



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Micah 4:1-7

1 Peter 2:4-10

Session Theme:

Peace

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Signs of Peace

Before class, research and print several unusual symbols of peace — such as a dove, an olive branch, a white poppy flower, the word “PAX,” etc. — and post them on the board. Ask kids to guess what these things have in common, then explain the peace symbolism. The white poppy may be less familiar, but it was used after World War I in the hope that war would never happen again. Invite kids to suggest other more familiar symbols of peace they may have seen (the peace sign, an origami crane, etc.).

War is a heartbreaking thing. Most people hope and pray for peace. Today's lesson is about a time when all will turn their “swords into plowshares” and live together in harmony under God's reign. What might this be like? Let's get started and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Dear God, please grant us peace — in our hearts, our families, our nation, and our world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- “Let There Be Peace on Earth” (hymn)
- “He's Got the Whole World” (children's song)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Promise

The prophets spoke the promise of God to the people in times of struggle and exile. In visions, dreams, and prophecy, God foreshadowed the coming of the Messiah and the salvation that would come in Jesus Christ.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level:

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, and Questions)

Adults: Bible Study (Large or Small Group Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. Use the Bible Rhyme as a short review, or simply ask questions to help the students recall the events of the story.

Youth/Adult: Discuss “Reflection for the Week Ahead”

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format



Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Micah 4:1-7

1. Prior to the good news in today's lesson, the prophet Micah had first delivered some bad news to God's people. Why is it better to hear the truth (good or bad) than to simply hear what we want to hear?

Micah spoke about how the leaders of Israel and Judah had let the people down and how they only thought of themselves. This was why the people were conquered by the Babylonians and carried off into exile. In order to make them realize their mistakes and perhaps avoid doing the same things again, God let them know the truth about their actions and consequences. It is better to hear the truth and make amends than to simply go on living a lie that destroys our lives.

2. The people of Israel and Judah suffered a great defeat that led to their exile in Babylon. Was this because God had given up on them? Was it because God was not powerful enough to save them? Or was there some other reason for their downfall?

God wanted the people to know that what happened to them was not some random accident but was the result of their own actions. It was not because God had abandoned them or was too weak to protect them; rather, God was allowing them to suffer the consequences of their lack of faith.

3. In chapter 4, Micah starts out by saying, "It shall come to pass in the latter days..." What do you think is meant by "the latter days"? Is this prophecy talking about things about to happen, or things that won't happen for many years?

Micah's words refer to both the near and far future. In the short term, God would restore the nation and bring the exiles back to their homeland. After years of warfare and captivity, he would bring about a time of peace. But this prophecy also points forward to the coming of Jesus, in whom we experience spiritual peace through his grace and forgiveness. Our relationship with God is restored.

Someday, at the end of time, Christ will return and God will bring about a new creation in which this promise of peace will be fulfilled and made complete. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, where God will dwell with us.

4. How was the image of people "beating swords into

plowshares" a hopeful one for people who had suffered much from war? What was God saying?

Instead of forging metal to serve as instruments of death and destruction, weapons would be turned into tools for growth and production. There would be no need for weapons, because danger and conflict will have ended.

5. Why is there such a strong emphasis in these verses on the desire for God to "teach us his ways" (v. 2)? In what practical ways does hearing and learning God's Word actually make our lives better?

Doing things our own way is always what gets human beings in trouble. God wants us to do things his way, so that things will go well for us. This is why studying the Bible is so important. It is where we learn God's commands and promises (law and gospel). It is not only where we see what God expects of us, but what God is doing in our lives to give us a better future.

6. Re-read verse 5. Do you think we need all people to agree on what is right before we can do it? Why is it important for us to obey God even if no one else does?

Verse 5 says: "For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." Not everyone is going to agree on what is right, just as not everyone will faithfully serve the Lord. But no matter what others do, that does not prevent us from serving God and living in the way that God wants us to. We don't do what is right because everyone else is doing it; we do what is right in spite of what others may be doing.

7. In verses 6-7, God speaks of the lame and afflicted and "those who were cast off." Have you ever felt left out or left behind? How does God's promise here let you know you are never alone? How might that help change your attitude and outlook?

We all feel excluded sometimes. But we always belong to God. Jesus' concern for the sick and the poor shows us that no matter how bad we may feel or how excluded we are by others, God is always with us. In fact, God takes a special interest in helping those who are hurting.

8. Read 1 Peter 2:4-10. In what sense does faith in God make us a part of something much bigger than ourselves? How does following Christ take away our shame and give us a purpose?

We are often rejected by the world. Even Jesus was rejected. But God, in Jesus, has given us a new identity as his child. We are part of a fellowship of faith across time and space. So no matter what the world may say, we have purpose and value.

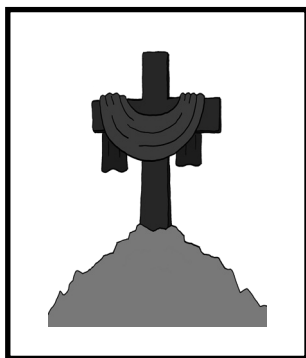
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Micah's Vision Illustrations

Materials Needed:

- Scrap paper
- White paper
- Pencils
- Dark, thin markers
- Crayons
- Colored construction paper
- Stapler



Instructions:

Give each student a piece of paper, a pencil, and some markers.

