

Club Maccabee **Handbook**

For

Year Five: Exile & Restoration **הַנְּבִיִּים \ The Prophets** **(The Prophetic & Post Exilic Writings)**

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In this Handbook we quote from several versions of the Scriptures: New American Standard Bible (NASB), New International Version (NIV), The Stone Edition Tanach (Stone), JPS Tanakh (JPS), Jewish New Testament (JNT), The Living Nach (TLN), and the Soncino Press Pentateuch & Haftorahs (Soncino).

Finally, and most importantly, we thank God for our Messiah Yeshua, by whose death we have received life!

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LESSON 4 - EXILE: WARNINGS UNHEEDED

Scripture:	Jeremiah Chapters: 1, 7, 21, 36
Theme:	God sent Israel Prophets to warn them about their sin!
Memory Verses:	Jeremiah 1:5c I have appointed you a prophet concerning the nations. (JPS) Mark 11:22 And Yeshua answered saying to them, “Have faith in God”. (NASB)
Hebrew Words:	אָבָא (abba) father שָׁלַח (sha-lach) to send (verb)

Lessons with Natan/Rivka

(This year in *Club Maccabee* we will be teaching the children about the Jewish calendar. Each lesson will focus on one of the months and the different holidays and remembrances related to that particular month. This first lesson will be an overview to teach the children that God is the one who gave the Jewish people their calendar.)

The Jewish Calendar – An Overview

Big Idea to get across – God gave a calendar to the Jewish people to help them to remember Him!

Read: Leviticus 23:1-2 – *The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: “Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: These are my fixed times, the fixed times of the LORD, which you shall proclaim as sacred occasions”.* (JPS)

Prop: Use Jewish Calendars that you can either show the children and/or give to them after Club.

Teaching: God gave to the Jewish people a brand new calendar. The reason God gave it to the Jewish people is because He wanted their calendar to remind them of all the different things God had done for them. The Jewish calendar is both solar and lunar, which means that with each new moon, we celebrate a new month, but that we adjust the calendar depending on the sun to make sure the holidays fall in their proper season. There are 12 months in the Jewish calendar and each month has its own name. In some years we have an additional thirteenth month! In Jewish tradition we say a special blessing at the beginning of each Rosh Chodesh (head of the [new] month). We recite this blessing on the Shabbat before the Rosh Chodesh to let everyone know the name of the month and the day of the week the new month starts. We also have a special blessing we say about 72 hours after the new moon appears:

בְּרִיךְ אַתָּה יְיָ מְחַדֵּשׁ חֳדָשִׁים

Baruch atah Adonai, Mechadeysh Chadashem – Blessed are you God for renewing the months!¹

Note: Have the children recite the Hebrew words and phrases in this lesson. Make sure they know that the word “Rosh Chodesh” means: New Month.

¹ Blessing from Jewish Every Day by Maxine Segal Handelman, ARE Publishing, Denver, CO; Page 132

Lesson 4 Midrash (Scripture Study)

Scripture: Jeremiah Chapters: 1, 7, 21, 36

Theme: God sent Israel Prophets to warn them about their sin!

Introduction: Ask, “When you are a mom or a dad, do you think you will ever give your kids a time-out? What kinds of things would you give a time-out for? Would you give your kids plenty of warnings? How many warnings do you think a parent should give a child before they finally get punished?”

Summary of Story:

Visual Aids: Background & Scenery: Scene 1: Blue Ocean/Sky with Green Hillside overlay, S14, S8-9
Scene 2: Pink Indoor Scene with T1, T2, T3, T4
Flannelgraph Figures: 20, 23, 42, 46, 50, 55, 57, 58, 87, 89, 92G, 204, 213, 264, 266, 313, 314

(**Scene 1: add 204 to right**) Jerusalem was a beautiful city. The walls shone like gold in the morning and evening when the sun was rising or setting. The temple that Solomon built was the highest building. Its stones were shining white and were decorated with beautiful carvings of pure gold. The people of Judah loved Jerusalem. It was the city where their God was worshipped, even if most of them didn't really worship God anymore.

