

Sunday School at Home

Sunday School at Home Resources for the season of Lent and Easter Sunday (2021) prepared collaboratively by Immanuel United Church in Winnipeg and Crossroads United Pastoral Charge (St. Andrew's United Church in Elm Creek and Carman United Church)

Note: This resource packet is designed for children ages 2 – young teen. The first page, Come as a Child, is designed with young children in mind. The rest of the pages are intended for school aged children. We encourage the grown-ups to read through the resources and decide which are best suited for the children in your household.

Come as a little child ... a learning resource for young children

March 21, 2021

Choose a place and a time where you and your child/children can sit together quietly to listen to the story and then talk about it

OR

Find whatever time is possible, expect distractions, and invite your child/children to join you in taking three deep breaths before you start.



Story: based on Jeremiah 31

This part of the story of Jeremiah is about God promising to be with the people ...wherever they went, whenever it was, however they felt. God asked the people to promise to try hard to be kind to one another, to take care of the world, and to remember that God loved them. God decided to help the people remember these promises by writing them on the people's hearts. It wasn't actual writing on their hearts but whenever the people needed to feel God close to them, they could put their hand over their heart and they could remember God's promises to them and their promises to God. Sometimes when there are promises going both ways, that is called a covenant. God had a covenant with the people. Can you think of any covenants in your life?

Reflection and Action: (*Grown-ups, please read through the questions and choose the ones that you think are most suitable for your child/ren.*)

What do we know about God?

We learn from the Bible that:

God loves us

God is fair

God is patient

God is gentle

God is strong

God is forgiving/gives us a second chance

God keeps promises

God wants peace on the earth

Suggest that, as you read what we know about God, your child/ren use their hands or their whole bodies to show what each thing about God looks like. A variation would be to ask your child/ren to tell you how to make your hands show what that thing about God looks like. While you can have fun with this activity, you may need to help the child/ren refocus on each word they are trying to demonstrate.

How can we tell that God is with us?

God is like a puzzle. Each piece is a different shape or colour. Each piece tells us something different about what God is like.

You may want to create a God puzzle as part of this activity. Talk with your child/ren about what some of their “God Puzzle” pieces might look like.

E.g. “ when I am excited, God is like getting a high five from a friend who is excited with me.

When I am scared, God is like being wrapped in a cozy blanket with my favourite stuffie.

When I am sad, God is like a friend offering to play with me.

When I am feeling happy, God is like laughter, and i feel even happier..

When I am feeling alone, God is like stars in the night sky blinking to say “Hi, we are here too!”

