

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND



**JUNIOR
TEACHER'S
HANDBOOK**

Book 2

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

**SABBATH SCHOOL
TEACHER'S
HANDBOOK**

JUNIOR GRADE
BOOK 2

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LESSON 1

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

GOD'S PLAN

Catechism No. 7 and No. 8

Scripture Text - Matthew 6: 25 - 30; Genesis 24: 1 - 27; 2 Kings 5: 1 - 19;
Acts 8: 26 - 40; Romans 8: 28

AIM OF LESSON

To show God's planning and provision in the lives of some Bible characters and in our own.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Tell the pupils that God's creation and providence will be studied in greater detail in later lessons. Today's lesson should help them to understand how God carries out His eternal plan (His decrees) in creation and providence.

Ask the pupils what happens when people buy a pet. Do they just stop at the pet shop instead of the sweet shop on the way home one day and buy a snake instead of a Flake? No! No matter what kind of pet someone would like, quite a lot of planning has to be done in advance. People have to decide what kind of pet they want and whether they can provide for all its needs (e.g. if they live in a small flat at the top of a tower-block it would not be a good idea to have a large dog). Every type of pet needs certain things - ask the pupils to suggest some. (A home of a suitable size and in a suitable location; 'furniture' in the form of items like bedding, sawdust, food and drink containers and toys; food and water - provided regularly; a clean environment - which someone will be responsible for keeping, and companionship - from people and/or other animals of its own kind). Children must also be sure that they can afford to buy, house and feed a pet, and of course ask their parents' permission before buying one. (see pupils' worksheet No. 1)

When we think about the amount of planning that it takes to look after one or two small pets, it helps us to see how great the plans of God are, for not only does He look after the whole universe, He created it in the first place.

1. God's plan in creation (See pupils' worksheet No. 2)

Ask the pupils to think of some examples of how God's plan can be seen in creation. (The stars, planets and moons, moving in their set paths without colliding or wandering off course; the seasons of our world continually following one another in sequence; the water-cycle or rainfall, evaporation and more rainfall; plants growing, bearing fruit and scattering seeds to begin the process all over again; insects, birds and animals interacting with one another while each following its own life-cycle.) Nowadays we can see many excellent wildlife films on television and, although the presenters of these programmes often refer to the theory of evolution, we know from the Bible that it is God who has planned it all and has given each animal the ability to look after its young and other complex ways of behaviour.

2. God's plan in providence

'Providence' is not a word which is used often in our day-to-day conversation but if the last three letters of this word are covered, it leaves a word that is common. Ask the pupils what that word is. God's providence simply means that God will always provide His people with all that they need.

Read Matthew 6: 25 - 30.

God's providence, or providing, does not just apply to our physical needs (food, shelter, clothes, etc.) but to all our other needs as well. There are many people in the Bible in whose lives God's planning and provision can be seen in a special way. In the case of some of these people God's plan can be seen at work all through the different stages of their lives. Ask the pupils to think of examples. (Joseph, Moses, David, Paul). In some other people God's plan can be seen being worked out at one special time in their lives.

(a) Abraham's servant

Look up Genesis 24: 1 - 27. Tell (or ask the class to tell) the story briefly. What did the servant do in verses 12 - 14? Look at verses 15 - 20. Did God answer the servant's prayer? Did the servant have to wait long? (v. 15). God had planned it so that Abraham's servant was in exactly the right place at the right time and as soon as the servant prayed for help, God was ready to answer him and the right wife was provided for Isaac.

(b) Naaman's little slave girl

Look up 2 Kings 5: 1 - 19. Again recap the story briefly. Ask the pupils how they think they would feel if some foreign soldiers came to their house, took them away to a different country and made them slaves. Ask if they think they would feel like serving a master or mistress helpfully and faithfully. The girl in this story did just that. She made the best of her circumstances, even though they were not pleasant and served God not only by doing her work well but by being the means of her master coming to know God.

(c) Philip

Look up Acts 8: 26 - 40 and recap the story. The story of Philip shows that obedience can play an important part in helping God's plan to be carried out. Philip went where God wanted him to go and approached the person to whom God wanted him to speak. Through his obedience, Philip was able to help the Ethiopian eunuch who was searching for God.

APPLICATION

The stories of these three Bible characters show how God's plan and providence are always linked. God always plans everything so that our needs will be provided for at the right time and if we are obedient to God's will as we know it from the Bible, God will help us to be in the right place at the right time to help others. We must be like the servant girl and do our best to serve God wherever we live or work. God's plans are always good. We read in the Shorter Catechism answer that everything has been fore-ordained (or planned in advance) by God 'for His own glory'. (Romans 8: 28).

Ask the pupils to complete No. 3 on their worksheet either in class or at home.

LESSON 2

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

WHAT IS THE WORK OF CREATION?

Catechism No. 9

Scripture Text - Hebrews 11:3; Genesis 1; 2 Peter 3: 4 - 5; Psalm 33:6-9.

AIM OF LESSON

To show that in the beginning God created all things from nothing and created them perfectly.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. God's work of creation has been completed. It was carried out without the use of any pre-existent materials.
2. God alone can tell us about it because no man was there to see it created and even if a human being had been there he could not have understood fully what he saw apart from God's own interpretation. (Job 38: 3 - 6). Our difficulty in grasping it may not be due so much to our limitations but to the fact that we are sinful and therefore lack faith.
3. Creation was sudden and instantaneous. (Ps. 33:6-9). There is certainly no thought here of delay or a trial and error process, or a gradual step by step fulfilment.
4. When God created living things He chose to use previously created inorganic substances for the bodies of these creatures. Thus He commanded the waters to bring forth marine creatures and birds on the fifth day. The earth was commanded by God to bring forth trees but this does not imply a gradual growth process any more than does God's use of the same earth to bring forth the full-grown body of a man (i.e. Adam).

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask pupils to name some things they have made lately, e.g. a paper aeroplane, a sock doll, a puppet or a mask. Discuss how it was made and from what it was made. Try to help them understand that provided you know how and have the materials to use, it is easy to make something. Imagine what it would be like if there were no paper, no wood, no coal, no oil, nothing. That's how it was at the beginning of time.

Refer pupils to points 1 and 2 of their worksheet and suggest that they try out these ideas

at home.

Outline

The very first verse in the Bible tells us that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. This was the start of all things. Before this there was nothing at all but God Himself. The first Chapter in Genesis tells us how the world came into being as we know it.

Ask one pupil to read what took place on the first day of creation and discuss. Continue similarly with each day of creation.

DAY 1

God said "Let there be light" (vs 3 - 5). A period of darkness followed by a period of light made one whole day.

DAY 2

God said "Let there be a firmament" (vs 6 - 8). This is the air all around the earth or the earth's atmosphere. It was made by God to separate the waters above the earth from the waters on the earth.

DAY 3

And God said "Let the waters be gathered together dry land appear". And God said "Let the earth" (vs 9 - 12).

The seas and land masses cover all the world's surface. Ask the pupils to name as many continents, oceans and seas as possible.

Ask the pupils what we do when we want something to grow. We either sow or plant the way the farmers do. Ask them if God did that. No. God said 'bring forth' to the earth, and trees, grass, herbs, etc. appeared. (Ps. 33:6-9).

DAY 4

And God said "Let there be lights" (vs 14-19).

Discuss the basic reasons for the creation of the sun, moon and stars. (Signs to mark Seasons, Lights, etc.)

DAY 5

God said "Let the waters bring forth" (vs 20-23). God created all the sea

creatures from the blue whale to the tiny shellfish and they were all different in shape, size and colour. God also made the winged creatures. Note God's command to His creatures (v 22).

DAY 6

And God said "Let the earth bring forth cattle and creeping things"
(vs 24-31).

Discuss with the pupils the wonder of the animal creation - that each animal is suited to the climate or environment where it lives. Ask pupils to suggest examples of this - e.g., flatfish have body colours to match the ocean bottom. The spotted fawn or the white-tailed deer is hard to see because its colours resemble those of its woodland home. (This is called protective camouflage.)

Lastly God said "Let us make a man in our image". Ask the pupils how man was special and different from the other creatures.

1. He was made in God's likeness.
2. He was given dominion over the other living creatures.

CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION

We believe that God created the world in six days. At this stage ask the pupils to complete Nos. 3 and 4 in their worksheet. Hebrews 11:3 tells us how we believe this (Complete No. 5). Discuss with the pupils the fact that much teaching today suggests that it took millions of years for the world to become as it is now. However, God is not limited in time the way we are and all things are possible with Him. Emphasise that the Catechism teaches that creation was 'all very good'. Everything that comes from God is good. Complete No. 6 on the pupils' worksheet and discuss this.

ANSWERS

- (a) God created all things
- (b) In the beginning
- (c) God has always existed
- (d) God has power to create from nothing
- (e) God spoke and it was done

LESSON 3

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

HOW GOD CREATED MAN

Catechism No. 10

Scripture Text - Genesis 1: 26 - 28; Genesis 2: 19; Psalm 8: 4 - 8; Genesis 9: 6.

AIM OF LESSON

To teach that God created man and woman in His image to rule over creation.

BACKGROUND NOTES

As part of creation, man reflects the attributes of God but as the only creature made in God's image, he mirrors the Creator in a special way. His total personality can know, respond to, communicate with, enjoy and self-consciously glorify God in his behaviour as well as in his attributes. When God said, "Let us make man in our image", He created a person with body, soul, mind and emotions all mysteriously united.

Useful references: CALVIN, J. Commentary on Genesis;
WILLIAMSON, G. I. The Shorter Catechism Vol. 1.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Last week we looked at the world which God had created. (Ask some questions to see how well pupils have remembered the lesson). Now we consider the creation of man and woman more closely. In No. 1 of the pupils' worksheet we have the word outline. Ask the pupils to turn to Genesis 1: 26. Ask them to fill in the answers, drawing their attention to the fact that this outline is of God's plan as we have seen it in Lesson 1 (Catechism Nos. 7 & 8). Now ask the pupils to do Nos. 2 and 3. Note in No. 3 the command given to man and the position he had over the rest of creation.

1. He was to subdue the earth - to cultivate it, grow crops on it and use the animals to help. For example, horses and oxen could be used to plough, trees could be used in building houses - all part of God's plan.
2. He was made: (see pupils' worksheet No. 4)

- (i) in God's image Look at the illustration of a boy looking in a mirror. He is seeing his image, a copy or reflection of himself. Explain to the pupils that being made in God's image does not mean that we are like Him in physical appearance but reflect the attributes of God. For example, our love for others reflects God's love though poorly.
- (ii) in knowledge, righteousness and holiness Complete part 4 of the pupils' worksheet. Help the pupils to see that Adam 'named' the animals and 'named' his wife, showing that man's knowledge was greater than that of the animals.
Man was also created without sin - righteous and set apart for a special purpose - to reflect God's glory. It should be pointed out that this is describing man as God created him and not as he is today. After man had sinned God had to command him "you shall be holy; for I am holy". (Lev. 11: 44b). When man sinned he became a very poor reflection of God's image.
- (iii) with dominion over the creatures Adam was set above the animal creation. Ask the pupils to compare Genesis 2: 19; Genesis 1: 28 (latter part of verse) and Psalm 8: 6 - 8. Complete No. 5 on the worksheet. This should give opportunity to discuss the fact that the theory of evolution suggests that man is only another animal. Compare this with what we have learned today about the nature of man.

CONCLUSION

Move to No. 6 of the pupils' worksheet. Man is made in God's image so human life is very precious, so precious that God has commanded that anyone who commits murder must be put to death. At this point ask the pupils to fill in the blanks in their worksheet. Draw attention to the fact that the reason given in Genesis 9:6 why murder is such a serious sin is that "In the image of God He made man". To murder is to destroy someone who is a reflection of God. Encourage the pupils to discuss the attitude which our society has towards murder and the murderer.

APPLICATION

We are very precious to God. Man is given a place of responsibility in God's world which is not given to any other creature. He is "made a little lower than the angels" and crowned with "glory and honour".

Ask the pupils to memorise the metrical version of Psalm 8: 4 - 5.

LESSON 4

Studies in the Psalms

PRAISING GOD

Scripture Text - Psalm 147

AIM OF LESSON

To show some of the many reasons we have for praising God.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Ask the class to imagine that their mothers were really busy one Saturday - perhaps there was a lot of washing, baking or ironing to be done - and their mothers asked them to tidy their own rooms. They were feeling helpful that day and tidied their rooms well. They also tidied and cleaned the living-room without being asked. What sort of reaction would they expect from their mothers? Most people would like to be thanked and to be told that they had done a good job. They might expect to feel rather disappointed if their mothers didn't seem very interested in what they had done. Most of us like people to notice the good things we have done and to thank and praise us.

Today's lesson is about praising God. Praising involves recognising the good things people do and thanking them for doing them. God does many things for us - some things we have asked Him to do and some we have not. Ask the class if they always notice what He has done and thank Him. God does not need to be encouraged in the same way that we do but we appear ungrateful when we do not show interest in all He has done for us.

Read Psalm 147 This psalm gives us lots of reasons for praising God.

Reasons for praising God

1. In nature

If we look at the world around us, we will see many reasons for praising God. Ask the class to think of a few examples. (He has given us beautiful sunrises, sunsets, starry nights, wonderful oceans, seas, lakes, rivers, lovely flowers, delicious fruits and magnificent trees. He has made a wonderful variety of animals of which some are tiny and others are huge but they all know how to look after themselves and their young and

they are all beautiful in their own way.) Psalm 147 gives three examples of things we can praise God for in the natural world.

(a) God has made and controls the universe (v 4)

If we look up at the stars on a clear night it would be hard to count them all and if we had a telescope we could see more. When we realise that there are even more stars beyond the reach of our strongest telescopes, we can see that counting the stars is an impossible task for us. Although the universe is huge, God knows how many stars there are and can even call them all by name.

(b) God is in control of all the weather (vs 8, 16 - 18)

We see in these verses how God sends clouds, rain, snow, frost, hail, wind and thaw. We cannot control the weather any more than we can count the stars but God is so powerful that it only takes a word from Him for the weather to change.

(c) God supplies the birds and animals with food (v 9)

God has provided the means for the birds and animals to find their food.

Complete part 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

2. In our lives

We have also reasons to praise God for what He has done in our lives.

(a) God builds up the church (vs 2, 12 - 13)

God doesn't leave the church to struggle on alone. He is there to strengthen and build it up.

(b) God gathers the outcasts of Israel (v 2)

This psalm may have been written after the people of Israel returned from captivity in Babylon: it tells us how God had brought back to Jerusalem those who had once been cast out of it. We who are Christians can praise God that He has brought us back into His family by forgiving our sins through Jesus Christ.

(c) God heals the broken-hearted (v 3)

Even when sad things happen in our lives, God is there to care and to bring something good out of it all.

- (d) God is great in power and His understanding has no limit (v 5)
There are many things that we cannot understand and things that are too hard for us to do but God has no limits at all.
- (e) God protects those who trust in Him (vs 6, 11)
God will not help people who are satisfied with their own strength but He will always help those who depend on Him.
- (f) God satisfies our physical needs (v 14)
God will meet our needs as well as those of the animals. Matthew 10: 31 - 'Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.' He is the only One who can bring peace to our land but even if we do not have peace in the worldly sense, God can bring His peace to our hearts (John 14:27).
- (g) God has revealed His Word to us (v 19)
God has spoken to us not only through the words of the Bible but also through His Son Jesus (John 1: 1 - 3).

Complete part 2 of the pupils' worksheet.

Question 3 on the pupils' worksheet can be completed in class or at home.

APPLICATION

We have many reasons for praising God and Psalm 147 reminds us of these. We must remember to praise Him, not only when we are singing this psalm but every day of our lives.

LESSON 5

Studies in the Psalms

ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAISE GOD

Scripture Text - Psalm 98

AIM OF LESSON

To consider God's salvation and respond with praise.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The circumstances in which this psalm was written are not known but it was probably written to celebrate the deliverance of Israel from Babylonian captivity. Quite a few statements are obviously quoted from Isaiah 40 - 66 where the constant theme is this deliverance. Compare verse 1 with Isaiah 59:16 and verse 2 with Isaiah 52:10. Psalm 98 is characterised by a tone of exuberant praise to God for His righteousness in delivering His people.