Because God cared about the Jewish people, even if most of them didn't care about Him, he sent them people called prophets to warn them about his punishment. He gave them many, many warnings through many, many different prophets.

One prophet that God sent was named Jeremiah. (**add 20**) He was also known as the crying prophet because for all of his talking and preaching he never saw any real change in his Jewish people, and this made him very sad. God called him to be a prophet when he was very young, maybe even just a boy. God told him that his work would be hard, and that people wouldn't listen to him, but that God would protect him and use him.

Even though Jeremiah didn't find anyone who would listen to him, he did have one friend named Baruch who was his scribe. (**add 58**) A scribe was someone who would write out what you would say. They were really helpful if you had bad handwriting! Baruch stayed with Jeremiah for many years and helped him warn the people.

Jeremiah spent his whole life talking with the people, warning them to repent. (**add 92G under S8-9, 87, 89**) He started during the reign of the righteous King Josiah and he continued through the wicked King Zedekiah at the time the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took the people away. Early in his life he would stand out and preach to the people himself. Many people would get

angry with him and he would get sent to jail. (**remove 92G, 87, 89; change 58 to 57, add 314 to hands of 57**) One time God told him to write down on a scroll all the words which God said to Jeremiah about Israel and the nations. This scroll was to be read to the people at the Temple in Jerusalem. Jeremiah couldn't go because he was in hiding so Baruch went to the Temple for him. Some of the leaders heard Baruch and they told him to go and hide and they would take the scroll to the King.

(**Scene 2: add 42 to throne, put 266 on 264 on 213 near King; add 46 to stairs, 23, 50, 55**) As these men read the scroll to the King he began to cut off sections into a fire. (**put 313 in fire**) He did this because he didn't believe in God and he didn't want to hear the warning that God was giving him through Jeremiah. God didn't give up though. He had Jeremiah write a new scroll that included everything that was in the old one, but this time God added even more warnings to the people.

Jeremiah remained in Israel even after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. He stayed to encourage the Jewish people who stayed in the land. He continued to warn the people to follow God and to serve the Babylonians. The people didn't listen to Jeremiah. They were angry that Jeremiah was telling them to serve their enemies. One day some of the people killed the good Jewish leader named Gedaliah who the Babylonians had left in charge. Everyone became afraid of the Babylonians so they decided to run away to Egypt. Jeremiah warned them not to go, that God would protect them, but they didn't listen. They all packed up and ran away to Egypt, and they took Jeremiah with them. The last thing we hear from Jeremiah is that he continued to warn the people even from the land of Egypt. However, God was still patiently trying to warn His Jewish people.

Challenge:

Think of a time when you were being punished. Did you know what you did was wrong? Did your parents warn you to do the right thing? Punishment hurts. The people of Jerusalem didn't have to be punished if they had listened to Jeremiah's warnings. God gives us warnings today. They are in His Scriptures. Are you reading God's Scriptures? Do you follow them?

LESSON 5 - LIVING IN THE GALUT: EZEKIEL

Scripture:	Ezekiel Chapters 1-3; 12:1-16; 39:25-29		
Theme:	God cares about His people no matter where they are!		
Memory Verses:	Ezekiel 3:17 O mortal, I appoint you watchman for the House of Israel...you must warn them for Me. (JPS) Jude 22-23a Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them.... (NIV)		
Hebrew Words:	צִפֵּה	(tzo-fey)	watchman
	וְהָרַח	(zah-har)	to warn (verb)

Lessons with Natan/Rivka

The Jewish Calendar – תִּשְׁרֵי Tishre: The Beginning of the Year

Big Idea to get across – God wants us to start our New Year right by worshipping Him!

Read: Leviticus 23:23-34 (excerpts) – *The LORD spoke to Moses... “In the seventh month, on the first of the month, you shall observe complete rest...commemorated with loud blasts...the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement...it is a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall practice self-denial... On the fifteenth day of this seventh month there shall be the Feast of Booths to the LORD to last seven days.”* (JPS)

Prop: Use a Jewish calendar to show the children the month of Tishre.

