high priest. What qualifies him—his position before the Father, his work, his righteousness (sinless and holy).
3. What would keep you from accepting Jesus as your High Priest? Do you believe that his blood was shed for your sin? Do you believe that he alone of all the people who have lived on earth can intercede for you before God?
4. One day you will stand before God to answer for how you have lived your life. Who will stand beside you to be your mediator?
5. Recall some of the stories in which Jesus intervened for women—the sinful woman who anointed the feet of Jesus in Simon's house (Luk 7), Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus (Luk 10), the woman accused of adultery (Jhn 8). Wouldn't it be wonderful to have an intercessor like this?
6. It is our relationship with the Father through Jesus Messiah the Son that counts. We can't know the Father unless we know the Son. For the Son has revealed the Father to us.

MEMORY VERSE: "Christ is the mediator (priest) of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance..." Heb 9:15a

NOTE: *Don't force your listeners to do what they are not ready to do. Three lessons follow to continue the emphasis upon Christ, the invitation and the coming judgment.*

JESUS PROMISED TO RETURN ONE DAY**FOR THE TEACHER:**

Many Muslims have some understanding that Jesus will one day return to earth, get married and have a family. Some have a weak understanding that somehow he may be involved in the judgment but that it will be the Prophet who will help the faithful to cross the narrow bridge in that fateful day.

Another weak area is that of Allah's promises which many believe he is not bound to keep since he is Allah. In the lessons we have tried to pick up on promises and their fulfillment to show that Allah does indeed keep his word. And that Jesus Messiah as the One who came from Allah also keeps his word. Jesus promised to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit. He did and the Spirit came upon the believers. Jesus said he was going away to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. And he said that he would return one day for them. He will!

We will reach back and pick up another parable Jesus told about the Master who went away and then suddenly returned one day.

REVIEW:

1. Jesus' promises to his disciples after the Last Supper.—prepare a place, return for believers, send Holy Spirit, give his peace. Recall the words of the angels when Jesus was taken up into heaven—he will return one day just as you have seen him go up into heaven.
2. Review the story of the foolish virgins who were not prepared when the bridegroom arrived.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 24:1-31, 36-51 (30-31); 26:64; Mrk 8:38; Luk 12:35-46; 17:20-37; 1Th 4:16-17

MAJOR THEMES:

1. The focus in this lesson is the return of Jesus. He will fulfill his promise to do so.
2. The return will come suddenly without warning.
3. It will be a joyous time for those who believe in Jesus and trust him to forgive their sins.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Have you ever been caught by surprise when someone returned home or to your village suddenly? Did you know they were coming? Did you know when they were to come?

READ: Mat 24:38-41

TELL THE STORY:**JESUS IS COMING AGAIN**

One day when Jesus was in Jerusalem with his disciples they called his attention to the beautiful Temple. Jesus told them that a time was coming when the Temple would be destroyed. Later when Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives across the valley from Jerusalem his disciples asked him, "Tell us when will this happen; what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?"

Jesus answered, "Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will lead many astray. Many things will happen to the nations of the world. The good news of the kingdom of God will be told everywhere, then the end will come."

Jesus said that his coming would be like the lightning that flashes across the sky. The people will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. Angels will announce the coming with loud trumpets. And they will come to gather believers from all the earth.

“For it will be like in the days of Noah, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage right up to the day of the flood. They knew nothing about what was going to happen.” Jesus continued to explain, “Two men will be working in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain; one will be taken and the other left behind. So keep watch, because you do not know on what day or what hour your Lord will come.”

Then Jesus told this story, “Who, then is the faithful and wise servant, the one the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him faithful when he returns. But suppose the master put the servant in charge and then went away. And while the master was gone the wicked servant said to himself, ‘My master is staying away for a long time.’ So he begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with other wicked people. The master of that servant will come on a day when the servant does not expect him, at an hour the servant does not know. Then the master will punish the servant and banish him to a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus told his disciples, “You must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. No one knows that day, not even the angels in heaven, only the Father.”

