

Teaching Aids

SESSION 1

Breathing Praise Practice

Guide the group through this practice during Connect to God.

Start by closing your eyes and placing one hand on your stomach and one on your heart. Focus on expanding your chest and stomach as you breathe in and releasing your body as your breath goes out. Try to lengthen your breaths in and out, in and out. (*Give time for a few breaths.*)

Now focus on relaxing every part of your body. Relax your forehead. Unclench your jaw. Let your mouth relax, neither smiling nor frowning. Take your hands away from your heart and stomach and place them comfortably in your lap. Keep your eyes gently closed. Keep breathing.

Think about how you are sitting. Relax into your chair or the floor and let it hold you. Keep breathing.

As you breathe, praise God for making every part of you. (*Give time for a few breaths.*)

As you breathe, praise God for the world around you. (*Give time for a few breaths.*)

As you breathe, praise God for being God. (*Give time for a few breaths.*)

Gently open your eyes. (*Close by saying "Amen" if you want.*)

SESSION 2

Damaged Relationships

Share these examples with the group during Explore (Peace Pursuit).

Examples of damaged relationships based on the categories in Genesis 3:

Humans and animals: People have moved into areas that were once animal habitats, which has led to animal attacks in many places, including by alligators in Florida and lions in Tanzania.

Women and men: Women receive less pay for equal work in both the United States and Canada. (Numbers vary depending on how you calculate them, but women earn about 75%–90% of men's wages in similar roles.)

Humans and the earth: Use of chemicals to kill weeds in farming can lead to health dangers for people who harvest the crops and those who eat them. It can also lead to pollution of the air, water, and soil. Of course, this issue is complicated, because chemicals also help farmers produce more.

Humans and God: In both Canada and the United States, fewer people go to church now than ever before. While many people still have a connection with God, some look at the bad things happening in the world and feel like God does not care or that church communities are not doing enough about those things.

SESSIONS 3, 4

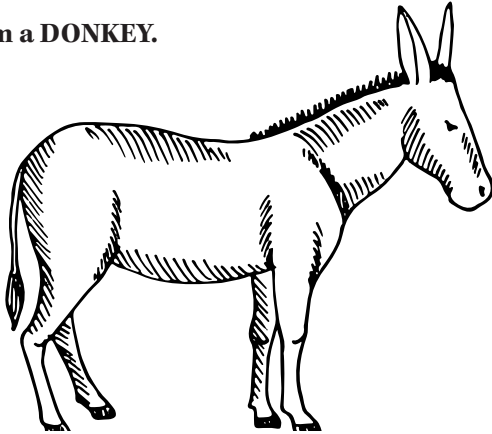
"Animal Guessing Game" Cards

Copy and cut apart the cards on pages 84–85 and use during Connect to Each Other in session 3 and Explore (Other Ideas) in session 4. Omit grasshopper and eagle for session 3 if you have a smaller group.



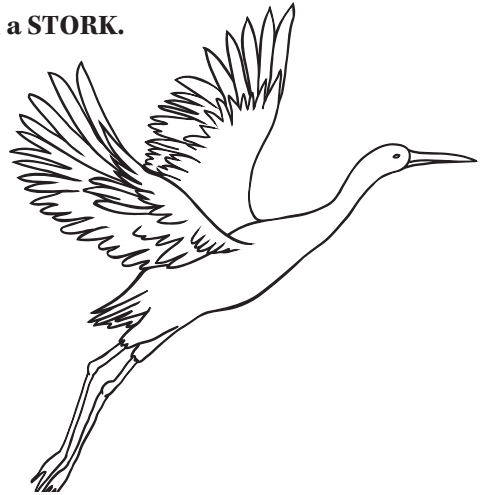
- In the Bible times, sometimes people's wealth was measured by how many of me they owned.
- I was a common form of transportation in Bible times.
- In one Bible story, I talked to the person riding me (Numbers 22:28)!
- I am known for being stubborn.

I am a DONKEY.



- The Bible points out that I know the right season to migrate (Jeremiah 8:7).
- I make my nests in trees.
- I have long, skinny legs.
- Some people say that I deliver new babies to their homes!

I am a STORK.