- Verses 1 - 3 - speak of God's salvation:
 - Verse 1 - wrought by His almighty power,
 - Verse 2 - revealed in His faithfulness to His Covenant with Abraham,
 - Verse 3 - seen by the surrounding nations.
- Verses 4 - 6 - call upon all the earth to respond with praise to Him as the King.
- Verses 7 - 9 - call upon the whole world to praise God because one day He will judge the world with righteousness.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the pupils to suggest occasions when they like to sing; for example, when they are happy or when they have something to celebrate. Ask if they can think of a time when God gave the Israelites something to sing about.

Outline

The 98th Psalm is a psalm of singing and thanksgiving to God and the story in the early chapters of Ezra (summarised below) could be used to illustrate it.

The children of Israel (Jews) had been captive in Babylon for seventy years and,

although the prophet Jeremiah had told them that they would be released, it seemed as if God had forgotten them. He had not. He had planned their return and brought it about in a most unexpected way.

When Cyrus became King of Babylon, God put it into his heart to allow the Jews to go back to Jerusalem. (Discuss how unexpected this must have been, since he was a heathen king). Even more surprising, he offered to help them rebuild the Temple which had been destroyed in Jerusalem.

The Jews were astounded. Excited meetings were held in the streets and the people danced and sang praise to God. Poets wrote songs of praise, for example, possibly this psalm and Psalm 126. These events were all the more wonderful because 150 years before Cyrus was born, Isaiah had mentioned him by name and had prophesied what he would do. It was 800 km from Babylon to Jerusalem (use a map to show this if possible) but the young and fit people made the journey. King Cyrus helped them by returning their plundered treasures. Five thousand people returned to Jerusalem and as they travelled they sang praise to the Lord.

When they reached their own country they found the Temple and their houses in ruins. The first thing they did was to build an altar to God, where they offered sacrifices of thanksgiving. They spent about a year making places to live and then laid the foundations of the new Temple. As soon as the foundations were completed the people spent several days singing and praising God as their Saviour, King and Judge.

Complete No. 1 of the pupils' worksheet.

Continuation - Psalm 98 shows three aspects of God.

- (1) The Lord as Saviour The Lord brought His people back to their own land. In doing so He made known His salvation, remembered His loving kindness and revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.
- (2) The Lord as King This salvation was only possible because the Lord of the Covenant is also King. His unaided 'right hand and His holy arm' gained the victory. (A pupil could read Ezra 1: 1.) God caused the King of Persia to send a proclamation whereby the Israelites would be returned to their own land. God revealed Himself as the supreme ruler over the nations. The psalmist, therefore, calls upon all the earth to shout joyfully before the King, the Lord.

- (3) The Lord as Judge The world and all who dwell in it are called upon to praise the Lord because one day He is coming to judge them. This judgement will be with righteousness because the Judge is righteous. Here is further cause for praise.

Complete No. 2 of the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

This psalm is timeless. Each time a person comes to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ there is further evidence that God has not forgotten His promise to the descendants of Abraham. One day 'every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath' (Isaiah 45: 23). The psalmist recognised the Lord as King, as well as Saviour. The Lord has not only saved His people but He is ruling and defending them, subduing and conquering all His and their enemies. This should give us further cause for praise as we enjoy the security of His rule. Ask a pupil to read Romans 8: 28. Since He is in control of all things His promised coming as Judge is certain. There is much reason for praise knowing that 'there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus' (Romans 8: 1). When we reflect upon God's salvation the words of Psalm 98 are well suited to be used for our response of praise. Ask the pupils if they remember these things when they sing in church. Ask if they believe in Jesus as their Saviour and thus know God's salvation personally and look forward to His coming as Judge.

Part 3 of the pupils' worksheet may be completed in class or at home.

LESSON 6

Studies in the Psalms

THANKSGIVING FOR HELP AND DELIVERANCE

Scripture Text - Psalm 118

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God's people should thank Him for the help and protection He gives and especially for Jesus Christ who saves us from our sins.

BACKGROUND NOTES

This is a Psalm of praise and its theme is outlined in the first verse and repeated in the last verse (v 29) - "Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good! For His mercy endures forever". This theme of thanksgiving can be applied to numerous situations in which the Lord had shown His never failing love and protection for His people. As a result commentators differ in their opinion as to what specific incident this psalm refers. Kidner, in the Tyndale O.T. Commentary on the Psalms, believes that this psalm may have pictured the rescue of Israel at the Exodus and the eventual journey's end at Mount Zion. However, Leupold sees this psalm as corresponding with that used in the celebrations when the walls of Jerusalem had just been completed, after almost a century of delay, in the days of Nehemiah (444 B.C.). Here special mention was made of thanksgiving (Nehemiah 12:27). (In this context, "I" in the psalm would refer to the whole congregation of Israel). The references to other scriptural passages, including a number of psalms, are frequent, a fact which points to the comparatively late date of the psalm and to the familiarity of the author with the Psalter as it was then in use. There is general agreement that it is a processional song and can be divided into two sections:-

- (1) Thanksgiving of the assembly as it approaches the Temple vs 1-18.
- (2) The blessing experienced by those within the Temple vs. 19-28.

It is also agreed that the psalm is Messianic, especially the section beginning at v. 19. Part of it was chanted by the crowd as Jesus rode into Jerusalem prior to His death (Mark 11:9-10). The cornerstone referred to in verse 22 is also mentioned in Isaiah 28:16. It probably refers to the stone cut by the architect which, when lowered into place as the last stone, holds the whole building together.

In Matthew 21:42 Jesus quotes this 22nd verse and refers to Himself as the Cornerstone. Further references to Christ as the Cornerstone can be found in Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; and 1 Peter 2:6-8.

Useful references: ELLISON, H. L. The Psalms, S.U. Bible Study Books;
 KIDNER, D. Psalms 73-150. Tyndale O.T. Comms. IVP 1975;
 LEUPOLD, H.C. Exposition of the Psalms. Evangelical Press 1977.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the children if they have ever had to do something really difficult which they dreaded and kept putting off. (A difficult homework? Giving their room a long overdue tidy?) Ask them how they felt when they had finished the job.

Outline

Illustrate this psalm using the story of Nehemiah. A map of the area, showing Jerusalem and Babylon would be useful. Putting off doing something difficult is not new. The children of Israel were guilty of it many times. One such occasion occurred during the life of Nehemiah. Many years earlier God had been angry with His people. He allowed them to be taken captive into Babylon and the city of Jerusalem destroyed. A number of years later the Babylonian empire was overthrown and they were allowed to return home. One of the first things they did was to begin rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem. Nearly one hundred years later they still had not completed the walls of the city. A city's walls were a sign of its strength. To have no walls meant that Jerusalem and the people, were weak and unprotected. It was a disgrace!

Nehemiah believed God wanted him to lead the people to rebuild these walls. It was a long and difficult task. They were in danger of being attacked while doing the job. They had to work with one hand and hold a weapon in the other to protect themselves but God watched over them. When the work was completed they celebrated and sang a song of thanksgiving to God. It may have been this very psalm or one similar to it. They thanked God for helping them rebuild Jerusalem's walls and for protecting them. Complete No. 1 on pupils' worksheet.

The people sang about how their city, which had been laughed at, (the stone which the

builders rejected v 22) had become strong and was admired (the chief cornerstone v 22). (Explain "cornerstone" from the Background Notes.)

This part of the psalm can also be found in the New Testament where Jesus is called the "chief cornerstone". Complete No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

When the city of Jerusalem did not have any walls, people laughed at it. It did not have any protection, therefore it was weak. God helped the people of Israel to build up their city's walls again and people from other cities could see that it was really a strong city and those inside it were safe.

When Jesus lived on earth people laughed at Him when He said He was God. To them He looked just like any ordinary man. God showed that Jesus really was His Son by raising Him from the dead. Although people had laughed at Him, He was, and is, the chief cornerstone or keystone - the only way by which we can come to God.

Just as the Israelites thanked God for giving them a safe city where they could live, we must thank Him for giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who will take away our sin and keep us safe if we trust and obey Him. Complete No. 3 on the pupils' worksheet in class or at home.

LESSON 7

The beginning of all things

THE FIRST CREATURES

Scripture Text - Genesis 1:20-25

AIM OF LESSON

To show some of God's characteristics to be seen in His creation of the animals.

BACKGROUND NOTES

In teaching about creation it is important to remember that we want the children to consider the power and care of God the creator. We must try not to become involved in arguments about evolution versus creation, although we must be prepared to give a response if the matter arises. God the creator and sustainer of the universe is an awesome figure.

Before the days of scientific investigation, people thought that living things could be produced from non-living, because it was supposed that decaying meat bred maggots and mud produced worms. However in 1668 it was demonstrated that maggots were not derived simply from decomposing meat but rather from the eggs of flies. When the meat was protected from flies, no maggots appeared. Scientific findings agree with the Bible account of the order of creation set out in Genesis - plant life, marine life, air life, land animals and lastly human life.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Begin by telling the following short story.

Miss Jones had a problem. On her desk lay two pieces of knitting. They were both of red wool on yellow knitting needles and she didn't know whose they were. All the children in her class were knitting scarves for themselves but some had chosen red wool and others had chosen blue. Miss Jones looked again at the two pieces of work and was puzzled. Then she remembered that only Joanne and Susan had wanted yellow knitting needles so she knew that the two pieces belonged to them. But which was which? As she thought of Joanne with her bright, clean face and hands and her tidy hair, and Susan with her untidy hair and dirty nails, she began to look more closely at the knitting. One piece was quite long and neat, clean and well knitted, while the other was just the opposite, dirty, with one

or two holes in it, untidy and quite short. Miss Jones sighed and thought to herself, "Well, I know now which knitting is Joanne's and which is Susan's."

How did Miss Jones know which knitting belonged to each girl?

Outline

Read the story of the creation of the creatures in Genesis 1:20-25. Ask pupils to name the different types of creatures mentioned (sea creatures, birds, cattle, creeping things, beasts of the earth). Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet. Note that each type of creature was created "according to its kind" - they did not evolve from each other but were individually created.

Answers to crossword:

Across -	1. DOG	5. BULL	6. STORK	7. SPARROW
	8. EAGLE	9. DEER	10. WOLF.	
Down -	2. OWL	3. OSTRICH	4. LEOPARD	5. BEAR
	6. SWALLOW			

Ask the pupils what command God gave to these creatures (v. 22). The whole earth and sea and air were to be filled with these creatures. Note how God felt about His creation. It was all very good. At this stage everything God created was perfect.

Ask the pupils if God created these creatures and then deserted them. Read from Psalm 104 to see how God cares for His creation. Complete No 2. on pupils' worksheet.

ANSWERS - springs, birds, grass and vegetables, wild goats, rock badgers, night.

APPLICATION

Miss Jones was able to tell which piece of knitting belonged to each girl because of its appearance. God's creation reveals much to us about our God. Ask the pupils what we can learn about God from these verses. Allow pupils to answer. Then complete No 3. on pupils' worksheet.

ANSWERS - powerful, good, perfect, order, caring.

As we look at creation and see these characteristics of God, it should lead us to praise Him for His creation and for His provision of all our need, as the psalmist did in Psalm 104. See No. 4 on pupils' worksheet.

LESSON 8

The beginning of all things

THE FIRST SABBATH

Scripture Text - Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God kept the Sabbath Day and, following His example, we must do likewise.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Names used for the Sabbath
 - (a) Sabbath Day: The name 'Sabbath' comes from a word which means 'to cease'; thus on the Sabbath Day we cease from work.
 - (b) The Lord's Day: This designation appears in Rev. 1:10: it was widely accepted as a name for the Christian Sabbath.
 - (c) Sunday: Although used universally this name is not biblical, but pagan. It means Sun-day, the day named in honour of the sun, one of the many pagan gods.
2. Why do Christians observe the Sabbath on the first day of the week and not on the seventh as had been the practice until the time of Christ?

The Sabbath, when first instituted, was on the seventh day as a remembrance that on that day God had finished His "Work of creation" (Gen. 2:2). God has now completed an even greater work, the "Work of salvation". This the Lord Jesus Christ was declared to have finished when He rose from the dead, which was on the first day of the week. The Sabbath is now a special day to remember this glorious finished work. While there is no record in Scripture of our Lord commanding Christians to observe the Sabbath on the first day of the week instead of the seventh, we know that He encouraged and blessed this change. It was on the first day of the week that He appeared to His disciples in the upper room (John 20:19), and it was on the first day of the week, the Day of Pentecost, that He

sent the Holy Spirit. Also the Christian Church met for worship and the breaking of bread on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the class what the Sabbath Day means to them. Answers will range from 'going to Church or Sabbath School' to things that are more negative e.g. 'I'm not allowed to play football', etc. Encourage them to say exactly how they feel about the Sabbath Day. (Look at the pictures at the beginning of the pupils' worksheet and discuss with the class these various reactions.)

Outline

Explain to the class that the Sabbath Day is a very important day and a day to be enjoyed. However, we can only do this when we understand what the Sabbath is all about. Discuss with the class the following points.

1. WHY DO WE KEEP THE SABBATH DAY?

There are 4 reasons.

(a) It is God's special day

Remind the class how God created the world in 6 days, pointing out that when it came to the seventh day God did something quite different. Read Gen 2:1-3 and ask the class what He did. God did two things on that seventh day:

- (i) He rested: God did no unnecessary work that day. This was not because He was tired, nor because He felt He had earned a well-deserved break after working hard for six days. Rather He was giving man an example to follow, i.e. work six days each week and rest the seventh day.
- (ii) He made the day holy: (He blessed and sanctified it.) God made this day a very special day - a day that was different from the other six. It was to be God's day and on it man was to think about God. Therefore the Sabbath Day is to be used for the worship of God.

Ask the class to complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

(b) God has told us to keep the Sabbath Day

Read Exodus 20:8-11. Ask the class what God tells us to do (or not to do) in these verses. We are to keep the Sabbath in exactly the same way as God did when He first brought it into being. We are to keep it holy (keep it a special day) and we are not to do any unnecessary work.

Stress the point that God saw this as very important when He included it in the ten commandments. These commandments tell us:

- (i) how we must honour God and give Him His proper place in our lives;
- (ii) how we must honour and obey our parents;
- (iii) how we must treat other people;
- (iv) how we must keep the Sabbath Day a special day.

No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet should be completed.

(c) Jesus kept the Sabbath Day

Jesus never did anything wrong, therefore we should always follow His example. In Luke 4:16 we are told that on the Sabbath Day Jesus always went to the synagogue (His church).

(d) The Sabbath Day was made a special day for man

Read Mark 2:27. The Sabbath is to be a day of blessing for man. It shouldn't therefore be a boring day but a day which everyone should look forward to and enjoy.

Why is this so?

- (i) The Sabbath is the day we rest. After we work hard we become tired and need rest. We need sleep each night but we also need one day off from work each week. This doesn't mean that we should lie in bed that day or do what we like.
- (ii) The Sabbath is a day for worship. As it is God's special day we

must think about Him. We should go to church to worship and to learn more about Him and thank Him for everything He has given us, including the Sabbath.

2. HOW DO WE KEEP THE SABBATH DAY?

Discuss with the class what we should (and should not) do on the Sabbath Day. Try to lay emphasis on the positive side of keeping the Sabbath and show the class that it is a day to be enjoyed, not simply endured. (Isaiah 58:13-14).

What to do

- go to Church and Sabbath School
- spend time together as a family
- read a good book, e.g. missionary biography, Pilgrim's Progress, Bible quizzes, etc
- refrain from work unless necessary (Luke 6:9)
- avoid organised/competitive sport.

APPLICATION

Ask the class to complete No. 3 and No. 4 on the pupils' worksheet. Point out to them that God takes note of whether or not we keep His day. He blesses those who do keep it but is very displeased with those who do not.

LESSON 9

The beginning of all things

THE FIRST HOME

Scripture Text - Genesis 2:5, 8-17

AIM OF LESSON

To teach that God provided a perfect home for the first man and woman.

BACKGROUND NOTES

In keeping with a custom in Hebrew writing, Moses (the author of Genesis) in chapter 2 goes into more detail concerning the matters he has covered in broader terms in chapter 1. In the first chapter he wrote about the creation of all things, including the man and woman. Now he focuses our attention on the making of the man and woman individually, and the setting in which they lived and worked.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Ask the children to describe their homes. Ask them what sort of things they think make a good home. In Genesis 2 we read about the home of Adam and Eve.

