

# FOCUS OF *THE STORY*, TEEN CURRICULUM

*Why use this curriculum? What's different about it?*

**We're so glad you're taking your group on a journey into *The Story*!** We hope this curriculum provides an engaging and effective framework for your journey. Our hope is that this in-depth study will guide your teens to discover their role in God's redemptive plan.

*The Story, Teen Curriculum has been designed with the hope that your students will...*

- See the big picture of God's great Story
- Listen for God's direction through Scripture and insights from their leaders and peers
- Learn deep truths about the character and nature of God
- Express their learnings and thoughts through discussion and creative mediums
- Discover new insights and directions for their lives in light of God's Story
- See how their story is a part of God's bigger Story

## DISCOVERING OUR STORY IN GOD'S STORY

When we step back and look at the entirety of the Bible, we see that it's interconnected...it is truly *one big story*. This grand narrative is the true account of God's pursuit to redeem and restore God's beloved creation. Looking at the big-picture view of the Bible is what we'll call the **Upper Story**.<sup>1</sup>

Within this Upper Story are many smaller stories, which we call the **Lower Story**. The Lower Story contains the details of particular people and the episodes we've become familiar with: *Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the flood, and so on*. When we look at each story with the Upper Story and Lower Story in mind, it helps us to:

- See that God and God's dreams for the world are central in the Story
- See how all of the events, places, and people of the Bible (the Lower Story) are connected to each other and to a greater purpose
- See how our own lives fit into the "bigger picture" and realize how God's Story continues with us as active participants

Most of the Bible—as much as 75%—was written in narrative form. Even parts that are more didactic, such as the epistles, contain strong narrative elements and are part of the context of the bigger Story.

By putting all that we read and hear from Scripture into a larger picture, we can make application from the Bible that takes into account the grand, mysterious ways of God and guards us from misapplications that can result from an isolated "what this verse says to me" approach. In other words, **the Upper Story creates the context for the Lower Story**.

As we journey through *The Story* together, the Bible's events and characters found in the Lower Story will point us to the larger purpose of the Upper Story: *God's desire to restore and build a relationship with creation*.

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1. Adapted from the *Upper Story Explanation* © Zondervan 2009.

## LEARNING APPROACHES

### **FACILITATE DISCOVERY**

Central to this curriculum is the belief that Scripture is living and active, and that God illuminates them for us in order to move us toward transformation and Christlikeness. The hope is then for the teacher to become a facilitator of discovery, a co-learner guiding students to explore the Bible in deeper ways. This requires the teacher to trust that God's Spirit is at work and to encourage participants to listen and look for God to bring illumination. It also requires the teacher to believe that, given a safe environment, each person will provide meaningful insights into the biblical story.

### **REPETITION AND RHYTHM**

One of the first things you may notice about this curriculum is that it uses a lot of the same elements from lesson to lesson. This wasn't done for the sake of simplicity or ease. This was done because research continues to reinforce the importance of repetition in learning.<sup>2</sup> We are creatures that need to experience things over and over before they really stick. So the structure of the curriculum repeats different activities each week—drawing, reading, discussing—and in the same order. This allows participants to move beyond the anxiety of trying to figure out a new activity every week, and instead focus their imagination and reason on the biblical story. When encouragement is provided toward this end, most participants will thrive in an environment where there is a consistent rhythm of activities.

### **MULTIPLE MODES, METHODS, MEDIUMS**

While this curriculum does use a lot of repetition, the methods and learning modes are diverse. Participants are encouraged to see and hear the story and then respond using varied mediums at different points. This approach is used in order to connect with participants of all different learning styles. Groups are given the opportunity to engage with Scripture using both sides of their brain, as activities move them through analysis, reason, reflection, imagination, emotion, and creativity.

### **EXPERIENTIAL PROCESS<sup>3</sup>**

Learning that transforms doesn't happen simply by gaining knowledge; it occurs by experiencing and integrating that knowledge into our own identities (our own stories). Experiential Learning is the process of making meaning from direct experience—*learning by doing*.

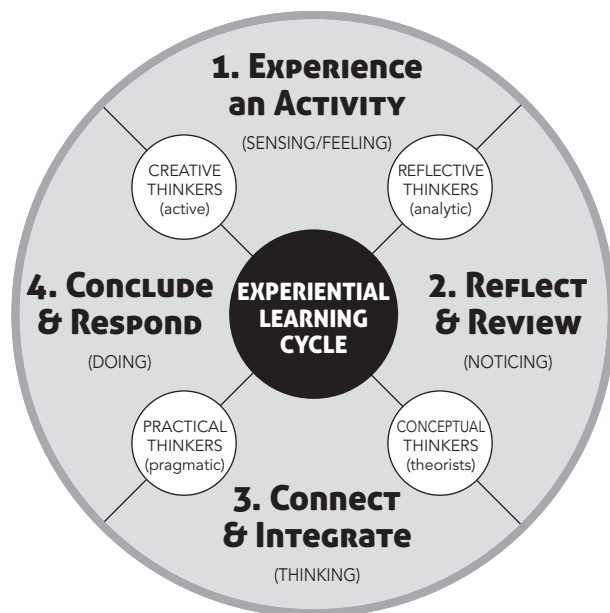
The underlying structure of this curriculum is rooted in the work of educator David Kolb and the process he identified as *The Experiential Learning Cycle* (sometimes called the Applied Learning Cycle).<sup>4</sup> This approach effectively helps learners to integrate information and experiences—in other words, *to be transformed by them*.

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2. <http://txtwriter.com/Onscience/Articles/repetitionlearn.html>

3. Adapted from Michael Novelli's *Enter the Story* © 2010, Zondervan.

4. Chart adapted from David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 41.



The heart of Kolb's model proposes four stages that move us toward applied learning: *Experience, Reflection, Integration, and Conclusion*. We've adapted the wording and descriptions of these stages to offer some additional clarity and usefulness.

Though it may not be immediately evident, we cycle through this process more than once in each lesson of the curriculum. We've found that giving participants space and intentional activities that help them process and assimilate what they're learning fosters the most effective environments for learning and transformation.

## IMPLEMENTING *THE STORY, TEEN CURRICULUM*

*What is the structure of this curriculum? How do I use it effectively?*

### USES OF THE CURRICULUM

Our hope is that you'll find this curriculum flexible enough to use with any size group and in varied contexts—Sunday school, youth group meetings, Bible studies, and more. Many of the segments of the curriculum depend on the use of the accompanying DVD. So you'll definitely need a TV or video projector and a DVD player!

This material was designed with a large group/small group format. This means that some segments will work in either a large group or small group, and other segments will work best in a small group setting. Indication of which segment will work with a small or large group is provided in the lesson outline.

### BASIC LESSON OUTLINE

*Curriculum Outline for a session that's approximately 75 minutes long. These segments may vary from lesson to lesson.*

#### **PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY (5 minutes — large or small group)**

Introduction and Prayer

Watch *StoryRecap* Video (or *StoryRewind* Video every fourth lesson)

Brief Responses to Video

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** (10 minutes — large or small group)

Explanation and Handouts  
Watch *StoryView* Video  
Create Symbols on Handout  
Share Symbols and Observations

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** (25 minutes — large or small group)

Tell the Story from Scripture Using *StoryReader* Script (additional options provided)  
*StoryReader* Scripture Telling  
Give Responses to Scripture on Handout and Briefly Discuss  
*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** (35 minutes — small group)

Engage in Discussion about Story Using Provided Questions  
Create Responses around Application of the Story  
Share Responses  
Prayer Time

## CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

**PRINT (PDFS):**

**Teacher's Guide:** This group leader's script covers all areas of the curriculum lesson for the week, including:

- **Teacher Insight:** Tips on how to best prepare for the study, and alerts to potential issues that may surface from the story.
- **Teacher Planning:** A list of supplies needed for the lesson and things to remember while preparing. This section also gives ideas for different options for telling and exploring the Bible story.
- **Lesson Outline:** This gives a suggested time allotment for each element in a 75-minute lesson.
- **Teacher Lesson Script:** This gives a complete walk-through of the lesson, including scripted transitions, instructions, and prayers. It also gives cues as to when you are to use the videos, handouts, and other materials.
- **Creative Option:** A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise is provided in the *JOIN the Story* section. These activities involve students in a hands-on activity, such as drawing or acting, designed to help them use a different (and often fun!) mode to engage the story.

**StoryReader Script:** The *StoryReader* scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition*. Each script takes about 10 minutes to read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A *Readers' Theater* is an activity in which a few participants read directly from a script with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner.

**Student Handout:** Each week a one-page PDF is provided for students to help them interact with the story in different ways. The areas of this handout include:

- *SEE the Story*: An area in which to create an image or symbol for the story
- *HEAR the Story*: An area to write down or draw key events that stand out
- *JOIN the Story*: An area to give a response to some application questions (Students will have options to create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, etc.)

## VIDEO:

**StoryRecap Videos:** One-to-two-minute look at the previous week's story using stop-motion animation or time-lapse photography. These videos are used in every lesson except during every fourth week when they're replaced by a *StoryRewind* video.

**StoryRewind Videos:** Two-to-five-minute fast-paced 2D animation giving a quick overview of ALL of the stories you've covered so far. These videos are used during every fourth lesson and replace the *StoryRecap* video.

**StoryView Videos:** A creative telling of each week's story, told in two to three minutes. These videos incorporate stop-motion animation or time-lapse photography (depending on the week) and are used in every lesson.

## TIPS FOR LEADING THIS CURRICULUM<sup>5</sup>

- 1. It's the inside that counts.** Sincerity, honesty, and authenticity are key qualities for any group leader. Your openness will set the tone and direction. Remember, trust is the foundation for building significant relationships in your group.
- 2. Ask good questions.** The key to leading a good discussion is asking good questions. A key step in asking a good question is to patiently wait for someone to answer. Good questions produce an interchange of ideas and insights so we can learn from each other and deepen relationships. Be sure to focus on the questions that encourage personal reflection and application to daily life.
- 3. Work at listening and being present.** Listen with your heart, your eyes, and your ears. Good listeners draw information from the group. Rephrase what's said to make sure you heard correctly. Ask them to expand on their comments to clarify what was said. Understand what people are feeling as well as what they're saying.
- 4. Transformation, not just information.** The goal isn't learning the facts and details about the stories in the Bible, but being transformed by them. Share with your group how *The Story* is reshaping your own life.
- 5. Make prayer a priority.** Praying for your group members and your study time is the best way to prepare. Make prayer a part of your study time. Also, be careful about asking others to pray before they are ready for such a step.

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5. Adapted from Grace Church's vision for using *The Story Curriculum* © 2009, Zondervan.

# CREATION: THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

As this is the first study in the series, it's going to be a bit different from those in the following weeks. Do your best to treat this opening study as the beginning of a wonderful adventure—which it is! Encourage your teens to be open to learning and experiencing new things.

During the introduction, teens will be asked to share in pairs about an event in their lives that was difficult, but later served a better purpose...maybe it protected them from more pain, or it taught them something they wouldn't have learned otherwise. It may be helpful to give your own personal example to help teens understand what they should be sharing about.

This first story has a lot of detail right from the beginning, and it's broken up into three major "events," each of which has its own unique themes and message. They are stories that you and your teens are probably familiar

Chapter 1: "Creation: The Beginning of Life as We Know It" can be found in Genesis 1–4; 6–9.

## DON'T KILL THE CONVERSATION!

Youth ministry expert Grahame Knox suggests five surefire ways to avoid an embarrassing silence:

1. Don't ask questions that can be answered with one word (e.g., *Do you agree that God loves you?*)
  2. Don't ask loaded questions that suggest the answer (e.g., *Our bodies are God's temple, so should we smoke?*)
  3. Don't ask intimidating questions (e.g., *If you really loved God, what would you do?*)
  4. Don't ask embarrassing questions (e.g., *What's your most frequent temptation?*)
  5. Don't try to make people guess the answers you want (e.g., *What are the three great truths from this passage?*)
- I'll add one more:
6. Don't use "Why?" or "Why not?" in your follow-up questions (because they make people feel as though they're defending their answers).

[From *Creative Bible Study Methods for Youth Leaders*, an ebook by Grahame Knox, 2007, pp. 10–11.]



with, but this time will be more meaningful if you encourage everyone involved to treat the stories as if they're being told for the first time.

The purpose of this study is to help teens engage in these stories and discuss the events within the boundaries of that narrative. Gently encourage them that discussion outside of these parameters is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will gain further insight.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 1 Handout: Creation** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 5 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story section of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **Chapter 1: Creation** video from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** Big sheets of paper (one for every 3 or 4 people), an assortment of colored markers; **OPTIONAL:** Old magazines, scissors, glue or tape
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are the Narrator and God. Make sure to pick teens or leaders who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

## LESSON OUTLINE

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

### **PART ONE: THE UPPER AND LOWER STORY** *(large or small group)*

**5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

2 minutes

Opening Activity

3 minutes

### **PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

**10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 1: Creation* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

### **PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

**25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

### **PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)*

**35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute



# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: THE UPPER AND LOWER STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP) 5 MINUTES

### Teacher Script: (please personalize this)

Welcome! I am so excited to be together and to begin our discovery in God's Story. Let's take a moment and pray before we begin:

*God, as we begin this amazing journey through your Story, we pray that you will open our eyes to see ourselves within it. We pray that as we learn about ancient times, places, and people, we may discover new things about our own lives and about your dreams for the world that we live in today. Amen.*

I hope this adventure through God's Story is going to teach us a lot and allow us to have some fun while we experience it together. Before we begin, let me share a little bit more about how we can be thinking about these stories as we move through them.

In every Bible story that we go through together, there will actually be TWO story lines going on. We'll call them an **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. Every story in the Bible is a part of one bigger story...the Upper Story.

The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week, which tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives. It will be an eye-opening experience when we're learning about a (Lower) story and we begin to see how it's connected to all of the other stories.

When we look at each story with the Upper Story and Lower Story in mind, it helps us:

- 1) See that God and God's plans for the world are the central characters in the story,
- 2) Put our own lives into the "bigger picture" and see how God's Story continues with us.

Sometimes events like a break-up or failure at school leave us feeling like there's no hope. But when we see that God has a long-range plan and a better Story for our lives, we begin to see life with a bigger perspective. We might even see difficult circumstances as an opportunity for God to show us something better.

**[CUE: DISCUSS—**Take the next few minutes, turn to the person next to you, and **share about an event in your life that was difficult for you** but later you realized it had served a better purpose...maybe it protected you from more pain or taught you something you wouldn't have learned otherwise.]

*(Teacher, it may be necessary to give your own personal example to help teens understand what they should be sharing.)*

**[CUE:** Give teens 1 to 2 minutes to discuss. As time permits, allow a few to share.]

As we can see, there seems to be an Upper Story and a Lower Story going on right here in our own lives. Let's keep those times and events in our minds as we move throughout each story.

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY**

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

**10 MINUTES****Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, you are ready to dive into the first chapter of this amazing Story. I have a video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we will take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Now, let's watch this week's video, *Creation*. Just to warn you, it is packed with action, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *Chapter 1: Creation* video from the curriculum DVD (2:44).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 1: Creation* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY**

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

**25 MINUTES****Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As you have noticed, this is a really interesting story—there is a LOT going on here! We want to spend some time diving deeper into this story, and I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes).]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]*

- *What were the key events from the story?*
- *What was most meaningful to you from this story?*

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

**[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]**

## PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY

**35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]*

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- In what ways was life in the creation story different from life today?
- Why do you think God rested after he finished creating? What could this mean for your life?
- Why do you think God created humans in his own image? What does this mean for you?
- What do you think motivated Adam and Eve to sin against God?
- Why do you think God put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden?
- Why did God flood the earth?
- What does this act of judgment tell you about God?
- In what ways do we see corruption and violence in our world today? How do we see it in our own lives?

**Teacher SCRIPT:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: (These questions are also on the handout.)

- *Which character in this story are you most like? How?*
- *In your own words, what does it look like for human beings to take care of God's creation as Adam and Eve were instructed to do?*

### CREATIVE OPTION:

Have your teens get into groups of 3 or 4. Give each group a large sheet of paper. Say something like, "You are now going to draw a map of the world that you would create. Feel free to draw and name animals, people, and landscapes—anything you like. Think about what you'd put into it to make this world a place that is good. Also think about what things wouldn't exist in the world you've created."

Take the next 10 minutes to create your new world. Don't forget to create new names for the things and places you've created.

*(If teens are struggling to come up with ideas for this, have them start by drawing their neighborhood or town and then ask them how they would change it to make it a better place.)*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

This is a very mature and creative group. The words and images in your mind are meaningful, so create or write something that honestly represents your thoughts. We can really learn from each other. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

I am impressed and encouraged by your insight and your willingness to share. The more we dive into these stories, the more we'll see that these stories have a way of connecting with us like nothing else can. I hope we'll begin to see how this Story can change all of our lives. Thank you for engaging in this and being so thoughtful in your responses. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next story!

Let's pray as we end our time together:

*God, thank you for this time together and for allowing us to begin this incredible journey through this Story. Help us to reflect on what we've experienced today in the week ahead. And may we look forward to learning more about you and your wonderful, mysterious plan for the world in the weeks to come. Thank you for being a God who is creative, powerful, and true to your promises. Amen.*

# CREATION: THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

**Bible Verses:** Genesis 1–4; 6–9

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Adam's words
- Serpent's words
- God's words
- Eve's words

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. [When] the earth was formless and empty, God said,

**GOD:** "Let there be light."

**NARRATOR 1:** And there was light...He separated the light from the darkness [and] called the light "day," and the darkness..."night."

**NARRATOR 2:** [He created] the sky...and the land...and the seas...[the] plants...and [the] trees. And [then] God said,

**GOD:** "Let there be lights in...the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times and days and years, and let them...give light on the earth."

**NARRATOR 2:** God made two great lights...to govern the day and...to govern the night. He also made the stars...

**NARRATOR 1:** [Then] God created the great creatures of the sea...and creatures [of the land.] [Finally,] God created mankind in his own image...[He] blessed them and said to them,

**GOD:** “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

**NARRATOR 1:** And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good...

**NARRATOR 2:** By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so...[He] blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done...

**NARRATOR 1:** Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man,

**GOD:** “You are free to eat 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 from it you will certainly die.”

**NARRATOR 2:** [Then] God said,

**GOD:** “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

**NARRATOR 2:** So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said,

**ADAM:** “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

**NARRATOR 1:** That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

**NARRATOR 2:** Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman,

**SERPENT:** “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

**NARRATOR 2:** The woman said to the serpent,

**EVE:** “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.’”

**SERPENT:** “You will not certainly die...for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

**NARRATOR 1:** When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to

her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

**NARRATOR 2:** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man,

**GOD:** “Where are you?”

**ADAM:** “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

**GOD:** “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

**ADAM:** “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

**NARRATOR 1:** Then the LORD God said to the woman,

**GOD:** “What is this you have done?”

**EVE:** “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

**NARRATOR 1:** [Then, because they disobeyed,] the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden.

**NARRATOR 2:** [Adam’s wife] Eve [soon] became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. [As they grew older,] Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry.

**NARRATOR 1:** Then the LORD said to Cain,

**GOD:** “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not 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 rule over it.”

**NARRATOR 1:** Now Cain [went with his brother Abel] out to the field. While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother...and killed him.

**NARRATOR 3:** The tragic accounts of the mistakes and poor choices of Adam and Eve and of their firstborn son, Cain, are echoed in the later stories of hardship and tragedy for their children and their children’s children. As people began to populate the globe, leaving the area of Eden and traveling as far as feet and beast could carry them, humanity’s legacy of hate, anger, murder, and deception play out as people continue to neglect their relationship with God. Eventually, nearly everyone just plain forgets their Creator and the whole point of being alive. For most people, life becomes one big party with no thought of the consequences...except for one man.



**NARRATOR 2:** Noah was a righteous man...[who] walked faithfully with God. [The rest of the] earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence...So God said to Noah,

**GOD:** "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them... So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out...I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you [and your family] will enter the ark...You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you..."

**NARRATOR 2:** [And] Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

**NARRATOR 1:** When the floodwaters came on the earth....Noah and his [family] entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Pairs of...animals came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

**NARRATOR 2:** For forty days...the waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water...Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

**NARRATOR 1:** The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days....At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat...So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

**NARRATOR 2:** Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him:

**GOD:** "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you...Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

**NARRATOR 3:** The earth recovered from this great flood. Animal and plant life flourished. Noah's family repopulated the earth. The cycle of life continued, and people remembered God. It was time for God's next move, time to build a nation in a land that would become the cultural and ethnic home to...well, that part of the story is yet to come.

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 1: Creation

Discover more FROM THIS STORY:  
Genesis 1–4, 6–9



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > Which character in this story are you most like? How?
- > In your own words, what does it look like to take care of God's creation as Adam and Eve were instructed to do?

*Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you like!*

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# GOD BUILDS A NATION

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

Since this is just the second week of the series, there may be teens for whom this is still a very new and challenging experience. Continue to encourage your teens to be open to learning and experiencing new things.

This lesson is somewhat unique in that there are several major themes in this chapter that have the potential to intersect with your teens' lives. For example, some teens may resonate more with God's calling for Abraham to step out in faith and leave home, while others may resonate more with the way God blesses Jacob in spite of his questionable character. As you lead, remember that you aren't trying to arrive at the "correct" answers, but to allow your teens to interact with and respond to the story in very different ways.

Also note that a lot happens between these stories in the traditional biblical narrative. In the discussion encourage those who are familiar with the Bible to stick to the larger themes that are highlighted in the selected stories and try to see the stories with "new eyes."

Remember that the purpose of this study is to help teens engage in these stories and discuss the events within the boundaries of that narrative. Gently encourage them that discussion outside of

Chapter 2: "God Builds a Nation" can be found in Genesis 12–13; 15–17; 21–22; 32–33; 35; Romans 4; and Hebrews 11.

## RESPECT THE SILENCE!

**Youth ministry expert Amelia Richardson Dress suggests that pauses in a discussion aren't always bad.**

"Sometimes it takes people awhile to warm up or gather their thoughts. Let them think. Yes, 10 seconds of silence will feel like an eternity to you, but the more you do it the more comfortable you, and the group, will feel. A caveat: you have to be calm and inviting when you do this. Relax, smile at everyone, let them know that you're ok with the quiet and soon they'll appreciate it for the invitation it is."

**[From "5 Tips for Leading Great Discussions" (Web Resource), available at [www.youthministry.com](http://www.youthministry.com).]**

these parameters is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will gain further insight.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 2 Handout: God Builds a Nation** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 8 to 10 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **Creation Recap video** and the **Chapter 2: God Builds a Nation video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** Pens, colored pencils, paper, and envelopes OR postcards
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick teens or leaders who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*Creation Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 2: God Builds a Nation Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome! I am so excited to be back together and to continue our journey through God's Story. Let's take a moment and pray before we begin:

*God, as we return to this amazing Story, we pray that you will continue to open our eyes to see ourselves within it. We pray that as we learn about different people in very different times and places, we may discover new things about our own lives and about how you want us to live in relationship with you and with each other. Amen.*

I'm really excited to continue on to chapter two of our journey through God's Story. But before we do, I thought it would be good for us to take a look back at what we experienced last week. This video will give us a quick summary of the stories from chapter one. It will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *Creation Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story that we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week, which tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, you are ready to dive into the next chapter of this amazing Story. I have a video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *God Builds a Nation*. It's packed with action, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *Chapter 2: God Builds a Nation* video from the curriculum DVD (about 3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 2: God Builds a Nation* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After two minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

As you have noticed, this is a really interesting story—there is a LOT going on here! We want to spend some time diving deeper into this story, and I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]



**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Abraham left his homeland and a wealthy family business that was passed down from generations in order to follow God. How do you think this would have been difficult? What did God give him in return?
- What might God be asking you to give up in order to follow him?
- The story said Abraham was “righteous” in God’s sight. What do you think this means? Was Abraham perfect? How did he express doubt in God during this story? Can teenagers be righteous? How or why not?
- Why do you think God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac? What do you think Abraham—and Isaac—learned from this experience?
- Because Jacob had shrewdly acquired Esau’s birth-right and stolen their father’s blessing, Jacob feared his brother’s revenge. How did Jacob prepare for his meeting with Esau?
- What attitude did Jacob have when he wrestled with the “man” whom Jacob eventually realized was actually God?
- Jacob’s name was changed to Israel...meaning “to struggle with God.” How do we “struggle” with God? How might it be good to “struggle” in our faith?

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Pass out pencils or pens and paper OR postcards to the teens. Say something like, “In today’s story, we see God’s faithfulness to his people, and we see that carried through even to restoring a relationship between Jacob and his brother, Esau. We’re going to take the next 10 minutes to write a short letter. You may write it to someone you’ve hurt or wronged, or to someone who has hurt you. I won’t make you deliver this letter—that is totally up to you. Take the next 10 minutes to create your letter.”

(Tell teens they don’t necessarily need to show their letters to anyone or ever deliver them; but they may do so if it’s appropriate.)

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- Which character in this story are you most like? How?
- If you had to “wrestle” with God over something, what would it be? *(Maybe it’s a fear of something? A frustration in your life? An injustice in the world?)*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

The words and images in your mind are meaningful, so create or write something that honestly represents your thoughts. We can really learn from each other. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for your willingness to share. Some of these things are very personal, and I am impressed by your courage to trust us. I hope we'll continue to see how this story can impact us and change us in very significant ways. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next story!

Let's pray as we end our time together:

*God, thank you for all of the things that this story, your Story, has shown us about ourselves and each other. In the days ahead, help us to reflect on what we've experienced today and to remember that you are with us always, no matter where we've been or what we've done. And may we look forward to growing and learning from new stories in the weeks to come. Thank you for being a God we can trust. Amen.*

# GOD BUILDS A NATION

**Bible Verses:** Genesis 12–13; 15–17; 21–22; 32–33; 35; Romans 4; Hebrews 11

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Abraham's words
- Jacob's words
- God's words
- Isaac's words
- Messengers (2 to 3 readers)

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1: PART ONE: THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM**

The LORD had said to Abram,

**GOD:** "Go from your country...to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you;...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

**NARRATOR 1:** So Abram went, as the LORD had told him...even though he did not know where he was going. [Then] the LORD said to Abram...

**GOD:** "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them...So shall your offspring be."

**NARRATOR 2:** Abram believed the LORD, and...without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that [his wife's] womb was also dead....God said to him,

**GOD:** "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham...I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between

me and you...to be your God and the God of your descendants after you...As for Sarai your wife,... her name will be Sarah...I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations."

**NARRATOR 2:** Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said. [She] became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.

**NARRATOR 1: PART TWO: SACRIFICING ISAAC**

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him,

**GOD:** "Abraham! Take...your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

**NARRATOR 1:** Early the next morning Abraham got up and...set out for the place God had told him about. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham,

**ISAAC:** "Father? The fire and wood are here...but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

**ABRAHAM:** "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

**NARRATOR 1:** When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there...He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar...Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven,

**GOD:** "Abraham!...Do not lay a hand on the boy...I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

**NARRATOR 1:** Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

**NARRATOR 3: PART THREE: JACOB AND ESAU**

*[After Abraham and Sarah died,] Isaac married Rebekah....Twenty years after the wedding...Rebekah gave birth to twins. Esau, the elder...was his dad's favorite. Jacob, the younger...was clearly his mother's favorite. The two boys vied for the inheritance rights, and Jacob proved to be a master manipulator and schemer.*

**NARRATOR 2:** One day...as Isaac lay in bed, weak and blind, he asked [Esau] for a tasty meal of char-grilled wild meat. After the meal, Isaac would officially pass on his blessing—and God's favor—to Esau. This was to be Esau's long-awaited big day.

**NARRATOR 3:** Rebekah overheard Isaac's plan and came up with a plan of her own. She dressed her favorite son, Jacob, in Esau's clothes...She quickly cooked up some meat and sent Jacob, posing as Esau, into Isaac's bedroom. Isaac, squinting his eyes and touching Jacob, wondered if this was really [Esau]...Jacob lied to his aged dad. Isaac ate. After kissing his son and smelling his scent, Isaac was convinced he was talking to Esau. Then Isaac gave the blessing, also confirming the double share of the material inheritance, to Jacob.

**NARRATOR 2:** Soon after, Esau arrived with his own platter of grilled meat, only to discover that mom and brother had robbed him of his entire future. Angry to the point of fury, he planned to kill Jacob. Rebekah intervened once more and sent Jacob to live with relatives until Esau's anger abated.

**NARRATOR 3:** *For twenty years Jacob tended flocks and farmland [and grew his family], and finally he took his large family home to meet Esau once again. But Jacob was careful to approach Esau with respect and humility. The wounds between them were deep and long, and he wasn't sure if Esau was friend or foe.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau...When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said,

**MESSENGERS:** "We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."

**NARRATOR 1:** Then Jacob prayed,

**JACOB:** "O God...I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown [me]...Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me."

**NARRATOR 3:** That night [when] Jacob was left alone...a man wrestled with him till daybreak. [The man knocked] Jacob's hip [out of the socket]. Then the man said [to Jacob], "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

**JACOB:** "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

**GOD [The Man]:** "What is your name?"

**JACOB:** "Jacob."

**GOD [The Man]:** "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

**JACOB:** "I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

**NARRATOR 1:** [Then] Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so...he himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.

**NARRATOR 3:** [After they reconciled,] Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him,

**JACOB:** "Let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone."

**NARRATOR 3:** After Jacob returned...God appeared to him again and blessed him. God said to him,

**GOD:** "A nation and a community of nations will come from you...The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you."

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 2: God Builds a Nation

Discover more from this story:  
Genesis 12–13; 15–17; 21–22;  
32–33; 35; Romans 4; Hebrews 11



### SEE the story

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the story

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the story .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

> Which character in this story are you most like? How?

> If you had to “wrestle” with God over something, what would it be?

(Maybe it's a fear of something? A frustration in your life? An injustice in the world?)

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# JOSEPH: FROM SLAVE TO DEPUTY PHARAOH

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

Since this is only the third lesson, there may be teens for whom this is still a very new and challenging experience. Continue to encourage your teens to be open to learning and experiencing new things.

This lesson moves fairly quickly through several episodes in Joseph's life. While you could spend time unpacking each trial he faced (e.g., temptation from Potiphar's wife) and what each means in our lives, it might be more advantageous to encourage your teens to see the whole narrative of Joseph's life and struggles in light of God's attitude toward those who are afflicted—the "underdogs," in a sense. The element of forgiveness will also play a large role in rounding out this narrative.

Continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 3: "Joseph: From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh" can be found in Genesis 37; 39; 41–48; and 50.

## ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS!

**Sometimes using the right probing questions can unlock great discussion.**

Until a group gets to know each other and becomes familiar with a new style of interaction, you won't be able to rely on canned questions to get your discussion started. (The questions will help, but you will need a little more.) Remember to keep your questions open-ended. When appropriate, ask "What do you think?" questions, rather than questions that seek a concrete answer. These will, by nature, foster more discussion amongst your group. Similarly, stay away from questions that could have a yes or no answer, and opt for "Why...?" questions. (For example, instead of "Did you like the story?" use "What did you think about the story? Why?")

As your teens begin to respond, don't be afraid to use probing questions to dig a bit deeper. When you sense there could be more to a teen's answer that is beneficial to the rest of the group, ask them to elaborate or explain their response further. (Of course, be careful not to pry into something that is too personal.)



## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 3 Handout: Joseph** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 11 to 13 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along. (Save paper by letting teens share the scripts, also.)
- Copies of the JOIN the Story section of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **God Builds a Nation Recap video** and the **Chapter 3: Joseph video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response.
- **Creative Option:** Sheets of paper, pens and pencils; OPTIONAL: Tape or voice recorders, musical instruments (tambourines, drums, keyboard, etc.)
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick teens or leaders who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*God Builds a Nation* Recap Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 3: Joseph* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

10 minutes

Response to Scripture

9 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome back! I am so excited to be back together as we continue to move through God's Story. Let's take a moment and pray before we begin:

*God, we thank you for the opportunity to dive into this amazing Story together once again. We ask you to inspire us, to move us, and to allow us to find our own story within this one. Please show us and teach us how this story about Joseph can intersect with our own stories. Amen.*

This week we are in the THIRD chapter of our Story. I hope you're excited to see what's coming up next. I thought it would be good for us to take a look back at what happened in the Story and see what we remember from last week. It will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *God Builds a Nation Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? Is there anything that stood out to you differently from the last time we heard it? What stood out to you the most from this part of the Story?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story that we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week, which tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, that video refreshed your memory of where we've been in the last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us today. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *Joseph: From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh*. Remember to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *Joseph: From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 3: Joseph* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After two minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As you have noticed, this is a really interesting story—it almost seems like it could be a movie, doesn't it? Once again, we want to spend some hearing this story in a different way, and I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes).]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were some of the most memorable moments from the story?
- Overall, how did this story make you feel? Why?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think Joseph's brothers wanted to get rid of him?
- Have you ever been betrayed by a family member or close friend? How did you (or do you) feel toward that person?
- In the story, Joseph was accused of something he didn't do. Have you ever been treated unfairly for doing the right thing? What did you learn from it?
- At one point in the story, Joseph says, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." What does this tell you about God?
- Has there ever been a difficult time in your life when you felt that God was with you? How did you know?
- What are some ways that you sense God is with you?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- Which character(s) in the story are you most like? How?
- What events or memories from your own life did the story evoke?
- How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Have your teens gather into groups of anywhere from 2 to 4 people. Tell them that since Joseph's story is a classic underdog story about rising from the bottom to the top, it needs a proper soundtrack to go along with it, just like a great underdog movie.

