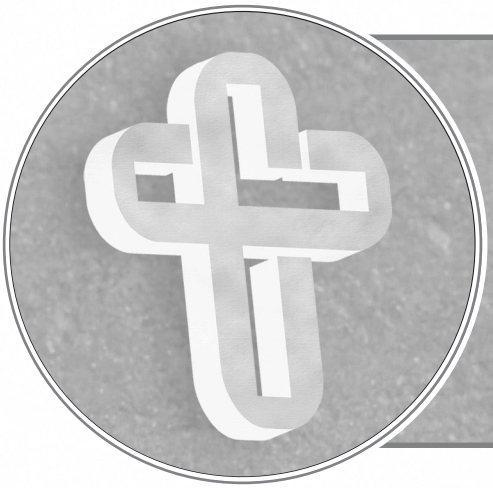


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
MAY 18 2024

are you available?

Scripture Story: Isaiah 6.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 25.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This lesson is particularly exciting in that we see how Isaiah was called to be a prophet of God. The story is vivid in its telling. We can teach so many great truths from this one chapter. If the chapter were to be summed up in one word, the word would be "calling." The process of Isaiah's calling is clear in the text. The vision of heaven, Isaiah's acknowledgment of his sin, the forgiveness given by the seraph by bringing the coal to Isaiah's lips, and the call and response of God and Isaiah is a wonderful view into how God calls His people to work for Him.

As you teach the lesson this week, it is important to note these three things: calling, forgiveness, response. These three elements are the backbone of any call from God. For us to be useful to God we have to understand who we are. Moses is a great example of this procedure that God uses when He calls His leaders to a task or a purpose.

Students at this age are always looking for identity, and this story gives a great example of how one becomes defined by what they do for God when He calls them. It is a great source of comfort for students to understand that God is in need of their hands and feet to do the work He has for them. Of course, God hasn't called all of us to be prophets! So it would be helpful for you to consider how you can help your students not only understand that God has a work for them to do, but help them in practical ways to discover what that work might be. Everyone's life work is different, so one suggestion is to offer some material on how to choose a career. Below are a few websites:

- What Color is Your Parachute? For Teens: www.parachute4teens.org
- Live Your Calling: www.amazon.com
- Christian Career Center: www.christiancareercenter.com

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that God is calling them. *(Know)*
- Understand that God is willing to forgive them of every sin. *(Feel)*
- Listen more closely to God and seek to do His will. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Unity in the Body of Christ, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 14

"The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope,

and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Ps. 133:1; Matt. 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Col. 3:10-15.)"

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.*

Have the students list all the different ways they are connected to one another—all the ways they are available to one another. Once this is done, ask them how they are connected to Christ. Give them all a piece of paper and have them write a phone conversation that they would have with God. Share these with each other and talk of how we are connected and available to God.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The author was working in the yard one day. His 4-month-old daughter was in her chair next to him. He decided he needed to run down the street in his car to do something, so he called his wife and told her he was taking their daughter with him. They got into the car and drove to the downtown area, which was real close. On a busy street, the car died. It was a hot day, and with no air-conditioning the baby was getting uncomfortable very quickly.

The author jumped out and tried to find someone with a cell phone. He had forgotten his at home. He asked a few people, who looked at him strangely. Then he grabbed his daughter and ran into a store to use the phone. They wouldn't let him use it. He was worried about his car and his daughter, but very little could be done. He finally found someone who would let him use the phone! He called his house, but his wife didn't pick up the phone. Trouble!

After a while, he was finally able to reach her and get things going again, but he learned something that day: it is good to be connected. It is good to know that you can get hold of someone who will be available to you when you need them, and you can be available to them as well.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Sometimes it seems as if we are all alone and there is nothing we can do for God. However, the story of Isaiah shows us that all we need is the desire to be available to God so that He can forgive us and use us as He sees fit. However, if we don't connect we don't know that He is calling us.