Teaching: The first month of the Jewish calendar is called **Tishre**. According to the Torah, Tishre is technically the seventh month. When the Jewish people were taken captive to Babylonia they decided to make some changes to the way they organized their calendar to better fit in with the Babylonians. Jewish tradition also came to believe that the first of Tishre marked the date for the creation of the world. The result is that today we start our official Jewish year with the seventh month. There are 3 very important Jewish Holy Days that take place in Tishre: Rosh Hoshanah (New Years), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and Sukkot (Tabernacles). Tishre is a very busy month as we have many special services and special times with our family and friends. A traditional greeting to one another in Tishre is:

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה

L’shanah tovah u’metukah – Have a good and sweet New Year!

Note: Have the children recite the Hebrew words and phrases in this lesson. Make sure they know that the word “Tishre” means the name of the first month.

Lesson 5 Midrash (Scripture Study)

Scripture: Ezekiel Chapters 1-3; 12:1-16; 39:25-29

Theme: God cares about His People no matter where they are!

Introduction: Bring to class: a suitcase, toothbrush, towel, soap, shampoo, deodorant, a set of clothes, a stuffed animal, a storybook, a Bible, a stapler, and a pair of pliers. Use index cards to put a “price” on each item: \$1 for each item including the suitcase, but \$5 for the set of clothes. Say, “Pretend you have to go away on a long trip and you are buying what you need. You only have \$11. What would you take?” As a few students give their lists, discuss what they will have to live without.

Summary of Story:

Visual Aids: Background & Scenery: Blue Ocean/Sky with Green Hillside Overlay, S7, S14, 204
Flannelgraph Figures: 18, 42, 79, 88, 93C, 102, 106, 108, 204, 254, 332

Ezekiel was a prophet, a person who told the people what God said. **(add 18 to right side)** God knows what will happen tomorrow and even a thousand years from now. God knew that the people of Judah and Jerusalem would not obey Him. God knew that the army of Babylon would burn the Temple and destroy Jerusalem. He knew the people would be taken away on a long trip to Babylon.

Many of the people in Judah and Jerusalem didn't believe that God is the only God. They didn't believe that obeying God's Torah was the way to be safe. God told Ezekiel that He wanted him to be His watchman for the people, to warn the people. Even if the people didn't listen to him, Ezekiel was to keep warning them about God's punishment.

One day God told Ezekiel to show the Jewish people in Babylon that God would exile the Jewish people in Judah by acting out his own personal exile. God said, “Prepare yourself baggage for a long trip to Babylon.” **(add 254 & 332 to hands of 18; add 79, 88, 93C, 102, 106, 108 to left side)** God told Ezekiel to pack a bag and walk out in the streets where everyone could see him. He was to dig a hole in the wall and start to walk out.

God wanted the Jewish people of Babylon, Judah and Jerusalem to know what would happen to them if they didn't ask God for help, they would be forced to go on a long trip.

This was not a fun trip to the beach. They would not be stopping at restaurants and staying in comfortable hotels. They would have to bring only

the possessions they could carry and line up by the thousands to march all day long for many days.

When they finally arrived in Babylon, the people would have to build a new house and live in a land where no one loved them. They would have to learn a new language. They would miss their home in Jerusalem but the king would not let them move back.

The people didn't listen to Ezekiel, even when he showed them his baggage and acted out the trip that the Jews in Judah would have to take. Ezekiel did what God wanted him to do. He was acting as God's watchman to warn the Jewish people. He couldn't make them follow God, but he could at least warn the people about what God would do to them if they continued to disobey.

God didn't just tell Ezekiel to warn the people about God's punishment. God also wanted Ezekiel to tell the Jewish people that He still loved them. He told Ezekiel to give them a promise that one day God would bring them back to Jerusalem. God would bring them a king like David, who would rule the whole world from Jerusalem, King Messiah. **(add 42 to sky)**

God had Ezekiel go into exile from Judah to Babylon to be God's watchman for the Jewish people. Ezekiel warned them about God's punishment, but he also encouraged them to stay faithful to God, because God would always stay faithful to them, even if they were in the land of Babylon.