1. It was a garden (v. 8)

After God made man He made him a home. It was not a castle, nor a farmhouse, nor a modern bungalow. It was a garden, furnished and decorated by nature. While man was without sin he did not need a house to live in. The heaven was the roof of Adam's house. The earth was his floor. The trees were his walls. God put the man whom He had formed in it. Complete No. 1 in the pupils' worksheet.

The most magnificent house today cannot compare with Adam's home.

2. It was beautiful (v. 9)

It was not a dull, drab place to live. Verse 9 tells us that God made every tree grow there that was pleasant to look at. It was a very beautiful place.

Complete No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet.

3. It was dry and warm (v. 5)

Ask the children what problems we would meet if we were to live in a garden today. Ask them if Adam and Eve had those problems.

At that time the earth was watered, not by rain coming down from the sky but by a mist which went up from the earth. Rain probably did not come until the time of the flood (Gen. 7:11-12). So Adam and Eve had no need to worry about getting wet. There was the sun to keep them warm so they had no need for central heating.

Houses and heating, like clothes, were only needed after man sinned.
Complete No. 3 on the pupils' worksheet.

4. It had plenty of food and drink (v. 9)

A home is not a home without food and drink! Ask the pupils what their favourite foods and drinks are.

God provided this also. Verse 9 tells us that God planted trees that were 'GOOD FOR FOOD'. At that time man was a vegetarian. He did not eat meat. As regards something to drink, there was no tea, coffee or soft drinks. Verse 10 tells us 'A RIVER WENT OUT OF EDEN TO WATER THE GARDEN'. Verses 11-14 tell us it divided into four parts. It made the garden both pleasant and fruitful.

Complete No. 4 on the pupils' worksheet.

5. It had to be looked after (v. 15)

A home needs to be looked after. Discuss with the pupils what is involved.

God gave Adam and Eve a perfect home. He meant them to enjoy it, but He also expected them to look after it. They were 'TO TEND AND KEEP IT'. They were to work in it. They were not to be idle in it, nor to take all its benefits without contributing anything.

Complete No. 5 on the pupils' worksheet.

6. It was ruled by God (vs. 16-17)

If people are to live together happily in a home, rules must be made. Ask pupils what rules there are in their homes.

In the garden which God had provided for Adam and Eve there were rules, not man-made rules, but God-given rules. God told man what he could do (v. 16) and what he could not do (v. 17). God is not just Adam's creator and provider. He is Adam's ruler and lawgiver. Adam could not live as he liked.

Complete No. 6 on the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

God has given us our homes. There is nothing wrong with having a beautiful home, provided we don't become more concerned about our home than God. Our homes are warm and dry. In them we have plenty of food and drink. We should thank God for all these things and share our homes with others, e.g. friends, family, neighbours, strangers and church members. Our homes need to be looked after and boys and girls should play their part in keeping the home clean and tidy.

In our homes we need rules. The rules we have in our homes should reflect God and honour God, e.g. no fighting, no lying, no bad language, etc. If God is our ruler and Jesus Christ our Saviour then our homes will be happy homes.

LESSON 10

The beginning of all things

THE FIRST WOMAN

Scripture Text - Genesis 1:27-28 and 31; Genesis 2:18-25

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God provided a suitable partner for man.

BACKGROUND NOTES

God had created various species of living creatures with the power to reproduce themselves and be company for each other. There were shoals of fishes, herds of cattle, flights of birds. Adam had been given the privilege of naming all these creatures but none of them provided satisfactory help and company for him. He was the only human being in the garden.

In order to satisfy Adam's needs God made a 'helpmeet' for him, i.e. 'a helper suitable for him'. This would mean he was no longer alone. In this lesson we explore how woman came to exist.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Begin by asking the children why we need friends and why people get married. Continue by discussing the following points which compare the first woman with the first man.

1. The first woman was made by God (Genesis 2:21-22)

Everything that was done to make the first woman was done by God. God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep (He put him under a kind of anaesthetic) so that He (God) could perform the first operation. God removed one of Adam's ribs. He closed up the wound with flesh. Then God took the rib He had removed from Adam and made it (literally shaped/fashioned it) into the woman. Notice that the woman was made in a different way to Adam. Adam had been made of the dust of the ground (v. 7) - the woman out of the rib of man. The woman was of the same kind as the man.

Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

2. The first woman was made perfect (Genesis 1:27-28 and 31)

At this stage Adam was perfect. He was without sin and he lived in fellowship with God.

Therefore the woman, made from the rib of man, was perfect also. She was without sin, enjoying friendship and fellowship with God too.

3. The first woman was made for man (Genesis 2:20 and 22)

God made woman because Adam had no helper (v. 20). The birds and the beasts whom God had brought to Adam to name were not on the same level as him (vs. 19-20). Adam was to have dominion over them (Genesis 1:28). When God made the woman 'HE BROUGHT HER TO THE MAN' (v. 22) not to the birds or the beasts. When God brought the first woman to Adam, Adam recognised her as being for him (v. 23). In other words the first woman was made for man.

4. The first woman completed man (Genesis 2:23-24)

Adam was perfect but incomplete without the woman. The woman whom God had made from him and for him now made him complete. For the first time Adam had someone of his own kind with whom to talk, with whom to share his life and with whom to be 'fruitful and multiply'. Before the woman was made all of these doors were closed to Adam. When God brought the first woman to Adam we have the beginning of marriage.

5. The first woman was equal to man (Genesis 2:23)

The fact that Eve was made by God after man, from man and for man does not make her (or her successors) a lesser or inferior being to man. She is equal to man. She had the same standing before God as Adam. Adam recognised Eve to be equal to himself (v 23).

The woman was not made out of the head of Adam for she was not to be superior to Adam. She was not made out of the foot of Adam for she was not to be inferior to Adam. She was made out of the rib of Adam for she was to be equal to Adam.

It is clear from the rest of Scripture however that Eve (woman) has a different role to Adam (man). Man and woman can be compared to a knife and fork. A knife and fork are both pieces of cutlery. They are equally important to the user but they have different

uses. The knife is for cutting and the fork is for lifting. So it is with man and woman. They are equally valuable to God but they have different roles in God's purpose and plan.

Complete No. 2 and No. 3 on the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

Woman was created not to compete with man, nor to rival man but to help and complete man.

Both man and woman are equal before God. We should treat members of the opposite sex as equal.

We need to understand and maintain the different roles God has given to men and women in the family, Church and society.

This story tells us about the first wedding and that marriage comes from God.

God made the sexes, male and female, man and woman, boy and girl. We must not try to blur the distinctions and differences God has made between men and women. The distinction between male and female is part of His plan and is therefore wise, holy and good.

LESSON 11

The beginning of all things

THE FIRST SIN

Scripture Text - Genesis 3; Shorter Catechism No. 13.

AIM OF LESSON

To show what the first human sin involved, what it means for us and how every sin we commit arises from it.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Passages like Romans 5 assume that the account of the first sin in Genesis 3 is true. Adam's sin has been inherited by all his natural descendants. In a similar way Christ's righteousness is inherited by all who believe and trust in Him.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Pupils may be encouraged to mention some of the sins they know they commit. They could be asked if they had to learn to do those things or if such things came naturally to them. If naturally, why is this so? Genesis 3 gives the answer.

As you go through the lesson keep in mind the examples the pupils have given and try to show how they are based on the same principles as this first sin.

Introduction

Remind the pupils that when God created Adam and Eve they were perfect and He created a perfect world for them. Ask them what they think it would be like to be perfect. They may suggest that a perfect person would love God perfectly, never think wicked thoughts and never use their tongues or hands or feet to do wrong. Adam and Eve were like that before they sinned. The story today tells how sin came into the world. Read Genesis 3.

Outline

The temptation The devil spoke through the serpent (v 1) which was probably one of the cleverest animals. He was 'subtil', that is, sly or sneaky. He approached Eve and started tempting her by making her think about God's word. He caused her to question whether God had said that they should eat from every tree in the garden. He thus

emphasised the restriction in what they were allowed to eat. Eve responded by telling the serpent that God had told them that they could eat the fruit of the trees in the garden except one but she omitted to say that they could eat freely and even added to God's words "Nor shall you touch it". Compare Genesis 3:2-3 with Genesis 2:16-17. Eve forgot to tell the serpent about God's generosity and she might even have been tempted to think that God was being mean in putting limits on what they could do.

Having successfully sown the seeds of doubt and discontent, Satan went on in verse 4 to openly contradict God's word and in verse 5 told Eve that the reason God didn't want them to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was that they would then be like God; rather than dying they would be able to exist without depending on God. This obviously appealed to Eve. She saw that the fruit looked good and thought the idea of being wise was good. She was persuaded to eat the fruit and she also gave some to Adam.

All sin involves wanting to live without depending on God. We want to make our own rules, do our 'own thing' and put ourselves in God's place. It is pride that makes us want to find things out for ourselves instead of reading, believing and obeying God's word.

The Effect Immediately Adam and Eve ate the fruit they realised they had no clothes on. They had never noticed this before they had sinned but now they were ashamed and sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. Whereas before they sinned they had delighted in God now they felt guilty and afraid. They tried to hide from God (v 8). Notice how Adam blames God for giving him Eve to be with him and he blames Eve for giving him the fruit of the tree (v 12). He does not accept blame himself and he does not think of blaming the serpent. God knew, however, that the temptation had arisen from Satan through the serpent (v 14). Suffering for all parties was to come from this first sin. There was to be ongoing conflict between Satan and mankind (v 15).

Verses 16-19 detail the miseries which are experienced in this life as a result of sin. Women would have pain in childbearing, thorns and thistles would grow in the ground, man would have to work hard to live and would have to suffer physical death. Since Adam and Eve had disobeyed God in eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, He drove them out of the garden of Eden so that they could not eat of the tree of life (v 24).

Complete Nos. 1-6 on the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

Pride, disbelief and disobedience are all contained in this first sin. Complete No. 7 on the

pupils' worksheet. Ask the pupils to relate these to examples given earlier. We all have inherited these characteristics of sin from Adam and Eve. We would do well to remember how Jesus overcame the devil's temptation in the wilderness by quoting God's word directly (Luke 4:1-13). We should also remember how Eve's weakness in allowing the devil to divert her attention from God's goodness resulted in more dangerous thoughts being suggested to her and in her being persuaded to sin by disobeying God. Sin comes naturally to us, as does its effect of suffering and death. Instead of trying to live without God we can escape from the effects of sin if we trust in Jesus. He has suffered punishment for our sin in His death on the cross. If we ask Him for forgiveness and live our lives as He commands we can escape from spiritual death and have everlasting life.

Complete Nos. 8 and 9 on the pupils' worksheet. No. 10 may be completed at home or in class.

LESSON 12

The beginning of all things

THE PROMISE OF A SAVIOUR

Scripture Text - Genesis 3:1-24

AIM OF LESSON

To show how God promised to defeat Satan and rescue His people from sin by sending a Saviour.

BACKGROUND NOTES

"you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17) - was to be the result of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Man would die physically (1 Cor. 15:22)

Man would die spiritually (Eph. 2:1)

Man would die eternally (Matt. 18:8)

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Read the following story to the class and discuss a possible ending.

‘Oh dear, I’m in big trouble now!’ Jim muttered to himself. The remote control car which he had been given for his birthday was covered in rust and the aerial was bent. In spite of his father’s warnings, Jim had once again forgotten to put it away and it had been left out in the rain. Someone had played with it and bent the aerial. ‘Dad’s going to give me a lecture about being responsible and taking care of my belongings and I suppose I deserve it.’

Jim didn’t say anything to his father but that evening when his father came to him with a thoughtful expression on his face, Jim prepared himself for the lecture. ‘Jim,’ said his father, ‘I see you left your new car outside in the rain.’

Ask the pupils how the story might end if the father treated Jim as he deserved, i.e. with JUSTICE. Ask them to suggest how the story might end if Jim’s father acted with GRACE.

Outline

After God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, they disobeyed Him and deserved to be punished. (Review the previous lesson or summarise Genesis 2:15-17 and Genesis 3:13-24.) Read with the class Genesis 3:13-24. Ask the pupils if they think God dealt with Adam and Eve in JUSTICE or in GRACE. (Both answers are true.) Consider first His justice.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God they were no longer in fellowship with Him. This disobedience was sin and it demanded punishment. God's punishment was in several parts. Use No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet to look at the punishments which God sent.

- (a) Satan was cursed and would crawl on his belly and eat dust.
- (b) Adam would have to work hard to grow food from the ground.
- (c) Eve would suffer in childbearing and would be subject to her husband.
- (d) Adam and Eve would be driven out of the Garden.

Look back to Genesis 2:15-17 to see what God had promised would happen if Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (See Background Notes.) Discuss No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet. Adam and Eve did not drop dead immediately but they did die physically and all men and women born since them have also died physically. They were also cut off from fellowship with God and from the true life that comes from Him. This state of spiritual death leads to eternal punishment unless God in His grace intervenes.

As well as being just, God has other qualities. Complete No. 3 on the pupils' worksheet. The missing words are MERCIFUL, GRACIOUS, LONGSUFFERING, FORGIVING, GOODNESS, TRUTH.

God dealt justly with Adam and Eve by giving them the punishment they deserved but in His grace He also gave them something which they did not deserve. He promised to rescue them from their sinful state and restore them to fellowship with Himself. Look at Genesis 3:15. Ask the pupils who God is speaking to in this verse. It is addressed to Satan (the serpent) but it also speaks of what God will do for Adam and Eve. The tempter had to listen to the curse on himself and the promise of rescue for mankind. Adam and Eve could do nothing for themselves but God promised to give complete victory over Satan when the seed of the woman (Christ) would eventually bruise his (Satan's) head. Compare the two bruising mentioned in the verse. Although Satan would attack Christ

(bruise His heel), Christ's bruising or crushing of Satan's head gives the idea of complete destruction. In God's time Satan was defeated. He was defeated when he came to Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) and by Jesus living on earth, dying and rising again from the dead. (1 John 3:8; Hebrews 2:14) God the Father raised Him from the dead and gave Him power and authority over all things (Matt. 28:18). That includes the victory over Satan.

Complete No. 4 on pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

When men, women, boys or girls believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and take Him as their Saviour, they can have the victory over Satan. God makes them new creatures. They have God's Holy Spirit to strengthen them in resisting Satan's temptations. (John 14:17; Hebrews 2:18)

They still die physically but after their death on earth they continue to live spiritually in fellowship with God in heaven.

- Remember
- (a) Satan is still tempting us to do wrong and we need God's help to overcome temptation.
 - (b) When we disobey God we are allowing Satan to rule our lives and breaking the fellowship between ourselves and God.
 - (c) The first step we must take to defeat Satan in our lives is to believe that Jesus died to take our punishment and to accept Him as our Saviour.

Complete No. 5 on pupils' worksheet in class if there is time, or at home.

LESSON 13

The beginning of all things

THE FIRST OFFERINGS - ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE

Scripture Text - Genesis 4:1-5

AIM OF LESSON

To show that we cannot have a right relationship with God by our good deeds. Instead we must come to Him in faith.

BACKGROUND NOTES

In Genesis Ch 4 we are not told specifically why Cain's offering was not acceptable to God, but references to the story in other parts of the Bible show us that it was the two brothers' spiritual standing before God as well as the content of their offerings which were the deciding factors (Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12).

There was a difference in the characters of Cain and Abel. God did not respect Cain because he was wicked and therefore He did not respect his offering. Abel was righteous (Matt. 23:35) and God considered his offering a holy offering and accepted it. The difference was also apparent by the fact that Abel's offering was given in faith and of the kind required by God (Hebrews 9:22). He was seeking to follow God and to bring Him glory. Cain did not appear to have such an honourable motive, nor an acceptable offering. When his offering was not accepted he was angry with God.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Ask the pupils if they enjoy giving and receiving gifts. Ask them why we give gifts and on what occasions people give gifts. This could lead into the story of the offerings which Cain and Abel brought to God.

Outline

Read the story with the class. It may be summarised as in the following paragraph.

