

Justice Wins the Day

May 3, 2020—Lesson 10

Background Scripture: Zephaniah 3 • **Lesson Scripture:** Zephaniah 3:1-2, 5, 12-13

Key Verse: The LORD . . . is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail. (*Zephaniah 3:5*)

Lesson Objective: The students will begin to understand the importance of justice and peace.

Materials Needed: *Middle Elementary* student books, Bibles (NIV), paper, transparent tape, an instrumental praise music CD and CD player, markers, crayons or coloring pencils, index cards, scissors. (**Optional:** whiteboard and dry-erase markers; Older Children’s Resource Kit [attendance chart and lesson 10 materials].)

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BEGINNING THE JOURNEY



✂ If you purchased the Older Children’s Resource Kit, post the attendance chart and purchase stickers (such as stars) to place on the chart. Also, gather any materials that may be needed for any of the activities for this lesson prior to class (found in the Teacher’s Guide of the Resource Kit).

✂ Prior to class, clear the center of the classroom to facilitate ease of movement for the students.

Welcome and Worship

Welcome the students and their parents or guardians to the classroom. Acknowledge any visiting students. Open the class with a weekly check-in, letting students who desire to do so give a praise report or prayer request. Then pray or ask a volunteer to lead the class in prayer. Complete the roll call and then collect any offerings the students or any others may have brought.

Opening Activity

Gather the students into the center of the classroom and have them stand in a circle. The students will participate in a “Listen/Follow and Obey” game. This game is a version of “Simon Says”—but instead of “Simon Says,” it will be “Teacher Says.”

Instruct the students to listen closely to the instructions and then to follow any command that begins with the words “Teacher says.” These commands can be “hop in place,” “touch your toes,” “chirp like a bird,” etc. Be sure to throw in some commands that “teacher” *does not* say. As the students fail to obey a command, they are called out and have to sit out the rest of the game. Play until the time allotted for this exercise expires, or until there is only one person left in play.

Say: Today’s lesson is about how the land that is God’s holy land is peaceful and just.

Help the students understand that we are all required to deal fairly and honestly with one another. Help them understand that the prophet Zephaniah proclaims that the day will come when God’s people will once again experience justice and peace.

Prepare the students for the Bible story.

BIBLE VOYAGE



The Bible Story

Always encourage your students to bring Bibles (New International Version) to class. Have extra Bibles available for classroom use.

You may choose to read today’s Scripture passage to the students from the Bible first. Then, using the student books, let volunteers take turns alternating reading different paragraphs of the Bible story aloud.

Justice Wins the Day

At this time in Bible history, Jerusalem (Israel) did not trust in God. It is sad that Jerusalem was so *wicked* (evil) and *sinful* (full of wrongdoing) that it hurt its own people. The people were wicked and stubborn and would not listen even to the voice of the Lord God. The people did not listen, and they could not even be taught to do what is right. They did not trust God and would not worship their God.

But God’s presence was still in the city. God does no wrong. He is always good. Every day, He shows justice and fairness toward the people. And though the people could trust in the Lord God, they were not ashamed of the evil things that they did.

Only those who are lowly and humble will be left to survive in the city. They will put their trust in God completely. The Israelites who survived would be different. They would not do anything wrong. They would not lie to one another. They would not try to *deceive* (trick) one another. They would be like sheep that eat and lie down—no one would bother them.

After reading the story, discuss the following:

1. What happened to the people in Jerusalem? (*They were overtaken by crime and violence in their city.*)
2. What did God bring to the people in the city every day? (*God brought justice to the people every day.*)
3. How did the people react to God's justice? (*They were not ashamed in paying no attention to God's justice.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

Mining for Words

Give the students pencils and provide time for them to complete the activity in their student books. Assist as needed. After they complete the activity, allow any students who wish to do so to share their word lists with the class. Point out similarities and differences in word choices. (You may create a word list of your own comprised of words that the students may not think of.) Accept only words that can be found in the dictionary.

The Contemporary Story

Read the story to the class, or let the students take turns alternating reading different paragraphs/sentences of the story aloud.

Sharing Is Caring, Right?