Challenge:

Have you ever been to a new place where you wondered if anyone would like you or care about you? How about a new school? How about moving to a new neighborhood? Why did God send Ezekiel with the people to Babylon? What did Ezekiel promise the people? What has God promised you? Do you think God loves you no matter where you are?

LESSON 6 - LIVING IN THE GALUT: DANIEL THE JEW

Scripture:	Daniel 1		
Theme:	Always choose pleasing God over pleasing people!		
Memory Verses:	Daniel 1:8a Daniel set the resolve in his heart not to be defiled by the king's food.... (Stone)		
	Titus 1:15a To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure.... (NIV)		
Hebrew Words:	לֵב	(lev)	heart
	אֵכֶל	(o-kel)	food

Lessons with Natan/Rivka

The Jewish Calendar – Cheshvan: The Month with No Special Days!

Big Idea to get across – Celebrate God's greatness even in a month with nothing special!

Read: I Kings 6:38 – “and in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul – that is, the eighth month – the House was completed...” (JPS)

Prop: Use a Jewish calendar to show the children the month of Cheshvan.

Teaching: The second month of the Jewish calendar is called *Cheshvan*; this name was given to the month during the time Jewish people were taken as prisoners to Babylonia. In the Bible it is called Bul. It is an autumn month of 29 days, except in years of 355 or 385 days in which it has 30 days. According to the Torah, Cheshvan is technically the eighth month.

According to Jewish tradition the flood began on the 17th of Cheshvan, and ended the following year on the 27th of Cheshvan. The following day, the 28th of Cheshvan, Noah made his sacrifice to God and God made his promise to never again bring a flood upon the earth to destroy all people. God then gave His sign, the rainbow, to show that He would keep His promise.

Cheshvan is the only month which has no holidays or special commandments. Because of this some call it *Mar Cheshvan* or “bitter Cheshvan” because it lacks any special days. Jewish tradition also teaches that it is “reserved” for the time of Messiah, who will build the third Temple in the month of Cheshvan.

Note: Have the children recite the Hebrew words and phrases in this lesson. Make sure they know that the word “Cheshvan” means the name of the second month.

Lesson 6 Midrash (Scripture Study)

Scripture: Daniel 1

Theme: Always choose pleasing God over pleasing people!

Introduction: Bring to class: cooked Turkey bacon (Louis Rich brand is great if it is available) on one plate and canned spinach on another plate. Ask, “Imagine it is your first breakfast at the king’s hotel in Babylon. These are your two choices, bacon or spinach.” (Don’t tell them the bacon is turkey instead of pork.) “Which one would you want to eat? Which one did God tell Israel not to eat?” Make a list of common foods and ask which are “kosher” and which are not. Be sure to include non-kosher choices such as: ham, lobster, shrimp, catfish, calamari (squid), oysters, clams, rabbit, etc.

Summary of Story:

Visual Aids: Background & Scenery: **Scene 1:** Pink Indoor Scene, 226, 230, 236
Scene 2: Pink Indoor Scene, T1, T3, T4
Flannelgraph Figures: 12B, 42, 46, 54, 55, 57, 60, 89, 226, 230, 236, 246, 250, 256, 4 of 257, 259, 304

Daniel was a smart young man. He did well in school. But when the Babylonians came to Judah, not long before they destroyed Jerusalem, they took away many of the smart young men to Babylon.

The king of Babylon liked to steal intelligent young men because he wanted to use their smarts to help make Babylon stronger. So Daniel had to leave his family and go to a strange land. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah went with Daniel. Their names got changed and most people know them better as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Daniel also received a new name, Belteshazzar.

(**scene 1**) Daniel and his friends were taken to a nice new place to live with a great dining room and delicious food. They were to live and go to school there for three years, learning the language and culture of the Babylonians. There was a problem though. (**add 12B, 54, 55, 57 & 60; put 256 & 4 of 257 on table**) The king served some food that God said the people of Israel were not supposed to eat. And Daniel didn’t want to drink wine either. God didn’t say that it is wrong to drink wine. But God did say that some people who wanted to be specially dedicated to God could give up wine and even raisins or grape juice.

