

ENRICHMENT LESSON 13

THE STORY OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: EZEKIEL, A PROPHET TO THE EXILES (THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL)

- **SACRED STORY**
- **ENRICHMENT PRESENTATION**

THE MATERIAL

- **LOCATION: OLD TESTAMENT SACRED STORY SHELVES, MIDDLE SHELF, BESIDE JEREMIAH**
- **PIECES: 10" CHAIN, IMAGE OF EZEKIEL'S VISION OF GOD (THE WHEEL, ETC.) MOUNTED ON WOOD, SCROLL, BRICK, GOOD SHEPHERD AND ORDINARY SHEPHERD (IDENTICAL TO THOSE IN "THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD," VOLUME 3, P. 77), SMALL PITCHER, COLLECTION OF "DRY" BONES, PICTURE OF JERUSALEM RESTORED**
- **CONTROL**
- **UNDERLAY: DARK BROWN FELT STRIP, 42" X 11"**

BACKGROUND

The story of Ezekiel enriches the presentations on the Exile and Return (*Volume 2*, p. 93) and the Prophets (*Volume 2*, p. 100). Ezekiel was deported from Jerusalem in 598 with some 10,000 elite of the city. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah, but his call to be a prophet came on the banks of the Chebar in Babylon (Ezekiel 1:1). With the exception of 1:2-3, this book is almost completely made up of his personal visions. They were shared with others and written down in his own house.

NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

Ezekiel's story sits in a deep wooden or wicker tray (12" x 8" x 3"). The story icon (5" x 2.5") is an image of Ezekiel's vision, a "wheel within a wheel." It can be attached to the end or the side of the tray depending on the size of the shelves, the

classroom or other considerations. The underlay is a strip of dark brown felt, 42" x 11". Each object in the story is approximately the same size (no more than 4" high and 4" wide). The story calls for the following objects: a 10" piece of chain, an image of Ezekiel's Vision of God (the wheel, etc.), a scroll, a brick, a Good Shepherd and an ordinary shepherd (just like what is used in the Parable of the Good Shepherd), a small pitcher, a collection "dry bones" and a picture of Jerusalem restored.

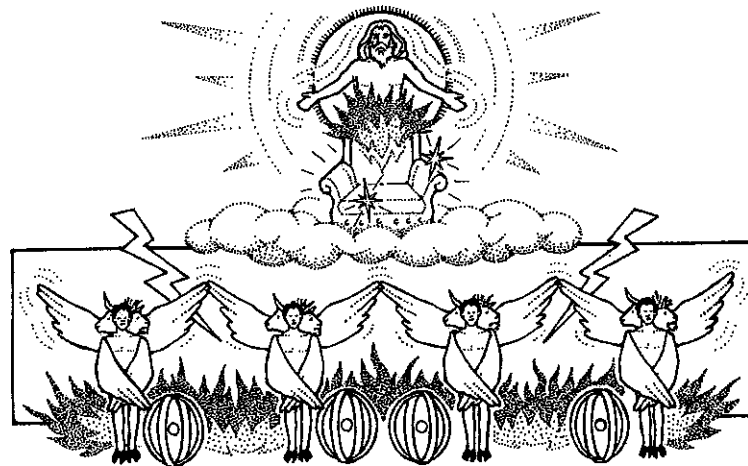
A control for the lesson is folded and placed in the tray for the children to use to check their work. The sequence of the story is important because when you change the sequence, you change the story.