After God put Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden they had a number of children. The two oldest sons were named Cain and Abel. Cain, the elder, was a farmer and Abel

was a shepherd. When the time came for them to bring their offerings to the Lord, Cain brought some of the fruit and grain which he had grown while Abel brought the fattest and best of his sheep. God was pleased with Abel and with his offering but He was not pleased with Cain and did not accept his offering. Cain went away very angry. Ask the pupils to suggest what had Cain done wrong (refer to the Background Notes). Genesis 4:4 tells us that Abel brought the best of his flocks for an offering. He did so by faith (Hebrews 11:4) and God gladly accepted his offering.

Complete No. 1 of the pupils' worksheet.

Cain was not like his brother. Pleasing God was not the most important thing in his life. Certainly he also was prepared to bring an offering to God but he does not appear to have made any effort to bring the type of offering that God wanted. Therefore God did not accept it.

When Cain saw that God accepted Abel's offering and not his own, this should have made him stop and think. He ought to have considered what he should do, so that God would accept his offering too. Instead he became angry.

Complete No. 2 of the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

It is good and right to help other people but God also requires us to have faith in Him and do what He tells us. We must approach Him in the right way. Jesus taught 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.' (John 14:6)

Complete Nos. 3 and 4 of the pupils' worksheet in class or at home.

LESSON 14

The beginning of all things

THE FIRST MURDER

Scripture Text - Genesis 4:4-15

AIM OF LESSON

To show the danger of anger and jealousy and how these can lead us away from God.

BACKGROUND NOTES

- Verse 5 God found Cain's offering unacceptable. This was due to the offering itself as well as the manner in which it was offered. Hebrews 11:4 states that Abel's offering was a more excellent sacrifice. Also it was presented in faith. Cain's offering was not right and it was not offered in the right spirit. Perhaps Cain was trying to appease God without being truly sorry for his sin (1 John 3:12 tells us that Cain belonged to the evil one), whereas Abel was truly repentant. God, who is an all-seeing God, does not look only on our outward gifts but also looks into our hearts (1 Sam. 16:7). Cain was displeased at the difference God made between his and Abel's offering and he became angry.
- Verse 6 'So the Lord said to Cain'. We are not told the manner in which God spoke. Certainly Cain was very much aware of God's rebuke.
- Verse 7 Here God tells Cain that there was no reason for him to be angry and points out that if he did well he would also be accepted just as Abel was. On the other hand if he did not, a dreadful sentence awaited him with his life being given over to sin. God's advice to him was to master the evil thoughts and desires before they took control of him.
- Verse 8 Cain rejected God's advice and decided to continue in his own way. Later while they were in a field Cain killed his brother.
- Verses 9-12 These verses deal with God's questioning of Cain and his subsequent pronouncement of judgement on him. Not only did Cain tell a blatant lie in answer to God's question, demonstrating that one sin leads to another, but he showed no regret for his evil deed. Neither did he show any fear

of Almighty God. When Cain did not repent God was forced to punish him.

This punishment was in two parts:

- (a) The earth would no longer yield good crops for him.
- (b) He would become a wanderer on the earth and not be able to settle in any place.

Verses 13-15 These verses deal with Cain's response to his punishment and God's answer. There was no sense of sorrow nor a cry for mercy from Cain, rather a complaint about the severity of his punishment and in particular about his fear that he would be in constant danger of his own life. God promised that He would protect him against execution and He gave him a 'sign' to assure him of this protection. We are not told what this sign was but it certainly did not give Cain the real peace that he needed.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the pupils if they ever get angry with their brothers or sisters. Discuss their answers with them and help them to see that when some people get angry they do things which are not right. When we loose our tempers we do wrong things. Today's lesson deals with one example.

Outline

Read the short passage of Scripture, then revise it in your own words with the help of the Background Notes or using the following summary.

Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Abel was a sheep farmer. Cain grew up to be a grain grower. One day each of them decided to bring God a sacrifice. Abel brought an offering from his flock which God accepted. Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground which God rejected. When God did not accept Cain's offering he became very angry. 'Don't look so angry', God warned Cain. 'It will get the better of you if you let it'. Cain was too jealous and angry to listen. 'Come into the fields', he asked Abel and there he killed his brother. The moment this happened, God knew what Cain had done. Imagine Cain's surprise therefore when God asked 'Where is your brother?' 'How should I know?' replied Cain. 'Why have you done this dreadful thing? You have murdered your brother', said God. 'You will no longer grow good crops and you will become a refugee and wanderer'. So Cain had to go away from his

parents but God promised to keep him safe wherever he went.

Ask the pupils to revise the story by completing Nos. 1 and 2 on their worksheets.

APPLICATION

While the story of Cain is a sad one there is much we can learn from it which will be of use to us in our lives. For example:

- (a) We must learn to control our feelings of anger and jealousy. If we don't, these feelings will cause us to do sinful things just like Cain. We cannot overcome these feelings on our own so we must ask God to help us.

- (b) When we have a disagreement with another person we should talk it over with that person and if we have been in the wrong we should acknowledge it and put it right. It is just as well that many of the bad things we do can be put right. For example, if we say hurtful things to a friend, we can ask God to forgive us and also ask that friend's forgiveness. Other things cannot be put right again so easily - Cain may have been sorry that he murdered Abel but that did not bring Abel back. That should make us more determined to control our thoughts, words and actions. God punished Cain for what he did. We too will have to answer for all that we do.

Ask the pupils to complete No. 3 on their worksheets.

LESSON 15

The beginning of all things

THE GROWTH OF SIN AND THE GRACE OF GOD

Scripture Text - Genesis 6

AIM OF LESSON

To show how God hates and punishes sin but cares for those who are obedient to Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Ark - Hebrew word meaning 'box' or 'chest'. The same word used for the water-tight 'basket' in which Moses floated on the Nile.

The ark was designed to float, not sail.

Size:- 450' x 76' x 45' or 137 m x 23 m x 14 m approximately (i.e. longer than a football pitch which is 92 m long). (A cubit is approximately equal to 18 inches.)

Useful reference books are :-

Lion 'Handbook to the Bible' p 131 - 134;

'Myths and Miracles' by David C. C. Watson, chapter 6 and

Videos and publications by Creation Resources Trust - (Mead Farm, Downhead,
West Camel, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 7RQ)

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Some newspaper cuttings or pictures about violent actions could be brought to the class. Discuss violence with the pupils e.g. its origins in jealousy, discontent and anger and its results in law-breaking and injury. Pupils could be reminded that people are made in God's image and we should not spoil that image by wilful hurt. Tell the pupils that God hates all evil and violence.

Outline

Relate the story of this passage in your own words, using the outline below.

God has always wanted people to love and obey Him. He still does. It was when Adam

and Eve disobeyed God that wrongdoing came into the world. After that, disobedience to God grew more and more widespread.

Cain was angry that God did not accept his offering. His anger led to him attacking his brother and killing him. This was only the beginning of a very violent era. Cain left Eden and went east to Nod, where he lived with his wife and where they had a son, Enoch.

Enoch's great grandson, Lamech was attacked and injured by a young man. In response he committed an even more violent act in killing that young man. Eventually God told the people that He could not let this evil continue and He warned them that He was allowing them only 120 years to change. This seems a long time to us but in those days people lived for many years (Gen. 5). For example, (v. 27) Methuselah lived for 969 years.

There was a great increase in population but over the years wickedness became more and more widespread. In Gen. 6: 5 we are told that the imaginations and thoughts of the people were evil all the time. When people think evil thoughts and when their feelings are wicked, it usually follows that their actions are evil too. This is what happened at this time. People disobeyed God in their thoughts and actions. As a result violence and crime spread across the earth (v 11). People forgot that the earth and everything and everybody in it had been created by God. They were so intent on their own ways that they were destroying God's creation. The Bible tells us that the earth was corrupt in God's sight (v 11). This means it was full of wrongdoing.

God saw how disobedient people were. He knew their wicked thoughts and He saw their actions and violence. We are told how God felt about this change. We are told that this corruption offended Him. God was so saddened by the extent to which people had become evil that He was actually sorry that He had created people. What a contrast between this and God's pleasure in men when He first created them (Gen. 1: 31; 6: 6).

God was so sorry that He had created man that He decided to wipe out mankind. In all this evil there was one person who stood out in God's eyes, not because he was evil but because he was righteous. Noah was upright and good. We are told some very interesting things about him.

- (a) He had three sons - Shem, Ham and Japheth.
- (b) Noah pleased God. While others around him were intent on their own ways, Noah was intent on pleasing God (v 8).

- (c) Noah was just and good. He always tried to conduct his affairs the way God would want.
- (d) Noah walked with God. This means that he kept close to God and knew what God wanted.

God told Noah that He was going to destroy every living creature. All would die.

However, God planned to save Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives. In order to do this He gave Noah instructions. He told him to make an ark (a large barge-like boat) of gopher wood. This would be an enormous boat for Noah to build. He would never have seen anything like it. It would have been a big boat in our eyes - over half the length of an ocean liner and longer than a football pitch. It would have been much too big for Noah and his family only but God intended to preserve the animal kingdom too, so He gave Noah more instructions. He was to take a pair (a male and a female) of every bird, animal and reptile into the ark, in order to keep them alive throughout the flood. If he was going to save all these creatures he would need food for them so God told him to store away food for both his family and the creatures. Ask the pupils what Noah's reaction was to what God said. Ask them if he laughed at the thought of a flood covering the earth.

Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

Ask the pupils if Noah said that he couldn't build such a boat or if they think he wondered how he was going to herd two of every creature into the ark. Remember the kind of man Noah was. He was close to God so he knew that if God said He would destroy the earth He would do it. He also knew that if God promised to save him and his family He would do it. He knew that if God needed him to do a job for Him, he must do it. Noah obeyed God.

APPLICATION

Ask the pupils how they feel about violent scenes on TV, e.g. shootings, punch-ups, muggings, cruelty to animals, war, etc. Ask if they enjoy watching such scenes or if they admire some of these happenings. Stress that we must never think of violence as being right. God hates it and so should we.

God always punishes evil. He knows our thoughts. Bad temper is wrong; not losing our temper is being obedient to God. Telling lies or cheating is wrong; telling the truth, even if it gets us into trouble, is being obedient to God. Stealing is wrong; being content with what we have is being obedient to God. Bullying others or being cruel to animals

is being disobedient. God wants us to be kind to other people and to care for creation. Noah 'walked with God'. Talk about what this means - talking to God in prayer, learning about Him, trusting Him and being obedient to Him. Discuss how God takes care of us.

Complete Nos. 2 and 3 of the pupils' worksheet in class if there is time, or at home.

Answers to the Boxes on the pupils' worksheet

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|---------|-----|----|--------|-----|----|--------|
| (a) | 1. | Giraffe | (b) | 1. | Hen | (c) | 1. | Badger |
| | 2. | Koala | | 2. | Robin | | 2. | Rabbit |
| | 3. | Lion | | 3. | Raven | | 3. | Kitten |
| | 4. | Cheetah | | 4. | Thrush | | | |
| | 5. | Whale | | | | | | |

LESSON 16

The beginning of all things

THE FLOOD

Scripture Text - Genesis 7:1-24; Genesis 8:1-19

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God punishes wickedness but rewards those who are faithful to Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of Genesis record one of the most important and solemn events in the history of the world, namely the Flood. With the exception of eight human beings the whole of mankind was overtaken and destroyed in this judgement. The reason was the anger of God against man's wickedness, violence, and corruption (Genesis 6:5).

1. The oldest nations on earth have recorded the occurrence of a world-wide flood and that one family of people and two animals of every sort were saved in an Ark. For example, records of Babylon, Nineveh, China, Greece, Egypt, India, North and South America and many others.
2. We know that vast areas of the earth are covered with waterlaid rocks of various depths and composition which nothing but a world-wide flood could have left.
3. Beds of fossils of almost all types of animals known today are found in all continents which is evidence of a world-wide disaster.
4. A salt sea 12,500 feet up in a fold of the Andes could only have been formed when the seas covered the highest mountains.

For further details and other evidence read "Evidence of the Flood" by W. W. Greenman, published by Gospel Standard Baptist Trust Ltd. 1972.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Ask the pupils if there was any time they did something which they knew God would

want them to do yet their friends laughed at them, e.g. not going out to play on the Sabbath Day.

Re-cap on what happened in last week's lesson, i.e. God was angry because of man's wickedness and sin and destroyed His creation, except for Noah and his family, by a flood. Noah obeyed God without question but he probably faced jeers and teasing from those around him.

Outline

Avoid reading these long passages in class; instead use the outline of the story below:

God told Noah that He was going to destroy every living thing on earth by a great flood, except Noah, his family and two of every kind of animal. God told Noah to build a big boat so that they would be safe while it rained. God said the boat was to be 137 m long, 23 m wide and 14 m high. Noah obeyed God's instructions down to the smallest detail. He must have been puzzled at having to build such a big boat when there was no water around! Just before the rain started God brought the animals to the boat and Noah let them inside. Ask some of the pupils to measure the length of the room in feet or metres - this will give some idea of just how big the Ark was.

Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

When at last Noah and his family were in the boat with all the animals, God Himself closed the door. Dark clouds burst and the rain poured down. Rivers overflowed and filled the valleys. The water rose higher and higher and the boat bobbed up and down and rocked from side to side on the flood. Ask the pupils if they have ever been in a ship on a stormy sea. Perhaps Noah and his family and the animals felt sea-sick! The boat rose higher on the flood until it was tossed high above the top of the highest mountains. Every living thing on earth drowned as the sea covered the whole world.

Complete Nos. 2 and 3 on the pupils' worksheet.

Safe inside the boat Noah and his family looked after the animals. It was very dark in Noah's boat. There were no portholes. The only light and fresh air came from a window between the roof and the sides. Before long the boat must have been smelly as well as dark. It would have been noisy too. Ask the pupils if Noah complained about this.

Noah and his family continued to trust in God and God did not forget them. The rain

died away and a wind blew over the flooded world. Slowly the water went down until the boat came to rest on the top of a mountain called Ararat.

One day Noah sent a raven out of the boat. The bird flew away. A little later Noah sent a dove but it found nowhere to settle and came back to the boat. A week later Noah tried again. In the evening the bird came back carrying an olive leaf in its beak. Now they knew the water had subsided. Soon they would leave their boat and make a fresh start in God's new world.

Complete Nos. 4, 5 and 6 on the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

1. The story of the Flood teaches us about the just and holy God who hates wickedness and violence among His creation. The flood wiped out all human and animal life on earth, except for one man, Noah, his family, and the animals in the ark. This was God's way of punishing sin.
2. The Flood also teaches us that God cares for those who trust Him and He does not forget His obedient servants. Noah was rewarded for his faith. God may ask us to do something for Him which may cause us hardship. Like Noah, we should be willing to obey Him without question for we know that if we trust God He will bring us safely through times of hardship.

LESSON 17

The beginning of all things

A NEW BEGINNING FOR MANKIND

Scripture Text - Genesis 8:13-22; Genesis 9:1-19

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God, who is just, punishes sin, and keeps the promises He has made.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The Ark had come to rest on Mount Ararat. Noah and his family remained in it for a further two months until the ground was dry. Altogether they had been in the Ark for one year and ten days.

Covenant - An agreement between God and His people, in which God imposes conditions and promises rewards or punishments.

Clean animals (and birds) - Only certain animals were 'clean', i.e. fit for food or sacrifice. The great rule was that they must have cloven hooves and chew the cud, e.g. only birds which did not eat flesh were allowed.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the pupils if they enjoy something new. For most pupils there sometimes is a new classroom; a new teacher; new books; new clothes; new toys.

Invite the pupils to share how they felt about going to secondary school. They may have felt happy and excited or nervous and afraid. Invite pupils to share their feelings when they started something new.

Outline

We all have feelings of excitement at new beginnings. When the Flood was over and the waters were dried up the cover of the Ark was lifted and Noah looked out upon the earth once more. Noah then began his life upon the new earth. God told Noah to leave the Ark with his wife and sons. The first thing Noah did was to build an altar: he wanted to thank God for keeping him safe during the flood. Ask the pupils if they

remember to thank God when they should. God told Noah and his family to have more children and to re-populate the earth. God was kind to Noah and blessed him. He made him ruler over the animals and birds and fish and said that they would provide meat for him to eat.