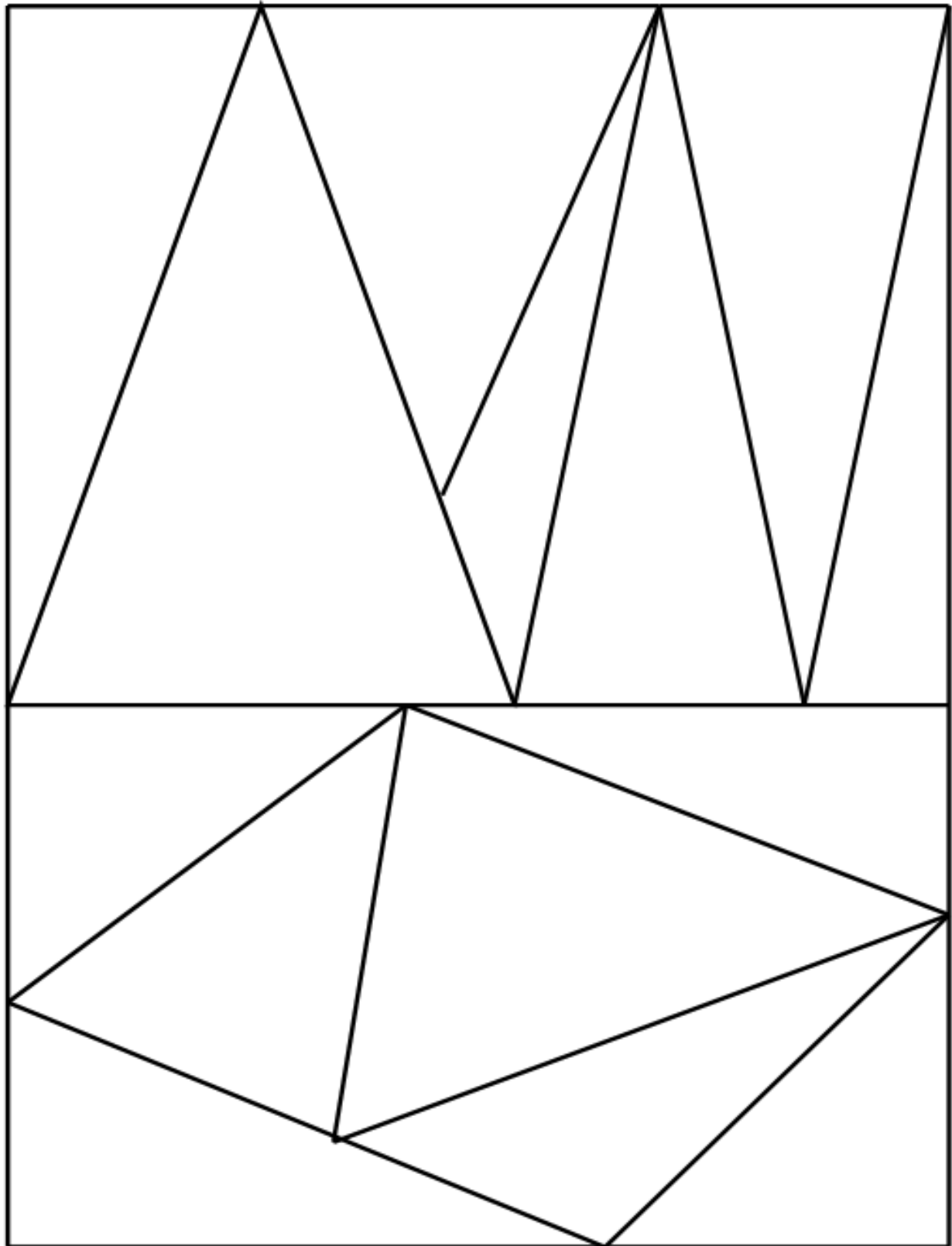
After you talk about what each aspect of God is like, help the child draw what that part of God looks like for them on a puzzle piece. The pieces can be any shape and size and be made of any kind of material. A sample is included in this package but you do not need to use it. The pieces do not need to fit together. Space between pieces is fine. Make sure you leave at least one piece blank to remind us that God is always more than we can imagine.

Prayer: God, today I am thankful that you are a God who is _____ and _____.

Ask your child/ren to choose one or two of the words that describe God to include in their prayer.

Optional Activity: Your child/ren may want to keep the puzzle pieces together. If your child is/children are open to you keeping them for another activity, preferably later on the same day, you may want to hide the pieces in various places where your child/ren will find them and be reminded what God is like and that God is with them wherever they are, whatever they’re doing, however they’re feeling. When the child has/children have found all the pieces they can put them back together as a puzzle.

God Puzzle



Sharing our Bible Story for Today

This week our story comes from Jeremiah. Jeremiah was one of the important prophets in the Hebrew Bible – so important he has a whole book named after him! In the Bible prophets are often reluctant to speak. Usually most of the people don't want to hear what they have to say most of the time. But prophets keep on telling the people what God has asked them to tell the people, even when they know the message will not be popular! Prophets help us hear what God is saying to us today and give us take heart and find the courage to take the next step to get there!

The Story of Jeremiah

Copied with permission from The Family Story Bible, Ralph Milton and Wood Lake Books.

The story of Jeremiah

(Jeremiah, selected portions)

Jeremiah was another prophet, like Isaiah. Before Jeremiah was grown up, God came and talked to him.

"Before you were in your mother's body, before you were born, I chose you. I decided you should be a prophet."

