

Fourth to Sixth Grade

GOD'S HEROES: FROM ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY!

Day: Monday

4th-6th

Theme: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego remain faithful

Lesson 1: *God saves 3 faithful young men from the fire*

Bible reference: Daniel 3:1-12 (13-28)

Memory verse: Daniel 3:28

Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. Dan. 3:28ab (NRSV)

OBJECTIVE

Show students that when we serve God faithfully we can accomplish extraordinary things. Have faith and trust in God, He is an extraordinary and powerful God.

PREPARATION

- *Seek God's direction in prayer, asking Him to give you wisdom and the right words so that students will understand the objective of this class.*
- *Pray also for children that you will have in your class, so that the Holy Spirit would move in the hearts of those with needs.*
- *Dedicate time to prepare class. Read the passage, keeping in mind the biblical and cultural background (Daniel 1 and 2).*
- *Read the Bible passage many times so that you are very familiar with the plot that reveals the story of these faithful young men of God.*
- *When possible, bring an illustrated Bible to the class and share the pictures with the children.*
- *Rehearse the class many times to measure the timing, using visual aids related to the class for support. If you'd like, you may use a flannel board. If you chose to do so, have the characters ready in the order in which they appear in the story.*
- *If there is enough time, you can act out the story with the children, allowing them to participate on the spot.*

- *Obtain all of the materials that you will use (pictures, flannel board, or dresses).*
- *Prepare the memory verse in a visual way (poster board, markers or figurines). Learn it well so that the students see your example, and if possible, keep the text in the classroom every day.*
- *Prepare the materials and have them ready to be used exactly the way you want them. For this class we suggest the following:*

MATERIALS

- A candle and matches
- A lifejacket or kickboard (used in swimming pools)
- If you can, bring clothing to use for acting out the story (togas, sheets, towels, or simply crepe paper to make costumes).
- Prepare your material according to the way the text will be memorized.

Optional: HOW TO VISUALIZE THE TEXT (see picture at the end)

GAMES FOR MEMORIZING THE VERSE:

☺ **STOP SIGN VERSE**

(Materials: a circle inside a larger circle which says "stop". You can make this using poster board or simply painted on the floor.)

For this game, every student places one foot inside the larger circle and one student declares "Jesus is my Savior and He loves _____" (saying the name of another child). At this point, everyone runs except for the child whose name was called- that child steps on the inside circle that says "stop" and recites the text aloud so that the rest of the children stop. The child that said the verse calculates how many steps there are between him/her and the next closest child. That second child is the next one to say "Jesus is my Savior and He loves _____". Try to mention a different child each time so that everyone gets a chance to say the verse.

☺ **ALPHABET SOUP**

Give each child the alphabet soup worksheet and have them look for the verse. As students finish they should stand up and say the verse aloud. (If

you'd like, you can give a candy to those that are able complete the task). Set a time limit.

☺ **GAME FOR REVIEWING VERSES:**

(Materials: A circle divided into the number of texts there are to be memorized, an arrow. You can use whatever material you wish or have on hand).

Since this is the first day the children will only have one verse learned, so you can add a general theme in the other spaces, such as the title of the lesson or the text from which the lesson came. Fill in a space each day using that day's verse. When you spin the arrow, students will take turns reciting the verse indicated by the arrow.

BIBLICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The people of Israel had been conquered by Babylon, and King Nebuchadnezzar sent for "young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace" (Daniel 1:4, NIV); "children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace" (Daniel 1:4 KJV).

It was the tradition of the conquerors at that time to impose the customs, religion and traditions on the conquered people.

The king's objective for bringing these young men to the palace was to make them faithful servants, not only to the king, but also to the gods of Babylon. It should be said that because of their good behavior, the king had made them administrators of the provinces of Babylon, and therefore their commitment to the king was greater.

INTRODUCTION

- *Start with a welcome and introduce all of the children, including those from the church. Let them know how happy you are to have them in your class to learn more about God.*
- *You can sing (or teach) a welcome song (if possible, write it using large letters and use a few illustrations related to the song to facilitate memorization).*
- *Give each child a name tag and take attendance. (use angels figures)*

- *Present the general theme of the VBS: God's Heroes: From Ordinary to Extraordinary! Then present the title of the lesson: **God saves from the fire 3 faithful young men***
- *Say a prayer for each of the children present and for those who will later come to the class.*

Practice the memory verse, Daniel 3:28" Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. Dan. 3:28ab (NRSV)

TEACHING THE CLASS

(Have the charcoal lit before beginning the class)

- *Light the candle*
- *Ask if anyone has been burned before.*
- *Ask the children to very carefully and orderly come close to the fire (keep the candle in a place where it will not cause an accident). Ask them to get their hand close to the fire, without touching the flame.*
- *Ask how it felt to get close to the fire.*
- *Ask the children to imagine being in the middle of a big, burning fire, one much bigger than the one they were just near.*
- *Ask them what would happen to them.*
- *Tell the students that the Bible talks about 3 people who were in a large furnace of fire and that nothing happened to them- they didn't even smell like smoke.*
- *Ask them to look up in their Bibles the story found in Daniel 3:1-28 so that you can read it together. Then begin the Bible story.*

The Bible talks about 3 men that had complete trust in God. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and they were simple and ordinary people, despite the positions that they occupied (administrators of the province of Babylon). They were faithful and feared God, which they demonstrated by not complying with the king's order, which was to worship the statue that he had had made. *(If you are using a flannel board, put each character on the board as you mention him/her).*

The king Nebuchadnezzar had a statue made of gold, ninety feet tall and nine feet wide, and he ordered it to be put in the Dura plain in the

province of Babylonia. He ordered that all the governors, satraps, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the officials of the provinces to attend the dedication of the statue that he had had made. Everyone was to meet in front of the statue for the dedication. The messengers or spokespersons said in a loud voice, "You people and nations of every language, you are ordered to do the following: when you hear the music of trumpets, flutes, zithers, harps, and other musical instruments, bow down and worship the statue". They also said that anyone who did not follow the royal order would be thrown into the fiery furnace. This order was indisputable because the king had given it.

Knowing what the punishment was, as soon as they heard the music, all of the people bowed down and worshipped the golden statue. But the Bible says that these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, did not do it. So the astrologers went before the king and said to him, "Your Majesty has given the order that all of the people of the nation bow down and worship the statue, and that whoever does not follow the order will be thrown into the fiery furnace." And your Majesty has put Jews in charge to govern the province of Babylon, and they have not followed your order - they do not worship the statue.

When he heard this, the king became very angry and he sent for them. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego stood in front of the king and the king said to them, "I have heard that you do not honor or worship my gods, nor the statue that I had made. Now when you hear the music, you had better bow down and worship the gold statue that I made or I will send you to be thrown into the furnace, and there will not be a god capable of freeing you from my hands." Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego responded that they did not need to defend themselves from the king, and they replied confidently, "If we are thrown into the fiery furnace, the God that we serve can free us from the furnace and from your Majesty's own hands. But even if our God does not, know that we will not honor your gods or the statue."

The king was furious. He ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter and that they be thrown into it. The furnace was so hot that when the soldiers threw in the three young men, whose feet and hands were tied, the heat itself killed the soldiers who were throwing the youth into the fire.

The king, anxious to see how they were burning, leaned out to see, and in that moment he asked his messengers "Weren't there three men that were tied and thrown into the fire?" The counselors replied that there were.

Shocked, the king said, "Look! I see four men in the fire, without ropes and unharmed, and the fourth man has the appearance of a god."