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven. The dead in Christ will rise first. After that we who are still alive will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

There is a warning in the End Times Book (Revelation 16:15) which says, “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

LET’S TALK:

1. Ask someone to retell the story about the servant who was not expecting his master’s return.
2. Talk about promises and what it means when a person does what they have promised to do.
3. Do the listeners believe the words of Jesus? Many times he referred to his promised return.
4. Some believe that Jesus will marry when he returns and have a family. This is not what God’s Word teaches. The believers in Jesus are his family. Remember when the mother and brothers of Jesus went to get him (Mrk 3:33-35). He said, “Who are my family (mother, brothers and sister)? Here they are! Whoever does the will of God.”
5. Remember the words of Jesus when he was talking with Nicodemus? “For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (Jhn 3:16)
6. “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise...He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2Pe 3:9)

MEMORY VERSE: “So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” Heb 9:28

Note: *This lesson continues to keep the door open for those who will respond to the invitation to make Jesus their Savior and Lord. If it is not needed at this time it may be used later when discipling new believers and talking about the return of Jesus and the coming judgment.*

JESUS RECEIVES HIS OWN, JUDGES SINNERS**FOR THE TEACHER:**

The focus of this lesson is on the coming judgment. This continues to touch upon the Muslim's beliefs about the return of Jesus and the judgment at the end of the world. In the same way that the last lesson touched on the words of Jesus about his return, this one focuses on the judgment and Jesus' right to be the judge—a right given him by the Father.

The role of the Prophet in traditional belief is not mentioned nor openly challenged. Truth is presented to displace error as the story of Jesus continues. There is an integrity in the story of Jesus which binds it all together as true. This lesson, too, can be delayed until a later time if it is not needed. It is presented here as the continuing open door for those who are slow to express their faith in Christ as the Messiah and as their Savior.

REVIEW:

1. Review the stories of the judgment of God in Noah's day or of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. In the story of The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luk 16:31) Jesus told his listeners that they were not heeding the words of Moses. In Jhn 5:45-47 Jesus said the words of Moses accused (judged) the unbelieving people.

SCRIPTURE BASE: Mat 13:40-43; 16:27; 25:31-46 28:18; Jhn 5:19-30; 8:16; 9:39; 10:1-5, 14-16, 27-30; Rev 20:11-15`

MAJOR THEMES:

1. God has honored Jesus by giving him authority and power and appointing him as judge.
2. Jesus, like the good shepherd, knows his sheep and will separate them from unbelievers.
3. The judgment of Jesus is righteous and true.

ASK THE LISTENERS: Are you ready to stand before the judge of all the earth? One day all people will stand to be judged? Who is this judge?

READ: Mat 25:32

TELL THE STORY:**THE SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP**

Once when Jesus healed a man who was born blind some of the religious leaders who opposed Jesus heard him talking to the man. Jesus said, "It was for judgment that I have come into the world."

Jesus told the story about a good shepherd who loves his sheep and who is willing even to give his life for his sheep. "The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead on them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will never follow a stranger, they will run away because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Later Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and

they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Again Jesus spoke about the time when he returns when he said, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" So those who refused and did not obey, "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

In the Book of the End Times it tells what will happen at the great judgment. The writer said, "I saw all the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. A book was opened, which is the book of life. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." Then speaking of the heavenly city he said, "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." Remember the words of John the Baptizer who proclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Jesus is that Lamb and the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep.

For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

LET'S TALK:

These last lessons are becoming more confrontational. Hopefully there is a good relationship and level of trust built between storyer and listeners by this point.

The theme of separation is emphasized more strongly than that of punishment. For those living in a communal society the idea of being "cut off" may be frightening. Talk about what it means to be separated from your family, friends and loved ones.

There are many traditional beliefs about how one might enter Paradise or be cleansed even in hell. The point here is not to debate these teachings but to keep the focus upon Jesus as the One that the Father has given the authority to judge. Will he know us as one of his sheep? Or not?

MEMORY VERSE: "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead." Act 17:31

Note: *The next lesson is the final one in this set. It may be used at any time after the resurrection story that you believe the listeners are ready to respond. This lesson on the judgment has continued to touch on general worldview issues.*

One of the weak areas in Muslim doctrine is that of heaven for women. You may need to insert such a lesson before the final one if there still is resistance. The story of the five prepared virgins speaks beyond their wisdom in having enough oil so they were included in the wedding festivities. The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus picks up the theme of blessedness for the believer after death. The story of the wedding (Mat 22:1-14) speaks of being properly clothed (may want to see Isa 61:10, Rev 3:5). The story of the widow and seven brothers speaks to the issue of whether there is marriage in heaven (Mat 22:23-30). In 1Co 15 you might pick up some gleams of the future state of our bodies after the resurrection. And Revelation 21-22 speak about the new heaven and earth.

