



The Prophet Zephaniah

Lesson Aim: To find security and comfort in the knowledge of God's love for those who seek Him.

THE WORSHIP

Who God is: The God Who Is Faithful

THE WORD

Bible Story: Zephaniah 1:12; 2:3a; 3:17

What He has done: God sent Zephaniah to warn the people about complacency and encourage those who seek Him.

Key Verse: Zephaniah 3:17

THE WAY

Christ Connection: Luke 15:3-7

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

"He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Philippians 2:8b-11a

Unit 8: The Prophets and God's Faithfulness			
	Bible Story	What He Has Done	Lesson Aim
38	The Prophet Isaiah, Isaiah 53:6; 45:22; 9:2, 6-7	God gave Isaiah the message of hope about the coming Savior.	To know we all need the Savior whom God gave us in Jesus.
39	Micah and God's Courtroom, Micah 6:1-2, 8; 7:9, 13, 19	God sent Micah to the people in Judea with a message of judgment and hope.	To know the three choices God expects us to make.
40	The Prophet Zephaniah, Zephaniah 1:12; 2:3a; 3:17	God sent Zephaniah to warn the people about complacency and encourage those who seek Him.	To find security and comfort in the knowledge of God's love for those who seek Him.
41	Jeremiah and the Linen Belt, Jeremiah 1:4-9; 13:3-11; 29:11-13	God sent Jeremiah to tell of His plans for those who do and do not seek Him.	To know God wants us to seek Him and be close to Him.
42	God Answers Habakkuk, Habakkuk 1:2; 2:2-4, 20; 3:17-18	God answered Habakkuk's questions.	To show God wants us to trust Him to punish evil and keep all His promises.

TEACHER'S ENCOURAGEMENT

This week, read Psalm 119:57-64. Please join us in praying, "Thank You, Lord, for the second chances you give us. Strengthen us to obey Your Word and help us find joy and comfort in trusting You alone. Amen."

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Segment	Minutes	Activity	Supplies
THE WELCOME	Up to 15	Meet & Greet	None
		Game: God's Delight	None
THE WORSHIP	Up to 20	Worship Sheet music and recordings for Bible Memory Verse Songs available at ResourceWell.org	Unit 8 Bible Memory Verse Song: "At the Name of Jesus" Other Bible Memory Verse Song Suggestions: "Do Justly" "To Him Who Sits on the Throne" "Search Me, O God" "You Will Seek Me" "The Lord Is My Shepherd" Additional Hymn Suggestions: "Trust and Obey" "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" Additional Song Collection Suggestions: Worship Jamz Series Shout Praises Kids: Hymns
		Worship Scripture Reading: Psalm 117:1-2	Bible
		Offering	Baskets
		Worship Illustration	Lesson 40 The Love Sub script or storybook
		Read the Word: Zephaniah 1:12; 2:3a; 3:17	Bibles, Bible Story Scripture reference poster
THE WAY	Up to 25	Discuss the Word	Bibles, Christ Connection Scripture reference poster
		Christ Connection: Luke 15:3-7	
		Golden Bowl	
GOT TIME?	Up to 10	Snack: Joyful Feast Snack	Sweet and salty snack
	Up to 10	Game: Musical Promise	"He Is Mighty to Save" Bible Memory Verse Song (Available at ResourceWell.org. It is the Prophets & Promises Unit 3 Bible Memory Verse Song for Ages 4-5), CD player, musical or rhythm instruments (may use pencils, sticks, blocks, coins in cans, etc.)
	Up to 15	Craft: "God Is with Me" Pockets	2 colors of craft foam or stiff paper, yarn or ribbon, assorted craft supplies, pencils, scissors, glue
	Up to 10	Bible Memory Verse Activity: Passing the Light	Unit 8 Bible Memory Verse poster, extra large paper, tape or tacks, marker, flashlight
	Up to 10	Bible Memory Verse Activity: Kneel & Say	Kneeling pad (small cushion or pillow), Unit 8 Bible Memory Verse Song "At the Name of Jesus," CD player
	Up to 5	Bible Timeline Review	Date with story title or name printed on card

RESOURCES: Supplemental materials are available at ResourceWell.org.



Getting started

THE WELCOME

To spark anticipation, encourage arriving children to meet and greet one another with today's question.

Meet & Greet Question: What is the best choice you have ever made?

