

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

HOSEA



KEY PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 13:4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why do Christians continue to sin? Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Israel was not faithful to God, but God was faithful to Israel, just as Hosea loved his wife even when she didn't love him. God is faithful to save all sinners who repent and trust in Jesus.

STORY POINT: God warned and showed His love to Israel through the prophet Hosea.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Although God had been faithful to the people of Israel, they were not faithful to God. The Israelites continued to disobey God, following worthless idols and acting wickedly. Israel even turned to other nations during times of trouble, trusting in the power of men over God. God warned Israel of their unfaithfulness and showed His faithful love through the prophet Hosea.

Though Israel was far from Him, God wanted to show a picture of His great love and relentless pursuit of His people through Hosea's life. God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer, explaining that she would not be faithful to him. Yet, God told Hosea to remain committed to her.

Hosea obeyed God and married Gomer. As God said, she was unfaithful to Hosea and left their family. In the same way, the Israelites were unfaithful to God, worshiping idols, acting corruptly, and loving violence. However, God's love did not relent, and He promised a day when He would forgive and restore them (Hosea 14:4-9).

To show the Israelites the depth of His love, God told Hosea to show love to Gomer, even though she had chosen a life of adultery (Hosea 3:1). Again, Hosea obeyed God. He paid the debts Gomer owed and brought her back home to their family.

On the cross, Jesus paid our debt of sin, restoring our relationship with God so we might be with Him forever. When we repent and turn to Jesus, He brings us into His family. Even when believers act unfaithfully, Jesus continues to be faithful and show unending love.

Encourage boys and girls to ask Jesus for forgiveness and praise Him for His unfailing love. God promised to be faithful to Israel, and He continues to be faithful to us. Point children to God's promises to Israel and the way these words of hope echo into Jesus' promises to followers of Christ to heal them, love them, and not be angry with them (Hosea 14:4).



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Search It" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- half-sized chenille craft stems, 2 per kid
- pony beads or other small beads

Session Starter (Option 2)

- index cards, 9



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ball

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- poster paper

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Old or New?" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Hosea, Prophet to Israel" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 14, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- 5-by-5-inch piece of cardboard, 1 per kid
- various spools of yarn
- 7 inch long strips of ribbon

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- inflated balloon



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What would you do if a friend said that he or she didn't want to be your friend anymore? How would that make you feel?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Search It” activity page.

SAY “Great job finding all the words! In our story today, we will see how Hosea, a prophet, was sent to search for his wife and bring her back.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: CROSS RING

Lead kids to take a half-sized chenille craft stem and place three pony beads on each side of the middle, leaving space between each set of three beads. Tell kids to take another half-sized chenille craft stem and twist it around the space between the beads. Then place two pony beads on each side of the chenille craft stem you just twisted. Tie off any extra chenille craft stem behind the beads. Push the beads on the first chenille craft stem toward the middle. The beads should make a cross shape. Lead kids to wrap the remaining ends of the first chenille craft stem around their finger to create the ring. Cut off any excess chenille craft stem.

SAY “Did you know that wedding rings symbolize commitment between a husband and a wife? They remind each person about the promise they made to be faithful and love one another. Today, we will learn about a wife named Gomer, who was not faithful to her husband, Hosea. We'll see how their relationship symbolized Israel's relationship with God. Your cross rings can remind you of God's faithfulness through Jesus, who died so we can be with God forever.”

OPTION 2: PAY IT BACK



Before the session, write the following dollar amounts on nine index cards: \$20, \$0, \$5, \$15, \$10, \$20, \$5, \$15, \$10. Tape the cards, face down, on a wall in a 3x3 grid. Form kids into two teams.

Tell kids they have a debt of \$50. Each team will work together to choose three cards, trying to receive an amount of at least \$50 in total from the three cards to pay back their debt. Choose which team will go first. If a team's three cards add up to at least \$50, they receive a point. Play again, as time allows, and consider increasing the debt owed.

SAY “Today, we will hear learn about a woman named Gomer who was unfaithful to her husband Hosea. But Hosea showed love to Gomer and paid her debt so she could return home. Gomer's marriage was like a picture of Israel's unfaithfulness to God. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** All people have been unfaithful to God because we are sinners. We all owe a debt we can never pay back. But in His love, God sent Jesus to pay the debt for us. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m happy you are here today to study God’s Word. Today, we will be in a book called Hosea. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Assist kids in finding Hosea.]