"I can't believe we finally got it!" Jonas said to his friend Michael. When the new *StarDestroyer* game came out a few weeks ago, Jonas did not have enough money to get it on his own. But when he and Michael put their allowances together, it was just enough to buy the game.

"You get it this week, and I get it next week," Michael said. "Deal?"

"Deal!" Jonas agreed and shook Michael's hand. But before Jonas knew it, his week was almost up. He was not even close to finishing and Michael was going to want his turn on the game. Jonas wanted to see if Michael could wait another week or two for him to finish the game.

"I know you want to beat it first, but I've been waiting all week to start it," Michael said. "I promise you'll get it back next week. But I really want to start playing it now."

Jonas thought about what to do on his last day of the week with the game. He could hold onto it until he finished—or he

could give it to Michael like he promised to do. What would *you* do?

Then, discuss the following questions:

1. What did Jonas and Michael do? (*They pooled their money and bought a new video game together to share.*)
2. What did Jonas want Michael to do? (*He wanted Michael to forget about their agreement and let Jonas keep the game until he finished playing.*)
3. How would you have handled the situation? (*Responses will vary but you are looking for students to say that they would honor their agreement and give the game to their friend, which is only fair.*)

Exploring the Story in Ruby's Lab

Say: As you listen to Ruby, think about what she says. After we read this section, we will go back and discuss her questions, statements, and observations.

Let one or two students read Ruby's words aloud. Discuss Ruby's words with the students. Discuss with the students how important it is to be fair with people. Discuss with the students how they would feel if someone treated them unfairly or tried to go back on his or her word to suit his or her own interests.

Fill in the Letters

Give the students pencils and provide time for them to complete the activity in their student books. Help any students who struggle with figuring out the answers. After they complete the activity, review the answers aloud.

Completed Verse: The Lord . . . is righteous, he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail. (Zephaniah 3:5)

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Bring the lesson to a close by reviewing the Key Verse and the lesson.

Ask: Why is it important to care for those who are poor or powerless? What does it mean to be restored by God? Why are we required to be just, fair, and honest with people? (*Pause for responses and discussion.*)

Respond to any remaining questions that the students might have. End the class session with prayer.

Justice Wins the Day

May 3, 2020—Lesson 10

Background Scripture: Zephaniah 3 • **Lesson Scripture:** Zephaniah 3:1-2, 5, 12-13

Key Verse: The LORD . . . is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail. (*Zephaniah 3:5*)

Lesson Objective: The students will hear about the importance of acting fairly and honestly with peers.

Materials Needed: *Upper Elementary* student books, Bibles, star stickers, pens, pencils, index cards, markers, coloring pencils, copier paper, sturdy white card stock, construction paper, glitter glue, gems, other decorating items, scissors, tape. (**Optional:** Older Children's Resource Kit [lesson 10 materials].)

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BEGINNING THE JOURNEY



✂ If you purchased the Older Children's Resource Kit, post the attendance chart and purchase stickers (such as stars) to place on the chart. Also, gather any materials that may be needed for any of the activities for this lesson prior to class (found in the Teacher's Guide of the Resource Kit).

✂ Prior to class, gather the needed supplies and arrange the classroom to facilitate student participation in the scavenger-hunt activity. Also, write the words of the phrase "Justice Wins the Day" on index cards (one word per card); do this for two sets of cards. Then tape each of the cards underneath different chairs and tables in the classroom.

Welcome and Worship

Arrive 15-20 minutes prior to class for planning and setup. Greet the students by name as they enter the classroom. Introduce yourself as the teacher and your assistant (if applicable). Acknowledge any visitors. Ask for a volunteer to open the class session with a prayer. Collect any offerings the students may have brought and take attendance. (*Optional:* The attendance chart found in the Leadership Resource Kit for Older Children may be posted to keep attendance, placing a star sticker on the chart for each student every day of his or her presence in class.)

Opening Activity

Split up the class into two teams (unless there is a very small number of children present). Invite the teams to look under the tables and chairs in the room to discover the cards containing the words of the phrase "Justice Wins the Day" (altogether, each set should be comprised of four [4] cards). Let them know the number of cards they are

looking for so they will know when they find all of them. Once they have found all of them, lead the students to arrange the cards to put the words of the phrase in order. Whichever team (if applicable) finds their cards, arranges them in the proper order, and reads the phrase aloud first wins.