IT'S YOUR DECISION**FOR THE TEACHER:**

We believe that salvation comes from faith in a person, who he was, what he did for us, and what he is going to do. It all comes down to faith in that person. Not in works or anything we can or could ever do to save ourselves from God's wrath. It may be that the issues of alienation or fear of separation are very important to a decision for or against Christ.

In the stories about Jesus it is hoped that the emotional content as well as the information has produced an openness in spirit to Jesus. Through the stories you have tried to hold the listeners' attention and get them to think about the issues they must decide upon. Now the time has come for them to consider that decision if they have not done so already.

So this lesson is a recap to bring to a focus and close what one must do when confronted with the story of Jesus. They must decide. How the women express that decision in their culture and possible hostility of others may be an important consideration. Study the page on Asking For Decisions. Decide how best to press for a commitment.

REVIEW:

1. You have the freedom to recall any of the stories and themes which have been covered. From the Let's Talk times there should have been some indication of interest and growing conviction among the women.
2. Recall the story The Sinful Woman Who Anointed Jesus. She realized that she was a sinner needing Jesus' forgiveness. Consider the story Jesus Forgives an Adulterous Woman. Recall the story of the two men who went to the Temple to pray (Luk 18:9-14). The Pharisee was blind to his sin. The tax collector realized his sinfulness before God and begged for God's mercy—"be merciful to me a sinner."
3. Review some scriptures:
 Pro 20:9 "Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin'?"
 Isa 53:6 "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."
 Isa 64:6 "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."
 Rom 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
 1Jh 1:8 "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

SCRIPTURE BASE: Jhn 6:44, 63, 65; 14:6; Rom 5:1-2, 6, 8-9, 19; Eph 1:7, 13-14; 2:8-9

MAJOR THEMES:

1. All are sinners and deserving of God's punishment—death. (Rom 3:23; 6:23)
2. Our sin has separated us from our God. (Isa 59:2)
3. We are helpless to save ourselves. (Rom 5:6)
4. We are unclean needing cleansing. (Eze 36:25)
5. Our own righteousness is like filthy rags before God. (Isa 64:6)
6. It is God the Father who calls us to salvation and who sent his Son to die for our sins. (Jhn 6:44)
7. Salvation is totally the gift of God. While we were still sinners Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8)
8. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other there name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. (Act 4:12)
9. Jesus taught that we must decide for or against him in this life. (Luk 16:19-31; Heb 9:27)

ASK THE LISTENERS: What is the most important decision you've ever made? Are you sure?

READ: Jhn 4:42

TELL THE STORY:

ITS YOUR DECISION

You are a daughter of Adam and Eve. You have inherited their sinful nature. You will pass it on to your children. That is our inherited nature. Our sins have separated us from our God. Our ancestors Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden of God after they disobeyed His command. The prophet Isaiah said that our sins hide God's face from us and have separated us from our God. We are made unclean and impure because of our sin. We are a defiled people.

God is a holy God who is righteous and without sin. He hates sin and judges all sin and will punish the sinner. In the days of Noah God judged the whole earth because of the terrible sinfulness of the people. No one was able to save themselves from God's wrath except those God helped. Salvation only comes from God. God is a merciful God who made us and who loves us. He wants us to be forgiven of our sin and look to Him for salvation. He gave the blood sacrifice as a temporary covering of sin until the day when He would send His own Son, the Messiah, who was Jesus.

Jesus taught about the kingdom of God and how to enter it. One must be born again of the Spirit to enter the kingdom. Jesus also came to die for our sin, his blood to be the covering for our sin. He took upon himself our suffering and died our death so that we might once again have fellowship with the Father in heaven. To have this fellowship we must be forgiven of our sins. We must confess Jesus as God's Son, the One come from God who also became the Son of Man.