Give them two options to create in the next 10 to 15 minutes: (a) Make a list of 10 to 12 popular songs that help tell different parts of Joseph's story (e.g., "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees). Have each group share their playlist with the rest of the teens, explaining why they picked each song; OR (b) Write and perform (if they are comfortable doing so) their own rap song or pop song about the themes from Joseph's story. Tell them they may rewrite new lyrics to the tune of a popular song, if that helps to get them started.

OPTIONAL: Allow volunteers to perform and/or record their songs. Be sure not to force anyone who is shy about sharing.

(To save time, you could have the groups who choose to make soundtrack lists share their "Top 3" songs.)

I love how you're all continuing to interact more and more with these stories, and I love seeing the words and images you come up with. So create or write something that honestly represents what you're wrestling with or wondering about in this story. I know we can really learn from each other. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their response to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for using your imaginations and being willing to share some very important and personal parts of your own stories. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but I encourage you to continue to reflect on these questions until the next time we meet. You can journal about your thoughts, create more art, or share them with friends or family.

Let's pray as we end our time together:

*God, we are so amazed and grateful that you stand by us no matter what—even when people betray us—and when it seems like things can't get any worse. We know you are a good God who cares about us and wants the absolute best for us. Thank you for showing us your love in our lives and through this story. Amen.*

# JOSEPH: FROM SLAVE TO DEPUTY PHARAOH

**Bible Verses:** Genesis 37; 39; 41–48; 50

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Joseph
- Jacob
- Potiphar's Wife
- God
- Brothers
- Pharaoh

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

(Opening is from *The Story: Teen Edition*, Chapter Two.)

**NARRATOR 1:** *Of Jacob's 12 sons, Joseph was clearly Jacob's favorite, leading the rest of Jacob's boys to resent their younger brother. Jacob only heightened the family stress when he gave a beautiful coat to Joseph. And Joseph didn't help matters when he twice told his older brothers that he had a dream that they would someday bow to him. Finally, the brothers had heard enough from their arrogant little brother. They hatched a conspiracy. For seventeen-year-old Joseph, it would be a very bad day indeed.*

**NARRATOR 2:** [Joseph's] brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks...[When] Joseph came to [check on] his brothers, they stripped him of the ornate robe he was wearing—and...threw him into [a] cistern.

**NARRATOR 2:** [Later,] when...merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him...[and he was taken] to Egypt. Then [the brothers] got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. They took [it] back to their father...He recognized it and said,

**JACOB:** "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him...!"



**NARRATOR 2:** Then Jacob...mourned for his son many days.

**NARRATOR 1:** Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard. The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the LORD was with [Joseph],...Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.

**NARRATOR 2:** Now Joseph was...handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice...and said,

**POTIPHAR'S WIFE:** "Come to bed with me!"

**NARRATOR 2:** But...day after day, he refused to go to bed with her. One day...She caught him by his cloak...But he left [it] in her hand and ran out of the house. She kept his cloak...until his master came home. Then she told him this story:

**POTIPHAR'S WIFE:** "That Hebrew slave...came to me to make sport of me. But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

**NARRATOR 2:** When [Joseph's] master heard the story his wife told him,...he burned with anger. [Potiphar] took him and put him in prison the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison, the LORD was with him; [God]...granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison.

**NARRATOR 3:** *[Now] God [had] gifted [Joseph] with the unusual ability to discern the meaning of dreams. Once during his confinement, Joseph helped two of Pharaoh's civil servants interpret their dreams. When Pharaoh's [dreams] took a bizarre turn...he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt...but no one could interpret them for him. So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon.*

**NARRATOR 1:** *Pharaoh explained his two dreams...[and] Joseph told Pharaoh that the twin dreams foretold seven years of bumper crops to be followed by seven years of...famine....Joseph's recommendation to Pharaoh was to put a wise man in charge of storing food and preparing for the coming famine. The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and...[he] said to Joseph,*

**PHARAOH:** "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders..."

**NARRATOR 3:** *For seven wonderful years...farms yielded enough for the people to eat well and still store up for the coming bad times....Then, as Joseph had predicted...Egypt became hot and parched; the crops withered....Because the drought was so severe, neighboring nations began to approach Egypt for help just to stay alive...*

**NARRATOR 1:** When [Joseph's father] Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, [he sent] ten of Joseph's brothers...down to buy grain from Egypt. Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him...As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them.

**JOSEPH:** "Where do you come from?"

**BROTHERS:** "From the land of Canaan...to buy food."

**JOSEPH:** "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

**BROTHERS:** "No, my lord...[We] are honest men, not spies."

**NARRATOR 3:** [But Joseph] put them all in custody for three days. On the third day, Joseph said to them,

**JOSEPH:** "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 go and take grain back for your starving households. But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die."

**NARRATOR 3:** This they proceeded to do. [After they brought back their youngest brother], Joseph [finally] said to his brothers,

**JOSEPH:** "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt....Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

**NARRATOR 3:** Then he threw his arms around...all his brothers and wept over them.

**NARRATOR 2:** So they went up out of Egypt and...told [their father],

**BROTHERS:** "Joseph is still alive!...He is ruler of all Egypt."

**NARRATOR 2:** Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived.

**NARRATOR 3:** So [when] Israel set out [for Egypt] with all that was his,...God spoke to [him] in a vision at night and said,

**GOD:** "Jacob! I am the God of your father...Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there."

**NARRATOR 3:** When they arrived in [Egypt, Joseph] threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time.

**JACOB:** "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

**NARRATOR 2:** So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land...[After Jacob died, Joseph's] brothers...came and threw themselves down before him.

**BROTHERS:** “We are your slaves...!”

**JOSEPH:** “Don’t be afraid...I will provide for you and your children.”

**NARRATOR 3:** And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father’s family...[and] he lived a hundred and ten years.

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 3: JOSEPH

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
Genesis 37; 39; 41–48; 50



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were some of the most memorable moments from the story?

Overall, how did this story make you feel? Why?



### JOIN THE STORY

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > Which character(s) in the story are you most like? How?
- > What events or memories from your own life did the story evoke?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# DELIVERANCE

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

While many are familiar with this story, it's always good to encourage your teens (and yourself!) to view the story from a new perspective. Some of the traditional elements have been omitted, such as Moses' birth and his escape from Egypt after committing murder. The focus of this telling is on God's deliverance, or rescue, of his people. While the conversation might stray to other parts of the Story not told in this lesson, try to keep your teens and leaders focused on the story presented here.

Also, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 4: "Deliverance" can be found in Exodus 1–7; 10–17.

## OPERATE IN JOY!

**Leadership expert Michael Zigarelli says your attitude has great power to influence the attitudes of those around you:**

"The disposition of the leader powerfully drives the disposition of the whole group. When you adopt a joyful and celebratory disposition throughout the study, others will follow. When you smile, when you're upbeat, when you're genuinely excited to be leading, when you celebrate successes, it will infect the group—and that will significantly improve the experience for everyone involved. As you know, though, joy doesn't just happen. It's not something you can engineer on demand, nor is it something you can fake for very long. Rather, real joy starts with seeing clearly the opportunity with which God has blessed you... This sort of perspective leads to gratitude for the opportunity, and out of gratitude flows joy, both in your preparation and in your leadership of the discussion."

[From *Freedom from Busyness Leader's Guide* by Michael Zigarelli, pp. 74–82.]

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 4 Handout: Deliverance** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 4 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **StoryRewind 1 video** and the **Chapter 4: Deliverance video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** Poster-sized sheets of paper (one for every 3 or 4 people), an assortment of colored markers
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators and God. Make sure to pick teens or leaders who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*StoryRewind 1 Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 4: Deliverance Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

10 minutes

Response to Scripture

9 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute



# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome back! I am so excited to be back together as we continue to move through God's Story. Let's take a moment and pray before we begin:

*God, we thank you for the opportunity to dive into this amazing Story together once again. We ask you to inspire us, to move us, and to allow us to find our own story within this one. Please show us and teach us how this story about the exodus can intersect with our own stories. Amen.*

This week we are in the FOURTH chapter of our story. I hope you're excited to see what's coming up next. I thought it would be good for us to take a look back at what's happened in the Story so far. It will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *StoryRewind 1* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story that we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consist of the smaller stories we'll look at each week, which tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you're just joining us. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *Deliverance*. Like the video we just watched, it's packed with action, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *Deliverance* video from the curriculum DVD (2:44).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 4: Deliverance* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

As you have noticed, there is a lot going on in this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- How did God show concern for the Israelites after hearing their cries for help?
- Do you think Moses was qualified to lead the people? In what ways did he feel he wasn't qualified?
- Have you ever felt unqualified or unable to do something, as Moses did? How did you handle it?
- The Story notes several amazing miracles in the deliverance of the people from Egypt. Do you believe God performs miracles today? Why or why not?
- Why do you think God "hardens Pharaoh's heart"? What might this mean?
- What does this story say about the character of God?
- What does the idea of "deliverance" mean in our world today? Where is God's rescue needed?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Have you ever been or are you now "captive" or "enslaved" to something?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I believe you all have something very important to add to this time, so create or write something that honestly represents how you're feeling and what you're wrestling with today. I think you'll find that we all can learn a lot if we're real with each other. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Have your teens get into groups of 3 or 4. Give each group a large sheet of paper and some markers.

Say something like, "In your groups, you are now going to create a campaign poster for the ideal candidate to lead a nation of people out of a tough time. Give your candidate a name and make a list of all the qualities that he or she must have to be a good leader. You may also create a campaign slogan and draw a picture of your leader."

After 10 minutes, ask each group to present their leader and his or her qualities. (OPTIONAL: After all have shared, take a quick hand-count election of which candidate would be the best leader.)

If time allows, briefly discuss the difference between the characteristics we look for in our leaders and the characteristics that God looks for in his.

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—***Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]*

**Teacher Script:** *(please personalize this)*

I am proud of you for engaging with these questions, even when it may be a bit uncomfortable at times. I believe these stories have a way of connecting with us like nothing else does, and I'm seeing great things come out of our times together. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next story!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we are so grateful for this amazing story of your plan to rescue your people from bondage and slavery. We pray that in the coming days you'll show us the areas of our lives in which you want to set us free. We also ask that you continue to remind us that, no matter who we are or what we think of ourselves, you believe we can do great things in your name. Amen.*

# DELIVERANCE

**Bible Verses:** Exodus 1–7; 10–17

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1 and 2
- God
- Moses
- Pharaoh

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** [After] Joseph and all his brothers...[had] died, the Israelites...became so numerous that the land was filled with them. Then a new king [called Pharaoh]...came to power in Egypt. [The Egyptians] put slave masters over [the Israelites] to oppress them with forced labor...The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out. [But] God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with [them].

**NARRATOR 2:** Now [an Israelite named] Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law...[when] the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush....God called to him,

**GOD:** "Moses!...Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground...I am the God of your [fathers]...I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt...So I have come down to rescue them...I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people...out of Egypt."

**MOSES:** "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh...? I have never been eloquent...I am slow of speech and tongue."

**GOD:** "Who gave human beings their mouths?...Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

**MOSES:** "Please send someone else."

**NARRATOR:** Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said,

**GOD:** "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite?...You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do...Take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it."

**NARRATOR 1:** Then Moses [went to meet Aaron and] told him everything the LORD had sent him to say. Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses.

**NARRATOR 2:** *Unfortunately, things didn't go so well with Moses and Aaron's first [meeting] with Pharaoh....[He only] made their slave labor even more difficult.* Then the LORD said to Moses,

**GOD:** "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go... Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt...and they will turn to blood.'"

**NARRATOR 1:** But Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. *The next plague included millions of frogs, hopping into every kitchen, every street and every field in Egypt....Pharaoh agreed to let the Hebrews go if Moses would get rid of the frogs. Moses prayed and the frogs died....[But] Pharaoh again stubbornly refused to make good on his part of the deal. So Moses hit the dust with his staff, and gnats swarmed the land...Still Pharaoh would not budge. God continued to show his power as he prepared to rescue his people.*

**NARRATOR 2:** *The cycle continued through plagues that included swarms of flies, a disease that killed livestock, terrible boils that afflicted people and animals, thunderstorms with destructive hail, devouring locusts and a frightening time of darkness. After each devastating plague, Pharaoh assured Moses that he could leave with the people...But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Now the LORD had said to Moses,

**GOD:** "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here..."

**NARRATOR 1:** So Moses said [to Pharaoh],

**MOSES:** "This is what the LORD says: '...Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, [including] the firstborn son of Pharaoh...There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again...'"

**NARRATOR 1:** Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh. The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

**GOD:** "Tell the whole community of Israel that...each man is to take a lamb [and slaughter it.] Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on...the doorframes of [their] houses....On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals...and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt."

**NARRATOR 2:** The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt...During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron...

**PHARAOH:** "Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Take your flocks and herds...and go!"

**NARRATOR 2:** *God had remembered his enslaved people and rescued them. They packed their carts...and prepared for a long...journey.* By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.

**NARRATOR 1:** When [Pharaoh] was told that the people had fled...He took six hundred of the best chariots [and] he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly...and overtook them as they camped by the sea. As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites...were terrified and cried out to the LORD. Moses answered the people...

**MOSES:** "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today...The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

**NARRATOR 1:** Then the LORD said to Moses,

**GOD:** "Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground."

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground. The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.

**NARRATOR 1:** Then...Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing...and the LORD swept them into the sea...Not one of them survived.

**NARRATOR 2:** *This unforgettable escape impressed upon the Israelites that God was indeed taking care of them...*[Then] the LORD issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test.

**GOD:** "If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."



# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 4: Deliverance

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
Exodus 1-7; 10-17



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol  
that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Have you ever been or are you now "captive" or "enslaved" to something?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

*Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.*

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# NEW COMMANDS AND A NEW COVENANT

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

This story has a lot of detail as Moses is traveling up and down the mountain several times. It may be hard for teens to keep track of the action, so it's important that you encourage them to really pay attention. The purpose of this study is to help teens engage in this story and discuss the events within the boundaries of that narrative. Gently encourage them that discussion outside of these parameters is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will gain further insight.

Chapter 5: "New Commands and a New Covenant" can be found in Exodus 19–20; 24–25; 32–34; and 40.

## DON'T KILL THE CONVERSATION!

Youth ministry expert Grahame Knox suggests five surefire ways to avoid an embarrassing silence:

1. Don't ask questions that can be answered with one word (e.g., *Do you agree that God loves you?*)
  2. Don't ask loaded questions that suggest the answer (e.g., *Our bodies are God's temple, so should we smoke?*)
  3. Don't ask intimidating questions (e.g., *If you really loved God, what would you do?*)
  4. Don't ask embarrassing questions (e.g., *What's your most frequent temptation?*)
  5. Don't try to make people guess the answers you want (e.g., *What are the three great truths from this passage?*)
- I'll add one more:
6. Don't use "Why?" or "Why not?" in your follow-up questions (because they make people feel as though they're defending their answers).

[From *Creative Bible Study Methods for Youth Leaders*, an ebook by Grahame Knox, 2007, pp. 10–11.]

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 5 Handout: New Commands and a New Covenant** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 4 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **Deliverance Recap** and the **New Commands and a New Covenant videos** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** Big sheets of paper (one for every 3 or 4 people), an assortment of colored markers
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrator. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

## LESSON OUTLINE

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

### **PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

**5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*Deliverance Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

### **PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

**10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 5: New Commands and a New Covenant Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

### **PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

**25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

10 minutes

Response to Scripture

9 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

### **PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)*

**35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome back! I am so excited to be back together and continue our discovery in God's Story. Let's take a moment and pray before we begin:

*God, we are challenged and encouraged by the things you are showing us in your Story. I've been blown away by the things these teens are seeing. May you continue to make your Story alive to us and help us to know you more. Amen.*

I hope this adventure through God's Story is really connecting with you. So much has happened in just four chapters! I thought it would be good for us to take a look back at the Story so far. In just 31 seconds, this video will give us a quick summary of all the stories we've seen. It will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *Deliverance Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story that we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consist of the smaller stories we'll look at each week, which tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has prepared you to dive into another chapter of this amazing Story. I have another video to show you that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *New Commands and a New Covenant*. Like the first video we watched, it's packed with action, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *New Commands and a New Covenant* video from the curriculum DVD (2:44).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 5: New Commands and a New Covenant* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As you have noticed, this is a really interesting story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, and I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes).]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think God gave the Israelites commands? Why were they needed?
- Do you think they were difficult to follow?
- Why do you think the people didn't want to live within God's commands?
- Why do you think the Israelites created a "god they could see"?
- Where do we see people put the highest value on material objects?
- Why do you think we tend to do this?
- God said the to Israelites, "You will be a kingdom of priests." What do you think that meant for the Israelites? What could that mean for us?
- What do you think it means to live in God's ways? What are some of the characteristics of someone who is doing this?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- Which character are you most like in this story? How?
- In your own words, what could it mean for you to live as a "modern-day priest"?
- How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

This is a very mature and creative group. The words and images in your minds are meaningful, so create or write something that honestly represents your thoughts. We can really learn from each other. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Have your teens get into groups of 3 or 4. Give each group a large sheet of paper. Say something like, "You are now going to create a current version of the Ten Commandments. You can look them up in Exodus 20. Your version needs to use language that teens relate to and understand. Tell us what you think each of these commands means."

Take the next 10 minutes to create your new commands. Don't forget to write them on a current communication device. God wouldn't give them to us on tablets...what would God use today?"

(If teens are struggling to come up with ideas for this, have them think about what God might put on a billboard or in an email or tweet to communicate these commands.)



**[CUE: SHARE—***Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]*

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

I am encouraged and amazed by your creativity and depth. Stories have a way of connecting with us like nothing else does, and I am seeing this Story begin to change all of our lives. Thank you for engaging in this and being so thoughtful in your responses. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next story!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we are so grateful for our time together and for how you're meeting us through your Story. We are learning so much about you, and it's changing our own stories. May we continue to seek you as our source of life and strength this week. Amen.*

# NEW COMMANDS AND A NEW COVENANT

**Bible Verses:** Exodus 19–20, 24–25, 32–34, 40

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrator
- God
- Moses
- Israelites
- Aaron

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR:** On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt...[and] camped...in the desert in front of the mountain.

**NARRATOR:** The LORD called to Moses from the mountain and said,

**MOSES:** "This is what you are to....tell the people of Israel: 'You...have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'"

**NARRATOR:** On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast....When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear.

**NARRATOR:** They stayed at a distance and said to Moses,

**ISRAELITES:** "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

**NARRATOR:** Moses said to the people,

**MOSES:** “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”

**NARRATOR:** The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

**NARRATOR:** The LORD said,

**GOD:** “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

“You shall have no other gods before me.

“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God,

“You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife...or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

**NARRATOR:** When Moses went and told the people all the LORD’s words and laws, they responded with one voice,

**ISRAELITES:** “Everything the LORD has said we will do.”

**NARRATOR:** Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.

**NARRATOR:** Then Moses entered the cloud ...and stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

**NARRATOR:** [Meanwhile in the valley below]...when the [Israelites] saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron, [the high priest and Moses’ brother] and said,

**ISRAELITES:** “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for...Moses...we don’t know what has happened to him.”

**NARRATOR:** Aaron answered them,

**AARON:** “Take off the gold earrings...and bring them to me.”

**NARRATOR:** So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then [the people proclaimed],

**ISRAELITES:** “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

**NARRATOR:** When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf.

**NARRATOR:** Then the LORD said to Moses,

**GOD:** “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it...”

**NARRATOR:** Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands...the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

**NARRATOR:** When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

**NARRATOR:** The next day Moses said to the people,

**MOSES:** “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”

**NARRATOR:** So Moses went back to the LORD and said,

**MOSES:** “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin...”

**NARRATOR:** And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did.

**NARRATOR:** Then Moses said to [the Lord],

**MOSES:** “What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth? Now show me your glory.”

**NARRATOR:** The LORD said to Moses,

**GOD:** “Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke...”

**NARRATOR:** So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning.

**NARRATOR:** Then the LORD came down in the cloud...passed in front of Moses, proclaiming,

**GOD:** "The LORD...compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished..."

**NARRATOR:** Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped.

**NARRATOR:** Then the LORD said:

**GOD:** "I am making a covenant with you...I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome...the work that I, the LORD...do for you."

**NARRATOR:** When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses...they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, [and] gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

**NARRATOR:** [On the mountain] the LORD [had told] Moses,

**GOD:** "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering...from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you."

**NARRATOR:** *The best Hebrew [craft workers] used their skills in woodworking, metalworking, weaving and embroidering to [provide] the materials for the [sacred tent called the] tabernacle.*

**NARRATOR:** Then the cloud covered the tent...and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

**NARRATOR:** In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all...Israelites during all their travels.



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

> Which character are you most like in this story? How?

> In your own words, what could it mean for you to live as a “modern-day priest”?

> How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

*Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.*

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# WANDERING

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

This story emphasizes some major themes in the Israelites' relationship to God. Some very "human" moments occur as the Israelites continue to complain to God, and Moses even shows his frustration at the burden of leading his people.

In responding to this story, there could be opportunities for teens to reveal some very personal examples of ways they have "given up on God" or questioned his blessing in their lives—or even his presence. Do your best not to steer teens toward specific answers and responses; rather, encourage them to draw from their own experiences and feelings about their relationship with God.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside the parameters of the story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 6: "Wandering" can be found in Numbers 10–14; 20–21; 25; 27; Deuteronomy 1–2; 4; 6; 8–9; 29–32; and 34.

## START AN ARGUMENT!

**Small group leader Carter Moss says the goal is to get at the core of what people are really trying to say.**

"I like to tell my groups that if we always agree with each other, and with every word that every author we read says, then it makes for a pretty boring group and a somewhat pointless discussion. The point of actually discussing things is to get different perspectives and wrestle with the issues!

"Here are some examples of questions that can help create discussion by playing a little 'devil's advocate':

- Do you really agree with what the author is saying in that chapter? Why or why not?
- Why did God design it to work that way? Why not just do (whatever else) instead?
- What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?
- Why do we really have to do it like that? Why can't we just go (some other route) instead?"

[From "Tips for Facilitating a Group Discussion" by Carter Moss. © 2010 SmallGroups.com & Christianity Today International]



## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 6 Handout: Wandering** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 6 to 8 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **New Commands Recap video** and the **Wandering video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** A sheet of paper for each teen and an assortment of colored markers or colored pencils
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*New Commands Recap* Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 6: Wandering* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

10 minutes

Response to Scripture

9 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome! I'm excited for another amazing week of journeying through God's Story, and I hope you are, too. Let's pray before we begin:

*God, we come together today, each of us with our own worries, fears, and doubts. We thank you for being a God who meets us wherever we are, no matter what. We recognize that you are here with us now, and we ask that as we dive into today's story, you'd continue to show us more about who you are and how we can interact with you through your incredible Story. Amen.*

We are in our sixth chapter of the Story this week, and I hope you are as excited as I am to see what's coming next. But before we move on, I thought it would be good for us to take a look back at what we covered last week. It will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *New Commands Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *Wandering*. Like the video we just watched, it's packed with action, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *Wandering* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 6: Wandering* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- What do you think was the main cause of most of the Israelites' problems? Why?
- How did God respond to the people's lack of faith?
- What do you learn about Moses' leadership throughout this difficult period? How did he display both frustration and faith?
- Why didn't the Israelites trust God to bring them safely into Canaan?
- Have you ever been afraid to do something, even though you knew it was what God wanted for you? Explain.
- Have you ever felt as if you were "wandering in a desert"—spiritually or emotionally? Explain.
- How do you think trusting God's promises can help you in difficult times?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *What are you thankful for? Have you ever been ungrateful for something you received?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I know you all have something very important to add to this story, so create or write something that honestly represents how you're feeling and what you're wrestling with today. I think you'll find that we'll continue to see this story in new ways if we challenge ourselves to look deeper into our own lives through these questions. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Pass out a sheet of paper and markers or colored pencils to each person.

Say something like, "Now on your own, you're going to draw a map. But it's not going to be an ordinary map of actual locations. Instead, it's going to be a map of your life so far. Each area that you draw should represent an important time in your life. By the time you're done, we should be able to see where you have 'traveled' or 'wandered' up until this point. Pay close attention to those events and times that were both good and bad, successful and difficult. Think especially about how God showed that he was with you in those times."

After 10 minutes, ask if any teens would like to share their personal maps. If they are comfortable, ask them to share about any "signs" along the way that remind them of God's presence in their lives.

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Once again, thank you for engaging with these questions, even though they can be tough at times. These stories can really connect with us like nothing else does, and I'm seeing great things come out of our time together. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next story!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we are so thankful for the things you teach us and show us about you and about us through this ancient Story. We ask you to continue to show us how this Story is also our story, and that we all have a role to play. We also pray that you would continue to open our eyes to see the things that you do in our lives every day. Remind us that you are with us and that you are on our side always. Amen.*



# WANDERING

**Bible Verses:** Numbers 10–14; 20–21; 25; 27; Deuteronomy 1–2; 4; 6; 8–9; 29–32; 34

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1 and 2
- God
- Moses
- Caleb
- Israelites

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** At the LORD's command through Moses...*The [Israelites] marched out from their yearlong campout near Mount Sinai...God continued to guide them with the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night...*[And] again the Israelites started wailing and said,

**ISRAELITES:** "If only we had meat to eat!...We never see anything but this manna!"

**NARRATOR 1:** The LORD became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled. He asked the LORD,

**MOSES:** "Where can I get meat for all these people? I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me..."

**NARRATOR 1:** The LORD said to Moses:

**GOD:** "Tell the people: 'Now the LORD will give you meat, and you will eat it. You will eat it...for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it—because you have rejected the LORD, who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?" ' "

**NARRATOR 1:** Now a wind went out from the LORD and drove quail in from the sea...All that day and night and all the next day the people went out and gathered [many bushels of] quail...But...the anger of the LORD burned against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague.

**NARRATOR 2:** *[After] God had dealt harshly with the people's lack of faith, [he] said to Moses,*

**GOD:** "Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites."

**NARRATOR 2:** *[So] Moses sent [men] to explore Canaan...and at the end of forty days they returned. They gave Moses this account:*

**ISRAELITES:** "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large."

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said,

**CALEB:** "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

**NARRATOR 2:** But the men who had gone up with him said,

**ISRAELITES:** "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are."

**NARRATOR 2:** And Caleb...who [was] among those who had explored the land,...said,

**CALEB:** "The land...is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land...Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

**NARRATOR 2:** But the whole assembly talked about stoning [him along with Joshua, another of the men]. Then...the LORD said to Moses,

**GOD:** "How long will these people...refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them?"

**NARRATOR 2:** *Grumbling, complaining, plotting, unbelieving—the Hebrews were slow learners.... The story picks up again nearly 40 years later.... The promised land lies before them again.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Now there was no water for the community, and the people...quarreled with Moses and said,

**ISRAELITES:** "Why did you bring the LORD's community into this wilderness, that we and our livestock should die here? Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has...no water to drink!"

**NARRATOR 1:** The LORD said to Moses,

**GOD:** "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink."

**NARRATOR 1:** So...he and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them,

**MOSES:** “Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?”

**NARRATOR 1:** Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. *The frustration and anger that had built up in Moses over the last 40 years came to expression. In his rage, Moses struck the rock rather than obeying God’s instructions to speak to it. Moses...demonstrated a lack of trust in God and respect for his presence among his people. The consequences were clear: Neither Moses nor Aaron would enter the promised land.*

**NARRATOR 2:** *As the battle for the promised land approached, Moses took a census and discovered that all the Israelites who had rebelled against God’s instruction to enter Canaan nearly 40 years earlier had passed away. After all these years, the next generation was finally poised to enter the land....*So the LORD said to Moses,

**GOD:** “Take Joshua...a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Moses did as the LORD commanded him. *Moses’ final task regarding the anxious and excited people was a grand...speech.*

**MOSES:** The LORD your God has blessed you...He has watched over your journey through this vast wilderness. These forty years...God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts...Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. You are now about to cross the Jordan to go in and [face] nations greater and stronger than you...But be assured today that the LORD your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as the LORD has promised you.

**NARRATOR 2:** *Though Moses often complained that he was not a public speaker, his strong words of encouragement kept the people faithful, focused and hopeful for many years. Moses knew God well, and he loved the people...*The LORD told Moses,

**GOD:** “Go up into the [mountains], and view Canaan, the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession....you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel.”

**NARRATOR 2:** [So] Moses [went up into the mountains and] died there...as the LORD had said. Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone.

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 6: Wandering

Discover more from this story:  
Numbers 10–14; 20–21; 25; 27;  
Deuteronomy 1–2; 4; 6; 8–9; 29–32; 34



### SEE the story

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the story

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the story

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > What are you thankful for? Have you ever been ungrateful for something you received?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# THE BATTLE BEGINS

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In this story a few things could be distracting for you and your teens. First, the story of Rahab the prostitute might require you to encourage your teens toward a mature approach to the discussion, especially since there could be some great insights to come from that part of the story. Also, use discretion when selecting someone to read the part of Rahab in the Readers' Theater.

Second, the topic of violence is prominent in this story, and it could spur some debate among your teens. Do your best to moderate the discussion, and let teens share their opinions before trying to provide a definitive answer. (For example, when a teen asks a question, allow the group to respond. Say something like: "Jason has asked a great question. What do you all think?")

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they

Chapter 7: "The Battle Begins" can be found in Joshua 1–2; 6; 8; 10–11; and 23–24.

## BRIDGE THE DISCUSSION!

You can use variations of the following statements to help stimulate or encourage ongoing discussion:

- Can you elaborate on that...?
- Tell me more...?
- Someone take this in another direction...
- What do you mean by...?
- Does anyone disagree with that...?
- Does anyone have a different take on that...?
- Can anyone give an example...?
- Can you dig a little deeper...?
- How did you come to this conclusion...?
- Can you think of a situation where this would not be true...?
- Have you had an experience that brought you to this conclusion...?
- Does everyone know what \_\_\_\_\_ (the speaker) is talking about...?
- Is there another way to see things...?
- I'm not sure what you mean, are you saying...?
- Can anyone say this in another way...?

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 7 Hand-out: The Battle Begins** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 8 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **StoryRewind 2 video** and **The Battle Begins video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** Big sheets of paper (one for every 3 or 4 people), an assortment of colored markers; OPTIONAL: Old magazines, scissors, glue or tape
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### BRIDGE THE DISCUSSION, CONTINUED

- How do you (the group) define...?
- When is this not true...? Or is this true in all cases...?
- Have the rest of you thought about this in the same way...?
- Who has had the same experience or situation...?
- Say more about that...
- Go into more detail...

Source: © 2008 Workshopexercises.com

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

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(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace

the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major "scene" from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the "Creative Option" sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*



**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*StoryRewind 2* Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 7: The Battle Begins* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute



# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome! I'm excited for another great week of discovery through God's Story, and I hope you are, too. Let's pray together before we begin:

*God, we thank you for such a captivating Story that has so much power to teach us more about you and about ourselves. We ask that over the next couple of hours, you would allow us to set aside anything that is distracting us or keeping us from hearing and experiencing the story in a new way. Amaze us, move us, and show us new things about our world that we never thought possible. Amen.*

This week we are in the seventh chapter of our Story, and I hope you are as excited as I am to find out what comes next. But before we do, let's take a look back at what's happened in the Story so far. As usual, it will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play the *StoryRewind 2* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *The Battle Begins*. As the title suggests, it's packed with action, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Battle Begins* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 7: The Battle Begins* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- How do you think Joshua was able to be “strong and courageous” in such intimidating situations?
- What do you learn about God from the story of Rahab?
- Why do you think God ordered the Israelites to go to war against others? Is this violence justified? Why or why not?
- What would you say is Joshua's legacy? How was his role important to God's plan, as we've seen so far in the Story?
- Why do you think God gave his blessing to Joshua and the Israelites?
- What practical steps can you take to learn to trust God more?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Have you ever felt as though you were fighting against great odds?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I know many of us have some ideas already. But even if we're still unsure about what this story means for our lives, sometimes it's good just to begin writing or creating in response to the story. You may discover something in this exercise that you've never realized before about yourself or about God. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide teens into groups of 2 or 3. Give each group a large piece of paper and markers OR colored pencils.