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 process it with them.*

- What are the most important verses in this story?
- What is the process God uses to call His people to work for Him?
- What does this story tell us about God?
- What does this story tell us about us?
- What does this story tell us about our relationship with God?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story:

Isaiah 61:6; Exodus 3.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. When God calls us to partner with Him to make the world understand Him more, it is often through God's preemption that it is initiated. In other words, God comes to us first. We call this "provenient" grace. It means that He moved first. Acts 9 has a great example of this in the calling of the apostle Paul. While he was still persecuting Christians he was called into a relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. After the light from heaven shone on him Saul/Paul immediately realized who he was in the eyes of God. It seems like a theme that when a person encounters God they also encounter themselves as they really are. We

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Making Things Practical

It's easy to speak of spiritual concepts and never let the rubber hit the road when it comes to our understanding of God. It is important to relate things as simply as possible. However, simple and simplistic are not the same thing. Plain, everyday language with illustrations from the students' lives makes the lessons more appealing and more understandable. Young people are very intuitive and willing to go where you lead them, as long as you know where you are headed first. A good rule is this: if it is hard to explain, you probably haven't spent enough time interpreting the concepts.

have lots of ways to justify and rationalize the things we do and the people we are. However, God sees through all of that into the depths of our souls. The Bible tells us He knows the number of hairs on our heads (Matthew 10:30); therefore, it is safe to say that God knows us. When we see ourselves as God sees us it is often a powerful reminder of how unworthy we are to be so loved by God.

3. In every person that God calls there is a time for response. That is when we decide whether or not we are going to receive the call of God and do as He asks, or if we are going to ignore the call of God and go about our business. In the Bible we see examples of those who have decided to ignore the call of God on their lives for various reasons ("the rich young ruler" comes to mind). In fact, Moses did all that he could in order to ignore the call of God; he even tried to give the call to his brother, Aaron, whom he believed to be much more eloquent than himself. But when God calls, either we say no or we say yes and accept the blessings God has for us in our lives.
4. Once you have responded to the call of God in your life in a positive manner, be prepared for your life to change rapidly. There are literally hundreds of examples of this in the Bible. Here are a few: Moses, Abraham, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Paul, the disciples, and the list goes on and on and on. Are you ready for your life to change in a way that you never imagined? Say yes to God and you can find out what He has for you.

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.*

III. CLOSING

Activity

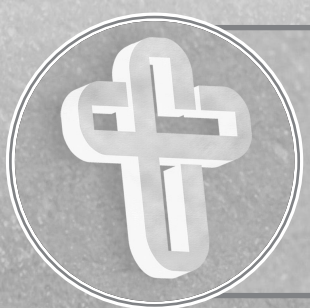
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Bring the class together for some time in prayer. During the prayer, make sure that you allow for some silent interaction with God. The students rarely get to be in complete silence with no distractions, so this will be a nice time for them to listen to what God is wanting from them. After the students have had a few moments of silent prayer, have them reread Isaiah 6:1-8. Give them a few minutes to read, then ask: "If you were called by God as Isaiah was, how would you have reacted? What were some of the sights and sounds you experienced in the throne room? How would experiencing that make a difference in how you live your life?" Close with a word that directs them to stay connected with God through the week.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Calling, forgiveness, response. These are the strong themes to hit in today's lesson. There are many examples of how we are called and forgiven and put to work by God in the Bible. The list in this lesson is by no means exhaustive. Do your own biblical search and find those whose story you most resonate with when it comes to calling. Know that every student is looking for validation and identity, and when they do what is being asked for them by God they can truly find the contentment that their heart so desires. You can add to that process by making them aware of the fact that God is calling them for a specific purpose in the world and in salvation history.



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*), chapter 25.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Isaiah 6.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 25.

are you available?



Photo by Bill Wolf

keytext

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'

And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' "

(Isaiah 6:8, NIV)

flashlight

"Suddenly the gate and the inner veil of the temple seemed to be uplifted or withdrawn, and he was permitted to gaze within, upon the holy of holies, where even the prophet's feet might not enter. There rose up before him a vision of Jehovah sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, while the train of His glory filled the temple" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 307).

what do you think?

Are you connected? What I mean is, do you have a cell phone? Are you on Facebook? Twitter? Instagram?

Write down all the different ways that you are connected to people—be it through school, church, or your electronic devices. You can even write down how many people you are connected to by going through your address books and seeing how many people you are available to be connected with. After all that, ask yourself this question: "With all these people vying for my time, can I hear the call of God on my life?"

INTO THE STORY

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another:

" 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'

"At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

" 'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.'

"Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'

"And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'

"He said, 'Go and tell this people:

"Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving." Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.'

"Then I said, 'For how long, Lord?'

"And he answered:

" 'Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.' "

(Isaiah 6, NIV)

did you know?

