



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Jer. 18:1-11, 18-20

Romans 9:14-24

Session Theme:

Reform

a. Welcome to Class

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

b. Icebreaker: Wacky Words!

Write a list of fairly simple words on the board in which you've taken the last letter and made it the first, turning it into nonsense. For example, write "OODF" for "FOOD" and "OTSP" for "POTS." See if kids can figure out how to re-form these jumbled words into the correct ones. Invite volunteers up to the board, one at a time, to do this. Then, try a second round, using words from today's lesson to make it more challenging.

To "re-form" something means to change it, as we did with these words. In today's story, a man named Jeremiah goes to visit a potter and sees him re-forming pots and jars. From this example, Jeremiah learns a lesson about what God can do in people's lives. What is this lesson? Let's get to our story and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, you are like a potter, shaping and forming your people. Mold us so that we may be of use to you in this world. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

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

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Take My Life and Let It Be" (hymn)
- "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

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

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

Over the years, God sent many prophets to speak his Word and warn of coming dangers. But God also promised that he would never forsake his people, but would restore the nation in faith.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

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

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

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

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

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

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

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

Adults: Bible Study (Large or Small Group Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

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

i. Summarize and Review

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

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

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

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

Bible Study Leader's Guide

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

Discuss: Jeremiah 18:1-11, 18-20

1. In our story today, where did God send Jeremiah? Why did God send the prophet there *before* he gave Jeremiah his message?

God sent the prophet Jeremiah to the house of the local potter, who made a vessel from another vessel that didn't turn out. God wanted to give Jeremiah an object lesson so Jeremiah would understand the message God wanted him to tell the people.

2. According to verse 4, what did Jeremiah see happen to the potter's work? What did the potter do about it? Did the ruined clay vessel prevent the potter from getting his work done?

The vessel the potter was making turned out badly, so the potter started over and reworked the clay in a way he liked better. The potter, as the one in charge, was not prevented from action by the outcome of the process, but simply started over to reform the clay. This was nothing new or special, it was something the potter did all the time.

3. God said: "Like the clay is in the potter's hand, so you are in my hand" (v. 6). How might that be both a frightening and a comforting thought? Who is the one in charge — the potter or the clay?

It may be scary to know that we must answer to God and he can do with us what he pleases. But what better and safer place could we be than in the hands of our loving Maker? We humans are just finite creatures; we are imperfect and make mistakes. But God is able to do what we can't. Romans 5:6-8 says:

"While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die — but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

4. If God is Creator of this universe, why is there so much evil in the world? What has gone wrong? What does God say he is able to do when things go badly?

People blame God for the existence of evil, when we are the ones who sin and destroy what God has created. Instead of listening and obeying God, we want to do things our own way. People

often turn away from God in order to do what they want, and that's what causes problems. But God makes it clear that he has the power to bring about a change, from evil to good — and he can do this in our lives!

5. In verse 11, what did God say he was going to do to his people in Judah because of their sin? Did God's punishment mean he did not love his people? What did God want them to do?

God said he would bring disaster on the people of Judah. In fact, they would soon be conquered by the Babylonians. But God did not abandon them; he was turning them back to faith.

God does not stop loving us when we sin, but he does not want us to continue to suffer from evil. God calls his people to repentance — that is, he calls us to change our ways and turn back to him. Only with God's power do we have the hope for something better; he is able to transform our lives and make us new.

6. When in your life have you seen God take something bad and turn it into something good? Have you ever looked back on hard times and seen how they helped you to grow or become a better person?

People may have different examples they can give. In the Bible, the ancestor Joseph suffered at the hands of his brothers, and yet God was able to use Joseph's slavery and imprisonment to put him in a position to save many others. As he said to his brothers, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Genesis 50:20).

7. Read Romans 9:14-24. From what you read here, does it seem like God sits back and lets human beings do what we want? Or is God actually involved in the world and in our lives? How so?

God is active in the world, even among those who do not obey him or do his will. In fact, in these verses, God says that our life and fate "depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy" (Romans 9:16). God is an active Creator; he does not leave us to our own ways. He wants to make something good and useful out of us.

8. On the most basic level, faith equals trust. Knowing God is our Maker, what reason(s) do we have for trusting him?

God makes things happen that we could never accomplish on our own. That is why we can trust him, even when life is hard and we feel overwhelmed. In Jesus, we have the promise that God is with us and for us. We trust that no matter what happens, we belong to him!

Classroom Craft and Activity Page

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

Activity 1: Coiled Pot Craft

Materials Needed:

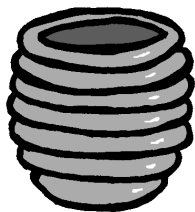
- Clay
- Toothpicks
- Small paper plates

Instructions:

Give each student a good-sized piece of clay, a small paper plate as a work surface, and a toothpick.