Then he went to the furnace door and ordered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to come out. When they did, all of the satraps, governors, judges and magistrates went up to them and saw that the fire had not harmed them—not even one of their hairs had been burned, and they did not even smell like smoke.

So king Nebuchadnezzar said, "Glory to the God of these men, who sent an angel to save them. They trusted in Him and challenged a royal order, preferring to die before honoring and worshiping other gods that were not theirs."

And he gave them even higher positions in the province of Babylon.

Talk to children about how the power of God can do all things and how He uses His children to show His glory.

Through these young men, God showed His power before the king and all of the governors, and what's more, he made them conquerors by not fearing what could have happened in the furnace. (In Christ we are more than conquerors).

REFLECTING ON THE PASSAGE

Ask the children the following questions to help them participate and analyze the theme.

- What was King Nebuchadnezzar's order? Worship the golden statue
- What was the punishment for anyone who did not obey? to be thrown into the furnace
- Who disobeyed the order given by the king? Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Remind the children that these three young men feared God and trusted completely in Him.

- What happened in the fiery furnace? The king saw four persons in it.
- Why didn't Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego get burned, even though the soldiers that threw them into the furnace were caught by the flames and died? *Emphasize that God loves those who are faithful and obedient to His commandments, even when in danger or in a difficult situation. Having faith*

does not mean that everything will always turn out right, but if we trust in God, everything that happens to us will be for our good.

- How did the king react when he saw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego without ropes and unharmed inside the furnace? He changes his attitude and he worship to God.

Help your students see how God uses His children to do extraordinary things so that others will know Him in the world.

APPLYING THE MESSAGE

God saved Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego by sending an angel to take care of them and they come out unhurt.

Despite working for the king as administrators, these young men had a conviction and faith in God that never changed, despite living among people who worshipped and honored other gods. We too should defend our faith in God and be faithful to Him, even when we find ourselves in difficult situations like these young men. If we trust in God, He will send help and will free us from the danger that threatens us.

Optional Activity (applying evangelism)

Show the lifejacket and ask:

- What is this?
- What is it used for? Wait for answers.....
- Have you ever seen a drowning person being rescued?

Explain what happens in these cases:

Under normal rescue situations, a life jacket is thrown near the person in danger so that he or she can grab onto it. Since the lifejacket floats, the person floats and does not sink. It rarely fails. The person who throws the lifejacket is, in reality, the savior.

The Bible says that Christ came to this world to be our Savior. (Open the Bible to 1 Timothy 1:15 and read the verse to confirm what you have just said). Explain that we need Christ, because only He can save us from sin and from the punishment that sin deserves. Being a sinner is like falling into water and not knowing or not being able to swim. You can't save yourself, so you urgently need the help of another person.

Christ is for us a lifejacket that never fails. He does it because He loves us.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego knew this, and that's why they trusted in God. They had the assurance that He would never abandon them because He loved them. This made them Heroes of God because they went out victorious from the situation they faced with the order given by the king.

We often face orders or situations that try to obligate us to change our faith in God, but we need to take Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's example and trust that God has everything under control and will make us victorious. They were ordinary youth like you and like me.

Ask for or give examples of situations in which the children think or feel that they should deny Christ and their faith.

- Being made fun of at school: sometimes because we are embarrassed we don't say that we are Christians, or when someone says something that goes against our faith, we stay quiet.
- Sometimes we are scared to talk about God because our friends might not want to be friends with us anymore.

However, these youth (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) did not fear, even when the king had other gods and did not know the true God.

OPCIONAL ACTIVITIES

Have the children act out the story they just heard and put the dialogue it in their own words.

CONCLUSION

Just as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had to be brave when they refused to worship the statue that the king had had made, we too need to face things bravely and not allow ourselves to be influenced by embarrassment or fear. Remember that He is your Savior and is always at your side to help you and take care of you in every situation

It may be difficult, but ask God in prayer to give you strength and courage to always be faithful. Remember that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were not afraid or embarrassed to talk about God. They didn't change their conviction or faith despite living amidst people who worshipped and honored other gods.

Prepare the children whom God has chosen to accept Christ this week. Tell the class: God loves you so much! God wants to help and bless you. When you come to church you learn more and more about God's love. We hope that what you learn this week will help you feel that love, and will allow you to deepen your relationship with God. Let's ask God to fill us with gratitude for his love.

Conclude the class with a brief prayer, asking that the children repeat after you.

4th – 6th Grade

Alphabet Soup

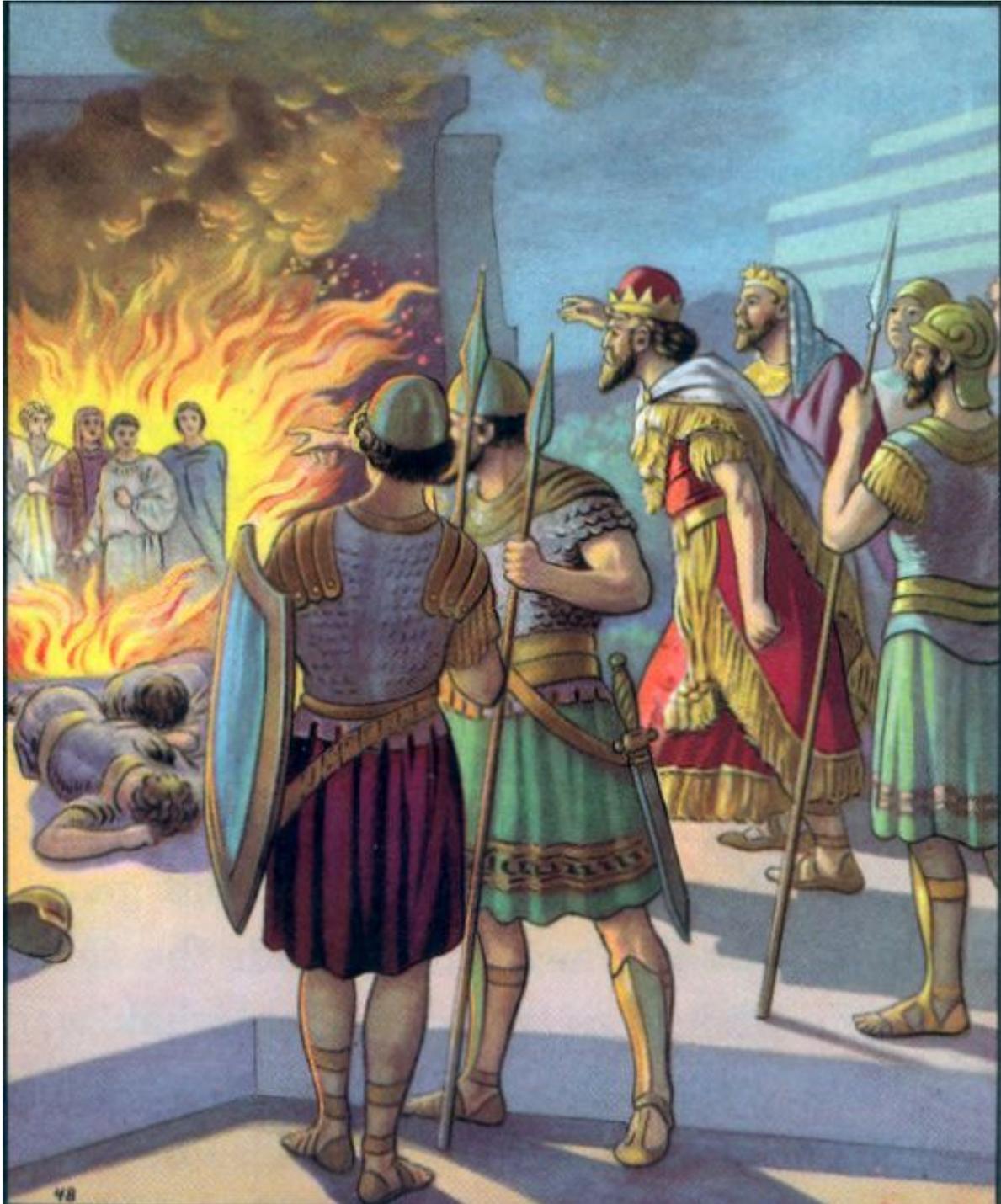
“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him.” Daniel 3:28

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Write the text

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

Daniel 3: 28



Source:

<http://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/Pictures/Standard%20Bible%20Story%20Readers,%20Book%20Four/target22.html>

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God's Heroes: From Ordinary to Extraordinary...

