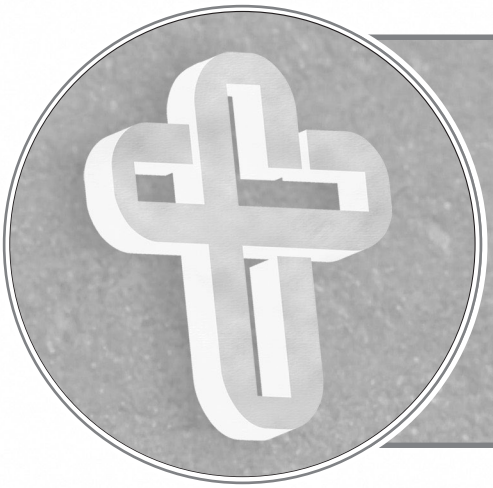


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
MAY 11 2024

come home!

Scripture Story: Hosea.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 23; 24.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

God loves us to death. His love for us is unending, undying, and unwavering. The story of Hosea demonstrates this kind of sacrificial love. It shows us the kind of love God has for His people. This story and lesson is not just about Hosea's broken home and heart, but also about God's. Students should become well acquainted with God's passionate love for them, God's pain over sin, and God's plan to redeem them.

God's passionate love caused Him to pull out all the stops to show Israel how much He cared for her. He was desperate to save and deliver her. Israel, though, had to make the decision to come back. In the same way, God is desperate to redeem and restore His people of today. He anxiously waits for us to give ourselves completely to Him.

As in the time of Hosea, God is often rejected, forgotten, or ignored, and this causes God great pain. He who fixes hearts reveals that He Himself is suffering from a broken heart. God, however, refuses to give up. God vows to fight for His bride.

God's plan is to redeem His people, as Gomer was redeemed. God leaves us with the promise that He will restore and heal His children. God is willing to do all He can to make our relationship with Him work. God wants to restore and remake us. Relationships, however, are two-way. We must do our part to stay faithful to God and maintain a loving relationship with Him.

Having said that, this is also a story of a mother and wife who left her family. The teacher needs to be prepared to address any personal issues (such as abandonment) that might arise in the midst of this lesson. These feelings can be manifested in outright personal sharing and/or anger or aloofness. It would be a good idea to remind the students of the various ways that they can get in touch with you, if they need to do so. Having a name of a pastor or Christian counselor on hand might also be helpful.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the deep love God has for us. *(Know)*
- Sense the emotions God feels when we ignore Him. *(Feel)*
- Choose a friendship with God and choose His way for their lives. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Marriage and the Family, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 23

"Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. . . .

(Gen. 2:18-25; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4.)"

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.*

What emotions do you think God feels? Give an example from the Bible when God felt joy. When did God feel sorrow? When did God get angry?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The phone rang and a young child answered the phone in a hushed whisper, "Hello."

It was his father's boss who needed his urgent help. "Is your father there, son?"

"Yes," the boy answered, speaking in soft tones.

"May I speak with him," he kindly requested.

To his surprise, the boy whispered, "No."

"Well, is your mommy there?" he replied.

"Yes," he quietly answered back.

"May I speak with her?"

"No," the child said in whispered tones.

The boss figured maybe he was home with someone else, so he asked to speak with the adult watching him in order to leave a message. "Is there anyone there besides you?"

"Yes, a policeman," the boy quietly revealed.

Wondering why a policeman would be there, he asked to speak with him.

"No, he is busy," whispered the child.

"Busy? Well, what is he doing?" the boss impatiently inquired.

"Talking to Daddy and Mommy and the fireman," came the whispered answer.

The boss was both frustrated and concerned. As he was trying to figure out what to say next, it sounded as if he heard a helicopter in the background. "What is that noise?" he asked.

"A hello-copper," answered the whispering voice.

His concern turned to worry, "What is going on over there?" he demanded.

Excited, the boy answered in his loudest whisper, "The search team just landed the hello-copper!"

"Well, why are they there?" the boss frantically questioned.