The lesson reminds us of two important facts:

1. God punishes sin Human life is very special to God because He made man "in the image of God". God knew, however that man was not perfect and that there was sin in his heart. He had told Adam and Eve that the result of sin was death. Through the flood sin was punished and all the evil in the world at that time was destroyed.
2. God gave Noah a wonderful promise which brought great comfort and encouragement to him as he set out to do all that God asked him. God promised that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. God made this promise not only to Noah and his family but to all the people who would ever live on the earth including all of us alive today. (One of the pupils should read verses 9 and 11 of chapter 9.) To remind us of this promise, God made a rainbow. When its bright colours appeared it reminded everyone who saw it that God would not destroy the earth with a flood again. Ask the pupils if they have ever seen a rainbow and when it appeared. When we see the rainbow it reminds us that God is faithful and has not forgotten His promise.

Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

From this story we have seen that God hates sin so much that He has to punish sinners. We see also that the God of mercy brings comfort and encouragement in the promises He makes. The greatest promise is that our sins can be forgiven by trusting in what Jesus did on the cross.

Ask the pupils if they have experienced God's forgiveness and mercy and are trusting Him. What He promises us in His Word will come to pass.

Complete No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet either in class or at home.

LESSON 18

The beginning of all things

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Scripture Text - Genesis 11:1-9

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God's plan for mankind will always succeed in spite of man's pride and rebellion against Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

After the Flood the number of people on the earth gradually increased and they moved farther and farther away from the mountains of Ararat. As they migrated south and east they came to a plain in the land of Shinar.

This plain was well-watered, having the mighty river Tigris on the east and the great river Euphrates on the west. The people thought that this would be a good place to live.

Slime - a kind of natural concrete found on the ground in some parts of the country.

Babel - sounds like BALAL - a Hebrew word for 'confuse'.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Ask the pupils if they have ever worked with others in a school project. Ask them if they all worked together and if they all were enthusiastic. Ask if anyone ever played in a football team or any other sports team and if everyone in the team always agreed. Encourage pupils to discuss problems involved in working with others and lead into today's story.

Outline

Tell the story of the Tower of Babel using the following description:

A clear new world lay before Noah and his three sons when they stepped out of the Ark. Now there were no wicked neighbours to mock them when they built altars to worship God. Noah and his sons set to work and made new homes. Noah's sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. After a while God gave them children. These children grew up and made homes for themselves.

From the mountains of Ararat where the Ark lodged, the human family went out, finally arriving at a place called Shinar. 'Let us build ourselves a city', said the people, 'and make a tower so great and so high that its top will reach up to the sky. Then we shall not be scattered over the face of the earth and be separated from one another'. So they set to work.

In the land where they lived there was clay which could be made into bricks. Soon many bricks were made and ready for use. Some people were making bricks, others were mixing mortar and still others were carrying bricks and mortar to the workmen who were building the city and the tower. Everything was moving fast and every body was thinking that some day their city and their wonderful tower would be finished.

Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

Then something happened that the people had not expected. God came to see the city and the tower. He did not talk to the builders and likely they did not know He had been there to look upon their work. God was not pleased with what He saw. He knew that men would become more sinful if they should finish the great tower. Already they were thinking more and more about their own work and less and less about God who gave them strength to work. Soon they might forget God altogether and worship the work their own hands had made. So God stopped their building.

Until this time all the people in the world spoke one language. Now God caused them to speak different languages. The people of one family could not understand what their neighbours were talking about. Such a great change made the people restless and all those who spoke one language moved into areas by themselves. They could no longer go on with their great building, because the workmen could not understand one another. So the work had to stop and the great tower which they had planned would reach the sky was never finished. The name of the city was called Babel.

Complete Nos. 2, 3 and 4 on the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

From this story we learn that it is good to be able to work together with other people. However, in so doing we must not become self-centred and forget God. The people at Babel were building for themselves and they did as they pleased without commands from God. They forgot that they were created to bring glory to God's name, not themselves. They were really working against God's plan. God didn't want them to stay in one place. He wanted them to spread out over the whole earth.

Points to stress -

- (a) If we are sinful, self-centred people there will be problems in working together.
- (b) We must not leave God out of our plans. We should find out God's will for our lives and obey Him.

LESSON 19

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

GOD'S WORKS OF PROVIDENCE

Catechism No. 11

Scripture Text - Psalm 145: 17; Matthew 10: 29; Psalm 103: 19; Isaiah 37: 33 - 38

AIM OF LESSON

To show God's love, care and control over all His creation and how this should affect our lives.

BACKGROUND NOTES

God's providence - His 'timely care' (Oxford Dictionary)

His works of providence are two-fold

- (a) preserving
- (b) governing

all His creatures and all their actions.

God not only created all things, He sustains His creation and works out His purposes through His created beings. God is all holy, all wise and all powerful and things which are said to happen 'by chance' or in a mechanical way are, in fact, under God's control.

1. God is in control of nature: 'He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust'. (Matthew 5: 45)
2. God is in control of nations: 'The Most High rules in the kingdom of men'. (Daniel 4: 25). 'He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings'. (Daniel 2: 21)
3. God is in control of individuals: 'The Lord kills and makes alive....He brings low and lifts up'. (1 Samuel 2: 6 - 7)
4. God is in control of 'the free actions of man': 'It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure'. (Philippians 2: 13)

Reference: WILLIAMSON, G.I. The Shorter Catechism Vol. 1.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduce Catechism answer - 'God's works of providence

When God provides food for His creatures, this is part of His preserving work. Ask the pupils to complete No. 1 of their worksheet which illustrates this point. God also notices if even a sparrow falls to the ground (Matthew 10: 29).

Ask the pupils what Psalm 147: 8 - 9 says about God's provision for His creatures. Complete No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet asking the pupils for suggestions to fill in the blanks before checking the Scripture reference. This verse speaks of God's provision of clouds to bring rain, to make grass grow, to provide food for animals and birds.

Ask the pupils to find out from the Catechism answer what God does as well as preserve life: He governs. Check that the pupils know what 'govern' means (to rule or reign over; to be in control of). See Psalm 103: 19.

The Catechism tells us that God rules over creatures and also their actions - i.e. the things they do. Discuss with pupils God's direction of the actions of animals and birds. Ask them to suggest instances from the Bible where God rules over the actions of animals for the benefit or good of man. Complete No. 3 on the pupils' worksheet.

(a) Daniel (Daniel 6) (b) Balaam (Numbers 22) (c) Jonah

Introduce the point that God preserves and governs all His creation; and this includes more than animals. It includes men and nations, even those who may not be aware of His direction. Daniel 2: 21 says that God 'changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings'.

Recount the spectacular defeat of Sennacherib (Isaiah 37: 33 - 38) when the angel of the Lord killed in the camp of the Assyrians 185, 000. Complete No. 4 on the pupils' worksheet.

Use 4(c) to encourage pupils to see that God had planned the deliverance of the people of Jerusalem. God saved them without their help. He was working on behalf of His people before they were aware of it. He was also directing and controlling events in the lives of those who did not acknowledge Him.

Complete Nos. 5 and 6 on the pupils' worksheet to emphasise God's love and care and control. (Correct answers: 5(a) animals, birds , fish; 5(b) people, nations; 5(c) me.)

APPLICATION

Sometimes when God allows certain things to happen we may wonder if He really is in control but we should remember the beautiful promise which He has given us: 'Before they call I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear'. (Isaiah 65: 24)

Ask the pupils if they are facing changes in their lives. (They may be moving to a new school, doing the 11+, etc). Encourage the pupils to suggest that knowing that God is in control of everything that happens should make a difference to us and free us from unnecessary worry. We are assured of His loving concern and that He has already planned our future. (Matthew 10: 31 'Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows').

LESSON 20

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN PRACTICE

Catechism No. 11

Scripture Text - 1 Kings 17: 1 - 16

AIM OF LESSON

To show the pupils a clear biblical example of God's providence at work in the life of an individual.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Elijah's announcement that there would be no rain or dew was a serious thing. James 5: 17 tells us that Elijah had "prayed earnestly that it would not rain". This seems strange but Elijah knew that God had said that if His people turned away to worship other gods He would shut the heavens so that it would not rain . (See Deuteronomy 11: 16 - 17.) Elijah also knew that the people had turned to other gods and so for God's word to be fulfilled the rain must be withheld.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Discuss with the pupils the reasons for the drought which Elijah announces. (See background notes.) Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

Discuss with the pupils the things which show God's providence in the life of Elijah in the two different situations in today's scripture reading.

At the Brook Cherith: Here we see how God preserves his servant Elijah and provides for him in a remarkable way. The provision of water from the brook is not unusual but bread and meat supplied by ravens twice a day certainly is. Clearly God was governing (over-ruling, directing) the actions of these birds so as to provide for Elijah. Note that it was the 'natural' supply of water, not the super-natural supply of bread and meat, which was first to fail. Complete No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet.

At Zarephath: Note how the widow just 'happens' to be at the town gate at the precise time Elijah arrives there. This is not 'chance' but God's providence at work. Likewise the unemptying jars of flour and oil are clear evidence of God's provision for Elijah and

the widow. They trusted God and did what He commanded. Despite the fact that by natural expectations there was little hope of their survival, because they obeyed God, He provided in unexpected ways and the supplies of food did not fail. Complete No. 3 on the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

1. Remember God provides for us in natural and expected ways. We expect to have some food to eat and something to drink every day. We would be surprised if this did not happen. However things can upset 'normal' events. Sometimes the weather plays havoc with crops of food; seeds may be destroyed by flood or may not grow because of drought. Crops may not ripen because of lack of sunshine or may not be harvested because the ground is too wet. These things are beyond the control of man and it is God's providence that they do not happen more often. It is easy to forget how much we depend on God for things that are part of our everyday lives - not just food and drink but also our ability to move and speak and think. We even depend on Him to provide fresh air for us to breathe and keep our bodies healthy. We should not forget to thank God for all the things He regularly provides for us.
2. Remember that God can and does provide for us in unexpected ways. Sometimes we wonder how we will ever be able to do something and then something unexpected happens to enable us to do it. Remember the power of God (Eph. 3:20). He encourages us to ask Him for help (Matt. 7: 7), and to pray (Col. 4: 2) and assures us that He answers our prayers (Is. 65: 24). Paul had to deal with many difficult situations and he coped with these through God's provision (see Acts 28: 3 - 6; Phil. 4: 13).
3. If we, like Elijah and the widow trust God and obey Him, we can be sure that He will keep His promise to care for us in all situations (Josh. 1: 8 - 9)

Complete No. 4 on the pupils' worksheet.

LESSON 21

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

THE COVENANT OF LIFE

Catechism No. 12

Scripture Text - Genesis 2: 8 - 9, 15 - 17

AIM OF LESSON

To explain to pupils what the Covenant of Life was and the parts of God and man in it.

BACKGROUND NOTES

A covenant is an agreement between two or more persons. This is true when the covenant is between human persons but not really acceptable as a definition when we think of God's covenants with men, for God and man are not equal partners in a covenant. God does not consult with man to decide what the terms of the covenant will be. God is sovereign. He alone decides the terms of His covenant with man.

The Covenant of Life is also referred to as the Covenant of Works because of the conditions which man had to fulfil - the things he had to do.

Reference: WILLIAMSON, G.I. The Shorter Catechism Vol. 1.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

This week we are considering again God's acts of providence - His care over all His creation. Encourage pupils to recall God's providential work - preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions. Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

Introduce the thought that God had a special relationship with man and in a special way singled him out from the rest of creation. Ask pupils to suggest ways in which man is different from the animal creation, e.g. created in God's image, 'in knowledge and righteousness and holiness....'.

Development

Introduce Catechism No. 12 and clarify the language of the Question - i.e. such words as exercise, estate, wherein, etc. This special demonstration of God's care for man was His making an agreement with man.

There are different kinds of agreements. See No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet. Discuss the agreement being made here and help the pupils to answer the questions.

- (a) Two people are involved in the agreement.
- (b) Yes - both have a part to play in making the agreement.
- (c) Yes - both suggest certain things.
- (d) Yes - both agree to certain conditions.
- (e) Yes - both have something to do to fulfil the conditions.

Mention the fact that in this agreement there are three aspects - conditions, reward, penalty.

Now look at No. 3 on the pupils' worksheet - another agreement is being made. Compare what is happening here with what happened in the first agreement and complete the section.

- (a) Two parties are involved in the agreement.
- (b) No - only one has a part to play in making the agreement.
- (c) No - only one suggests certain things.
- (d) No - only the dog has to agree to the conditions.
- (e) Yes - both have something to do to fulfil the conditions.

Draw attention again to the three aspects - condition, reward, penalty. Keeping these two agreements in mind, suggest that we look at a third agreement.

God's special act of providence towards man was His entering into an agreement with man. Ask the pupils what the word is which the Bible uses to describe an agreement between God and man. See Isaiah 55: 3 or quote Catechism answer - a covenant - and complete No. 4 on the pupils' worksheet.

'When God had created man He entered into a covenant.....'. Find out details about this agreement by reading Genesis 2: 16 - 17 and complete No. 5 on the pupils' worksheet.

Answers to No. 5(b):

- (a) Two parties are involved in the agreement.
- (b) No - only one has a part to play in making the agreement.
- (c) No - only one suggests certain things.
- (d) No - only man has to agree to the conditions.
- (e) Yes - both have something to do to fulfil the conditions.

Ask pupils to compare the agreements shown on the worksheets. The agreement between

the boy and the dog is the one which resembles the covenant between God and man. Encourage pupils to suggest in their own words why this is so, e.g. God decided there should be an agreement. He laid down the conditions, reward and penalty.

Emphasise the parallels in the situation between the boy and dog and between God and man. For example, the boy makes the conditions and does not have to agree to any conditions. God alone lays down the conditions of a covenant and does not have to agree to any conditions. Fido was not in a position to lay down any conditions for his master. Similarly, man is not in a position to make conditions for God. A covenant between God and man is based totally on what God chooses to do and on the conditions which He lays down.

Remind pupils of the three aspects of a covenant - conditions, reward, penalty. Complete No. 6 on the pupils' worksheet and discuss these three aspects of God's covenant.

- (a) The condition - obedience - anything less than complete obedience would not fulfil the conditions.
- (b) The reward - life. (The agreement is referred to as the Covenant of Life because obedience to it would bring the rewards of life). While we cannot understand the full implications of this promise of life, it involved a continued unbroken relationship with God, the absence of physical death and the possibility of translation into God's presence (heaven) without undergoing death.
- (c) The penalty - death. Man, if he disobeyed God, would die physically (instant physical death is not implied but, rather, the limiting of his life span). The penalty also involved eternal death; a break in the relationship between God and Adam and eternal separation from God.

CONCLUSION

Ask the pupils if there was anything in the Covenant of Life that was unfair to Adam. Adam was given a choice. God made Adam with the ability to obey. God also provided generously for Adam's needs, so that he need not eat of the fruit which was forbidden. (Genesis 2: 16 - 17). God also threatened severe punishment should Adam disobey Him. We cannot think that there was anything unfair about the covenant which God made with Adam. (Pupils may question Adam's degree of choice i.e. if God plans all things, must not He have planned that Adam would eat the fruit? We cannot explain

this, we can only point out that although God plans all things, Adam did have freedom of choice.)

APPLICATION

God is in control of all things. He has the right to lay down conditions for His creatures. The covenant which He made was for man's good, though man might not understand why certain conditions were made. Man's part in the covenant was obedience. God's demand of us today is still obedience to what is written in His word.

LESSON 22

Studies in the Psalms

THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEYING GOD'S LAWS

Scripture Text - Psalm 119: 1 - 8

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God wants us to obey His laws and that He rewards those who are obedient to Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Psalm 119 is a meditation upon the law of the Lord. The word 'law' in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word meaning 'teaching'. Throughout the Psalm, ten words are used to describe 'the law':-

law	testimonies (instruction)
ordinances (decrees or judgements)	word
ways (paths)	faithfulness or truth
righteousness	precepts
statutes	commandments

One or other of these terms occurs in every verse of the psalm except verses 122 and 132.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Ask the pupils what it means 'to obey'. (To submit to the will of a superior.) Ask them to discuss who they have to obey, e.g. parents, teachers, and why they should do so. Also point out that we all have various sets of laws and regulations to keep e.g. the Highway Code. We obey these because we know it is for our own safety as well as that of others.

Outline

Try to emphasise the relevance of the Psalm using the examples and points below.