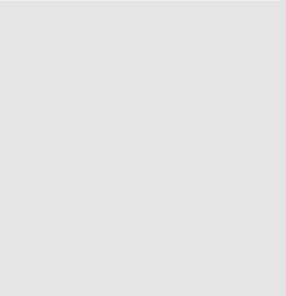
Héroes de Dios: De Ordinario a Extraordinario...

Joseph Interprets Dreams

Day One **4th to 6th Grade**

THEME:	God makes us extraordinary when God gives us different gifts.
BIBLE PASSAGE:	Genesis 41:1-28 (29-37) 38-40.
MEMORY VERSE:	We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. Rom. 12:6a

Objective	Students will learn that when we serve God faithfully, we can accomplish extraordinary feats.
Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will hear the story of how Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams (Genesis 41:1-40)• Students will understand that God put Joseph in the right place at the right time to accomplish God's goals.• Students will understand that God gave Joseph the ability to correctly interpret Pharaoh's dreams about the coming famine.• Students will understand that Joseph was willing to serve God even during difficult circumstances (being a prisoner, being in a foreign land).
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Genesis 40 to know the background of how Joseph came to be recommended to Pharaoh as a dream interpreter.• Read Genesis 41 to familiarize yourself with today's story.• Pray that God will work through you to reach the children you teach; pray that He will give you patience, wisdom, and joy as you share His word. Pray for the students you will be working with, that the Holy Spirit will open their hearts and minds to today's lesson.• Read through the "true/false/not in story" list to be sure that you know the correct answers for this activity.
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rehearse presenting the lesson to time the length of each section.• Illustrations (illustrated Bible, Bible storybook, Abeka cards, or other pictures) to show during the lesson. Pictures of wheat or barley would be helpful, as many of these students may never have seen wheat or barley sheaves. Pictures of Egyptian culture during Biblical times would be a nice addition, particularly pictures of a Pharaoh or an Egyptian palace.• True/false/not in story paddles. These are made by using 3-inch red, green, and yellow construction paper circles (red for false, green for true, yellow for "not in story".) You can tape them to popsicle sticks, or children can just use the paper circles. Each



child will need one circle of each color for this activity. It's more effective if the word "true" is written on the green circle, the word "false" on the red circle, and the phrase "not in story" (or just the initials) written on the yellow circle.

- Worksheets, pencils
- Bibles
- Index cards, each with one word of the memory verse written on it.

Introduction

Greet the group. Let the young people know how happy you are to be there with them. Make them feel welcome and happy to be learning about God.

Meanwhile hand out nametags to the students and write their names on a list.

Introduce yourself and tell a little about yourself (be sure to introduce any classroom assistants as well, if they're not known to the students)

Open with a brief prayer (or invite one of the students to open with prayer)

Introduce today's memory verse: Rom. 12:6a: We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If possible write the verse on a white board or chalkboard and have students begin by reading it. Repeat several times, each time erasing two or three of the words until the students can recite the passage by memory. If no chalkboard is available, write each word on its own index card and display that way, removing a couple of the cards each time you read through the verse.

Studying the Bible passage

Ask:

- Who here has ever had a really interesting dream? (everyone should be able to answer that they've had such a dream).
- Who wants to tell just a little bit about a dream they've had? (Allow a few students to answer as time permits).
- Who has ever had a dream they can't understand at all?

Say:

Our lesson today is about how Joseph was able to use the special gifts and abilities God had given him to help many people. A powerful king (in this story, called "Pharaoh") had some strange and troubling dreams. He asked a man named Joseph to help him figure out what those dreams meant.

First, let's have a little background about Joseph from the book of Genesis:

Joseph lived in Canaan (part of Israel) with his father and brothers. He was his father's favorite child, which made his brothers angry. God had given Joseph the ability (even when he was very young) to interpret dreams, and one of his dreams told him that he would rule over his brothers. This made Joseph's brothers even angrier. They made a plan to kill Joseph, but decided instead to sell him as a slave. Joseph was taken as a slave to Egypt to work for a man named Potiphar. God watched over Joseph, and Joseph worked hard for Potiphar. Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his whole household. Potiphar's wife told lies about Joseph that made Potiphar very angry, and Potiphar put Joseph in prison. God continued to watch over Joseph while he was in

prison, and Joseph eventually was put in charge of all of the other prisoners. He continued to work hard and be patient. While Joseph was in prison, two of Pharaoh's servants, the royal cupbearer and the royal baker, were also put in prison. They each had strange dreams, and Joseph helped them to understand those dreams. When they were let out of prison, the cupbearer and the baker found that the things Joseph predicted from their dreams came true. The cupbearer had promised to mention Joseph to Pharaoh if Joseph's predictions came true, but once he was out of prison, the cupbearer forgot. So Joseph stayed in prison.

Now we come to today's story:

Let's read *Genesis 41: 1-40*. It's a long passage but lots of interesting things happen in it. (*Read the passage out loud, or ask if any of the students would like to take a turn reading part of the passage*).

Okay. Now let's talk about the story in our own words. (*As you go over the main story points, feel free to ask the students to help retell the story. Ask general questions like "who can remember what happens next?" or leading questions like "After Pharaoh had his dreams, what did he do?"*)

- After Joseph had been in prison two more years, Pharaoh had a dream.
- He dreamt that he was standing by the Nile River, and out of the river came seven fat cows. They grazed by the river. Then seven skinny cows came out of the river and ate the fat cows!
- Pharaoh had another dream. This time, there was a stalk with seven good, full heads of grain (probably barley) growing on it. Then seven bad, shriveled heads of grain grew on the same stalk and swallowed up the good, healthy heads of grain.
- Pharaoh was upset by these dreams and sent for all of his magicians and wise men, but none of them could tell him what the dreams meant.
- Finally, the cupbearer remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him. Pharaoh sent for Joseph.
- Pharaoh asked Joseph to interpret his dreams. Joseph said **"I can't do it, but God will give you the answer"**.
- Pharaoh told Joseph about his dreams, and Joseph told Pharaoh that the dreams were about the same thing: seven years of good harvests followed by seven years of famine (bad harvests where there isn't enough food and people starve).
- Joseph again gave God the credit, saying "God has revealed to Pharaoh what He is going to do" (*Gen. 41:28, 41:32*).
- Joseph suggested to Pharaoh that he make a system of saving up part of the grain from the seven years of good harvest so that it could be given to people during the seven years of famine.
- Pharaoh saw that the Spirit of God was in Joseph, and he liked Joseph's plan to save Egypt from famine. Pharaoh made Joseph his second-in-command, in charge of everyone in Egypt (except Pharaoh, of course!)