Say something like: “In today's story, we see God's people come up against some pretty intimidating circumstances. We're going to take the next 10 minutes and use our imaginations to draw a picture of the most intimidating situation we could realistically face in our world today. Whether it's enduring an impossible science test or standing up to the biggest bully in school, we want to see what your imaginations can come up with.”

After the teens have had 10 minutes to draw their scenarios, ask each group to share. Then, as time allows, ask each group to think creatively about how God might want them to face that intimidating situation.

**[CUE: SHARE—***Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]*

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for wrestling with these questions, even though they can be really tough at times. We've seen how these stories can connect with us in powerful ways, and I'm seeing great things come out of our time together. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next chapter of the Story!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we thank you for a history and a Story that is full of adventure, mystery, and even confusion, at times, because it points us to our own stories. We pray that you'd show us real, practical ways that we can continue to grow in trusting you every day, and that you'd continue to open our eyes to the ways that you step in to fight for us—even when things seem hopeless. Thank you for being strong, even when we are weak. Amen.*

# THE BATTLE BEGINS

**Bible Verses:** Joshua 1–2; 6; 8; 10–11; 23–24

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1 and 2
- God
- Joshua
- The King
- Rahab
- Spies (2 people)

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** After the death of Moses...the LORD said to Joshua:

**GOD:** "You and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them...No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you."

**NARRATOR 1:** So Joshua ordered the officers of the people:

**JOSHUA:** "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.' "

**NARRATOR 1:** Then Joshua...sent two spies [to the city of Jericho.] So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there. [But] the king of Jericho [found out and] sent this message to Rahab:

**KING:** "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

**NARRATOR 1:** But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said,

**RAHAB:** “Yes, the men came to me, but [they left, and...] I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.”

**NARRATOR 1:** But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them...So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road...Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them...

**RAHAB:** “Please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you.” [She knew the Israelites were preparing to attack her city.]

**SPIES:** “Our lives for your lives!” the men assured her.

**NARRATOR 1:** So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall...when they [returned to camp, they told] Joshua,

**SPIES:** “The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands...”

**NARRATOR 1:** *Joshua organized the march to the land, with the ark of the covenant leading the way. When the priests carrying the sacred ark touched the river bank, the Jordan’s brisk flow ceased. All the people crossed on dry ground.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. Then the LORD said to Joshua,

**GOD:** “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in.”

**NARRATOR 2:** When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD’s covenant followed them...So [Joshua] had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the army returned to camp and spent the night there....[Again] on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days. On the seventh day, they... marched around the city seven times. The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army,

**JOSHUA:** “Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!”

**NARRATOR 2:** When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet... the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city...Then they burned the whole city and everything in it. But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho.

**NARRATOR 1:** So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land. [After leaving Jericho] God helped the Israelites to be victorious over [many armies.] Joshua subdued the

whole region, including the hill country... All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. [Then, many more] kings joined forces...to fight against Israel. The LORD said to Joshua,

**GOD:** “Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them, slain, over to Israel.”

**NARRATOR 1:** So Joshua and his whole army came against them...and attacked them, and the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel. They defeated them and pursued them...until no survivors were left. Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war.

**NARRATOR 2:** *God’s promise to Abraham centuries earlier was coming to pass. A new nation was being formed. Much of the promised land was theirs; much still remained to be taken. In the meantime, their leader had some final words of encouragement and challenge. After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then a very old man, summoned all Israel—their elders, leaders, judges and officials—and said to them:*

**JOSHUA:** “I am very old. You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the LORD your God who fought for you...Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed...”

**NARRATOR 2:** [And] Joshua made a covenant for the people, and...he reaffirmed...[God’s] decrees and laws. And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. After these things, Joshua...died at the age of a hundred and ten. Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel.

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 7: The Battle Begins

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
Joshua 1–2; 6; 8; 10–11; 23–24



### SEE the story

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the story

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the story

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Have you ever felt as though you were fighting against great odds?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>



# A FEW GOOD MEN...AND WOMEN

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In the story for chapter 8, the narrative is told through several "main" characters and several smaller stories of battles fought by the Israelites. Because of repetition, these stories have been abbreviated in the video and the StoryReader script to two predominant stories and characters: The story of Gideon and the story of Samson.

While teens should focus on themes from these two primary stories during your time together, make sure to emphasize the scale of the numerous and miraculous victories the Israelites achieved with God's help. Also make sure to remind the teens that the story goes much deeper, with detail and nuance, into the lives of the (very different) men and women whom God chose to lead Israel. Encourage them to take time on their own throughout the week to read more about these characters and their amazing stories.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 8: "A Few Good Men...and Women" can be found in Judges 2–4; 6–8; and 13–16.

### AVOID CHRISTIAN JARGON!

**Keep the conversation as accessible to teens as possible!**

While leading a discussion, it's important to use language that teens understand. Even though some adolescents have a "churched" background and may understand some theological concepts and words (e.g., *justification*, *righteousness*, *sovereignty*, etc.), chances are there may be some who are totally unfamiliar with Christian words or concepts. Be aware of using more complex Christian ideas in answering questions, and make sure to give background or an explanation in everyday terms whenever possible.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 8 Handout: A Few Good Men...and Women** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 8 to 10 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show **The Battle Begins Recap video** and **A Few Good Men...and Women video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** A large sheet of paper for every 2 to 3 teens, and an assortment of markers for each group
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some optional variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*The Battle Begins Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 8: A Few Good Men...and Women Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! I'm so glad you're here for another great week of discovery through God's Story. Let's pray together before we begin:

*God, we are grateful for another chance to come together and learn more about you and your amazing Story. We pray that you'd help us to set aside anything that would keep us from hearing from you during our time today. Teach us something fresh and new about ourselves and about you, and show us how we can change ourselves and the world around us. Amen.*

This week we're continuing our Story, and I hope you're as excited as I am to find out what comes next. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened in our story last week. As usual, it will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *The Battle Begins Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *A Few Good Men...and Women*. It's packed with action, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *A Few Good Men...and Women* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 8: A Few Good Men...and Women* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the *StoryReader* script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- What encouragement does Gideon's story provide?
- Why do you think God uses people who are uncertain or weak like Gideon?
- Why do you think the Israelites kept repeating their downward cycle of sin and rebellion?
- What kinds of temptations do you think Samson faced as a warrior with superhuman strength?
- What are the strongest temptations you face? How do you fight such temptations?
- What did Samson's decision to die accomplish for his purpose? What might this teach you about sacrifice?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Have you ever felt as though you were stuck in a destructive or rebellious pattern?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide teens into groups of 2 or 3, and give each group a large piece of paper and some markers.

Tell them to divide the piece of paper into 8 boxes. (They can do this by folding the paper in half three times.) Say something like, "In your groups, you are going to create either a superhero or a story about a human being with super powers or abilities. In the boxes, you're going to create a comic strip about your superhero's life." Tell the teens they must follow three rules:

- The superhero must have a particular strength or ability that he or she uses for good.
- He or she must exist in the world that you live in—your school, neighborhood, city, etc.
- The superhero must have a weakness.

After the teens have had about 10 minutes to create their superheroes and comic strips, allow each group to share. Make sure they include their superhero's strength, weakness, and the way he or she does good in the world they know.

I know many of us have some ideas already. But even if we're still unsure about what this story means for our lives, sometimes it's good to just begin writing or creating in response to the Story. You may discover something in this exercise that you've never realized before about yourself or about God. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*



**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for wrestling with these questions. As we've seen, they can be pretty tough at times. We know these stories can connect with us in powerful ways, and I'm seeing great things come out of our time together. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next chapter of the Story!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we thank you for a Story that continues to amaze us and teach us more about you and about ourselves. Thank you for being a God who gives us courage, strength, and confidence to face the toughest obstacles in our lives. We pray that you would remind us that we cannot do it on our own, and that we must look to one another—and most importantly, to you—for help. Thank you for being so faithful to your people. Amen.*



# A FEW GOOD MEN...AND WOMEN

**Bible Verses:** Judges 2–4; 6–8; 13–16

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Gideon
- Delilah
- Israelites
- God / Angel
- Samson
- Philistines

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** After [Joshua], another generation [of Israelites] grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. In his anger against Israel the LORD gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them...They were in great distress.

**NARRATOR 2:** Then the LORD raised up [men and women called] judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. Yet they would not listen to their judges but...worshiped [other gods]. Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them. But when the judge died, the people...*of Israel turned away from God again, and the cycle of social chaos began anew.*

**NARRATOR 3:** *[At one point, God] gave them into the hands of the [powerful] Midianites...[who destroyed their crops and oppressed them]. In their hunger and weakness, the Israelites appealed to God, who informed them that their big problem was not agricultural or military, but spiritual. To illustrate, God picked for service a farmer [named Gideon] from the weakest clan in his tribe. Like most new leaders, Gideon was uncertain if he could measure up. But God was looking for a faithful follower, not a decorated soldier.* When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said,

**GOD:** “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior...Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand.”

**GIDEON:** “Pardon me, my lord...but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in [the land], and I am the least in my family.”

**GOD:** “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”

**NARRATOR 1:** [So] the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon. [Gideon] and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them...[and] the LORD said to Gideon,

**GOD:** “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‘My own strength has saved me.’”

**NARRATOR 1:** So Gideon sent [most] of the Israelites home but kept...three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others. Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley. Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.

**NARRATOR 2:** [When] Gideon and the...men with him reached the edge of the camp,...they blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. Grasping the torches in their left hands...they shouted,

**ISRAELITES:** “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!”

**NARRATOR 2:** While each man held his position around the camp...the [Midianites ran out from their tents...confused, they fought and killed each other]. Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon’s lifetime, the land had peace forty years.

**NARRATOR 3:** No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites...*forgot their faithful, holy God—and once again they suffered the consequences of their unbelief. Several Israelite leaders tried to keep enemies at bay, with mixed results. No one had Gideon’s daring or success. But God was still working, and he sent an angel to make an extraordinary announcement.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. A certain man named Manoah had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said,

**GOD:** “You are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. He will begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”

**NARRATOR 2:** *The birth happened just as the angel said...[This boy named Samson], wild and unusually strong...grew, and the LORD blessed him. [Once, when he was traveling with his mother and father] a young lion came roaring toward him. The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands...*

**NARRATOR 3:** [When he grew older], he fell in love with a [Philistine] woman...whose name was Delilah. The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said,

**PHILISTINES:** “See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him...”

**NARRATOR 3:** So Delilah said to Samson,

**DELILAH:** “Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued.”

**NARRATOR 3:** With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it. So he told her everything.

**SAMSON:** “No razor has ever been used on my head...If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.”

**NARRATOR 1:** When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines...After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. Then she called,

**DELILAH:** “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and [put him in] prison. But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved. While they were in high spirits, [the Philistines] shouted,

**PHILISTINES:** “Bring out Samson to entertain us.”

**NARRATOR 3:** So they called Samson out of the prison...[and] when they stood him among the pillars, Samson said to the servant who held his hand,

**SAMSON:** “Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.”

**NARRATOR 1:** Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. Then Samson prayed to the LORD,

**SAMSON:** “Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, Samson said,

**SAMSON:** “Let me die with the Philistines!”

**NARRATOR 3:** Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived. He had led Israel twenty years. [But even] *after Samson, the Israelites continued their pattern of spiritual compromise during this sad period of their history.*

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 8: A Few Good Men...and Women

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
JUDGES 2-4; 6-8; 13-16



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Have you ever felt as though you were stuck in a destructive or rebellious pattern?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# THE FAITH OF A FOREIGN WOMAN

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In the story for chapter 9, the narrative is focused on the story of Ruth and Naomi. As you will quickly see, this story has a few "difficult" spots, in that Ruth's actions may be perceived as strange or even scandalous by modern-day readers. Teens may wonder what really happened when Ruth "uncovers the feet" of Boaz. While the text isn't clear about what exactly took place, we know her actions were seen as "kindness."

As the teens begin to work through the themes of the story, you and your group will hopefully see the richness of God's provision, meeting us in our pain and leading us toward a better way.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 9: "The Faith of a Foreign Woman" can be found in Ruth 1–4.

## SPREAD OUT THE CONVERSATION!

**Invite ALL of your teens to participate in the discussion.**

As you lead your discussion, there will likely be teens who are more vocal than others. Sometimes a highly participatory teen can dominate the conversation and keep others from sharing. When this happens, don't be afraid to take control and invite more teens to share. You can say something like: "Thank you for your great input, Brian. Let's see if anyone else has something to share on this topic."

You can also call on specific teens who may be more reluctant to share. Be careful not to pressure someone into sharing. (Also be mindful of new teens—being singled out in front of a group can be intimidating!) Remind teens that you highly value their opinions and would love to hear what they have to say!

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 9 Handout: The Faith of a Foreign Woman** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 7 to 10 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **A Few Good Men...and Women Recap video** and **The Faith of a Foreign Woman video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** A blank sheet of paper and a letter-sized envelope for each teen; pens, pencils, or markers
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*



**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*A Few Good Men...and Women Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 9: The Faith of a Foreign Woman Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute



# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello! Welcome back as we continue through God's Story together. I'm really excited to continue discovering new things, and I hope you are, too. Let's pray before we begin:

*God, as we come together today, I pray for our crazy and busy lives—from schoolwork to time with our friends and family. Please show us that you are present even in those times. Today we ask you to help us slow down, rest, and focus more on you and your amazing Story. Thank you for being with us here and now. Amen.*

This week we're continuing our Story, and I hope you're as excited as I am to find out what comes next. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened in the story last week. As usual, it will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *A Few Good Men...and Women Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you've missed any of the past weeks. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *The Faith of a Foreign Woman*. As with all of our videos, there is a lot going on here, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Faith of a Foreign Woman* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 9: The Faith of a Foreign Woman* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Ruth left her home and her relatives to follow Naomi and to follow God. Why?
- What do you think Ruth's story shows us about God's love?
- How does God use Ruth (a non-Jew) to bless and continue God's plan? What might this tell us about God?
- What could this mean...for how we treat people in our world? For how you treat people in your life?
- Both Ruth and Naomi suffered tremendous loss. Why do you think God allows tragedy to come upon those who love him?
- When difficult times come, what causes you to continue to hope in God?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Describe a time when you felt like an "outsider."*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I know many of us have some ideas already. But even if we're still unsure about what this story means for our lives, sometimes it's good to just begin writing or creating in response to the Story. You may discover something in this exercise that you've never realized before about yourself or about God. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give a sheet of paper and an envelope to each teenager. Say something like: "Now we're going to take some time on our own to reflect, and we're going to do this by writing a letter. I want you to take the next 10 minutes to write a letter to someone whom society sees as an "outsider" or who may be experiencing a great deal of hurt and pain."

Tell the teens this could be a person they know, or it could be someone they've never met before (e.g., a homeless person, an orphaned child, a person suffering from AIDS). Encourage them to use this letter to give the person hope, to tell about God's love and how God might want to use him or her to do great things in the world. The teens don't necessarily need to deliver their letters, but encourage them to keep them as a reminder to pray for and reach out to those people who are left out, hurting, and forgotten.

OPTIONAL: Invite volunteers to read their letters aloud to the rest of the group. Tell them to be careful not to use names if they wrote to specific people that others may know (e.g., instead of saying, "Dear Steve Smith," have them say, "Dear Boy in My Math Class.")

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for wrestling with these questions. As we have seen, they can be pretty tough at times. We know these stories can connect with us in powerful ways, and I'm seeing great things come out of our time together. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next chapter of the Story!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, thank you for using your incredible creativity and imagination to write such an amazing Story for us to follow. We know you are writing a Story just as amazing in our own lives, and we ask that you'd help us to be creative, just like you are. Allow us to use our imaginations in how we respond to your love and learn to love other people. Thank you for showing us your love. Amen.*

# THE FAITH OF A FOREIGN WOMAN

**Bible Verses:** Ruth 1–4

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1 and 2
- Naomi
- Ruth
- Boaz
- Overseer
- Guardian

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife, [Naomi], and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. [Some time later], Naomi's husband died, and she was left with her two sons. [Her sons both] married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both [sons] also died.

**NARRATOR 2:** With her two daughters-in-law [Naomi] left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law,

**NAOMI:** "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show you kindness, as you have shown kindness...to me."

**NARRATOR 2:** [So] Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

**NAOMI:** "Your sister-in-law is going back to her people...Go back with her."

**RUTH:** "Don't urge me to leave you...Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."

**NARRATOR 1:** So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth...arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning...And Ruth...said to Naomi,

**RUTH:** "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor."

**NARRATOR 2:** So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to [Naomi's relative] Boaz. Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters,

**BOAZ:** "Who does that young woman belong to?"

**OVERSEER:** "She...came back from Moab with Naomi...She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now..."

**NARRATOR 1:** So Boaz said to Ruth,

**BOAZ:** "My daughter, listen to me. Stay here with the women who work for me. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled."

**NARRATOR 1:** At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him,

**RUTH:** "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?"

**BOAZ:** "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the LORD repay you for what you have done."

**RUTH:** "May I continue to find favor in your eyes. You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants."

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Ruth [went and] told her mother-in-law:

**RUTH:** "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz."

**NAOMI:** "The LORD bless him! He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead. That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers."

**NARRATOR 2:** So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to [gather food] until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her,

**NAOMI:** "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for. Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be [working] on the threshing floor. Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down...go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

**NARRATOR 1:** So [Ruth] went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do. When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went...to lie down...Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down...in the middle of the night...[this] startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet!

**BOAZ:** “Who are you?”

**RUTH:** “I am your servant Ruth...Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.”

**BOAZ:** “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. And now, my daughter, don’t be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character. Although it is true that I am a guardian-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I. Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to do his duty as your guardian-redeemer, good; let him redeem you. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it.”

**NARRATOR 2:** [In the morning Boaz went back to town.] [He] went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer he had mentioned came along. Then he said to the guardian-redeemer,

**BOAZ:** “Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our [relatives]. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line. On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth, the widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.”

**NARRATOR 2:** At this, the guardian-redeemer said,

**GUARDIAN:** “Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it...Buy it yourself.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people,

**BOAZ:** “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of [her family]. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite...Today you are witnesses!”

**NARRATOR 1:** So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. [Soon] she gave birth to a son. Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 9: The Faith of a Foreign Woman

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
RUTH 1-4



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Describe a time when you felt like an "outsider."
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>



# STANDING TALL, FALLING HARD

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading This Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 10, the story moves rather quickly and covers a span of multiple generations. Several characters take the "main stage"—from Hannah to Eli to Samuel to Saul. Their lives are tied together by Israel's ongoing conflict with the Philistines. As a result of the great number of battles, the details have the potential to confuse teens. Therefore, these details have been greatly abbreviated in the StoryReader script for this lesson, so the story may focus more on each character and that person's relationship to God and to the nation of Israel.

There are very different things that teens may take from each of these characters and their stories.

Because there isn't one single "takeaway" lesson or theme, really encourage the teens to dig into the story and find meaning for themselves. Stress that there are no "wrong answers" and that the story might speak to each of us a little differently.

Chapter 10: "Standing Tall, Falling Hard" can be found in 1 Samuel 1–4; 8–13; and 15.

## MAKE IT SAFE TO SHARE!

**Creating a safe environment for teens to share is key to an open conversation.**

When engaging with teens, it can be especially difficult to address more personal and vulnerable topics. As a leader, there are a few things you can do to help make your small group time more conducive to openness. For starters, be transparent by sharing your own struggles. (But remember that you are the leader, not a peer. Use discretion regarding what things you share with the teens.)

It's also important to be supportive of teens' comments as much as possible. Even when you don't completely agree with a comment or find it to be relevant, thank the person for sharing. Avoid disagreeing with teens, unless it's absolutely necessary to maintain the direction of the conversation or the truth of the biblical narrative.

If the group conversation becomes too personal, it can have an adverse effect on the atmosphere of the discussion. If you feel a teen has deeper personal issues to discuss, politely thank that person for sharing and ask if the two of you can talk about what he or she is dealing with at another time.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 10 Handout: Standing Tall, Falling Hard** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 10 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **StoryRewind 3 video** and **Standing Tall, Falling Hard video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** A piece of paper and pen or pencil for each teen; **OPTIONAL:** A small journal or memo notebook for prayers or journaling
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace

the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major "scene" from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### Another Creative Option

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the "Creative Option" sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

StoryRewind 3 Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

Chapter 10: Standing Tall, Falling Hard Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello! Welcome back as we continue through God's Story together. I'm really excited to continue discovering new things together, and I hope you are, too. Let's pray together before we begin:

*God, we pause and thank you for the gift of today. We recognize that every day is a new opportunity to contribute to your Story of grace and redemption that you began living out through your people so long ago. We thank you for allowing us to be a part of it all, and we pray you will continue to move us in ways that will change us forever. Amen.*

This week we're continuing our Story, and I hope you're as excited as I am to find out what comes next. But before we do, let's take a look back at what's happened in the Story so far. As usual, it will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play the *StoryRewind 3* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions, don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you've missed any of the past weeks. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *Standing Tall, Falling Hard*. As with all of our videos, there is a lot going on here, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *Standing Tall, Falling Hard* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 10: Standing Tall, Falling Hard* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]



**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- What did we learn about Hannah from the story?
- Do you think it was wrong for the Israelites to ask for a king? Why or why not?
- How did God react to their desire to have a human king? Why do you think God allowed the Israelites to have a king?
- Can you think of a time when you tried to “take matters into your own hands” instead of obeying God?
- How would you describe God's grace? Where do you see it in this story?
- Where do you see God's grace in your own life?
- In what areas of your life is God calling you to obey him?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *If you could cry out to God and ask him for anything, what would it be?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I know many of us have some ideas already. But even if we're still unsure about what this story means for our lives, sometimes it's good to just begin writing or creating in response to the Story. You may discover something in this exercise that you've never realized before about

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each teen a piece of paper (or a journal/notebook, if available) and a pen or pencil.

Tell the teens to take some time and write a prayer to God. Tell them they have two options:

1. They can write a prayer from themselves, crying out to God or asking him for something in their lives.
2. They can write a prayer to God in the “voice” of one of the characters in the story (Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul). If teens need further guidance, tell them it can be a prayer asking God for something, a prayer of thanks, or even a prayer of confession—based on what that character might have been experiencing in the story.

After about 10 minutes, ask if anyone would like to share his or her prayer. Some of these might be very personal, so don't force anyone to share. Encourage teens to hold onto their prayers and continue praying them daily, trusting that God will answer them.

(For those who wrote from a character's perspective, challenge teens to keep them so they might think about what a similar prayer would look like for their own lives.)

yourself or about God. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

I am really impressed with all of your responses. As we have seen, it can be tough to wrestle with these questions. Hopefully, you're seeing that these stories can connect with us in powerful ways. I'm seeing great things come out of our time together, and I hope you are, too! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next chapter of the Story!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we thank you for challenging us and teaching us about other people—your people—who have struggled with obeying you. Please remind us that even when we decide to go our own way and bypass your plan for us, you are still there and your grace is still available to us. May we grow to be more honest in communicating with you through our struggles and doubts. We thank you for being there to hear us when we cry out for you. Amen.*



# STANDING TALL, FALLING HARD

**Bible Verses:** 1 Samuel 1–4; 8–13; 15

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- Hannah
- Samuel
- Eli
- Elders
- People

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** There was a [woman]...from the hill country...[named Hannah]. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly:

**HANNAH:** "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and...give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life..."

**NARRATOR 2:** As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli [the priest] observed her...He [said],

**ELI:** "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

**NARRATOR 2:** Then she went her way...and her face was no longer downcast...So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel.

**NARRATOR 1:** After he was weaned, she took the boy...to Eli, and she said to him,

**HANNAH:** "Pardon me...I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD..."

**NARRATOR 2:** [So] the boy Samuel [stayed there and] ministered before the LORD under Eli. The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up. And all Israel...recognized that Samuel was...a prophet of the LORD. The LORD continued to appear ...[and] revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

**NARRATOR 3:** Now the Israelites went out to fight [and were] defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield. [So] the [Israelites] sent men to [bring] back the ark of the covenant, [the traveling chest carrying the Ten Commandments' tablets]. When the ark of the LORD's covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook... [and] the Philistines were afraid.

**NARRATOR 2:** [But] the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons...died. When [he heard about this], Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man, and he was heavy. He had led Israel forty years.

**NARRATOR 3:** *No doubt the loss of his sons staggered Eli, but the loss of the ark of the covenant hit him even harder.... The Philistines understood what a symbolic victory they had won and promptly placed the ark in [their] great temple... But God would not be mocked by the false gods of the Philistines. Israel had been brought here in the first place for the very purpose of showing the one true God to these people.*

**NARRATOR 2:** *[So] God afflicted the Philistines with [physical problems], and after seven months of pure misery, the Philistines put the ark on a cart and sent it back to the Israelites. [Some time later, Samuel became the leader of Israel, and he] insisted that the Israelites stop worshiping pagan deities and return to the true God. He led the people in successfully subduing the Philistines.*

**NARRATOR 1:** When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel's leaders...[but] his sons did not follow [God's] ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice. So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel. They said to him,

**ELDERS:** "Appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

**NARRATOR 1:** [But] this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him:

**GOD:** "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king...Listen to them and give them a king."

**NARRATOR 3:** [With God's help, Samuel chose] Saul [to be king. Saul was] as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else. Samuel said to all the people,

**SAMUEL:** "Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people."

**NARRATOR 1:** Then the people shouted,

**PEOPLE:** "Long live the king!"

**NARRATOR 2:** *Though [Saul] was chosen by God, he was a jealous, impatient and impetuous man. Yet he led the people into battle, and they rallied to support a strong central leader, forging a nation out of local tribes. [Samuel said to them,]*

**SAMUEL:** “Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for...If you fear the LORD and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the LORD your God—good! But if you do not obey the LORD, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your ancestors.”

**NARRATOR 3:** *After Samuel’s stern warning, Saul attempted to reign successfully, but he seemed always to be one step behind common sense. When facing battle, he...took matters into his own hands...[and disobeyed God’s instructions].*

**NARRATOR 1:** *Samuel, sad that Saul had failed as king, warned Saul that his time was up. It was time to find a successor. But having enjoyed the perks of high office, Saul would not go without resistance...[as we will see in our next story!]*

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 10: Standing Tall, Falling Hard

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
1 Samuel 1–4; 8–13; 15



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > If you could cry out to God and ask him for anything, what would it be?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# FROM SHEPHERD TO KING

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 11, the story focuses on the beginning of the reign of David. Some parts of this story—especially David's battle with Goliath—should be very familiar to many of your teens. In approaching this lesson, remind your teens to try to hear the story with "new ears," even though it's a very well-known story.

Because the metaphor of David's battle with Goliath is such a strong and relevant one, spend some time exploring what it means for the teens' lives. But make sure to pay enough attention to the lesser-known "scenes" from the story as well, including David's decision to seek peace with Saul. They have the potential to have just as much of an impact on the teens and are just as relevant to the Upper Story of God's grace and love.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this

Chapter 11: "From Shepherd to King" can be found in 1 Samuel 16–18; 24; 31; 2 Samuel 6; 22; 1 Chronicles 17; and Psalm 59.

## DON'T LOSE THE FOCUS!

**Keep the dialogue on track by steering the direction of the conversation.**

If you've worked with teens before, then you know that limiting unrelated conversation is one of the more difficult—and most important—challenges in leading a group discussion. One side comment can give way to the next, and before you know it, a series of loosely related remarks has stolen your group's focus, derailed your thread of discussion, and probably wasted valuable time.

Avoid diversions by refocusing the group whenever you sense that a comment has gotten too far from the original point. One option is to reiterate the original question or pose a new question. You may pose the question to the entire group, or directly to a specific teen.

Another option is to give the comment a few seconds to die on its own. If it does not, then affirm the teen, put the conversation "on hold" until later, and switch directions. You could say

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 11 Handout: From Shepherd to King** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 9 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **Standing Tall, Falling Hard Recap video** and **From Shepherd to King video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** Printed copies of Psalm 59 (at least one copy for every 1 to 2 teens); OPTIONAL: Musical instruments—drums, guitar, keyboard, tambourines, noisemakers, etc.
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### DON'T LOSE THE FOCUS!, CONTINUED

something like, "That sounds like a funny story, Jenny, and I'd love to hear more about it later. But for now I'd love to hear what you thought about today's story...."

Focusing the conversation from the onset by involving all of your teens and setting the expectation for relevant participation in the conversation can limit the opportunity for teens to have unrelated side conversations.

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

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- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

## ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

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*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

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1 minute

*Chapter 11: From Shepherd to King* Video

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2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

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15 minutes

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12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

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1 minute



# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! I'm so glad you're here as we continue to journey together through God's Story, and I hope you're all excited for what's in store today. Let's pray together before we begin:

*God, we come to you today with open eyes and open hearts. We ask that you speak to us through your Story, through its characters and its conflict, through its moments of tension and its moments of joy. Stir something within us, spark our imaginations, and help us to hear your voice clearer than ever before. Amen.*

This week we are continuing our story, and I hope that you are as excited as I am to find out what comes next. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened in the story last week. As usual, it will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *Standing Tall, Falling Hard Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you have missed any of the past weeks. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *From Shepherd to King*. As with all of our videos, there is a lot going on here, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *From Shepherd to King* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 11: From Shepherd to King* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- According to the story, why does God choose David to be the next king of Israel? What might this say about God's character?
- What obstacles does David face to become the king he was anointed to be?
- Why do you think David was able to face a giant warrior like Goliath when so many others gave way to fear?
- Why do you think David spares Saul when he has the chance to kill him? What would you have done?
- What does the story show about David's heart for God?
- How do you cultivate a heart like David's?
- What does Nathan's prophecy say about the future of the kingdom of Israel? What do you think this means?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Has there been a fear or challenge in your life that seemed impossible to overcome?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I know many of us have some ideas already. But even if we're still unsure about what this story means for our lives, sometimes it's good to just begin writing or creating in response to the Story. You may discover something in this exercise that you've never realized before about yourself or about God. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Have teens break into groups of 3 to 4. Give each group a copy of Psalm 59 (or another psalm of David).

Tell your teens that many of David's prayers and poems (found in the book of Psalms) were written during the period of his life when this story takes place. And they were originally written as passionate, heartfelt, and celebratory songs.

Each group should perform their "cover" of a psalm in their own style. They can rap it, put it to an original melody and sing it, chant it, or perform it as a dramatic poetry reading. They can even put the words to the tune of a popular song or medley of songs.

Encourage teens to either break up the psalm into parts, or perform it in unison so every teen who wants to be involved can be. Give the teens 8 to 10 minutes to plan their performance. Then have each group perform their rendition in front of the rest of the teens.

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

These are great responses! I learn so much just from hearing from you all. As we have seen, it can be tough to wrestle with these questions. Hopefully, you're seeing that these stories can connect with us in powerful ways. I'm seeing great things come out of our time together, and I hope you are, too! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to Part 2 of David's story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, thank you for being a God who is big and powerful. Help us to trust that you see the bigger Story when we cannot, that you have a plan for us, and that you give us the courage and power to live the way you want us to, loving others and loving you. We ask that you continue to grow our hearts to look more like yours. Amen.*

# FROM SHEPHERD TO KING

**Bible Verses:** 1 Samuel 16–18; 24; 31; 2 Samuel 6; 22; 1 Chronicles 17; Psalm 59

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

• Narrators 1, 2, and 3    • God    • David    • Samuel    • Jesse    • Goliath    • Saul

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** The LORD said to Samuel,

**GOD:** "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king...Do not consider his appearance or his height...The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

**NARRATOR 1:** Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him,

**SAMUEL:** "The LORD has not chosen these...Are these all the sons you have?"

**JESSE:** "There is still the youngest...He is tending the sheep."

**NARRATOR 1:** So he sent and had him brought in. Then the LORD said,

**GOD:** "Rise and anoint him; this is the one."

**NARRATOR 1:** And from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. [It still would be some time before David grew into a man and took over as king.]

**NARRATOR 2:** Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war [against the Israelites.] A champion named Goliath...came out of the Philistine camp. [He was very tall and wore heavy armor.] Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel,

**GOLIATH:** "Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us."

**NARRATOR 2:** On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were...terrified. [Meanwhile, Jesse was at home as all of his sons were on the front lines ready to fight the Philistines.] Jesse said to his son David,

**JESSE:** "See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. They are with Saul and all the men of Israel...fighting against the Philistines."