"But God," said Jeremiah. "I don't know the right words to say. I'm just a child."

"Don't say you're just a child," said God. "You must tell people the things they need to know about me."

Jeremiah felt as if God had touched his lips. "I will help you know the right words to say," said God.

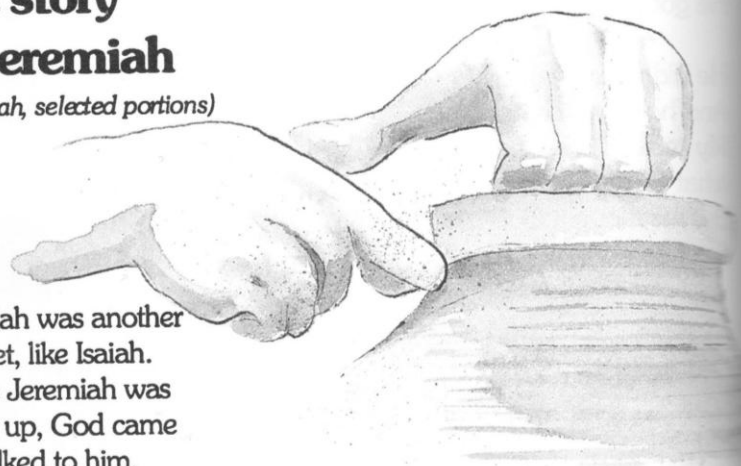
So Jeremiah started talking to people, telling them about God. Sometimes people got very angry at Jeremiah. They didn't want to hear what God had to say to them.

"Mind your own business," they told Jeremiah. "We can do anything we want. We don't care about God."

One day God asked Jeremiah to go to a place where people make clay pots. Jeremiah watched as a potter tried to make nice round pots.

When the pots didn't turn out right the potter mushed the clay into a lump again.

"Aha," said Jeremiah. "Now I see what God is like."



So Jeremiah went back to the people and said, "You are like clay in God's hands. God has tried very hard to make the Hebrew people be good people. But if you don't try to live in God's way, God will do just what that potter did."

"What's that?" asked the people.

"God will smash you back into a lump and start all over."

The people just laughed. They didn't care what Jeremiah said. Sometimes that made Jeremiah very angry. Sometimes it made him very sad. But Jeremiah kept trying.

One day Jeremiah got so angry, he went to the potter's house and got a really big pot. Then Jeremiah went back to the people.

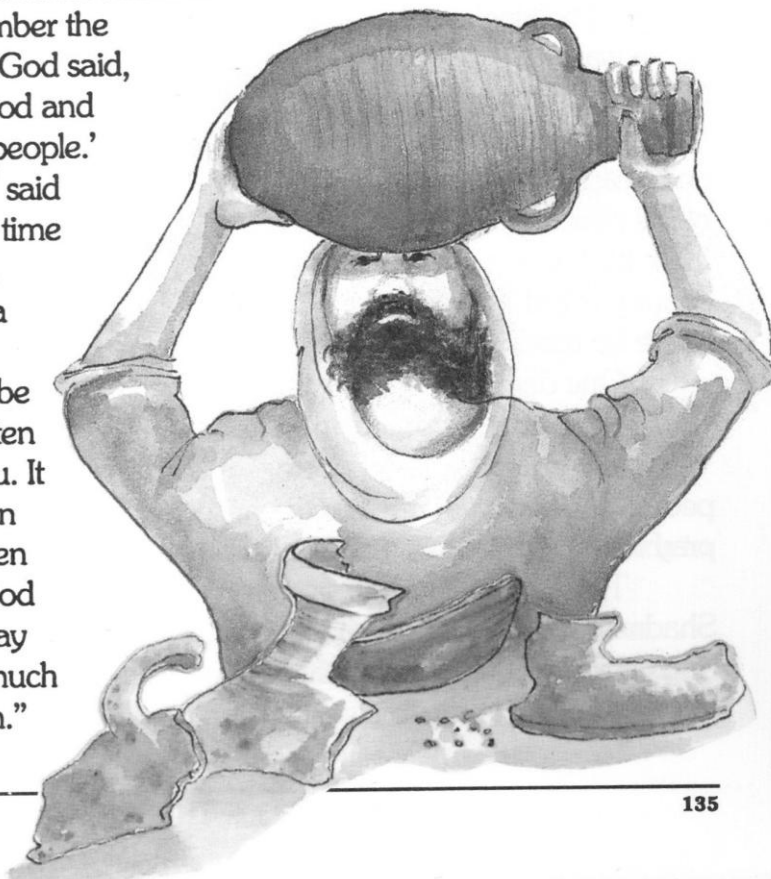
"Look!" he yelled. "This is what God will do to you if you don't start paying attention!"