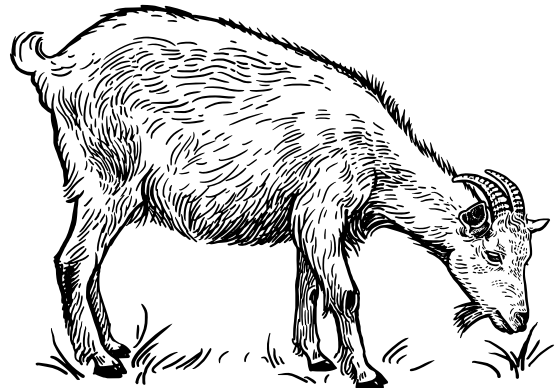
- I do not live in North America. I am native to Africa and the Middle East.
- In the Bible I am mentioned as something that is "small, yet . . . exceedingly wise" (Proverbs 30:24, 26 NRSVue).
- I am also known as a rock rabbit, dassie, or hyrax.
- My webbed feet act like suction cups to help me climb on slippery rocks.

I am a ROCK BADGER or CONEY.



- I live in steep, rocky places.
- I have big horns.
- Jesus told a story where I was sorted out from the sheep (Matthew 25:33).
- Relatives of mine can be found on farms in North America. They like to eat anything!

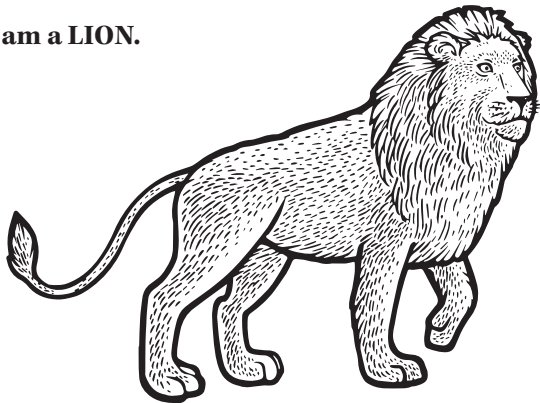
I am a WILD GOAT.





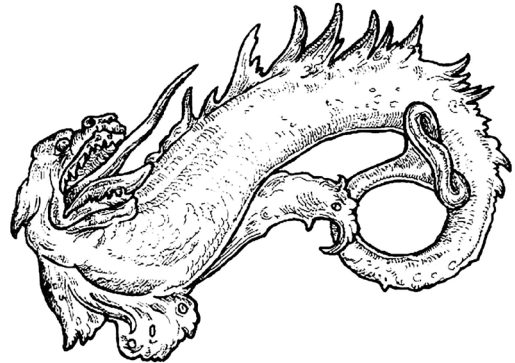
- I am found today only in Africa and India, but in Bible times I lived in more places, including Greece, Syria, and Turkey.
- I usually live and hunt in groups.
- I am a symbol of strength, danger, anger, and righteousness.
- In the Bible, I am used as a comparison for both Jesus and the devil (Revelation 5:5, 1 Peter 5:8).

I am a LION.



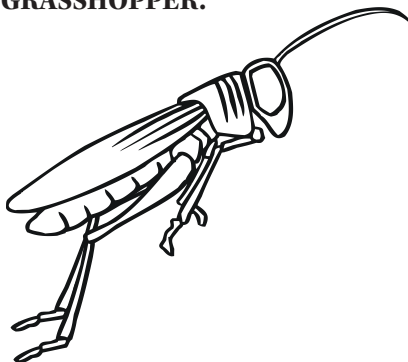
- I am very large and strong.
- Jewish tradition says that God plays with me for three hours every day!
- There is a whole chapter of the Bible talking about how amazing I am (Job 41).
- Some people have said that I am a sea monster, a dragon, a whale, or a crocodile, but I seem to be a one-of-a-kind creature.

I am LEVIATHAN.



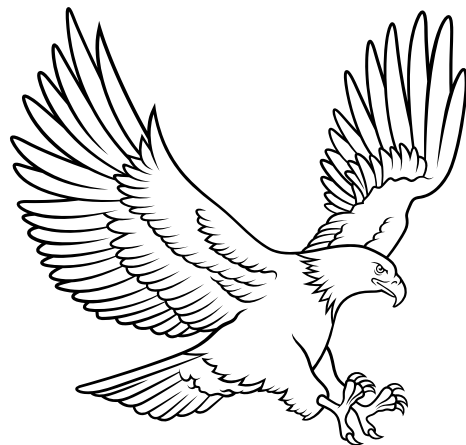
- I belong to what may be the most ancient group of plant-eating chewing insects still alive today.
- In the Bible, people are said to be like me because of their smallness compared to God's greatness (Isaiah 40:22).
- People eat me in some parts of the world.
- Under certain conditions I can change color and form a swarm—then I am called a locust.