Still whispering, but now giggling, the child confessed, "They are looking for me!"*

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

When you were little, did you ever run away? Share a time when you tried or wanted to run away as a little child. How do you think your parents would have felt if their little child stayed lost? Losing something is not very fun; especially if it is something you love. When that something is someone you love, it can be heartbreaking. Our lesson is about heartbreak—Hosea's heartbreak and God's heartbreak.

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 did God tell Hosea to do?
- What do we know about Hosea's wife?
- How had Israel behaved toward God?
- How did God deal with Israel when she forgot God and did her own thing?
- What emotions do you think God felt when He saw Israel?
- *Circle* all the words that showed emotions or feelings.
- How would you feel if you were married to someone like Gomer?
- How do you think God feels about His relationship with you?
- What do you think God was trying to tell us through the marriage of Hosea and Gomer?
- How should you be like Hosea to someone who has turned their back on you? As a Christian, is it ever OK to forgive someone while still choosing not to have a relationship with them? Why or why not?
- Is there a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?

- What promise did you find in this story?

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

Ezekiel 33:11; Jeremiah 3:12; Hosea 6:1-3; 14:1, 2; 1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

Sharing Context and Background

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

Israel was on the brink of destruction. Israel had disobeyed God time and time again. As a result, they were soon to be led into captivity. Hosea was the last prophet to Israel before it was destroyed. All the prophets before spoke of the ensuing judgment and the flaming wrath that was to come on all who had turned away from God. In Hosea, God shows His softer side, the deepness of His heart and the depth of His love.

The name Hosea means "salvation" or "savior." It has the same meaning as Joshua and Jesus. Actually, Jesus is the Greek version of Hosea. Hosea was also the name of Israel's last king, before it was destroyed as a nation. This name was a promise of salvation.

God instructed the young prophet Hosea to get married. The woman he was engaged to was unfaithful and was a prostitute. Nevertheless, Hosea married Gomer and started a family, but Gomer never let go of her old lovers. She cheated on Hosea more than once, and found herself a slave.

Hosea was heartbroken. He had fallen in love with Gomer, and it seemed as if Gomer wanted everyone but him. God shared with Hosea that this was exactly how He felt about His wife, Israel. God had loved her and provided for her, but she continued to forget all about God. Israel wanted the gods of the world. This broke God's heart.

God told Hosea to go get his wife back. By the time he found her, even though she was his wife,

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Random Draw

Allowing the students to participate in reading and answering questions is a great way to keep them involved. Students do not always volunteer for these opportunities; so try calling on students randomly. They are more likely to be alert and more engaged if they do not know when they will be called on. To make this fun, write each student's name on a small object, such as a card or craft stick, and place them all in a container. After asking a question, draw a name to determine who will answer it. Return the object to the container and mix them up for the next question or duty.

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 quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

he had to pay another man for her freedom. The Bible says that he bought her for 15 shekels of silver and 1½ homers of barley. In Hosea's time, 1½ homers of barley was equal to about 15 shekels of silver. The prophet paid the equivalent of 30 pieces of silver for his wife. This was the price of a slave. This was also what the priests paid Judas for Jesus.

Hosea probably made only 10 shekels a year, so 30 shekels was a large price to pay. Hosea had to pay a great cost to forgive and restore his wife. Hosea's story points to Christ who purchased us from the slavery of sin with His own blood. God loved us too much to leave us as slaves. Though we hurt Him, He still extends the invitation for us to be in loving relationship with Him.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

God went through great pains to show His love for us. Now give the students a chance to express their love for Him. Have students get in groups of three or four and instruct them to write a six-line love song to God. Each group will work on one song together. When each group has finished, give them time to share their love songs. The songs should be sung for the whole group.

Summary

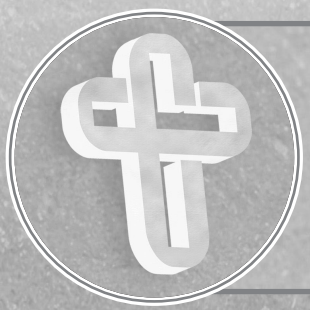
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Hosea is a story of love. Hosea fell in love with a woman who did not love him back. In the midst of this pain, God helped him to love again. Though his wife was unfaithful and unloving, God was able to heal their relationship and restore their family.