1. As God made all people, we all belong to Him

Therefore we must live for God and please Him. We must live the way He wants us to live. God has told us how we must live by giving us His law. This tells us what kind of people His children should be.

Briefly describe how God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19). God talked to the people and showed them how great He is so that they would obey.

2. We must try to keep God's Commandments every day

By reading the Bible we find that we must always put God first. He knows what is best for us. Ask pupils to complete No. 1 on their worksheet.

Read 1 Kings 17: 8 - 16 with the class - this is the story of a person who obeyed God. The widow woman baked bread for God's prophet Elijah, even though she had just a little flour and oil left. She put God first and obeyed Him. Note that God blessed her by never letting her flour and oil run out. (See Psalm 119: 2) Complete No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet.

3. If we do not obey God He will punish us

Outline the story given in 1 Samuel 15 to see what happened to Saul. Samuel told Saul that God said he was to fight against the Amalek people but he was not to keep any of their sheep, cattle or other animals. Saul won the battle but God was displeased. God sent Samuel to Saul's camp, where he saw the animals Saul had kept. Saul argued that they were for sacrificing. Samuel reminded him that God had told him not to keep the animals - he had disobeyed God and now his kingdom would be taken away. Saul was sorry. He learned too late that it is very important to obey God.

4. How is God's law good for us

When we do not know what God wants of us, we are in the dark, but His law is like a lamp. It shows us what we must do and how we must live. (Read Psalm 119: 105.) Ask the pupils why it is hard to obey God's law. It is because we are sinful and naturally inclined to put other things first instead of putting God first. What we have to do then, is to ask God to forgive us and take away our sin from us.

APPLICATION

We can only know what God wants us to do if we read His word. Ask the pupils how many of them use Scripture Union or other Bible Notes. Encourage them to read the Bible every day.

To complete the lesson ask the pupils to do No. 3 on their worksheet.

Answers - Noah, Abraham, Moses, Daniel, David, Jeremiah, Hannah, Isaac, Samuel.

LESSON 23

Studies in the Psalms

GOD - PROTECTOR AND JUDGE

Scripture Text - Psalm 125

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God not only protects His people but punishes those who do wrong.

BACKGROUND NOTES

This psalm is one of 15 entitled 'A song of Ascents'. It is not known precisely what this title refers to although many suggestions have been made.

The purpose of the psalm is to encourage and comfort God's people in the sure knowledge that He will protect them from evil and that any hurt which they may suffer will not last for ever.

- verse 1 - God is all powerful and unchangeable and those who put their trust in Him cannot be destroyed.
- verse 2 - Just as Jerusalem was surrounded by mountains which gave it protection against invaders and strong winds, God surrounds His people and protects them from now until eternity.
- verse 3 - While the power and authority of the wicked may fall on God's people for a time it will not last for ever because God knows the limitations of His people.
- verse 4 - In this verse the psalmist is asking God to do good to those who are sincere and honest and not hypocritical.
- verse 5 - As for the hypocrites, those who profess to be followers of God but who are involved in wickedness, God will punish them just as He will punish the greatest of sinners.

Outline

Ask the pupils if they have ever been in a town which is surrounded by high mountains. Discuss how such a town could have been captured by enemy soldiers before aeroplanes were invented. Suggest that these towns could only be taken by the soldiers climbing up and over the mountains. Explain that this was a difficult thing to do and consequently such towns were easy to defend. Jerusalem was one such town. Ask the pupils how the residents of these towns would regard the mountains. Help them to see that they would regard the mountains as protectors against the enemy - protectors which never moved

even in fierce storms.

Christians are like a city surrounded by mountains because they are kept in safety by God. At all times they can trust Him and not be afraid. This brings them great comfort and peace. They know that no harm can come to them when God is their protector.

Many 'storms' may come to Christians. The devil will try to make God's people sin and will try to break through their defences but there are no breaks in God's protection. Just as the mountains are always there, God is always there to protect His people. This care will follow God's people until they reach heaven, when they will be safe for ever.

Not only is God a protector of His own people, He is also a judge of those who do wrong. God does not like sin and He must punish those who commit it. Remember the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. All was well until they sinned against God by eating the forbidden fruit. After that God punished them by driving them from the garden.

APPLICATION

This psalm speaks about God being two things - a protector and a judge. God gives us a promise that we will be safe when we trust Him. He also warns us that it will not be well for the wicked because they will be punished. To revise the lesson ask the pupils to complete Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of their worksheet.

Ask the pupils to think about whether they are trusting God. He will keep those who trust Him safe and secure from all dangers. If people do not trust Him and obey Him but are wicked and do things which are wrong, God will be their judge and will punish them.

Answers to crosswords:-

1. (1) People, (2) Rest, (3) Lord, (4) Trust, (5) Ever,
(6) Crooked, (7) Turn, (8) Good, (9) Righteous.
2. (1) Jerusalem, (2) Mountain, (3) Hand, (4) Upright, (5) Wicked.

LESSON 24

Studies in the Psalms

GOD KEEPS HIS PEOPLE

Scripture Text - Psalm 121

AIM OF LESSON

To highlight the fact that God continually cares for His people.

BACKGROUND NOTES

This is the second of the fifteen Psalms (120 - 134) which bear the title 'A song of Ascents'. These psalms were probably used in the pilgrim festivals of the Old Testament church, being sung either by groups of pilgrims or individual pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem to take part in worship at the temple. (A pilgrim is a person who is travelling to a holy place.) Psalm 121 appears to have been used for the instruction of a pilgrim.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Work through the outline below, taking care to stress that Psalm 121 (or the singing of it) does not guarantee that Christians will have freedom from accident and trouble but does teach us that God is constantly working for the spiritual good of His children.

Outline

The opening words express the doubt of an inexperienced pilgrim -

'I lift my eyes up to the hills - where does my help come from?'

The hills are the hills of Jerusalem. This is the destination of the pilgrim but it seems far away. He wants to know where his help comes from now and he wonders who is to help him on the journey to the Holy city. This is his doubt - he fears that God is afar off and that he must journey without His help.

Verse 2 brings an answering voice - the voice of faith, either from an older and more experienced pilgrim, or from the pilgrim himself in response to his doubt. Perhaps voicing doubt has reminded him of his faith. At any rate the voice of faith now speaks -

'My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'

Here is the assertion of help available now. Jehovah, the covenant God who made heaven and earth, He is there to help. Ask the pupils if there is any greater help anyone could hope

to have. This helper has got heaven and earth at His disposal. He isn't limited to the holy city. He is ready and able to help in every situation and at any time.

From verse 3 the voice of faith continues to speak, addressing the doubting pilgrim and reassuring him that God is his help.

Verses 3 and 4 bring the assurance of God's continual providential care over us - there will not be even the slightest slip out of His way. We need have no fear that we will fall into trouble because of a moment's inattention on God's part.

Verses 5 and 6 deal with things that may have concerned the young pilgrim. There is the assurance that he will experience no harm by day or night. He will not suffer exhaustion from the heat of the sun for God will shade him, neither will the cold of the night harm him
for God will cover him.

Finally in verses 7 and 8 the voice of faith repeats his assertion of God's keeping, this time reassuring himself that God would keep him from all harm, watch over his life and watch over his coming and going both now and for evermore.

Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet

APPLICATION

This psalm expresses great confidence in God and in God's keeping of His people. However, we must not be naive. This cannot mean that the Christian is kept from sickness, accident and danger, for that would be contrary to the observed facts of life. Rather, as we take this psalm to express our own faith, even in the midst of sickness, accident or danger, we are called to exercise the same faith that Romans 8: 28 demands of us: 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them

who are the called according to his purpose.'

Often that will not appear to be true. We won't see the good but we believe it is there because God has said so. It is the same with the words of this psalm. Often it will seem to us that God is asleep, or that He has let our foot slip or some harm befall us. That's how it seems to us but God has said 'my thoughts are not your thoughts.' (Isaiah 55: 8). We think that harm has come to us, that our foot has slipped but God knows that those things have come into our lives simply to keep us in the pilgrim way to glory. The Lord is keeping us, not always from what we regard as being harmful, but if we trust Him, He will never let us suffer real harm and lose our promise of eternal life.

Complete Nos. 2 and 3 on the pupils' worksheet.

LESSON 25

God sends His Son

GOD PROMISES A SAVIOUR

Scripture Text - Isaiah 53

AIM OF LESSON

To show what Isaiah 53 says about the Saviour who was promised.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Genesis 3: 15 - Here we have the first reference in Scripture to the promise of a Saviour.

Part of Isaiah 53 is in the past tense. It would seem to be so clear in Isaiah's mind that he speaks as if the suffering and glory of Christ had already come to pass. Isaiah 53 was written several centuries before Calvary but it cannot possibly fit any person in history, other than Christ.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Talk to the class about what a promise is. Ask them if any of their parents have ever promised to give them something for their birthday. Normally people keep their promises but sometimes people don't. God makes promises to us too but He always keeps them.

Outline

Isaiah lived 700 years before Jesus came to earth. He was a man of God and God gave him messages from Himself for the people. The message in today's lesson is about the promise that God would send His Son to earth and it foretells how people would treat Him. Read the chapter with the class.

1. Most of the chapter concerns the suffering of Christ during His time on earth:
 - (a) physical - He was scourged, beaten and put to death on the cross (v 5).
 - (b) mental - He was treated as a criminal when He had done no wrong and everyone deserted Him in His greatest hour of need (vs 3 - 4).
2. The remainder of the chapter (vs 10 - 12) shows Christ's glory arising from the

perfect fulfilment of God's will. Emphasise that what Isaiah wrote was not only for the people 700 years before Christ, or even for the people who wrote about the happenings in the gospels: it was written also for people who lived after the Saviour's time on earth, e.g. the people to whom Paul was writing at Galatia and it was written for us. Ask the pupils to do No. 1 on their worksheet to bring out some of the truths Isaiah tells us God promised about the Saviour.

The answers are:-

Across - 4. death; 5. open; 6. grief; 7. rich; 13. dumb; 14. hid; 15. root

Down - 1. peace; 2. silent; 3. deceit; 5. our; 8. healed; 9. wounded;
10. tender; 11. sin; 12. lamb

Ask the pupils to complete No. 2 on their worksheet which will show them how the Scripture was fulfilled. The longer portions of Scripture might be read at home, later.

The answers are:- (a) John 12: 37 - 41, (b) Matt. 8: 16 - 17, (c) Rom. 4: 24 - 25,
(d) Matt. 26: 62 - 63, (e) Matt. 27: 57- 60, (f) Rom. 8: 32 - 34.

The pupils could complete No. 3 on their worksheet at home. When the puzzle is solved it will give the basic verse by which to remember the chapter in Isaiah 53: 6 - 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.'

APPLICATION

The salvation of His children was planned by God and the suffering and glory of the Saviour were part of that plan. Jesus came and suffered so that we can have fellowship with God if we trust in Him.

LESSON 26

God sends His Son

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Scripture Text - Luke 2: 1-24

AIM OF LESSON

To help the pupils to understand the various aspects of Jesus' birth and to be able to relate them to His unique work of salvation.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Luke sets the background to the story showing that God is the Lord of History who works through different kinds of people and different circumstances to fulfil His prophecies. For example: the emperor in Rome made a decree that a census should be taken; Joseph had to go to Bethlehem for this because he was of the family line of David and he took Mary with him; Jesus was due to be born just at that time. These factors combined together to fulfil the prophecy in Micah 5:2.

- Verse 1 - all the world - all the Roman empire.
- Verse 2 - taxed - a census taken.
- Verse 5 - espoused - betrothed or engaged.
- Verse 21 - circumcised on the 8th day - The Mosaic law required that all the male children should be circumcised when they were eight days old. Lev. 12:3.
- Verse 22 - purification - Under the Mosaic law there were four kinds of purification. The one referred to in Luke chapter 2 is the purification of a mother after childbirth. The mother was regarded as unclean for a period of seven days after the birth of a boy and 14 days after the birth of a girl. After the period of uncleanness there followed a period of purification lasting 33 days for a son and 36 days for a daughter. During this period the mother was not allowed to go into the sanctuary or touch any hallowed thing (see Lev. 12:1-8).
- Verses 22-24 - consecrated - 'present Him to the Lord' - The eldest son in all Israelite families was regarded as sacred to God because during their time in Egypt Israel's first born had been preserved by the sprinkling of the blood on the lintels and door-posts of the houses in which they

lived. Every first-born male was therefore brought to the sanctuary in acknowledgement of this fact and presented to God. Ex. 13:1-16; Num. 18:15.

In John 1:41 Jesus is referred to as the 'Messiah - the Anointed One'. This indicates that He was recognized as being different from other people and that His life on earth as a man was specially planned by God with a very specific purpose.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Many people commemorate Christ's birth on the 25th December each year. Ask the pupils to indicate the various things which people do on that day, e.g. give and receive presents, etc.

Outline

God planned the birth of Jesus and it was an important part of God's plan that Jesus should be born like any other person. Every detail was planned, right down to the name He was to be given which showed the work He was coming to do. The name 'Jesus' means 'God is Salvation'. Ask the pupils to complete No. 1 on their worksheet.

The promise was made to Adam and Eve that their descendant would come and crush Satan and destroy sin (Genesis 3:15). Through all the ups and downs of Israel's history, God kept a remnant of people faithful to Him and from this line Jesus was born. The Old Testament traces Jesus' family from Adam to Mary and Joseph.

Complete No. 2 of the pupil's worksheet by asking each pupil to look up one of the verses about the family tree and ask the others to write the answers down. The answers are:

1. Adam; 2. Abraham; 3. Isaac; 4. Jacob; 5. Judah; 6. David; 7. Solomon.

The birth of the baby Jesus was in many ways similar to the birth of any other baby. He was born into a family whose history was known and He was born at a certain time in history, when Caesar Augustus was Emperor of Rome, and at a certain geographical location. His mother was an ordinary young girl. He was circumcised when eight days old and He was consecrated at the age of six weeks.

The teacher should emphasize that although we know many details of Jesus' family and

birth, many other stories are mixed with the facts. For example, many people believe that Jesus was born on 25th December and that three wise men visited Him but these facts are not given in the Bible. Point out to the pupils that we can be sure only about what the Bible actually tells us. Ask the pupils to fill in details about Jesus on the 'census form' puzzle (No. 3 on pupils' worksheet).

Year of birth - when Caesar Augustus was Emperor

Place of birth - Bethlehem

Name of mother - Mary

Day of circumcision - 8th

Day of consecration - 6 weeks of age

Other Particulars - SON OF GOD; WITHOUT SIN; THE MESSIAH;
CAME TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS.

APPLICATION

While in some respects the birth of Jesus was similar to any other baby we should remember that in other ways it was different (recall the previous lesson). He was born as a human being but continued to be God. The circumstances of His birth, i.e. being placed in a manger because there was no room in the inn, pointed to obscurity, poverty and rejection. He was without sin, although He would experience the frailties and temptations of men. He was the Messiah of whom the prophets wrote. He would suffer, so that He would take the blame for the sins of God's children. Through Jesus' birth God fulfilled many prophecies and promises and we know that if we put our trust in God we can rely on Him to fulfil all His promises to us.

LESSON 27

God sends His Son

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Scripture Text - Luke 2:40-52

AIM OF LESSON

To show that Jesus was obedient to all His Father's will including obeying Mary and Joseph.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The Passover - This was the feast held annually by the Jews, to commemorate the night when God smote all the first born of Egypt but passed over those houses of the Israelites where blood had been sprinkled on the lintels and doorposts. The feast was observed in the court of the tabernacle or temple because it was not only a sacrament but also a sacrifice with the blood of the Passover lamb being sprinkled on the altar. This was why the Jews had to go to Jerusalem in Jesus' time to commemorate this feast. See Exodus 12 and Deuteronomy 16:1-8 for further details.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Ask the pupils what job they would like to do when they grow up. Ask them how they would find out about that job, e.g. from teachers at school, parents, friends, etc. Try to bring out the point that they must listen and ask questions if they are to fully understand what any job entails.

Outline

As Jesus grew up, He is likely to have been involved in Joseph's carpentry business. In Mark 6:3 Jesus is referred to as 'the carpenter'. However, apart from this and His visit to the Temple at the age of 12, the Bible does not tell us much about His early life.

