

Week of September 13, 2009

Lessons for the Leader

Imagine being present on July 8, 1776, for the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. What feeling do you think you would experience? How would the words of the Declaration of Independence change your life? What hope would these words give to the people tired of living under the King of England's rules?

- Read Nehemiah 8:1-12. Imagine yourself being present at the reading of the book of law given to Moses. What emotions would you experience? Notice the respect the people gave to the reading of the law. Verse 3 states that the people listened attentively. Verse 5 states that the people stood as Nehemiah opened the book. Verse 6 states the people lifted their hands, shouted "Amen," then bowed down and worshiped God. Finally, the people celebrated.
- How does the reading of God's Word impact your life? Do you listen attentively as it is read? Do you stand in reverence of the words? Does the reading of God's Word cause you to want to worship Him? Do you celebrate what God says?
- Stop for a moment and truly reflect on the public reading recorded in Nehemiah 8. Imagine the scene taking place today. In what ways would things be the same? How would they be different? Why do you think there would be such a difference?
- Think about the children in your ministry. How are they learning they can read and learn from God's Word? How important do they sense God's Word to be in their lives? How can you help them gain a better understanding of the importance of reading and learning from the Bible?

What do these symbols mean?

- 1 → Application Activities Format:** Follow the numbers with arrows for a 30-minute, large group plus 20-minute Application Activities format.
- 1** Follow all the numbers for a 45- to 60-minute large group only format.



Read the Word

Focus Passage: Nehemiah 8:1-12

Key Bible Verse: Luke 11:28

Life Application

I can read and learn from God's Word.

Level of Biblical Learning (Bible)

Every person can find truth and meaning in God's Word.

Session at a Glance

Introduction to Worship (6 to 8 minutes)

Greet the Children

Complete Worship Guide Activity

Worship (30 minutes/45 minutes)

Sing "Whoa!"

Receive Offering/Pray

Introduce the Bible Story

Tell the Bible Story

Review the Bible Story

Sing "I Just Love Worshiping You"

Learn the Key Verse

Pray

Show "Jamm Fam" Video #1

Apply the Bible Story

Learn More Lessons from the Bible

Sing "Holy, Holy, Holy"

Application Activities (20 minutes)

Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

Introduction to Worship

Ezra Read the Scroll

Based on Nehemiah 8:1-12

1 → Greet the Children

2 → Complete Worship Guide Activity

Pull It Together

Worship Guides, pencils

- Distribute Worship Guides and pencils.
- Guide the children to read the instructions and complete "Bible Fill-In."
- Direct the children to compare answers with friends.
- Compliment the kids on how well they know the Bible.
- Say: "God gave us the Bible to teach us. We can learn how to please God when we read the Bible."

Worship

3 → Sing "Whoa!" (DVD, 3 minutes)

4 → Receive the Offering/Pray (1 minute)

5 → Introduce the Bible Story (3 minutes)

Pull It Together

Scissors

- Print and cut apart "Ezra Scripts" (CD). Make at least one copy for every other child.

- Invite several volunteers to read aloud their favorite Bible verses.
- Lead the children to applaud for these readers. Say: "Just as we listened to our friends read from the Bible, a large crowd of people in Jerusalem listened long ago to a man named Ezra as he read from God's Word. Let's learn more about this story."
- Form three groups. Assign each group a number: 1, 2, or 3. Provide the children with copies of the appropriate script. Instruct: "When called upon, read aloud your script in unison."

6 → Tell the Bible Story (3 minutes)

- Open your Bible and tell the story in your own words.

(Note: Leader will read bold text. Children will read italicized text.)

Ezra, the scribe, stood before the Israelites who had gathered at one of the city gates in Jerusalem.

(Point to Group 1)

Ezra stood on a high, wooden platform with other important leaders standing beside him. He opened the book of law.

(Point to Group 2)

As Ezra opened the book, the people stood. Ezra blessed God as the people lifted their hands and said "Amen! Amen!" Then the people bowed down and worshiped God with their faces to the ground.

Ezra began to read from the book of law. He read from early in the morning until noon.

The people listened quietly as Ezra read. The priests helped the people understand what Ezra read. The Israelites began to cry when they heard the words Ezra read. The people knew they had not been obeying God.

(Point to Group 3)

Ezra said to the people, "Do not weep. Go eat and have a celebration. Today is special to the Lord. Rejoice in God."

The people began to eat and celebrate and share food with those who had none. They had a great time of joy and celebration because they understood the words that were explained to them.

7 → Review the Bible Story (5 minutes)

Pull It Together

Print "Ezra" Teaching Picture (CD)

- Show the teaching picture.
- Instruct: "Think about how you would answer each of the following questions, but do not say anything out loud." Pause between questions to give children time to consider their answers.

- Continue: (1) "In what ways do you think the people in the Bible story disobeyed God?" (2) "How do you disobey God?" (3) "How does reading the Bible help you obey God?"
- Say: "To review our Bible story, I'm going to tell you an answer. Then, tell me the question."
- State aloud the answers. Call on volunteers to provide questions.