We must confess our sin and accept the forgiveness and salvation that God has provided in Jesus. It is God who calls us to salvation. He provides it freely to all who will believe. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved—it is only Jesus.

All who believe and call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. But we must do it in this life. It is appointed upon us once to die and after that the judgment. We have the testimony of Moses and the Prophets. We have the testimony of angels, of God the Father, of Wise Men, of Samaritans, of the disciples, of sinful women who came to Jesus for forgiveness. We are without excuse and we will be held accountable. God has given Jesus the authority to judge everyone.

This story is about you and me. We are the sinner who needs to be forgiven and cleansed. You have heard the story in God's Word. You've heard about Jesus and know him through his words and what he did in the stories. Now you must decide whether to believe in him or not. It is your life and your decision will be eternal. Choose wisely!

LET'S TALK:

1. Talk about the most important decision each woman has ever made. What about this one?
2. Talk about the story. It may be difficult to retell. But talk about it.
3. What do the women think of Jesus? Do they believe Jesus was who he said he was?
4. Is anyone able to confess they are a sinner before a holy God? What are they counting on to save them from God's wrath? Are they sure of its effectiveness?
5. Is anyone ready to believe in Jesus and accept his forgiveness for sin and receive eternal life?

MEMORY VERSE: "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him." 1Jh 4:10

ASKING FOR DECISIONS

The primary purpose in sharing the Bible story is to lead listeners to profess their faith in Christ. By publicly professing their faith the listeners demonstrate the work of Christ in their lives. The public profession of faith is a testimony to others in the group who are still undecided. It is helpful for the storyer to know who has reached this point of decision and who has not. Learn to look for cultural ways this decision is communicated.

Early Responders. It may be that along the way various members of the group have come under early conviction because of the stories or issues discussed in the sessions, and are already asking what to do. For those who begin asking early it is wise to test them to see what they already may understand about salvation. Do this privately as other members of the group may not be ready to consider such matters.

If the indications come late in the storying then it could be helpful to encourage those expressing a desire to respond to wait just a bit so that a general invitation can be made to the whole group so that others might respond. This may be the best approach if there is anticipated persecution or strong interference by the family members in listeners' decisions.

Signalling Belief. If the primary target group is Muslim women in rural areas, there may be a need to indicate different ways to *safely* express one's faith in Jesus. For some women it may mean only a nod of the head at decision time. For others a whispered word in the storyer's ear or a mark on paper can be an alternative way to express their decision. It is always good to have an oral expression or testimony if possible as this serves to strengthen both the believer and those listening.

Where persecution is strong a quiet "heart" decision leading into a changed life and desire for discipling may be all that is possible. Scripture memory is very important to strengthen this.

The Storyer's Own Testimony. The storyer may want to end with her own testimony of how she professed faith in Christ as Savior and what that decision means to her. This sets an example and may trigger the same response in others. Previous experience with inquirers and new believers in the area will suggest what is the best approach to follow.

The New Believer's Turmoil. Realize the turmoil that the new believer may be experiencing. A wonderful thing has happened in her life and she wants to share it but realizes that other family members may not receive the news gladly. Also she has many thoughts and questions about how her life now will be different than it was before. She will need immediate affirmation and support. The sure work of Satan will be to cast doubts over the validity of her decision and to bring immediate opposition to weaken her resolve to follow Christ.

Prayer For Each Listener Is Essential. The point of decision is critical. The storyer has been praying all along for her own preparation as well as for the women to have open and attentive hearts. Now the prayer is for faith and courage of each listener to do what the Spirit is leading them to do. Pray for each listener by name. Pray for family members known to be opposed to the gospel who might hinder a decision.

Delayed Decisions. Some decisions may be delayed in coming. Never give up hope that the gospel will prevail. Pray for a quiet decision that each listener can make public in due time. Be prepared to repeat key stories if response is slow in coming. A review of the key stories will serve to strengthen new believers and to begin their discipling. It also gives time for slow responders to think about their decision. Encourage the sharing of testimonies by those who have professed faith in Jesus as Savior.

Backsliding or Recanting. This will happen. Some women may have second thoughts after getting away from the group. Others may come under severe family pressure or persecution. For those who practice folk religion petitions and worship it may take some time for them to be able to discontinue the practice. Be patient and pray with them. Use appropriate story lessons to strengthen them and to challenge them to rely upon Jesus alone. Those who backslide are not lost to the cause. Be patient with them, continuing to pray for them. The seed has been planted in their hearts.