In the same way, Hosea's story shows how God feels about us. God loves us to death. God desperately wants us in a loving relationship with Him. This story gives us a glimpse of God's passionate love for His children. "How can I give you up?" God exclaims. God wants to fight for us. This story also displays the pain we cause God when we walk away from Him, neglect Him, or ignore Him. God has a plan for our lives. Hosea points to Jesus who died to set us free from the bonds of slavery. And because of Jesus Christ, we can be restored into a right relationship with God.

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*Adapted from illustration "Looking for the Lost" found on SermonCentral.com.



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 23; 24.

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MAY 11 2024

STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Hosea.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 23; 24.

come home!



Photo © Getty Images

keytext

"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them."

(Hosea 14:4, NIV)

flashlight

"Despite the efforts of Satan to thwart God's purpose for Israel, nevertheless even in some of the darkest hours of their history, when it seemed as if the forces of evil were about to gain the victory, the Lord graciously revealed Himself. He spread before Israel the things that were for the welfare of the nation. . . . Tenderly had the Lord dealt with them, instructing them by His prophets line upon line, precept upon precept" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 296).

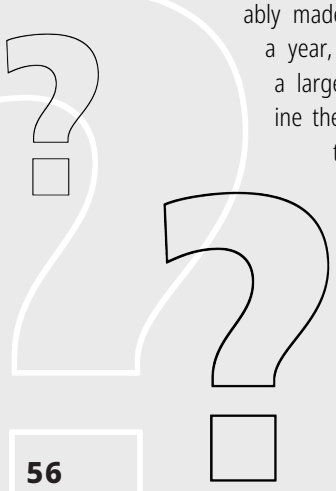
what do you think?

Write down what emotions you would feel if the following happened to you:

- You find a $100 bill on the street. _____
- You drop and break your cell phone. _____
- You get a C on your exam. _____
- Everyone laughs at your new outfit. _____
- You find a mouse in your backpack. _____
- Your best friend moves away. _____
- Your family forgets your birthday. _____
- It is the last day of school. _____
- Your boyfriend/girlfriend breaks up with you. _____

did you know?

Hosea had to buy his wife back with 15 shekels of silver, and 1½ homers of barley. In Hosea's time, 1½ homers of barley was equal to about 430 pounds of barley and was worth 15 shekels of silver. That means he had to buy his wife for 30 pieces of silver—the price of a slave. That was also the price Judas received for Jesus. Hosea probably made only 10 shekels a year, so 30 shekels was a large price to pay. Imagine the prophet walking up to the slave master with 430 pounds of grain!



INTO THE STORY

"When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, 'Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord.' So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son."

"She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.' "

"The Lord said to me, 'Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.'

"So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. Then I told her, 'You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you.'

"For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days."

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more they were called, the more they went away from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them. . . .

"How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboyim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again. For I am God, and not a man—the Holy One among you. I will not come against their cities."

"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them."

(Hosea 1:2, 3; 2:7; 3:1-5; 11:1-9; 14:4, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What did God tell Hosea to do?

_____
_____

What do we know about Hosea's wife?

_____
_____

How had Israel behaved toward God?

_____
_____
_____

How did God deal with Israel when they forgot God and did their own thing?

_____
_____

What emotions do you think God felt when He saw Israel?

_____
_____
_____

Circle all the words that show emotions or feelings.

How would you feel if you were married to someone like Gomer?

_____
_____
_____

How do you think God feels about His relationship with you?

_____
_____
_____

What do you think God was trying to tell us through the marriage of Hosea and Gomer?

_____
_____

What promise did you find in this story?

_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying:

" 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness' " **(Jeremiah 31:3, NIV).**

"I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you" **(Isaiah 44:22, NIV).**

" 'Come back to me, you unfaithful children, and I will forgive you for being unfaithful.'