Read verse 40. This tells us that He grew as a normal child, i.e. He needed larger clothing each year, He developed new skills as His muscles developed, and He gained a larger vocabulary. God's grace was also upon Him, a fact seen in His perfection. Although He was a normal child, He was sinless. The Passover Feast was observed one week in each year. It was special because it reminded the people of God's goodness to

them in bringing them out of Egypt and it looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. This was not necessarily Jesus' first trip to Jerusalem but it was a special trip because He was a child about to become a man.

Mary and Joseph seemed careless, perhaps, in not making sure Jesus was with them but He was probably considered old enough to look after Himself and they undoubtedly assumed He was travelling with other children of His own age in the group. Perhaps they did not notice He was missing until they set up camp at nightfall. Jesus was intrigued by the discussions of the teachers who expounded and explained the scriptures - our Old Testament - and He revealed unusual understanding by His intelligent questions.

Jesus may have seemed irresponsible but perhaps He assumed that His parents knew where to find Him and that they might expect Him to look after Himself. Mary was concerned and sorrowful at not being able to find her son and the tenor of her question demonstrates her annoyance. Jesus' response to Mary's question shows His awareness that He is the Son of God who had come to do His Father's will. In spite of their knowledge of Jesus' origin, Mary and Joseph did not fully understand the work and nature of the Child. His reply indicated His commitment to serve His Father in all things.

Read verses 40-51 and complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet. Honouring parents is part of God's moral law as expressed in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:12). Jesus kept the whole law of God perfectly, including this commandment to honour His earthly parents. Emphasize to the pupils that obedience to parents is a way of showing obedience to God.

Paul repeats this command in Eph. 6:1-3. Ask the pupils to complete No. 2 on their worksheet. Discuss how the pupils can be 'about their Father's business' as they grow up as children of God and complete No. 3 on their worksheet.

APPLICATION

We must always obey what God tells us to do in the Bible but we must also obey what our parents tell us to do provided that it is in keeping with the Bible. In this way we follow the example of Jesus.

LESSON 28

God sends His Son

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

Scripture Text - Luke 3: 1-17

AIM OF LESSON

To help pupils understand how John the Baptist prepared the people for the coming of Christ.

BACKGROUND NOTES

It would be helpful for teachers to look at a map of Palestine showing the regions of Judea, Samaria and Galilee. John the Baptist worked in the country around the River Jordan.

- 'tetrarch' - a governor of a fourth part of a country.
 'viper' - a very dangerous type of snake which bites and then injects poison into the wound caused by the bite. John referred to the multitude who came to him to be baptised as vipers.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Ask the pupils if they know of any roadworks in their area. Have a discussion about them and ask why they think that they were necessary. Help them to see that such works will eventually benefit them and other people in the area.

Outline

Read Luke 3:1-17 and discuss what is being talked about in these verses - is it the building of roads or the preparation of peoples' hearts to meet God? Discuss in particular Luke 3:3.

John taught the people that the kingdom of heaven was coming. They should get ready for it by turning away from their sins and seeking forgiveness. Talk about the sketches shown in No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet - these bumps and rocks may be keeping us away from Jesus. Another word for these problems is sin. Ask the pupils what they think should be filled in for John's occupation - e.g. prophet. Through the words of the prophet Isaiah, hundreds of years before, God not only told of Jesus' coming but also announced the work of John. Look up Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:1-3 and fill in the blank spaces in

No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet.

Help the pupils to see that the New Testament provides us with the correct interpretation of the Old Testament promises. Matthew says very clearly that John was the one that the prophet Isaiah was talking about. John's message is a clear call to changed lives and righteous living. He spoke specifically to the people of that day: religious leaders, despised tax collectors, soldiers and simple ordinary people who had problems.

Luke 3:10-11. People who wanted to show that they had repented and changed their way of living were told that they should share, give and care for others. The new life demands a change of focus - from self to others; from getting to giving.

Luke 3:12-13. 'Don't collect more than is legal', John says to the tax-collectors. The tax-collector had established a way of life - one of dishonesty and greed. Unless a complete change took place within, he was not apt to give up his chance to become rich at the expense of those he robbed. The very nature of his work provided a constant temptation to abandon his integrity. Only God's mercy could make him a new creature.

Luke 3:14. Soldiers, too, were often tempted - to the sins of unnecessary and unjust force, extortion and false accusations. John adds the very particular advice to them to be content with their wages.

Turn to No. 3 on the pupils' worksheet and let each pupil write his summary of what John said to each group. Discuss the answers with the other pupils.

APPLICATION

God is still calling men and women and young people to trust Him for forgiveness and turn away from sin. The world contains many selfish people who have no concern for the needs of others - either their physical need for food and clothing or their spiritual need. Even Sabbath School pupils are not free from temptation to greed, dishonesty, discontentment, bullying or bribery. They need to think about the demands of a new life following God's ways. Encourage them to be very specific and personal as they consider what they should do individually. Be certain each pupil understands the relationship of faith and works; that faith comes first and works should follow as evidence of repentance and trust in Christ.

Complete the lesson by asking the pupils to do No. 4 on their worksheet. This gives the characteristics of a true Christian.

LESSON 29

God sends His Son

CHRIST BAPTISED

Scripture Text - Matthew 3:13-17; John 1:29-34

AIM OF LESSON

To see the humanity of Christ, as shown in His baptism, and to see that He is also the Son of God.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Matthew 3:15 'to fulfil all righteousness' means 'to do what is right'

Matthew 3:17 'in whom I am well pleased', does not mean 'with whom I am delighted' but 'in whom my pleasure lies'.

John 1:29 'Lamb of God' - to the hearers of John the Baptist, the mention of a lamb is likely to have reminded them of the ones used in the temple sacrifices for peace offering (Lev. 3:6-8) and for the Passover (Ex. 12:1-28) and also perhaps of the suffering Lamb in Isaiah 53.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Introduce the lesson by reviewing last week's lesson using the questions in No. 1 of the pupils' worksheet. John preached in the area around Jordan. His message concerned the people's need for confession of sin, repentance and baptism. Ordinary people, tax-collectors and soldiers came to him.

Outline

1. Matthew 3:13-17 Read the account of Jesus' baptism in Matthew 3:13-17 and then ask the pupils to do No. 2 on their worksheet. Discuss their answers with them.

Note (a) John was not proud. Whether or not he fully realised that Jesus was the Messiah, he knew that Jesus was a good man, much better than himself. John knew that he himself was a sinner in need of repentance and of baptism as a sign of cleansing from sin.

- (b) God required John to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission

of sins and Jesus came to him in obedience of God's command (verse 15).

- (c) Jesus was perfect and sinless. He was baptised, not in order to be forgiven, but to identify Himself with sinners.
 - (d) At His baptism, Jesus showed Himself to be the representative of sinful people, for whom He was going to die.
2. John 1:29-34 Read this passage with the class and discuss the four questions listed in No. 3 on their worksheet, helping them to complete the answers.
- (a) See Background Notes. Every person who sins deserves the punishment of death - separation from God. In the Old Testament, God accepted the death of an animal, e.g. a lamb as a sacrifice for sins. Jesus died for all who would believe, so no more sacrifices needed to be made. He was the 'Lamb of God' (Leviticus 4:32-35).
 - (b) John knew that Jesus, the Messiah, was much greater than himself (verses 26-27).
 - (c) John baptised people because he knew that the Messiah would be revealed in this way (verse 31).
 - (d) Jesus was revealed as the Messiah when the Spirit descended on Him (verse 33).

Explain to the pupils that, when we confess our sin and acknowledge Christ as Saviour, we receive His Holy Spirit to help us in our Christian lives.

To revise this lesson ask the pupils to complete No. 4 on their worksheet.

APPLICATION

The story of Jesus' baptism is very important because it tells how Jesus came to be baptised, how God revealed Him there as being the Son of God, how Jesus identified Himself with mankind and how He was prepared for His ministry on earth by receiving the Holy Spirit.

LESSON 30

God sends His Son

CHRIST TEMPTED

Scripture Text - Matthew 4:1-11

AIM OF LESSON

To show how Jesus reacted when He was tempted by the devil.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Use the following idea to introduce the lesson:

'I know how you feel', is something we say to show our sympathy for others. We often think that God cannot possibly know how we feel when we are tempted but this story about Jesus shows that He does know. He understands because He lived on earth and was Himself tempted by the devil.

Outline

Temptation is something that usually promises pleasure or gain by doing wrong. Look at the two examples in No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet. Your pupils will identify readily with these temptations. Ask them to write down an example of a temptation which they have experienced in the space provided.

1. Matthew 4:1-4. Read these verses and discuss the following questions and comments. Point out that Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit of God, but was tempted by the devil, not God.
 - (a) How do we know that Jesus was really hungry? He had not eaten for forty days and was probably weak from lack of nourishment.
 - (b) Why would it have been wrong for Jesus to turn the stones into bread? God had led Jesus into the desert. Since it was God's will that He should be there, Jesus had to trust God for His provision.
 - (c) Could Jesus have turned the stones into bread? Yes. Look at later

examples of His power, such as turning water into wine and feeding five thousand people with one boy's lunch.

- (d) Why would it have been wrong for Jesus to display His power? Jesus' power was given to Him to glorify God, not for His own personal gratification or to please His followers or sensation-seekers.
 - (e) How did Jesus answer Satan? He used the Word of God. This answer comes from Deut. 8:3. By doing this Jesus acknowledged His obedience and dependence on His Father.
2. Matthew 4:5-7. When Satan tried to persuade Jesus to throw Himself off the temple he used Jesus' own weapon, the Word of God. The quotation in verse 6 is taken from Psalm 91:11-12.

Ask the pupils if they think Jesus could have summoned angels to help Him. Of course He could but Jesus again answered in the words of Scripture (Deut. 6:16) to say what Satan was suggesting was wrong: it was putting God to the test, to prove His promises were true.

3. Matthew 4:8-11. Jesus was the promised King who had come to set up His own kingdom. This was not to be done by bowing down to Satan but by defeating him. The defeat of Satan would come through Jesus' suffering and death. Satan was suggesting a way out.

Ask the pupils which commandment Satan was asking Jesus to break? It was the first commandment. 'You shall have no other gods before me'. Jesus used Deut. 6:13 to rebuke Satan - 'You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him'. This is another way of phrasing the first commandment. Jesus resisted the temptation to disobey God and forsake His plans for His people.

At this point ask the pupils to look at the illustrations in No. 2 on their worksheet and to write down the temptations each of the children may have. Bill may be tempted to be proud of his physique, to bully others, or to make fun of smaller, weaker boys. Jenny may be tempted to be proud of her good looks, to have scorn for those less good looking, or to be preoccupied with her appearance. Greg is tempted to lie, to allow someone else to take the blame, and to allow someone else to pay for the broken window.

Jesus was tempted like the pupils. He was tempted to use the power He was given for His own gain and glory rather than for pleasing God. We may be tempted to do this with the gifts God has given us, e.g. muscles, good looks, speech.

APPLICATION

Jesus' temptations were not like Sue's and Jim's but they were similar. God's children are often tempted to do something wrong so that they will gain from it e.g. cheat or tell lies. Jesus' temptation was to satisfy His physical need and human ambitions and to misuse the power God had given Him. Jesus overcame temptation and He is able to help those who are tempted. He sends His Spirit to give strength in time of temptation and to bring His Word to mind when temptation comes. To emphasize these points ask the pupils to complete No. 3 on their worksheet.

LESSON 31

God sends His Son

JESUS CHOOSES HIS DISCIPLES

Scripture Text - John 1:35-51

AIM OF LESSON

To identify the basic characteristics of a disciple of Christ.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The passage mentions 4 of the 12 disciples chosen by Jesus.

- Andrew - A fisherman of Bethsaida. He was previously a disciple of John the Baptist and was one of the first two called by Jesus. He appears to have had none of the boldness and impetuosity which characterised his brother Peter whom he was responsible for bringing to Jesus. It would seem that he was a very approachable person as it was to him that Philip brought the Greeks who wished to see Jesus (John 12:20-22).
- Simon Peter - Like his brother Andrew he was a fisherman from the town of Bethsaida. By nature he was impetuous, earnest, courageous and a born leader of men. He was the natural spokesman of the apostles and it was he who was the first to confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). He was always eager and impulsive, a man of action. It was he who cut off the High Priest's servant's ear, and later denied Jesus. Afterwards he became an outstanding teacher, a leader in the early church and the author of the two epistles which bear his name. In John 21:18-19, Jesus told Peter that he would die a martyr's death.
- Philip - He was a native of Bethsaida and a friend of Nathanael whom he brought to Jesus. Like some of the other disciples he did not always understand what Jesus was teaching. His faith was simple and his knowledge sometimes defective (see John 14:8-10).
- Nathanael - A native of Cana in Galilee, thought also to have been called

Bartholomew. He was brought to Jesus by Philip and was one of the people in the boat with Simon Peter when the miraculous draught of fish was caught (John 21:2).

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the pupils about their school football team or their hockey or netball teams. Help them to see that members of the team differ from one another in many respects. For example they may be from different backgrounds or have different levels of academic ability; some will be shy while others will be outgoing etc. Even their ability to play the game will differ e.g. the goal-keeper has particular skills which the others do not have. Point out, however, that despite their many differences they have all two things in common.

- (i) they were chosen for the team by someone (the school teacher)
- (ii) they are willing to play.

In some respects being a disciple of Jesus Christ has certain similarities to membership of a school's sports team.

Outline

Read John 1:35-51. Ask the pupils to complete No. 1 on their worksheet to identify the names of the four disciples mentioned in the passage. Using the Background Notes give the pupils a short pen-picture of each of these disciples. Stress the fact that they differed in background, temperament and ability. Some had been disciples of John the Baptist while others had not. Peter was brash and impulsive by nature while Andrew was of a quieter disposition. Some were more gifted than others. Peter wrote books of the New Testament. Make sure that the pupils understand that just as Christ's first disciples differed in many respects so too do present day Christians who are also disciples. They live in many different countries and include people of every colour, class and ability.

Ask the pupils to consider how these men became disciples of Christ and what special qualifications were necessary. Stress:-

1. The disciples were chosen by Christ

To emphasize this point ask the pupils to complete the 2nd column of No. 2 of their worksheet, i.e. 'the person who chose the disciples'. Help them to see that all the

disciples were chosen by Christ and this is exactly what happens today. Every person who becomes a Christian is chosen by God Himself.

2. Means used to bring them to Christ

Ask the pupils to complete the 3rd column of No. 2 of their worksheet. Stress the fact that except for Philip, other people were used by God to direct the disciples to Christ. This shows the importance of the witness of others. Christians today must also recognize this and tell their friends and neighbours about Jesus.

Help the pupils to see that the disciples did not all come in the same way. While all had to come individually to Christ, sometimes two or more were chosen at the same time. This also happens today with some people turning to Christ at huge rallies, others in conversation with a friend and some in the solitude of their own bedroom.

3. The disciples obeyed the call

To become a disciple it is necessary to obey the invitation of Jesus. Ask the pupils to complete No. 3 of their worksheet to find out how Andrew, Peter and John responded to Jesus' call. Point out that we too have to obey Jesus and yield our hearts and lives to Him.

To revise ask the pupils to complete No. 4 on their worksheet.

APPLICATION

1. God calls men and women, boys and girls through the reading and preaching of His Word. When we hear God's call we should respond and accept His Son as our Saviour and Lord.
2. We have a duty to tell others about Christ. This includes our friends as well as those whom we do not know so well. Ask the pupils to think about when they last told anyone about Jesus.
3. Suggest that we should pray that we may have the love of Christ in our hearts which will enable us to speak to others about Him.

LESSON 32

God sends His Son

JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE

Scripture Text - John 2:1-11

AIM OF LESSON

To show the great power of Jesus and how it should affect our lives.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Jewish marriages consisted of two parts:

- (i) The wedding procession. The bridegroom went to fetch his bride from her father's house to his own. It was a happy procession probably with music and dancing.
- (ii) The marriage supper. This was held in the bridegroom's house and it was the setting of this passage. There was great feasting which often lasted for days.

It is possible that the bride and bridegroom in this story were either close friends or relatives of Mary.

Verse 3 The lack of wine would be considered a sad disgrace and one that would not soon be forgotten.

