

Better Days Are Coming

May 10, 2020—Lesson 11

Background Scripture: Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17 • **Lesson Scripture:** Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17

Key Verses: [God said,] “I will save my people . . . I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be . . . their God.” (*Zechariah* 8:7, 8a)

Faith Block: God gives us good days.

Lesson Objectives: The children will hear about the conditions of living that God promised upon Israel’s return to the homeland.

Materials Needed: *Picture Lesson Cards*, Bible, a rug, markers, crayons, line-art coloring pictures related to today’s lesson, yellow construction paper, preprinted strips that read “Better and brighter days are coming,” scissors, glue, poster board, pictures of people worshipping God and living peacefully, blocks, books, other toddler toys, (**optional:** Pax the Penguin; Younger Children’s Resource Kit [lesson 11 materials]).

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A BEGINNING BLOCK

✂ Prior to class, create enough circles (cut out of yellow construction paper) and preprinted strips for each student. Collect pictures of people praising God; glue them to the poster board.

Welcome: Greet the parents as they bring their children into the room. Engage any children who arrive early—with blocks, books, and other toddler toys—in order to maintain their attention. Gather the children and help them settle down when you are ready to begin class.

Opening Worship and Activity: Let the children know that prayer time is when we talk to God. Tell the children to bow their heads and close their eyes, and then lead them in prayer.

Have the children sit down at the classroom table or let them sit on an area rug on the floor. Show the children the poster. Encourage and help them to identify the images that they see.

Say: God wants to have a relationship with us.

Prepare the class for the Bible story.

B BIBLE STORY BLOCK

The Bible Story: Hold up the lesson 11 Picture Lesson Card where all the students can see it. Point to the images and see if the children can name the artwork shown. Assist as needed.

Say: God wants His people to come near to Him.

Read or tell the Bible story to the children and review it with them afterward.

Better Days Are Coming

God always wants what is best. When we do wrong, God sometimes punishes us.

God had punished the people of Jerusalem in the past. But He promised the people that better days were coming. Old men and women, as well as young boys and girls, would be in the streets. It would be a great sight. God would save the Israelites. They would return to their land. God would be their God, and they would be God’s people. They would have food, and God would bless them. The people should be loving and truthful to each other.

C STACKS OF FUN

Brighter Days: Pass out art supplies, a yellow circle (sun), and a preprinted strip to each child. Help them glue their strip onto their circle.

Say: God promises that better days are coming!

☺ **Words from Pax the Penguin:** Present Pax to the class. (See the *Early Elementary* teacher book, pages 35–36, for suggestions on how to present Pax.) The script for Pax appears below.

Pax: Hello, girls and boys! In today’s lesson, did God agree that the people would return to their land? (*Pause for responses.*) Yes. Now, let’s thank God that He keeps His promises. Repeat after me: “Thank You, God (*pause*), for Your promises.” Good job, boys and girls.

Let Pax wave good-bye and/or hug the children.

D CLOSING BLOCK

Have the children repeat the Faith Block after you. Afterward, say the prayer on the Picture Lesson Card. Distribute the Picture Lesson Cards to parents/guardians when they arrive to pick up their children.

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Faith Block: God makes things better!

Lesson Objective: The children will hear about how God chose to help Jerusalem.

Materials Needed: *Preschool* student books, Bibles, star-shaped stickers, pencils, crayons or coloring pencils, reward stickers, markers, old pennies and pencil erasers, (**optional:** Pax the Penguin; Younger Children’s Resource Kit [lesson 11 materials]).

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A BEGINNING BLOCK

✂ Prior to class, secure enough pencil erasers for each child to have one.

Welcome: Greet the children and parents with a warm and inviting smile. Tell the children how glad you are to see them.

Opening Worship and Activity: After the students are seated, open the session with prayer. Then collect the children’s offerings. Thank them for their offerings. Briefly tell the children that today they will hear about how God decided to make things better for His people.

Give each child a pencil eraser. Then give them each a few old pennies (they must be old and brown). Tell them that they can make the pennies look better by rubbing the eraser over them. Allow time for the children to erase their old pennies and enjoy their reaction when the pennies begin to shine.

When finished with this activity, prepare the children for the Bible story.

