

# Middle School

## Teacher's Plans



May 24, 2020

Youth Topic:

**Repent**

Unit III. Called to God's  
Work of Justice

General Lesson:

**Repent of  
Injustice**

# Lesson 13

**Background Scripture:** Jeremiah 22

**Print Passage:** Jeremiah 22:1-10



“Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.” (Jeremiah 22:3b)

## PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, index cards, (**optional:** Youth Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])

## LESSON OVERVIEW

Society often ignores and even condones the oppression of the vulnerable. Will righteousness be rewarded, and will evil face retribution? Through the prophet Jeremiah, God exhorts the people either to repent of injustice and deliver those who are oppressed or face destruction.

## INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

### STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

*Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students; check in with them to see how their week has been.*

**Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? “Why do you think youth sometimes rebel against their parents’ or other adults’ authority?”**

### It's Go Time! (illustration)

*Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.*

Arrange the students into two groups. Have Group 1 brainstorm characteristics that are necessary to build positive friendships. Have Group 2 discuss the bad outcomes of following negative influences. Allow both groups to discuss their thoughts and ideas. Emphasize the point that believers should seek relationships that align with God's standards of godly living.

## WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

*Have the students read this week's contemporary story and connect it this week's lesson.*

After the story is read, ask the students if they ever went through a stage of rebellion. Allow the students to share personal or indirect examples of how rebellion may have impacted their lives. Ask the students to discuss Faith's behavior and consider what led to her change of heart. Tell the students that repentance is necessary when believers sin and do things that they know violate God's commandments.

## WORD UP (10 minutes)

*Inspect the passage for the day. You will want to make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the passage for those who do not have a Bible with them.*

## Back Up! (background)

*Here is some background for today's text that should be used throughout teaching this lesson—in order to set the stage for the passage.*

In last week's lesson, God warned Judah's leaders that there would be no deliverance from the Babylonians' attacks. This week, God speaks directly to the kings of Judah. In chapter 21, God implied that Judah had run out of time to repent. Their fate of destruction was set in motion. But in today's Scripture passage, God extended mercy to Judah and gave them another chance to repent and return to Him. Jeremiah gave the kings specific instructions on how they would need to go about rebuilding the nation spiritually. Jeremiah advised the kings to turn from evil and do right. Also, they were to help those whom they robbed and mistreated; rescue people who were oppressed; quit their evil deeds; not mistreat foreigners, orphans, or widows; and stop murdering the innocent. Judah was guilty of promoting a lifestyle that was loaded with sin and wrongdoing. Before God would consider sparing their nation, they would have to change.

Jeremiah's message to Judah expressed God's continuous love for His people, along with God's promises of destruction if the people continued to disobey. God called Judah to be a great nation, but Judah was not acting like a great nation at all. Jeremiah did not hesitate to describe how the nation would be destroyed and mocked by other nations because of their refusal to repent and live according to God's standards.

The righteous King Josiah died at the battle of Megiddo (see 2 Kings 23:29) and his son Jehoahaz reigned for only three months in 609 BC before being taken away to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco. Jehoahaz became the first ruler to die in exile. Jeremiah advised the people to stop worrying about King Josiah but to cry for the king (Jehoahaz) who was taken into exile and would never return. This important lesson reminds us how unrepented sin can result in God's full punishment.

## It's Text Time! (Scripture)

*Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.*

## (Jeremiah 22:1-10)

**1** This is what the LORD says: "Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and proclaim this message there: **2** 'Hear the word of the LORD to you, king of Judah, you who sit on David's throne—you, your officials and your people who come through these gates. **3** This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. **4** For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people. **5** But if you do not obey these commands, declares the LORD, I swear by myself that this palace will become a ruin.'" **6** For this is what the LORD says about the palace of the king of Judah: "Though you are like Gilead to me, like the summit of Lebanon, I will surely make you like a wasteland, like towns not inhabited. **7** I will send destroyers against you, each man with his weapons, and they will cut up your fine cedar beams and throw them into the fire. **8** People from many nations will pass by this city and will ask one another, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?' **9** And the answer will be: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and have worshiped and served other gods.'" **10** Do not weep for the dead king or mourn his loss; rather, weep bitterly for him who is exiled, because he will never return nor see his native land again.

## WORK OUT (10 minutes)

*Examine the intersections of the passage. What is the passage about? How was it heard at the time? How does it apply now?*

After reading today's text about God's continuous desire to save His people from a fate of doom and destruction, emphasize how God used Jeremiah to speak directly to the kings of Judah. Jeremiah's message gave the kings specific instructions on which changes they needed to make in order to please God. Throughout history (and even today) many world leaders have received the counsel of spiritual advisers—but just as the kings of Judah, most are

not inclined to follow spiritual direction. Instead, they make decisions based on what serves their public image, their political or economic advantage, or other interests. Like ancient Judah, however, every nation will answer to God for their choices.

