



are you available?

Scripture Story: Isaiah 6.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings*, 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.

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

- Forgiveness
- Calling
- Response

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

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. Cell phones, instant messaging, and those types of things count as they continue to find ways to connect and be available to other people. Once this is done, ask them how they are connected to Christ. Give them all a piece of paper and have them write a conversation that they would have with God on a cell phone with text messaging. The responses might be pretty funny with all of the abbreviations they use. 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 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.



Tips for Top-notch Teaching

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.

RABBI 101

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

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**

Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **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 read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.

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*, chapter 25.

*A special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.