Reflecting on the Bible passage

Say:

Let's talk about the story a bit:

Emotion questions

- How did Pharaoh feel when no one could interpret his dream? (upset, worried, angry)
- How did Joseph feel when the baker forgot him for two years? (disappointed)
- How did Joseph feel when Pharaoh made him his Prime Minister? (excited, relieved)

Fact questions

- What two things did Pharaoh dream of? (7 skinny cows eating 7 fat cows. 7 withered ears of corn eating 7 full ones.)
- How many years of feast and famine were coming? (7 of each)
- Who benefited from God's warning? (Pharaoh, Joseph, all of Egypt, eventually Joseph's family.)

Review questions

- What did the dreams mean? (famine would follow plenty)
- What did Joseph advise that Pharaoh do? (appoint a man to store up food while they had it)
- Why did Pharaoh appoint Joseph? (he saw that he was wise and that God was with him)

Application questions

- Who should we give credit for our talents, abilities? (God)
- What should we do when we recognize God's work in someone else? (help them, praise God)
- What should we do when it seems God's plan isn't working? (be patient, pray)
- When we know times of trouble are coming, how should we prepare? (keep our hearts pure of bitterness, study and pray)

Applying the Bible passage to our life

Review Game: True, False, or Not in story?

The purpose of this game is to review the story and separate facts from fiction in a fun way. The teacher will read a list of statements. Some statements are true, some are false, and some may be true but were not in the story. After each statement, students will each hold up either a green circle (if they think the statement is true), a red circle (if the statement is false), or a yellow circle (if the statement wasn't in the story). If the answer is "false", ask them what the correct statement would be. Remind students to choose their answers for themselves, rather than looking to see what their friends are answering. You can keep score if you'd like, but it's not really a game where there's a "winner".

Statements:

- Joseph took all the credit for interpreting the dreams himself. (F)
- Pharaoh's magicians were able to interpret his dreams for him (F)
- Pharaoh's cupbearer was the one who recommended Joseph to Pharaoh (T)
- Pharaoh liked to wear a long purple robe and a crown when he talked about his dreams (Not in story)
- Pharaoh dreamed of seven fat cows and seven skinny cows (T)
- Pharaoh also dreamed of eight stalks of healthy grain and eight stalks of shriveled grain (F)
- The Pharaoh recognized God working in Joseph. (T)
- Both dreams meant the same thing. (T)
- Pharaoh had his dreams just before he woke up in the morning (not in story)

- After his dreams were interpreted, Pharaoh sent Joseph back to prison. (F)
- Joseph married Asenath. (Not in story)
- Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the whole country (T)
- After Joseph was released from prison for good, he tried to go back home to his brothers (F)
- God watched over Joseph the entire time he was a slave and in prison (T)

If time allows, hand out worksheet and have them fill it out individually or in teams. If there is no time, hand out worksheet for them to fill out at home.

Conclusion

Review the memory verse: Romans 12:6a. Have children try to recite it from memory.

Say: This verse is taken from a longer passage about the various gifts God gives to each of us. (Read Romans 5-8)

Ask: How do you think this memory verse fits with today's lesson? *(accept answers)*

Say: We've learned about how God gave Joseph the gifts he needed to interpret Pharaoh's dreams and save many, many people from starvation. God gives EACH of us different gifts and talents that we can use to serve Him and each other. What are some talents you feel that God has given to you? *(accept answers, if any)*

God wants us to have faith that He will watch over us and guide us according to His plans for us, and that He will give us the abilities we need for the work He gives us. Just like Joseph, we need to be patient and have faith that God will guide us where He wants us to go. What are some things we can do to learn what God wants for us? *(Pray, read the Bible)*

God has special work for each one of us. God wants us to use the gifts that God gave us. God loves us a great deal. When you come to church you learn about the love of God, but you also learn that we human beings sin and that this becomes a barrier for our connection with God. This week, let's ask God to help us overcome that barrier through Jesus. In this way, we can use the gifts God has given us.

Let's close with a prayer: *(you can either pray yourself or ask for a volunteer. Pray for God's guidance, pray for patience and faithfulness, pray that God will bless the students with strength and the ability to do His work in the world.)*

JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE KING'S DREAMS (Genesis 41:1-36)

Unscramble the following words and use them to complete the sentences below.

GETPY

NISKNY

FICEH OKOC

SALONERP VANTERS

ILAJ

SMEARD

UPT OT HEDAT

SHOJEP

LINE VIRRE

NEEVS SAYER

WOSC

TYPLEN

ASRSG

GIVTRANS

1. Joseph was a slave in _____.
2. The _____ was thrown in jail with Joseph.
3. Joseph, the king's personal servant, and the chief cook were in _____ together.
4. The chief cook was _____.
5. The king dreamed he was standing on the bank of the _____.
6. The king dreamed about fat _____ eating the _____.
7. The king also dreamed about _____ cows eating the fat ones.
8. The king's _____ told the king about Joseph.
9. The king sent for Joseph because he wanted to know what his _____ meant.
10. God helped _____ to know what the dreams meant.
11. The king's dreams meant that there would be _____ of more than enough grain in Egypt, followed by not enough.
12. Joseph told the king there would be seven years of _____.
13. Joseph told the king that after that the Egyptian people would be _____.



GOD'S HEROES: FROM ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY!

Day: Wednesday

4th-6th

Theme: Queen Esther Saves Her People.

Lesson 3: Esther the Brave Queen.

Bible reference: Esther 3:12-13, 4:1-17, 5:1-4, 7:1-6, 10

Memory verse: Esther 4:14

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this? Est.4:14 (NIV) (use all or part of the verse).

OBJECTIVE

The student will know the story of Queen Esther, be able to tell about her bravery in defending her people, and will identify God's response to His people's fast.

PREPARATION

- *Seek God's direction in prayer, asking Him to give you wisdom and the right words so that students will understand the objective of this class.*
- *Pray also for the children that you will have in your class so that the Holy Spirit would move in the hearts of those with needs.*
- *For this class you will already know the children who have attended this week a little bit better; pray for them, especially for those you sense have the greatest needs. Ask the Lord to use you to help these children.*
- *Read the Bible passage many times so that you are very familiar with the plot that reveals the story of this young Jewish girl who would become queen.*
- *When possible, bring an illustrated Bible to the class and share the pictures with the children.*

- *Rehearse the class many times to measure the timing, using visual aids related to the class for support. Make your class enjoyable and try to make each class different from those before. This keeps the children interested. (Remember that we can use flannel boards, puppets, figurines, or whatever objects we have available-it's only a matter of imagination and creativity).*
- *If there is enough time, you can act out the story with the children, allowing them to participate on the spot.*
- *Obtain all of the materials that you will use (pictures, flannel board, or dresses).*
- *Prepare the memory verse in a visual way (poster board, markers or figurines, etc). Learn it well so that the students see your example, and if possible, keep the text in the classroom every day.*

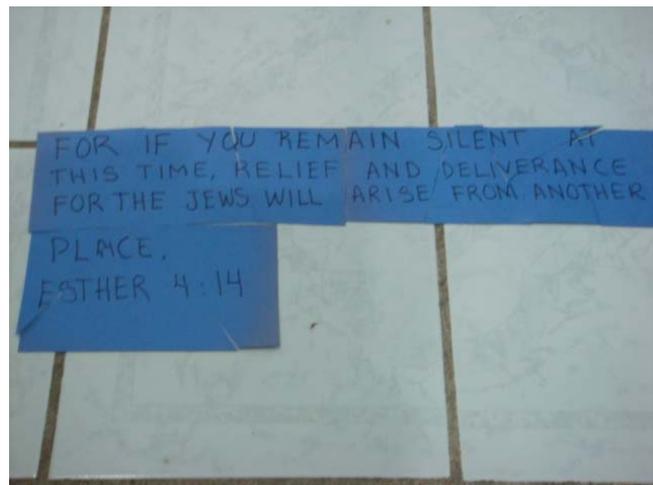
☺ Optional activity for application (Together We Are Strong)

-Materials required: approximately 10 wooden toothpicks or tongue depressors

-A small amount of thick string for tying the toothpicks or tongue depressors

☺ Prepare your materials according to how the students will memorize the verse.