Daniel didn’t care about delicious food. He was in a strange land and he knew one thing that would make the new land feel like home: faith in God. You can go anywhere in the world and obey God.

So Daniel wasn’t going to eat the king’s food and do what God said not to do. You can’t be very dedicated to God if you don’t care about God’s commandments. And Daniel wanted to be especially dedicated to God. That meant that Daniel had to eat vegetables and drink water. The King’s Chief Officer named Ashpenaz wasn’t sure if this was a good idea. If Daniel didn’t eat the special food he might get sick and not be able to do his work for the king, then Ashpenaz would get the blame, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah also wanted to do what Daniel did. They wanted to be close to God. They said to Ashpenaz, “Let us eat vegetables and drink water for ten days and see if we look weak.” (**remove 256 from table; add 246, 250, 257 & 259 to table, have 60 leave**)

God blessed the young men from Judah and after the ten days, when Ashpenaz returned (**have 60 return**) to examine them, they were actually healthier and smarter than the others.

When the time came to be presented before King Nebuchadnezzar, (**remove all pieces; switch to scene 2; add 42 with 304 on head to T1 & 46; add 12B, 54, 55, 57 & 89**), not one was found as good as these 4 Jewish men. They were found to be ten times wiser than any of the king’s magicians! So the king never made Daniel or his friends eat things that God forbids.

Daniel chose God first. He didn’t worry what people thought. He didn’t worry if the food wasn’t as delicious. He cared more about obeying and serving God than being rich and comfortable.

Challenge:

What if a doctor told you never to eat pizza again, or a hamburger, or French fries? Would it be easy or hard? What if one day at lunch there wasn’t enough food and you had to cut your hamburger in half and share it with your brother or sister? Would it be easy or hard? What if your mom said you had to eat a lot of broccoli, salad, or green beans? Why do we want tasty food so badly? It is not wrong to eat tasty food, but decide for yourself if obeying God and helping other people is more important than food.

LESSON 7 - LIVING IN THE GALUT: DANIEL THE PROPHET

Scripture:	Daniel 2						
Theme:	God knows the Future!						
Memory Verses:	Daniel 2:45b ...The great God has made known to the king what will happen in the future.... (JPS) I Timothy 1:17 Now to the King eternal ...the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (NIV)						
Hebrew Words:	<table><tr><td>חֵלֹם</td><td>(cha-lom)</td><td>dream</td></tr><tr><td>מֶלֶךְ</td><td>(me-lech)</td><td>king</td></tr></table>	חֵלֹם	(cha-lom)	dream	מֶלֶךְ	(me-lech)	king
חֵלֹם	(cha-lom)	dream					
מֶלֶךְ	(me-lech)	king					

Lessons with Natan/Rivka

The Jewish Calendar – Kislev: The Month of Lights

Big Idea to get across – Encourage them to live as God’s Lights of Jewish Witness in the world!

Read: John 10:22-23 – “*At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Yeshua was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.*” (NASV)

Prop: Use a Jewish calendar to show the children the month of Kislev.

Teaching: The third month of the modern Jewish calendar is called **Kislev**; this name was given to the month during the time Jewish people were taken as prisoners to Babylonia, as the name is not Hebrew but Babylonian in origin. In the Scriptures the month is simply referred to as the Ninth month of the year.

The most important event in Kislev is Chanukah. Chanukah begins on the 25th of Kislev and continues into the month of Tevet. This is the only Jewish holiday which begins in one month and ends in another month. Chanukah is of course a very popular Jewish holiday as it commemorates when God protected the Jewish people from a pagan king who tried to force the Jewish people from following God’s instructions. Part of the celebration of Chanukah is the lighting of the Chanukah Menorah. These lights remind us that God has called us a Jewish people to live as His lights in the world.

Note: Have the children recite the Hebrew words and phrases in this lesson. Make sure they know that the word “Kislev” means the name of the third month.

Lesson 7 Midrash (Scripture Study)

Scripture: Daniel 2

Theme: God knows the Future!