SPECIAL NOTES

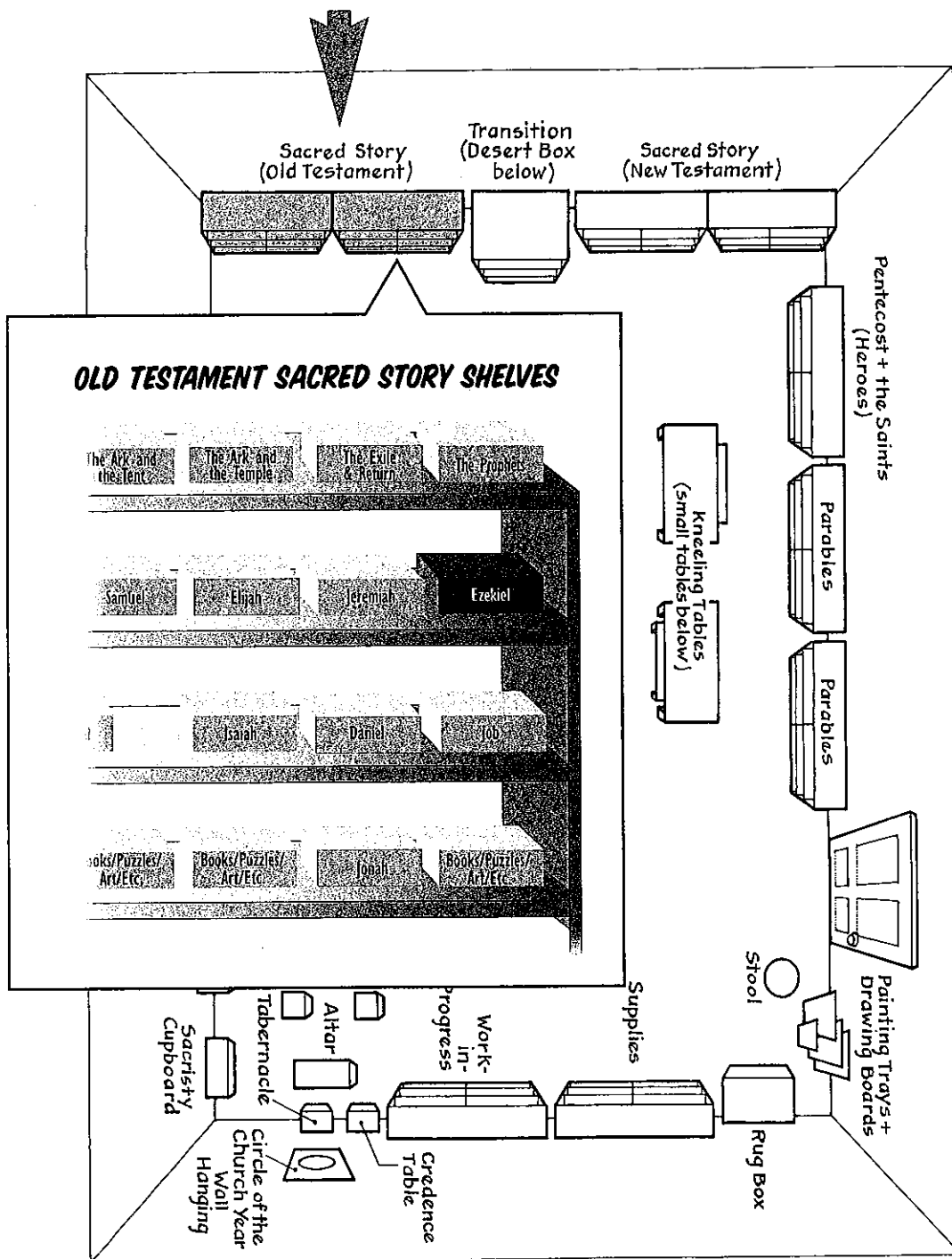
The core stories about the People of God are placed on the top of the sacred story shelves. The enrichment stories about the key people in the core stories are placed on the lower shelves of the sacred story section in the room, under the core stories they enrich and extend (see diagram below).

This lesson on Ezekiel enriches the lesson on the Exile and Return (*Volume 2*, p. 93) and the Prophets (*Volume 2*, p. 100). When you introduce the stories in this volume, take care to set them in the larger context of the sacred story of which they are a part.

As you tell the story of Ezekiel and his prophetic visions, place objects on the underlay to remind you of each important prophetic vision. Unroll the underlay slowly, just enough for each object, as if you are unrolling a life. At the end of the wondering, show the children the control card and carefully place each object back in the tray saying something about each event like, "Here is the Good Shepherd and the Ordinary Shepherd," and so forth. Lastly, model how to roll the underlay back up and place it in the tray.