HOW TO VISUALIZE THE TEXT: (Optional)



GAMES FOR MEMORIZING THE VERSE:**Puzzle**

Give the child a sheet where the words of the text are out of order, so the student can cut out and arrange the words.

Use visual aid to play a group game:

Form two teams and give each team the words that make up the memory verse. The children will come to the front and place the words of the verse on the flannel board. Both teams play at the same time. This is not a competition; it's just a game to see if the children have learned the verse and to get them interested in learning it. It's a lot of fun!

BIBLICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

This happened during the time of King Ahasuerus who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush (Esther 1). Some Jews were dispersed and scattered among the people of the land ruled by King Ahasuerus (Esther 3:8).

At that time King Ahasuerus reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa (Esther 1:2). There was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (Esther 2:5-6). Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, who was also known as Esther (Esther 2:7; 2:15). Even though both the parents of Esther passed away she was brought up by cousin Mordecai who had taken her as his own daughter (Esther 2:7).

Esther, descendant of the tribe of Benjamin, from the house of Israel, was beautiful, lovely in form and features. The book of Esther describes the time when all the Jews in the 127 provinces of kingdom of Ahasuerus got relief from their enemies with the help of Queen Esther.

The story revolves around king Ahasuerus. It was the third year of his reign when he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. One of those days King Ahasuerus was in high spirits, and he asked for Queen Vashti to be brought before him, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. But Queen Vashti refused to come into the presence of the King.

As a consequence of the Queen's conduct King Ahasuerus consulted his experts in matters of Law and justice. He inquired about what must be done to Queen Vashti, for she had disobeyed a royal commend. Foreseeing that the Queen's conduct would be known to all women in the Memucan kingdom, one of the wise advisors of the king predicted that women of the nobility would respond in the same way to all the nobles of the king. Therefore, disrespect and discord amongst men and women would have no end in the kingdom. In this context, Memucan proposed that Vashti should never again enter the presence of King Ahasuerus, and that the King would give her royal position to someone else who was more worthy than she. As a result, all women would respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest.

The King and his nobles were pleased with this advice, so the king did as Memucan proposed. Beautiful girls were selected in every province of the kingdom. The one who pleases the king would become Queen instead of Vashti. Once chosen, a girl had to complete 12 months of beauty treatment before she was taken to the presence of the King.

Esther was selected amongst the beautiful girls of the kingdom. She was put under care of Hegai, who was in charge of the women in the Harem at the citadel of Susa. Esther pleased him and won his favor. He took good care of her and moved her to the best place in the Harem. When the time came for Esther to go to the King she followed Hegai's advice. Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her. The King was attracted to Esther more than to any other woman, and she won his favor and approval. He set a royal crown on her head and made her Queen instead of Vashti.

In those days two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway conspired to assassinate King Ahasuerus. Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were hanged on a gallows. At this time Mordecai would not receive honor or recognition for saving the life of the king.

After these events, King Ahasuerus honored Haman, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. The king commanded that all the royal officials at the king's gate should kneel down and honor Haman. This they did, except Mordecai, for he said he was a Jew. Haman was enraged because of the conduct of Mordecai and looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus. To do so Haman spoke to the King. Haman told king

Ahasuerus about the existence of people in the kingdom whose customs were different from those of all the other people and who wouldn't obey the laws of the king. He persuaded king Ahasuerus into issuing a decree to destroy them.

From this moment on, Esther would use her gifts and wisdom to save all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus from those enemies who sought to annihilate them- young and old, women and children- in a single day.

INTRODUCTION

- *Welcome each child to the class and introduce the new children. Always demonstrate how happy you are to be with them again to continue learning about God.*
- *Sing the welcome song (if you taught one) and pass the attendance list.*
- *Don't forget to remind the students of the general theme of the VBS- "God's Heroes: From Ordinary to Extraordinary!"*
- *Review the verses you've already memorized and the titles of the previous classes.*
- *Present the title and key verse of today's class.*
- *Say a prayer for all of the children who have been blessed in coming to the VBS. Give thanks to God for what has been learned and for this lesson.*
- *Note: try to maintain eye contact with each student, preferably seating them in a semicircle.*

TEACHING THE CLASS

Ask questions like the following:

- *Where are you from originally? (Where were you born?)*
- *What would happen if someone decided that you could no longer live in that place and that people had to leave?*
- *How would you feel if you had family and friends there?*
- *What would you do? (This question is very important, since the children will possibly give similar answers).*

The Bible tells us the story of a young and very nice girl who was orphan (she did not have parents), but she had a cousin named Mordecai who took care of her and raised her. What do you think the life of a person who does not have parents is like? *Listen to children's comments.* They were living in a country very far from his and her mother land since they were Jewish, where there was a king called Ahasuerus. He was a king who had many friends. One day invited them to his palace to a great banquet.

This king during a party in his palace, called his queen Vashti in order that his friends meet her but she did not want to come to him. His friends advised him to take the throne from Vasti and to look for another woman in order that she may become his queen. Then the King chose Esther from among other women in order make her his queen, though he did not know that she belonged to the Jewish nation.

The king loved Esther more than any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti And the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his nobles and officials. He proclaimed a holiday throughout the provinces and distributed royalty gifts.

In the God's perfect plan she passed from being a simple orphan to occupying the royal throne. Her cousin told her that she should not declare her origin yet. Even though she was the queen, she was obeyed her cousin. During that time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, and two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway became angry and conspired to assassinate King Ahasuerus. But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were hanged on the gallows. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.

But at this moment, Mordacai was not honored nor received recognition for saving the life of the king.

Haman was one of the King's officials. All the royal workers at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him homage. When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him homage, he was enraged. Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus. Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people dispersed and

scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will put ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out this business."