THE NEXT STEP

The next step is to form a worship group leading to a church if this has not already begun to happen. The primary goal was to evangelize and to get some indication of the women's decision to believe in Christ. Following that the goal is to establish or plant a viable New Testament church. This can take time. And it will require patience. It is not uncommon for the storyer to get to the point of establishing a church and then to have the group of listeners fall apart. This is discouraging. It does not necessarily mean that all is lost. It may mean having to work with only one or two who continue to express interest or who feel secure enough to continue.

Three Expressions Are Needed. First is the need for **expressed knowledge** leading to modeling of New Testament worship. There are stories of individual as well as corporate worship in the Old Testament. Most likely the focus has been on instances of individual or family worship like in the Abraham stories or those of Jacob or someone like Hannah. What do followers of Jesus do? How can they express their love for him and for the Father? What are the activities of worship? Where can one worship? When should one begin worship?

Second is the need for **spiritual and emotional expression** in worship. The group will need to develop their own model which may reflect cultural and emotional needs of each member. For many corporate worship will be a new experience. This needs time to develop as members learn to express their love for the Savior corporately. They need to see how individuals can interact with one another in worship.

Third is the need for **ministry expressed as an outlet for newly discovered spiritual gifts** and desire to serve their Savior and Lord. This has a two-pronged effect. First it provides a **release for emotional and spiritual energy** that builds up from worship and fellowship. It is a way to express one's love for their Lord. Then it follows that ministry provides a **powerful testimony of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the power of intercessory prayer**. For many this will be prayer for physical or emotional healing, or deliverance from influence of evil spirits. For others it will be a testimony of changed lives as the Spirit convicts of sin and leads new believers to repentance. The women will want to learn how to intercede for the needs of their families so that former religious practices are no longer attractive.

What To Teach Next. The Book of Acts provides the stories to meet these needs. In Acts there are stories that model worship of the new believers without limiting local culturally appropriate expressions of worship. The Acts stories (and some of the Epistles stories) reflect corporate worship practice and the individual's responsibility. Ministry models are illustrated in the wealth of stories. There are 16-24 Acts stories which are helpful for planting the church. Use more or less as needed. Also feel free to repeat stories as well as to reflect back into the four Gospels and the Old Testament to pick up on acceptable worship and ministry.

The Acts stories also begin modeling the believer's lifestyle. This will be emphasized even more strongly in the following Epistles lessons which are sometimes called *Characterization in Christ* lessons. Here the stories are not as strongly organized but there are many stories implied as well as common problems mentioned that the Epistle writers speak to. Since the Epistles are like a treasure chest of spiritual gems, far too many to handle in a short time, it is necessary to choose those which best speak to discipleship needs of the group. Other truths can be filled in later. Themes like repentance (the changed life), faith in Christ alone, and hope that endures are important to emphasize. The woman may be encouraged by the teachings on the marriage and home.

Continue Scripture Memory. Especially among oral communicators or where possession of a Bible is not safe, Scripture memory provides an oral Bible that is discreet and easy for the woman to recall and meditate on. Encourage the women to recall verses when they feel tempted to sin or discouraged. Also they can recall verses for a quiet personal worship time during their day.

ABOUT USING TEACHING AIDS

The Importance Of Teaching Aids In Bible Storying.

1. Teaching aids help to hold attention—provide a focal point.
2. Teaching aids provide visual and other sensory input to enhance the hearing.
3. Teaching aids can provoke recall of earlier stories and biblical truth.
4. Teaching aids may provide a sense of encouragement for training timid storyers.
5. Teaching aids can provide an element of “authority” for those otherwise not culturally qualified to teach.
6. Teaching aids can help to clarify new concepts and activities not previously known by the listeners.

Sources Of Teaching Aids.

There are two sources for teaching aids. People usually think of what is already available like Bible picture sets or flannelgraph sets. These materials most likely will need to be supplied from outside sources. They will be more costly. Picture sets which are culturally appropriate (racial appearance, social positioning in picture, colors, setting) are very useful in giving a powerful visual image to a story. Be sure to look for locally available picture sets.