Verse 4 ‘Woman’ was not a harsh expression: it was a gentle and courteous expression in the language used at that time.
 ‘What does your concern have to do with Me?’:
 Jesus wanted to make clear that His power was not at His mother's command.

Verse 6 ‘Water jars’: these would have been used by Jews for washing performed as a ritual custom. A feast like this would have had rules about ritual washing. Each water jar held about 25 gallons (120 litres).

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the pupils to answer the questions in the quiz (part 1 of the pupils' worksheet). They may answer individually or as a class, depending on the time available. The idea is to start them thinking about what a miracle is. Don't give them the correct answers yet. They will be looking at the questions again later.

Outline

Tell the pupils that they are going to look at Jesus' first miracle. Give them a brief introduction to the story, bringing out the fact that a Jewish wedding was an important social event. (See Background Notes).

Read John 2:1-11 with the pupils and go through the story to make sure that they have a firm grasp of what happened. Point out that

- (1) the wedding was such an important social event that it would have been a sad disgrace to the bride and groom if they had had to tell the guests that they hadn't any more wine to give them.
- (2) Jesus wanted to make clear that His power was not at Mary's command but nevertheless He respected her as His mother, was courteous to her and, in fact, fulfilled her request.
- (3) The wine Jesus produced was better than that which had been served beforehand.

Refer back to Part 1 of the pupils' worksheet. Ask the pupils if they want to change their minds about any of their answers and then discuss the correct answers with them. Answers - (a) (iii); (b) (iii); (c) (iv) (but all 4 could be correct); (d) (iv).

Read Part 2 of the pupils' worksheet with them.

APPLICATION

Jesus performed this miracle to show the glory of God and that He had special power.

The greatest miracle Jesus does is when He changes our lives which He does when we pray to Him and ask Him to forgive our sins.

Ask the pupils to complete Part 3 of their worksheet.

LESSON 33

God sends His Son

JESUS INTRODUCES HIMSELF AS THE PROMISED SAVIOUR

Scripture Text - Luke 4:14-30

AIM OF LESSON

To show that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in Jesus and to stress that we all still need Him as Saviour.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Luke 4:17-21 - The synagogue had no ministers as we know them. The ruler of the synagogue would ask someone to read from the scrolls and then preach to the people. The reader stood to read to show respect for God's Word and then sat to explain it. If some important person came to the synagogue, he would probably be asked to read.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

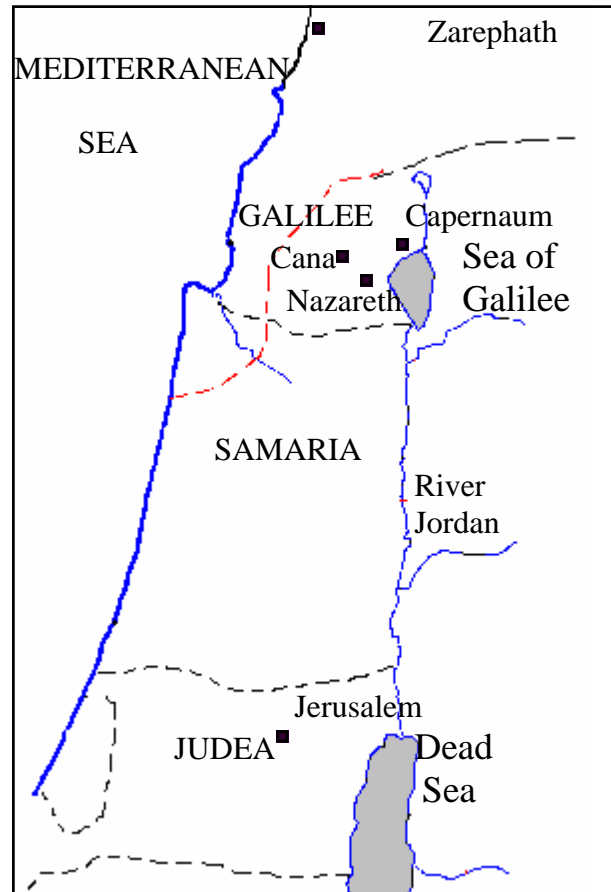
Talk to the class about home-comings. Ask if any of them have ever been away from home for several days and been glad to return. Ask if any of them have been to family reunions, with uncles, aunts and cousins, etc. Some may have met relatives who have come 'home' after living abroad for some time.

Outline

From the discussion lead on to the story of Jesus' homecoming to Nazareth. Use the map similar to the one on the next page to point out places mentioned in this and the last few lessons, e.g.

- Baptism - Jordan: Probably in Judea near the Dead Sea
- Temptation - In the wilderness, probably near the site of His baptism.
- Choosing disciples - Near Jordan, journeying towards Galilee.

In today's lesson, Jesus had been round the Galileean countryside preaching and healing and had returned to Nazareth where He had been brought up. On the Sabbath He went to the synagogue as He had done when He was a child.



1. Read Luke 4:14-20 with the class. Explain briefly the form of worship. (See Background Notes). Jesus was probably asked to read because He had come back after being away for a considerable time.

He turned to a passage which spoke about Himself (Is. 61:1-2). He rolled up the scroll and everyone listened eagerly to hear what He would say to them. Ask the pupils to decide what the expressions on the people's faces would be like and draw them on their worksheet. (Ask the pupils to do Part 1 in the pupils' worksheet).

2. Read verses 21-24. Jesus told the people the prophecy was coming true that very day. He was the one about whom Isaiah was speaking. The people were amazed. They had waited for the Messiah for so long; now this Man said that He was their Messiah, King and Deliverer but, to them, He was only the son of Joseph the carpenter.

They listened as Jesus spoke again. He knew they would want Him to do miracles for them as they had heard He had done in other regions like Capernaum. (Show pupils where Capernaum is on the map). Jesus said that, like other prophets before Him, He would not be accepted in His own town. He gave two examples from the history of Israel. Allow the class to recount these

examples if they can and encourage them to look them up at home. The references are: 1 Kings 17:8-24 and 2 Kings 5. Explain, if necessary, that Elias is the old English form of Elijah and Eliseus is the old English for Elisha. Let them fill in the blanks in Part 2 on the pupils' worksheet. The nation of Israel had rejected God and His prophets, so Elijah had gone to Zarephath (outside Israel - see map) and Naaman, whom Elisha healed from his leprosy, was from Syria, north-east of Israel.

Jesus was telling the people that these prophets had been sent to Gentiles (non Jews) because the Jews had rejected them. Now He said the same would happen to the Messiah. To emphasize this ask the pupils to do Part 3 of their worksheet. The following should be underlined:-

- (a) i; iv;
- (b) i; iii;
- (c) ii; iv;
- (d) iii.

- 3 Read the people's reaction in verses 28-30 and ask the pupils to draw the new expressions of anger on their faces (Part 4 on their worksheet). The people who had listened eagerly became violent and wanted to kill Jesus.

APPLICATION

Ask the pupils why the people didn't understand and discuss their answers.

The people in Nazareth wanted their Messiah King to banish the Romans from their land and to free their friends who were in prison. They did not see that they were all prisoners. They did not need a king to set them free from chains, instead they needed the King to set them free from sin. Their real oppressor was not the Roman army in Nazareth; it was the sin in their hearts. Point out to your pupils that they, too, need to be set free. If they have not trusted Jesus to be their Saviour, then they are slaves to Satan and to sin. Read part 5 of their worksheet with them.

LESSON 34

Studies in Joshua

RAHAB AND THE SPIES

Scripture Text - Joshua 2

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God is with those who trust and obey Him.

BACKGROUND NOTES

After 40 years wandering in the wilderness the Children of Israel were brought at last to the borders of the Promised Land. Joshua had succeeded Moses as leader of the Israelites. He decided to send two men to spy out the land of Canaan and especially the city of Jericho which stood at the entrance to the mountain passes into the Promised Land.

Rahab - She seemed to have heard about the God of the Israelites and some of His great deeds and seemed prepared to trust herself to His power and mercy. Thus it was faith which saved her.

Spies - Returned to Joshua after three days, probably by swimming the Jordan, with their report of the utter despondency and alarm of the Canaanites.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Ask the pupils if they have ever done something very secretly because they didn't want anyone else to know. (Perhaps sometime they were making a special present for mum or dad and they had to be very careful that mum or dad didn't know or see what was going on.) Let the pupils give examples of secret things and discuss what was involved. Continue by talking about spies and what they do.

Outline

Relate this story using the outline below - then revise it using the questions and verse references in No. 1 of the pupils' worksheet. Joshua was now the leader of the Children of Israel. It was about time for all the people to go into their new country. Joshua chose two men and asked them to be spies for him (verse 1). He wanted his spies to find out about the city called Jericho which was a short distance away on the other side of the river Jordan. The spies set out secretly and entered the city of Jericho. The first house

they came to belonged to a woman named Rahab. She often had people staying in her house but she guessed that these two men were spies and that people would soon be looking for them.

Rahab knew a little about their God. She knew she should help these spies because she had heard of the great things their God had done (verses 9-11). So she took them up onto the roof and hid them under some bundles of flax.

Soldiers came to look for the spies but they were safely hidden and Rahab didn't give them away. When it was safe again Rahab helped the two spies down from the roof. She said she would help them to escape but first of all she asked them to make her a promise. She asked that when the Children of Israel came to attack Jericho, they would make sure that she and her family were kept safe (verses 12-13).

The spies promised to save Rahab and her family (verse 14) but only if she promised to keep their visit and escape a secret. She then let them down by a scarlet rope through the window (verse 15), outside the wall. The spies told her to tie this rope in the window (verse 18). By this the Israelites would know that Rahab lived in that house and so she would be protected. She did this when the spies left (verse 21). This showed that she believed the Israelites would be back.

The spies hid in the mountains for three days until the men from Jericho who had been searching for them had gone back (verse 22). They then returned to Joshua. They told him that they believed that the city of Jericho would indeed fall into their hands (verses 23-24).

Complete No. 1 on the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

1. God's provision - He looked after Rahab and He used her to keep the spies safe. He looks after us too.
2. Rahab's faith - She did what she believed God wanted her to do. It was dangerous for Rahab and the spies to be doing what they were doing but they were acting in obedience to God and were trusting in Him. We can love, trust and obey God too, even though He gives us hard things to do, knowing that He will be with us and will protect us, just as He protected Rahab and the spies.

Complete No. 2 on the pupils' worksheet in class or at home.

LESSON 35

Studies in Joshua

THE FALL OF JERICHO

Scripture Text - Joshua 6

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God keeps His promises to those who trust and obey Him.

BACKGROUND NOTESJericho

A very old city, well provided with water by a natural spring. The walls of the city were very thick in places and strong enough to have houses like Rahab's built on them. It must have looked quite a fortress to the Israelites. Yet here God demonstrated His power. He did not choose to work on His own but through the willing obedience of His people.

Fall of Jericho

What the Israelites did, in obedience to God's command, must have seemed foolish to the inhabitants of Jericho but this was the means God used to bring about the fall of the city. NB Jericho was destroyed because of its sin. If it had been allowed to stand it would have been a danger to the Israelites, tempting them to worship other gods and disobey God.

Trumpets of rams' horns (verse 4)

These were not military trumpets but were trumpets which were devoted to the worship of God: a reminder that God would fight the battle.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Estimate or ask the children to measure the length or width of the room in which you are sitting. Tell them that the walls of the city of Jericho were 10 metres (30 feet) high and thick enough to have houses built on them - they were built of dried mud as hard as bricks. Try to imagine how strong these walls would have been.

Outline

Briefly revise last week's lesson about the strength and importance of Jericho, Joshua sending spies to observe the city and the meeting with Rahab.

Describe today's topic using the following outline and the map in the pupils' worksheet.

The camp of the Israelites was very near to the city of Jericho. The city gates were kept locked; no-one was allowed to go out or come in. If God had not helped the Israelites they would never have entered the city. The Lord told Joshua how the people might take the city. Joshua arranged everything as God had commanded. First came thousands of soldiers marching. Then came seven priests with seven trumpets, followed by priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant. Last of all came more soldiers.

This procession marched around the city, the priests blowing their trumpets, but the soldiers were silent. When they had gone around the city once, the soldiers returned to their tents. This was repeated for six days. On the morning of the seventh day, the soldiers started very early. They were going to march around the city seven times instead of only once. Six times they marched round in silence, except for the blowing of the trumpets but the seventh time the priests blew a long blast on their trumpets. Joshua cried to the people, 'Shout, for the Lord has given you the city.' In that instant every man shouted and the walls crashed down. The soldiers ran into the city. All the people of Jericho were killed, even the oxen, sheep and asses were destroyed, as the Lord commanded.

Only Rahab and her family were saved, as the spies had promised. (Recall last week's lesson at this point.) After that Rahab lived among the Israelites and worshipped the true God for the rest of her life.

Revise the story using Nos. 1 and 2 of the pupils' worksheet.

APPLICATION

It was only through careful obedience to God's plans that the Israelites successfully captured Jericho and so laid claim to their first foothold in Canaan. God is great. He has power to do anything.

Joshua, the Israelites and Rahab believed that God could do great things. They showed this by their obedience and they weren't disappointed.

The instructions God gave must have seemed foolish but they obeyed nevertheless. They knew that what God said, He would do. So they trusted Him and did what He told them. God wants us to trust Him and always do the things He tells us to do because He always keeps His word to us.

Complete No. 3 on the pupils' worksheet in class if there is time, or at home.

LESSON 36

Studies in Joshua

ACHAN'S SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Scripture Text - Joshua 7

AIM OF LESSON

To show that disobeying God brings His anger and punishment.

BACKGROUND NOTES

In Joshua 6:18-19 God had said that when Jericho fell to the Israelites, they were not to loot anything, either the devoted things, or silver, gold, brass or iron. If they did, the Israelites would be destroyed. In other words, all the people would suffer if a few sinned.

"Accursed things" (Joshua 7:1) refers to this loot.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**Introduction**

Every Saturday in the winter time hundreds of thousands of people go to watch football matches in Great Britain. While the majority go to enjoy the game, occasionally a few go primarily to create trouble. Ask the pupils if they have ever seen a match on television where the police have had to go into the crowd to restore order. Sometimes the trouble is considered so serious that the ground has to be closed for a few weeks and no spectators are allowed in to watch the matches. Help the pupils to see that when this happens large numbers of innocent people are made to suffer because of the activities of a few.

Outline

Today's story follows the destruction of the city of Jericho by the Children of Israel. God had told them that they must not take any loot or plunder from Jericho: to do this would be to disobey His commands.

1. Read verses 1-5 with the class. Show how Achan disobeyed God's command and this led to the Israelites being defeated as a punishment.
2. Summarise verses 6-9 as follows: Joshua and the elders of the people bowed down before the Ark of the Lord until the evening. Joshua prayed that the

Israelites would not be defeated because that would bring scorn upon God from the people of the area.

3. Read verses 10-12 with the class. These show that God cannot tolerate disobedience to His word.
4. Summarise verses 13-19. God sent Joshua to tell the people to consecrate (make holy) themselves for the following day. They were to present themselves tribe by tribe, a chosen tribe would be brought forward clan by clan, a chosen clan brought forward family by family, a chosen family man by man until God chose the man who had sinned. He would then be destroyed with his belongings.

This was done and Achan was brought forward. Joshua asked him to confess his sin and say what he had done against God.

5. Read verses 20-26 with the class. These tell us the result of Achan's sin involving both himself and all the people.

APPLICATION

God punished Achan for his sin. God had given the people a command and Achan had disobeyed. God has also given us commands in His Word, the Bible. He wants us to obey them and bring glory to Him, rather than disobey and have to be punished. Other people can also suffer as a result of our sin, as happened in this story.

To revise today's lesson complete the crossword on the pupils' worksheet in class, if there is time, or at home.

Answers to crossword:

Across

5	Israel	17	Christ
7	Thirty	18	Stoned
8	Judah	20	Judah
9	Garment	21	Spy
12	Ark	22	Jericho
14	Punish	24	Six
15	Gold	25	Jesus
		26	Sheep

Down

1	Ai	13	Takes
2	Silver	15	Great
3	Tent	16	Donkeys
4	Glory	17	Carmi
6	Achan	19	Daughters
8	Joshua	20	Joshua
10	Tore	21	Sons
11	Babylon	23	Cattle
12	Achor		