So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please." Haman ordered an edict punishing the Jewish people because Mordecai would not pay homage to the king nor kneel before him. When Mordecai found out about this, he covered himself with ashes, put on clothes for mourning, and went out of the city shouting bitterly. Since no one was allowed to enter the palace dressed for mourning, he only made it to the king's door (he did this as a protest), and sent Hathach, a eunuch, (servant, employee) to tell Esther everything that was happening. *(Explain to the children that at that time the queen was not allowed to present herself before the king without being summoned, for it could cost her her life)*. So Esther explained that she could not present herself before the king because she would be putting her life in danger, unless the king reached out with his scepter as a sign that he would spare her life. When Mordecai heard this he reminded her that despite being the queen she was also part of the Jewish people, and that it was possible that God had put her there in order to do something for them. Esther sent word to Mordecai to gather all the Jews that were in Susa to pray and fast for her for three days, without eating or drinking anything. She would do the same, and at the end of the three days she would present herself before the king. It didn't matter to Esther that she would be risking her life-she was certain that God would hear the prayers of His people. Esther said that she would do this, even though it went against the law. She said, "If I die, then I die". So Mordecai did what Esther had asked. Esther put on her royal robes and presented herself before the king. She was asking for her people to be freed from death. When he saw her, the king the king reached out his scepter as a symbol of pardon. What's more, he asked her what her petition was, saying, "even if you ask for half of my kingdom I will give it you!" If it pleases your Majesty, come today to the banquet that I will give in your honor, and also bring Haman. The king immediately had Haman sent for in order to fulfill Esther's request. So the

king and Haman attended the banquet given by Esther, and being there he asked her, "What is it that you want?" And he told her again that even if she asked for half of his kingdom he would give it to her. Esther replied, "My wish and petition, if I have earned your Majesty's favor, is that you and Haman come to the banquet that I will give tomorrow, and then I will give my answer." (*Remind the students that before Esther did all this, she had been praying and fasting along with Mordecai and the Jewish people*). "On the second day, the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, and while they were enjoying themselves the king asked the queen again what her petition was. She replied, "If I have earned your Majesty's favor, and if it seems fitting to you, my wish is that you grant me my life. My petition is that you would have compassion on my people, because both I and my people have been sentenced to be extermination, death, and annihilation. If only we would have been sold as slaves I would have stayed quiet, for such anguish would not be motive for disturbing your Majesty. (Show the children how Esther acted with humility before the king, even though she was the queen). King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is the man who has dared to do such a thing?. Esther said : Is Haman" Then the king answered as to what would be done with Haman. Haman was punished and sent to be hanged on the same gallows that had been prepared for Mordecai. (*Emphasize how God takes care of His children and gives us solutions to our worries and dangers*).

REFLECTING ON THE PASSAGE

Ask the following questions to help the children analyze and remember the lesson.

- What was Mordecai's concern?
- Why did he have word sent to Esther to inform her of what was happening?
- What was Esther's reaction?
- What did she do?
- What would you have done?
- Would you have had the same courage and conviction that Esther had?

This courage comes only from God, for He knows you-He knows your needs and worries.

Esther acted with faith, along with her people, in prayer. Faith brings us to conviction, which brings us to action, which results in blessing. The result is up to God. Remember that God will not abandon us, and He always protects His people. Everything that happens is guided by Him and is for our good. God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things, just as in this story He used Esther, who was just like you and me. She became queen and saved the lives of an entire people, and she accomplished all this by trusting in God.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY 1

Act out the moment in which Esther speaks to the King while the people fasted. Choose a person to be Queen Esther and one to be King Ahasuerus. Bring some costumes, crowns, etc. Then ask the rest of the class to be the people of God, on their knees praying while Esther spoke with the King. Help the group take turns so that several or all the students get a chance to have the roles of Esther and Ahasuerus

APPLYING THE MESSAGE

Can you imagine what it must feel like to be orphaned with out parents to take care of you? Esther was an orphan but had a cousin who took care of her and taught her to trust in God. Esther completely trusted her cousin. When her cousin asked her to protect the Jewish people, she took a great risk to do so.

Have you ever obeyed your parents to do something that scared you, but since your parents were asking you to do it you did it anyway? Esther was not afraid to face the danger of speaking to the King without permission. The rule was that if the king did not extend his scepter to her, she ran the risk of being executed by order of the king.

Have you ever prayed for God to help you when you had a big problem? Have you seen your parents pray when they had a big decision to make? God listens to the prayers of God's people. The story tells us of a special way of praying. It's called Fasting. Do you remember what I told you fasting was? It is not eating in order to focus on praying to God. It is a very special way of

praying and God listens to these prayers because they show how serious the people who are praying are. God heard the cry of his people praying, and God made the king to extend his scepter towards Esther and therefore sparing her life. Esther not only accomplished this, but also got the king to order the Jews to be able to defend themselves and be saved. As a result, the Jewish people had light, joy, happiness and honor in a foreign land.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Complete worksheet. Link the related words

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- *Show the toothpicks/tongue depressors and hand out three to different children.*
- *Ask how strong they think the toothpicks/tongue depressors are.*
- *Ask them to break the toothpicks/tongue depressors you handed out to prove how strong or resistant they are.*
- *Now tie five or more toothpicks/tongue depressors together and give them to different children. Ask again that they break them. This time they shouldn't be able to break them; if they do, they will see that it is more difficult to break a group than just one.*

Explain the following: each one of us in isolation is very weak, but when we unite as a family or a people we make each other strong. This is why Jesus wants us to remain together and united with and in Him. Remind your students that only Christ gives us strength and unity; that's why He wants us to be part of His body, the church. To demonstrate this, He died for us on the cross, and He rose again to give us salvation.

CONCLUSION

Esther knew that she would accomplish more by praying and fasting along with Mordecai and their people than she could have accomplished alone. This doesn't mean that if we pray alone God doesn't listen to us, but He likes to hear the voice of all His people. Esther knew this because she was part of the people of God.

Do you want to be an extraordinary person? God makes ordinary people to become extraordinary, just like the lesson. God wants to be in your heart and make you a part of God's family.

I invite you to surrender your life to Christ, confess your sins, and ask God for forgiveness. *If you have a positive response from any children, ask them to stay for a moment and finish presenting the plan of salvation. If you can't do it yourself, ask another teacher for support in doing so. (If possible, get the full names and addresses of these children).*

Conclude the class with prayer, giving God thanks for Jesus and for the members of the class.

Lesson 3

4-6 Grade

Relaciona las columnas
Draw a line to link columns

Ester
Esther

exterminio
extermination

Asuero
Ahasuerus

primo
cousin

Mardoqueo
Mordecai

malo
bad

Aman
Haman

esposa
wife

Zeres
Zeresh

ayunar
to fast

Ordenar
Order

judía
jew

Judíos
Jews

rey
king

God's Heroes: From Ordinary to Extraordinary...

Héroes de Dios: De Ordinario a Extraordinario...

Mary prepares to serve God

Day Four **4th to 6th Grade**

THEME:	God makes us extraordinary when God chooses us to do special things.
BIBLE PASSAGE:	Luke 1:26-38
MEMORY VERSE:	Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Lk.1:38

Objective	Young people will: 1) imagine themselves in Mary's place, 2) discuss what characteristics made Mary a faithful servant of God, and 3) discover their own characteristics which make them able to serve God as well.
Preparation	Devotional Time: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Luke 1:26-38 to yourself and picture the scene in your mind.• Read Luke 1:26- 38 again and reflect on Mary's personality and feelings.• Read Luke 1:26- 38 a third time, and ask yourself what you would do in her place.• Write short people descriptions (see attached list) on each nametag (enough for one per youth) and put them in an envelope you can access easily;• Print and highlight the script for 3 readers;• For option a: Print characteristics and descriptions on tagboard strips• For option b: Make needed # copies of phrases or put onto newsprint for whole group• Make one copy of the role play situations for each leader• Make copies of the discussion questions for each small group
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blank stick-on name tags to make description labels (need 1 per youth) (or print descriptions onto sticky paper and cut for labels)• Large envelope to hold description labels (need 1 envelope per class)• 3 copies of the Scripture Luke 1:26-38, parts highlighted for Mary, Gabriel, Narrator. (have a set for each class or have extras on hand)• tagboard strips or newsprint for "Mary's Top 3"

- masking tape
- pen/pencil or marker for each group leader
- copy of the role play situations for each leader
- copies of the discussion questions for each small group

Introduction

Welcome the children warmly. Hand out nametags to the students and write their names on attendance sheet.