### **Inside Out (interpretation)**

*Work on the passage from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.*

Ask the students to think about how people believe they can live in disobedience, yet still call on God for help in times of trouble. Explain that God is not obligated to help people who deliberately and consistently disobey Him. God holds every person accountable for their actions. It is pointless to blame others when you sin or disobey God's Word. Encourage the students to repent and approach God in humility when they need His assistance and direction.

### **There's an App for That! (application)**

*Show how this Scripture applies to present day.*

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Faith's parents prayed for her, but nothing changed until Faith decided it was time to make some positive changes. God will not force anyone into a relationship with Himself. God wants people to surrender their hearts to Him willingly." Allow a quiet moment for the students to pray and ask God to reveal any sin or selfish desire that could cause them to make wrong choices. Encourage them to trust God and believe He will answer their prayer.

### **WALK OUT (10 minutes)**

*Help the students think about how this Scripture connects to them personally.*

After the text in this section of the student book is read, invite the students to consider that youth are often tempted to behave badly because their friends behave

badly. Encourage them to associate with friends who will help them grow in their faith and to avoid those who could influence them to sin. Remind the students that God is pleased when they make choices that keep them safe, productive, and moving in a positive direction.

### **Stepping Out! (challenge)**

*Give the students this challenge for the week. Emphasize that they can do it!*

Challenge the students to think of some ways they could talk to a friend or acquaintance about his or her negative behavior in a way that would not be rude or offensive. Offer some of the following suggestions if students need assistance coming up with ideas: pray for the person; share a personal testimony of how God helped them to change; share a Scripture verse that discusses obedience; invite the person to church to learn more about God.

### **It's Game Time! (Answer Key)**

**Answers:** (1) b; (2) c; (3) c; (4) a

### **MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)**

*Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song that relates to this lesson.*

Preacher and civil-rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made significant contributions to society in the areas of social justice. Emphasize the point that as a Baptist minister, many of Dr. King's teachings were based on the Word of God. Encourage the students to read some of King's famous quotes on the topics of justice, courage, and righteous living. These quotes can be found at [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/23924.Martin\\_Luther\\_King\\_Jr\\_](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/23924.Martin_Luther_King_Jr_).

# High School

## Teacher's Plans



May 24, 2020

Youth Topic:

Repent

Unit III. Called to God's  
Work of Justice

Lesson

13

General Lesson:

Repent of  
Injustice

**Background Scripture:** Jeremiah 22

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“Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.” (*Jeremiah 22:3b*)

### PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, a flip-chart, markers, (**optional:** Youth Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])
- Prior to class, copy the “What Would You Do?” statements for the “There’s an App for That!” activity; also, select a word of the day.

### LESSON OVERVIEW

Society often ignores and even condones the oppression of the vulnerable. Will righteousness be rewarded? Will evil face retribution? Through the prophet Jeremiah, God exhorts the people to either repent of injustice and deliver those who are oppressed or to face destruction.

### INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

#### STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

*Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students; check in with them to see how their week has been.*

**Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Name some ways you have shown fairness at school.”**

#### It’s Go Time! (illustration)

*Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.*

*Privilege is defined as “a special right or advantage given only to certain people or groups.” Oppression*

*results from cruelty, injustice, or a desire to control. Ask the students to identify common situations when privilege is denied to the disadvantaged and oppressed. Write the responses on the flip-chart under each category.*

### REFLECT (10 minutes)

*Have the students read this week’s contemporary story and relate it back to the main points of this week’s lesson.*

Have the students read the contemporary story and then read and discuss the question posed at the end. Transition into the lesson by saying, “The situation in Jerusalem had gone so terribly wrong that God directed the prophet Jeremiah to go straight to the king with a word from the Lord. Let’s tune in!”

### INSPECT (10 minutes)

*Inspect the passage for the day. You will want to make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the passage for those who do not have a Bible with them.*

#### Back Up! (background)

*Here is some background for today’s text that should be used throughout teaching this lesson—in order to set the stage for the passage.*



Jeremiah prophesied during the latter period of Judah's long spiritual decline. Jeremiah's ministry spanned over forty-plus years beginning in 627 BC. Zedekiah of Judah reigned as king and Jeremiah boldly spoke the Word of the Lord to remind the king that God had targeted them for judgment because of their sins. Chapter 22 begins with condemnation against the kings and prophets, but the prophecy also extended to the people. Jeremiah's prophecy began with a glimmer of hope that perhaps destruction by the Babylonians would not take place. But God determined that because of their hardened hearts, the people of Judah would be taken captive by the Babylonians and held in captivity for a period of time. God sent Jeremiah to the king to deliver a message regarding his obligation to do right by the people. Verses 4-5 lay out the blessing for obedience and the warning for disobedience, but the king refused to repent. God sent Jeremiah directly to the king because overseeing matters of justice was among the king's powers and duties. Jeremiah's message to the king was essentially "check your privilege."

