



April 24-25, 2021 Joel, Prophet to Judah

Bible Passage: Joel 1-3

Main Point: God warned His people to repent before the Day of the Lord.

Bible Verse: Return to the LORD your God. He is gracious. He is tender and kind. He is slow to get angry. He is full of love. Joel 2:13

YOUNGER/OLDER
LARGE GROUP

 PLAY Opening Video & Countdown

 PLAY Worship Songs

Worship leaders sing two songs with the children and collect the offering.

 SAY LEADER Script: Opening

Over the last two weeks, we have learned about two prophets, Hosea and Jonah. Remember that prophets are people that God sent to tell his message to everyone. What did we learn about God from these stories? [Allow kids to answer.] That's right. We learned that God loves people even when they do not deserve it. He loves to show mercy. This week we will learn about God's prophet Joel and the message he had for the Kingdom of Judah.

 PLAY Big Idea Video

 SAY LEADER Script: Recap *Big Idea*

K-5th:

If you remember, Israel and Judah were the two kingdoms made up of God's people. Both kingdoms had a series of bad kings who led the people into sin. When Joel spoke to the people in Judah, they were not living like they should have been- and things were not going well. They had been attacked by swarms of locusts, and there was a drought. That meant there hadn't been any rain in a long time. So plants and animals were dying.

God used these disasters to get the people's attention. Joel told them to stop sinning and to turn back to God. He said that if they did not repent, things were only going to get worse. But it wasn't too late yet. Joel said that God would rather forgive people than punish them. When the people turned away from the wrong things they were doing and cried out to God, he forgave them. He made it rain again and the people were saved.

Even now, those who trust in Jesus will be saved. You see, all of us have sinned and deserve for God to be angry toward our actions. Since God loves us very much, He sent a Rescuer. Jesus was punished in our place. We share in Jesus' righteousness when we trust in Him!

Ask the following review questions:

1. What insect invaded Judah? (locusts, Joel 1:4)
2. What did Joel tell the people of Judah to do? (Joel told the people to ask God to forgive them, Joel 1:13-14)
3. Is God quick to get angry? (No, God is slow to anger, merciful, and loving; Joel 2:13)
4. If a person wants to be saved, what should they do? (Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, Joel 2:32)

 PLAY *Bible Verse* Video

Bible Verse: Return to the LORD your God. He is gracious. He is tender and kind. He is slow to get angry. He is full of love. Joel 2:13

 SAY LEADER Script: Prayer and dismiss to small group

[Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.]

Let's thank God for His mercy and love. Let's ask Him to give us courage to tell others about Jesus.

"Lord God, we come before You so thankful for Your mercy toward us. Thank You for being a patient and compassionate God who wants to forgive. Thank You for Jesus, who takes away our sin. Give us a sense of urgency to share the gospel with others so they too may find forgiveness and eternal life. Amen."



**YOUNGER
SMALL GROUP**

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Welcome:

Invite kids to talk about their favorite and least favorite bugs. Discuss how bugs can be helpful (lady bugs help protect gardens) or harmful (mosquitoes bite and transmit diseases).

SAY: In the Bible story we will hear today, the land of Judah was attacked by swarms of locusts. This was a warning from God! We'll find out more soon.

Transition to Large Group / Transition back to Small Group

Activity: Locust Launch

Materials Needed: brown and green construction paper, markers, masking tape, plastic spoons

Distribute a half sheet of green or brown construction paper to each kid. Instruct each kid to write her name in big letters on her sheet and crumple it into a ball. Use masking tape to make a target on the floor and mark a line a few feet away. Allow the kids to take turns using plastic spoons to make their paper wads "hop" toward the target. When everyone has had a turn, open the paper wads to see whose was the closest. Play additional rounds as time allows.

SAY: God sent locusts to punish His people for their sin. We will learn more about God's punishment as well as His mercy toward His people in large group.

Activity: Sackcloth Race

Materials Needed: Two burlap sacks

Form two teams. Ask each team to line up at one end of the room. Give the first child in each line a burlap sack and instruct her to step into it, holding it about her waist. When you say "go," the first kids will hop in the sack to the other end of the room and back. Upon returning to the start, the kid will step out of the sack, give it to the next child, and that child will step into it and hop down and back. Play continues until every member of each team completes the task. The first team to finish wins.

SAY: Joel brought a sad message to Judah. In those days, people would often wear clothing made out of a rough material, like these burlap sacks, during difficult times. The Bible calls it "sackcloth," and it was a sign that the person wearing it was very sad. All the bad things that were happening to Judah did make the people very sad, and God asked them to wear sackcloth because of it. However, we know that God loves His people and didn't want them to be sad forever. That's why God sent Jesus! Jesus died on the cross and rose again so that our sins could be forgiven. We can be joyful and happy because we know that God showed us His great love by sending Jesus to rescue us.

Pray

Pray, thanking God for mercy and His faithful love. Ask God to show us things in our hearts we need to confess to Him so we can give Him our whole hearts.