

GOD BUILDS A NATION

TEACHER INSIGHT

Personal Preparation for the Study:

The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group's responses.

Leading This Study:

After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher's perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

Since this is just the second week of the series, there may be teens for whom this is still a very new and challenging experience. Continue to encourage your teens to be open to learning and experiencing new things.

This lesson is somewhat unique in that there are several major themes in this chapter that have the potential to intersect with your teens' lives. For example, some teens may resonate more with God's calling for Abraham to step out in faith and leave home, while others may resonate more with the way God blesses Jacob in spite of his questionable character. As you lead, remember that you aren't trying to arrive at the "correct" answers, but to allow your teens to interact with and respond to the story in very different ways.

Also note that a lot happens between these stories in the traditional biblical narrative. In the discussion encourage those who are familiar with the Bible to stick to the larger themes that are highlighted in the selected stories and try to see the stories with "new eyes."

Remember that the purpose of this study is to help teens engage in these stories and discuss the events within the boundaries of that narrative. Gently encourage them that discussion outside of

Chapter 2: "God Builds a Nation" can be found in Genesis 12–13; 15–17; 21–22; 32–33; 35; Romans 4; and Hebrews 11.

RESPECT THE SILENCE!

Youth ministry expert Amelia Richardson Dress suggests that pauses in a discussion aren't always bad.

"Sometimes it takes people awhile to warm up or gather their thoughts. Let them think. Yes, 10 seconds of silence will feel like an eternity to you, but the more you do it the more comfortable you, and the group, will feel. A caveat: you have to be calm and inviting when you do this. Relax, smile at everyone, let them know that you're ok with the quiet and soon they'll appreciate it for the invitation it is."

[From "5 Tips for Leading Great Discussions" (Web Resource), available at www.youthministry.com.]

these parameters is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will gain further insight.

TEACHER PLANNING

SUPPLIES:

- Copies for every participant of the **Chapter 2 Handout: God Builds a Nation** (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 8 to 10 copies of the **StoryReader** for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who'd like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for **Small Group Leaders**
- Show the **Creation Recap video** and the **Chapter 2: God Builds a Nation video** from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** Pens, colored pencils, paper, and envelopes OR postcards
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

STORYREADER ASSIGNMENT:

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. **Never force a teen to read!** Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan's *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a *Readers' Theater*. A Readers' Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are **not expected to memorize or improvise** from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters' actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week's story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick teens or leaders who won't mind reading large portions of the story.)

LESSON OUTLINE

Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:

PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY *(large or small group)***5 minutes**

Introduction and Prayer

1 minute

Creation Recap Video

2 minutes

Brief Responses to Video

2 minutes

PART TWO: SEE THE STORY *(large or small group)***10 minutes**

Explanation and Handouts

1 minute

Chapter 2: God Builds a Nation Video

3 minutes

Create Symbols for the Story

2 minutes

Share about Our Symbols

4 minutes

PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY *(large or small group)***25 minutes**

Explanation

1 minute

StoryReader Scripture Telling

12 minutes

Response to Scripture

7 minutes

BREAK: Teens move to small groups

5 minutes

PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY *(small group)***35 minutes**

Discussion

15 minutes

Create Responses to the Story

12 minutes

Share Responses to the Story

7 minutes

Closing Prayer

1 minute

TEACHER LESSON SCRIPT

PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

5 MINUTES

Teacher Script: (please personalize this)

Welcome! I am so excited to be back together and to continue our journey through God's Story. Let's take a moment and pray before we begin:

God, as we return to this amazing Story, we pray that you will continue to open our eyes to see ourselves within it. We pray that as we learn about different people in very different times and places, we may discover new things about our own lives and about how you want us to live in relationship with you and with each other. Amen.

I'm really excited to continue on to chapter two of our journey through God's Story. But before we do, I thought it would be good for us to take a look back at what we experienced last week. This video will give us a quick summary of the stories from chapter one. It will go by fast, so watch and listen carefully.

[CUE: Play *Creation Recap* video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

Teacher Script: (please personalize this)

So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don't spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story that we go through together, we're looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we'll look at each week, which tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

PART TWO: SEE THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

10 MINUTES

Teacher Script: (please personalize this)

Hopefully, you are ready to dive into the next chapter of this amazing Story. I have a video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we'll take a moment to respond using these handouts.

Let's watch this week's video, *God Builds a Nation*. It's packed with action, so you have to pay careful attention so you don't miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *Chapter 2: God Builds a Nation* video from the curriculum DVD (about 3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 2: God Builds a Nation* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

Teacher Script: (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we'll share our creations.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After two minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP)

25 MINUTES

Teacher Script: (please personalize this)

As you have noticed, this is a really interesting story—there is a LOT going on here! We want to spend some time diving deeper into this story, and I've asked a few of you to help us as *StoryReaders*.

While the story is being read, draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the *StoryReader* script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes).]

Teacher Script: (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: **DISCUSS**—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- *What were the key events from the story?*
- *What was most meaningful to you from this story?*

Teacher Script: (please personalize this)

Right now we're going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]

PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY**35 MINUTES**

[CUE: DISCUSS—*Adjust questions as needed and don't feel like your group must answer all of them.***]**

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Abraham left his homeland and a wealthy family business that was passed down from generations in order to follow God. How do you think this would have been difficult? What did God give him in return?
- What might God be asking you to give up in order to follow him?
- The story said Abraham was “righteous” in God’s sight. What do you think this means? Was Abraham perfect? How did he express doubt in God during this story? Can teenagers be righteous? How or why not?
- Why do you think God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac? What do you think Abraham—and Isaac—learned from this experience?
- Because Jacob had shrewdly acquired Esau’s birth-right and stolen their father’s blessing, Jacob feared his brother’s revenge. How did Jacob prepare for his meeting with Esau?
- What attitude did Jacob have when he wrestled with the “man” whom Jacob eventually realized was actually God?
- Jacob’s name was changed to Israel...meaning “to struggle with God.” How do we “struggle” with God? How might it be good to “struggle” in our faith?

CREATIVE OPTION:

Pass out pencils or pens and paper OR postcards to the teens. Say something like, “In today’s story, we see God’s faithfulness to his people, and we see that carried through even to restoring a relationship between Jacob and his brother, Esau. We’re going to take the next 10 minutes to write a short letter. You may write it to someone you’ve hurt or wronged, or to someone who has hurt you. I won’t make you deliver this letter—that is totally up to you. Take the next 10 minutes to create your letter.”

(Tell teens they don’t necessarily need to show their letters to anyone or ever deliver them; but they may do so if it’s appropriate.)

Teacher Script:

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- Which character in this story are you most like? How?
- If you had to “wrestle” with God over something, what would it be? *(Maybe it’s a fear of something? A frustration in your life? An injustice in the world?)*

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!

The words and images in your mind are meaningful, so create or write something that honestly represents your thoughts. We can really learn from each other. In a few minutes, we'll talk about your responses. I'm really excited to see what you come up with!

(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)

[CUE: SHARE—Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

TEACHER SCRIPT: (please personalize this)

Thank you for your willingness to share. Some of these things are very personal, and I am impressed by your courage to trust us. I hope we'll continue to see how this story can impact us and change us in very significant ways. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next story!

Let's pray as we end our time together:

God, thank you for all of the things that this story, your Story, has shown us about ourselves and each other. In the days ahead, help us to reflect on what we've experienced today and to remember that you are with us always, no matter where we've been or what we've done. And may we look forward to growing and learning from new stories in the weeks to come. Thank you for being a God we can trust. Amen.