STORY ICON FOR THE STORY OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL



WHERE TO FIND MATERIALS (TEACHING OBJECTS)

MOVEMENTS

Move with deliberation to the shelf where the material waits.

Pick up Ezekiel's tray and return to the circle.

As you return to the circle you may need to say...

Remove the underlay from the tray and begin to unroll—just enough to place the first object—right to left (story-teller's perspective).

*Place **Object 1** (chain) on the underlay when you say the word exile.*

*Place **Object #2** (painting or drawing of Ezekiel's vision) on the underlay.*

*Place **Object #3** (scroll) on the underlay as you mention the scroll.*

WORDS

☛ Watch. Watch where I go.

☛ We need to be ready.

☛ This is the story of the prophet Ezekiel's visions. But what is a prophet?

Prophets are people who come so close to God and God comes so close to them that they know what God wants.

☛ Ezekiel was a prophet to the people in exile in Babylon. The exiles would gather by the river to worship God. They didn't know if God would find them in that strange land, so they often faced toward Jerusalem and the temple, where they knew God was.

☛ One day while gathered at the river with the other exiles, Ezekiel had a vision. He saw a storm coming. In the clouds were four living creatures. They looked like men but had wings. Each one had four different faces—all of different animals. When they moved their wings it sounded like thunder.

Each creature had a wheel within a wheel. The wheels seemed almost alive. When Ezekiel looked up, he saw God sitting on a throne, being carried by these four creatures. Ezekiel was afraid and fell to the ground.

☛ God spoke to Ezekiel saying, "Son of man, stand upon your feet, and I will speak with you." And the Spirit of God entered Ezekiel and lifted him up onto his feet. And God said, "Son of man, eat what I give to you; eat this scroll, so that my words may live in you." And Ezekiel ate the scroll and found it to be sweet like honey.

This vision was only the first one he had. Before his time as a prophet was over, he had about fifty more visions. At first most of the messages Ezekiel brought to the exiles were about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Later they were about hope for God's people.

MOVEMENTS

Place **Object #4** (brick) on the underlay.

Place **Object #5** (Good Shepherd and ordinary shepherd) on the underlay.

Place **Object #6** (clear, glass pitcher) on the underlay.

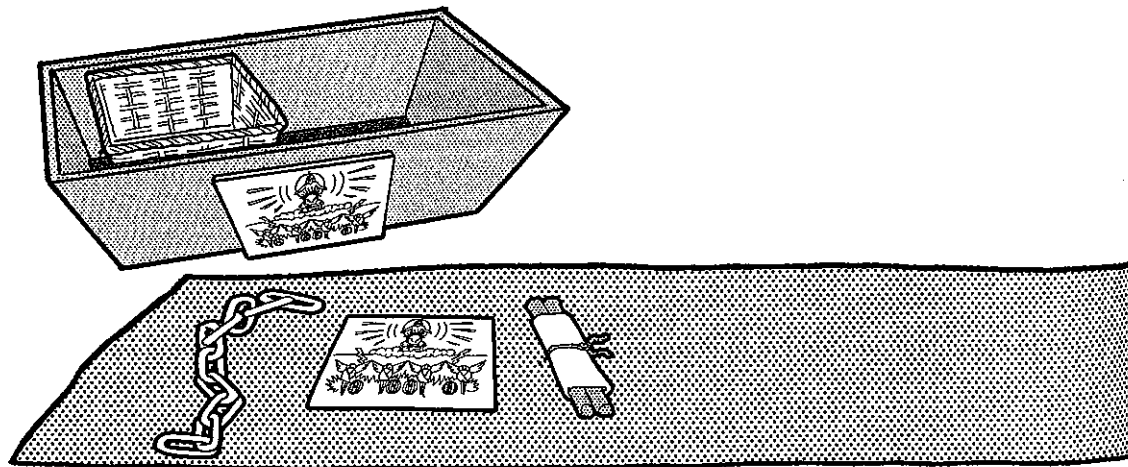
WORDS

One time God told Ezekiel to take a brick while it was still wet and draw a map of Jerusalem on it. Then he put the brick on the ground so everyone could see and he put a toy army around it ready to take over the city. Ezekiel did this to show that Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Babylonians.