Ask: What do you think the title of today's lesson means? (*Pause for responses and examples.*)

Discuss with the students that today they are going to learn about another minor prophet, Zephaniah.

Prepare the students for the Bible story.

BIBLE VOYAGE



The Bible Story

Have extra classroom Bibles (New International Version) if possible. For those who may not have a personal Bible, try to provide a checkout loan procedure whereby the students return the Bibles every so often so that they can then be rotated out to other students.

Let the students read the Scripture passage from the Bible first. Then, have them take turns alternating reading different paragraphs of the Bible story printed in their student books aloud.

Justice Wins the Day

Woe to sinful Jerusalem! At this time in Bible history, the city was full of violence and crime. Jerusalem had rebelled against God. Even when she had been wrong, Jerusalem would not accept correction from the Lord. God called to His people over and over, but in pride they turned away. They listened to no one, not even the voice of God. Jerusalem refused to be corrected. They would not worship their God.

The city of Jerusalem was *wicked* (evil), yet the Lord was righteous in their midst. God continued to be faithful and trustworthy every day. He continued to distribute justice and

the Israelites continued to sin. The people did not trust in God. Israel did not draw near to God. But God's presence was still in the city. God does no wrong. He is always good. Every day, He shows justice. God does not fail, even when no one is listening.

The wicked were not ashamed of the things they were doing. Those who were left—the remnant—turned to God. They would be the meek and humble. They would trust in the name of the Lord and would not sin. They would be faithful to God and would not worship idols. They would be honest, and they would not tell lies. They would live lives that were pleasing to God and would live in peace. Those who followed and obeyed God would lie down in safety, and no one would make them afraid.

Ask: What were some ways in which Israel was disobedient to God? (*They did not trust God; they were not sorry for their sins; they lied.*) What is another word for “a small amount”? (*Remnant.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Let the students take turns alternating reading different paragraphs of the first part of the contemporary story aloud.

We Are Winners! (Part 1)

“Dad, I’m nervous about the game today. We are playing a team that’s undefeated,” Jamillah explained.

“Your team is undefeated too. I think it’s going to be a great game,” Dad noted.

“I’m not so sure; I heard they have some players that are over the age limit. It’s all over social media,” Jamillah commented.

“That information can’t be true. I don’t think they would cheat to win a few softball games,” Dad argued.

“Look at this picture of their team. They look older than a lot of the girls on my team. It’s not going to be a fair game,” Jamillah responded.

“I believe in your team. Let’s see what happens tonight during the game,” Dad said.

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Let students volunteer to read the information in this section aloud. Allow time for the students to respond to and discuss any questions that are posed.

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Let the students take turns alternating reading different paragraphs of the second part of the contemporary story aloud.

We Are Winners! (Part 2)

“I was so nervous before the game started,” Jamillah

admitted. “But the coach talked to us and said that we didn’t need to worry about the other team. We just needed to play the game like we always do.”

“That was good advice. It looks like everyone followed it too,” Dad noted.

“At first, I didn’t want to. I didn’t think it was fair to play older girls, but then I remembered what you said. I believe in my teammates too,” Jamillah responded.

“You all played a great game, and I think today you learned more than how to play softball. You also learned that no matter if you win or lose, it’s important to be honest—which makes you a winner every time,” Dad explained.

Ask: Why was Jamillah concerned about the upcoming softball game? What advice did her mother give? What advice did the coach give? (*Pause for responses and discussion.*)

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Let students volunteer to read the information in this section aloud. Allow time for the students to respond to any questions that are posed, offering insight as deemed necessary.

Decode the Message

Allow the students time to complete the activity in their student books. Assist as needed. After the students complete the activity, review the answer aloud.

Decoded Message: “The Lord is righteous; He does no wrong.”