**NARRATOR 2:** [David] reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions. As he was talking with [his brothers], Goliath...stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. David said to Saul,

**DAVID:** "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him...Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep...The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine."

**NARRATOR 2:** Saul said to David,

**SAUL:** "Go, and the LORD be with you."

**NARRATOR 3:** Then [David] took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine. David said to the Philistine,

**DAVID:** "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty..."

**NARRATOR 3:** Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck [Goliath] on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the sheath. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.

**NARRATOR 1:** [King] *Saul was impressed with David's victory over Goliath...[he] drafted David into service at the king's court....David and Saul's son Jonathan...formed a friendship...as strong as any brothers'....But David's popularity [led Saul to be]...consumed by anger and jealousy, [and] on numerous occasions Saul tried to kill David. Finally, David, in fear for his life, fled from Saul. But Saul was driven to hunt David down. In danger, David did what he always did: He poured out his fears to God and prayed for help.*

**DAVID:** “Deliver me from my enemies, O God; be my fortress against those who are attacking me...”

**NARRATOR 2:** [No matter how close Saul got, David consistently outmaneuvered him.] [One day, as he hid from Saul in a cave,] David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. [He]...called out to Saul,

**DAVID:** “My lord the king!...I spared you...I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that...I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life.”

**NARRATOR 2:** When David finished saying this, Saul...wept aloud.

**SAUL:** “You are more righteous than I...You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly... May the LORD reward you...I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands.”

**NARRATOR 3:** *[After Saul died] God directed David to assert his calling as king....Soon afterward, David twice led the Israelites in decisive victories over the troublesome Philistines. This period also saw one of David’s most important accomplishments: he [overtook]...Jerusalem—making it Israel’s national and spiritual capital.*

**NARRATOR 1:** *Aware that the treasured [ark of the covenant] deserved a majestic home, David began to conceive of a permanent temple...David consulted with Nathan, a trusted prophet of God, about his plans. And the prophet’s reply, reflecting God’s mind on the matter, must have stunned David.*

**GOD:** ‘You are not the one to build me a house to dwell in...the LORD will build a house for you...I will raise up your offspring to succeed you. He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son.’

**NARRATOR 2:** *David organized an effective army with trusted leadership and used it strategically to stabilize [Israel.]...David was a warrior, a poet and a man after God’s heart. He was a leader who put God first, who loved and followed God. Everywhere the record showed that God blessed this shepherd-king. But David was not a perfect man...[as we will see in our next story].*



# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 11: From SHEPHERD to KING

Discover more from this story:

1 Samuel 16–18; 24; 31;

2 Samuel 6; 22;

1 Chronicles 17; Psalm 59



### SEE the story

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the story

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the story

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Has there been a fear or challenge in your life that seemed impossible to overcome?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# THE TRIALS OF A KING

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 12, the story focuses on the struggles of King David. Obviously, there is some uncomfortable territory to navigate regarding his adultery with Bathsheba. As usual, encourage teens to address the story with maturity and remember that these are stories about real people with real brokenness and real struggles, just like us.

If you work hard to establish an open, trusting environment, this story has the potential to lead to some transformative discussion and next steps for your teens. Use discretion when encouraging moments of "confession." Some teens' struggles and secrets are more serious than others', and it may be best to encourage those who are struggling with certain issues to meet with a leader in a more discreet setting.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 12: "The Trials of a King" can be found in 2 Samuel 11–12; 18–19; 1 Chronicles 22; 29; and Psalms 23; 32; 51.

## CONNECT THE DOTS!

**Leadership expert Michael Zigarelli gives an example of how to keep your discussion moving by relating one teen's comment to the next:**

*"So Sherry, you think the verse calls us to action. But Fran, two minutes ago you said you didn't understand it that way. Can somebody else help us out here?" This is good facilitation because it clarifies where we are with the discussion and where we want it to go.*

[Adapted from "Twenty Tips for Successful Small Group Leadership" by Michael Zigarelli. Excerpted from pages 74–82 of the *Freedom from Busyness Leader's Guide*.]

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 12 Handout: The Trials of a King** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 9 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **From Shepherd to King video** and **The Trials of a King video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** A blank sheet of paper for each teen, plus pens, pencils, or markers
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*From Shepherd to King* Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 12: The Trials of a King* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome back, everyone! I'm very excited for our time together today. We've already come a long way through God's Story, and there is so much more to come! Let's pray together before we begin:

*God, thank you for giving us a Story filled with so much drama and action. We've learned so much in the past weeks, and we pray you'd continue to show us more and more about who you are and what you've done for your people. Use today's story to stir our imaginations, and may its characters and their struggles remind us of how you're continually working in our own lives. Amen.*

In today's story, we're continuing on to the next part of King David's life, and I hope you're ready to see what happens. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened in our story last week. Be sure to watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *From Shepherd to King* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *The Trials of a King*. There's a lot of drama coming our way, so pay close attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Trials of a King* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 12: The Trials of a King* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

### PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.



[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

## PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY

**35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- What do you think were some factors that led to David's sin with Bathsheba?
- Why did David try to get Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to come back home? What was David's plan?
- How do you think David felt as he planned to have Uriah killed? Why do you think he continued to carry out the plan?
- How do you think Nathan felt when he was confronting David with his sin? How would you feel if you were in Nathan's position?
- Who was affected by David's sin?
- How did David respond to his sin and punishment? Does his response surprise you?
- David was allowed to plan the temple, but God told him David's son would be the one to build it. How do you think David felt about this? Do you think this was fair?
- What do David's actions show about his heart for God?

### Teacher Script:

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *When have you been driven by impulse to do something wrong?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!

### CREATIVE OPTION:

Hand each teen a blank sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Tell them they're going to take some time to create their own psalm as a confession to God. (You can read parts of Psalms 23, 32, or 51 as examples for the teens.)

Remind teens that a psalm, at its simplest, is a poem or song directed toward God. Tell them it isn't necessary for their psalms to be long or complicated, but encourage them to be honest with God about their own struggles and need for his forgiveness.

When the teens have had about 10 minutes to write, invite volunteers to share. Remind them they aren't required to share, as their psalms might be very personal. Issue a challenge to your teens that, while it's okay for some things to remain between them and God, it's also good and healthy sometimes to share these words with trusted friends, as David did.

I know you all can come up with some great responses to one of these questions. Also, I encourage you to branch out and try to respond in a new way. Sometimes, stepping out of our comfort zones can help us relate to God in new ways and discover new things. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you so much for being brave in answering these questions. Sometimes it's very intimidating to confront our shortcomings and sin as David did, but it can be very rewarding if we do. Hopefully we can understand God's love for us a little better as we think back on these questions throughout the week. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we come to you as imperfect people who make mistakes—both big and little. We thank you for being a God who is willing to forgive so freely and to wipe away all of our sin. We ask that you'd remind us how our sin breaks your heart. Show us how we can be more open and honest with you when we stumble and fall, and in doing so, grow closer to you. Thank you for your unfailing love. Amen.*

# THE TRIALS OF A KING

**Bible Verses:** 2 Samuel 11–12; 18–19; 31; 1 Chronicles 22; 29; Psalms 23; 32; 51

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- David
- Nathan
- Bathsheba
- Messenger

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** In the spring..., [King] David sent [one of his generals named] Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a [beautiful] woman bathing....David sent someone to find out about her. The [messenger returned and] said,

**MESSENGER:** "She is Bathsheba...the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

**NARRATOR 2:** Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying,

**BATHSHEBA:** "I am pregnant."

**NARRATOR 2:** So David sent [for] Uriah. When Uriah came to him...David ate and drank with him, and...made him drunk...Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among [the king's] servants; he did not go home. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote,

**DAVID:** "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."

**NARRATOR 1:** [So] when the men of the city came out and fought against [the Israelites]...Uriah died. When [Bathsheba] heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD. The LORD sent Nathan [the prophet] to David. When he came to him, [he said],

**NATHAN:** "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says:"

**GOD:** 'I anointed you king over Israel,...Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes?'

**NARRATOR 2:** Then David said to Nathan,

**DAVID:** "I have sinned against the LORD."

**NARRATOR 2:** *Unlike Saul, David didn't make excuses for his sin. Humbled and broken in heart, David acknowledged his sin and poured out his feelings in this prayer.*

**DAVID:** "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love...blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."

**NATHAN:** "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die."

**NARRATOR 3:** After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child,...and he became ill [and eventually died. After mourning for his child,] [David] went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba...[Not long after,] she gave birth to [another] son, and they named him Solomon.

**NARRATOR 1:** *His sin forgiven, David again praised God with a full heart and continued to lead the army with great success....Among his own sons, however, a struggle was brewing...David failed to act as [his son] Absalom...challenged David's political position....David now faced uncharted territory—a rebellion from within his own family, an enemy who was also a beloved son....So...[when] all his men marched out in units of...thousands...[David] commanded [his generals],*

**DAVID:** "Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake."

**NARRATOR 2:** And all the troops heard the king giving orders concerning Absalom to each of the commanders. David's army marched out of the city to fight...and the battle...spread out over the whole countryside. Now Absalom happened to meet David's men...and ten of Joab's armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him and killed him. The king was shaken [when he heard of Absalom's death]. He...covered his face and cried aloud,

**DAVID:** "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

**NARRATOR 3:** *Absalom's rebellion was suppressed and the political damage repaired. Now David turned his attention to more pleasant concerns. The word of the LORD had come to David that the*

*great temple project would fall to his successor, Solomon....So David gave orders to assemble the [materials needed to build the temple.] Then he called for his son Solomon and...said to [him]:*

**DAVID:** "Now, my son, the LORD be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the LORD your God, as he said you would..."

**NARRATOR 1:** *David knew his days as a warrior were over and his energy to lead a nation was waning. Still he resisted transferring power to his son Solomon. One day his lovely wife Bathsheba whispered in his ear:*

**BATHSHEBA:** "Now, David, now is the time."

**NARRATOR 2:** *And the king complied. [Soon, Solomon would become the wisest and richest king in Israel's history!]*

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 12: The Trials of a King

Discover more from this story:

2 Samuel 11–12; 18–19;

1 Chronicles 22; 29;

Psalms 23; 32; 51



### SEE the story

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the story

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the story

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > When have you been driven by impulse to do something wrong?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# THE KING WHO HAD IT ALL

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading This Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 13, the story focuses on the life and reign of King Solomon. If time allows, share the significance of Solomon's contributions to Scripture: most notably, his Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes.

This week's Creative Option includes an opportunity for teens to interact with some Proverbs of Solomon. If you choose not to engage in this option, it may be a good idea to provide copies of a chapter or two from Proverbs, which the leaders may share during their small group time. It might also be a good time to encourage teens to get into the Bible by reading through Proverbs during the week.

(NOTE: A useful approach is to read one chapter of Proverbs for each day of the month, since there are 30 chapters. So if a teen decides to read on the eighth day of the month, have them read chapter 8.)

Chapter 13: "The King Who Had It All" can be found in 1 Kings 1–8; 10–11; and 2 Chronicles 5–7.

## STAY WITH THE STORY!

**Avoid the tendency to inject later parts of the Story into the present narrative.**

When moving through the Story with your group, it's important to keep the focus on the present story (or "Lower Story") and how it relates to the stories that have come before it in preceding weeks. While much of Scripture—and especially the Old Testament—can be explained more fully by what happens "later" in the Story, it's important that each story is presented in the context of an ongoing narrative.

Encourage teens to continue to think of each story as a part of a movie or dramatic novel—you don't skip to the end when watching or reading it for the first time! (And you never want someone to spoil it for you!)

Remind your leaders and your more Bible-literate teens that it's important to approach the Bible as if you're hearing the Story for the first time. This will help them gain fresh insights into the ongoing struggle of God's people and their need for redemption. It will also help those who are unfamiliar with Scripture to feel like they can interact with the Story and find meaning in the same way that everyone else can.



As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 13 Handout: The King Who Had It All** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 9 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **StoryRewind 4 video** and **The King Who Had It All video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** One large piece of paper for every 2 to 3 teens; pens, markers, or colored pencils; OPTIONAL: Copies of passages from Proverbs for each group. (Recommended: Proverbs 1–3; 6; 20–21)
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

## ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major "scene" from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

## ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the "Creative Option" sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*StoryRewind 4* Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 13: The King Who Had It All* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome, everyone! I'm so excited that you made it back to join us for our time today. If you're new with us, we're excited to welcome you as we journey through God's Story. If you've been with us, you'll know that we've been learning some incredible things together! We have more to discover today, but let's pray before we begin:

*God, thank you for another week full of your work in our lives and in the world. We never cease to be amazed to see your Story playing out all around us. As we enter the Story once again, I pray you'd allow us to see ourselves in it, to get to know you a little better through it, and to be moved to live differently because of it. Thank you for being a creative God. Amen.*

In today's story, we're continuing on to look at the life of the next king of Israel, and I hope you're ready to see what happens. But before we do, let's take a look back at what's happened in the Story so far. As always, this recap will move pretty fast, so be sure to watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play the *StoryRewind 4* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *The King Who Had It All*. There's a lot of drama coming our way, so pay close attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The King Who Had It All* Video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 13: The King Who Had It All* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the *StoryReader* script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why did Solomon ask God for wisdom? What was God's response to Solomon's request for wisdom and discernment? What might this tell us about God?
- In your opinion, how is wisdom different from knowledge and intellect?
- Why is it important to gain wisdom?
- What do you think you can do to gain more wisdom?
- God asks Solomon to follow him "faithfully with integrity of heart." What do you think this means?
- According to the story, what sins contributed to Solomon's downfall?
- What distractions in your life pull you away from following God?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *What character attribute would you like God to increase in you? Why?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I know you all can come up with some great responses to one of these questions. Also, I encourage you to branch out and try to respond in a new way. Sometimes, stepping out of our comfort zones can help us relate to God

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide teens into groups of 2 to 3 teens. Give each group a large piece of paper and pens, markers, or colored pencils. Also give each group a Bible or a copy of a chapter of Proverbs (recommended: Chapters 1–3; 6; 20–21). OR you may preselect 1 to 2 proverbs for each group and give them their proverb(s) on an index card or piece of paper.

(NOTE: You may select a proverb that is either straightforward and directly applicable, OR one that has more complex/humorous imagery. Or you may select one of each for each group.)

Explain to the teens that in the wisdom that God gave him, Solomon wrote many of the proverbs and wisdom sayings found in Scripture. Some are very straightforward, while others can be somewhat complex or confusing. Their task is to take 1 or 2 proverbs (1 to 2 sentences) and draw a picture or collection of images that represents the saying and explain what it means. Encourage them to, if possible, refrain from using words in their picture(s). Also encourage them to have fun with it and to think outside the box when creating their drawings.

After teens have had 8 to 10 minutes to create their drawings, invite each group to show their proverb(s) to the rest of the teens. Allow teens to guess what each proverb means or says before revealing the actual saying.

in new ways and discover new things. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you so much for your creativity in responding to these questions. I learn so much, and I'm inspired by your thoughts every week. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, thank you for being willing to bless us with the things we ask you for. We know we don't always get it right, but we ask that you continue to show us how to protect ourselves from the temptations that lead to slippery slopes. Show us the things you care about, and teach us to follow you with the integrity and wisdom that comes from you. Amen.*



# THE KING WHO HAD IT ALL

**Bible Verses:** 1 Kings 1–8; 10–11; 2 Chronicles 5–7

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- David
- Solomon
- Hiram
- Singers

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** When the time drew near for [King] David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son.

**DAVID:** "I am about to go the way of all the earth...So be strong...and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands...Do this so that you may prosper in all you do..."

**NARRATOR 1:** [When] David [died], Solomon sat on the throne of his father...and his rule was firmly established. [One night], the LORD appeared to Solomon...in a dream, and God said,

**GOD:** "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

**SOLOMON:** "My God, you have made [me] king...But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. So give [me] a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong."

**NARRATOR 1:** The LORD was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him,

**GOD:** "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked....And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life."

**NARRATOR 1:** God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight...He spoke three thousand proverbs...From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom...*[which offered] practical insight into what it means to fear God, to have God-honoring relationships and how to wisely handle finances, work and life.*

**NARRATOR 2:** When [a king named] Hiram heard that Solomon had been anointed king to succeed his father David, he sent [messengers] to Solomon, because he had always been on friendly terms with David. Solomon sent back this message to Hiram:

**SOLOMON:** "You know that because of the wars waged against my father David from all sides, he could not build a temple...But now the LORD...has given me rest on every side, and there is no adversary or disaster. I intend, therefore, to build a temple for God...My men will work with yours, and I will pay you...whatever wages you set. You know that we have no one so skilled in felling timber as [your people]."

**NARRATOR 2:** When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he was greatly pleased and said,

**HIRAM:** "Praise be to the LORD today, for he has given David a wise son to rule over this great nation. I...will do all you want in providing the cedar and juniper logs...And you are to grant my wish by providing food for my royal household."

**NARRATOR 2:** In this way Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar and juniper logs he wanted, and Solomon gave Hiram...[plenty of] food for his household. Solomon continued to do this for Hiram year after year.

**NARRATOR 3:** In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites came out of Egypt...he began to build...*a temple...of spectacular beauty and historic significance....Construction took seven years of work by 180,000...laborers and nearly 4,000 supervisors....At the building site itself, [everyone] anticipated the inauguration of the house of God.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Then King Solomon summoned [all of the Israelites]. When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests...brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple. [Then more than 120] trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD...The singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang:

**SINGERS:** "He is good; his love endures forever."

**NARRATOR 3:** Then Solomon stood before the altar, spread out his hands toward heaven and said:

**SOLOMON:** "LORD...there is no God like you...The heavens...cannot contain you. How much less [is] this temple I have built! Now, my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place."

**NARRATOR 3:** When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down...they knelt...with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD.

**NARRATOR 1:** When Solomon had finished all these prayers...[he] stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying:

**SOLOMON:** “May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us nor forsake us. May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands ...he gave our ancestors.”

**NARRATOR 1:** Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. When Solomon had finished the temple...the LORD appeared to him...and said:

**GOD:** “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself...My eyes and my heart will always be there. As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did...I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever...But if you or your descendants turn away from me and...go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them...This temple will become a heap of rubble.”

**NARRATOR 2:** [Over time], King Solomon [became] greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart—even the Queen of Sheba came from far away to visit, seeking Solomon’s wisdom and bringing him lavish gifts].

**NARRATOR 3:** *[Now] during Solomon’s time, [having multiple wives] was considered normal (but was not [approved of] by God). Like other kings, Solomon had a large harem of wives, some of whom were from other nations....As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods...So Solomon...did not follow the LORD completely, as David...had done.*

**NARRATOR 1:** The LORD became angry with Solomon...So [he] said to Solomon,

**GOD:** “Since...you have not kept my covenant...I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem.”

**NARRATOR 2:** *For Solomon, unfortunately, the irresistible draw of [women had] led to...pagan worship...[It was] a bad decision from a fellow renowned for wisdom. [It was also a decision that marked] the beginning of the end—for Solomon’s reign, and for the nation of Israel as he knew it.]*

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 13: The King Who Had It All

Discover more from this story:

Read 1 Kings 1–8; 10–11;

2 Chronicles 5–7



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > What character attribute would you like God to increase in you? Why?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# A KINGDOM TORN IN TWO

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading This Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 14, there is a lot that happens in the story, but not as much dialogue as in previous lessons. There also may not be as many "teachable" themes. Help teens use their imaginations to wrestle with what it might be like to be a character in the story, witnessing the struggle and complexity of Israel's civil war. Also encourage them to consider how this story especially lends to the pattern(s) of the Upper Story.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage them that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 14: "A Kingdom Torn in Two" can be found in 1 Kings 12–16.

## KEEP GOOD CONVERSATION GOING!

**Tailor your discussion to the questions that teens want to talk about.**

While following the teacher's script and being time-conscious, it's easy to want to get through all of the discussion questions and activities. Keep in mind that the goal isn't necessarily getting through all of the questions. Your focus should be on the engagement of your teens. Most often, they'll want to talk about the things that are most important to them. When a question arises and encourages more discussion than usual, give teens enough time to process their reactions and responses before moving on.

Remember that the scripted questions are simply there to guide you—feel free to use discretion about which questions deserve more time and focus.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 14 Handout: A Kingdom Torn in Two** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 9 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for students who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show **The King Who Had It All Recap video** and **A Kingdom Torn in Two video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** For every 2 to 3 teens you'll need a large piece of paper OR posterboard; 2 to 3 old magazines; scissors; tape OR glue; and pens, markers, or colored pencils.
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to student and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a student to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a student or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your students' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have students read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of students.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have students read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the students read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage students to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide students into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so students are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide students into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage students to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the students if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*



**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*The King Who Had It All Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 14: A Kingdom Torn in Two Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome, everyone! I'm glad you're all here for our time together this week. Whether this is your first time or you've been here throughout this journey through *The Story*, I hope we can all come away from today's time having learned some incredible things together! We have a lot more to discover today, but let's take a second to pray before we begin:

*God, we acknowledge that you are with us wherever we go—even here and now as we come together to enter into your Story. We thank you for the many ways these stories have challenged us so far, and we pray you'd continue to stretch us and change us as we interact with the Story and begin to see ourselves as characters in it. Amen.*

In today's story, we're continuing on to see what happens to Israel after the reign of King Solomon. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened in the story last week. As always, this recap will move pretty fast, so be sure to watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *The King Who Had It All Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on students to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that students are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *A Kingdom Torn in Two*. There's a lot of drama coming our way, so pay close attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *A Kingdom Torn in Two* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each student the *Chapter 14: A Kingdom Torn in Two* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few students to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned student and adult volunteers read the *StoryReaders* script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few students to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send students into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the **JOIN the Story** segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- What do you think caused the kingdom of Israel to divide?
- How did Rehoboam and Jeroboam both make mistakes?
- What does this story show you about God's character and what's important to God?
- Why do you think God removed his protection from the Jewish people after they continued to rebel?
- Can you think of a time when you strayed from God? How did you know you were going down the wrong path?
- In what ways has God been kind or gracious to you, even when you might not have deserved it?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *What does it look like for you to be faithful to God? For God to be faithful to you?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide teens into groups of 2 to 3. Give each group a large piece of paper OR posterboard; 2 to 3 old magazines; scissors; tape OR glue; and pens, markers, or colored pencils.

Tell the students they're going to create their own campaign posters. But instead of creating them for one of the kings in the story or a political candidate, they're going to make one for GOD. Give students about 10 minutes to come up with a slogan and imagery to help persuade the Israelites to follow the One True God again, instead of wayward kings or false idols.

Tell them they can either draw, write, or cut out words and pictures from the old magazines. If students need help coming up with ideas, encourage them to think of political campaigns or other advertisements they've seen. You could also ask, "What 'background' does God have in leading his people? Is he a proven leader?"

Once the groups have had time to create their posters, have them show and explain their posters to the rest of the groups.

I know you all can come up with some great responses to one of these questions. Also, I encourage you to branch out and try to respond in a new way. Sometimes, stepping out of our comfort zones can help us relate to God in new ways and discover new things. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While students are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing students to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you so much for your creativity in responding to these questions. I learn so much, and I'm inspired by your thoughts every week. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, thank you for never giving up on your people, even when we fail time and time again. Give us the power to be faithful in following you, even when it isn't easy. And please help us to remember that your grace is bigger than all the ways we fall short, and that your love is always available to us—no matter who we are or what we've done. Thank you for your faithfulness, God. Amen.*

# A KINGDOM TORN IN TWO

**Bible Verses:** 1 Kings 12–16

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

• Narrators 1, 2, 3, and 4 • God • Jeroboam • Rehoboam • Man of God • Elders

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** *[While Solomon was still king], God told a...young [man]...by the name of Jeroboam that he would be the future king...[of] all but one of the tribes of Israel....[But] Solomon was not ready to [give up] the throne and tried to kill Jeroboam...[So] Jeroboam fled to Egypt.*

**NARRATOR 2:** *After Solomon died, his own tribe of Judah automatically accepted his son Rehoboam as [their] next king. But much of [Israel]...had grown to resent Solomon's heavy taxation and [the slavery he imposed] for his grand projects....When Jeroboam...heard [that Rehoboam was to be made king], he returned from Egypt...and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him:*

**JEROBOAM:** "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."

**NARRATOR 3:** Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon...

**REHOBOAM:** "How would you advise me to answer these people?"

**ELDERS:** "If today you will be a servant to these people...and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."

**NARRATOR 3:** But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him...and said [to the people],

**REHOBAM:** "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier."

**NARRATOR 4:** *[Before long, civil war broke out.] Rehoboam retreated to rule Judah (the smaller, southern region), while Jeroboam became king over Israel (the larger, northern region). God had forewarned that the kingdom would become divided because Solomon failed to [resist] pagan worship...Already divided in worship practices, the nation now also became divided in politics, in priesthood, in security and in safety.*

**NARRATOR 1:** [Soon] Rehoboam...mustered all Judah...to go to war against Israel and to regain the kingdom...But this word of God came to...Rehoboam [through one of the prophets.]

**GOD:** "Do not go up to fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Go home...for this is my doing."

**NARRATOR 2:** So they obeyed the word of the LORD and went home again, as the LORD had ordered. Then Jeroboam fortified [the city of] Shechem in the [hills]...and lived there. Jeroboam thought to himself,

**JEROBOAM:** "If [my] people go up to [worship] in Jerusalem, [part of the kingdom of Judah], they will again give their allegiance to...Rehoboam. They will kill me and return to [him]."

**NARRATOR 3:** [So Jeroboam] made two golden calves. He said to the people,

**JEROBOAM:** "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel..."

**NARRATOR 4:** And this [idol worship] became a sin; the people came to worship the [golden calves instead of God.] Jeroboam...[even]...instituted a festival....[where he made sacrifices] to the calves he had made.

**NARRATOR 1:** [One day] a man of God came from Judah...[just] as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. By the word of the LORD he cried out against the altar:

**MAN OF GOD:** "This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out."

**NARRATOR 1:** When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out...he stretched out his hand [pointing at the man] from the altar and said,

**JEROBOAM:** "Seize him!"

**NARRATOR 1:** But the hand...shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God...Then the king said to the man of God,

**JEROBOAM:** "Pray for me that my hand may be restored."



**NARRATOR 1:** So the man of God [prayed], and the king's hand was restored. [But] even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways.

**NARRATOR 2:** [Rehoboam's tribe of] Judah [also] did evil in the eyes of the LORD. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than those who were before them had done...The people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

**NARRATOR 3:** There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. *[After they died], various kings reigned in Israel and Judah. Most of them did evil. [The only king] considered "good" [was] King Asa of Judah...[He] "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD."...He understood that only...God was worthy of worship, and he cleaned...Judah of its idols.*

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 14: A Kingdom Torn in Two

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
1 Kings 12–16



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > What does it look like for you to be faithful to God? For God to be faithful to you?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# GOD'S MESSENGERS

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading This Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 15, the story moves quickly, and there are some important themes you'll want to touch on with your teens. One of the central translatable events of this story is Elijah's hearing the "whisper" of God. Make sure you give enough time and attention to the questions that challenge teens to think about how they hear from God.

If time allows, you may want to try the Creative Option for this lesson, as it further allows teens to "enter" the story by giving them time and space—a mini-retreat—to intentionally listen to what God might have to say to them individually.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of the story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn things they never have before.

Chapter 15: "God's Messengers" can be found in 1 Kings 17–19; 2 Kings 2; 4; 6; Hosea 4–5; 8–9; 14; and Amos 1; 3–5; 9.

### ASK QUESTIONS USING "WHY" AND "HOW"!

**Keeping the discussion open-ended is the key to keeping teens talking!**

When you ask a question, remember to frame it using the words "why" or "how." In doing this, teens will tend to give more elaborate answers than if you ask a yes-or-no question. Questions that begin with words like "who," "where," or "when" can be good for recapping events from the story. But they often, by nature, lead to short answers.

Also, when applicable, try framing questions using "Why do you think...?" and "How do you think...?" Teens will be more willing to give answers and opinions if they're assured there could be more than one possible response—and their perspective matters more than the "correct" answer. (Note: Some questions are more specific to events in the story and require a more concrete answer.)

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 15 Handout: God’s Messengers** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 6 to 8 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who’d like to read along.
- Copies of the Join the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show **A Kingdom Torn in Two Recap video** and **God’s Messengers video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** An index card and a pen OR marker for each teen
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

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### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
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*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

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2 minutes

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Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 15: God’s Messengers Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome, everyone! I'm glad you're all here this week. Whether this is your first time with us or you've been here throughout this journey through *The Story*, I hope we all get something out of our time together. We have a lot more to get to today, but let's take a second to pray before we begin:

*God, thank you for bringing us back to a time and a space where we can focus on you. You know there are so many other things on our minds, and I pray you'd help us to set aside those things for the next few hours. We ask you to show us new things about ourselves and about you, and that we'd hear the things you have to say to us through your Story. Amen.*

In today's story, we're picking up where we left off. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened in the story last week. As always, this recap will move pretty fast, so be sure to watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *A Kingdom Torn in Two Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: *It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.*]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.



Let’s watch this week’s video, *God’s Messengers*. There’s a lot of drama coming our way, so pay close attention so you don’t miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *God’s Messengers* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 15: God’s Messengers* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we’ll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there’s a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I’ve asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the *StoryReader* script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we’re going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think God revealed himself to Elijah in a gentle whisper?
- What do you think we can learn about faith from Elijah's relationship with God?
- What does God's way of communicating with Elijah tell you about God's character?
- Do you think we can hear God's voice? How? What might we do to listen?
- What kinds of false gods are in our society today? How do they entice us to "worship" them?
- In what ways can you learn to trust God more and take risks in your faith?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Which "noise" in your life is keeping you from hearing the voice of God?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I know you all can come up with some great responses to one of these questions. Also, I encourage you to branch out and try to respond in a new way. Sometimes, stepping out of our comfort zones can help us relate to God in new ways and discover new things. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each teen an index card and a pen OR marker. Tell the teens they're going to spend some time listening to God. Give them 10 to 15 minutes to go off on their own. Encourage them to get away from their friends—find a corner of the room or go for a walk outside, if appropriate. Once they've found a place, invite them to say a simple prayer asking God to speak to them.

During their time of silence, have each teen write down a word or phrase that comes into their minds. Reassure them that it could be something simple about who God is or about their relationship with him—or it could be specific to something they're dealing with in their lives.

When the time is up, invite any willing teens to share what their time in silence revealed to them. Remind them that God speaks to all of us differently, and it's okay if they didn't experience anything profound during their time alone.

[CUE: **SHARE**—Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you so much for your creativity and your wonderful insights in responding to these questions. You all teach me so much every week. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let’s pray as we end our time:

*God, we thank you once again for showing us how faithful you are to your people. Thank you that you are a God who comes to us in the quiet, peaceful places. We ask you to continue to help us find time to listen for your voice, and please continue to make our hearts more faithful, like yours. Amen.*

# GOD’S MESSENGERS

**Bible Verses:** 1 Kings 17–19; 2 Kings 2; 4; 6; Hosea 4–5; 8–9; 14; Amos 1; 3–5; 9

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan’s *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers’ Theater*. A Readers’ Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters’ actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- Elijah
- Ahab

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan’s *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

(Opening is from *The Story: Teen Edition*, Chapter Fourteen.)

**NARRATOR 1:** *[The downward spiral of Israel’s kings continued, as a man named] Ahab became king of Israel...[Ahab married] Jezebel, [the] daughter of a pagan foreign king. Ahab and Jezebel worshiped [a god called] Baal and hated the prophets of God. Now [a prophet of God named] Elijah... said to [King] Ahab,*

**ELIJAH:** “As the...God of Israel...lives...there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then...the LORD [told] Elijah [to go live in a valley, where he would have food and water]. In the third year [of the drought], the word of the LORD came to Elijah, [and] Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. When he saw Elijah, he said to him,

**AHAB:** “Is that you, you troubler of Israel?”

**ELIJAH:** “I have not made trouble for Israel...But you...have abandoned the LORD’s commands and have followed the Baals. 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 false god] Asherah...”

**NARRATOR 2:** So Ahab assembled [the people and] the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said,

**ELIJAH:** “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him...Get two bulls for us. Let Baal’s prophets...put [one] on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God.”

**NARRATOR 2:** So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon...But there was no response; no one answered. At noon Elijah began to taunt them.