The other source is for the storyer (or another local person) to make their own from locally available materials or from low cost imported materials but “assembled” locally. Literacy is a consideration in what kinds of materials are needed. Locally made teaching aids may be more culturally acceptable because of the “little” things that help to identify it as local. Some Bible storyers have a creative time when prospective new storyers are led to make their own teaching aids.

Some sources of teaching aids are listed on the next page. Here are some ideas for making your own teaching aids either from scratch or from outside materials supplied by the storyer.

1. Make a teaching book. Using the small *Look Listen & Live* pictures (see next page) and a clear file folder, one can assemble a teaching book that is “picture driven”. That is, the pictures lead from story to story and trigger recall of each story. On each page a scripture passage may be written under the picture and a story synopsis written on the facing page. This can be very handy for witnessing with Bible stories in a home or one-on-one setting. A clear file of 20 or 40 pages will do nicely. The storying book can be edited as needed by simply changing the pictures, scriptures and story synopsis. An alternative is to paste pictures into a school composition book. Black & white line drawings can be easily traced and colored at low cost.
2. Make *Characteristics of God* teaching charts. These can be hand lettered on durable paper. Or they may be painted on a cloth. In some countries silk screening is very low cost and provides a durable chart which may be rolled up for storage and transport and hung from a stick for display.
3. Look for local artists and for those with some ability to draw figures and scenes. Even a crude local drawing may communicate better than an imported one. The scenes do not need to be highly detailed, but only suggestive of the story theme.
4. Look for locally available objects by which to display or construct items needed to illustrate the stories. A small pile of stones can be made into an altar. Beware of making clay figures or animals as they may take on some significance as an idol or fetish.
5. Use simple dramas with simple speaking parts, or role play. Develop a drama team.

TEACHING AIDS:

“Telling the Story...” Chronological Bible teaching pictures, color 13"x17". Larger set of 105 contains two maps and includes stories through Acts. Short set of 40 includes mostly core story pictures used for evangelism.

“Telling the Story...” 105 pictures

“Telling the Story...” 40 pictures

“Telling the Story...” 103 b/w line drawings 8.5"x11"

Church Strengthening Ministry
Box 2656 MCPO
1266 Makati, MM, PHILIPPINES
Fax 63-2-512-1499

“Look, Listen & Live” Eight color flipcharts and picture booklets. Flipcharts are 13"x17" and spiral bound. Each flipchart contains 24 pictures with 3-5 stories in each. Five books of OT stories, two of Jesus, and one of Acts. Keyed story scripts in short form suitable for children or beginning readers and long form for students and adults suggest the story to use.

Language Recordings Inc.
Private Mail Bag 19
Castle Hill, NSW 2154
AUSTRALIA (Look for a LRI or Gospel Recordings office near you.)

Bible in Felt (Betty Lukens) Colorful flannelgraph set in two sizes which comes with key for 150 Bible stories but can be used to tell more stories. Large with 36"x48" backgrounds and 12" figures for larger groups. Small set with 24"x36" backgrounds and 6" figures suitable for smaller groups.

Jim and Jane Felt Set Low detail simple easy-to-use colorful felt set that presents days of creation, Adam & Eve and a graphic presentation of sin in the heart and cleansing. Could be used in initial lessons on creation and sin and then to bring closure at the decision lessons.

Christian Felts Company
15306 Ashburton
Houston, TX 77040 USA
713-466-0073 73234,601@compuserve.com

PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH

Prophecies		Fulfillment
Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers, he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.	Would be the "Offspring of a woman"	Gal 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law. (Luk 2:7; Rev 12:5)
Gen 18:18 Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. (Gen 12:3; 22:18)	Promised offspring of Abraham	Act 3:25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed." (Mat 1:1; Luk 3:34)
Gen 17:19 Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.	Promised offspring of Isaac	Mat 1:2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers." (Luk 3:34)
Num 24:17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel, He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of the sons of Sheth. (Gen 28:14)	Promised offspring of Jacob	Luk 3:34 ...the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor. (Mat 1:2)
Gen 49:10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of nations is his.	Will descend from tribe of Judah	Luk 3:33 ...the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah. (Mat 1:2-3)
Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. (Isa 11:1-5; 2Sa 7:13; Jer 23:5;)	Heir to the throne of David	Mat 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Mat 1:6) Luk 1:32-33 ..The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."
Mic 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, our of you will come for me one who will be the ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times.	Place of birth	Mat 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem. (Luk 2:4-7)
Dan 9:25 Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven "sevens" and sixty-two "sevens". It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.	Time of birth	Luk 2:1-2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) (Luk 2:3-7)
Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and you will call him Immanuel.	Born of a virgin	Mat 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. (Luk 1:26-35)
Jer 31:15 This is what the Lord says, "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.	Slaughter of infants	Mat 2:16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. (Mat 2:17-18)
Hos 11:1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.	Escape into Egypt	Mat 2:14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt. (Mat 2:15)
Isa 9:1-2 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the gentiles, by way of the sea, along the Jordan—The people wa king in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.	Ministry in Galilee	Mat 4:12-16 When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area near Zebulun and Naphtali—to fulfill what was said by the prophet Isaiah: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people living in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

Deu 18:15 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.	A Prophet, Like Moses	Jhn 6:14 After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." (Joh 1:45; Act 3:19-26)
Psa 110:4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." (Zec 6:12-13)	A Priest, like Melchizedek	Heb 6:20 Where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. (Heb 5:5-6; 7:15-17)
Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Psa 2:2)	Rejected by Jews	Jhn 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. (Jhn 5:43; Luk 4:29; 17:25; 23:18)
Isa 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (Psa 45:7; Isa 11:3-4)	Characteristics	Luk 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. (Luk 4:18)
Zec 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Isa 62:11)	His triumphal entry	Jhn 12:13-14 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written. (Mat 21:1-11; Jhn 12:12)
Psa 41:9 Even my close friend, whom I trust, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.	Betrayed by a friend	Mrk 14:10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. (Mat 26:14-16; Mrk 14:43-45)
Zec 11:12 I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it" So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. (Zec 11:13)	Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Mat 26:15 And asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted for him thirty silver coins. (Mat 27:3-10)
Zec 11:13 And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.	Money returned for a potter's field	Mat 27:6-7 The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. (Mat 27:3-5, 8-10)
Psa 109:7 When he is tried, let him be found guilty, and may his prayers condemn him. May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership.	Judas Commits Suicide After Betraying Jesus	Mat 27:3-5 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priest and the elders... So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself."
Psa 27:12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence. (Psa 35:11)	False witnesses accuse him	Mat 26:60-61 But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward and declared, "this fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"
Isa 53:5 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. (Psa 38:13-14)	Silent when accused	Mat 26:62-63 Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you? But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." (Mat 27:12-14)
Isa 50:6 So I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.	Struck and spit upon	Mrk 14:65 Then some began to spit at him, they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him. (Mrk 15:17; Jhn 19:1-3; 18:22)
Psa 69:4 Those who hate without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal. (Psa 109:3-5)	Hated without cause	Jhn 15:23-25 He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: "They hated me without reason."

Isa 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isa 53:6, 12)	Suffered vicariously	Mat 8:16-17 When evening came, many who were demon possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took up our infirmities and carried out diseases." (Rom 4:25; 1Co 15:3)
Isa 53:12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.	Crucified with sinners	Mat 27:38 Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. (Mrk 15:27-28; Luk 23:33)
Psa 22:16 Dogs have surrounded me, a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. (Zec 12:10)	Hands and feet pierced	Jhn 20:27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." (Jhn 19:37; 20:25-26)
Psa 22:6-8 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me, they hurl insults, shaking their heads; "He trusts in the Lord, let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."	Mocked and Insulted	Mat 27:39-40 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God!" (Mat 27:41-44; Mrk 15:29-32)
Psa 69:21 They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.	Given gall and vinegar	Jhn 19:29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. (Mat 27:34, 48)
Psa 22:8 He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.	Hears prophetic words repeated in mockery	Mat 27:43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, "I am the Son of God."
Psa 109:4 In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer. (Isa 53:12)	Prays for his enemies	Luk 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.
Zec 12:10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one the have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.	His side to be pierced	Jhn 19:34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.
Psa 22:18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.	Soldiers cast lots for his clothes	Mrk 15:24 And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. (Jhn 19:24)
Psa 34:20 He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. (Exo 12:46)	Not a bone to be broken	Jhn 19:33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.
Isa 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.	To be buried with the rich	Mat 27:57-60 As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered it should be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.
Psa 16:10 Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. (Mat 16:21)	His resurrection	Mat 28:9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. (Luk 24:36-48)
Psa 68:18 When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men, even from the rebellious—that you, O Lord God; might dwell there. (Eph 4:8)	His ascension	Luk 24:50-51 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. (Act 1:9)