B BIBLE STORY BLOCK

The Bible Story: Say: We made our old pennies look better. Now, let’s listen carefully to the story to find out how God decided to make things better for His people.

Read the Bible story to the children and then review it with them afterward.

Better Days Are Coming

God gave a message to Zechariah. This was the message: “I love the people of Jerusalem and want to help them.” God said He would make Jerusalem a great city again where people would be happy.

God’s plan was to bring peace to all the people who loved

Him. Enemies from other lands had come to make life hard for the people. But God was going to put an end to all of that. People all around would see that God had blessed His people.

God told them to have courage and not be afraid. Better days were coming!

Bible Story Application: Refer to the lesson 11 Bible Story Application (*page 67*) and teach the children the sing-along “Blessings for Jerusalem.”

☺ **Words from Pax the Penguin:** If you purchased Pax the Penguin, use the script printed in the *Early Elementary* teacher book for lesson 11 (*page 58*). See suggestions on how to present Pax on *pages 35–36* of this teacher book.

C STACKS OF FUN

Making Things Better: Have the children complete the activity, matching the person or thing on the left to the community helper on the right who meets the need of that person/thing. Assist as needed. When done, discuss each community helper and the job that he or she does.

Match-ups: line from woman writing a letter to the mailman; line from the guy looking for a book to the librarian next to the bookshelf; line from sick child to the doctor; line from burning house to the firefighter

A Brighter Future for God’s People: Have the children color the Bible story picture. As they color, review the Bible story with them.

D CLOSING BLOCK

Say the Key Verses, and let the children repeat them after you. Have the children repeat the Faith Block after you: “God makes things better!” Then close the class session with prayer.

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Faith Block: God makes things better!

Lesson Objective: The children will begin to feel hopeful that God will create a world of peace and prosperity for His people.

Materials Needed: *Early Elementary* student books, Bibles (NIV translation), pencils, crayons, coloring pencils, happy-face stickers, masking or transparent tape, attendance chart, markers, reward stickers, puzzles or coloring pages, pairs of child safety scissors, 23x28-inch poster board, glue sticks, family magazines, a praise and worship music CD, CD player, (**optional:** Pax the Penguin; Younger Children’s Resource Kit [lesson 11 materials]).

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A BEGINNING BLOCK

✂ If you purchased Pax the Penguin, decide whether you or someone else will be the puppeteer. It is important that the children not see Pax placed on or taken off the puppeteer’s hand; this must be done discreetly and out of the children’s view.

Welcome

Welcome the students and their parents or guardians. Take attendance, placing a sticker beside the name of each child (that is present) on the attendance chart. Engage early arrivers with activities (such as puzzles, coloring pages, or books) until you are ready to begin class.

Opening Worship and Activity

Lead the children in prayer. Then collect the children’s offerings.

Say: We live in a world where some people are unkind. But God still wants us, His children, to show kindness and fairness every day. God wants our help to create a beautiful and peaceful world. Let’s create an “Our Peaceful World” poster. (*Write “OUR PEACEFUL WORLD” across the top of the poster board. Also, pass out the magazines.*) Look at the magazine pages. Cut out pictures of smiling people having a peaceful and happy day. Work together in peace to glue the pictures onto the poster board.

Pass out the scissors and allow time for the students to flip through the magazines and choose pictures to cut out (adhering to the instructions given). Afterwards, help them glue their pictures onto the poster board; discuss the

children’s ideas of what a peaceful and blessed world looks like. Tape the poster to the wall.

Prepare the children for the Bible story.

B BIBLE STORY BLOCK

The Bible Story

Say: Today’s Bible story is about a message from God shared by the prophet Zechariah. Zechariah served as a prophet when the Israelite people returned to Jerusalem from being held as prisoners. God wanted to let His people know that better days were coming! Listen to find out what God promised them.

Read the Bible story to the children and review it with them afterward.

Better Days Are Coming

The prophet Zechariah shared a message from God. Enemies had harmed the people of Jerusalem. So, God was returning to make things right. Then Jerusalem would be called the *Faithful City* and the *Holy Mountain*.

God would bring peace and blessings. God would bring His people back to Jerusalem. The streets would be filled with older people and children playing.

God is faithful. He would make it rain. Then seeds would grow, and vines would make lots of fruit. Yes! Better days were coming!