Open the class with prayer, giving thanks to God for the opportunity of being together and also ask God to give students understanding and open up their hearts and minds so they may apply God's teaching for the day.

Ask children to raise their hands if they have ever been surprised by something so unusual that it grabbed their attention and maybe even startled them. Ask a few children to share what surprised them and how they felt when that happened. Were they afraid? Were they confused by what was happening?

Have the children show you their best "surprised faces" (mouths open, leaning back, hands raised, gasping...)

Tell them that you want to share a story from the bible about a woman who was surprised, yet showed great faith..

Studying the Bible passage

Read the story from the Bible-Luke 1:26-38

Ask them to tell you what the story tells us about Mary (female, from a town called Nazareth, engaged to be married to Joseph, virgin...)

How does Mary respond when the angel Gabriel says "Greetings favored one! The Lord is with you? (confused at first and wonders what it all means)

Once the angel explains that she will have a baby that will be the Son of the Most High (God), named Jesus and that he will reign forever, what does Mary say? (how can this be?) The angel goes on to explain that the Holy Spirit will be with her and the child will be born holy.

Now comes the most important thing that Mary does! She says: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Act out the story using 2 children (angel Gabriel and Mary). Have the angel use the flashlight to shine on Mary's face as he greets and surprises her.

Help the class memorize the passage for today: "Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Luke 1:38

Reflecting on the Bible passage

1. *Have some of the children loosely place cotton in their ears (one cotton ball per child split in half will do), while others put on blindfolds. Ask the children to do a simple task that requires listening or seeing. (This will be difficult for them to obey and accomplish*

with the cotton and blindfolds). Ask them to return their attention to you and ask "how would the story be different if Mary had not been willing, even when she was afraid, to look at the angel and listen with her ears and heart to what message the angel was giving her?" (Mary would not have served God and God's plan would not have worked out in this way.) Have you ever ignored an important message from your parent or a teacher by pretending not to hear or see?

- 2. Have the children sit cross-legged in a circle. Place an ice cube in the middle of the circle. As it melts, talk about how sometimes we are not willing to hear or see what our parents or teachers are telling us. Why is that? Are we afraid, too busy, angry, don't care or have trouble believing? If we have faith and obey willingly, all the reasons and excuses melt away like this ice cube and then we are ready to hear what God has planned for us.*

Applying the Bible passage to our life

Still in circle, tell the children: Mary was an ordinary young woman, not yet married who discovered that she was going to be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God! Mary had great faith in God because she knew God, and knew God had done great things for her people. She was willing to be the Lord's servant saying "here am I".

Have the children place their hands on their knees with the palms down and close their eyes. Tell them that they are special to God and that God may choose them to do something special. Have them turn their palms up and say "Here am I, Lord help me to serve you."

Choose one of these activities:

- 1. Set the children up in teams for a relay, where a ball is passed through the line using their elbows only. Do the relay a second time, but while keeping the children in their spots, remove someone from the line and have them attempt to do the relay again. Illustrate the point that God needs us to serve on his team.*

- 2. Have them trace their hands on paper and write on the hands what makes them special and what things they can do to serve God. Put all the hands together and say that when we all use our gifts to serve God, extraordinary things can happen!*

Conclusion

We have learned the story of Mary today, an ordinary young woman who served God in an extraordinary way-bringing Jesus into the world. She was willing to serve God and to help carry out his plan. May we all be part of God's team, being willing to hear what God tells us and to serve him.

God loves you so much! With Jesus in your heart, you have a special relationship with Jesus. Let's ask God to help you continue to grow in your knowledge and love of Jesus.

Conclude with prayer.

GOD'S HEROES: FROM ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY!

Day: Friday

4th to 6th

Theme: With God You Can Do Impossible Things

Lesson 5: Peter walks on water.

Bible passage: Matthew 14:22-33

Line to memorize: Matthew 14:28

*"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."
Mt 14:28 (NIV)*

OBJECTIVE

The children will learn the story of Peter, who walked on water because he was commanded to. The children will place and maintain their faith in God.

PREPARATION

- *Seek God's direction in prayer, asking Him to give you wisdom and the right words so that students will understand the objective of this class.*
- *Pray also for the children that you will have in your class that the Holy Spirit would move in the hearts of those with needs.*
- *For this class you will already know the children who have attended this week a little bit better; pray for them, especially for those you sense have the greatest needs. Ask the Lord to use you to help these children.*
- *Read the Bible passage many times so that you are very familiar with the plot that reveals the story.*
- *When possible, bring an illustrated Bible to the class and share the pictures with the children.*
- *Rehearse the class many times to measure the timing, using visual aids related to the class for support. Make your class enjoyable and try to make each class different from those before. This keeps the children interested. (Remember that we can use flannel boards, puppets,*

figurines, or whatever objects we have available-it's only a matter of imagination and creativity).

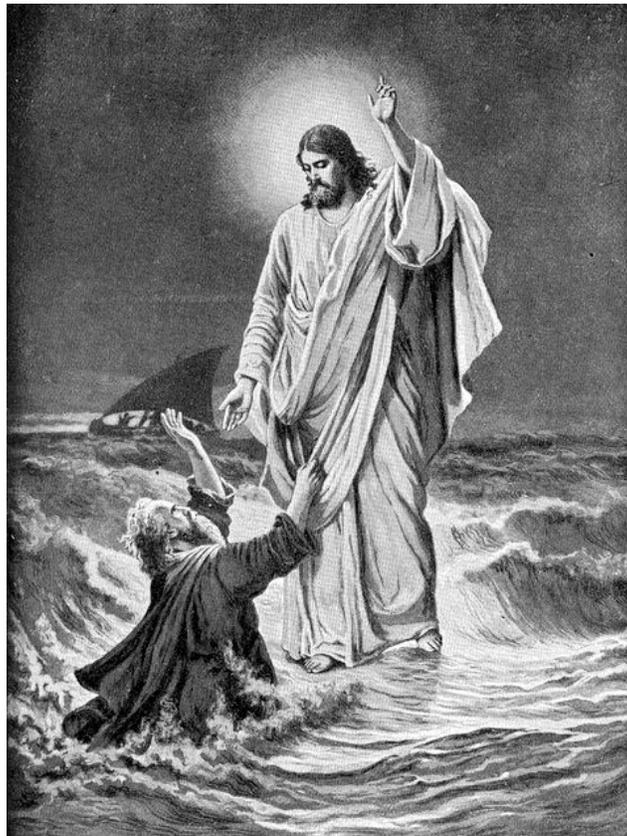
- *Prepare the memory verse visually and learn it well so that the children see that you also memorized it. If possible, keep the visual aid in the classroom every day.*
- Prepare the materials and have them ready to be used exactly the way you want them. For this class we suggest the following:

☺ Application activity:

- ~ a handkerchief or bandana .
- ~ objects (chairs, etc.), children, a path blocked by obstacles

Prepare your materials according to how the students will memorize the verse.

HOW TO VISUALIZE THE TEXT: (Optional)



Source: [http://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/Pictures/Treasures%20of%20the%20Bible%20\(Jesus'%20Ministry\)/target18.html](http://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/Pictures/Treasures%20of%20the%20Bible%20(Jesus'%20Ministry)/target18.html)
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GAMES FOR MEMORIZING THE VERSE:

☺ STOP

In this game the children will have to stop and say the verse when they hear commands such as the following:

Children with green clothing

Children who are ___ years old

Children who have a cat, dog, parrot, etc., at home

Children who drink milk in the morning

Or any other characteristic you'd like to mention.