Introduction: Bring an umbrella, a raincoat, sunglasses, beach ball, beach hat, winter coat, a beach shirt, and a U.S. map. Ask, “Do you ever watch the weather report on the news? What do you think the weather will be tomorrow, next week?” Have volunteers put on different items: one for a rainy day, one for a cold day, one for a sunny day. “How do weather people know what the weather will be in the future? Are they ever wrong?” Explain that weather forecasters do not know the future, but look at temperature, barometric pressure, and satellite picture to decide what the weather will probably do (not certainly).

Summary of Story:

Visual Aids: Background & Scenery: Pink Indoor Scene; T1, T3, T4
Flannelgraph Figures: 42, 46, 57, 59, 89, 218, 304

(add 42 and 46 to stairs, put 304 on head of 42)
King Nebuchadnezzar was having bad dreams. He was just sure that the dreams were from his gods to say something important to him. The king believed in many gods and thought that these gods could send dreams. But the king could not understand them. He kept seeing a giant statue with a head made of gold, arms of silver, a chest and stomach of bronze, and legs of iron. The feet of the statue were made of clay and iron mixed together. In his dream a great stone fell on the feet of the statue and broke the feet into little pieces.

The king called his magicians. **(add 59 & 89)** They were supposed to be smart and know how to tell the future. He said to them, “Tell me what I have been dreaming and what it means?” The magicians were scared, because the king could get mad and have them killed. They said, “That’s not fair. We can tell you what your dream means, but we can’t tell you what you dreamed about.”

King Nebuchadnezzar wasn’t stupid. He knew that anyone can pretend they know what something means. But no one can tell you what someone else dreams about. He said, “No, tell me the dream or I will have all my magicians and advisers put to death.”

Now all the magicians were afraid. Word spread throughout the court of King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel heard that he also was to be killed so he asked, “What is wrong.” They told him the story.

Daniel asked his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to pray to the God of heaven. Daniel knew that God knows everything.

Then Daniel stood before the king. **(add 57)** He said, “There is a God in heaven who can tell you everything. He sent you this dream to show you the future.” The king smiled, but he didn’t believe Daniel at first. Then Daniel said, “You saw a giant statue with a head made of gold, arms of silver, a chest and stomach of bronze, and legs of iron. The feet of the statue were made of clay and iron mixed together. **(add 218 to wall)** A great stone fell on the feet of the statue and broke the feet into little pieces.”

The king was amazed. This was a miracle. Maybe Daniel’s God was real. Daniel explained, “The head of gold is you, the silver arms are the kingdom that will come after you, the bronze will be another kingdom after than one, and the iron will be a mighty kingdom after that one.”

The king wondered what the stone could be. Daniel said, “God will send a powerful king who will bring an end to all those other nations and kingdoms and he will rule forever.” Daniel was talking about the Messiah, who will be king forever at the end of days. The king was amazed, Daniel was saved, and God saw the future because he knows everything.

Challenge:

What if someone really could tell the future? What if one day a Messiah is coming to this earth and he wants followers before he comes? Do you believe in the coming of Messiah? Yeshua’s followers were told that he would come back someday and the whole world would know he is the Messiah. Do you think he is the Messiah, the king of the earth? Why do you think so?

LESSON 8 - LIVING IN THE GALUT: STANDING UP FOR GOD

Scripture:	Daniel 3
Theme:	Stand up for the True God!
Memory Verses:	Daniel 3:17b ...our God whom we serve is able to save us from the burning fiery furnace.... (JPS) 2 Timothy 4:18a The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed.... (NASB)
Hebrew Words:	אֵשׁ (eysh) fire יְשׁוּעָה (ye-shu-ah) salvation

Lessons with Natan/Rivka

The Jewish Calendar – Tevet: The Month of the Siege!

Big Idea to get across – Encourage them to remember that they are one with the Jewish people, whether they know them or not!

Read: Esther 2:16 – “*Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, in his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tevet, in the seventh year of his reign.*” (JPS)

Prop: Use a Jewish calendar to show the children the month of Tevet.

Teaching: The fourth month of the modern Jewish calendar is called *Tevet*; this name was given to the month during the time Jewish people were taken as prisoners to Babylonia, as the name is not Hebrew but Babylonian in origin. In the Scriptures the month is simply referred to as the Tenth month of the year. The month of Tevet is the first of the three months of winter.