**ELIJAH:** “Shout louder! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or...maybe he is sleeping....”

**NARRATOR 3:** So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom...But there was no response...Then...Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes [of Israel]...and built an altar in the name of the LORD. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed:

**ELIJAH:** “Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

**NARRATOR 1:** Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice...When all the people saw this, they...[fell down and cried out in awe.] Then Elijah commanded them [to seize the prophets of Baal]...Elijah said to Ahab,

**ELIJAH:** “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.”

**NARRATOR 2:** So Ahab went off [and] told [his wife] Jezebel everything Elijah had done...So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to [threaten to kill him]. Elijah was afraid and ran for his life...[out] into the wilderness. [There]...the word of the LORD came to him:

**GOD:** “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

**ELIJAH:** “The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

**GOD:** “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for [I am] about to pass by.”

**NARRATOR 3:** Then a...powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks...but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. [Then] came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. The LORD said to him,

**GOD:** “Go back the way you came, and...anoint Elisha...to succeed you as prophet.”

**NARRATOR 1:** So Elijah went from there and found Elisha...[who]...became his servant. [Soon,] Elijah’s time had come to an end...Elijah and Elisha were walking along [a road] together, [when] suddenly a chariot...and horses of fire appeared...and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

**NARRATOR 2:** *Elisha was left to carry on [God’s] work, and his dramatic miracles made it clear that his God was one of unspeakable power and glory. In one instance, Elisha purified a spring to provide fresh water to an entire town. Another time, through Elisha’s intervention, a poor widow and her sons were saved from financial ruin and slavery by a bottomless jar of oil. Elisha [even revived a boy from the dead!]*

**NARRATOR 3:** *Many kings came and went in Israel and Judah. Some [made] godly [decisions]; others made a mess of what they inherited....[After Elisha died] Jeroboam [the Second] took the reins and secured Israel’s borders, but he never guarded Israel’s soul. The worship of false gods and idol-making businesses flourished during his regime.*

**NARRATOR 1:** *Though [more] prophets warned the people...Israel didn’t listen. They hardened their hearts and continued to ignore God’s pleas to return to his ways, [and] the kings of Israel led the people into spiritual and social chaos.*

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 15: God's Messengers

Discover more from this story:  
1 Kings 17–19; 2 Kings 2; 4; 6;  
Hosea 4–5; 8–9; 14; Amos 1; 3–5; 9



### SEE the story

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the story

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the story

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Which "noise" in your life is keeping you from hearing the voice of God?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>



# THE BEGINNING OF THE END (OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL)

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 16, the story touches on themes in the lives of King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah. Since Isaiah's prophecies are too numerous to be included in the StoryReader script for this lesson, you may want to investigate additional writings of Isaiah. One way of doing this would be to utilize the Creative Option for this lesson, which gives teens an opportunity to engage with Isaiah's prophetic visions in Isaiah 6.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 16: "The Beginning of the End (of the Kingdom of Israel)" can be found in 2 Kings 17–19; Isaiah 3; 6; 13–14; 49; and 53.

## BREAK INTO PAIRS!

**Mix up your discussion's dynamic by encouraging partner interaction.**

If you find that your teens tend to lose focus, or if your discussion tends to be dominated by a few, mix it up by asking teens to discuss a specific question in pairs.

You can say something as simple as: "For the next question, turn to the person next to you..." This strategy can help everyone feel included in the discussion, especially in larger groups. Once the pairs have had a few minutes to discuss, ask each group to share what they came up with for a response.

For some added intrigue, have the pairs discuss a more "controversial" question, with each person taking a different "side" of the argument. Then have them report back to the larger group with perspectives from each side.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 16 Handout: The Beginning of the End** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 6 to 8 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **StoryRewind 5 video** and **The Beginning of the End video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** One printout of Isaiah 6; one large sheet of paper; and pens, pencils, markers for every 2 to 3 teens (You may substitute OR add other passages from Isaiah, if you wish. Recommended: Isaiah 3; 6; 13–14; 49; 53)
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*StoryRewind 5* Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 16: The Beginning of the End* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome, everyone! I'm glad you're all here for another great week together. Whether this is your first time with us or you've been here throughout this journey through *The Story*, I hope we all find this time exciting and important to our lives, no matter where we are in our relationship with God. We have another great part of the Story to get to today, but first let's take a second to pray before we begin:

*God, we thank you for all the ways you show yourself to us throughout the week—from nature to our relationships with our friends and families. We ask you to continue moving in our lives as we come together today. Show us new things about ourselves and about you as we enter into this Story yet again. We pray we'll leave here today different than when we came in. Amen.*

In today's story, we're picking up where we left off last week, with the nation of Israel in total chaos. But before we do, let's take a look back at what's happened so far from the very beginning of the Story. We've come quite a long way, so this recap should move pretty quickly—be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the *StoryRewind 5* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Now, let's watch this week's video, *The Beginning of the End*. And as always, there will be a lot to take in, so pay close attention. You don't want to miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Beginning of the End* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 16: The Beginning of the End* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the **StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes)**. NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the **JOIN the Story** segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think Hezekiah experienced so much opposition?
- Do you think obedience to God guarantees success or freedom from hardship? Why or why not?
- How is God calling you to “rebel” against the opposition in your life?
- How does God give his followers confidence in the face of adversity? How does he give you confidence?
- What were some of the main themes in Isaiah's prophecies? How would you have responded if you were an Israelite?
- How did God show mercy to his people in spite of their actions?
- How has God shown mercy to you?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *What current fears or worries can you lay before the Lord, as Hezekiah did?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide teens into groups of 2 to 3. Give each group a printout of Isaiah 6; a large sheet of paper; and pens, pencils, or markers. Tell them they're going to look at one of the visions of the prophet Isaiah and create their own artistic interpretation of what Isaiah saw.

Explain that ancient prophecies like Isaiah's were commonly full of strange imagery that represented important messages about God and his people.

Tell the teens their task is to take all or part of Isaiah 6 and create their own comic strip or artistic representation of what the passage says. Assure them there is no “right” or “wrong” way to represent this part of Scripture; encourage them to let their imaginations run with it.

When the teens have had about 10 minutes to create their artistic interpretation or comic strip, ask each group to share what they made. As they do, ask the teens what they think this passage says about God, his people, or the situation in the world during Isaiah's time.

*(NOTE: Other recommended passages: Isaiah 3; 13–14; 49; 53)*

Don't be afraid to be honest with your responses, and remember that this is a safe place to share—however you'd like to respond. Also, if there's something you haven't tried yet as a way of responding, I encourage you to try it. It's always good to mix it up and relate to God in new ways! In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!



*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you so much for your willingness to share these things with the rest of us. Keep it up! Hopefully these are things we can all continue to think about throughout this week. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we recognize through your Story that you are a God who is—and who always has been—in control of history. You are also in control of our lives, with all of the happiness and heartbreak that we experience. Please remind us that we can always lay our worries, our fears, and our problems before you, and that all of our joy and success belongs to you, as well. Thank you for fighting for us and giving us hope. Amen.*



# THE BEGINNING OF THE END (OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL)

**Bible Verses:** 2 Kings 17–19; Isaiah 3; 6; 13–14; 49; 53

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- Isaiah
- Commander
- Hezekiah

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** [The Israelites] worshiped other gods [and] did wicked things that [provoked] the LORD's anger. The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets...But they would not listen. So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria.

**NARRATOR 2:** *Any semblance of a nation—a people with a common cause and heritage—was gone. In the southern kingdom of Judah, [a] young King Hezekiah watched these developments take place. Hezekiah...began to reign [at the age of twenty-five]. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. [So] the king of Assyria sent his supreme commander...[to] Jerusalem...to intimidate Hezekiah. The...commander said,*

**COMMANDER:** "This is what...the king of Assyria, says: 'On what are you basing this confidence of yours? You say you have the counsel and the might for war—but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me?' Furthermore, have I come to attack and destroy this place without word from the LORD? The LORD himself told me to march against this country and destroy it.' "

**NARRATOR 1:** Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew,

**COMMANDER:** “Hear the word of...the king of Assyria! Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, ‘The LORD will deliver us.’ Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?”

**NARRATOR 1:** [Some time later, the king of Assyria] sent messengers to Hezekiah [again] with this word:

**COMMANDER:** “Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you... Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the [other] countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered?”

**NARRATOR 2:** Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed:

**HEZEKIAH:** “LORD, the God of Israel...you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth...Listen to the words [the king of Assyria] has sent to ridicule the living God...Deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, LORD, are God.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then [the prophet] Isaiah sent a message [in response] to [Hezekiah’s prayers]:

**ISAIAH:** “This is the word that the LORD has spoken against [the king of Assyria]:”

**GOD:** ‘Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel! By your messengers you have ridiculed the LORD. But I know where you are and when you come and go and how you rage against me. I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will make you return by the way you came.’

**ISAIAH:** “Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning the king of Assyria:

**GOD:** ‘He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here...By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city...I will defend this city and save it...’ ”

**NARRATOR 3:** *That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp...So [the] king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew.*

**NARRATOR 1:** *The...prophet Isaiah achieved prominence during Hezekiah’s reign, helping the king to stand-down the Assyrian threat by relying on God alone. [But] Isaiah’s message [also] contained some bad news: Jerusalem would fall. Once announced, that event was sure to happen.*

**ISAIAH:** “See now, the LORD...is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support: Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves.”

**NARRATOR 2:** *But the story was far from over...Isaiah’s prophecies also foretold that after God’s judgment, the Israelites would return home from Babylon and rebuild their nation, clearly revealing that the LORD God was in control of world events.*

**ISAIAH:** “The LORD will have compassion...once again he will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land...This is what the LORD says:”

**GOD:** 'In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land...to say to the captives, "Come out," and to those in darkness, "Be free!" Then the will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer...'

**NARRATOR 3:** *The promised...return...of Judah was to be a precursor of something much more glorious that was still to come—God's greater plan for giving his people endless freedom and glory. Isaiah's prophecies ended with promises of a suffering Servant, the Messiah, who would usher in a glorious kingdom without end.*

**ISAIAH:** "He was despised and rejected by mankind...Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering...he was pierced for our transgressions...the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all...After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied..."

**NARRATOR 1:** *In the meantime, faithful King Hezekiah died and was buried. Unfortunately, his son, Manasseh, did not follow the faithful example set by his father. Manasseh's reign actively supported detestable religious practices and brutal oppression. The righteous people in the land must have recalled fond memories of the good old days of Hezekiah, while enduring Manasseh's betrayals and compromise.*

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 16: The Beginning of the End

Discover more from this story:  
2 Kings 17–19;  
Isaiah 3; 6; 13–14; 49; 53



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > What current fears or worries can you lay before the Lord, as Hezekiah did?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# THE KINGDOMS' FALL

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

As in the last chapter of the Story, much of the prophetic literature has been omitted for the sake of continuity of the narrative. If you'd like, you may revisit some of these with your teens for added context. (Recommended: Jeremiah 1–2; 4–5; 13; 21; Lamentations 1–3; 5; Ezekiel 1–2; 6–7; 36–37.)

NOTE: During the StoryReader telling and following discussions, you may need to help your teens with the pronunciation of the name Nebuchadnezzar (neb'u'kud'nez'ur).

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 17: "The Kingdoms' Fall" can be found in 2 Kings 21; 23–25; 2 Chronicles 33; 36; Jeremiah 1–2; 4–5; 13; 21; Lamentations 1–3; 5; and Ezekiel 1–2; 6–7; 36–37.

## PLAY THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE!

**Investigating multiple perspectives can strengthen your teens' understanding.**

When facilitating a discussion, it can become easy for your group to seek the most obvious—or "correct"—answer and then quickly move on to the next question. But sometimes it's helpful to reapproach a question or topic as the "devil's advocate." By encouraging teens to think of how they'd defend or support their answer, they'll be able to gain a fuller perspective and a better understanding of why they believe what they do.

As the leader, you can do this by addressing the question "What would you say to someone who said or thought differently about this...?" or "How would you explain this to someone who's never heard this story?"

Because the point is not to encourage debate or make an answer seem "wrong" or inferior, make sure to reaffirm the answers given by your teens and let them know you're taking an opposing viewpoint for the sake of the discussion.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 17 Handout: The Kingdoms' Fall** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 6 to 8 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **The Beginning of the End Recap video** and **The Kingdoms' Fall video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** One piece of paper and an envelope (OR postcard) for every participant; pens, pencils, or markers
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*



**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*The Beginning of the End Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 17: The Kingdoms' Fall Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome, everyone! I'm glad you're all here for our time together this week. Whether this is your first time with us or you've been here throughout this journey through *The Story*, I hope we all get a lot out of our time together. We have some great storytelling to get to today, but let's take a second to pray before we begin:

*God, we come together today and acknowledge that you are here with us. We thank you for being a God who is present—in the good times and the bad. For those of us whose lives are confusing and chaotic right now, I ask you to give us peace and hope through your Story and the time to interact with one another. Open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts, so we may experience your Story more fully. Amen.*

In today's story, we're picking up where we left off last week. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened last in the Story. As always, this recap will move pretty fast, so be sure to watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *The Beginning of the End Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Now, let's watch this week's video, *The Kingdoms' Fall*. As always, the video will move pretty quickly, so you'll have to pay attention—you won't want to miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Kingdoms' Fall* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 17: The Kingdoms' Fall* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the **StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes)**. NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the **JOIN the Story** segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think this destruction and disaster came upon the Israelites?
- How do you think power can corrupt people?
- What negative effects of rebellion have you seen in your life? In the lives of those close to you?
- Can you relate to Jeremiah as the “weeping prophet” who felt deeply the burden of God’s people’s sin? What sin or struggles in the world do you feel burdened by today?
- What do you think God’s prophets would say to his followers today?
- How can God’s promise of restoration for his people still give us hope?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Have you ever felt spiritually “dry” or hopeless? How did God help you in that time?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I know you all can come up with some great responses to one of these questions. Also, if there’s something you haven’t tried yet as a way of responding, I encourage you to try it. It’s always good to mix it up and relate to God in new ways! In a few minutes, we’ll talk about your responses. I’m really excited to see what you come up with!

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each teen a piece of paper and an envelope (or postcard). Tell them they’re going to write a message of life and hope to someone who needs to hear it. Tell them to think of people in their lives who may be hurting, lonely, or simply in need of encouragement. Suggest that they share with these people the reason for the hope that they have and tell them they are loved by God.

If teens have trouble thinking of someone to write their messages to, tell them to think of someone younger than them—maybe a family member or someone in their neighborhood—who might be going through the same struggles they did while growing up.

When teens have had about 10 minutes to write their messages, invite those who are willing to share theirs with the rest of the group. (Warn the teens to be careful about revealing personal details or names of people that others may know.) Then encourage teens to put their messages in envelopes and deliver or send them to the people they wrote to—if they feel comfortable doing so. If they don’t wish to deliver the messages, encourage them to keep them and pray for those people daily.

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

It's amazing to see your responses each week. Thank you so much for your wonderful insights in responding to these questions. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, in times when we feel lost, abandoned, and spiritually "dead," we thank you for breathing life into us again. For those of us who are struggling in our relationship with you or with others, I pray that you would continue to show your life and love to us. And I ask that you'd use all of us to speak words of hope and grace to our family, our friends, and those we come in contact with every day. Thank you for the fresh, life-changing ways you show yourself to us through your Story. Amen.*

# THE KINGDOMS' FALL

**Bible Verses:** 2 Kings 21; 23–25; 2 Chronicles 33; 36; Jeremiah 1–2; 4–5; 13; 21; Lamentations 1–3; 5; Ezekiel 1–2; 6–7; 36–37

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- Ezekiel
- Jeremiah

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** [After the reign of Hezekiah, his son] Manasseh [became king and] did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He...erected altars to Baal and...[worshiped the stars]. He [even] sacrificed his own son in the fire.

**NARRATOR 2:** So the LORD brought against [Judah] the...[armies]...of Assyria, who...took [Manasseh away] to Babylon [as prisoner]. In his distress [Manasseh]...humbled himself greatly before...God. The LORD was moved...and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom.

**NARRATOR 3:** *[But] any feelings of new hope...[brought] by Manasseh's repentance were suppressed [by the kings that followed him].* [With few exceptions, several generations of kings] did evil in the eyes of the LORD.

**NARRATOR 1:** [Eventually] Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and...all [of] Jerusalem [was carried] into exile: all the officers and fighting men, and all the skilled workers and artisans—a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left.

**NARRATOR 2:** *Among [those exiled]...was a young priest named Ezekiel, a man of keen intellect...and spiritual insight. Ezekiel relayed to his fellow exiles the stern message of God's judgment. Jerusalem was still standing, but it was the beginning of the end.*

**NARRATOR 3:** *Back on the home front, things were going from bad to worse in Jerusalem. But God continued to pursue and warn his people. Another prophet, named Jeremiah, was called into service in a very interesting conversation with God. The word of the LORD came to [Jeremiah]:*

**GOD:** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

**JEREMIAH:** "Alas, Sovereign LORD...I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

**GOD:** "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you...I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant. [The people of Judah] will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you..."

**NARRATOR 1:** *Knowing God was with him, Jeremiah shed his fears....Jeremiah felt deeply the burden of the people's sin and the coming...destruction of Jerusalem, God's judgment for the people's sins of idolatry and pride.*

**NARRATOR 2:** *The words of Jeremiah were clear, but [Judah's] kings...refused to listen. They grew increasingly brash, ignoring the prophet's warnings and wisdom....Finally Judah's kings had to face Babylon's full military muscle, rock hard and set to kill.*

**NARRATOR 3:** Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem, [this time] with his whole army. [The Babylonians] set fire to the temple of the LORD, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building [was] burned down.

**NARRATOR 1:** *Though Jeremiah was faced with sorrow and tragedy, he trusted in God's mercies—as did Ezekiel. Before Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, the prophet Ezekiel [also] warned the people of the destruction that was to come. And yet once Ezekiel and his fellow exiles in Babylon received the news that Jerusalem had fallen, his message turned to hope. [God spoke through Ezekiel, saying]:*

**GOD:** "I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land...I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh..."

**NARRATOR 2:** [Then Ezekiel told of a vision given to him by God]:

**EZEKIEL:** The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones...bones that were very dry. He asked me,

**GOD:** "Son of man, can these bones live?"

**EZEKIEL:** I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." Then he said to me,

**GOD:** "Say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.' "



**EZEKIEL:** So I prophesied as I was commanded....[and] they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. Then he said to me:

**GOD:** “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ Therefore...say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My people...I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it.’”

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 17: The Kingdoms' Fall

Discover more from this story:

2 Kings 21; 23–25;

2 Chronicles 33; 36;

Jeremiah 1–2; 4–5; 13; 21;

Lamentations 1–3; 5; Ezekiel 1–2; 6–7; 36–37



### SEE the story

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the story

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the story

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Have you ever felt spiritually "dry" or hopeless? How did God help you in that time?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# DANIEL IN EXILE

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 18, the story centers on two of the most well-known "scenes" in the Old Testament: the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; and the story of Daniel and the lions' den. These should present some accessible themes for your teens—encourage them, whenever possible, to find ways to connect the meaning of these stories to their own lives.

NOTE: During the StoryReader telling and following discussions, you may need to help your teens with the pronunciation of the names Shadrach (shad'rack), Meshach (me'shack), Abednego (a'bed'ne'go), and Nebuchadnezzar (neb'u'kud'nez'ur).

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 18: "Daniel in Exile" can be found in Daniel 1–3; 6; and Jeremiah 29–31.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

**Encourage teens to think about practical applications for their lives.**

Through a study like this, it's necessary to continually remind the teens—and yourself—to be thinking about what these stories mean for their everyday lives—for their relationships, their work, their school, their church, and their steps toward spiritual growth.

While several of the discussion questions are aimed at connecting these themes with teens' lives, it can be easy, at times, for teens to address these stories on more theological or theoretical levels than on a personal, practical one.

One way to ensure teens are continuing to connect their lives to the Story is to follow up with them—either during the week or in the next discussion, as time allows. If it's helpful, try to write down notes for yourself soon after the discussion, to help you remember what each teenager is wrestling with in his or her life. (Try not to take notes during the discussion, as it may communicate that you aren't fully engaged.)

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 18 Handout: Daniel in Exile** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 9 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show **The Kingdoms' Fall Recap video** and the **Daniel in Exile video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** Popular magazines and newspapers (4 to 6 per group), one large piece of paper or posterboard for every 3 to 4 participants, scissors, glue OR tape, and markers
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?, CONTINUED

You may also institute a "So what?" question at the end of each discussion time. This can be an intentional time for teens to share the part of the story they'll be "taking away" from the time together. You could ask questions like, "What will you be thinking about when your head hits the pillow tonight?" or "In response to this story, how will your life look different this week?"

If teens know they're expected to give an answer, they may be more likely to find direct takeaways from your time together.

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace

the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major "scene" from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### Another Creative Option

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the "Creative Option" sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*The Kingdoms' Fall Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 18: Daniel in Exile Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome, everyone! I'm glad you're back this week for another great time of looking at God's Story together. Whether this is your first time with us or you've been here throughout the Story thus far, I hope we'll all get something exciting and new out of our time together. We have some great activities to get to today, but first let's pray before we begin:

*God, thank you for this amazing group of people, each of us with our own unique story. As we come together, I ask that you remove any distractions from our heads and our hearts, so we may hear what you have to say to us through today's story. Help us to discover how each of our stories intersects with yours—and give us a better picture of how we can live the way you want us to. Amen.*

In today's story, we're picking up where we left off last week. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened last in the Story. As always, this recap will move pretty fast, so be sure to watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *The Kingdoms' Fall Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.



Let's watch this week's video, *Daniel in Exile*. As always, the video will move pretty quickly, so you'll have you pay attention—you won't want to miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play the *Daniel in Exile* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 18: Daniel in Exile* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- What stood out to you from the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?
- Who do you think was with them in the furnace?
- What do you think it took for them to defy the king's orders?
- What might God's protection of them tell us about God?
- Why do you think Daniel continued to be open about his faith and prayers?
- How is God calling you to "defy" the expectations and norms of today's culture?
- What issues are difficult for you to take a stand on because everyone else seems to think differently than you do?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Have you ever been picked on for doing the right thing and obeying God?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I hope one of these questions will give you something to think about and create. If you're having trouble coming up with something, try choosing a method of responding that you haven't tried before. Sometimes it helps to mix

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Give each group 4 to 6 magazines OR newspapers, a piece of paper OR posterboard, scissors, glue OR tape, and markers. Tell the teens that each group is going to create a collage based on the things that our culture calls us to worship.

Say something like: "Just as the main characters in today's story were faced with difficult decisions about who they should bow down and worship, we have that same difficult decision to make every day. There are many things in our culture that vie for our allegiance and—in essence—our worship. You're going to have the next 10 minutes to look at these magazines and newspapers for examples of things that have the potential to come in the way of our worship of God. Cut them out and stick them to your piece of paper/posterboard. Try to fill up your poster with as many meaningful images as possible."

After the groups have had about 10 minutes to complete their collages, invite them to briefly share some (or all) of the items.

OPTIONAL: Once all of the groups have finished, attach the collages together to create one large collage that may be displayed in the space where your group meets, as a reminder of the "idols" of our world.

it up and respond to God in new ways! In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

You all continually amaze me with the way you think about and respond to these questions. Thank you so much for putting yourself out there and sharing your great insights with the rest of us. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, you are a God who is worthy of being worshiped. You give us everything we need—and more—and we cannot thank you enough. We are also thankful that you are faithful to remain with us as we try to choose you every day. Thank you for coming into the fire with us when things get really tough, and thank you for protecting us. Please help us to continue trusting you and to remain faithful to you and the plans you have for us. Amen.*

# DANIEL IN EXILE

**Bible Verses:** Daniel 1–3; 6; Jeremiah 29–31

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Daniel
- Shadrach/Meshach/Abednego
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Darius
- Official
- Administrator

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** *[While God's people were still in exile],* the king *[of Babylon]* ordered *[his]* court officials to bring...some of the Israelites...to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

**NARRATOR 2:** Among those...chosen...were *[three men named]* Shadrach...Meshach...and Abednego. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

**NARRATOR 3:** *[In his pride, King]* Nebuchadnezzar decided to erect a statue *[of gold]* some 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. *[He ordered that all the people]...fall down and worship the image...and that whoever [did] not...[would] be thrown into a blazing furnace. [Soon after the decree, some of Nebuchadnezzar's officials said to him],*

**OFFICIAL:** "There are some Jews—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

**NARRATOR 1:** Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego...*[and]* said to them,

**NEBUCHADNEZZAR:** “Is it true...that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?...If you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you...?”

**NARRATOR 1:** Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him,

**SHADRACH:** “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.”

**MESHACH:** “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand.”

**ABEDNEGO:** “But even if he does not...we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with [them]. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.

**NARRATOR 3:** The...furnace [was] so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers,

**NEBUCHADNEZZAR:** “Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire? I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

**NARRATOR 3:** Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the...furnace and shouted,

**NEBUCHADNEZZAR:** “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!”

**NARRATOR 1:** So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and [everyone] saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar said,

**NEBUCHADNEZZAR:** “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego...! They trusted in him and...were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God...”

**NARRATOR 1:** Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

**NARRATOR 2:** *[During that time, there was another Israelite in the king’s service named] Daniel, who served...with honor and distinction. He became a top administrator under [King Darius, who ruled several years after Nebuchadnezzar.]*

**NARRATOR 3:** Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators...that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. So [the other] administrators [were jealous of Daniel,

and encouraged King Darius to] issue an edict...that anyone who [prayed] to any god or human being except [Darius will] be thrown into the lions' den. So King Darius [issued] the decree.

**NARRATOR 1:** When Daniel learned [of] the decree...he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Then [the other administrators] went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So they went to the king and...said...

**ADMINISTRATOR:** "Daniel...pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day."

**NARRATOR 2:** [Although he liked Daniel], the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel,

**DARIUS:** "May your God...rescue you!"

**NARRATOR 2:** At the first light of dawn [the next day], the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice,

**DARIUS:** "Daniel...has your God...been able to rescue you from the lions?"

**DANIEL:** "May the king live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight..."

**NARRATOR 2:** The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

**NARRATOR 3:** *[Some time after this], Babylon [fell] to Persian invaders....[Within a year], the Persian [governor] issued a decree permitting Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem. Thus, [almost] 70 years after [their exile] began...[the Israelites] were going home, [just as the prophet Jeremiah had promised]!*

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 18: Daniel in Exile

Discover more from this story:

Daniel 1–3; 6;  
Jeremiah 29–31



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Have you ever been picked on for doing the right thing and obeying God?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>



# THE RETURN HOME

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 19, the Israelites begin returning from their captivity in Babylon to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. While not a lot of "drama" happens in the story, there are several themes that should emerge for fruitful group discussion. Also, there are more characters than usual in this week's StoryReader, none of which should be very familiar. You may need to help your teens by reviewing "who's who" and clarifying any other story details before your group discussion.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 19: "The Return Home" can be found in Ezra 1–6; Haggai 1–2; and Zechariah 1; 8.

### TELL A STORY AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE!

**Address the material by using narrative examples from "real life."**

Teenagers grasp and remember stories—stories from their own lives, stories they heard at school, and stories from their favorite TV shows, movies, and Web sites. When your group discussion seems stagnant, or if you feel it would be beneficial to address a question from another angle, use a story. Share an episode or observation from your own life, or ask the teens if they have an example from their lives that parallels a theme or event from the part of *The Story* that you're discussing.

Connecting your discussion to these narrative "images" will help teens embed the story of Scripture within the stories of their own lives, rather than just learning the "right answers" to seemingly unconnected concepts.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 19 Handout: The Return Home** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 10 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **StoryRewind 6 video** and **The Return Home video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** A pen and 2 index cards for each participant
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

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**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

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- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

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- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*StoryRewind 6* Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 19: The Return Home* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! I'd like to welcome you back for what I hope is going to be another great week together. Whether this is your first time with us or you've been here throughout the Story thus far, I hope we'll all get something new out of our time. As usual, we have plenty to get through today, so let's pray before we begin:

*God, we are so happy to be back together this week—thank you for allowing us this time and space to regularly talk about you and your incredible Story. I pray that—no matter what is going on at home, at school, or in the rest of our relationships—you'd calm our hearts and allow us to learn something new about you and your love for your own people. Amen.*

In today's story, we're picking up where we left off last week. But before we do, let's take a look back at what's happened in the Story so far. As always, this recap will move pretty fast, so be sure to watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play the *StoryRewind 6* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *The Return Home*. As always, the video will move pretty quickly, so you'll have to pay attention—you won't want to miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Return Home* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 19: The Return Home* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think God rescued the Israelites from their enemies again?
- In what ways have you seen or experienced the rescuing power of God?
- What did the Israelites do to deserve the mercy they received?
- Have you ever felt God's presence in a place or a situation? How did you know it was God?
- The Jews returned home to rebuild the temple, the dwelling place of God on earth. Why was it important for them to do this?
- Where does God dwell on earth today?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *When has God stirred your heart to accomplish something?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I hope one of these questions will give you something to think about and create. If you're having trouble coming up with something, try choosing a method of responding that you haven't tried before. Sometimes it helps to mix it up and respond to God in new ways! In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each participant two index cards and a pen. Tell them they're going to do something a little different—and very meaningful. Say something like:

"In this story God speaks through his prophets to encourage the Israelites in the face of fear and apathy. God reassures them by telling them, 'I am with you.' Today, we're going to have a chance to encourage one another here. With your two index cards, you will write two messages: one to the person sitting on your right, and one to the person on your left. For each message, write something thoughtful that compliments or encourages that person—if you don't know her name, find out! Somewhere in your note, include the words 'I am with you,' as a reminder of God's promise. Remember to make these thoughtful! You'll have about 10 minutes. Ready? Go!"

After 10 minutes, have the teens fold the index cards and deliver them.

**OPTIONAL:** Have each teen write his or her phone number or e-mail address on each card before exchanging them. Once they've received their two messages of encouragement, invite teens to send each person who gave them a card a thoughtful text message or e-mail sometime during the coming week.



*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Great job, everyone! I'm always impressed by the things you come up with in response to these questions. Thank you so much for opening up and sharing your thoughts with the rest of us. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we thank you for being faithful to stir our hearts when we are complacent, weary, or afraid. Please help us recognize your gift of mercy in our lives every day, and remind us that it is available to us, no matter what we've done or how far from home we've gotten. As we go from here, help us to hear your voice each day, wherever we go, saying "I am with you." Thank you for never leaving us. Amen.*

# THE RETURN HOME

**Bible Verses:** Ezra 1–6; Haggai 1–2; Zechariah 1; 8

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Darius
- Priest
- Cyrus

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** In the first year [after Babylon had been overthrown], the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus, [the] king of Persia, to make a proclamation:

**CYRUS:** "'The LORD...has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him [in] Jerusalem. Any of his people among you...may...go up to Jerusalem...and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel."

**NARRATOR 2:** King Cyrus [also] brought out the articles belonging to the temple...which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem. *[Then] nearly 50,000 [Israelites were led] back home to begin their rebuilding mission. With long, hard labor ahead of them, the people remembered to put first things first.*

**NARRATOR 3:** When [they returned to the Promised Land], the Israelites...[gathered] in Jerusalem. Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on [the new temple's] foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD. [Then] the priests...took their places...[and] with praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD:

**PRIESTS:** "He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever."

**NARRATOR 1:** And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, [and] the older [citizens], who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid. The people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.

**NARRATOR 2:** [Before long], the enemies of Judah...set out to discourage the people [from]...building [the temple]. They bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans. Thus the work on the house of God...came to a standstill [for about ten years], until...Darius [took over as the next] king of Persia.

**NARRATOR 3:** *Weary of the resistance [from their enemies], the Israelites began thinking that maybe this wasn't the right time to build the LORD's house after all....But God had different plans. Once again intervening, he sent his prophets to jump-start the temple project. Haggai's message helped shake the people out of their complacency.*

**HAGGAI:** "Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house. [The temple] remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. Therefore...[God has] called for a drought on the fields and the mountains,...on people and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

**NARRATOR 1:** [So] the people obeyed...[and] feared the LORD. Then [God] gave this message...to the people [through Haggai]:

**GOD:** "I am with you."

**NARRATOR 2:** So the LORD stirred up the spirit of...the people [and] they...began to work on the house of the LORD Almighty. *Haggai continued his prophetic message of encouragement. God had not forgotten his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he said. And he hinted at a glorious future promise that sounded too good to be true...*

**HAGGAI:** "Be strong, all you people of the land,...and work. For [God is] with you...Do not fear. This is what the LORD Almighty says:"

**GOD:** 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth...and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory...And in this place I will grant peace...'

**NARRATOR 3:** *[During the time of Haggai's ministry, another prophet named Zechariah]...began his work in Jerusalem....Both men wanted to stimulate renewal in the temple rebuilding project. Like Haggai, Zechariah had a dual message:*

**ZECHARIAH:** *The temple is important, but it's a sign and symbol of something greater coming. Work on the temple; don't be afraid. But watch for the day when God will bless Jerusalem once again....* This is what the LORD Almighty says:

**GOD:** "Judah and Israel have been a curse among the nations, so I will save you, and you will be a blessing...Just as I had determined to bring disaster on you...when your ancestors angered me...so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid."