" 'Yes, we will come to you, because you are the LORD our God. It was foolish to worship idols on the hills and on the mountains. Surely the salvation of Israel comes from the LORD our God' " **(Jeremiah 3:22, 23, NCV).**

" 'In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,' says the LORD your Redeemer" **(Isaiah 54:8, NIV).**

"Now it's time to change your ways! Turn to face God so he can wipe away your sins, pour out showers of blessing to refresh you" **(Acts 3:19, *The Message*).**

further insight

"By giving Christ to our world, God manifested His love for mankind."—Ellen G. White, *Lift Him Up*, p. 134

"Christ was the medium through which He [God the Father] could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world."

—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 13

Sabbath

Read Genesis 6:6; Psalm 2:4; Exodus 32:9, 10; Zephaniah 3:17.

Complete the *What Do You Think?* section of the lesson. You were asked to list some emotions you feel in everyday situations. Emotions come to us naturally, without even thinking about them. What kind of positive emotions do you feel? What kind of negative emotions do you feel? What kind of emotions does God feel?

Emotions are not bad. They give us a clue to what is going on in our hearts. This week's lesson is an emotional one. It takes a peek into the heart of God. Write down God's feelings and manifestations in each of the Bible passages listed at the top of this column for today's reading.

_____

Sunday

Read Isaiah 44:22.

Read the story of Hosea and Gomer in this week's *Into the Story* section and respond to the study questions. This is a story of scandal and pain, and everybody had their share. Which of the characters in the story did you most identify with? Why?

What emotions do you think God and Hosea had in common?

_____

Hosea and God both knew what it was like to lose someone they loved. When Gomer strayed from her husband she went so far that she ended up being sold into slavery. God sent Hosea to buy her back. What emotions do you think Gomer felt as she stood on the auction block and saw Hosea in the crowd bidding for her?

How are you like Gomer?

_____

Monday

Read Acts 3:19.

God loved Israel to death. God was very hurt about how Israel had broken His heart and left Him. He was angry too. God came up with a solution for this problem. Read this week's *Key Text* and write down God's solution below:

_____

God saw that Israel was sick—sin-sick and in need of healing. He promised to heal them and to love them freely. What do you think that means? Did God loving Israel freely mean they could continue to do what they wanted? What should Israel do in response to God's love? What should we do in light of the love God freely gives us?

_____

Tuesday

Read Jeremiah 31:3.

In the *Flashlight* section, Ellen White reveals that God was not the only one after Israel's love and affection. Satan was very active trying to ruin the relationship God had with His people. Read the *Flashlight* section and jot down the kinds of things you think Satan did to keep Israel away from God.

What things does Satan do to try to ruin your relationship with God? Does it work?

_____

Wednesday

Read all the verses in the *Punch Lines* section. What do these verses reveal about God? If you had to summarize all the verses in five words or less, what would you write? Which verse stood out to you the most? Why?

God loves us. He works hard at keeping a relationship with us. Even when Satan tries to distract us, God reveals Himself and speaks to us through His Word.

Jeremiah 3:22, 23, one of the verses you read, is God's invitation for Israel to come back to Him and His promise to forgive them. It also includes a response from Israel. Write out how you would respond to God's invitation.

Thursday

Read Psalm 62:1; 119:105; 1 Chronicles 16:11; Philippians 4:8, 9.

One of the things good relationships are built on is time. Quantity time is quality time. God is pleading for you to give Him top priority in your life. One way to help with this is to make sure God has time with you every day. Commit to a time in the next 24 hours that you will spend alone with God. Make it a date and do not let anybody pull you away from it. You might even want to ask a trusted friend to help you keep that commitment.

Time: _____ Place: _____

Things to remember in prayer: _____

_____

Friday

Read Acts 3:19.

Take some time to reflect on how God may be feeling about His relationship with you. What are the things in your life that bring God pain? What are the things in your life that make God angry? What are the things in your life that bring God joy? What are you willing to do in the next week to bring God even more joy? Who can help you keep that commitment? Imagine that God wrote you a letter about your relationship with Him. On a separate sheet of paper, write down what you think it would say.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 23; 24.

**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.