Encourage kids to make a pot of any kind with their clay. Don't give them instructions on how to do this — just let them be creative in their approach. They may try a variety of methods. It doesn't matter if these are successful or not.

After they have tried to make their own version of a pot, invite kids to "re-form" their clay into something specific — a



coil pot. They can do this by first rolling the clay into a long rope shape. To create a pot, tuck one end of the clay rope tightly around itself and then coil it around and up until it creates a pot. (This may take several tries.) Rub along the finished pot to give it a smoother appearance.

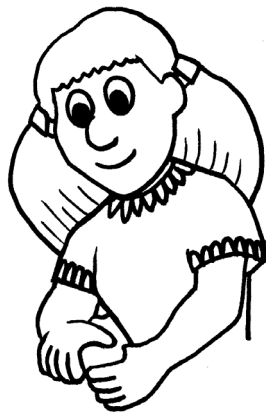
If kids aren't happy with their coil pot, they can re-form it again using another method — and can do so several times.

If they so choose, kids can decorate their pot further by poking holes in it with a toothpick to make a design.

In today's story, Jeremiah visits a potter and sees him working with clay, making and re-forming pots and jars.

Jeremiah tells people what he saw and prophesies that God will remake them as well. While his message was not well received, it was honest and true.

God is Lord over all heaven and earth. For those who love God and want to keep his commands, this is good news! Why? Because God can change us in positive ways, so that we live better lives and serve our neighbor.



Activity 2: Turn Around Game

Materials Needed:

- Large area to play a game

Instructions:

God said if a nation would turn away from evil and towards him, he would forgive them.

Yet in today's lesson, the people got so offended by this idea that they did not hear the good news in it. God was giving them a chance to change, to turn around, and to live better lives in faithfulness!

To remind kids of this point, play a game of "Turn Around" (also known as "Red Light/Green Light").

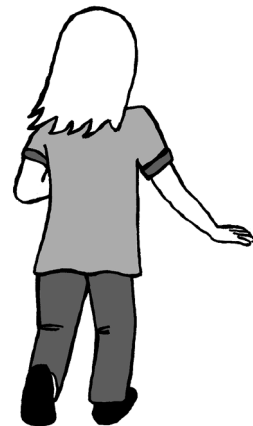
For the first round, the teacher will be the traffic light and the kids will be the walkers.

Invite the kids to stand at one end of a large room, while you stand at the other. Explain that when you say "Green light!" and turn your back to them, they can quietly walk up to you. However, if you say "Red light!" and turn around, they must freeze in place. Anyone who moves at that point will be out and must go back to the starting line.

The object of the game will be for someone to tap you on the shoulder, arm, or hand while you are facing away from them during a "green light" phase. Whoever does this is the winner and can take on the role of traffic light during the next round of the game.

In this game, the traffic light turned around many times, and did so easily. But once the walkers started moving, it was hard for them to stop.

In daily life, we often feel more like the walkers than the traffic light. When we are on a certain path and used to acting in a certain way, it can be hard to change. Yet God offers hope to us! If we are off course, we can look to him, and he will help us turn around. Sometimes he even stops us first! God can change us from the inside out. He alone can make all things, and all people, new.



Worksheet Answer Key

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

The Vessel Without Cracks



Vocabulary Word for the Week

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

Reform

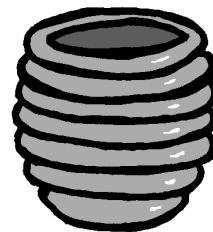
to change something for the better

God promises to reform his people, like a potter reshapes clay. He never gives up on us!

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Kids often like to work with play dough or clay. It is fun to make things, squish them down again, and remake them into something new. In today's Bible story, Jeremiah told the people that God could do the same with them. If they didn't turn from their evil ways, God would intervene in their lives and re-form them.

The people Jeremiah confronted didn't like this message, but in truth, it was good news. Why? Because God is good. Therefore, his actions are ultimately for a positive purpose, whether we understand them at the time or not.



God is the Creator, and if he wants to re-create us — or anything — he has a reason. We can trust that. In fact, the more we do trust that, the less we will need to be reformed in the first place.

Do you find change easy or hard? Why? Tell about a time when something happened that forced you to "re-form" or change in some way. What was it? Did you understand it at the time? How do you see that situation today?

The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer thanking God for his work in your life. Ask him to mold and shape you according to his purpose, and pray that he would give you the words to share his message with others.

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