The month of Tevet is mentioned in the book of Esther 2:16. There are three minor fast dates in the month of Tevet, the most important being the 10th of Tevet when we mourn the date when the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to the city of Jerusalem; he later destroyed Jerusalem including the Temple of God as well. There are no holidays or festival days that begin in Tevet, although Chanukah concludes at the beginning of the month. In modern day Israel, the 10th of Tevet has been designated as Yom Hakaddish Haklali - the day on which we mourn those whose date or place of death is unknown.

Note: Have the children recite the Hebrew words and phrases in this lesson. Make sure they know that the word “Tevet” means the name of the fourth month.

Lesson 8 Midrash (Scripture Study)

Scripture: Daniel 3

Theme: Stand up for the true God!

Introduction: Bring to class pictures of idols. These can be found in library books about different cultures: Egyptian, Babylonian, Mexican, Peruvian, etc. or on the internet. Ask, “Which commandment in the ten commandments says not to make idols? What are idols?” Explain that in the ancient world, people believed that an idol was a way to talk to the god or goddess that the statue represented. They didn’t think the statue was the god. But they believed what the idol saw and heard would be what the god saw and heard. Ask, “Why doesn’t God need an idol to see and hear what we want to tell him?”

Summary of Story:

Visual Aids: Background & Scenery: Blue Ocean/Sky with Desert Overlay
Flannelgraph Figures: 12B, 30, 34, 41, 54, 54A, 55, 73, 87, 89, 89B, 92, 100, 101, 101A, 116, 173, 213, 217, 304

King Nebuchadnezzar was a very powerful man. His kingdom was the largest anyone had ever heard of. He was so powerful that he decided to make the biggest golden idol ever and make everyone bow down to it. **(add 217)** Nebuchadnezzar’s idol was 90 feet high and nine feet wide. It was so tall it needed huge beams of wood to hold it up.

The king was so impressed with the golden idol he made that he passed a new law. He said that the priests of the Babylonian gods would play music in front of the statue. People from the king’s court would have to go out to the statue and watch. When the priests started playing, everybody had to bow in front of the statue with their head to the ground and stay that way until the music stopped. Anyone who didn’t listen was going to be thrown in a giant fireplace with a blazing fire. **(add 30, 34, 54A, 73, 100, 101, 101A, 116)**

This command was no problem for the Babylonians in the king’s court, but what about Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah? They believed in God’s commandments not to make idols or worship other gods. Now Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were called by a different name in Babylon. They were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

One of the Babylonian courtiers of the king found out that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow to the idol. **(add 12B, 54, 55)** He told the king (Daniel must have been out of town at the time).

The king was furious. **(add 41 with 304 on head)** How dare they disobey his order! He told his soldiers to arrest Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The king said to them, “You’d better bow to the idol or you’ll be thrown into the fire. What god will save you?” They said to the king, “Our God can save us from the fire, but even if he doesn’t, we won’t break his commandment and worship an idol.” **(remove all pieces except 41 and 304; add 87, 89 & 89B)**

The king was even more furious. He told his soldiers to put as much wood as they could into the fireplace and make the fire hotter than it had ever been. They made the fire so big and so hot, that the men who carried Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fire caught on fire and died. **(add 213 with 173 on top)**

But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not die. They stood in the middle of the fire. Everyone looked inside the blazing fire and saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego . . . and someone else! **(add 92)**

Who else went into the fire? Maybe it was an angel of God protecting them. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego got out of the fire, the fourth person was gone. And they were not burned. Their hair was not burned. Their clothes were not burned. And they didn’t even smell like smoke. **(add 12B, 54, 55 in front of furnace)**

King Nebuchadnezzar said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.” He had never seen what the true God could do. And the three men from Israel were glad they had stood up for God.

Challenge:

How important is God to you? If your friends want to do something bad, and you know God is watching, do you do it anyway? Why didn’t Shadrach and his friends bow to the idol and save their lives? Would you be willing to do the right thing even if your friends picked on you?