I am a GRASSHOPPER.



- I am a symbol of power and majesty.
- In the Bible, God is compared to me in caring for the people (Deuteronomy 32:11).
- I have very good eyesight.
- I mate for life and return to the same nest each year.

I am an EAGLE.



SESSION 5

Revelation Interruptions

Use during Encounter (The Story). Interject these comments as you read through the passages together.

First have everyone turn to Revelation 21.

After verse 1: **Wait . . . who is “I”?** (*Have everyone look together at Revelation 1:9–11.*) **The author of the book of Revelation is a man named John, who was on an island. He might have been in prison because of his faith, or just trying to share about Jesus with people there. John was writing to Christians in churches in Asia who were being ruled by Rome. Rome controlled every part of their lives, and some of the people faced difficulties because of their faith.**

After verse 2: **Wait . . . what’s Jerusalem?** (*Pause for comments from youth.*) **Jerusalem was the capitol city for the Israelites. At the time of Revelation, it had been attacked several times and ruled by different people. It is an actual city that still exists in the Middle East. But the city, sometimes called “Zion,” was also a symbol of God’s presence with the people. Here John describes Jerusalem like a bride ready for God, her husband.**

After the word *saying* in verses 3 and 4: **Wait . . . whose voice is that?** (*Pause for comments.*) **I think we can assume that it is God. John saw a vision of God on the throne earlier. I wonder what God looked and sounded like!**

After the word *end* in verse 6: **Wait . . . what does “Alpha” and “Omega” mean?** (*Pause for ideas.*) **These are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, the language Revelation was written in. So, it’s like God is saying, “I am the A and the Z!”**

After verse 7: **Wait . . . those who conquer what? Remember that John was writing to people facing difficulty in area churches. Those who stay strong in their faith are promised a reward of life and closeness to God.**

(*Now have everyone turn to Revelation 22 and proceed in a similar manner.*)

After the word *angel* in verse 1: **Wait . . . where did this angel come from? Apparently, an angel is showing all this to John. Earlier in Revelation we hear about seven angels, one for each of the cities he was writing to.**

After the word *city* in verse 2: **Wait . . . what city are we talking about? This is the “new Jerusalem,” which we heard about earlier. It is described in more detail in the part of chapter 21 that we skipped. It is huge and covered with gold and jewels. Its gates never close, and all the nations will come to it.**

After verse 2: **Wait . . . “tree of life”—haven’t we heard that before?** (*Pause for comments.*) **That was the name of the tree that God was worried about the first humans eating from in Genesis 2 and 3. Here the tree is not dangerous, though—its leaves are for healing.**

After verse 4: **Wait . . . what’s with the name on the people’s foreheads?** (*Pause for ideas.*) **It’s probably a way of saying that a person belongs to God. Branding, or permanently marking people on their skin with a hot iron, was used as a punishment in the ancient world. Some Christians were branded between the eyes and on the cheeks for refusing to worship the Roman emperor.**

SESSION 6
Blessing Prompts

Copy and cut apart one for each youth for use during Connect to God.



Blessed be God, who _____ .
(description of something God has done for you or that you appreciate about who God is)

May God bless _____ **with** _____ .
(name of friend who is struggling) (a hope you have for that friend)

As I _____ , **may God bless me with** _____ .
(an upcoming situation you need God's help with) (a characteristic you need for that situation)

Blessed be God, who _____ .
(description of something God has done for you or that you appreciate about who God is)

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SESSION 6

"Character Name" Cards

Copy and cut out the cards and use during Encounter (The Story).



Elimelech

husband of Naomi

Boaz

wealthy landowner in Bethlehem, relative of Elimelech

Naomi

name means "pleasant"

Reapers

work in Boaz's field

Mahlon

name sounds like *sickness*

Next-of-Kin

close relative of Elimelech

Chilion

name sounds like *destruction*

Townspeople

residents of Bethlehem

Orpah

daughter-in-law of Naomi

Obed

son of Ruth and Boaz

Ruth

daughter-in-law of Naomi

SESSION 7

"Samuel Hears God's Voice" Skit

Use during Encounter (The Story).

Characters: Narrator, God, Samuel, Eli

Narrator: Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, was lying down in his room. Samuel was lying down in the temple, where the ark of God was.