GAME: GOD'S DELIGHT

Purpose: Children are reminded they are each different and special to God.

Supplies: None

Option: If this memory game is too difficult for younger children, play this alternate version. Assign partners. Everyone remains in the circle, but each child only has to remember and repeat the activity of his or her partner instead of all the activities mentioned in the circle.

God made each of us different and special. He remembers everything about each one of you. Let's see how much we can remember about each other's favorite things.

Directions:

1. Seat children in a circle.
2. The first player begins the game by choosing his or her favorite activity to complete the phrase, **"God loves to watch us _____."** For example, "God loves to watch us play tag."
3. The second player continues the game by repeating what the first person said, and then adding his or her favorite activity: "God loves to watch us play tag and collect rocks."
4. Each player adds another activity to the sentence and repeats the preceding items in order.
5. When a player forgets an activity, the "forgotten" player must jump up, move to the center of the circle, and quickly act out his or her favorite activity until the player guesses it correctly.
6. If time allows, play another round. This time, see how quickly they can accurately complete the circle without missing anyone's favorite activity.

God delights in seeing us discover and enjoy our favorite things. We will learn more about God's feelings toward us as we hear the promises God gave the prophet Zephaniah for all who seek Him.



The God who is faithful

THE WORSHIP

Teacher Tip: To help children identify time set aside for worship, designate a special corner or area for singing, collecting offering, and watching the worship illustration. Play music as children move to the designated area.

Today, we worship the God who is faithful. We will hear from the prophet Zephaniah about God's wonderful promises for those who seek Him. We seek God when we gather to sing and pray to Him, bring our offerings, and learn more about Him. We seek God when we do our best to do things His way every day.



Zephaniah told us how God shows His love for us. When times are hard or when we have sinned, we may sometimes feel God is angry with us, but God takes great delight in each one of us! That means we make Him happy. It is important for us to remember Zephaniah's message about God's faithful love toward those who seek Him. Let's seek Him now as we bring our offerings and think about the ways He shows His love to us. Sing: "You Will Seek Me" as the offering is collected.



Read Psalm 117:1-2. It's important to remind each other the truth about God's love for us. His love will last forever.

God showed His great love for us when He sent His Son Jesus to give His own life for us. Sing the Unit 8 Bible Memory Verse Song "At the Name of Jesus." You may also choose to sing songs that focus on God's unconditional love.



Perform The Love Sub script or read storybook: Prophets & Promises Unit 8, Lesson 40.



God takes great delight in you

THE WORD

Teacher Tip: As you move from worship to instruction, change rooms or locations within a room to help redirect the children's focus to the Bible story. During this transition time, have each child write his or her name on a card and place it in the Golden Bowl.

Before we read God's Word, let's go over our Class Covenant. A covenant is an agreement. Just as God made a covenant with His people, I ask each of you to make this covenant promise with me today. Listen as I read our Class Covenant: "I will keep my eyes on my teacher, my mouth in control, my ears on God's Word—knowing God is my goal."

Last time, we learned from the prophet Micah about the three choices God expects us to make. The first was to act justly. Do you remember the other two choices? (Love mercy and walk humbly with our God.) **Today, we will learn about the prophet Zephaniah and the promises God has for those who seek Him.** If a Bible Timeline is available, point to Zephaniah (Circa 630 B.C.). For a Bible Timeline Review activity, see the GOT TIME? segment of this lesson.

God had a clear warning, choice, and promise for the prophet Zephaniah to give to the people of Jerusalem. If a map is available, point to Jerusalem, Israel. **They had ignored the warning Micah had delivered to them. They were still choosing to treat the poor unfairly and to worship idols.**



If you brought your Bible, open it now and share it with others. Hand out spare Bibles. **Today's Scripture verse is behind the curtain** (or secret door, secret window, etc.). Child reveals the Bible Story Scripture reference: Zephaniah 1:12; 2:3a; 3:17.

Before we read, let's stand and ask God to open our eyes, ears, hearts, and minds to His Word today. Who would like to pray that for us? Child prays aloud. **Be seated.**

During the time Zephaniah was a prophet, the people didn't think God would do anything about their sins. They were being complacent. That means they did not care what God had done or was going to do. Let's begin with the warning and choice God gave to those who did not care about Him. Read Zephaniah 1:12; 2:3a.