Explain that they are all going to have a chance to be an illustrator today. Their job will be to draw the future that Micah describes, taking his description and making it into a drawing. To do this, follow these directions:

First, they will listen closely as you slowly re-read the story (from the Upper Student lesson) to them. As they listen, they will jot down on scrap paper any words or descriptions that capture their interest. (For example, the high mountain with the Lord's temple on it, etc.)

Then, they will take their white paper and draw a picture based on the words they had jotted down. After they have done this, they will trace over the pencil drawing using a thin, dark marker (black, navy, brown, or purple). Finally, they will color the entire picture in crayon.

When done, they can choose a colored piece of construction paper, center their picture on it, and staple it in place.

Invite kids to explain why they drew the picture that they did, and notice the different parts of Micah's prophecy each illustrator chose to highlight.

To be an illustrator, you have to read a story carefully and then draw the parts that you want people to remember.

In today's story, Micah was painting a picture of the future with his words. He trusted God's promise of the Messiah, who would be the Savior of his people. No matter how bad things might be at present, there is reason for hope. Micah wanted people to remember that God has a plan for the world where good wins in the end. We can trust that plan!

Activity 2: Lift the Hoop Activity

Materials Needed:

- One or more hula hoops

Instructions:

Show kids the hula hoop, and ask if anyone can think of a way to lift it up, horizontally, to shoulder length.

Here is the challenge — they must do this using only one fingertip, and the hula hoop must stay horizontal the whole time.

Give kids time to figure out a way to solve the problem.

Finally, lay a hula hoop on the ground in front of 3 or so kids. Have the kids stand around it, on the outside. Using only one fingertip on each hand, invite them to place this under the hula hoop and work together to raise the hoop to shoulder level, and then back down to the floor again without dropping it. The rules are that no one can disconnect at any time, and if this happens, kids must begin the activity again.

Let all the kids in the class try doing this in groups of 3 or 4.



The original order, to lift a hula hoop horizontally using only one fingertip, may have seemed impossible to do.

Yet with a little creativity and teamwork, you did it.

In real life, sometimes big things, like "peace," seem like impossible goals as

well. Yet with creativity, teamwork, and most importantly, the help of God, peace is possible too.

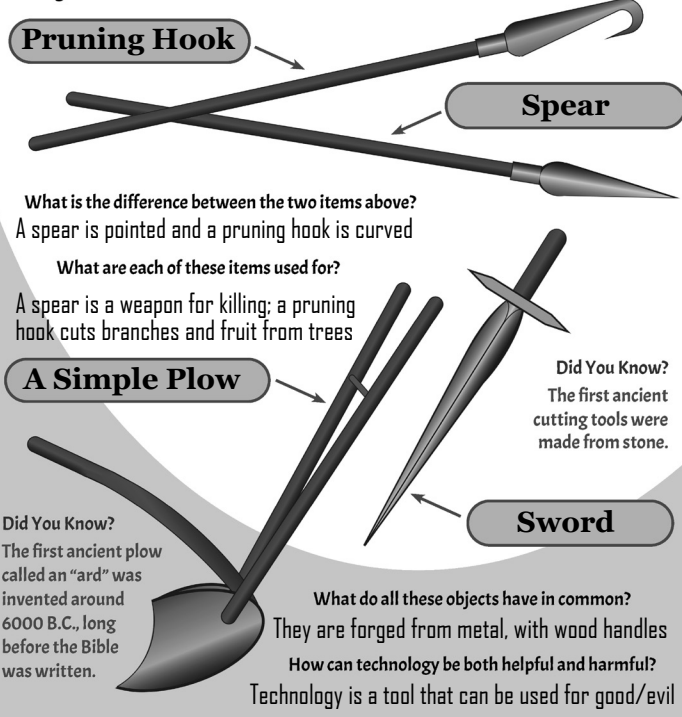
Our Bible lesson paints of vision of this—one that we can hold on to even (and especially) today.

Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

Four Objects:

In the green ovals, label each of the four items shown below:



Map Answer Key

The major Iron Age empires that ruled the Middle East are shown on the map on the Youth Page:

- The Babylonians (modern-day Iraq)
- The Persians (modern-day Iran)
- The Greeks (modern-day Greece)
- The Romans (modern-day Italy)

Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Peace

being in right relationship with God and others; harmony, rest

Today's lesson describes a time when people will no longer fight — a time of peace.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

What is a plowshare? This is something mentioned in today's lesson, but kids in many parts of the world may never have heard of one. Essentially, a "plowshare" is the cutting blade in a plow. Therefore, to turn a "sword" into a "plowshare" as is mentioned in today's lesson means using the sharpest, most dangerous part of the sword for something good.

Stop and think about that for a minute. Can God take something that has been destructive in your life and use it for something positive, something that helps others? Yes. He absolutely can.

Not only that, but God can do this on a much bigger, world-wide scale as well. He can turn swords into plowshares. He can bring peace where there was war. He can bring hope where there was despair. That's the point of today's story. God has promised this, and he will do it. Never lose hope.

Talk about what it means that God can use something that has been destructive for good. How might that work? How can knowing this give us hope for the future?



The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer thanking God for his promises to us through Jesus Christ. Ask him to give you a sense of peace, and to overcome the anger and frustrations you carry with you at this time.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.