

ENRICHMENT LESSON 12

THE STORY OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: JEREMIAH, THE CHALLENGER OF FALSE PROPHETS (THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH)

- **SACRED STORY**
- **ENRICHMENT PRESENTATION**

THE MATERIAL

- **LOCATION: OLD TESTAMENT SACRED STORY SHELVES, MIDDLE SHELF, UNDER "THE EXILE AND RETURN"**
- **PIECES: SHOFAR, LION AND WOLF, SUMMARY OF THE LAW (FROM "THE TEN BEST WAYS" VOLUME 2, P. 73), LINEN BELT, BROKEN PIECES OF CLAY POTTERY (IN SMALL BASKET OR OTHER CONTAINER), CUP FILLED WITH "POISON", PLATE OF NASTY FOOD, 10" PIECE OF CHAIN, PYRAMID, IMAGE OF RESTORED JERUSALEM**
- **CONTROL**
- **UNDERLAY: DARK BROWN FELT STRIP, 42" X 11"**

BACKGROUND

The story of Jeremiah enriches the presentations on the Exile and Return (*Volume 2*, p. 93) and the Prophets (*Volume 2*, p. 100). Jeremiah was a major prophet during the decline and fall of the southern kingdom around Jerusalem (Judah). He lived during the time of the last five kings of Judah and was called to be a prophet around 627 B.C.E. when he was about 20 years old. He felt that the word of the Lord was "like a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jeremiah 20:9). He lived through the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar who destroyed Jerusalem.

NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

Jeremiah's story sits in a deep wooden or wicker tray (12" x 8" x 3"). The story icon (5" x 2.5") is Jeremiah blowing a shofar. It can be attached to the end or the side of

the tray. The underlay is a strip of dark brown felt, 42" x 11". Each object in the story is approximately the same size (no more than 4" high and 4" wide). The story calls for the following objects: a shofar, lion and wolf, the Summary of the Law (from "The Ten Best Ways"), a linen belt, broken pieces of clay pottery, a plate of nasty food, a cup filled with poison (grey glue works well), a 10" piece of chain, a pyramid and an image of Jerusalem restored.

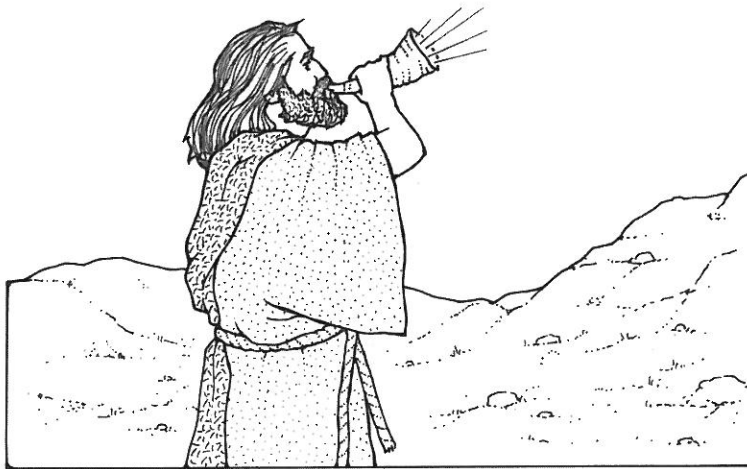
A control for the lesson is folded and placed in the tray for the children to use to check their work. The sequence of the story is important because when you change the sequence, you change the story.