God: *(speaks off stage)* Samuel! Samuel!

Samuel: *(runs to Eli)* Here I am, for you called me!

Eli: I did not call; lie down again.

(Samuel goes and lies down.)

God: *(speaks off stage)* Samuel!

Samuel: *(goes to Eli)* Here I am, for you called me.

Eli: I did not call, my son. Lie down again.

Narrator: Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time.

Samuel: *(goes to Eli)* Here I am, for you called me.

Eli: Go, lie down. If he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

(Samuel goes to lie down.)

God: *(stands by Samuel)* Samuel! Samuel!

Samuel: Speak, for your servant is listening.

God: I am about to do something drastic. I have told Eli that I would punish his house because his sons have been disrespecting their role as priests, and he did not stop them. There is no sacrifice or offering that will stop this punishment.

Narrator: Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli about the vision.

Eli: Samuel, my son.

Samuel: *(goes to Eli)* Here I am.

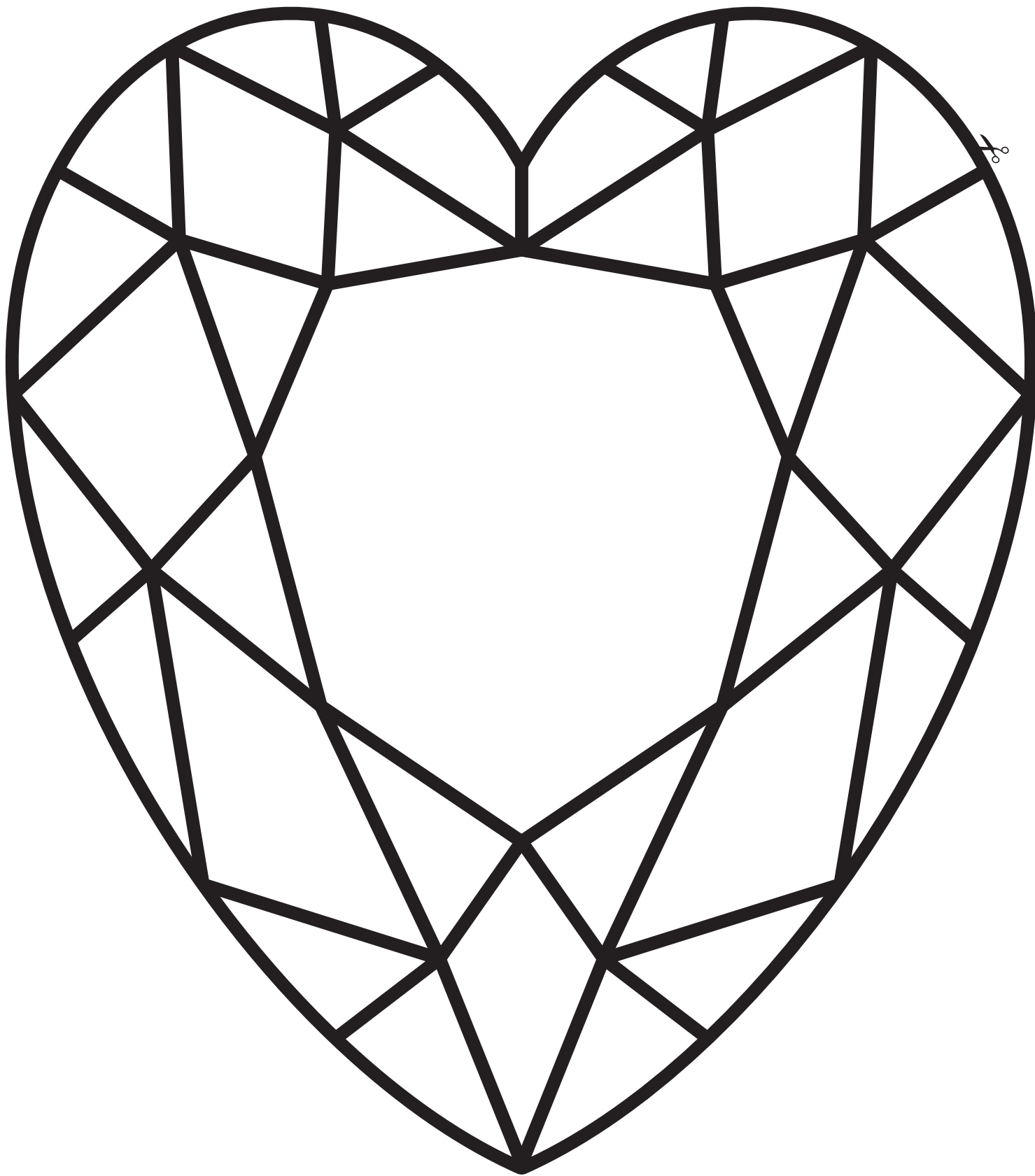
Eli: What was it that God told you? Do not hide it from me.