Then, Zephaniah gave five encouraging promises to all who would make the choice to seek the Lord. See if you can find all five promises in this verse. Let's count the promises as I read them to you. Read Zephaniah 3:17, pausing after each promise for the children to count.



God loves you **THE WAY**

What was God's **WARNING** to the people who didn't care about Him? (He will punish them.) When others care about you, they ask questions about your activities, feelings, and plans. They spend time with you. They remember what you have said and done. They celebrate good times with you. They comfort you when you are afraid. Have you ever had a friend or family member who showed they cared about you in any of those ways? (Children respond.) Did you feel special? (Children respond.)

Zephaniah told the people their **CHOICE** was to seek God. To seek God is to treat Him as the most important one in your life. It means always wanting to know and do whatever God wants of you. What are some ways you can show God He is the most important one in your life? (Pray and sing to Him, tell others about Him, love the people He has made, etc.)

Sometimes, it is difficult to put God first. We may treat things we have or activities we want to do as more important than God. If you start doing that, tell God you are sorry. He will forgive you! It is very important to remember Zephaniah's message to those who seek God. He is not angry with you. He quiets you with His love. He takes great delight in you. When you come to Him, He rejoices over you with singing. Imagine God singing a song for you!

There are 5 different **PROMISES** found in Zephaniah 3:17. Let's think of ways God has already made some of these promises come true in your life.

1. "The Lord your God is with you." Have you ever felt God was with you? (Children respond.)
2. "The Lord is mighty to save." Have you ever seen God do something powerful? (Children respond.)
3. "The Lord will take great delight in you." Is God angry with you? (No.) Is God delighted and happy to see you every day? (Yes.)
4. "The Lord will quiet you with His love." Have you ever been afraid? (Children respond.) Have you ever felt safer after remembering God loves you? (Children respond.)
5. "The Lord will rejoice over you with singing." Imagine how special you would feel if you knew God wrote a song about you. Picture God rejoicing over you just because you are special to Him.



Connecting the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Us

CHRIST CONNECTION

Over 600 years after Zephaniah told the people about God's promises, Jesus came to save us. God's promises came true: Jesus came to be with us, He is mighty to save us, and He loves and comforts us. Jesus helped us understand more about the way God rejoices over us in heaven when he shared the Parable of the Lost Sheep.



Everyone, place your Bible on your lap. Choose a child to reveal the Christ Connection Scripture reference: Luke 15:3-7. Let's find this scripture. Read Luke 15:3-7.

What happens in heaven when someone repents or seeks God? (There is rejoicing in heaven over that person.)

THE WAY *continued...*



Revelation 5:8

GOLDEN BOWL

Teacher Tip: Write the names of classmates, local church leaders, and children in other nations or others who need prayer on small pieces of paper. Place the papers in a golden bowl.

Revelation 5:8 says our prayers are like sweet smelling incense in the golden bowls at God's throne. I'm going to lift each one of your names to God's throne as you pray for each person silently. Then, we will pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) aloud together. Let's pray.

Lord God, we lift up to Your throne the name of each child here. We trust You to watch over us and our needs, the ones we say aloud and the ones hidden in our hearts. First, we lift up to You ____, ____, ____. Read names in Golden Bowl.

Now, we pray the prayer Your Son taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.



When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

FINAL FIVE MINUTES

TREASURE TREAT: Today, your Treasure Treat is a Zephaniah 3:17 Promises Card (or magnet). It lists the five promises God made to anyone who chooses to seek Him. Tell your family what it means to seek God. Attach your card to a mirror to remind you of how very important you are to God.

DAILY WAY CHALLENGE: Did anyone bring in a completed Daily Way from last time? Praise or reward those who return a Daily Way. Distribute Lesson 40 Daily Way 5-day Bible study. **Complete this week's Daily Way at home and let God speak to you through His own words in the Bible. Join the Daily Way Challenge by returning your completed Daily Way.**

Teacher Tip: Collect Daily Ways in a basket or other container and periodically reward children as a group for completing the challenge.

OFFERING OF ART: Until it is time to be dismissed, make an Offering of Art. For your offering, draw a picture of God in heaven delighting to watch you do something you enjoy.

PRAYER REQUESTS: As children work on their Offering of Art, ask how you can pray for them this week. Write requests in a prayer notebook.

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE SONG: Play the Unit 8 Bible Memory Verse Song, "At the Name of Jesus," in the background as children wait to be dismissed.