There were many more prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, and all of them came true. The city crumbled—there was little left.

After Jerusalem was destroyed God began to send messages of hope to his people through his prophet Ezekiel. One of them was about a shepherd. Ezekiel told the people that sometimes shepherds are not like the Good Shepherd. They are not even like the ordinary shepherd. They are bad. But God will come and rescue the people from the bad shepherds. God says, "I myself will be the shepherd of the people and will bring them into their own land."

One day another message of hope came to Ezekiel. He told the people that God will sprinkle clean water upon them when he brings them home to Jerusalem to cleanse them from all their wrongdoings. "A new heart I will give you," says God, "and a new spirit I will put with you. You will be my people, and I will be your God."



MOVEMENTS

Pour **Object #7** (bones) onto the underlay as you speak of them.

Place **Object #8** (picture of Jerusalem restored) on the underlay.

Sit for a moment and look at the lesson from beginning to end to let the story rest. Then begin the wondering.

After the wondering is over, show the children the control card for them to use to check their own telling of the story. Then put the story away carefully. Pick up each object in reverse order and remind the children what the object is, saying for example, "Here are the dry bones that came to life..." After all of the objects are back in the tray, carefully model how to roll the underlay back up and place it in the tray as well. Return the lesson to its place on the shelf. Then return to your spot in the circle and dismiss the children one by one to their work.

WORDS

Yet another time God showed Ezekiel a pile of dry bones. God breathed new life into them and they became alive, like God's people were going to come alive. God said, "I will put my Spirit in them and they will live."

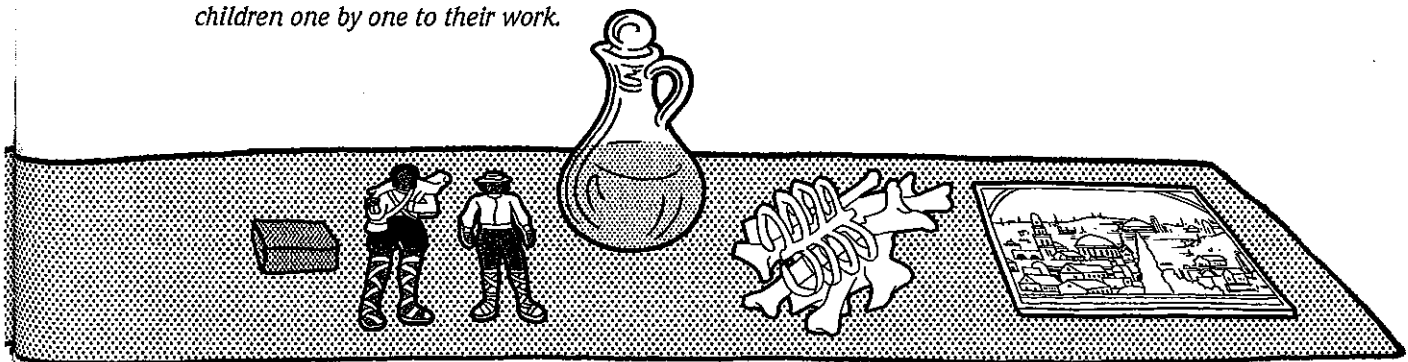
Ezekiel died in exile. He had witnessed the loss and destruction of his beloved city, but he also saw a beautiful vision of a people living in a restored city who were content. The city would be called *The Lord is there*.

I wonder what part of this story you liked the best?

I wonder what part was the most important?

I wonder what part was about you, or what part you were in?

I wonder if we could leave any of the story out and still have all the story that we need?



COMPLETE LAYOUT OF THE STORY OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL (CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE)