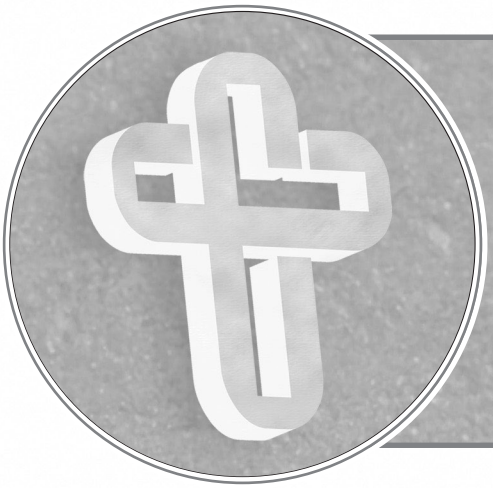


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JUNE 08 2024

recipe for revival

Scripture Story: 2 Chronicles 29–31; 2 Kings 18–20; Isaiah 39.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 28; 29.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Hezekiah was a breath of fresh air among the kings of Judah—a king determined to serve God the way King David had done. He instituted a program of national reform that led to a great spiritual revival. This lesson focuses on two of Hezekiah's initiatives: restoring the Temple and its services, and renewing the observance of the annual Passover festival.

Before Judah could experience revival, there had to be preparation. Hezekiah called on the priests and Levites to help with the restoration of the Temple and its services. In order to do so, everything that "defiled" the Temple—everything that related to the worship of false gods—had to be disposed of. The people of Judah did the same in preparation for the Passover celebration, throwing down false altars and "high places" to get ready to worship the true God.

When the Passover feast came, it was such a joyous celebration that it ran an extra week—by popular demand. That's the sign of a real revival—when people just can't stop worshipping God!

As you discuss this week's lesson with your class, get a sense of whether they think your church community and/or your youth group is in need of revival. What might revival look like in your context? Remember to keep the focus on the fact that revival within a community begins with individuals making a radical commitment to Jesus. Revival isn't about going around telling others what they're doing wrong; it's about being so committed to Jesus that others will want to share the excitement.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand what steps are necessary to prepare for revival. *(Know)*
- Sense the need for revival in their lives and communities. *(Feel)*
- Commit to doing what they can to make revival a reality. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Experience of Salvation, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 10

"In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. . . . (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 45:22; 53; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 33:11; 36:25-27; Hab. 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:6-10; 8:1-4, 14-17; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Eph. 2:4-10; Col. 1:13, 14; Titus 3:3-7; Heb. 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rev. 13:8.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Ask: Have you ever been in a church or youth group that you felt was really "on fire" for God? How could you tell? Do you see those same qualities in our church community here? If not, what's missing?

If you have a large class, break into small groups of four or five for this discussion, and have groups report back to the class as a whole. Generate a list of "Signs of a Church on Fire" and write them on a white/chalkboard at the front of the room. Use it as a checklist to evaluate your church and/or youth group.

Illustration

Share this illustration from Mark Finley's devotional, Solid Ground:

Let me tell you about a friend named Milton Schustek. He pastored in Czechoslovakia during the years of Soviet domination and religious oppression.

When the Communists took over his country, Schustek wanted to be free to minister to his Sabbath keeping congregation in Prague. But the Communists had other ideas. They were determined to send all ministers to labor camps.

Milton knew they wanted to send him as far away from his congregation as possible, to the coal mines in the north. But he figured out a way that he might be able to stay close to his pastoral work in the city. There was one job nobody wanted—to clean out the sewers. Nobody wanted to climb into those narrow filthy culverts, hundreds of feet under the city streets.

Milton decided to go see the Communist officials about that job. But first he got down on his knees and prayed. "Jesus," he said, "I want to worship You every Sabbath. Please help me keep Your law and be faithful to You."

Milton was ushered in to see the local official. He said, "I understand you want to ship me to the mines to work. Let me tell you something. My grandfather worked in the mines, and my father worked in mines, and I am willing to work in whatever mine you send me to. But I have a suggestion. You need someone to do the worst job you have. I know about it. It is climbing down into those sewers, and I am willing to do the job. Why don't you assign me to clean the pipes of Prague? I'd be happy to do it." The Communist official agreed to give him the job.

I will never forget the look on Milton's face when he told me this story. He admitted it was a very tough job, very dark and lonely. "But every day was worth it," he said, "because I could worship God with my congregation each Sabbath."

God has His faithful people in every age. They are lights shining in a dark place.

Milton Schustek was willing to serve God at any cost. God took care of him, and He will take care of you too. God works miracles for those who trust Him. When in faith we take hold of His strength, miraculous doors open. He opened them for Milton Schustek, and He will open them for you.

We will never see God work miracles in our lives if we live lives of careless compromise. Compromising denies God the privilege of working a miracle to deliver us from our dilemma. Stand firm, don't lose heart, and watch God open doors.[1]

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

For many years the kings of Israel and Judah hadn't led their people to follow God's law closely. The laws God outlined for Israel in the first five books of the Bible had mostly fallen into disuse. Many people worshipped pagan gods; those who still followed the true God often did so without a clear understanding of who He was and how to worship Him.

Hezekiah came to the throne as a man with a mission. Just 25 years old, he knew that he wanted to follow God all the way—and take the nation with him. God uses his dedicated followers who are willing to make a total commitment to Him, just as Milton Schustek. Hezekiah used his position of power to lead his people back to God.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Brainstorming

When you divide students into small groups (or discuss as a whole group) as in the *Getting Started* and *Out of the Story* sections of this lesson, be sure to review the rules of brainstorming with them. Remind them that the goal is to generate lots of ideas, and not to "shoot down" their own or other people's ideas. Comments such as "that's a stupid idea" or "that's wrong" should be banned; people should feel safe saying whatever pops into their heads. In discussion time afterwards, you as the teacher may gently and tactfully suggest which answers are more helpful and which are closer to the meaning of the Bible text. But students should always feel that during a brainstorming discussion they are safe to say what they think without fear of being criticized or told to be quiet.

process it with them.

- *Underline* the specific things Hezekiah did (or instructed the people to do) as part of his plan for reform and revival.
- How do you think people felt about Hezekiah's reforms? What evidence do you see in the text to tell you how the people responded?
- What might be some modern-day equivalents to the things Hezekiah did? What would have to change in our churches and communities to prepare for a Hezekiah-style revival?

Write three headings on a white/chalkboard: 1. Seeking God's Will; 2. Sacrifice; 3. Celebration. The student lesson suggests these as three steps in Hezekiah's revival that we could apply to revival in our church today. Divide the class into three groups and assign one heading to each group. Ask each group to answer the question: Under this category, what are some things we can do to prepare our church, youth group, or community at large to get closer to God?

If the groups need more guidance, suggest that Group 1 discuss how we can better understand God's will, as revealed in His Word. Group 2 can generate a list of things we might need to be willing to give up or change in order for revival to come. Group 3 can think of ways we can celebrate God's presence—joyful ways of worship that will keep people coming back for more, as the people of Judah did during Hezekiah's revival Passover.

Give groups a few minutes to discuss, then have them report back and write a summary of their ideas under the headings at the front of the room.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Acts 2 (compare the Pentecost revival with that of Hezekiah).

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light

cornerstoneconnections

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

The history of Israel and Judah was a roller coaster of falling away from God, then coming back to Him. The "revivals" during which the Jews returned to God were usually led by a powerful, charismatic leader who was completely committed to following God and challenging others to do so too. One such revival, led by John the Baptist, paved the way for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus.