Make a Door Hanger

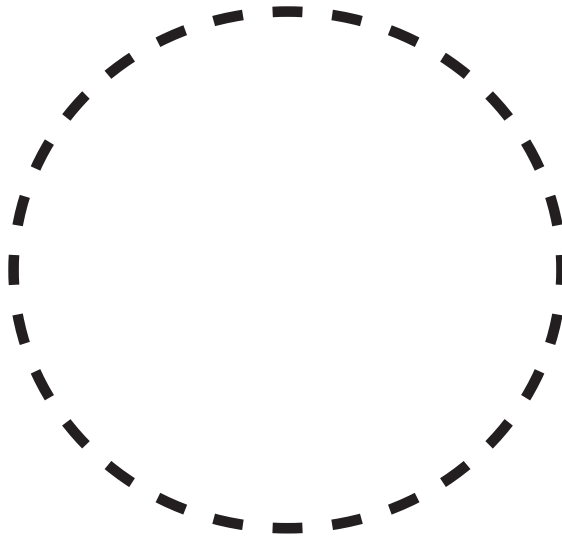
Refer to the reproducible activity (*page 71*) and, using sturdy white card stock and/or construction paper, make a copy of the page for each student in your class. Distribute a door hanger to each student. Allow the students to decorate the door hanger, using glitter glue, gems, and other classroom art supplies. Help the students to cut it out and then cut out the large hole. Encourage the students to take home their door hangers as a reminder of today’s lesson.

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Assemble the class to reflect on the main points of the lesson by focusing on the central characters, places, conflicts, etc. Take a few minutes to review the Key Verse from today’s lesson. Also, take the time to answer any questions that the students might have. Ask for a volunteer to end the class session with a prayer, encouraging him or her to include some aspect related to the lesson in the prayer.

Upper Elementary Reproducible
Lesson 10

Make a Door Hanger



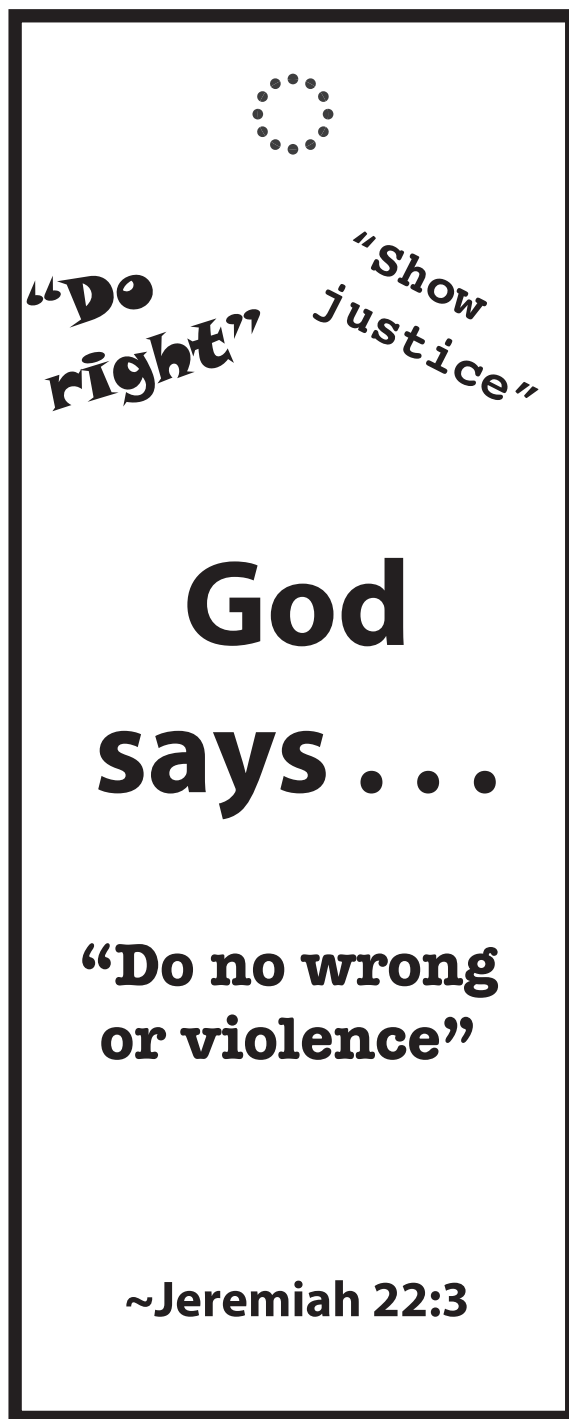
**The LORD is
righteous;
He does no
wrong!**