Jeremiah threw the pot down on the ground. It broke into many pieces.

But the people still wouldn't listen.

Jeremiah reminded the people about the promise God had made to Abraham and Sarah and to all the others. "Remember the promise. Remember the covenant when God said, 'I will be your God and you will be my people.'"

"Listen," said Jeremiah. "The time is coming when God will make a new covenant with you. It will be a covenant written down inside you. It will be written on your hearts. Then the people of God will live every day knowing how much God loves them."



Thinking and Talking about the Story

What does it mean to know something by heart? What do you know by heart?

What might it mean to have God's promises and love written on our hearts, like Jeremiah says in today's story?

Can you think of some people who might be prophets today? Maybe a young person like Greta Thunberg? Or a wise elder like former senator Honorable Murray Sinclair? Or a musician or artist with a strong message like IsKwe or William Prince? (Greta is from Sweden. Did you know that the other three are all from right here in Treaty One Territory Winnipeg!) Remember a prophet will not always be well known or famous, or even popular!

I wonder where you find the courage to say and do hard things? Think of a wise person who is older than you are now, and ask them how they have found courage to say and do hard things. We can learn so much from listening carefully to our stories! Often we forget to ask one another what is written on our hearts – what is most important to us. Can you find a way to honour their message with a poem, a thank you card, or a drawing or image?

God is still speaking to people today! What is God writing on your heart? What important message might God be asking you to share? Create a paper heart and choose some colours that will encourage you to use your voice and take action. Write some words or draw some images to remind yourself of what God might be writing on your heart!

When the world is facing big changes, we especially need prophets. Maybe you would enjoy this song about Jeremiah written away back in 1970, another time of big changes! Just do an internet search for this song: *Jeremiah was a bull frog! (Joy to the World) by Three Dog Night*. (Or many other artists will have also covered this popular song.) If you ask someone older they probably have this song on an album or cassette tape!

Do you play guitar or ukulele? Find the chords and learn the song yourself!

Putting the Story into Action

1) Have you looked at *"Take a Sacred Pause"* in our Sunday School at Home resources? Paying attention outdoors is a wonderful way to listen for God.

When we love the world that God created we want to take care of it and we find more courage to speak out and act up to protect the earth!

2) Do you have a question about the story? Send us an email and we will respond! We love questions – the harder the better! And I still haven't received any questions!

3) Did you explore this week's story in another way – by acting it out or drawing pictures or some other creative idea, or by doing some research and learning about a justice issue that matters to you? We encourage you to share what you are learning with your church family! We miss being together in person!

Carman United Church and St. Andrew's United Church families - to share your responses to this week's story visit Carman United Church Face Book page or email the church office Karen.mcgill@crossroadsunited.com. Visit www.crossroadsunited.com and see Sunday School At Home to view previous lessons and stuff people are sharing.

Immanuel United Church families –If you are willing to have your art shown before or during worship, please ask your grown-ups to take/help you take a picture of your drawings and send the picture(s) to Ha Na to be shared before or during the service on Sunday.

Praying at Home

What does God want us to do?

Here is how another prophet named Micah answered this big question:

Do justice.

Love kindness.

Walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:6-8)

Try sharing this every day at mealtime (or some other time when you are together at home) until you know it by heart! Celebrate all the ways you do these things!

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