**NARRATOR 1:** *Thanks to Haggai's and Zechariah's encouragement, the people returned to their work on the temple. However, they were not the only ones back at work. So was their opposition, this time from [other governors and officials of nearby regions]. When King Darius heard of their plans to interfere with the rebuilding of the temple, he wrote to them, saying]:*

**DARIUS:** Stay away from there. Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site. Moreover, I hereby decree [that] their expenses are to be fully paid out of [your] royal treasury...so that the work will not stop. Whatever is needed...must be given them daily without fail, so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven...May God...overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem.

**NARRATOR 2:** The...[orders] King Darius...sent [were]...carried out with diligence. So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai...and Zechariah. They finished building the temple, [and]...the people of Israel...celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy.

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 19: The Return Home

Discover more from this story:

Ezra 1–6; Haggai 1–2;

Zechariah 1; 8



### SEE the story

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the story

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the story

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > When has God stirred your heart to accomplish something?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY AND COURAGE

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 20, we meet Esther and Mordecai, two great examples of people who trust in God's faithfulness and protection. Since this story is a bit isolated from previous chapters—and seemingly a departure from the larger narrative of the Israelites' return to Jerusalem—try your best to help your teens attach the themes in this Lower Story to what's been going on in the Upper Story of God's faithfulness to his people in the midst of their rebellion.

As in past chapters, you may need to help your teens with the pronunciation of a few of the characters' names: Xerxes (zerk'seez), Haman (hay'muhn), and Mordecai (mor'de'kye).

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 20: "The Queen of Beauty and Courage" can be found in Esther 1–9.

## BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT!

**Show your teens that even leaders can engage, too.**

For you and the other leaders, it may be necessary to walk around, facilitate, and monitor the things your teens are making in their response and creative times. But once the teens have become acquainted with the routine of the activities, feel free to engage alongside them. Doing this will communicate that you aren't simply a "teacher" giving them "assignments," but you're an active participant in the Story, just as they are.

Whether you complete the activities and creative responses ahead of time or along with the group, it may be beneficial to share your responses and creations alongside those of their teens. Showing your own honest responses can help you to gain their trust and respect; it can also model for them new and thoughtful ways of engaging with the material.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 20 Handout: The Queen of Beauty and Courage** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 10 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show **The Return Home Recap** and **The Queen of Beauty and Courage video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** A piece of paper and pen or pencil for each participant
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)



(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

## LESSON OUTLINE

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

### **PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

**5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*The Return Home Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

### **PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

**10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 20: The Queen of Beauty and Courage Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

### **PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

**25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

### **PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)*

**35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! I'd like to welcome you back for what I hope is going to be another great week together. Whether this is your first time with us or you've been here throughout the Story thus far, I hope we'll all get something new out of our time together. As usual, we have plenty to get through today, so let's pray before we begin:

*God, we feel so fortunate to be part of something so much bigger than ourselves. As we continue to see the ways you work in our lives and our world every day, we recognize that it's all part of a Story that's been going on for a long, long time. We pray you will continue to speak to us through the characters of this amazing Story, capture our hearts and our imaginations, and allow us to hear your words for us loud and clear. Amen.*

In today's story, we're picking up where we left off last week. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened in our story last week. Be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play *The Return Home Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Now, let's watch this week's video, *The Queen of Beauty and Courage*. As always, the video will move pretty quickly, so you'll have to pay attention—you won't want to miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Queen of Beauty and Courage* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 20: The Queen of Beauty and Courage* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- What causes you fear? Why do you think that is?
- How did Mordecai respond when faced with the threat of disaster for his people?
- How would you describe Queen Esther's character? What did you learn from her actions?
- When was the last time you faced a threatening situation? What was your reaction?
- In what ways have you experienced God's faithfulness and protection in your life?
- What steps can you take to show that you trust in the faithfulness of God?
- What does this chapter of *The Story* teach about God's work behind the scenes of history?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Have you ever hidden information about yourself, your identity, or your background from someone? Why did you hide it?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each participant a pen or pencil and a piece of paper. Tell the teens they're going to dive even deeper into the mindset of one of this story's main characters.

Encourage teens to pick one of the two main characters—Esther or Mordecai—and spend some time creating a journal entry or a prayer to God from that character's perspective. Tell them they can choose any moment from within the story to write about, or they can write it as if the character is looking back on the event(s) from several months or years in the future.

Tell teens not to be afraid to use their imaginations to fill in the other details they don't necessarily know about the character from the details given in this version of the story.

After about 10 minutes, ask teens who feel comfortable to share their piece of writing. (As always, don't force anyone to share.) Encourage teens to return to the story throughout the week (found in Esther 1–9), and to pray through it from that character's perspective.

I hope one of these questions will give you something to think about and create. If you're having trouble coming up with something, try choosing a method of responding that you haven't tried before. Sometimes it helps to mix it up and respond to God in new ways! In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Great job, everyone! I'm always impressed by the things you come up with in response to these questions. Thank you so much for opening up and sharing your thoughts with the rest of us. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, thank you for being so faithful to your people. We ask that, as we go from here, you will help us trust you more with the things that intimidate us and motivate us to hide from who we were created to be. Give us power to take a risk, to tell the truth, and to stand for what is right—especially when it's really hard to do. Thank you for protecting us and leading us into the life that you want for us. Amen.*

# THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY AND COURAGE

**Bible Verses:** Esther 1–9

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Esther
- Xerxes
- Haman

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** [After most of the Jews had returned to Jerusalem, the King of Persia], King Xerxes, reigned from his royal throne in the [city] of Susa. The king [wanted a new wife, so he appointed] commissioners in every province of his realm to bring all [the most] beautiful young women [to him].

**NARRATOR 2:** Now there was in...Susa a Jew...named Mordecai, [whose ancestors] had been carried into exile from Jerusalem [years before]. Mordecai had a cousin named...Esther, [who] had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.

**NARRATOR 3:** When the king's order...had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to...Susa. Esther also was taken to the king's palace...[and] had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments [before she was presented to King Xerxes]. Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so. Every day he [waited outside the city gate] to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.

**NARRATOR 1:** When the turn came for Esther...the king was attracted to [her] more than...any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval...So he...made her queen.

**NARRATOR 2:** [Not long after], Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. [While he was there, he overheard]...two of the king's officers...[become] angry and conspire to assassinate King Xerxes. But



Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were [captured].

**NARRATOR 3:** After these events, King Xerxes honored [a man named] Haman,...elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

**NARRATOR 1:** When Haman saw [this], he was enraged...Having learned who Mordecai's people were,...Haman looked for a way to destroy all...the Jews throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes. Then Haman said to King Xerxes,

**HAMAN:** "There is a certain people dispersed among...your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different...and they do not obey the king's laws. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them."

**NARRATOR 1:** So the king...said to Haman...

**XERXES:** "Do with the people as you please."

**NARRATOR 2:** [So Haman] sent [an order] to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy...all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. When Mordecai learned of all [this], he...went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. In every province to which the...order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing.

**NARRATOR 3:** When Esther's...attendant came and told her [what had happened], she sent this [message] to Mordecai:

**ESTHER:** "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

**NARRATOR 3:** [Esther knew that it was a risk to approach Xerxes for help,] for any man or woman [who approached] the king [—even his wife—] without being summoned [could be] put to death. [But even so], Esther put on her royal robes and [approached Xerxes]. When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her...Then the king asked,

**XERXES:** "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? ...It will be given [to] you."

**ESTHER:** "If it pleases the king...let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him."

**NARRATOR 1:** So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, and as they were drinking wine...the king again asked,

**XERXES:** “Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.”

**ESTHER:** “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty,...grant me my life...and spare my people... For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated.”

**XERXES:** “Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?”

**ESTHER:** “An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. The king [was enraged and had Haman executed.] Then the king’s fury subsided. That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman...and Esther appointed [Mordecai] over [the] estate.

**NARRATOR 3:** [Xerxes also] granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves. In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating.

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 20: The Queen of Beauty and Courage

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
ESTHER 1–9



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Have you ever hidden information about yourself, your identity, or your background from someone?  
Why did you hide it?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# REBUILDING THE WALLS

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

The story for chapter 21 is the last story from the Old Testament. It tells of the Israelites' task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem under heavy opposition from their enemies. While this story has some good, dramatic "plot points," it also addresses some significant spiritual themes through Ezra, Nehemiah, and, later, Malachi.

If time allows, you may seek to read more of Malachi's words with your teens and find connection to what is happening in the Story. (Recommended: Malachi 1–4.)

NOTE: You may need to help your teens with the pronunciation of a few of the characters' names: Antaxerxes (an'te'zerk'seez) and Malachi (mal'e'kye).

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 21: "Rebuilding the Walls" can be found in Ezra 7; Nehemiah 1–2; 4; 6–8; and Malachi 1–4.

## PUSH PAUSE!

**Stopping to refocus doesn't have to be a negative thing.**

Chances are, your teens will—at one time or another—be either distracted or disinterested from the discussion of the week's story. When this happens, it can't hurt to stop the discussion and do one of a few things:

1. Have your group rapidly retell the story for the day. You can either do this collectively, or choose one person to do it and give him or her a time limit of 30 seconds or a minute. This will help teens regain their focus by giving them an objective.
2. Pause and reimagine the story. Tell the teens you're all going to take one minute of silence to re-create the story in your minds. Encourage them to see how much they can remember.
3. Pray. Have your group pray silently, or else you or a volunteer can pray aloud, asking for focus and God's help to connect the story to the lives of the people in the group.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 21 Handout: Rebuilding the Walls** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 8 to 10 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show **The Queen of Beauty and Courage Recap video** and **Rebuilding the Walls video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** One half-sheet of colored construction paper for each participant, markers, tape OR other wall-safe adhesive (*OPTIONAL: Construction paper may be replaced with cardboard bricks OR building blocks that teens can write on and take home with them as reminders or keepsakes. These may be found at most toy stores or online suppliers.*)
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script

provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*The Queen of Beauty and Courage Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 21: Rebuilding the Walls Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Close Prayer

1 minute



# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! Welcome back for another great time together. I hope that as we continue our storytelling, we'll all get a lot out of this time. As usual, we have another great story to get through today, so let's pray before we begin:

*God, we come to you with thankful hearts for all that you've done for us. And we thank you, too, for this incredible journey that we're on through your Story. I pray that you'd continue to work in our minds and our hearts as we consider what it means to become part of this grand plan that's unfolding in our lives and all around us. Amen.*

In today's story, we're picking up where we left off last week. But before we do, let's take a look back at what happened last in the Story. For those of us who need a refresher or who weren't with us last week, I hope this recap will help bring us up to speed. Be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play *The Queen of Beauty and Courage Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *Rebuilding the Walls*. As always, it will move pretty quickly, so you'll have you pay attention—you won't want to miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play the *Rebuilding the Walls* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 21: Rebuilding the Walls* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Who was Ezra? What was his role when he arrived in Jerusalem?
- In what ways do you see God's faithfulness in this story?
- Why do you think Nehemiah was so upset that Jerusalem's walls were never rebuilt?
- Why do you think Nehemiah was able to rebuild the city walls so quickly amidst such severe opposition?
- When God says, "Return to me, and I will return to you," what do you think he means? What does this mean in your life?
- What can you do to grow a greater dependence on God in difficult circumstances?
- How do you feel when you hear God's words: "I, the Lord, do not change"?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *If you had to confess the sins of "your people" what would those sins be? And who would "your people" be?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I hope one of these questions will give you something to think about and create. If you're having trouble coming up with something, try choosing a method of responding

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give one half-sheet of colored construction paper to each teen, along with markers to share with the group.

Explain to the teens that just as each worker was integral in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, each of us has a part to play in the bigger picture of the church. Tell them they're going to have an opportunity to pray for their church or youth ministry, and to lend their trust in God to the ministry's "wall."

Say something like, "You're going to make your own 'brick' for the wall that we're going to create. On your piece of construction paper, I want you to write, draw, or graffiti on it to show the things that you feel like you need to trust God with today. These can be fears, sins, shortcomings, doubts—anything that you feel like God is asking you to depend on his power and strength. So take about 10 minutes to decorate your brick. And, as always, be as creative as possible—make it your own!"

After teens have had about 8 to 10 minutes to create their bricks, ask them to share what they created. Once all the bricks are finished, give each teen a piece of tape or adhesive, and have them hang their bricks to create a "wall" somewhere in your meeting space. (If this isn't possible, you can attach all of the bricks to a large piece of butcher paper temporarily—then move it after your gathering.)

that you haven't tried before. Sometimes it helps to mix it up and respond to God in new ways! In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Great job, everyone! I'm always so impressed by the ways you respond to the things you're learning. Thank you so much for opening up and sharing your thoughts with the rest of us. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we thank you for being a God who never changes. In the midst of our vulnerability, our weakness, and our inclination to mess up time and time again, we're grateful that you are there to help us, to guide us, and—most importantly—to forgive us. I pray that as we go from here, you will continue to help us see our need to depend on you and challenge us to find ways to trust you more. We love you. Amen.*

# REBUILDING THE WALLS

**Bible Verses:** Ezra 7; Nehemiah 1–2; 4; 6–8; Malachi 1–4

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- Antaxerxes
- Nehemiah
- Everyone

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** *[About half a century after God's people began returning home to Jerusalem, there was] a respected priest and teacher [named Ezra who was] living in Babylon...[Ezra] took a serious interest in making sure that God's Law was heard and followed. [King Artaxerxes, the ruling king of Babylon, decided to send Ezra on a] journey [to] Jerusalem [with this mission]:*

**ARTAXERXES:** You are sent by the king...to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God...You are to take with you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel. And you, Ezra...are to teach any who do not know [the Law of God].

**NARRATOR 2:** *Loaded down with the king's gifts and supplies, Ezra led several thousand fellow Israelites on [the] journey to Jerusalem. He found the temple in good order, but he also discovered that the people were intermarrying with neighboring cultures who worshiped other gods....Appalled, Ezra tore his clothes in grief and wept as he prayed, confessing the people's sin and asking for God's mercy.*

**NARRATOR 3:** *About 13 years later, [another prophet named] Nehemiah, [an assistant] to the king of Persia...received news [that disturbed him]...The temple in Jerusalem was completed, but the wall of the city still lay in ruins. When [Nehemiah] heard [this], [he] sat down and wept [and prayed to God]:*

**NEHEMIAH:** "LORD...I confess the sins we Israelites...have committed against you. LORD, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your...servants who delight in revering your name."

**NARRATOR 1:** *Nehemiah decided he would [go to Jerusalem and] lead the people in rebuilding the city's walls....After praying for God's help, Nehemiah approached the king, who was pleased to send Nehemiah on his way...[Once Nehemiah reached Jerusalem, he addressed all those] who would be doing the work.*

**NEHEMIAH:** "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace."

**NARRATOR 2:** *So they began this good work. Just as the Jews had received opposition from the neighboring peoples when they worked at rebuilding the temple a century earlier, they came under attack for trying to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. When [their enemies] heard [they] were rebuilding the wall, [they] became angry...[and] ridiculed [and taunted] the Jews. [Again Nehemiah prayed to God:]*

**NEHEMIAH:** Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads...for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

**NARRATOR 3:** *So [the Jews] rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height...But when [Judah's enemies] heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Meanwhile, the...strength of the laborers [was] giving out, and [the Israelites were afraid of an attack from all sides. So Nehemiah] stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places...with their swords, spears and bows. [Then Nehemiah] said to...the people,

**NEHEMIAH:** "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the LORD, who is great and awesome, and fight for your people, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."

**NARRATOR 2:** *[But an attack never came.] The wall was completed...in [only] fifty-two days...[and] when [Judah's] enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of...God.*

**NARRATOR 3:** *[Now that the wall was completed]...both Ezra and Nehemiah wanted to ensure that a pure system of worship was in place and to enforce the laws against intermarriage with people of ungodly nations. [So] Ezra [the teacher] brought the Law [of Moses] before the assembly...As [Ezra] opened [the book], the people all stood up. Ezra praised the LORD...and all the people lifted their hands and responded,*

**EVERYONE:** "Amen! Amen!"

**NARRATOR 1:** Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground... All the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law, [so] Nehemiah the governor...said to them all,

**NEHEMIAH:** "Do not mourn or weep...Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

**NARRATOR 2:** [So] day after day...Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God, [and the people celebrated]. They celebrated...for seven days [straight].

**NARRATOR 3:** *The Israelites had indeed rebuilt the temple and were worshiping God again; yet many of the people and priests strayed from the faith. God called Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, to offer a final word to the people....Through Malachi, God issued his warnings against the people's hypocrisy, but also reminded them of his never-ending covenant promise:*

**GOD:** I the LORD do not change...Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you...Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him...for all Israel....



# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 21: Rebuilding the Walls

Discover more from this story:  
Ezra 7; Nehemiah 1–2; 4; 6–8  
Malachi 1–4 ;



### SEE the story

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the story

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the story

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > If you had to confess the sins of "your people" what would those sins be?  
And who would "your people" be?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# THE BIRTH OF THE KING

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

The story for chapter 22 brings us one of the most well-known stories of all time: The birth of Jesus. While you and your teens will probably be familiar with most of the story, some small details and perspectives could lead to some interesting discussion. As always, encourage your teens (as well as yourself) to imagine that you're hearing this story for the very first time.

Depending on what time of year you cover this lesson, you could engage your teens in some further questions about Christmas traditions and the ways in which we can celebrate to honor the true meaning of Jesus' birth. (See [adventconspiracy.org](http://adventconspiracy.org) for more ideas and information.)

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 22: "The Birth of the King" can be found in Matthew 1–2; Luke 1–2; and John 1.

## USE THE NAME GAME!

**Learning and using teens' names can break down barriers in discussion.**

Depending on the size of your group, there could be teens coming on a weekly basis that you haven't had the chance to meet or get to know. In this case, it's always good to have some way of sharing each other's names and some general information. (e.g., you might go around the circle and have each person state her name and favorite hobby or movie.)

Knowing (and remembering) teens' names will help you as you facilitate discussion. While you always want to be careful about singling out those who may be new, it might be appropriate, at times, to ask questions of specific teens during your group discussion. (e.g., "Chris, what did you think about Mary's response?") If only on a subconscious level, using your teens' names helps to communicate that you're invested and interested in them and what they have to say.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 22 Handout: The Birth of the King** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 8 to 10 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **StoryRewind 7 video** and **The Birth of the King video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** One piece of paper and a pen for each group of 2 to 3 participants
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*StoryRewind 7* Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 22: The Birth of the King* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! Welcome back for another great time together. I hope that as we continue our storytelling, we will all get a lot out of this time. As usual, we have another great story to get through today, so let's pray before we begin:

*God, thank you for another week and another opportunity to come together. We realize that we all provide so many unique personalities and perspectives as we come here and share our stories, all while investigating your Story. God, we ask that you would, once again, show yourself to us in brand-new ways so we can reimagine our lives to be more like yours. Amen.*

In today's story, there's something new and exciting on the way. But before we get to that, let's take a look back at where we've been up until this point in the Story. Hopefully this will be a great reminder of where our Story has taken us this far. We're getting pretty far along, so this recap will move fairly quickly. Be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the *StoryRewind 7* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *The Birth of the King*. (Anybody have an idea of what this one is about?) There might be some things that you'll recognize in this story, but there might be some new perspectives, too. So pay close attention so you don't miss anything! Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Birth of the King* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 22: The Birth of the King* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]



**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Are there any parts of this story that are “forgotten” or overlooked?
- What can you learn from Mary’s reaction to her news?
- How do you think Joseph felt after he found out Mary was pregnant? Why?
- Why do you think Jesus was born into such humble circumstances?
- What role do the shepherds play in this story? Why is it significant?
- What does this chapter reveal about who Jesus is?
- What impact has Jesus’ birth had on your life?
- In what ways has the traditional Christmas celebration deviated from the point of Jesus’ birth?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Have you ever been given a significant burden or responsibility? How did you respond?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I hope you can use one of these questions to generate a great response to today’s story. If you’re having trouble coming up with something, try choosing a method

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide participants into groups of 2 or 3, and give each group a piece of paper and a pen.

Tell the teens they’re going to do some role-playing by interviewing the characters in the story. Say something like:

“In your groups choose someone to be the interviewer, and the other person will select a character from the story to portray (Mary, Joseph, Shepherd, or Wise Man). The interviewer must come up with and write down 3 to 5 questions for the interviewee. The person being interviewed must answer the questions from the perspective of the person she’s portraying, perhaps months or years after baby Jesus is born. (Think of it as a celebrity being interviewed on a late-night talk show.) Then after about 5 minutes, I’ll say ‘switch,’ and the other person will get a chance to interview a new character.”

(If a group has an odd number of people, have them take turns playing each part. OR the interviewer can interview two people at once.)

Once they’ve had about 10 minutes to interview each other, ask for some volunteers to “perform” their interviews in front of the rest of the group. Encourage the teens to have fun with this and use their imaginations!

OPTIONAL: Set up a video camera and film some of the interviews. You could even bring in some old clothes that the teens could use to dress up.

of responding that you haven't tried before. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Great job, everyone! I'm so impressed with your responses. Thank you for being willing to open up and share about how you're processing this story. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, thank you, finally, for a turn in the Story! Just when we thought it was hopeless for your people, you came to earth as the hero. Thank you, too, for coming as a different kind of king and giving us hope through your less-than-glamorous human birth. We are so excited to dive headfirst into the life of Jesus, and we ask that you'll be faithful in the coming weeks to show us new and amazing things through the life of God in the flesh. Thank you for coming through on your promises! Amen.*

# THE BIRTH OF THE KING

**Bible Verses:** Matthew 1–2; Luke 1–2; John 1

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Angel
- Mary
- Herod
- Magi
- Jesus

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** In the beginning [of time], [Jesus] was with God, and [Jesus] was God,...[and] through him all things were made. [At just the right time]...[almost] *four hundred years [since God last spoke through his prophets]*, [Jesus] became flesh and [lived] among [the people].

**NARRATOR 2:** [Before Jesus came to earth], God sent [an] angel...to [the small village of] Nazareth...to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of [King] David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said,

**ANGEL:** "Greetings!...Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will...give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and...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."

**MARY:** "How will this be...since I am a virgin?"

**ANGEL:** "The Holy Spirit will [grow the baby inside you], and the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

**MARY:** "I am the LORD's servant...May your word to me be fulfilled."

**NARRATOR 3:** Then the angel left her. [Now] Joseph...did not want to expose [Mary] to public disgrace [because of her pregnancy out of wedlock]...[So] he had in mind to divorce her quietly. [But] an angel of the LORD appeared to him in a dream and said,

**ANGEL:** "Joseph...do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

**NARRATOR 1:** When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel...had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. In those days [the emperor of Rome] issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world, [which then included Israel]. And everyone went to their own town to register.

**NARRATOR 2:** So Joseph [and Mary]...went...to Bethlehem the town of David, because [Joseph] belonged to the...[family] of David. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and [Mary] gave birth to...a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

**NARRATOR 3:** [Meanwhile], there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the LORD appeared to them...and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

**ANGEL:** "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the LORD. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

**NARRATOR 1:** Suddenly a great company of [angels] appeared with the angel, praising God. When the angels had left them...the shepherds...hurried off [to Bethlehem] and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby. When they had seen him, they spread the word...about this child, and all who heard it were amazed.

**NARRATOR 2:** After Jesus was born...Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked [King Herod, the ruler there],

**MAGI:** "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star...and have come to worship him."

**NARRATOR 3:** When King Herod heard this he was disturbed...[so] Herod called the Magi secretly...and said,

**HEROD:** "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

**NARRATOR 1:** [So] they went on their way, and the star they had seen...went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

**NARRATOR 2:** [The magi found] the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they...presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been

warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When they had gone, an angel...appeared to Joseph in a dream.

**ANGEL:** "Get up...take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt...for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

**NARRATOR 3:** So [Joseph] got up, took the child and his mother...and left for Egypt...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 its vicinity who were two years old and under. [Finally], after Herod died, [Joseph brought his family back] to...Nazareth.

**NARRATOR 1:** When [Jesus] was twelve years old, [his family brought him to a] festival [in Jerusalem.] After the festival was over...Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but [his parents] were unaware of it. [When they discovered he was missing], they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

**NARRATOR 2:** After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him,

**MARY:** "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

**JESUS:** "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

**NARRATOR 3:** But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 22: The BIRTH OF THE KING

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:

MATTHEW 1-2;  
LUKE 1-2; JOHN 1



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol  
that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Have you ever been given a significant burden or responsibility? How did you respond?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# JESUS' MINISTRY BEGINS

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

There is much that happens as Jesus begins his ministry, and the StoryReader telling presents a selection of "highlights" from Jesus' first days teaching and healing. For the sake of time, not much is added to the narrative to provide cultural and historical background of these episodes (e.g., the significance of Jesus' discussion with the Samaritan woman and the recognition of her multiple divorces). You may need to help your teens unpack some of these episodes a bit further during your discussion, so they can make deeper cultural observations.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 23: "Jesus' Ministry Begins" can be found in Matthew 3–4; 11; Mark 1–3; Luke 8; and John 1–4.

## WELCOME UNANSWERED QUESTIONS!

**It's vital to let teens share unresolved questions or doubts.**

When you finish a discussion, chances are your teens still have unanswered, unresolved, or even unaddressed questions. Some may need help understanding the story, while others might have more general questions about the story, Scripture, or faith in general. It's very important to provide a safe way for teens to share the things that are on their minds at the end of a discussion.

A great way to do this is to create a regular "open comment" time. Give each teen an index card and a pen, and encourage them to share any questions, doubts, or comments they may have with regard to the story or anything else. Tell them they may write their names on the cards, so you can follow up with them, or they may remain anonymous.

Also remind teens that any question or comment is okay—there are no "bad" questions, no matter how trivial

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 23 Handout: Jesus' Ministry Begins** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 10 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show **The Birth of the King Recap video** and **Jesus' Ministry Begins video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** One blank greeting card\* and envelope for each teen; pens or markers (\*One blank piece of 8.5"x11" paper may be substituted for a card.)
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### WELCOME UNANSWERED QUESTIONS, CONTINUED

or "basic" they may think theirs are. Once teens have had a few minutes to write, collect the cards. During the next week, make a point to follow up with those who have significant questions or comments.

OPTIONAL: Create a "question box" or other container to collect the questions each week. Give it a unique name or look to encourage students to openly engage in this time as a regular part of your gathering.

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace

the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major "scene" from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### Another Creative Option

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the "Creative Option" sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*The Birth of the King Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 23: Jesus' Ministry Begins Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! Welcome back for another wonderful time together. I hope that as we continue our storytelling, we'll all get a lot out of this time. As usual, we have another great story to get through today, so let's pray before we begin:

*God, we thank you for continuing to show us more and more about you through your amazing Story. Please help us see how our lives continue to merge into your greater plan of love and redemption for all people. We ask that you open our eyes and our ears today to experience today's story more fully, and help us to grow in our love for you and the world. Amen.*

In today's story, we have more to look at from the life of Jesus. But before we do that, let's take a look back at what happened last week. For those who weren't with us or who may need a reminder of where we were, this recap should help refresh us. Be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play *The Birth of the King Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, that video helped to refresh your memory about what happened in the last chapter of our story. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *Jesus' Ministry Begins*. Again, there might be some things in this story that are familiar to you, but there might be some new things, too. So pay close attention so you don't miss anything! Ready?

[CUE: Play the *Jesus' Ministry Begins* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 23: Jesus' Ministry Begins* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the **StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes)**. NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the **JOIN the Story** segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think Jesus' disciples were so willing to leave everything and follow him?
- Why do you think it was significant that Jesus fasted and was tempted by the devil?
- How does Jesus respond to the friends who lower the paralytic man through the roof? What might his response teach us?
- What kinds of people did Jesus usually minister to and spend time with? What does this tell you about him?
- Who are the "tax collectors" and "sinners" of our society today?
- What do you learn from Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well? What surprises you?
- Jesus tells the woman at the well that "those who drink the water I give them will never thirst." What do you think this statement means?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Have you or someone you know ever been treated as an outcast? How did it make you feel?*
- *What is the most miraculous event you've ever seen?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each participant a blank greeting card\*, envelope, and pen or markers.

Tell the teens they're going to make invitations to a very special party. Explain that just as Jesus hung out with sinners and tax collectors, they will have an opportunity think about what "hard to love" people they could reach out to and spend time with. You can say something like this:

"For the next 10 minutes, we're each going to make a special invitation for ONE person. Think of someone in your life—your school, neighborhood, or even your extended family—who may be an "outsider" or someone the world sees as difficult to love. Once you think of that person, write his or her name on the outside of the envelope. Then you're going to create an invitation. With your invitation, you have TWO options:

"Create an invitation to an imaginary dinner party in that person's honor. Write that person a special message of encouragement, and keep the invitation as a reminder to pray about ways to reach out to that person on a regular basis.

"Create an invitation to actually spend time with that person. You can invite him or her to go see a movie, get coffee, have lunch, or spend

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

I hope you can use one of these questions to generate a great response to today's story. If you're having trouble coming up with something, try choosing a method of responding that you haven't tried before. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Well done, everyone! As always, these are great responses. Thank you for giving some good thought and sharing your honest feelings as you process this story—I learn so much from you all! Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, you continue to amaze us every single week as we come together and unpack this unpredictable, radical, world-changing Story. We thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to show us the best ways to live in relationship to you and to one another. And we ask that you'd give us the eyes to see the world the way Jesus sees it, and the heart to love and serve others the way you want us to. Thank you for showing us your love and grace daily. Amen.*

**CREATIVE OPTION, CONTINUED**

meaningful time together in another way. Then, give that person the invite, praying that God will bless your time together."

Once they've had about 10 minutes to create their invitations, give them a couple of minutes to pray for the people they wrote to. Then encourage them to continue praying throughout the week about creative ways to reach out.

\*Instead of actual greeting cards, you can have them make homemade cards out of 8.5"x11" pieces of paper.



# JESUS' MINISTRY BEGINS

**Bible Verses:** Matthew 3–4; 11; Mark 1–3; Luke 8; John 1–4

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- Jesus
- Evil Spirit
- Samaritan
- John the Baptist
- Pharisees

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** In [the days before Jesus began his public ministry], [a man named] John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying,

**JOHN:** "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near!"

**NARRATOR 1:** People went out to [John] from...all [over the region]. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. Then Jesus came...to be baptized by John. As soon as Jesus was baptized...heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove. And a voice from heaven said,

**GOD:** "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The [devil] came to him and [tempted him with food, political power, and more, if Jesus would worship him. But Jesus resisted, so] the devil left him...

**NARRATOR 3:** *Following the test in the wilderness, Jesus began his public ministry.* [One day, when] John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him...[he] said,

**JOHN:** "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

**NARRATOR 3:** When...two [of John's] disciples heard...this, they followed Jesus. The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding [a young man named] Philip [and several others], he said,

**JESUS:** "Follow me."

**NARRATOR 3:** He appointed twelve [disciples in all] to be with him...[and they dropped everything and followed him.]

**NARRATOR 1:** [Not long after, Jesus went to] a wedding...in Galilee. When the wine was gone... Jesus said to the servants,

**JESUS:** "Fill the jars with water...[Then] draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

**NARRATOR 1:** They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from [and was amazed at how good the wine was.] What Jesus did [at the wedding]...was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

**NARRATOR 2:** [Once, while traveling], he came to a town in [the region of] Samaria...and Jesus...sat down by [a] well [at] about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her,

**JESUS:** "Will you give me a drink?"

**NARRATOR 2:** [She was surprised at his request, since Jews did not associate with Samaritans—especially Samaritan women.]

**JESUS:** "If you knew...who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

**SAMARITAN WOMAN:** "Where can you get this living water?"

**JESUS:** "Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

**SAMARITAN WOMAN:** "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

**JESUS:** "Go, call your husband and come back."

**SAMARITAN WOMAN:** "I have no husband,"

**JESUS:** "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband..."

**SAMARITAN WOMAN:** "Sir...I can see that you are a Prophet...I know that [the] Messiah...is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

**JESUS:** "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

**NARRATOR 2:** Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. The woman [then] went back to the town and [told] the people [about Jesus]. Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony...

**NARRATOR 3:** [From there, Jesus and his disciples] went to [the town of] Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority...Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out,

**EVIL SPIRIT:** "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth?...I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

**JESUS:** "Be quiet! Come out of him!"

**NARRATOR 1:** The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed,...[and] news about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. The people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed...and Jesus healed many.