The history of the Christian church has seen the same kind of pattern. As Christians grew lukewarm and unconcerned about religion, God always raised up leaders who were willing to dig deeper into the Scriptures, challenge people to change, and lead a revival. Revival can happen in any church or any community. But it always starts with someone who is willing to place themselves completely in God's hands.

Anthropologist Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Hand out an index card or small slip of paper to each student. Say: "We've talked today about revival—about what it would be like if our church, our youth group, and our community were totally committed to God as Judah was in Hezekiah's time. That's a very big idea, but now I'd like you to make it small and practical. On this slip of paper, write ONE change you'd like to see in your church, this youth group, or this community, that would bring it closer to God. Then write one thing *you* could do to help make that happen."

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

God calls each of us to a renewed and closer relationship with Him. He wants us to be, like King Hezekiah, willing to follow Him all the way, whatever it takes. That kind of commitment will lead to change—not just in us, but in the world around us. Whether or not you think of yourself as a leader, you do have influence on those around you. Your example of total commitment can help bring about change in your family, your school, your church, your community. If you determine to follow God completely, like Hezekiah did, you can be a positive force for change.

As you go through this week, I'd like to encourage you to think about this challenging statement by Ellen White:

"A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 121).

(Note to Teacher: If possible, you might consider creating a bookmark or laminating the quote for the students to take with them.

[1]Mark Finley, *Solid Ground* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald®, 2003), p. 342.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 28; 29.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 2 Chronicles 29–31; 2 Kings 18–20; Isaiah 39.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 28; 29.

recipe for revival



Photo by Alden Ho

keytext

"Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. . . . He held fast to the LORD and did not stop following him."

(2 Kings 18:5, 6, NIV)

flashlight

"These and other like messages revealing the willingness of God to forgive and accept those who turned to Him with full purpose of heart, had brought hope to many a fainting soul in the dark years when the temple doors remained closed; and now, as the leaders began to institute a reform, a multitude of the people, weary of the thralldom of sin, were ready to respond" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 334).

what do you think?

Which sentence best describes your church, Sabbath School class, or youth group?

___ Everyone is on fire for the Lord.
___ A few people are excited about God, but most aren't.
___ Everyone seems to be going through the motions of religion.
___ People want to know God better but don't seem to know how.
___ Nobody takes God seriously.

Do you think you need a revival among young people in your church? What would it take to get everyone really excited about serving the Lord? Would you want to be part of a group that was "on fire" for God?

did you know?

The word "revival" is often used to call people to true heart religion and a return to God. In fact, one of the dictionary definitions of the word is "a time of reawakened interest in religion."

The Bible never uses the word "revival." It comes from a Latin word that means "to live again." It wasn't used in a religious sense until 1702, when it was used by the American preacher Cotton Mather. But the Bible does describe several periods in Israel's history that we would probably call "revivals." These were times when Israel had turned away from God, but a strong leader—usually a king or a prophet—led the people back to God and, once again, they became excited about serving and worshipping Him.

INTO THE STORY

"Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. . . . He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done.

"In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the LORD and repaired them. He brought in the priests and the Levites, assembled them in the square on the east side and said: 'Listen to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple of the LORD, the God of your ancestors. Remove all defilement from the sanctuary. . . . I intend to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger will turn away from us. My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before him and serve him, to minister before him and to burn incense.'. . .

"So the service of the temple of the LORD was reestablished. Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly."

"Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to come to the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel. The king and his officials and the whole assembly in Jerusalem decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month. . . . They decided to send a proclamation throughout Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, calling the people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel. It had not been celebrated in large numbers according to what was written. . . .

"A very large crowd of people assembled in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the second month. They removed the altars in Jerusalem and cleared away the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley. . . .

"The whole assembly then agreed to celebrate the festival seven more days; so for another seven days they celebrated joyfully. . . . There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place."

(2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 35, 36; 30:1-5, 13-27, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What was the first step in Hezekiah's reform program?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What kind of "defilement" needed to be removed from the Temple?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Why did Hezekiah want to make a covenant with God?