Narrator: So Samuel told him everything God had said, and Eli accepted it. As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.

SESSION 8

"Stained Glass Heart" Template

Copy one template for each person to use during Explore (Respond).



SESSION 9

Abigail's Oatmeal Cookies

Make oatmeal cookies with your group during Explore (Peace Pursuit). Or, if you don't have access to an oven, make ahead of time and bring in to distribute to the youth. Make copies of the recipe to give to youth to take home.



Abigail's Oatmeal Cookies

- ½ cup / 125 ml butter, softened
- 1 cup / 250 ml sugar (can use a combination of white and brown)
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp / 5 ml vanilla
- 1 tsp / 5 ml baking powder
- ½ tsp / 2 ml cinnamon (optional)
- 1¼ cup / 310 ml all-purpose flour (can use some wheat flour)
- ½ tsp / 2 ml salt
- 1½ cup / 375 ml old-fashioned rolled oats
- ½ cup / 110 g raisins
- ½ cup / 110 g dried figs, chopped (can substitute dried cranberries or more raisins)

Preheat oven to 350° F / 175° C. Mix butter and sugar in a large bowl. Add egg, vanilla, baking powder, and cinnamon, and mix thoroughly. Stir in flour, then oatmeal, raisins, and figs. Drop by rounded tablespoons onto a greased baking sheet, leaving 2 in / 5 cm between each cookie. Bake until the cookies are lightly browned, about 10 minutes.

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SESSION 10

Justice and Compassion Situations

Use during Explore (Collaborate). Invite youth to act out the scenes and continue the story showing just and compassionate actions.

Situation 1

Characters: Sean, Allison

Sean and Allison are in the same math class at school. Sean acts goofy a lot of the time and distracts the class. Allison has heard him make comments about how his mom doesn't like him and has noticed that he looks sad behind all of his jokes. Allison is worried about him and wants to help, but she doesn't want people to think she likes him romantically or approves of what he's doing!

Situation 2

Characters: Jaelyn, Jessica, Chaz

Jaelyn's little sister Jessica leaves her toys all over the place. Jaelyn has stepped on several of the toys, hurting his feet. When his friend Chaz comes over, he steps on Jessica's favorite toy and breaks it. Both Chaz and Jessica feel sad and angry.

Situation 3

Characters: Philip, Jared, Ben, Bryce

Philip's best friend Jared has some annoying habits, such as always interrupting people and laughing way too long at jokes. Philip can put up with these things because he and Jared have a lot of fun when they are together. But he notices that when Jared is around other people, such as his other friends Ben and Bryce, they make faces and comments under their breath about Jared's habits.

Situation 4

Characters: Marisa, Sara, Coach Maria

Marisa is the best player on her community soccer team. Sara joins the team. She doesn't seem to have ever played soccer before. In fact, she is very slow to learn, and Marisa wonders if she has some kind of disability. Even Coach Maria doesn't seem to have much patience in helping Sara learn.

SESSION 11

King Solomon Story Plan

Use this plan to tell today's Bible story. For each section, set out the object indicated (or draw it on a visible surface, such as a whiteboard or large piece of paper). The regular type indicates summaries to read out loud to the group. A leader or youth can read the scripture passages.

Chapter 3: baby doll

- Solomon became king after his father David. He often went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to God, because there was no other place for the people to gather to worship.
- *Read 1 Kings 3:5–14.*
- One day two women came to Solomon. They had both given birth around the same time in the same house. One of the babies had died, but both claimed that the living baby was hers! Solomon announced that he would cut the baby in half. One woman cried out, "No, just give him to her!" Solomon knew this was the real mother. Everyone in Israel heard about Solomon's wise judgment.