Over the past few weeks, we have learned about Israel’s wicked kings and some of the prophets God sent to warn His people about their sin. Today, we will learn about another prophet named Hosea. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and ask God to help us receive His truth: ‘Dear God, thank you for loving us even though we sin and don’t show love to You. Help us know and trust in Your faithfulness and give us the desire to be faithful like You. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ What is our big picture question? [Allow responses.] **Why do Christians continue to sin?** What is the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.** Let’s say that together one more time: **Christians continue to sin because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.**

In our story, we will be reminded how God’s people continued to sin against Him, even though God was always faithful to them. God provided for Israel, cared for them, and displayed great patience, but Israel continued to turn away from Him. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** Through Jesus, God has showed us His perfect faithfulness and how we can be forgiven of our sin. When we trust in Jesus, we have the hope of one day being sinless like Him. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Although the Northern Kingdom continued to worship idols, God provided prophets to warn His people—and even foreign nations—to turn away from their sin. God sent Elisha to speak His words and perform miracles, proving that God is the one true God. Then God sent to Jonah to Nineveh to preach against their sin. While Nineveh repented and was spared God’s judgment, the nation of Israel refused to worship God alone. Today, we will see how God sent Hosea to warn Israel of their unfaithfulness to Him and remind them of His faithful love. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Hosea. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Hosea, Prophet to Israel.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

HOSEA, PROPHET TO ISRAEL

“ Israel was not faithful to God. They worshiped other gods, sinned by disobeying Him, and looked to other nations to help them in times of trouble.

God wanted to show His people a picture of how much He loved and wanted to be with them, even though they had been unfaithful to Him. He spoke to His prophet Hosea, saying, “Go and marry a woman who will not be faithful to you, and be committed to her.”

Hosea followed God’s direction and married a woman named Gomer. They had three children together. Sadly, Gomer was not faithful to Hosea and left the family.

Gomer’s unfaithfulness to Hosea was like Israel’s unfaithfulness to God. Israel had taken the grain, oil, silver, and wine that God had given to them, and had used it to worship Baal. They pursued false gods and looked to other nations to save them. **But God still loved Israel and forgave them for their lack of faithfulness.**

To show Israel how much He loved them, **God told Hosea to go get Gomer back. “Show love to Gomer, even though she hasn’t shown love to you, just as I have loved the Israelites.”**

Hosea obeyed God. He paid back what Gomer owed others and brought her back to live with him, and she agreed.

Hosea pled with the Israelites to come back to God, just as Gomer had come back to Hosea. Hosea reminded Israel of how God had loved Israel like a child, providing and caring for their every need. **But he also told the people that there would be consequences for their sin. He said, “Come, Israel, return to the LORD, for you have stumbled in sin. Repent and turn away and return to the LORD. Ask him for forgiveness and praise him. No one else can save us but God.”**

Through Hosea, God promised to be faithful to Israel. God also said that one day His people would seek the Lord their God. “I will heal them,” said God, “I will love them. I will not be angry with them anymore.”

Christ Connection: Israel was not faithful to God, but God was faithful to Israel, just as Hosea loved his wife even when she didn’t love him. God is faithful to save all sinners who repent and trust in Jesus. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Tell kids that when they hear the word “unfaithful,” they should make an exaggerated sad face. When they hear the word “faithful,” they should make an exaggerated happy face.

Define it: Tell kids that the word *faithful* means steadfast, dedicated, dependable, and worthy of trust.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Long before the kingdom was divided, God had chosen and called Abraham. Through Abraham’s family came the nation of Israel. God made a covenant, or promise, to be Israel’s God. Over the generations, Israel’s disobedience grew and grew, but God continued to be faithful. The book of Hosea is centered on Israel’s disobedience and unfaithfulness toward God. But **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA**. How did God demonstrate His faithfulness to an unfaithful people through the prophet Hosea? Look at Hosea 1:2. [Ask a volunteer to read Hosea 1:2 aloud.] God told Hosea to marry a woman who would not be faithful to him. Gomer, Hosea’s wife, left their family. Through Hosea and Gomer, God was helping His people see what they were like: they were unfaithful to God.

How was Israel unfaithful to God? Look at Hosea 4:1-2,12-13. [Ask a volunteer to read Hosea 4:1-2,13-14 aloud.] God said His people showed no truth, no faithful love, and no knowledge of God. They cursed, lied, murdered, stole, and turned away from God. They worshiped idols and made sacrifices to false gods. But even with all their disobedience and unfaithfulness, God still loved His people. He wanted to be with them and forgive them.

How did Hosea demonstrate God’s love for Israel? Look at Hosea 3:1-5. [Ask a volunteer to read Hosea 3:1-5 aloud.] God told Hosea to go find Gomer and show her love, even though she had left him. Hosea paid Gomer’s debt and brought her back to live with him, telling her that she must be faithful to him. God acted the same way toward His people. He had shown them faithful love, no matter their unfaithfulness. While they had consequences for their sin, God continued to help His people and care for them.

Like Israel and Gomer, we are all unfaithful to God. We sin and go astray. But God is faithful to save all sinners who repent and trust in Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the debt we owe because of our sin. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven and safe with God forever. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Think about your life. How have you shown unfaithfulness to God? In what ways have you let sin lead you away from God? God has never stopped loving you and has made the way for you to be forgiven. Through faith in Jesus, God will forgive our sin and give us eternal life. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 14, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why does God forgive us even though we don’t deserve it?
2. How does Jesus’ perfect, sinless life get credited (or given) to us?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ Dr. George and Joan Braswell were missionaries in Iran from 1968 to 1974. Dr. Braswell was the only Christian professor at a Muslim university. This opportunity to teach at the university opened up doors for Dr. Braswell to build relationships with many Muslim people and share the good news about Jesus. ”

Share how Joan had an opportunity to share about the country of Iran with elementary students. Joan explained that people in Iran often work with looms to weave beautiful carpets. Tell kids that carpets from Iran are known as Persian rugs. Share how these looms can be quite large because they make carpets to fill a room.