_____
_____
_____

How do you think the priests and Levites reacted to the changes Hezekiah asked them to make?

_____
_____
_____

What had to be done before the Passover feast could be celebrated?

_____
_____
_____

Why was this celebration of the Passover such a big deal?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Why do you think the people wanted to celebrate the Passover for seven days longer than usual?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" **(2 Chronicles 7:14, NIV).**

"LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known" **(Habakkuk 3:2, NIV).**

"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days" **(Joel 2:28, 29, NIV).**

"Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours" **(Isaiah 61:7, NIV).**

further insight

"In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 59

Sabbath

Read 2 Chronicles 30:32.

Look back at your answers to *What Do You Think?* Do you think your church or youth group needs a revival? What would "revival" look like for you and your friends?

The people of Israel joyfully chose to celebrate Passover for an extra seven days after King Hezekiah brought back the festival that had been forgotten for so many years.

Have you ever wanted a church service or program to last longer? What kind of worship service would you enjoy so much that you'd want to stay twice as long as you were supposed to?

Sunday

Read 2 Chronicles 29:2, 5; 30:14.

King Hezekiah's revival included three steps that can give us an idea of how God brings about revival for His people today.

Seeking God's will. Hezekiah "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD" (2 Chronicles 29:2, NIV). True revival begins by seeking God's will for us as it's revealed in the Bible.

Sacrifice. There were things the people of Israel had to give up in order to truly follow God. All evidence of idol worship had to go (2 Chronicles 29:5; 30:14, NIV). What are the "idols" in your life that you would need to remove before God could completely rule your world?

Celebration. During that Passover—the first in many years—people were having such a good time, they decided to stay, worship, and celebrate for an extra week! When God truly takes over our lives, our churches, our communities, we'll enjoy spending time in His presence.

Monday

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Hezekiah "held fast" to the Lord. He held on and kept following God even when temptations and distractions threatened to tear Him away. Without a firm grip on God, we can never experience revival ourselves, or help bring revival to God's church.

What temptations and distractions in your life might lead you to let go of God?

What helps you "hold fast" to the Lord when times get tough?

Tuesday

Read Habakkuk 3:2.

Read the *Flashlight* section of the lesson. According to Ellen White, how did the people of Israel feel about God during the years when the Temple's doors were closed? What made them "ready to respond" to Hezekiah's plans for revival?

Many people who might not seem to be active in church are quietly longing for a relationship with God. If a revival were to start in your church or youth group, you might be surprised by some of the people who were "ready to respond." Don't ever write off anyone as a lost cause!

Wednesday

Read Joel 2:28, 29.

Hezekiah's revival reawakened the spiritual life of Judah at a time when the nation had been spiritually asleep for years. God calls men and women, youth and adults, in every era to reconnect with Him and get others excited about following Him again.

Today's Bible reading was probably written during the same period of Jewish history. This passage is quoted in Acts 2 to show that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophecy.

As we get closer to the end of earth's history, God again promises to pour His Spirit out on young and old, men and women—anyone who will commit their lives to Him and get serious about bringing revival to His church and the world.

Thursday

Read Psalm 51:10; Matthew 4:19.

Revival begins inside—with a person who is, as Hezekiah was, completely committed to following God. It then moves outside—to change a church, a community, the world.

What's one thing you'd want to do in your own spiritual life to make it happen?

What's one thing you'd like to see happen in your church or youth group? (And share it with your youth group leader, Sabbath School teacher, and/or pastor!)

Friday

Read Isaiah 61:7.

A true spiritual revival is exciting and inspiring—but also scary.

As you think about revival coming to your church or youth group, to your life, is there anything about it that scares you? Are there things you'd be afraid to give up? Are you afraid of what God might ask you to do?

Ask God to help make you, your family, friends, and church ready for revival.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 28; 29.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.