**NARRATOR 2:** [One day, at a home in] Capernaum, the people...gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door...Some men came [with] a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus...they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man,

**JESUS:** "Son, your sins are forgiven...Get up, take your mat and go home."

**NARRATOR 2:** He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God.

**NARRATOR 3:** [Another time], while Jesus was having dinner at [a tax collector named] Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples...When the teachers of the law...saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples:

**PHARISEES:** "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

**NARRATOR 3:** On hearing this, Jesus said to them,

**JESUS:** "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

**NARRATOR 1:** After this, Jesus traveled about from one town...to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases...[and] were helping to support them out of their own means.

**NARRATOR 2:** *[For hundreds of years], the Jews [had been] convinced that when the long-awaited Messiah came, he would free the people from political oppression....They were looking for an earthly king to bring their nation into power. But Jesus' purpose was much deeper, his intentions [far] more significant...*

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 23: Jesus' Ministry Begins

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:

MATTHEW 3-4; 11; MARK 1-3;  
LUKE 8; JOHN 1-4



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol  
that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Have you or someone you know ever been treated as an outcast? How did it make you feel?
- > What is the most miraculous event you've ever seen?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# NO ORDINARY MAN

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

As Jesus' ministry continues in chapter 24, we find out more about who he is and the kinds of things he stands for. If time allows, engage your teenagers in the Creative Option or find other ways of reading more of Jesus' teachings together. (Recommended: Jesus' Sermon on the Mount can be found in Matthew 5–7.)

Many of the miracles described in this part of the Story center on the themes of trust and faith. There should be plenty of opportunity for your teens to respond in practical ways—namely ways they can learn to trust God more and take risks for him in their day-to-day lives.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 24: "No Ordinary Man" can be found in Matthew 5–7; 9; 14; Mark 4–6; Luke 10; 15; and John 6

## BRUSH UP ON THE BACKGROUND!

**A little research can go a long way in helping teens unpack the story.**

When discussing Scripture, it's almost always essential to have some grasp of the cultural and historical implications of the text. Especially as you lead teens and seek to answer any questions that might arise during your time together, it can be beneficial to have a basic knowledge of the symbols and cultural themes that are present in the story for a given week.

As you prepare prior to leading your teens, take a few extra moments to read the full passages indicated in the Teacher's Guide and StoryReader script. This will give you a working understanding of where the selected narrative line fits into the complete story of Scripture.

You may also find commentary by picking up a Bible dictionary or commentary guide at your local bookstore. Another option is to simply type a given passage or biblical theme into your favorite online search engine. Of course, you should always confirm

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 24 Handout: No Ordinary Man** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 10 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **Jesus' Ministry Begins Recap video** and the **No Ordinary Man video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** For each group of 2 to 3 participants: One piece of posterboard, a copy of Matthew 5:1–16, and colored pencils or markers
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### BRUSH UP ON THE BACKGROUND!, CONTINUED

multiple sources on a topic instead of believing everything on the first blog you come to. It won't take long to find a wealth of information surrounding just about any name, symbol, or theme in Scripture.

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*



**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*Jesus' Ministry Begins Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 24: No Ordinary Man Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! Welcome back for another great time together. I hope that as we continue our storytelling, we'll all get a lot out of this time. As usual, we have another great story to get through today, so let's pray before we begin:

*God, as we come together today, we pause in our lives of busyness and stress and thank you for being so good to us. You never fail to show us grace, to pick us up when we fall, and to forgive us time and time again. We ask that you would again allow us to feel your presence with us. Speak to us through this story, through the words and actions of your Son, Jesus. Empower us to care about the things that you care about, and remind us that you love us more than we'll ever know. Amen.*

In today's story, we have more to look at from the life of Jesus. But before we get to that, let's take a look back at what happened last. For those of us who weren't here last week or who may need a reminder of where we were, this recap should help refresh us. Be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the *Jesus' Ministry Begins Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we've been or caught you up if you weren't with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *No Ordinary Man*. Again, there might be some things in this story that are familiar to you, but there might be some new things, as well. So pay close attention so you don't miss anything! Ready?

[CUE: Play the *No Ordinary Man* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 24: No Ordinary Man* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the *StoryReader* script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think Jesus used parables as a way to teach people?
- Why do you think Jesus taught the parable of the Good Samaritan?
- How do you think religious leaders responded to it?
- What meaning does the Good Samaritan have for your own life? Who is YOUR neighbor?
- If you had experienced Jesus' teaching firsthand, how do you think you would have reacted? Would you have followed him? Why or why not?
- If you were Peter, would you have gotten out of the boat to try to walk on the water? Why or why not?
- What do Jesus' miracles teach you about having faith?
- What practical steps can you take to trust Jesus more every day?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *Have you ever had to rely solely on your faith in God? What were the circumstances?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

I know you all have the ability to create something wonderful in response to one of these questions. If you're stuck trying to think of a creative response, try choosing

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide participants into groups of 2 to 3. Give each group a piece of posterboard, a copy of Matthew 5:1-16, and colored pencils or markers.

Explain that, as well as using parables, Jesus used a variety of imagery and memorable sayings in his teaching. Tell teens they're going to further interact with some of Jesus' most famous teachings by playing a drawing game of sorts. Using their copies of Matthew 5:1-16, each group should select one of the verbal images or phrases Jesus uses to describe life in the kingdom of God.

Once each group has selected their words or image, their task is to draw a picture, scene, or diagram that illustrates their particular section of teaching. Tell them they'll have about 10 minutes to be as elaborate as possible, but they CANNOT write any words on their pictures.

Once the groups have had about 8 to 10 minutes to complete their illustrations, invite each one to show theirs to everyone. While the other teens guess, group members may give yes or no answers until the correct statement is guessed. Once all of the groups have gone, commend the participants for a job well done and encourage them to read further into this passage of text in the coming week.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

a medium or method you haven't tried before. And, most importantly, have fun with it! In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**CREATIVE OPTION, CONTINUED**

OPTIONAL: Instead of having groups choose their own phrases from the text, you may preselect pertinent pieces of the teaching, write them onto index cards OR strips of paper, and have each group randomly select one from which to create an illustration.

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you, everyone! I learn so much from these responses every week—thank you for your effort and honesty in responding. Keep it up! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, as we engage more and more with the story of Jesus, we grow in amazement at your plan to reveal yourself to the world in power, grace, and love. Remind us as we live out our own stories this week that, as we grow and learn to have faith in you, it was you who first had faith in us. Thank you for never, ever giving up on your love for us and for this world. Amen.*

# NO ORDINARY MAN

**Bible Verses:** Matthew 5–7; 9; 14; Mark 4–6; Luke 10; 15; John 6

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Jesus
- Peter
- Religious Leader
- Jairus
- Disciples (1 and 2)

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** [As] Jesus [started drawing] huge crowds, [he]...taught them many things by [telling short stories, called] parables...[Once] *Jesus used a parable when he was questioned by a religious leader. [The man asked]:*

**RELIGIOUS LEADER:** "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

**JESUS:** "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?"

**RELIGIOUS LEADER:** 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

**JESUS:** "You have answered correctly...Do this and you will live."

**RELIGIOUS LEADER:** "And who is my neighbor?"

**JESUS:** "A man was [traveling], when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite...saw him [and] passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he

saw him, he took pity on him...and took care of him...Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

**RELIGIOUS LEADER:** "The one who had mercy on him."

**JESUS:** "Go and do likewise."

**NARRATOR 2:** *Jesus' teachings moved many people and changed lives. However, those who continually heard his parables and sermons were his disciples. At one point during their travels together, the disciples' trust in Jesus was put to the test when a violent storm overtook their boat. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. [When] the disciples woke him...he got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves,*

**JESUS:** "Quiet! Be still!"

**NARRATOR 2:** Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples,

**JESUS:** "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

**NARRATOR 3:** When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and...fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him,

**JAIRUS:** "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live."

**NARRATOR 3:** So Jesus went with him...When they came to the home of the synagogue leader...people [were] crying and wailing loudly [because the girl had died]. [But Jesus] went in and...took [the girl] by the hand and said to her:

**JESUS:** 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!'

**NARRATOR 3:** Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around. At this [everyone was] completely astonished.

**NARRATOR 1:** [Once, as Jesus was teaching, it had become] late in the day, so his disciples came to him [and said],

**DISCIPLE 1:** "Send the people away so that they can go...and buy themselves something to eat."

**JESUS:** "You give them something to eat."

**DISCIPLE 2:** "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

**JESUS:** "How many loaves do you have?"

**DISCIPLE 1:** "Five—and two fish."



**NARRATOR 1:** Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down....Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

**NARRATOR 2:** Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side [of the lake]...After he had dismissed [the crowd], he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. But Jesus immediately said to them:

**JESUS:** "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

**NARRATOR 2:** [Then Peter said]:

**PETER:** "Lord, if it's you...tell me to come to you on the water."

**JESUS:** "Come."

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out,

**PETER:** "Lord, save me!"

**NARRATOR 2:** Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

**JESUS:** "You of little faith...why did you doubt?"

**NARRATOR 2:** And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying,

**PETER & DISCIPLES:** "Truly you are the Son of God!"

**NARRATOR 3:** *Jesus...had a rock-solid sense of who he was, and he wanted his followers to know him to the core....As Jesus continued his ministry, he began to reveal more about who he was and why he had come...*

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 24: No Ordinary Man

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:

MATTHEW 5-7; 9; 14; MARK 4-6;  
LUKE 10; 15; JOHN 6



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol  
that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > Have you ever had to rely solely on your faith in God? What were the circumstances?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 25, the followers of Jesus are confronted with the big questions about his true identity and purpose as he enters the last week of his life on earth. As in past chapters, this story consists of several prominent events that may be familiar to some of your teens.

Each event has the potential for great discussion, and they all provide easy opportunities to talk about teenagers' beliefs about who Jesus is and what he means to them. Use this time to gauge where teens are spiritually. Don't be afraid to ask tough questions, and—as always—encourage your teens to be honest.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 25: "Jesus, the Son of God" can be found in Matthew 17; 21; Mark 8–12; 14; Luke 9; 22; and John 7–8; 11–12.

## PAY ATTENTION TO POSTURE!

### Mixing it up can improve teens' engagement.

During your group's interaction with the Story, the way people are sitting can have a significant impact on their focus and participation. For a more focused discussion, it may be helpful to gather teens around a table or have them lie in a circle on their stomachs and elbows, with everyone facing inward.

For a more creative, imaginative, or reflective exercise, it might be better to encourage them to spread out, get comfortable, and maybe even get up and walk around. Allowing freedom to move and think can be very important in allowing teens to be creative in their responses.

It is especially effective to make intentional shifts in posture with your group; invite them all to stand, to sit, to stretch, to kneel, and so on. As you plan your lesson, the more you can think about what posture would best accompany each exercise or activity, the less likely teenagers are to lose focus.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 25 Handout: Jesus, the Son of God** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 12 to 15 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **StoryRewind 8 video** and the **Jesus, the Son of God video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** For each group of 2 to 3 participants: One large piece of paper or poster-board; markers, pens, or colored pencils
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes,*

*depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### Another Creative Option

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*StoryRewind 8* Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 25: Jesus, the Son of God* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! I hope you're ready for another exciting time together. I'm confident there will be a lot of great things for us to experience together. Let's take a moment to pray before we begin:

*God, we cannot thank you enough for the freedom and the ability to meet together like this. It's such a privilege to journey through your amazing Story with these wonderful young people—my friends. We ask that you'd continue to break the mold of the ways we think of you, so we may see a fresh new picture of who you are and the life you intend for us. May we hear your voice loud and clear today. Amen.*

We have another great story to look at today. But before we do, let's take a look at where we've been up until this point in the Story. Hopefully this will be a great reminder of where our Story has taken us this far. It'll move pretty quickly, so be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the *StoryRewind 8* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video helped to refresh your memory about what happened in the last chapter of our story. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.



Let's watch this week's video, *Jesus, the Son of God*. As always, there's a lot of story packed into these next couple of minutes. So pay close attention so that you don't miss anything! Ready?

[CUE: Play the *Jesus, the Son of God* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 25: Jesus, the Son of God* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the **StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes)**. NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the **JOIN the Story segment of this study**.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think Jesus told his disciples not to tell anyone about who he was?
- What would you say was Jesus' primary mission during his life?
- What words would you use to describe Jesus?
- What character qualities do you see in Jesus?
- In what ways did Jesus' words and actions reveal the reality that he is God?
- How would you respond to the question, "How do you know that Jesus is God?"

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *What amazes you about Jesus?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

Hopefully one of these questions will spark something creative in your mind. If you're having trouble finding a way to respond, try to approach it from another angle by creating something you never have before. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide participants into groups of 2 to 3. Give each group a large piece of paper OR posterboard; markers, pens, or colored pencils.

Tell teens they're going to create a front-page news story based on one of the events from today's story. You could set up the activity by saying something like this:

"In your groups today, you're going to do something fun: Create the front page of a newspaper—but there's a catch. It's covering events in Jesus' day. Feel free to give your newspaper a name. (Maybe it's the *Nazareth Sun*, or the *Galilee Gazette*.) Then you and your group will select one event from today's story to 'report.' You can make a front-page headline, a picture or two, picture captions, and—if you have time—the opening paragraph to a news story or opinion column about this Jesus who has everybody talking. You'll have about 10 minutes to create your front-page story. Feel free to be as creative as you'd like. Ready? Go!"

Once groups have had 10 minutes to create their newspapers, invite them to show and read their front pages to the rest of the group.

[**CUE: SHARE**—Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for these great responses. I'm more and more impressed with how you're wrestling with these questions! I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we're in awe of this person of Jesus—the Son of the Living God. We're grateful for the ways in which his story—your Story—unfolds to show your passion for leading and redeeming your people. We ask that you'd continue to show us what it means to live out the kingdom of God in our lives every day. Be with us as we wrestle through the big questions of who Jesus is and what he means for our lives here and now. We ask this all in his name. Amen.*

# JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

**Bible Verses:** Matthew 17; 21; Mark 8–12; 14; Luke 9; 22; John 7–8; 11–12

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- |                         |        |                       |                          |
|-------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| • Narrators 1, 2, and 3 | • God  | • Jesus               | • Peter                  |
| • Rich Man              | • Mary | • Disciples (1, 2, 3) | • Crowd Person (1, 2, 3) |

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** [While Jesus continued to travel with his disciples], he asked them [one day],

**JESUS:** "Who do people say I am?"

**DISCIPLE 1:** "Some say John the Baptist..."

**DISCIPLE 2:** "Others say Elijah..."

**DISCIPLE 3:** "And still others, one of the prophets."

**JESUS:** "But what about you? Who do you say I am?"

**NARRATOR 1:** Peter answered [him]:

**PETER:** "You are the Messiah."

**NARRATOR 1:** Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things...and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said:

**JESUS:** “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it...”

**NARRATOR 2:** [One day], Jesus took with him Peter, James and John...and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. [Suddenly] a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said,

**GOD:** “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

**NARRATOR 2:** When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them.

**JESUS:** “Get up. Don’t be afraid.”

**NARRATOR 2:** When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen...

**NARRATOR 3:** [Soon after that] a man named Lazarus was sick. [His] sisters, [Mary and Martha] sent word to Jesus. When he heard this, Jesus said,

**JESUS:** “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”

**NARRATOR 3:** When [Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days]. Mary...fell at his feet and said,

**MARY:** “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

**NARRATOR 3:** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the [many] Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved.

**JESUS:** “Where have you laid him?”

**MARY:** “Come and see, Lord,”

**NARRATOR 3:** Jesus wept. [They traveled to the tomb.] It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

**JESUS:** “Take away the stone.”

**NARRATOR 3:** When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice,

**JESUS:** “Lazarus, come out!”

**NARRATOR 3:** The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them,

**JESUS:** "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

**NARRATOR 3:** Many [saw] what Jesus did [and] put their faith in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a [secret] meeting...[and] from that day on they plotted to take his life.

**NARRATOR 1:** [Meanwhile] as Jesus [continued] on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him.

**RICH MAN:** "Good teacher...what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

**JESUS:** "You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"

**RICH MAN:** "Teacher...all these I have kept since I was a boy."

**JESUS:** "One thing you lack...Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

**NARRATOR 1:** At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,

**JESUS:** "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the kingdom of God."

**NARRATOR 1:** The disciples were...amazed, and said to each other,

**DISCIPLES:** "Who then can be saved?"

**JESUS:** "With man this is impossible, but...all things are possible with God."

**NARRATOR 2:** As they approached Jerusalem...[Jesus' disciples brought a] colt [for] Jesus [to ride] and threw their cloaks over it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

**CROWD PERSON 1:** "Hosanna!"

**CROWD PERSON 2:** "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

**CROWD PERSON 3:** "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

**ALL CROWD:** "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

**NARRATOR 2:** [After he arrived in Jerusalem], Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.

**JESUS:** “It is written,...‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’ ”

**NARRATOR 3:** Now the Passover...Festival [was] only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some [sly] way to arrest Jesus and kill him. Then Satan entered Judas,...one of the Twelve [disciples]. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.



# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 25: Jesus, The Son of God

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:

Matthew 17; 21; Mark 8–12; 14;  
Luke 9; 22; John 7–8; 11–12



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol  
that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > What amazes you about Jesus?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

*Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.*

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# THE HOUR OF DARKNESS

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

As you engage your teens in this story, be aware that this part of the narrative is very intense. Your group time this week should be more reflective in order to allow teens to adequately interact with the reality of the final hours of Jesus' life.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 26: "The Hour of Darkness" can be found in Matthew 26–27; Mark 14–15; Luke 22–23; and John 13–14; 16–19.

### CALL ON TWO AT A TIME!

**An effective alternative to singling out someone is to prompt teens in pairs.**

When your group is struggling to respond during the discussion, it may be helpful to call on a teenager to ask for his or her opinion or answer. Whenever you call on teens, you must use sensitivity. It may help to call on two and have them work together.

You might say something like: "Jen and Stacy, could you two work together to unpack this a little more for us?" OR "Jason and Andy, what are a couple different perspectives that people could have on this issue?"

Framing a question in this way can put a healthy pressure on teens to respond in a way that's comfortable for them—and you might be surprised by the responses you get from two teenagers who are able to feed off of each other's ideas.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 26 Handout: The Hour of Darkness** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 10 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **Jesus, the Son of God Recap video** and **The Hour of Darkness video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** For every 3 to 4 teens: a bucket or bowl of warm soapy water; clean washcloths for washing; clean towels or a roll of paper towels for drying; hand sanitizer
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*Jesus, the Son of God Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 26: The Hour of Darkness Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! Welcome back for what I hope is going to be another great time together. Before we dive into the storytelling for today, let's take a moment to pray before we begin:

*God, thank you for your grace to make it through another week. We realize that every day is a gift from you, and the opportunity to live out a great Story is more than we could ask for. We pray that as we engage with your Story today, you'd stir our hearts. Move us, motivate us, and impact us so we leave here different than when we came. Amen.*

We have another very compelling story to look at today. But before we do, let's take a look at where our story took us last week. Hopefully this will be a great reminder for any of us who weren't here or who may need to be refreshed on what happened. It'll move pretty quickly, so be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the *Jesus, the Son of God Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video reminded you of what happened last in the Story. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *The Hour of Darkness*. This part of the story gets pretty intense, so you'll want to pay close attention. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Hour of Darkness* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 26: The Hour of Darkness* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the *StoryReader* script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]



**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- What do you think Jesus' act of feet washing communicated to his disciples?
- What was Jesus' prayer in the garden after the Last Supper? How might you say this in your own words?
- Why do you think the crowds turned against Jesus so quickly, when only a few days before they were praising him as he entered Jerusalem?
- Why do you think Jesus had to die?
- How did Jesus' followers respond to the tragic events? How do you think you would've responded?
- What implications does Jesus' death on the cross have for your life?
- In what way has Jesus' life and death affected the way you live your life from day to day?
- What do you learn about God's love through these events?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *How is Jesus' sacrifice meaningful to you?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

Hopefully one of these questions will spark something creative in your mind. If you're having trouble finding a way to respond, try to approach it from another angle by

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

While Jesus' act of washing his disciples' feet is often talked about as an example of humility and sacrifice for one another, it is rarely practiced. Take time to engage in this activity with your teens.

Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Tell them they're going to practice what Jesus told his disciples to do by washing each other's feet. Encourage them that while this can be an uncomfortable and uncommon thing to do for each other, it can also be a very intimate time that will give them a better understanding of the greater attitude of servanthood that Jesus modeled for his followers.

Give each group a bowl of warm, soapy water and clean washcloths and paper towels. Model this first by washing someone's feet as the leader of the group. Tell them to take turns washing and drying another person's feet, so each one has a chance to both have his or her feet washed and to wash the feet of someone else.\*

While teens are doing this act of service for one another, encourage them to maintain a reflective attitude by praying for one another and by asking God to show them ways that they can be servants to others every day.

After about 10 minutes, ask a few to share about their experiences and

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

creating something you never have before. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for these very mature and thoughtful responses. I'm so impressed with how you've responded to this profound Story. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to finding out what happens in our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we are humbled by what you've done for the world—and for us. Having all the power in the universe, you limited yourself, took on all of our sin, and experienced a horrible death, all so we can be made right with God. May we continue to remember what you've done for us and embrace your unending, sacrificial love in our lives as we go from here today. Amen.*

**CREATIVE OPTION, CONTINUED**

what they learned to help them understand the story better.

\*It's likely that some teens may have a severe aversion to feet or other hesitance in doing this activity. Encourage them that, if desired, they may choose to wash someone's hands or have their hands washed instead.

# THE HOUR OF DARKNESS

**Bible Verses:** Matthew 26–27; Mark 14–15; Luke 22–23; John 13–14; 16–19

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- |                         |          |               |                         |
|-------------------------|----------|---------------|-------------------------|
| • Narrators 1, 2, and 3 | • Jesus  | • High Priest | • Crowd (3 to 4 people) |
| • John                  | • Pilate | • Criminal 1  | • Criminal 2            |

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** [In Jerusalem, Jesus met with his disciples for the Passover Meal.] [During the meal Jesus] got up...wrapped a towel around his waist...and began to wash his disciples' feet....

**JESUS:** "Do you understand what I have done for you? Now that I...have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example...for you..."

**NARRATOR 1:** [Then] Jesus [became] troubled in spirit and testified,

**JESUS:** "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

**NARRATOR 1:** His disciples stared at one another, [not knowing what] he meant. [John] asked him,

**JOHN:** "Lord, who is it?"

**JESUS:** "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish."

**NARRATOR 1:** Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him,

**JESUS:** "What you are about to do, do quickly."

**NARRATOR 1:** But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. [But] as soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out.

**NARRATOR 2:** While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying,

**JESUS:** "Take and eat; this is my body."

**NARRATOR 2:** Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying,

**JESUS:** "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins..."

**NARRATOR 2:** [After the meal], they went out to...a [garden] called Gethsemane, and he said to them,

**JESUS:** "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch..."

**NARRATOR 2:** Going a little farther, he fell...to the ground and prayed,

**JESUS:** "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

**NARRATOR 2:** Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. [He said to them]:

**JESUS:** "Are you...sleeping? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise!...Here comes my betrayer!"

**NARRATOR 2:** While he was still speaking, Judas...arrived...[with] a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and...elders....[Then they] arrested Jesus [and] took him to...the high priest. [Jesus' disciples fled], but Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest.

**NARRATOR 3:** [As he was questioned, Jesus remained silent]. Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus,

**HIGH PRIEST:** "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

**JESUS:** "You have said so...But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

**NARRATOR 3:** Then the high priest tore his clothes and said,

**HIGH PRIEST:** "He has spoken blasphemy!...He is worthy of death!"

**NARRATOR 3:** Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. [Meanwhile, outside, Peter was identified as one of Jesus' followers by three different people, and three times he denied it, just as Jesus said he would.]

**NARRATOR 1:** Early in the morning, all the chief priests...came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the [Roman] governor...to *judge Jesus as a subversive threat*. [After questioning Jesus and finding him innocent, Pilate] went out...to the Jews gathered [outside his palace] and said,

**PILATE:** "I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?"

**NARRATOR 1:** [The crowd] shouted back,

**CROWD:** "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!"

**NARRATOR 1:** Barabbas [was a murderer who] had taken part in an uprising. [So] Pilate [released Barabbas and] took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe...As soon as the [crowd] saw him, they shouted,

**CROWD:** "Crucify! Crucify! Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"

**NARRATOR 2:** Finally Pilate handed him over, [and] the [Roman] soldiers took charge of Jesus. Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, [nailing his hands and his feet to a cross]...along with the criminals. [Jesus prayed]:

**JESUS:** "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

**NARRATOR 2:** The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. The soldiers also came up and mocked him. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him:

**CRIMINAL 1:** "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

**NARRATOR 2:** But the other criminal rebuked him.

**CRIMINAL 2:** "Don't you fear God...? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong...Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

**JESUS:** "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

**NARRATOR 3:** *So Jesus waited...for death to overcome him. Before [he died]...God poured out humanity's rightful punishment for sin upon [him]. And even the physical elements trembled.* [At] about noon...darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon...[Then] Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

**JESUS:** “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

**NARRATOR 3:** [Then, with his last breath], Jesus said,

**JESUS:** “It is finished.”

**NARRATOR 1:** With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open...Those with him...were terrified, and exclaimed,

**CROWD:** “Surely he was the Son of God!”

**NARRATOR 1:** [And] all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

# The Story DVD Curriculum for Teens

## CHAPTER 26: The Hour of Darkness

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:

Matthew 26–27; Mark 14–15;  
Luke 22–23; John 13–14; 16–19



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol  
that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > How is Jesus' sacrifice meaningful to you?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>



# THE RESURRECTION

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 27, we see the most exciting turn in the entire Story. This should be a great time for you and your teens to dream together about the implications of the hope that Jesus' resurrection brings. This part of the Story also addresses heavily the theme of doubting. Don't shy away from the opportunity to have some authentic conversation with teens about the times we doubt God or the doubts they may have about their faith.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 27: "The Resurrection" can be found in Matthew 27–28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 19–21.

## USE PRAYERS PURPOSEFULLY!

**Utilizing short prayers before or during discussion can help focus your group.**

In addition to the prayers provided at the beginning and end of the Teacher Lesson Script, you may want to include short prayers to focus the teens before or during your group discussion. Beginning discussion in prayer signals that it's time to focus, which may be necessary after teens transition from a large-group setting.

You might add a short prayer in the middle of your discussion to pray for a particular issue that one or more teens may be struggling with. You may also pray to regain focus if your group has gone off on a tangent.

When you pray, be sure to keep the prayer brief. Ask God for focus and to open the hearts and minds of those involved. If appropriate, you may also ask a trusted teen to say a quick prayer for your group.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 27 Handout: The Resurrection** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 10 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show **The Hour of Darkness Recap video** and **The Resurrection video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** For each teen: 1 postcard OR piece of paper and a pen
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*The Hour of Darkness Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 27: The Resurrection Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hi, everyone! It's great to have you with us as we enter into God's Story again this week. But before we do, let's take a moment to pray together:

*God, we come to you humbled by the way you love us every day. We thank you that you showed this to us once and for all by sending your only Son, Jesus, to be a sacrifice for us. We pray that as we enter this time together today, you'd continue to reveal your amazing plan to us and captivate us with the mystery and hope of what's coming next. Amen.*

As you can imagine, we have another very compelling part of the Story to get to today. But before we do, let's take a look at the events of last week's story. Hopefully this will be a great refresher for any of us who weren't here or who may need to be reminded of what happened. It'll move pretty quickly, so be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play *The Hour of Darkness Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video reminded you of where our story left off last week. The next video will give us a quick look at where our story is headed this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *The Resurrection*. Needless to say, the story just keeps getting better and better from here, so you'll want to pay close attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Resurrection* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 27: The Resurrection* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[**CUE: DISCUSS**—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- What do you think life was like for Jesus' followers after his death?
- After Jesus died, why do you think some of his followers went to the tomb?
- What does this tell you about friendship and loyalty among Jesus' companions?
- When Jesus appeared to people after his resurrection, how do you think their lives were changed?
- What does Jesus' resurrection from the dead reveal about God's power over death and sin? What might this mean for your life?
- Do you believe Jesus rose from the dead? What leads you to believe this?
- Before Jesus went up to heaven, he commanded his followers to "go and make disciples of all nations." What do you think this means?
- What does "making disciples" look like practically in your life?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *How does Jesus' resurrection change everything?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

Hopefully one of these questions will spark something creative in your mind. If you're having trouble finding a way to respond, try to approach it from another angle by creating something you never

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each teen a postcard OR piece of paper and a pen.

Tell them they're going to use their imaginations to enter the minds of those who first encountered Jesus' resurrection. Have each one choose a person or perspective from the story—it could be one of the women who saw the open tomb, Mary Magdalene, one of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, or Thomas.

Once they've selected someone, have each one write a letter or note from the perspective of that person, telling a friend or family member about Jesus' resurrection. (For example, a letter from Mary Magdalene might begin: "Dear Mom, You won't believe this—the most amazing thing has happened...!")

Give teens about 10 minutes to write their notes. Once they've finished, give a few the opportunity to read theirs to the group. Invite all of them to keep their notes someplace where they'll see them every day and be reminded of the amazing and exciting news that the resurrection brings to every person.



have before. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for these very insightful and creative responses. I'm continually impressed at the ways you respond to these stories. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to finding out what happens in our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we are filled with hope and awe at the way you decisively entered your own Story. Thank you for showing us your love and power by conquering death and raising Jesus to new life. God, we ask that you continue to show us the "dead" areas in our lives that you wish to bring to life. May we also be assured every day that there is always hope because you have power over everything—even the grave. We pray in the name of Jesus, who is alive! Amen.*

# THE RESURRECTION

**Bible Verses:** Matthew 27–28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 19–21

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Jesus
- Mary
- Cleopas
- Thomas
- Angel

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** [After Jesus died, his body was prepared for burial and placed in a] new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. [Then], *to prevent any tampering with the body, [the tomb was] made...secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting [a] guard [in front of it].*

**NARRATOR 2:** Very early on the first day of the week, [some of the women who were followers of Jesus] were on their way to the tomb [to anoint his body with spices and oils]...and [suddenly], there was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven...rolled back the stone and sat on it. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women,

**ANGEL:** "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples...!"

**NARRATOR 2:** So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

**NARRATOR 3:** [Meanwhile], Mary [Magdalene] stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she...turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she...[thought]...he was the gardener. He asked her,

**JESUS:** “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

**MARY:** “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

**JESUS:** “Mary.”

**NARRATOR 3:** She turned toward him and cried out...

**MARY:** “Teacher!”

**NARRATOR 3:** [And] Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news [that Jesus was alive].

**NARRATOR 1:** Now that same day two [of Jesus’ followers] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked...Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them,

**JESUS:** “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

**NARRATOR 1:** They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him,

**CLEOPAS:** “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

**JESUS:** “What things?”

**CLEOPAS:** “About Jesus of Nazareth...He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people...Our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. In addition, some of our women...went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They...told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive...”

**JESUS:** “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”

**NARRATOR 1:** And...[Jesus] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going...they urged him strongly [to stay with them for dinner]. When he was at the table with them...he gave thanks, broke [bread], and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

**NARRATOR 2:** They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven [disciples] and...told what had happened...While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them,

**JESUS:** “Peace be with you.”

**NARRATOR 2:** They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them,

**JESUS:** “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise 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.”

**NARRATOR 2:** When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he...said to them,

**JESUS:** “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.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them,

**JESUS:** “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things...”

**NARRATOR 3:** Now Thomas...one of the [disciples], was not with [them] when Jesus came. [And] he said to them [afterward],

**THOMAS:** “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were...I will not believe.”

**NARRATOR 3:** A week later...Thomas was with them [when] Jesus came and stood among them... He said to Thomas,

**JESUS:** “Put your finger here; see my hands...Stop doubting and believe.”

**NARRATOR 3:** [Then] Thomas [believed it was really Jesus, saying]:

**THOMAS:** “My Lord and my God!”

**NARRATOR 3:** Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said,

**JESUS:** “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 27: The Resurrection

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:

Matthew 27–28; Mark 16;  
Luke 24; John 19–21



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol  
that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > How does Jesus' resurrection change everything?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# NEW BEGINNINGS

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading This Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

This chapter moves quickly through a few of the many significant events involving the early church in the book of Acts. Tying these events together are common themes, such as the work of the Holy Spirit, the characteristics of the early church, and the emergence of martyrdom and the persecution of the church. It also touches on Saul's radical life change. All of these events should yield great discussion and responses from your teens.

Don't miss the opportunity to encourage teens to connect today's story to not only their own, but also their corporate faith community's (small group, youth group, church) and the larger picture of the worldwide church today.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 28: "New Beginnings" can be found in Acts 1–10; 12.