Invite kids to practice weaving by creating a "loom" from a 5-by-5-inch piece of cardboard. Cut slits at the top and bottom of the cardboard equal distance apart. Then lead kids to take yarn and tape the end of the yarn to the back of the "loom." Kids will then bring the yarn through the first slit, turn the "loom" over, and bring the yarn down to the matching slit at the bottom. Repeat, wrapping the yarn through all the slits. Next, weave 7 inch long strips of ribbon in an under-and-over pattern across the "loom." Repeat, weaving until the desired length is achieved.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, post an Allergy Alert Poster for kids who may have a latex allergy. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Deuteronomy 13:4 together.

SAY “ In our story, we learned that Israel did not follow the Lord, fear Him, or love Him. But God never stopped loving His people. Hosea reminds us of God's faithful love and how He was still working to send a Savior to rescue people from sin. ”

Form two teams and instruct each team to stand on one side of the room. You may use tape to mark the middle of the room. Then toss an inflated balloon to one team and challenge them to bop the balloon back and forth with the other team. Lead kids to say the words of the key passage each time they bop the balloon. Challenge teams to say the entire key passage without the balloon hitting the floor.

Lead kids to sing “Faithful to Him (Deuteronomy 13:4).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for being patient with us. Thank You for Your faithfulness, even when we sin and mess up. Please help us remain faithful to you. In Jesus' name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Hosea 9. Explain that Hosea is part of the Minor Prophets, which means it is a short book when compared to the Major Prophets, not that it is less important.

Consider pointing out the location of Israel (E5) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Hosea 9:3,7 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud. Use these verses to point ahead to next week's session.

SAY “ The story of Hosea reminds us of God's faithful love to Israel. Like Hosea was faithful to an unfaithful wife, God never abandoned His people, who continually sinned against Him. However, God is just and will punish sin. Hosea prophesied about the coming exile—the time when the people of Israel would be taken from their land and be held captive in Assyria. The exile would serve as a punishment, but it would also be a time for Israel to repent and remember God's faithfulness. Even though Israel would be sent away, God would continue to bring about His promise to bring the Savior into the world. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Is every person unfaithful to God? Why? ”

Tell kids that yes, every person is unfaithful to God. We all sin, choosing to reject God and His ways. Discuss how we sometimes willfully disobey God, knowing what is right but choosing to do what is wrong. Share how we also sin by not being able to perfectly live up to God's standards, even when we try our very best. Remind kids that through Adam and Eve, sin has spread to all people. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:12.)

SAY “ How can we be faithful to God? ”

Discuss how we can only be faithful to God by trusting in Jesus, who was always faithful. Tell kids that we will never be perfectly faithful until Jesus returns, but through Jesus, we are counted as righteous because His faithfulness is given to us. Remind kids that the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and helps us to follow God's ways. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Thess. 5:23-25.)

SAY “ How has God shown faithfulness to you, even when you've sinned? ”

Answers will vary. Remind kids that God is faithful, and He has shown perfect faithfulness through Jesus. Discuss how God's promises will never fail. Those who have trusted in Jesus as Savior and Lord can know that God will accomplish everything He has promised: salvation from sin, eternal life, peace, joy, wisdom, provision, goodness, and so on. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 1:9.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: RETRIEVE IT



Choose one kid to be the guard. Form kids into two teams. Place the guard at one end of the room and give him a ball to guard. At the other end of the room, tell teams to line up single file. Then send one kid from each team to get the ball away from the guard. If the kid gets the ball, award a point to her team. If the kid is tagged, she is out. Repeat, sending kids from each team until all kids have had a turn. Play again, choosing a new kid to be the guard.

SAY “ Your team's goal was to retrieve the ball from the guard. In our story, we learned how God sent Hosea to get his wife back. **GOD WARNED AND SHOWED HIS LOVE TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHET HOSEA.** This reminds me of how God sent Jesus to seek and save sinners. We all have been unfaithful to God, but in His love, God sent Jesus to warn us about sin and to save us from the punishment we deserve because of our sin. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven forever. ”

OPTION 2: FAITHFUL FOREVER

Write the word Faithful on a poster paper. Form kids into four groups and assign each group two letters from the word Faithful. Provide each group with several papers and instruct them to cut the papers into heart shapes. Invite groups to write a character trait of God or a promise of God on their papers that match their assigned letters. For example, for the letter F, kids may write forgiving. Or for the letter I, kids may write infinite or indwells believers with His Spirit. Lead groups to tape the hearts next to the letters.

SAY “ God showed faithful love to His people, even when they sinned against Him. In love, God sent the prophet Hosea to warn the people of their sin and to tell them to return to Him. God shows us faithful love through His Son, Jesus. Because of Jesus, believers can experience God's promises and know He will always be with them. God desires that we share His faithfulness with others through the gospel story. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His faithfulness and for sending Jesus to save us from our sin. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Old or New?” on the activity page.