☺ PING PONG

(Materials: a rubber or cloth ball)

Divide the group into two teams, facing each other.

The game begins when one of the two teams throws the ball towards the other team and says the first word of the verse. The other team member who catches the ball throws the ball back and says the next word in the verse. The game continues until the whole verse has been recited.

- ☺ The game can also be played with several teams so that all of the children can participate and the verse can be memorized more easily depending on the time you set aside for this part of the class.

BIBLICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Jesus Christ was walking beside the Sea of Galilee and asked Simon, also known as Peter, to follow him. From there he became one of the 12 disciples of Christ (Matthew 4:18-20; 16:16).

Peter was impulsive (Matthew 16:22, 17:4, 26:33, 35; John 18:10) and full of weaknesses (Matthew 14:28, 30; 19:27, 26:40; John 18:17, 25, 27)

Jesus Christ predicted that Simon Peter would become the building rock upon which the church of Christ would be built (Matthew 16:17-19)

Peter disciplined himself through years of trials. After the Ascension of Christ, Peter wrote some letters, which show a difference on the character of Peter.

First epistle of Peter

Peter had become what Christ predicted: a rock for his church. This letter is likely to have been written during the last years of his life

The epistle is addressed to God's elect, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia & Bithynia.

INTRODUCTION

- *Welcome each child to the class and introduce the new children. Always demonstrate how happy you are to be with them again to continue learning about God.*
- *Sing the welcome song (if you taught one) and pass the attendance list.*
- *Don't forget to remind the students of the general theme of the VBS- God's Heroes: From Ordinary to Extraordinary!"*
- *Review the verses you've already memorized and the titles of the previous classes.*
- *Present the title and key verse of today's class.*
- *Say a prayer for all of the children who have been blessed in coming to the VBS. Give thanks to God for what has been learned and for this last lesson.*
- *Practice the memory verse, Matthew 14:28: "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water. 'Come', he said."*

TEACHING THE CLASS

- *Ask the children if they have personally seen a boat, yacht, raft, or a simple life jacket.*
- *Ask what happens when one of these objects is put in water. Wait for responses and say, "These objects have been created to float, and some of them move across the water. But how can a human walk on water without help from something like one of these objects? Again wait for responses and..."*
- *Ask: "Do you think that anyone can walk on water without sinking? Have you ever gone to the beach and wandered farther than you should have, when all of a sudden a wave comes and washes over you? How did you feel? Tell the children that the Bible talks about two people that walked on water, but only one of them sank. They were Jesus and Pedro.*

- *Ask the children to find the passage in the Bible where this story is found- Matthew 14:22-33 (NIV). Read it together. Then start with the Bible story.*

The Bible tells us that Jesus walked on water without sinking, and it tells us that Peter also walked on water, but that he became afraid and began to sink. Jesus had to save him.

Jesus was always with His disciples, and in general, people wanted to be near to hear His teachings and often to be healed. On that day, after being with all the people, He went away and told His disciples to go on ahead of Him to the other side of the lake. He went up to a mountain to pray, as He often went away to do.

Night fell, and He continued praying, but the boat that Jesus would board later with His disciples had drifted far from the shore. So, in order to reach the disciples, He walked on the water. What would happen if you went to the beach when it was dark and all of a sudden you saw someone walking on the sea? What would you think? Let the children give you their responses; wait to hear the following: "I would think it was a ghost and I'd be scared". But Jesus spoke to them and said, "Do not be afraid, it's Me.". Then Peter, one of His disciples, told Him, "Lord, if it's You, tell me to go to You on the water." Peter wanted to be sure that it was Jesus, since He can do everything. And Jesus replied to him and said, "Come".

Tell the children that Peter was free to do whatever he chose, since Jesus didn't make them do anything. But Peter, without thinking twice, got off the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. Then Peter felt the strong wind and was afraid, and he began to sink. Desperate, he shouted, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out His hand to grab him so that he wouldn't sink, and Jesus said, "Man of little faith! Why did you doubt? When they got onto the boat the wind calmed down, and those that were there worshipped Him, saying, "You truly are the Son of God". Peter knew that Jesus would never abandon him, but even so, he was afraid and needed Jesus' help.

Tell the children that Jesus is the only One who has power over the water, and is the only One who can help someone else walk on water. God makes ordinary things and people extraordinary, just like in the story of Peter. He was a simple fisherman whom Jesus called to be His disciple, and what's more, He made him walk on water. Peter could have used human reasoning and said, "How could I walk on water? If I get off the boat, I'll

sink." However, he didn't think that way, because He knew that God is a God of extraordinary power.

REFLECTING ON THE PASSAGE

Ask the following questions to help the children reflect on the lesson:

- What did the disciples see as they were waiting for Jesus?
- What was their reaction?
- Que fue lo que los discípulos vieron cuando esperaban a Jesús?
- Why do you think Peter could walk on the water?
- Do you think Peter acted in full faith?
- Why?
- What did Jesus do when Peter asked for His help and said, "Save me!"

APPLYING THE MESSAGE:

When Peter was afraid of sinking, he asked Jesus to save him because he knew that He would never abandon him. And Jesus did reach out His hand to help him because He loved him.

Activity

Ask for two children to volunteer, or choose two for this activity. Blindfold one of the child's eyes and give him/her a goal to reach, walking along with a few obstacles in the way. The child should not know where the obstacles are, but tell him/her that s/he could be at risk for bumping him/herself or falling if s/he trips on something. The other child will guide the blindfolded child with words, without taking him/her by the hand. The child whose eyes are blindfolded can choose to do or not do what the guide instructs. When s/he reaches the goal, remove the blindfold and ask the child about his/her experience. Mention that it was necessary to have a guide and to trust in him/her in order to reach the goal without tripping or falling.

Without someone to guide him/her, s/he would have felt much more fear because s/he wouldn't have known when s/he was going to trip. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is our guide and came to the world to save us. *Open your Bible and read 1 John 4:14: "And we have seen and testify that the*

Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world" (NIV). Explain that we need Christ because only He can save us from sin and the punishment that sin deserves.

Being a sinner is like walking with our eyes blindfolded, without anyone to guide us or save us from obstacles and their dangers. Christ is for us the trustworthiest guide that we could have, and although at times our fear gets the best of us, He is there to give us help and salvation, just as he did for Peter. On that occasion Peter had the opportunity to ask for help, but we don't always do so, even though God is always willing to grant us that help. *Invite your students to have faith in God and look to Him every moment of their lives.*

CONCLUSION

When Peter took his eyes off Jesus and focused on what surrounded him in this story -the strong wind- he no longer showed complete trust in God. But Peter knew that despite not having trusted fully, Jesus would bring him across the water. He would never leave him -it was to Him that he turned when he was sinking because he knew that He was his Savior and that He would never abandon Him.

This shows us that we should have faith in God. Faith is having complete confidence in God, although often this is difficult for us. There are moments and situations when fear invades us. This is not a bad thing, on the contrary, it shows us that we always need God, and alone we cannot save ourselves.

We should always turn to Jesus; he alone can save us. It is part of our calling to share this joy from God with others. Tell your siblings, your parents, and your friends that having Jesus in your heart makes you feel his love.

Jesus wants to be in your heart. If you have not yet invited Jesus to enter into your heart, you can do it now. *If you have a positive response from any children, ask them to stay for a moment and finish presenting the plan of salvation. If you can't do it yourself, ask another teacher for support in doing so. (If possible, get the full names and addresses of these children).*

Conclude the class with prayer. Thank the students for coming all week. Tell them goodbye and invite them to keep coming to Sunday School.



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