But the people must do some things: They must tell the truth, be fair, be peaceful, and not harm others.

Ask: What did God promise the people? (*The streets would be filled with older people and children. Their plants and*

fruit vines would grow. They would have peace.) What did God want the people to do? *(To tell the truth, be fair, live in peace, and not harm others.)*

Bible Story Application

Refer to the lesson 11 Bible Story Application (page 67) and teach the children the sing-along “Blessings for Jerusalem.”

☺ Words from Pax the Penguin

If you purchased Pax the Penguin, make preparations to present him to the class. Create a distraction so that you or your assistant can discreetly bring out Pax. The script for Pax appears below.

(Pax enters with his head down.)

Pax: Hello, everyone.

Teacher: Hello, Pax. You look sad today.

Pax: I didn’t have a good day yesterday. I’m tired of the same boys being mean to everybody. It makes me sad and angry. Sometimes, I want to fight them.

Teacher: I’m sorry, Pax. We live in a world with both kind and unkind people. All we can do is be a good example and pray that others will change. We must not fight. That is not God’s way of living in peace with everyone. God has promised that better days are coming. Boys and girls, share what God wants His children to do. *(Pause for responses from the children; guide them in realizing and ultimately responding that God wants people to be kind, honest, and fair with each other.)*

Pax: Okay. I will keep living in peace and do what is right and fair. I believe God will make things better. I hope to have good news to share next week. See you later.

C STACKS OF FUN A “Happy Day” Drawing

Say: Draw a picture of you having a happy day with your friends or family.

Allow time for the children to complete the activity, assisting as needed. After the activity, invite the children to share the information and drawing of their happy day with the class.

A Brighter Future for God’s People

Have the children color the Bible story picture. As they color, review the Bible lesson with them.

D CLOSING BLOCK

Say: In today’s Bible story, we heard God’s message from the prophet Zechariah. God was concerned about enemies harming the people of Jerusalem. God promised to return to Jerusalem and make things right. What did God promise the people? *(Pause for responses.)* Yes, God would bring peace and blessings to His people. But there were some things that God wanted them to do. What were these things? *(Pause for responses.)* Yes, and today we must continue to tell the truth, be fair, live at peace, and not plan to harm others. These things will bring better days.

Read the Key Verses to the children and ask them to repeat them. Have the children repeat the Faith Block after you; then prepare the students for the closing prayer.

Pray: Dear God, thank You for loving and taking care of Your people. Help us to tell the truth, be fair, live at peace, and not harm others. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

As you wait for parents or caregivers to come for your students, here are some suggestions for things to do to keep the children occupied while they wait: (1) Have the children review their lesson leaflets, completing any unfinished activities. Make sure each child’s name is written somewhere on his/her leaflet. (2) Allow the children to help clean up the classroom before leaving class. (3) Allow for quiet play time if you have a room with an activity area. (4) Offer crayons and coloring sheets or paper for the children to draw on or allow them to work on puzzles together.

Reproducible Bible Story Applications

April 26, 2020

Lesson 9 : May 10, 2020

Lesson 11

A READ-ALOUD POEM

A Wise Choice

Two women faced King Solomon
with one baby to give;
They both had a child, but one did not live.
Each woman said that the live baby
belonged to her;
The wise king said, "Cut the baby in half;
half to her and half to her."
The real mother said, "Do not hurt the baby;
don't cut it in two."
King Solomon ruled, "Because of what you said,
the baby belongs to you."

May 3, 2020

Lesson 10

A READ-ALOUD POEM

Obey God!

The people did not do what was right—
they did not obey.
When they heard God's voice,
they went the other way.
No one would listen or do what was good;
Zephaniah told them that God hoped they would.
God would not leave them; He was right there!
God shows love and justice; He is always fair.
God will remove the proud, the humble people
there would be;
They will do what is right and no wrong
that God would see.

A SING-ALONG

Blessings for Jerusalem

(Sing to the tune of "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore.")

The man said, "God still loves you."
Hallelujah!
Jerusalem is God's place.
Hallelujah!
Streets will be filled with people.
Hallelujah!
Nothing is impossible.
Hallelujah!
God will give the people peace.
Hallelujah!
Just remember to do good.
Hallelujah!