Chapter 4: pen

- Solomon appointed priests and officials over different areas of Israel. People throughout the country brought supplies to Solomon, and they lived in safety from their enemies.
- *Read 1 Kings 4:29–34.*

Chapters 5–7: "gold" jewelry or coin

- Solomon began building the temple, a house for God. He ordered cedar trees from Lebanon to be shipped to him. It was a huge project. Solomon even forced some Israelites to work on the building. The Bible records many details about how the temple was constructed. There were stones outside and wooden walls inside, with carvings of angels and palm trees and flowers. Everything was covered with gold. The temple took seven years to build. Solomon also built a palace for himself, which took 13 years.

Chapters 8–9: cotton ball for "cloud"

- When the temple was ready, the leaders brought the Ark of the Covenant, which held the Ten Commandments God had given to Moses, into the temple. God's presence filled the temple like a cloud—so thick that the priests could not even stand there!
- *Read 1 Kings 8:22–30.*
- Solomon blessed the people and offered many sacrifices to God. The people celebrated joyfully. God appeared to Solomon again and told him that if he continued to walk in God's ways, God would establish his family as rulers of Israel forever.

Chapter 10: spices

- *Read 1 Kings 10:1–10.*
- Solomon continued to be known for his wisdom. People came to him from all over, bringing gifts. He gathered chariots and horses and silver and gold.

Chapter 11: torn cloth

- Solomon married many women from different parts of the world and started to worship their gods. God said that most of Israel would no longer be ruled by Solomon's descendants after he died. A prophet tore apart a piece of clothing to show how the kingdom would be torn apart.
- *Read 1 Kings 11:42–43.*

SESSION 13

"Elisha and the Shunammite Woman" Skit

Use during Encounter (The Story). Choose youth for each of the characters and provide the props "offstage."

Characters: Narrator, Elisha, Gehazi, Woman, Husband, Husband's Servant (nonspeaking)

Props: blankets, pillow, chair (for furniture), doll (for son), broom (for donkey), stick (for staff)

Narrator: One day Elisha was passing through Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived; she urged him to have a meal in her home. So whenever he passed that way, Elisha would stop there for a meal.

Woman: *(to Husband)* Look, I am sure that this man who regularly passes our way is a holy man of God. Let us make a small roof chamber with walls, and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that he can stay there whenever he comes to us.

Narrator: One day when Elisha came, he went up to the chamber and lay down.

Elisha: *(to Gehazi)* Since this woman has taken all this trouble for us, what may be done for her?

Gehazi: Well, she has no son, and her husband is old.

Narrator: Elisha told Gehazi to call the woman. When he had called her, she stood at the door.

Elisha: *(to Woman)* At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son.

Woman: No, my lord, O man of God; do not deceive your servant.

Narrator: The woman conceived and bore a son in due time, just as Elisha said. When the child was older, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. He complained to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" His father told his servant to carry the boy to his mother. The servant brought him to his mother; the child sat on her lap until noon, and he died. She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, closed the door on him, and left.

Woman: *(to Husband)* Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again.

Husband: Why go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath.

Woman: It will be all right.

Narrator: The woman saddled the donkey and told her servant to urge the animal on. So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

Elisha: *(to Gehazi)* Look, there is the Shunammite woman. Run at once to meet her and say to her, "Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is the child all right?"

Narrator: Gehazi went to the woman, and she told him, "It is all right." When she came to the man of God at the mountain, she caught hold of his feet. Gehazi approached to push her away.

Elisha: *(to Gehazi)* Let her alone, for she is in bitter distress; the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me.

SESSION 13

"Elisha and the Shunammite Woman" Skit (*continued*)

Woman: (*to Elisha*) Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, "Do not mislead me"?

Elisha: (*to Gehazi*) Gird up your loins, and take my staff in your hand, and go. If you meet anyone, give no greeting, and if anyone greets you, do not answer; and lay my staff on the face of the child.

Woman: (*to Elisha*) As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave without you.

Narrator: So Elisha rose up and followed her. Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. Gehazi came back to meet Elisha.

Gehazi: The child has not awakened.

Narrator: When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. So he went in and closed the door, and prayed to the Lord. Then he got up on the bed and lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands. While he lay bent over him, the child's skin became warm. Elisha got down, walked once around the room, then got up again and bent over him. The child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha opened the door.

Elisha: (*to Gehazi*) Call the Shunammite woman.

Gehazi: (*to Woman*) Take your son.

Narrator: She came and fell at Elisha's feet, bowing to the ground. Then she took her son and left.