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD
(For Storying to Muslims)

1. Allah is one God.

He always acts in harmony with His Spirit and the Word.

2. Allah is Creator and a communicating God.

He made all things and so is all-powerful.

He made man and desires to communicate with him.

He sees and knows every thought, every intention of man's heart, and every act of man.

He provides for man's needs to show His love for man.

3. Allah is a holy and righteous God.

He is holy. There is no wrong or unrighteousness in him.

He always does what is right and just.

He hates sin and judges all sin.

His holy nature demands that all sin be punished.

Man is accountable to Allah and cannot escape Allah's judgment by his own works

4. Allah is Sovereign Ruler.

He has given all judgment to the Righteous Judge.

He has anointed One to rule over man in God's Kingdom.

He must be the One to provide an acceptable sacrifice for sin--the sinless Lamb from God.

All Allah's work brings glory and honor to His Name.

5. Allah always keeps His Word.

Whatever Allah says, He will do, even if a long time passes before it happens.

Allah can be known through His revealed Word.

Man can have assurance of his relationship with Allah through the written Word and revealed Word.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD (For Storying to Muslims)

Note in the accompanying list of Characteristics of God there is a strong emphasis upon certain areas of God's nature and work that have implication for Muslims. These follow a pattern similar to the summarized list of natural and moral attributes of God in the **God and Man** model.

It is an attempt to pick up some of the attributes Muslims are in agreement with, some they are fuzzy about, and some which challenge their understanding and belief system.

There is a deliberate use of words which lead into the nature and work of Jesus in the Gospels.

This list is not rigid and should be considered as a suggested model subject to revision according to local worldview issues. If the list is too long to be manageable then it can be trimmed down or summarized as necessary. For a review tool it is best if kept to six or less characteristics for ease of retention and recall.

The corollaries define the main statement and can be used in explaining the meaning of the characteristic. After the group learns the chart by memory, then it should become an “oral chart” that is recalled from time to time when the group is being asked to find the characteristics that are in a particular story. Later the characteristics chart can become a confession in worship or for individuals to explain to others about their new faith. When reciting a characteristic found in a story the best way is to state the characteristic and then the specific corollary. For instance, “Allah is a holy and righteous God. He hates sin and judges all sin and punishes the sinner.” Or, “Allah always keeps His Word so he can be known through his revealed Word.”

The intent of the chart was to begin where the Muslim is and point in the direction that one needs to go. The chart begins with the “oneness” of Allah but points to a harmony with His Spirit and the Word which is Jesus. While this states the Trinity in a sense, it does so without blatantly challenging one of their most sensitive areas.

It was decided to separate the Creator/Communicating characteristic from the Sovereign Ruler characteristic for the latter one to emphasize His right to appoint the sacrifice and the judge.

Creator/Communicating begins with creation which there is agreement and moves toward a desire for communication with man as God knows the heart and mind. God demonstrates His love by what He does for man. This challenges their idea of the transcendent nature of God.

The Holy/Righteous characteristic begins with righteousness and moves toward the problem of sin and accountability and lack of escape for the sinner. It touches on the moral nature of God.

The Sovereign Ruler characteristic begins with agreement on God's sovereignty and moves toward defining what that allows Him to do—appoint the ruler, sacrifice, and judge. And it reminds that all His work brings glory and honor to His Name.

The last characteristic speaks to God's consistency rather than capriciousness as some believe because He is God and can do anything He wants to do including break His Word. Because of this consistency man can have assurance in his relationship with God.

This model looks more toward the characteristics of the Father. The **God and Man** model has a certain flexibility in that it can be used to demonstrate that Jesus had characteristics like those of the Father so providing a Father/Son link.

JOT

rev 6/98