## THINK COMMUNALLY!

**Challenge teens to think beyond individual application.**

In responding to these stories, it can be easy to default to understanding their themes in relation to our lives as individuals. As your group discussion leads to application for everyday life, challenge teens to begin thinking beyond themselves and about the implications the story may have not only for them, but also for their youth group, their church, their family, their community, or even the church as a whole.

Engaging in this perspective will allow teens to recognize that they're part of communities much larger than themselves, and that entire groups and systems are in need of redemption and grace, just as individuals are. It will also help them to think practically about the impact they can bring not only to their "internal" spiritual lives, but also to the outward-facing practice of the life that God desires.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 28 Handout: New Beginnings** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 10 to 12 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **StoryRewind 9 video** and the **New Beginnings video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** For every 3 to 4 teens: 1 posterboard OR large piece of paper and markers
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

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**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*



### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*StoryRewind 9* Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 28: New Beginnings* Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! Welcome back for what I hope will be another great time together. Before we begin today's story, let's take a moment to pray together:

*God, what an amazing time you've given us to come together and unpack this story! We are so excited and grateful that you sent a hero in Jesus to come to our rescue and give us hope through his death and resurrection. As we investigate what's next in the Story, we ask that you'd continue to show us our place in your plan as it continues to unfold. Move in our hearts and motivate us to be the people you want us to be. Amen.*

We have another very compelling story to look at today. But before we do, let's take a look at where our Story has brought us in the last 27 weeks. Hopefully this will be a great reminder for us about the larger Story that's going on in the midst of these smaller stories. As always, this recap will move pretty quickly, so be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the *StoryRewind 9* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video reminded you of where our story left off last week. The next video will give us a quick look at where our story is headed this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *New Beginnings*. Ready?

[CUE: Play the *New Beginnings* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 28: New Beginnings* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost was so effective?
- What do you think about the Holy Spirit speaking through them with different languages?
- Is the Holy Spirit still at work in the world today? How have you experienced it or seen it at work?
- How would you describe this first "church" of Jesus followers? What kinds of things did they spend their time doing?
- Why do you think the message of Jesus Christ spread quickly?
- Why do you think the religious leaders disliked the early Christians?
- How was Saul's (Paul's) life dramatically changed?
- How do you think the early Christians were able to remain faithful even in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *What's happened in your life that caused you to view God in a brand-new way?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Divide teens in groups of 3 to 4. Tell them they're going to pretend they've been given the responsibility to start their OWN church or ministry—wherever and however they want!

Give each group a sheet of posterboard OR large piece of paper and some markers. Tell them to create a poster for their new church, informing the surrounding community what their church is like. Before they begin, suggest that they spend a few minutes planning their church and its mission. Your teens might want to think about these things:

- What will the church be known for?
- Where will it meet?
- Will it have a specific mission?
- Will it serve a specific community or people group?
- What will the church be called? (Encourage them to think of a name that has significance to their mission.)

Once they've talked about the church they'll start, encourage teens to be free with how they use their poster. They can draw pictures, write things, include Scripture—whatever they think would best communicate what their new community of Jesus followers is like. After about 15

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

Hopefully one of these questions will spark something creative in your mind. If you're having trouble finding a way to respond, try to approach it from another angle by creating something you never have before. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for these very mature and thoughtful responses. I am so impressed with how you are connecting this Story to your own. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to finding out what happens in our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we are so excited and honored to be a part of a community of faith that has been gathering for thousands of years and experienced such amazing things as a result of your Holy Spirit. Thank you for giving this same Spirit to each and every one of us to be with us through even the toughest times. May we continue to grow as a community of your followers and figure out what it means to be a blessing to all people in your name. Amen.*

**CREATIVE OPTION, CONTINUED**

minutes, invite groups to share their church posters with everyone.

**NOTE:** As an alternative, you can have groups create posters for the first church, as it's described in today's story. What might a modern-day poster for that community of people look like? What would it say? How would it be different from modern churches today?

# NEW BEGINNINGS

**Bible Verses:** Acts 1–10; 12

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Jesus
- Peter
- Saul
- Angel
- Stephen
- Ananias
- High Priest

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** [After he rose from the dead, Jesus] appeared to [his disciples] over a period of forty days. ...[Once,] while he was eating with them, he gave them this command:

**JESUS:** "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised...in a few days you will [receive] the Holy Spirit...You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem...and to the ends of the earth."

**NARRATOR 1:** After he said this, he was taken up [into the sky] before their very eyes...[And] suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

**ANGEL:** "Men of Galilee...why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus...will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

**NARRATOR 1:** [Soon after that, a group of Jesus' followers were all together praying in Jerusalem, gathered for a celebration called Passover]...Suddenly a sound like...a violent wind...filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other [languages]...[And] Jews [who had come to Jerusalem] from every nation [on earth could understand them!]



**NARRATOR 2:** Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

**PETER:** “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles...which God did...through him...And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God...raised this Jesus to life...[and made him] both Lord and Messiah....[So] repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. [The believers] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching... [and] everyone was filled with awe at the many [miracles they] performed. All the believers...sold [their] property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad... hearts...And the Lord added to their number [every day].

**NARRATOR 3:** The priests...and the Sadducees...were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people [about Jesus], [so] they seized Peter and John, and...began to question them:

**HIGH PRIEST:** “By what power or what name did you do this?”

**PETER:** “It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

**NARRATOR 3:** When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus...After further threats they let them go.

**NARRATOR 1:** Now Stephen...[was a follower of Jesus, who] performed great wonders and signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from [some religious leaders] who...stirred up...the elders and the teachers of the law. They brought [Stephen] before [them and] produced false witnesses [that accused Stephen of blasphemy]. Then the high priest asked Stephen,

**HIGH PRIEST:** “Are these charges true?”

**STEPHEN:** “You stiff-necked people!...You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law...but have not obeyed it.”

**NARRATOR 1:** When [they] heard this, they were [so] furious...[that] they dragged him out of the city and [stoned] him [to death]. And [a young Pharisee named] Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against [Jesus’ followers], and [they] were scattered [and imprisoned] throughout Judea and Samaria.

**NARRATOR 2:** [And] Saul [continued] breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. [But one day, as he traveled to the city of Damascus]...a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him,

**JESUS (VOICE FROM HEAVEN):** “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

**SAUL:** “Who are you...?”

**JESUS:** “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting...Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Saul got up from the ground, but...he could see nothing. So [his servants] led him... into Damascus. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision,

**JESUS:** “Ananias!...Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man...named Saul. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

**ANANIAS:** “Lord...I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority...to arrest all who call on your name.”

**JESUS:** “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said,

**ANANIAS:** “Brother Saul, the Lord...has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Immediately...Saul...could see again. He got up and was baptized...At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God...[and] all those who heard him were astonished...

**NARRATOR 3:** When he came to Jerusalem, [the apostles] were all afraid of him. But Barnabas... told them how...the Lord had spoken to him. So Saul stayed...in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. Then the church throughout [the whole region] enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. *It was also during this time that Saul [changed his name] to “Paul.” Because God’s Spirit was leading them...[Paul] and his colleagues boldly spoke about Jesus everywhere they went.*

# The Story, Teen CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER 28: New Beginnings

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
Acts 1–10; 12



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol  
that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > What's happened in your life that caused you to view God in a brand-new way?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# PAUL'S MISSION

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading This Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

Chapter 29 is a quick overview of Paul's early ministry, as found in the book of Acts. If time allows, spend some time with your teens reading through some of Paul's earlier letters to the churches he visited on his journey. (Recommended: Romans 1; 3–6; 8; 12; 15; 1 Corinthians 1; 3; 5–6; 10; 12–13; 15–16; Galatians 1; 3; 5–6; and 1 Thessalonians 1–5.)

Because this part of the Story contains so much activity, the StoryReader telling will rely heavily on the narrators. For these parts, be sure to choose more capable readers who will be able to carry the story in a lively way, given its many details.

Don't miss the opportunity to encourage teens to connect today's story to not only their own, but also their corporate faith community's (small group, youth group, church) and the larger picture of the worldwide church today.

Chapter 29: "Paul's Mission" can be found in Acts 13–14; 16–20; Romans 1; 3–6; 8; 12; 15; 1 Corinthians 1; 3; 5–6; 10; 12–13; 15–16; Galatians 1; 3; 5–6; and 1 Thessalonians 1–5.

## ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION!

**Making teens feel valued can lead to greater engagement.**

During a group discussion, it's important to remember to verbally affirm every teen who shares an answer or opinion. As a leader, it's easy to become distracted by listening for a "correct" answer or thinking about what question you're going to ask next. Following up every teen's response by saying something positive like, "That's a good point," or "I like your point of view," or even something as brief as "Thank you for sharing" can boost a teen's confidence and encourage that person to participate again in the future.

Even if a teen's answer is incorrect, off-track, or different from your own opinion, it's important to thank him or her for sharing. In doing this you aren't necessarily affirming the teen's answer, rather you're affirming her willingness to share—a trait that you want to cultivate and encourage as much as possible for healthy discussions.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 29 Handout: Paul's Mission** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 8 to 10 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story Sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **New Beginnings Recap video** and the **Paul's Mission video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** For each teen: 1 index card and a pen
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script

provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*New Beginnings Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 29: Paul's Mission Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute



# PAUL'S MISSION

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome, everyone! I'm so glad you're back with us for what I hope will be another great time together. Before we dive into our story for today, let's take a moment to pray before we begin:

*God, thank you for bringing us back together to continue this journey of discovery. You've pulled us all in to such an unbelievable, life-changing Story of grace, forgiveness, and restoration through Jesus. We ask that over the next couple of hours, you'd continue to open our eyes to see ourselves as characters in this Story. Help us to focus, listen, and fully understand the things you have to say to us today. Amen.*

We have another amazing story to look at today. But before we do, and to remind us of what happened last in the Story, let's take a look back at last week's chapter. As always, this recap will move pretty quickly, so be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the *New Beginnings Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: **SHARE**—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: *It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.*]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video reminded you of where our story left off last week. The next video will give us a quick look at where our story is headed this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *Paul's Mission*. Ready?

[CUE: Play the *Paul's Mission* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 29: Paul's Mission* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

**[CUE: DISCUSS—***Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- After his conversion to Christianity, how would you describe Paul's passion and mission in life?
- What would you say is your unique passion and mission in life?
- When in a new city, why do you think Paul always began his outreach at the Jewish synagogue?
- Why do you think Paul and his fellow prisoners stayed in the prison when they could've escaped?
- What do you learn from the story of the jailer?
- In what setting or environment is it difficult for you to talk about Jesus? Why?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *How could you courageously live out your faith?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

Hopefully one of these questions will spark something creative in your mind. If you're having trouble finding a way to respond, try to approach it from another angle by creating something you never have before. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to*

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each teen an index card and a pen. Explain that they're going to create their own mission statement for their lives. Emphasize that just as Paul had a clear vision of what he was supposed to do with his life, it's important for us to be continually asking ourselves where God wants to use us.

Have teens spend a few minutes thinking of the thing that makes them the most passionate in life or how God is calling them to do good for their communities or the world. Once they have their ideas, tell them to write their personal mission statements on their index cards. The form of many mission statements is: My mission is to \_\_\_\_\_ (what) by \_\_\_\_\_ (how). (An example might be: "My mission is to love those in need by volunteering to serve hot meals at a local homeless shelter.")

Reassure teens that they don't need to have the mission of their entire lives figured out yet. Their mission statement can simply be one area of their lives that they're particularly passionate about, or through which they feel they're doing what God created them to do. Also remind them that their mission doesn't necessarily need to be church-related and God can use people who are passionate about many things, from playing rock music to making movies to creating designer clothing.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

*participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thanks, everyone, for these great responses. I'm always challenged and inspired by what you come up with for these questions. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to finding out what happens in our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we thank you that your gospel of redemption and salvation is for everyone, and that it has spread to us here today. We are also grateful that we get to participate in spreading this Good News through the gifts and passions you've given to us. May we continue to see that each of our stories is significant and that you give us opportunities every day to be Good News to others. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, the Hero of the Story. Amen.*

**CREATIVE OPTION, CONTINUED**

music to making movies to creating designer clothing.

Once students have had 5 to 8 minutes to come up with their mission statements, invite willing volunteers to share theirs with the rest of the group. Be sure to applaud those who have the courage to share.

# PAUL'S MISSION

**Bible Verses:** Acts 13–14; 16–20; Romans 1; 3–6; 8; 12; 15; 1 Corinthians 1; 3; 5–6; 10; 12–13; 15–16; Galatians 1; 3; 5–6; 1 Thessalonians 1–5

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- God
- Paul
- Slave Woman
- Jailer

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story Bible*

**NARRATOR 1:** [Paul and Barnabas were] sent...by the Holy Spirit...[to preach the Good News to both Jews and Gentiles all over the Roman Empire.] [They sailed to many cities, and eventually reached the city of] Lystra, [where] there sat a man who...had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul...saw that he had faith to be healed and called out,

**PAUL:** "Stand up on your feet!"

**NARRATOR 1:** At that, the man jumped up and began to walk. When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they [mistook him and Barnabas for gods and offered] sacrifices to them. But when...Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they...rushed out into the crowd, shouting:

**PAUL:** "Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God..."

**NARRATOR 2:** Once [in Philippi, Paul and his companions] were met by a female slave who...earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul [for days], shouting:

**SLAVE WOMAN:** "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."

**NARRATOR 3:** Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to [her],

**PAUL:** “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!”

**NARRATOR 3:** At that moment the [evil] spirit left her. When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and...brought them before the [authorities], [who] ordered them to be... flogged...[Then] they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

**NARRATOR 1:** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted,

**PAUL:** “Don't harm yourself! We are all here!”

**NARRATOR 1:** The jailer...rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked,

**JAILER:** “What must I do to be saved?”

**PAUL:** “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

**NARRATOR 1:** Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him, [and] at that hour of the night...he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

**NARRATOR 2:** After this, Paul [traveled to Berea, Athens,] and [then] to Corinth. [In Corinth] he met a Jew named Aquila...[and his] wife Priscilla...because [Paul] was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. But when they [finally] opposed Paul and became abusive, he...said to them,

**PAUL:** “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

**NARRATOR 2:** One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision:

**GOD:** “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.”

**NARRATOR 3:** [Encouraged], Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God...Paul [then] set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout [Asia Minor]...strengthening all the disciples.

**NARRATOR 1:** [After some time, Paul returned to Ephesus.] Paul...spoke boldly [in the synagogue] there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them...refused

to believe.... So Paul left them...and [preached to others outside the synagogue]. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

**NARRATOR 2:** God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them...A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly...In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

**NARRATOR 3:** *Near the end of Paul's two-plus years in Ephesus, he wrote a very direct letter to the Christians in Corinth...[where the believers] were splintered into factions [over many issues]. Paul's letter spoke eloquently to issues they faced, concluding with a reminder that Jesus has triumphed over death.*

**NARRATOR 1:** *[He also wrote a famous letter to the Christians in Rome, which] mapped out foundational truths...and answered tough questions about sin, grace, the Jewish law and the never-ending power of God's love....After [leaving Ephesus], Paul set his sights on Jerusalem. He felt urgently compelled by God to return there, even though...hardship awaited him.*



# The Story, Teen

## CURRICULUM

### CHAPTER 29: Paul's Mission

Discover more from this story:

Acts 13–14; 16–20; Romans 1; 3–6; 8; 12; 15;  
1 Corinthians 1; 3; 5–6; 10; 12–13; 15–16;  
Galatians 1; 3; 5–6; 1 Thessalonians 1–5



## SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



## HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



## JOIN THE STORY

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > How could you courageously live out your faith?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# PAUL'S FINAL DAYS

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading This Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

Chapter 30 moves quickly through the remainder of Paul's story. The story moves around quite a bit geographically, and the plot is full of a variety of events. Because there is a lack of standalone "scenes" or explicit teaching points, it might be advantageous to focus your group's discussion on the overall scope of Paul's work and the recurring persecution and trials he faced, rather than any one "moment."

Also, the text of the story never explains how Paul died, though church history indicates he was probably executed in Rome at the hands of Roman Emperor Nero. It's likely that, as Paul predicted, his life ended in martyrdom for the sake of the gospel.

Don't miss the opportunity to encourage teens to connect today's story to not only their own, but also their

Chapter 30: "Paul's Final Days" can be found in Acts 20–23; 27–28; Ephesians 1–6; and 2 Timothy 1–4.

## ASK REPEATING QUESTIONS!

**Don't be afraid to address recurring themes from week to week.**

As you move through these stories, you may notice that similar themes emerge--themes like learning to trust God in hard times. You may also notice that some of the questions provided in the teacher script seem very similar, if not exactly the same. As you facilitate your group's discussion, welcome these repeating questions.

For example, "What practical steps can you take to trust God more?" can be a great takeaway question for a variety of different stories. In the same way, a question like "Based on this story, how would you describe God's character?" is a great way to gauge how teens are connecting each story to their view of God. As teens journey through the stories, questions like these have the potential to take on new meaning with each new story—especially if the teens continue to wrestle with them in their everyday lives.

Whether or not questions like these are provided in the script, find and reuse the questions that you feel your teens can resonate with and respond to the best.

corporate faith community's (small group, youth group, church) and the larger picture of the worldwide church today.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 30 Handout: Paul's Final Days** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 8 to 10 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **Paul's Mission Recap video** and the **Paul's Final Days video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** For each teen: 1 piece of paper, and markers or colored pencils
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

## ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major "scene" from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

## ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the "Creative Option" sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*Paul's Mission Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 30: Paul's Final Days Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Welcome back, everyone! I'm so glad you're here for another great time of going through God's Story together. Before we dive into one of our last parts of the Story today, let's take a moment to pray before we begin:

*God, thank you for giving us a reason to be excited and hopeful. Despite all the things in our lives that stress us out and bring us pain, we realize that you are a God who is so good to us and has great plans for us. We ask that during this time together, you'd help us to feel your presence as we engage with your Story. Open our minds and our hearts to see something new in it, and continue to build in us a desire to become more like Jesus. Amen.*

We have another very exciting story to look at today. But before we do, and to give us a little reminder, let's take a look back at what happened in our story last week. As always, this recap will move pretty quickly, so be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the *Paul's Mission Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video reminded you of where our story left off last week. The next video will give us a quick look at where our story is headed this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *Paul's Final Days*. Ready?

[CUE: Play the *Paul's Final Days* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 30: Paul's Final Days* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the *Additional Storytelling Options* section under *Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]



**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- How do you think Paul was able to endure the pain and trials he suffered for his beliefs?
- What can you learn from Paul's life about how to face difficult circumstances?
- Why do you think Paul was willing to walk into the face of danger?
- What character qualities do you see in Paul?
- Where in your life do you need courage like Paul's?
- What practical steps can you take to develop an attitude like Paul's?
- How would you sum up Paul's life and message?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *When you "finish the race," what do you want people to remember about you? What do you hope your legacy will be?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

Hopefully one of these questions will spark something creative in your mind. If you're having trouble finding a way to respond, try to approach it from another angle by creating something you never have before. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each ten a piece of paper and some markers or colored pencils. Explain that Paul's story of perseverance provides a great model for fearlessly living out a life of radical faith in Jesus. Tell them to think of their own lives, and invite them to think of what they want to be known for 50 years from now. Then ask this question:

"If in 50 years a movie was made about your life, what would the movie be about? What would your STORY be?"

After the teens have had a moment to think about it, tell them they're each going to create a movie poster for the movie about them. Encourage them to think of an image or two that would represent "scenes" in the movie. They should also think of a title and, if they'd like, a tagline (e.g., "One man's quest to be the best rodeo champion the world had ever seen"). They might also include reviews from movie critics, giving either a brief synopsis of the movie or film reviews (e.g., "A true under-dog story...Inspiring!"). Also have them think about which actors would best play their characters in their movies.

Give the teens about 15 minutes to create their movie posters. As always, remind them that there is no "right" way to do this activity and they should have fun with it.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for these very insightful responses. I learn so much from you all every week. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to finding out what happens in the last chapter of our Story next week!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, we thank you for stories like Paul's, which inspire us to press on in the face of adversity. We ask that, as we go from here, you'd continue to show us ways in which we can be more courageous and be the kinds of people you created us to be. Help us to hold on to the things that truly matter, and to let go of the things that only hinder us from living and loving the way you want us to. We thank you for Jesus and the power of his new life, through which all of this is possible. Amen.*

**CREATIVE OPTION, CONTINUED**

Once they've finished, invite volunteers to share their movie posters with the rest of the group. Then encourage teens to hang their posters in their bedrooms or their lockers at school, where they can be reminded of the stories they're living every day.

# PAUL'S FINAL DAYS

**Bible Verses:** Acts 20–23; 27–28; Ephesians 1–6; 2 Timothy 1–4

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Jesus
- Paul
- Rioter
- Commander
- Crowd (5+ people)
- Pharisees

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church...He said to them:

**PAUL:** "Compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that...prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task of...[sharing] the good news of God's grace..."

**NARRATOR 1:** [The elders] all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. Then they accompanied him to the ship. [The] voyage [toward Jerusalem began, making several stops on the way]. [When they had stopped in Caesarea...Paul's friends there began to fear for his life and] pleaded with [him] not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered,

**PAUL:** "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

**NARRATOR 2:** After this, [they continued]...up to Jerusalem....[Upon arriving], Paul was warmly received by the believers there....[But] some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting,

**RIOTER:** "Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place!"

**NARRATOR 2:** The whole city was aroused...Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple... While they were trying to kill him...the commander of the Roman troops...came up and arrested him, [ordering] that Paul be taken into the barracks. The crowd that followed kept shouting,

**CROWD:** "Get rid of him!"

**NARRATOR 3:** As they were shouting and [rioting],...the commander ordered that Paul...be flogged and interrogated in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there,

**PAUL:** "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"

**NARRATOR 3:** [When he said this, the soldiers] withdrew immediately, [and the] commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put...a Roman citizen in chains. The commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests...to assemble. Then he brought Paul...before them. Paul looked straight at the [Pharisees and Sadducees] and said,

**PAUL:** "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead."

**NARRATOR 1:** When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees [over this hotly debated issue of resurrection], and the assembly was divided. There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously.

**PHARISEES:** "We find nothing wrong with this man...What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"

**NARRATOR 1:** The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces...[So Paul was taken] away from them. The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said,

**JESUS:** "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

**NARRATOR 2:** The next morning [more than forty religious leaders] formed a conspiracy [to ambush and kill] Paul. But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions and said,

**PAUL:** "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him."

**NARRATOR 2:** So [the young man told the commander of the men who waited to ambush Paul the following day]. The commander...called two of his centurions and ordered them,

**COMMANDER:** "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea...tonight...so that [Paul] may be taken safely to Governor Felix."

**NARRATOR 2:** So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him [to Governor Felix] in Caesarea....Learning that [Paul] was [a Roman citizen], [Felix agreed to hear Paul's] case when [his] accusers [arrived]. Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in [the local] palace.

**NARRATOR 3:** *[So Paul was soon placed as a prisoner] on a ship to Rome. [After stopping in several ports along the way, the conditions became] dangerous,...[and at one point, when a] storm [had] continued raging [for days]...[the whole crew of the ship had] given up...hope of being saved. [So] Paul stood up before them and said:*

**PAUL:** "I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed...So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

**NARRATOR 1:** [Just as Paul had said, the ship ran ashore on an island] called Malta...[where the] chief official welcomed [Paul and his companions with] generous hospitality. After three months [there, they] put out to sea [again, and finally came to] Rome, [where Paul was greeted by other believers.]

**NARRATOR 2:** [Paul] was allowed to live by himself [there], with a soldier to guard him. For two whole years...[he] welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance...*During his final days, [Paul] wrote [several letters, including] one last...personal letter to Timothy, his co-worker and "son in the faith"...[in which he] pours out his heart [and bids farewell to his dear friend].*

**PAUL:** "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus...You...know all about my teaching, my way of life, [and] my...sufferings...For...the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith..."

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 30: Paul's Final Days

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:

Acts 20–23; 27–28;  
Ephesians 1–6; 2 Timothy 1–4



### SEE THE STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol  
that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR THE STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:

What were the key events from the story?

What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN THE STORY

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > When you "finish the race," what do you want people to remember about you?  
What do you hope your legacy will be?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>

# THE END OF TIME

## TEACHER INSIGHT

### Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

### Leading this Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

Chapter 31 is the final chapter of the study, and the story comes from the book of Revelation. As you might imagine, it is perhaps the most unusual of all the chapters in this study. As you will see, the StoryReader script is divided primarily amongst the narrators, the apostle John, the words of Jesus, and the others who appear in John's vision.

Revelation is written in the first person (John's point of view). In order to create a more cohesive and narrative form, some liberty is taken in the StoryReader by telling parts of John's vision from a third-person perspective. Before beginning, you may want to prepare your teens that there might be some unusual imagery in the story, but that if they focus on the message of the story, there could be a lot to learn from this final chapter.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 31: "The End of Time" can be found in Revelation 1–5; 19–22.

## REWARD YOUR TEENS AND LEADERS!

**Celebrate your journey through God's Story together.**

As your teens finish *The Story*, a great way to wrap up the time is to celebrate your teens and leaders to show their value throughout this journey, and also to celebrate what God did over the course of the 31 weeks. You could do this by throwing a party, organizing a worship gathering, or by hosting an open-mic event to share artwork and stories of life-change that have emerged over the course of the study.

You might also dovetail the final chapter's theme of hope for redemption and restoration into an opportunity for a service project in your community.

Whatever you decide to do, make sure to honor both your teens and leaders for their commitment to working through this experience with open minds and open hearts.



## TEACHER PLANNING

### SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 31 Handout: The End of Time** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 8 to 10 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **Paul's Final Days Recap video** and **The End of Time video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** For each teen: a 4" x 4" square of posterboard, markers, and adhesive tape
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

### StoryReader Assignment:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)**

### ADDITIONAL STORYTELLING OPTIONS

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens' experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers' Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)

*(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)*

### 1. TWO LENSES

- Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
- When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
- Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

- Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
- After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
- OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

### 3. STORYBOARD

- Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
- At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
- When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

### ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

*(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)*

**LESSON OUTLINE**

*Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:*

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

*Paul's Final Days Recap Video*

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

*Chapter 31: The End of Time Video*

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

*BREAK: Teens move to small groups*

5 minutes

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

# TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

## PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hello, everyone! Welcome back for the final installment of our journey through God's Story together. Before we dive into our last piece of storytelling, let's take a moment to pray together:

*God, you have brought us on such an incredible adventure through this Story—your Story—and we are so grateful. Thank you for all of these wonderful young people who've come along for the ride and taught me so much. I see you working in their lives every single week, and I'm so excited for them. We pray that during our time together today, you'd stir our imaginations to see you again in a brand-new way and allow us to dream big about the incredible future you have in store for us—your people. Amen.*

Our final story is perhaps the most interesting and exciting one yet. But before we get into it, let's give ourselves a little reminder about what happened in last week's chapter of the Story. As always, this recap will move pretty quickly, so be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the *Paul's Final Days Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you'd forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

## PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Hopefully, this video reminded you of where our story left off last week. The next video will give us a quick look at where our story is headed this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *The End of Time*. This part of the story is pretty different from anything we've heard so far, so you'll want to pay close attention. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The End of Time* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 31: The End of Time* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

## PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there's a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning.]

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher SCRIPT:** (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY****35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- John is writing to a church that's being heavily persecuted by the Roman Empire. What emotions do you think Christians felt when they first read John's revelation?
- How does John describe Jesus when he first sees him in the vision?
- What do you learn about God from his actions and descriptions in this chapter?
- What does this chapter reveal about what heaven will be like?
- Why do you think it's important to think about and set your hope on heaven?
- How does this vision of what will happen in the future impact how you live today?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- *In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?*
- *What areas of your life and our world need to be redeemed or renewed?*
- *How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?*

**Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!**

Hopefully one of these questions will spark something creative in your mind. If you're having trouble finding a way to respond, try to approach it from

**CREATIVE OPTION:**

Give each teen a square of posterboard and some markers. As you do, remind them that in John's vision, Jesus says, "I am making all things new!"

Tell them to think of their daily lives and the places and people they come in contact with on a regular basis (in their homes, their schools, their work, their friends, their family, etc.). Now out of all those places and people, have them think about where there lies brokenness, pain, suffering, or need for restoration. If necessary, ask them to make a list on one side of their square of posterboard. Then explain that their task is to pick ONE of the things on their list and imagine how that thing would look different if it were restored and redeemed back to the way it was originally intended to be.

Once they've had a moment to think, tell teens they'll have 10 minutes to draw, write, or graffiti a description of what that redeemed "piece" of their world would look like.

After they've had time to create their squares, invite any willing volunteers to show and explain theirs to the rest of the group. When they've finished, invite all the teens to attach their squares to a wall or large sheet of posterboard so all of the scenes create a mosaic of restoration and redemption. Display the combined piece of art in your meeting space or church for all to see, and let it serve as a reminder of God's promise to restore all things.

another angle by creating something you never have before. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

*(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)*

**[CUE: SHARE—**Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you for these incredible responses. You all did so well with a rather strange story. I am so impressed with how you've responded over the course of the Story.

I hope you've all enjoyed this journey through God's Story as much as I have—I hope we'll be able to experience it again sometime soon!

Let's pray as we end our time:

*God, what an amazing adventure it's been! We thank you, from the beginning to the very end, for showing us new things about you and about ourselves through this incredible Story, a Story that continues on as we continue to live our lives following you. Thank you for giving us hope for the future and grace for every day. We thank you, the Author of the greatest Story, for your hope, your grace, your peace, and your love. Amen.*



# THE END OF TIME

**Bible Verses:** Revelation 1–5; 19–22

**Important Details:** The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes approximately 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

**Characters:**

- Narrators 1, 2, and 3
- Jesus
- John
- Angel
- Four Creatures (4 people)
- Elder 1
- All

**Tweaks to the Text:**

Ellipses = words omitted within a sentence for the sake of conciseness. NOTE: No need to slow your reading when you see an ellipsis.

Words in brackets = added words for context

Words in italics = summary sections from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* Bible

**NARRATOR 1:** *Decades after the resurrection, the church [was] facing intense persecution. The Roman Empire [insisted] that Caesar [was] a god, and anyone who [wouldn't] bow down to him [could be killed]. John, the last surviving disciple, [had] a vision direct from heaven, [which began with a vision of Jesus, in all his glory. John wrote]:*

**JOHN:** I saw...someone like a son of man...The hair on his head was white like wool, [and] his face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet....Then he placed his right hand on me and said:

**JESUS:** "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death...Write, therefore, what you have seen: both what is now and what will take place later."

**NARRATOR 2:** *[After this, John saw] a series of mysterious and symbolic scenes. The curtains of heaven [were] rolled back, and John [got to see]...the final days of history when the utterly astounding glory of God and his plan for the world will be revealed.*

**JOHN:** I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said,

**ANGEL:** “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

**NARRATOR 3:** [The first thing John saw was] a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it...Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder...

**NARRATOR 1:** In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures...covered with eyes. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle...Day and night they never stop saying:

**FOUR LIVING CREATURES:** “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then...in the right hand of him who sat on the throne [was] a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And...a mighty angel [proclaimed] in a loud voice,

**ANGEL:** “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”

**JOHN:** But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ...Then one of the elders said to me,

**ELDER 1:** “See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

**NARRATOR 2:** Then [there was] a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne...He went and took the scroll from...him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, [every] creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea [praised him], saying:

**ALL:** “To...the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

**NARRATOR 3:** Then [John] saw...[the] dead...standing before the throne, and...[a] book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose names were not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

**JOHN:** Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

**ANGEL:** “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

**NARRATOR 1:** [Then] he who was seated on the throne said,

**JESUS:** “I am making everything new! It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give...the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children...”

**NARRATOR 1:** Then the angel showed [John] the river...of life...flowing from the throne of God...down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life...And the leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations.

**JOHN:** And when I had heard and seen [these things], I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me,

**ANGEL:** “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!”

**NARRATOR 1:** [Then, at end of John’s vision, Jesus offered a great promise to John and to God’s followers].

**JESUS:** “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End...Yes, I am coming soon.”

**JOHN:** Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

# The Story, Teen Curriculum

## CHAPTER 31: The End of Time

Discover more  
FROM THIS STORY:  
Revelation 1–5; 19–22



### SEE the STORY

DRAW: Create a simple image or symbol that you think best represents this story:



### HEAR the STORY

DRAW OR WRITE:  
What were the key events from the story?  
What was most meaningful to you from this story?



### JOIN the STORY .....

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response:

- > In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- > What areas of your life and our world need to be redeemed or renewed?
- > How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, or song here or on another sheet.

<< NEED MORE SPACE? USE THE BACK! >>