Looking at the Internet usage statistics from www.internetworldstats.com, it is estimated (as of June 2022) that of almost 372 and a half million people in North America, 93 percent are connected to the Internet. When you look at the statistics for Asia, there are almost 3 billion people connected. All together, there are more than 5 billion people connected to the Internet worldwide. What a powerful communication tool. Just think of the people we can be available to by just plugging in!*

OUT OF THE STORY

What are some key things that happened in the story to show how God gives us grace?

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_____
_____
_____
_____

What did Isaiah realize that made it possible for God to use him?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Underline the verse that you think is the most important in the whole chapter.

Have you ever read this chapter before? What are a couple of interesting points you learned about Isaiah's calling?

_____
_____
_____

Why do you think it is important to understand who you are and what you are called to do?

_____
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_____

For purely personal reflection, what do you think God is calling you to do in this life?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" **(Romans 8:28, NIV).**

"I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being" **(Galatians 1:14-16, NIV).**

"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness" **(2 Peter 1:3, NIV).**

"No one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was" **(Hebrews 5:4, NIV).**

"And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast" **(Isaiah 61:6, NIV).**

further insight

"Every follower of Jesus has a work to do as a missionary for Christ, in the family, in the neighborhood, in the town or city where he lives."—Ellen G. White, *Christian Service*, p. 18

Sabbath

Read John 15:5.

In the *What Do You Think?* section, you are asked the question, "Are you connected?" This question is obviously about whether or not you are connected to Christ.

Maybe a better question is, "When are you NOT connected, or available?" It seems that in this day and age someone can get hold of us at anytime—and it's probably a good thing that they can! However, perhaps it should make us think about whether or not we are available to God in that same way. This has always been a question for us humans. In Isaiah 6 God asks a question: "Whom shall I send?" Isaiah answers, "Here am I, send me." Is this the answer that we have for God today?

What are three different ways you know how to connect with God?

_____

_____

For some additional resources, check out www.adventistbookcenter.com/steps-to-christ-youth-edition.html.

Sunday

Read Romans 8:28.

After having read the text and the story of the call of Isaiah, what do you think is the most important lesson?

_____

_____

Two words are pretty important in conjunction with this story: repentance and forgiveness. Repentance is the act of acknowledging our sin and recognizing that we are in need of a Savior from that same sin. Forgiveness is God's act of justification and making us right with Him again. As well, we see that God Himself is willing to forgive us of our sins so that we might be able to go out and do the work He has for us. The text is clear that forgiveness and justification come directly from God, just like the angel taking the coal and placing it on Isaiah's lips.

Monday

Read Isaiah 6:8.

Be sure to read the *Key Text* for this week. This week's memory text is Isaiah's response to God when God asks the question of who will go and be His representative to the world. Isaiah was ready for a couple reasons: (1) he could hear the voice of the Lord, and (2) he had been cleansed by God of his sins.

How do you hear the voice of God in your life? Is it through parents or pastors? Friends or family? Quiet time or study? Delving into the Word of God or into prayer?

_____

_____

All of these things help us hear the Word of God. If we seek His voice, He is more than willing to let us hear what He has for us.

Tuesday

Read John 3:16, 17; Revelation 21:4.

This week's *Flashlight* section gives us a glimpse into the vision that Isaiah had into the Holy of Holies in heaven. What do you think the throne of God looks like? What do you think you might do if you saw that vision? Would you fall on your knees and sing the same song as the seraphs who sing constantly of God's praises? Would that vision do to you what it did to Isaiah, and show you just how unworthy you are of the grace given to us by God? Would you be afraid, or would you desire that God come closer to you and your life?

_____

_____

It's difficult to tell what such a clear vision of God would do to us. But it's awesome to think that we seek a God who is this majestic and powerful! A God who is powerful enough to wipe our sins away.

Wednesday

The *Punch Lines* this week had to do with *calling*, and how that is different from a job or a profession. Calling has to do with what God is calling you to do and what He will give you a passion for in this life. When we decide to do what God is calling us to do, it is amazing how excited and energetic we become in the completion of the tasks He has for us. Can a job become a calling? Do you have any idea what God is calling you to do?

_____

_____

The one thing we can be sure is that God has a plan and that plan involves some sort of responsibility. Are you ready to hear the call of God in your life?

Thursday

Read 2 Peter 1:3.

How can you be right with God? How can you know what He is asking you to do? Sometimes it is those things that we find hardest to do that lead us to a better understanding of God's will.

_____

_____

Friday

Read Hebrews 5:4.

Are you available to God? Is He in your address book? Would you be surprised if you received an e-mail from Him about what He would love to have you do?

_____

* www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 25.

**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.