

=BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 25
Lamentations

Objects to have:

Sign for the new book: LAMENTATIONS
Jeremiah's Sadness

Drawings of a happy face and of a sad face, pasted back-to-back, and mounted on a stick
Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Review with the children the Bible book names learned thus far. Show the children the book of Lamentations in the Bible. Have them repeat the name with you. Show them that there are five chapters in this book. Explain to them that Jeremiah wrote down the words that God the Holy Spirit told him to write when the book of Lamentations was written.)

Do you remember who Jeremiah was? He was a preacher. He was a sad preacher because the people did not want to hear the message which he had to give them from God. Jeremiah preached in Jerusalem.

Telling the story:

Jerusalem was a very beautiful city. Jerusalem was a very important city. The temple was in Jerusalem. The temple was beautiful! Gold lined the walls of the rooms of the temple! There were beautiful curtains in the temple; with needle and thread the people who made the curtains sewed pretty pictures in them. The furniture in the temple was covered with gold.

At one time the Jewish people had been happy to go to the temple. At the temple they heard more about God. At the temple they told God their sins, and they got forgiven when they brought their animal sacrifices.

In the city of Jerusalem the people had nice houses in which to live. The people had enough to eat and enough to wear. It was God's people who lived in Jerusalem. God took care of His people. (Show the happy face.) How happy were the children who lived in Jerusalem! They laughed and played each day. They did the jobs that they were told to do. The mothers and the daddies were content with their homes and their jobs.

The people in Jerusalem were so busy having a good time and enjoying all the wonderful things they had that on some days they forgot to thank God for these wonderful things. On some days they did not pray. On some days they did not listen to God's Word. God had said to the people in Jerusalem, "You must not have any other gods; worship only Me. Love Me. I am the true and living God; I love you. I am the One Who loves and cares for you. Go to the temple, My house, regularly. There confess your sins. Remember My commandments. In everything, obey Me."

The people disobeyed Him. They were doing wrong things. They saw other people bowing down before statues. (Start to turn your smiling face so that the frowning face slowly becomes visible.) They thought they would like to do that, too. They saw other people drinking cocktails and wine and whiskey and beer. They decided they would do that, too. They saw men and ladies being romantic to ladies and men who were not their wives and husbands. They decided that was all right to do, too. And do you know what else God's people started to do? They began worshipping other things called gods. They bowed down to statues, and they prayed to statues. They were also getting drunk. They were also getting divorces and marrying other people.

God said to His preacher Jeremiah, "Tell My people that they are doing wrong. Tell them to confess their sins. Tell them to do right." Most of the people would not listen to Jeremiah. They kept on doing wrong. God said to

Jeremiah, “Stand in the door of the temple. Tell My people about their sins. Tell them that I am going to let them be punished. Terrible things are going to happen to them because they are not sorry for their sins.” The people still would not listen. They kept on praying to statues. They kept on sinning. God said, “Tell them that the enemy army is coming.”

The enemy army did come. The enemy soldiers came on their horses. They came with their swords and their spears. They came with their fire, and they came with their wicked hearts. The enemy army came from another country into Jerusalem.

God did not stop the enemy army; He let it come. God had to punish His people for the wrong that they were doing. How terribly sad it made God feel to have to do this! He loved His people. He wished that they loved Him, and that they would trust Him so that He could make them happy always.

The enemy soldiers went into Jerusalem. They tore down and burned the temple. Houses were broken into by the enemy, and the houses were burned. Mommies and daddies and young men and ladies were carried away as captives by the army. Wicked enemy men put their hands on young men and ladies and on boys and girls. They treated them badly. Still God’s people did not trust Him to help them, so God could not help them. What a sad time! (Hold up the sad face.) No longer were there nice houses. No longer were there clothes enough to wear. No longer was there food enough to eat.

That is what the book of Lamentations is about. Jeremiah tells us in the book of Lamentations how torn up and burned Jerusalem was. Jeremiah was lamenting, he was crying, about the broken-up condition of Jerusalem. In the book of Lamentations Jeremiah wrote how sad he was that the people did not listen to his preaching. He was so sad because they made fun of him and would not do what God wanted them to do.

(Turn the happy face so that the children can see it.) There was one happy thought that Jeremiah had. He remembered, “God still loves us. He is still merciful to us. If He did not love us and was not merciful to all of us, He would have had us all killed. Everybody sins. I know that God still loves us. I know that God still loves me,” thought Jeremiah.

(Put down the stick with the two faces on it.) Here is a pretend story; this story is not in the book of Lamentations:

Sam had been told not to go away from home. His mother said, “You may go outside to play, Sam, but you must stay in our yard.” Sam was happy to be able to go outside to play. The sun was shining brightly. He had not been able to play outside for many days because of the rain and then the snow and the cold. He gathered up his trucks and went to the spot in the backyard where he was allowed to play in the dirt with his trucks. He played for a while, happily obeying his mother.

Then he heard some people talking and laughing. He looked up from the dirt where he was moving his trucks back and forth, loading them and unloading them with dirt. He saw Jimmy and Ben playing in a yard two houses away. Jimmy and Ben saw Sam. Sam waved at them and called, “Come play with me. I’m playing with my cars and trucks in the dirt.”

Jimmy and Ben called, “We can’t. You come play with us.” Sam thought a minute, and then he decided that he would go play with Jimmy and Ben. So, he left his yard and went to play with Jimmy and Ben. What was he doing? Yes, he was disobeying! He thought he would not stay long and that way it would be all right if he went. Was it all right? No!

Pretty soon he heard his mother calling, “Sam, come home.” Sam picked up his trucks, and he hurried home. He met his mother at their back door. His mother said, “Sam, I thought I told you to stay here in our yard.”

Sam nodded his head. His mother had told him to stay in their yard. “Sam, you disobeyed me. Now I have to punish you. You have to come in the house and stay there the rest of the day.” How sad Sam was! Nobody likes to be punished. Sam did not like to have to come into the house. (Pick up your stick with the sad face showing.)

He had disobeyed, so he had to be punished. He looked at Mother's face. Mother's face was not a smiling face. It was stern and frowning. Sam might even have wondered if his mother loved him. She did love him; she loved him so much that she wanted him to be a good boy, and to grow up to be the right kind of man. She had to teach him to obey.

After Sam got into the house, he sat in a chair, where he could look out the window. It was so pretty outside. He had been having so much fun out there. He wished he were out in his own backyard playing with his cars and trucks. Sam was lamenting the fact that he was being punished.

Then he began to feel very sorry that he had disobeyed. He got down from his chair, and he ran to his mother. He said, "Mother, I am very sorry that I disobeyed you."

Mother put her arms around Sam. She said, "I love you, Sam. I forgive you. It's all right now." Sam felt so much better because he knew that his mother still loved him. He was sad that he had disobeyed her and had to be punished. He was happy, however, that Mother still loved him. He decided that he would obey Mother from then on. (Show the happy face.)

Let's you and me decide that whatever we should do, we will do it. Whatever God wants us to do, we will do. Let's decide we will always obey Mother and Daddy and Teacher and anybody else who is in authority over us. Let's decide that we will obey God all our lives. Let's come to church every week of our lives. Let's decide to do what the Bible tells us to do, and not have to have lamentations in our lives.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Lamentations 5:21, "Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."