If time remains, choose from the connected activities below.

GOT TIME?

SNACK: JOYFUL FEAST SNACK

Purpose: Children eat a snack as they discuss how God promises to remove His people's sorrows.

Supplies: Sweet and salty snack

In Jerusalem, people celebrated several feasts each year. Feasts are holidays celebrated with plenty of food. When Jerusalem was seized, the people could no longer celebrate the feasts. This saddened the people, but God promised to remove that sadness. Let's eat a snack that is both sweet and salty to remind us of the salty tears the people cried and the happiness they enjoyed at the feasts after God's promise came true.

Directions:

1. Distribute the snack and drink.
2. Child prays to thank God for the snack.
3. Ask the Snack Discussion Question: **"What are some of your family's favorite foods to eat on the holidays?"**

GAME: MUSICAL PROMISE

Purpose: To help children remember God's promises, the children will play instruments and create motions to a musical version of Zephaniah 3:17a.

Supplies: "He Is Mighty to Save" Bible Memory Verse Song (Available at ResourceWell.org. It is the Prophets & Promises Unit 3 Bible Memory Verse Song for Ages 4-5), CD player, musical or rhythm instruments (may use pencils, sticks, blocks, coins in cans, etc.)

Zephaniah gave us many promises from God. Two of them are that the Lord our God is with us and He is mighty to save us. We are going to dance and play as we sing of those promises. You may choose to be a singer, dancer, or musician.

Directions:

1. Each child chooses to be in one of the following groups: singers, dancers, or musicians.
2. Play the song a few times while the children create their own dance motions and rhythmic accompaniment.
3. When everyone is ready, play the song again as the children dance, sing, and play their instruments together.

God takes great delight in us and rejoices over us with singing. Let's sing this song one last time. As you dance, sing, and play your instruments, think about how much God in heaven is enjoying your music. He is delighted with you! He is singing joyfully over you! What do you think His voice sounds like? (Children respond.)

GOT TIME? *continued...*

CRAFT: "GOD IS WITH ME" POCKETS

Purpose: Children will make pockets to keep a reminder of God's promise to be with them.

Supplies: 2 colors of craft foam or stiff paper, yarn or ribbon, assorted craft supplies, pencils, scissors, glue

Prepare: From sturdy cardboard, create pocket templates which are each half the size of a sheet of craft foam or stiff paper. Punch matching holes, spaced 1 inch apart, along three sides of the templates. From craft foam or stiff paper, cut a cross to fit inside the pocket. Cut a 24-inch length of yarn or ribbon. Display the following verse so that children may copy it: **"The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save." Zephaniah 3:17.**

Teacher Tips: If using craft foam, use permanent markers to prevent the writing from rubbing off.

Options: Cut a length of yarn to attach to each top corner of the pocket so the child can wear the pocket around his or her neck like a nametag. Glue, staple, or tape the pockets together instead of stitching. Make the cross out of sticks lashed together with yarn.

God promises He is always with us. What is He mighty enough to do? (Save us.) How did He save us? (By dying on the cross to pay for our sins.) To help us remember both of those promises, let's make pockets. Keep the cross in your pocket to remind you that God is always with you. It also can remind you that Jesus is mighty enough to save you. He saved you by dying on the cross.

Directions:

1. Use a pocket template to trace two pockets onto a sheet of craft foam or stiff paper.
2. Cut out the pockets.
3. Use the template to punch matching holes in both pocket pieces.
4. Place the pocket pieces together so the holes match.
5. Thread the yarn through the first set of holes. Knot the end.
6. Thread the yarn through all the sets of holes to sew the pocket together. Knot the end after threading it through the last set of holes.
7. Use the craft supplies to decorate the pocket.
8. On the cross, write: "The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save." Zephaniah 3:17.
9. Put the cross inside the pocket.

GOT TIME? *continued...*



BIBLE MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITIES

“He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Philippians 2:8b-11a

GAME: PASSING THE LIGHT

Purpose: Children learn the meaning of the Unit 8 Bible Memory Verse.

Supplies: Unit 8 Bible Memory Verse poster, extra large paper, tape or tacks, marker, flashlight

Prepare: Write “Jesus” in large letters and hang it as high as possible in your classroom.