SPECIAL NOTES

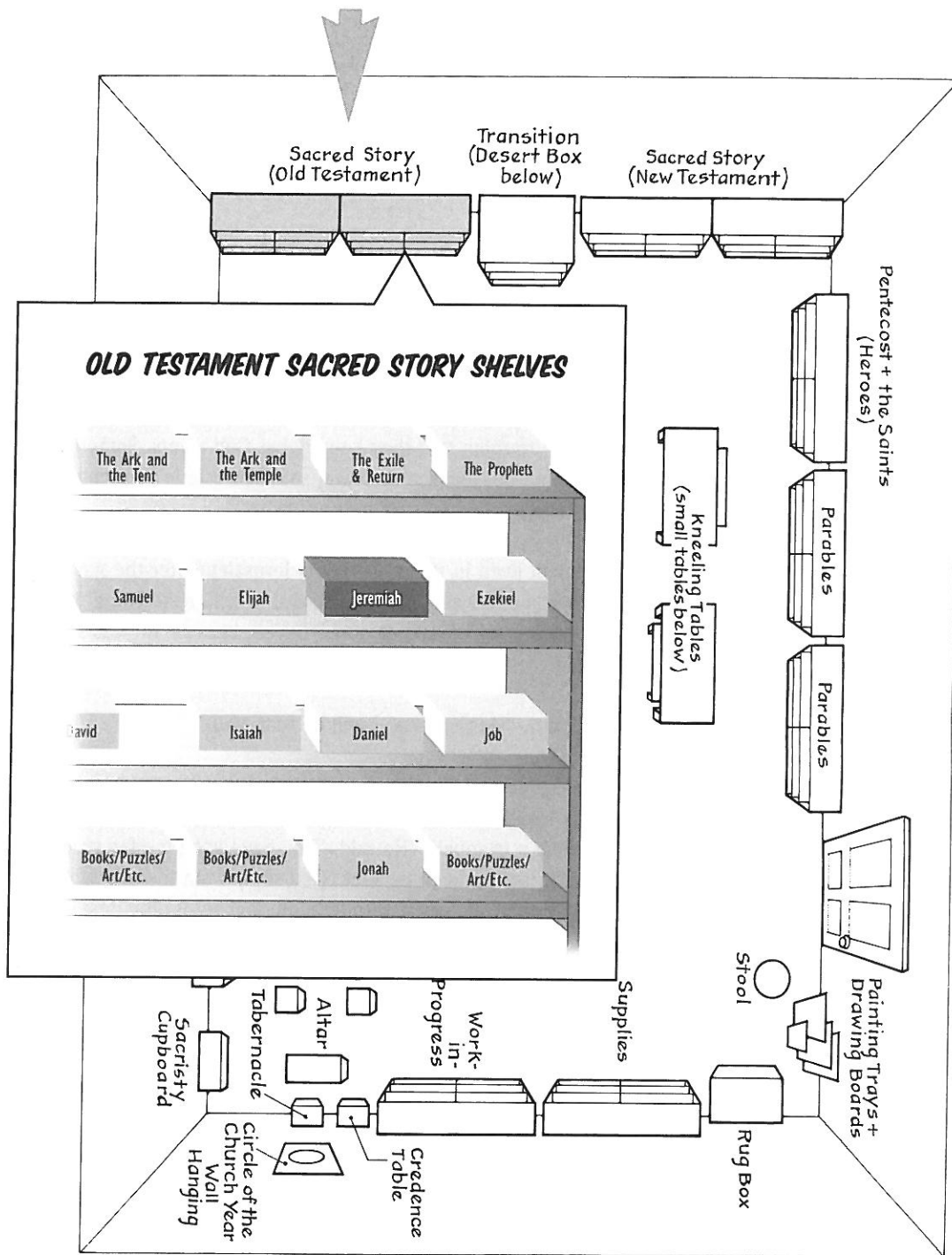
The core stories about the People of God are placed on the top of the sacred story shelves. The enrichment stories about the key people in the core stories are placed on the lower shelves of the sacred story section in the room, under the core stories they enrich and extend (see diagram below).

This lesson on Jeremiah enriches the lessons on the Exile and Return (*Volume 2*, p. 93) and the Prophets (*Volume 2*, p. 100). When you introduce the stories in this volume, take care to set them in the larger context of the sacred story of which they are a part.

As you tell the story of Jeremiah, place objects on the underlay to remind you of each important event or prophecy. Unroll the underlay slowly, just enough for each object, as if you are unrolling a life. At the end of the wondering, show the children the control card, then carefully place each object back in the tray saying something about each event like, "Here is the linen belt God told Jeremiah to bury in the ground," and so forth. Lastly, model how to roll the underlay back up and place it in the tray.



STORY ICON FOR THE STORY OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH



WHERE TO FIND MATERIALS (TEACHING OBJECTS)

MOVEMENTS

Move with deliberation to the shelf where the material waits.

Pick up Jeremiah's tray and return to the circle.

As you return to the circle you may need to say...

Remove the underlay from the tray and unroll it—just enough to place the first object—right to left (storyteller's perspective).

*Place **Object #1** (shofar) on the underlay.*

*Place **Object #2** (lion and Wolf) on the underlay.*

*Place **Object #3** (Summary of the Law) on the underlay.*

WORDS

Watch. Watch where I go.

We need to be ready.

This is the story of the prophet Jeremiah. But what is a prophet?

Prophets are people who come so close to God and God comes so close to them that they know what God wants. Sometimes people do not like the message, so they become very angry with the prophet. It's not easy being a prophet.

Jeremiah lived in the great city of Jerusalem after the Assyrian army had come and gone. God said, "I will make you a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah was worried, because he was still so young.

God said, "Don't worry. I will be with you."

One day Jeremiah went all around inside and outside the city walls blowing a trumpet. The people asked him, "Why are you blowing a trumpet?" He said, "You have gone too far away from God. It is time to come back. God says, 'I am the one who led you through the water into freedom and across the desert. I gave you the Ten Best Ways to live. I am your God. You are my people. Come back!'"

God showed Jeremiah things that would happen in Jerusalem, things so frightening that even hearing about them would make the ears of the people tingle. Jeremiah was afraid. But he did what God told him to do. He said, "A nation will come and attack us like a lion and destroy us like a wolf," but the people would not listen.

Another time Jeremiah went into the temple. He said to the people there, "Pay attention! Remember the Ten Commandments. Love God and love people. Stop worshipping other gods. God says, 'Turn around. Change your ways, or I will tear down the temple,'" but still the people would not listen.

MOVEMENTS

Place **Object #4** (linen belt) on the underlay.