(Zephaniah 3:5a)

Upper Elementary Reproducible

Lesson 13

Make a Bookmark



Answers for Extra Activities

MIDDLE ELEMENTARY

Extra Activity 1

Colorings will vary. (*page 59 of student book*)

Extra Activity 2

Differences in picture #2 to be circled: there is another bare tree in the distance in the left panel; there is an owl on the tree branch in the left panel; the orange bush turned to yellow in the right panel; there is a bird in the sky in the right panel; there is a brown cow in the right panel; the petals of the flower under the cow in the foreground of the right panel turned from yellow to purple (*page 60 of student book*)

Extra Activity 3

Drawings of the events from lesson 6 will vary. (*page 61 of student book*)

Extra Activity 4

Colorings will vary. (*page 62 of student book*)

Extra Activity 5

Differences in picture #2 to be circled: the head and facial hair of the man standing in the back turned from black to gray; there is a tall vase standing on the floor between the two left-most pillars; the standing woman on the left now has on a necklace, and her headband turned from yellow to pink; Solomon now has on a ring on his left hand, and his beard turned from black to blue; the hair of the kneeling woman turned from black to yellow (*page 63 of student book*)

Extra Activity 6

Drawings of the events from lesson 11 will vary. (*page 64 of student book*)

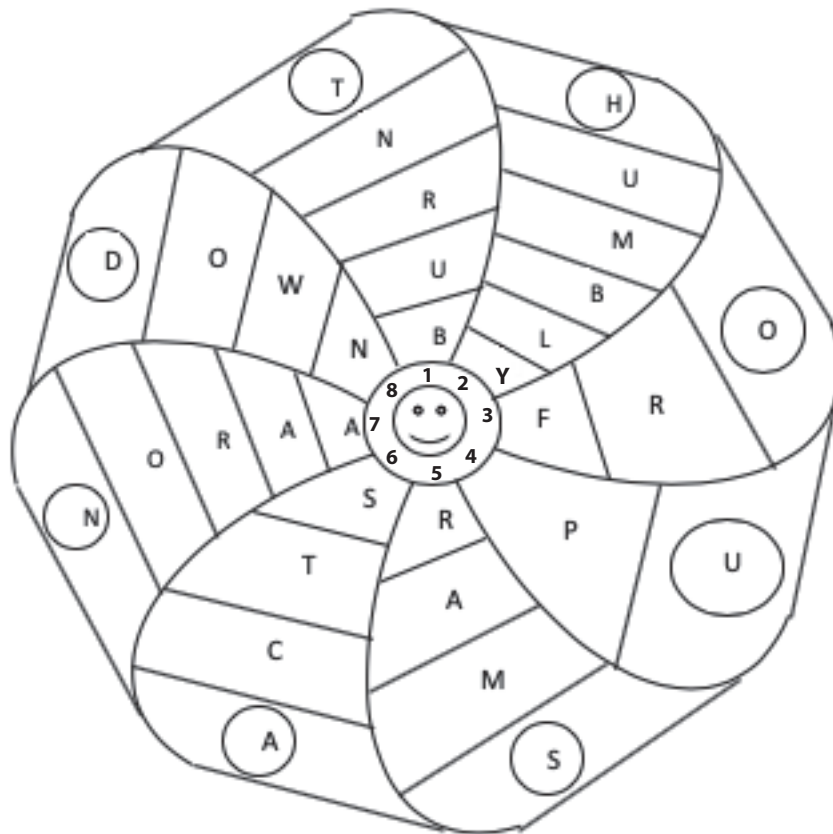
Answers for Extra Activities

UPPER ELEMENTARY

Extra Activity 1

Decoded Message: “Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (*page 44 of student book*)

Extra Activity 2



Completed Statement: Will the Lord be pleased with . . . ten thousand rivers of olive oil?

(*page 45 of student book*)