Seat children in a circle. Read the Bible Memory Verse. **What did Jesus do when He humbled Himself?** (He obeyed God and died on the cross for us.) **God exalted Jesus. That means He gave Him the highest praise. He gave Him the highest place of honor—a seat on the heavenly throne. What should we do to honor our Lord Jesus?** (Bow to Him, say aloud that He is Lord, and praise His name.) **One way to honor His name is to remember His Word, the Bible. In this game, when the light is passed to you, it is your turn to shine the light on Jesus’ name and say the next phrase of the Bible Memory Verse.**

Directions:

1. If possible, dim or turn off the lights. Shine the flashlight on the Bible Memory Verse poster. Lead the children in reciting the scripture together.
2. Give the flashlight to one of the children.
3. That child shines the flashlight on Jesus’ name and says the first few words of the Bible Memory Verse. (Children may shine the flashlight on the Bible Memory Verse poster and read the phrase from there.) The child quickly passes the flashlight to the child on his or her right.
4. Repeat step 3 until each child has a turn holding the flashlight and reciting the next few words. You may need to repeat the passage so everyone may have a turn.

GAME: KNEEL & SAY

Purpose: Children memorize the Unit 8 Bible Memory Verse.

Supplies: Kneeling pad (small cushion or pillow), Unit 8 Bible Memory Verse Song “At the Name of Jesus,” CD player

In Isaiah 45:23, God promised that every knee would bow to Him. Then, over 700 years later, Paul wrote more about that promise in our new Bible Memory Verse. Because God is faithful to keep all His promises, we can trust that one day everyone will worship Jesus by bowing down on their knees. In this game, when the music stops, the person with the kneeling pad is to kneel on it and say the next few words of the Bible Memory Verse.

Directions:

1. Children stand in a circle.
2. Lead the children in reciting the scripture together.
3. Play and sing the Bible Memory Verse Song as children pass the kneeling pad around the circle.
4. Stop the music. The child holding the kneeling pad is to kneel on the pad and say the next few words of the verse. If the child does not know the verse, encourage others to help.
5. Start the music and play again. Play several rounds.

GOT TIME? *continued...*



BIBLE TIMELINE REVIEW

Prophets & Promises Part Two studies the miracles and stories of the Bible from Elijah through Malachi. Review recent Bible stories to see the continuing story of who God is and He has done.

Isaiah (Circa 710 B.C.) God gave Isaiah a vision of worship around God's throne. What creatures were praising God in that vision? (Six-winged seraphs.) How did Isaiah compare all of us to wandering sheep? (We are all like sheep who have strayed from God.) What did the great light in the darkness stand for? (The coming of Jesus.) How did God promise the Savior would come? (As a child.)

Micah (Circa 700 B.C.) God showed the prophet Micah that God was the judge with a case against the people. He warned the people they would be punished for their sins. What were the three choices God expected the people to make? (Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.) What did God promise to do with their sin when He forgave them? (To tread on their sins and hurl them into the deep sea.)

Zephaniah (Circa 630 B.C.) Zephaniah warned the people of Jerusalem that God would punish them for being complacent. They did not care about God nor did they think He would do anything about their sins. The choice God gave them was to seek Him. Zephaniah gave an amazing set of five promises from God. The promises show He is not angry with those who seek Him. He takes great delight in them!

How to create a Bible Timeline from Elijah through Malachi:

1. Print each scroll on sturdy paper.
2. Choose a wall or other visible location to display the timeline.
3. Before each lesson, add the scroll for that lesson to the Bible Timeline using the list below. Add the Unit 10 cards for Prophets & Promises Lessons 48-52.
4. To review, ask the corresponding questions as you point to the associated scroll.

Elijah – Malachi: Elijah (Circa 870-845 B.C.) > Elisha (Circa 845-800 B.C.) > Joel (Circa 830 B.C.) > Jonah (Circa 781 B.C.) > Amos (Circa 760 B.C.) > Isaiah (Circa 710 B.C.) > Micah (Circa 700 B.C.) > Zephaniah (Circa 630 B.C.) > Jeremiah (Circa 626 B.C.) > Habakkuk (Circa 603 B.C.) > Ezekiel (Circa 593 B.C.) > Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Circa 580 B.C.) > Daniel (Circa 580 B.C.) > Haggai and Zechariah (Circa 530 B.C.) > Malachi (Circa 430 B.C.)

Unit 10: 400 Years of Silence (Circa 400-2 B.C.) > The Birth of Jesus (Circa 7-2 B.C.)