In verse 7, Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem by the hands of the Babylonians with the image of a forest whose trees are chopped down and burned. In verse 10, there is reference to "Shallum." This verse refers to the son of Josiah, Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz was crowned by the people in Judah, but was overthrown by the king of Egypt after just three months on the throne. Jehoahaz of Judah did *evil in the eyes of the Lord* by falling into idolatry (see 2 Kings 23:32). After his removal from the throne, he was put in prison in Egypt, where he died. Jeremiah told the people not to weep for Josiah, but to weep for Jehoahaz, the first leader of Judah to die in exile.

### It's Text Time! (Scripture)

*Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.*

### (Jeremiah 22:1-10)

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to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. **4** For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people. **5** But if you do not obey these commands, declares the LORD, I swear by myself that this palace will become a ruin.'" **6** For this is what the LORD says about the palace of the king of Judah: "Though you are like Gilead to me, like the summit of Lebanon, I will surely make you like a wasteland, like towns not inhabited. **7** I will send destroyers against you, each man with his weapons, and they will cut up your fine cedar beams and throw them into the fire. **8** People from many nations will pass by this city and will ask one another, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?' **9** And the answer will be: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and have worshiped and served other gods.'" **10** Do not weep for the dead king or mourn his loss; rather, weep bitterly for him who is exiled, because he will never return nor see his native land again.

### INTERSECT (10 minutes)

*Examine the intersections of the passage. What is the passage about? How was it heard at the time? How does it apply now?*

After the text in this section of the student book has been read, say, "Today's topic is 'Repent,' meaning 'to turn away from a negative action with regret; to express sincere regret or remorse about one's wrongdoing or sin.' According to *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, the most common Hebrew words for 'repentance' are from the root *nabam* and signify a change of mind or purpose, or being sorry. The New Testament concept, however, is more nearly expressed by the Hebrew verb *shuv*, which means 'to turn,' or 'return,' and is sometimes translated as 'repent.' The Israelites were told by many prophets, including Jeremiah, to repent. If the people would have heeded the warnings and repented, then God would have forgiven them. God is holy and He does not change—He still expects His people to repent of their sins. True repentance involves conviction, godly sorrow, and a changing of attitudes and ways—a total reversal of prior actions."

Inside Out (interpretation)

Work on the passage from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Have the students respond to the questions/statements posed in this section of the student book.

Answers: (1) Jeremiah warned the king to do what was right and just, or God would “cut down” the nation like a tree. (2) God warned the nation’s leaders to practice justice and protect innocent people, including foreigners, orphans, and widows. (3) God expects leaders to be good because they answer to Him and have people who see them as role models. God judges evil leaders. (4) God rules the world; He created every human soul, and every individual must answer to Him.

There’s an App for That! (application)

Show how this Scripture applies to present day.

The students will engage in an impromptu skit. Break up the class into three groups. Give each group a “What Would You Do?” prompt. Allow the students time to prepare their skit, and then call the class together to watch and perform the skits.

- 1. You hear that an elderly person at your grandmother’s assisted living facility is being mistreated by her caregiver.
- 2. You personally witness a violent act against an immigrant in your neighborhood.
- 3. You see another youth steal money from a church member’s purse during altar prayer.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Help the students think about how this Scripture connects to them personally.

Have the students read the text in this section (found also in the student book): “When we are called out for our sins, we must show God our genuine repentance. Repenting restores our relationship with God, but it does not always protect us from suffering the consequences of our actions. Judah experienced strong judgment because the people refused to turn from their sins. Even though God punished them, He promised spiritual and physical restoration.” Ask the students what God’s promise says about His character.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

Give the students this challenge for the week. Emphasize that they can do it!

This week, the youth are challenged to identify world leaders who govern with a mindset driven by dishonesty, cruelty, or injustice. Using the space provided in their books, the students are to write a short note about the leader they chose and describe the person’s leadership.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song that relates to this lesson.

The students are asked to visit <https://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/the-lorax/let-it-grow> and watch the movie clip entitled “The Lorax: Let it Grow.” After viewing, invite the students to discuss their thoughts on the video and how it relates to today’s lesson. If they have a video, song, or Web site that relates to the lesson, invite them to share as time permits.

NOTES