

STORIES WITHIN THE TRUE STORY



Week Seventeen - Jeremiah

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

Jeremiah 29:11 is one of the most misquoted verses out of context from the Bible. We pray that our kids don't hear a message of self-empowerment or individualistic salvation or prosperity. Instead, may they hear a message of a God who has been faithful to His people and lovingly pursues the restoration of His creation.

- **Big Idea:** God's people have a mission - no matter where they are

Starter

- **Evidences of Grace**

Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. When a kid shares, encourage everyone to thank God together.

- **Hide and Seek**

You may choose to play a short game of hide and seek if you have time. Use this as an opportunity to discuss how God wants us to seek after Him... only He does not hide from us! He wants to be seen!

Sing Together

Story - from Jeremiah 29, Luke 11:9, John 14:9

Since Israel continued to worship other gods from other nations, the true God decided to let them see what it was like to really serve those nations and their gods. He allowed a wicked nation called Babylon to come and take over Israel. But to get them ready for it, He sent a few prophets to warn the people. He wanted anyone who would listen to know what to do when Babylon came.

Jeremiah was one of those prophets. What do you think God told Jeremiah to say to the people? What should they do when Babylon came? Should they fight back against them? Should they defy Babylon or try to ignore them?

This was the Message from the God of the army of angels, Israel's God, to all those He sent from Jerusalem to Babylon:

*"Build houses and make yourselves at home.
Put in gardens and eat what grows in that country.
Marry and have children. Encourage your children to marry and have children so that you'll thrive in that country and not waste away.
Make yourselves at home there and work for the country's good.
Pray for Babylon's well-being. If things go well for Babylon, things will go well for you."*

Wait a second... God actually wanted the Israelites to treat the Babylonians well??? But weren't they the enemy who was capturing them? Shouldn't they fight back? God was trying to get Israel to be who He always wanted them to be. Who He always wanted humanity to be. He was telling them to do what He told the very first two humans in the garden to do:

*"Take care of the garden. Eat what grows from it.
Have children. Be fruitful and multiply.
Care for the world and keep it good."*

Even after all of Israel's rebelling, God was not done with them. Even after all the evil humans had done, God still was working His plan to restore them back to what they were meant to be: people who partner with God to care for one another and for creation.

God also had Jeremiah give them these words of hope:

*"I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.
When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen.
When you come looking for me, you'll find me."*

Many years later, Jesus came to earth and said the same words: *"When you look, you will find. The Father wants to give the good gift of the Spirit and salvation."* He also said, *"The one who sees me, has seen God the Father."*

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- What do you think God meant by, “When you come looking for me, you’ll find me”? What do you think Jesus meant when he said the same thing?
- Why were the Israelites being captured by Babylon? Had they been looking for God? Or were they looking to serve other gods?
- God was ready and waiting for His people to turn away from sin and look for Him. Where are you looking for hope or for life?
- How can you partner with God this week to care for the city you live in?

Breakout Time

- **Prayer:**

God, help us to partner with you and your Spirit to make things good in your world. Thank you for Jesus who helps us to see you. Amen.

- **Craft:**

Use toilet paper rolls and string to create binoculars. Talk about how we can look for God.

If you do not have toilet paper rolls, you can also roll construction paper into tubes

OR

You may use the coloring sheet attached

- **BLESS Activity:** **For kids to do during the week**

Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask Spirit to help us Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak, and Sabbath (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God’s Story.

This week, focus on the **Bless** rhythm. God’s people are blessed to be a blessing. What has God given you or done for you that you can share with others as a blessing?

You will seek me
and find me when
you seek me
with all
your
heart.

- Jeremiah 29:13