Place **Object #5** (broken pieces of clay pottery in a pouch) on the underlay when you speak of breaking the jar.

Place **Object #6** (cup filled with “poison” and plate of nasty food) on the underlay as you speak of the false prophets’ drinking poison and eating bitter food.

Place **Object #7** (chain) on the underlay when you say, “They were in exile.”

Place **Object #8** (pyramid) on the underlay.

Place **Object #9** (image of a restored Jerusalem) on the underlay.

WORDS

Once God told Jeremiah to buy a linen belt and put it around his waist. Then God told him to take it off and hide it in some rocks. Many days later God told him to go back and get it, but now it was ruined and completely useless. God said, “The people are like this belt. They refuse to listen to my words and are now completely useless!”

Another day God told Jeremiah to go buy a clay jar from a potter and take it to the Valley of Ben Hinmon. There in the presence of the people he broke the jar and said, “God says, ‘I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter’s jar is smashed and cannot be repaired.’” Jeremiah’s words made the people very angry—so angry that they put his hands and feet into pieces of wood called stocks and left him there overnight. Many more times they put him in prison. They did not want to listen.

While Jeremiah was prophesying, there were false prophets throughout the country. A false prophet is someone who only pretends to speak for God. They did not tell the people the truth. The false prophets God very sad and angry.

God told Jeremiah to tell the people that God would punish the false prophets. They will eat bitter food and drink poisoned water. God told Jeremiah to warn the people not to listen to them.

Jeremiah had told the truth. The Babylonians did come and destroy the city. They took the king and many of the best people to Babylon. They were in exile. They could not go home.

The people remaining in Jerusalem were frightened. They did not want to be taken into exile, so they decided to run away. They went to Egypt and asked Jeremiah if this was the right thing to do. Jeremiah asked God.

God said, “No. They should not go to Egypt.” God promised that the people would be cared for. Once again they refused to listen, so they went to Egypt anyway. They even forced Jeremiah to go with them.

Even as the city of Jerusalem lay in ruins, God spoke words of hope and consolation through Jeremiah, and they were written down and kept for us to read.

MOVEMENTS

Sit for a moment and look at the lesson from beginning to end to let the story rest. Then begin the wondering.

WORDS

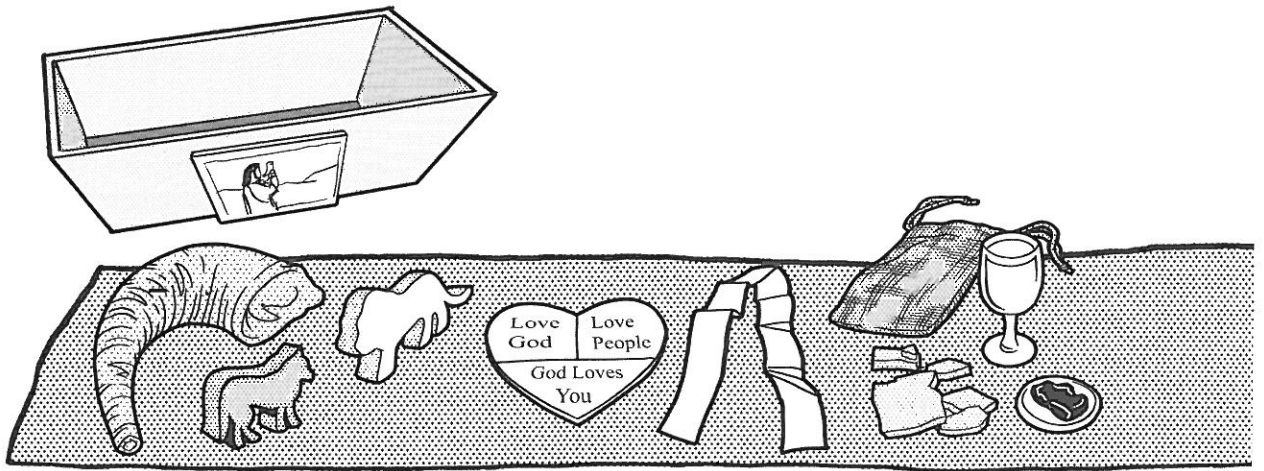
“I will bring health and healing to the city. I will heal my people and give them peace. I will bring the people back from exile and will rebuild the city as before. I will forgive them all their sins. A new king will be born—one who will do what is just and right in the land.”

• I wonder what part of this story you liked the best?

I wonder what part was the most important?

I wonder what part was about you, or what part you were in?

I wonder if we could leave any of the story out and still have all the story that we need?



FINAL LAYOUT OF THE STORY OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH (CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE)

MOVEMENTS

After the wondering is over, show the children the control card for them to use to check their own telling of the story. Then put the story away carefully. Pick up each object in reverse order and remind the children what the object is, saying for example, "Here are the pieces of pottery left after Jeremiah broke the clay pot..." After all of the objects are back in the tray, carefully model how to roll the underlay back up and place it in the tray as well. Return the lesson to its place on the shelf. Then return to your spot in the circle and dismiss the children one by one to their work.

WORDS