1. The book of law (*What did Ezra read to the Israelites?*)
2. Lifted their hands and bowed to the ground (*What did the people do when Ezra stood to read from God's Word?*)
3. Priests (*Who helped the Israelites understand the words Ezra read?*)
4. They cried (*What did the people do when they realized they had not been obeying God's commandments?*)
5. Eat, celebrate, and worship God (*What did Ezra tell the people to do instead of crying?*)

8 Sing "I Just Love Worshiping You"
(DVD, 3 minutes)

9 → Learn the Key Bible Verse (5 minutes)

Pull It Together

Index cards, marker, tape

- Divide Luke 11:28 into several phrases. Print each phrase on a separate index card.
- Print the reference, *Luke 11:28*, on an index card.
- Locate and read aloud Luke 11:28.
- Enlist as many volunteers as cards.
- Tape a card to the back of each volunteer.
- Instruct the volunteers to put themselves in correct verse order. Allow the other children to assist the volunteers.
- Encourage all the children to join you in repeating aloud the key Bible verse.
- Repeat with additional volunteers.

10 Pray (1 minute)

- Thank God for giving us His Word.

11 → Show "Jamm Fam" Video #1
(DVD, 8 minutes)

- Ask: "What would you do if you were on a hiking trip and something scared you? Would you run? Would you hide? Would you pray? Let's discover how the Jamm family responds to fear."
- Show video.

- Continue: "How did Oscar and Jimmy deal with their fear? After Pam said she thanked God that everyone was safe, Oscar said he was praying. To whom was Oscar praying? What was Oscar's view of God? How did Pam help Oscar learn about the one true God?"
- Conclude: "By reading and studying the Bible, Pam knew what to tell Oscar about God. When we learn and study our Bibles, we learn what to say to our friends about God."

12 → Apply the Bible Story (4 minutes)

Pull It Together

Self-stick adhesive notepad, pencils, poster board, marker, tape

- Print a list of the following Bible references on the poster board and secure to a wall: *Genesis 1:31; Psalm 56:3; Psalm 119:11; Isaiah 45:5; Luke 19:10; John 13:35; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; James 1:22; 1 Peter 4:9; 1 John 4:21*
- Distribute adhesive notes and pencils.
- Call attention to the reference list.
- Instruct: "Look at this list of Bible references. Select one of the references and write it on your note."
- State: "Now, firmly attach the note to the palm of your right hand."
- Continue: "Move around shaking hands with your friends. When I shout 'Stop,' read the reference printed on the person's hand you are standing beside. Locate and read the verse in your Bible."
- Lead each child to read the verse to his handshaking partner and tell one lesson he can learn from that verse. Assure the children it is OK if partners have the same verse and learn the same lesson.
- Play several rounds. Encourage the children to apply the lessons they learn from the Bible.

13 → Learn More Lessons from the Bible
(4 minutes)

- Lead the boys and girls to complete "Rhyme Time" on their Worship Guides.

14 Sing "Holy, Holy, Holy" (DVD, 3 minutes)

15 → Transition to Application Activities or Wrap-Up

Wrap-Up

(Large Group Only Format)

- 16** Play “Bible Lesson Shout” (5 minutes)
- Guide each child to think of a Bible story and one lesson he can learn from that story.
 - Enlist a volunteer to stand with his back to the group.
 - Encourage each child in the group to shout out his lesson and continue shouting it until the volunteer raises his hand.
 - Instruct the volunteer to listen to the shouts and choose one lesson that he hears. Tell him to raise his hand when he has chosen a lesson.
 - Invite the volunteer to share what lesson he heard. Invite the child who shouted the lesson to tell which Bible story he was thinking about.
 - Play several rounds with different listening volunteers. Allow children to change their stories and lessons with each round.

- 17** Sing “Our God Reigns” (DVD, 3 minutes)

- 18** Conclude/Pray (2 minutes)
- Say: “The Israelites learned important things by listening to God’s Word. We can learn important things by reading the Bible, too.”
 - Encourage volunteers to share what they learned during today’s session.
 - Lead the children in a time of prayer, thanking God for His Word and asking for His help to read, understand, and apply the Bible each day.

Wrap-Up

(Application Activities Format)

- 16** → Sing “Our God Reigns” (DVD, 3 minutes)

- 17** → Review Application Activities (5 minutes)
- Invite the children to share their Application Activity experiences.
 - Arts and Crafts—Bible Cover Bands
 - Dramatic Play—Show and Tell
 - Games—Tic-tac-toe
 - Exploration and Discovery—Reading and Learning

- 18** → Conclude/Pray (2 minutes)
- Say: “The Israelites learned important things by listening to God’s Word. We can learn important things by reading the Bible, too.”
 - Encourage volunteers to share what they learned during today’s session.
 - Lead the children in a time of prayer, thanking God for His Word and asking for His help to read, understand, and apply the Bible each day.

* *Giant Game Floor Mat* (001114564) may be ordered through LifeWay Christian Resources Customer Service Center at 1.800.458.2772 or online at www.lifeway.com.