Noah, in His Old Age, Describes Great Flood and Recalls Rainbow’s Appearance

Noah celebrated his nine hundredth birthday recently, surrounded by his three sons and their large families.

It has now been three hundred years since the great Flood, and we asked Noah to tell us what it was like to live through such a tremendous event.

“I knew all along that God would be with us,” he began. “You see, God spoke to me long before the rains came and told me to build an ark for my family and for pairs of all the kinds of animals and birds on the earth.

“It was a big job, and I was six hundred years old at the time. We had to store up every kind of food to keep us all alive the whole time. What a lot of work!”

A young person interrupted to ask Noah why the Flood had happened.

Noah replied, “God was very unhappy about the way people were living. So much violence! It was such a shame that this good earth was being spoiled by the actions of people.”

Forty Days of Rain

Quickly, Noah moved on to tell the story of the days on the ark. The rain lasted forty days, water beating down on the deck as the family and all the creature below huddled together and waited. Soon the whole earth was covered with water, and everything was flooded for about five months.

“We were glad when a wind started to blow, and the water began to go down,” the aging Noah recalled.

“I’ll never forget, a couple of months later, how excited we got when the ark settled down on something solid. We were surprised to find that we were sitting on a mountain called Ararat.

“Three more months went by, and then we could see other mountains around us.

Continued on page 2
NOAH, Continued from page 1

"After forty days, I sent out a raven. It flew all around until the earth began to dry up. Then I sent out a dove, but she came back because there was no safe place for her to touch down on land.

Feet Touch Dry Land

"Another week went by, and I sent the dove again. This time, she came back with an olive leaf in her beak, so I knew it would not be much longer till we could get off that ark. Seven days later, I sent the dove a last time. When she didn't come back, it seemed clear that the time had come at last to venture out.

"God spoke to me again and told me to bring my family and all the animals out onto the dry land. I call tell you, that was a wonderful feeling!"

We urged Noah to tell us what he did first after touching soil with his feet once again.

"I was so grateful we'd been saved that I built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed animals."

One of Noah's grandchildren shouted in his ear, "Don't forget about the rainbow!"

"Oh, yes," he said, smiling. "The children always want to hear about that. God made a covenant with me and my family after the flood. God told me that there would never again be a time when every living thing was destroyed. Life would go on! And the rainbow is a sign that reminds us of that promise. Every time we see a rainbow in the sky, we remember God's covenant."

People of Today Are Reminded by Noah's Story that Every Creature Needs our Care

N oah took into the ark two of every kind of animal that God had made. When the great Flood ended, these animals could multiply once again.

Sadly, many animals of long ago are no longer with us. They are extinct. Still others are endangered because people have moved into their natural habitats to cut down forests, use up the water, and build cities, and plant crops. Some animals have become extinct or endangered because people killed them for their fur, feathers, or tusks.

In the last four hundred years, about 125 kinds of mammals and 165 kinds of birds have become extinct. Many others are endangered: 300 mammals, about 300 birds, and more than 200 reptiles and amphibians.

All Are Important

While some of the animals on the endangered species list may not seem to be important, every creature has its place in the eco-cycle. When one species is diminished or destroyed, it affects all living things in some way.

Most people can do little about the loss of wildlife, but we can be aware of the problem and support governments, zoos, and others who are working to save the animals and their environments.

Read about these animals and the efforts people are making to save them.
God wants everyone to take care of the earth. We can all help by doing some simple things around our homes, schools, and neighborhoods:

1. **Plant a tree.** Trees help to remove carbon dioxide from the air and give back oxygen. They also help to keep the earth cooler in the summer. If there is space in your yard, plan to plant a tree. Money to buy the tree can be raised by doing chores such as raking leaves, mowing lawns, or feeding pets for people who are on vacation. Once the tree is purchased, ask an adult to help plant the tree. Take the responsibility to water and protect it until it can grow on its own.

2. **Pick up litter.** Keep school-yards and neighborhoods clean by picking up litter and putting it in trash cans. Put the litter in a trash bag and dispose of it in a proper receptacle. Wearing plastic gloves or putting plastic bags on hands provides protection from germs and insect bites.

3. **Recycle.** Keep bins to dispose of glass, plastic, newspapers, white paper, and aluminum cans like the ones soda comes in. If young persons assume responsibility for collecting and sorting recycled items, parents and teachers are more likely to help get the things to a recycling center. Be sure to check with your local government to see what can be recycled in your area.

### MEMORY CHALLENGE

Add these to your mental list.

- **OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS**
  - Genesis
  - Exodus
  - Leviticus
  - Numbers
  - Deuteronomy
  - Joshua
  - Judges
  - Samuel
  - Kings
  - Chronicles
  - Ezra
  - Nehemiah
  - Esther

- **PENTATEUCH**

- **HISTORY**

- **POETRY**

- **PROPHETS (MAJOR)**

- **PROPHETS (MINOR)**

### Puzzle Solution
1. Creature
2. Covenant
3. Established
4. Descendants
5. Clouds
6. Waters
7. Sign
8. Ark
9. Bow
10. Flood
11. Noah
12. Living

*BCE is an abbreviation for the words Before the Common Era. When the Christian calendar was developed, years were counted from the date of Jesus Christ’s birth, with BC meaning Before Christ and AD meaning Anno Domini (Latin for in the Year of Our Lord).

In recent times, BCE is used, out of respect for persons who are not professing Christians.
UNLEARNING THE SCRAMBLED

Unit I:
LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Verses for the Unit:
Session 1: Genesis 9:13,16
Session 2: Genesis 15:5b,c; 17:9
Session 3: Exodus 20:3, 4a, 7a, 8, 12a, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17a, 24:12
Session 4: Deuteronomy 10:5; Joshua 24:15b,e
Session 5: II Chronicles 3:1; Psalm 51:15
Session 6: I Kings 12:16b; Psalm 122:1; Psalm 124:8
Session 7: Psalm 137:1-2, 4
Session 8: Isaiah 40:3, 4, 5
Session 9: Psalm 145:10, 13

LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Session 1:
"I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth." —Genesis 9:13 (NRSV)

"When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." —Genesis 9:16 (NRSV)
Abraham and Sarah Rejoice at the Birth Of Isaac and Praise God for the Miracle

We visited with Abraham and Sarah the other day, just after the birth of their son Isaac. The birth is considered a miracle for a couple in their nineties when the child was conceived.

"Both Sarah and I are delighted to have a son at long last. We have always wanted children and are truly blessed by the Lord," Abraham said. The baby's name means "laughter" in Hebrew. We asked why it was chosen.

Sarah explained, "Because I laughed out loud when I heard the news that an old woman like me would become pregnant. I'll tell you how I heard about it."

Three visitors came to see my husband. He invited them to share a meal with us. I fixed the food in our tent, and Abraham served them.

"Since I was standing near to the doorway of our tent, I overheard the guests asking where I was. Then one of them said I would have a son. Well, the idea was so ridiculous that I just burst out laughing!"

"We found out later that the visitors were from God. What they said came true. So we named our son Isaac, after the laughter we shared that day."

God's Promise Fulfilled

"Why do you think the Lord gave you a son in your old age?" we asked.

"Many years ago, when I was seventy-five, and still living with my father in Haran," replied Abraham, "I was called by the Lord to leave my father's house and go to the land the Lord promised me in Canaan. It was a journey of almost 400 miles. So Sarah and I packed up our belongings and set out on foot."

"At the same time the Lord told me, 'I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.'"

Abraham Goes on Trusting

"I trusted God and did what was asked of me without concern. Because God saw that we were faithful, he promised to make my descendants as numerous as the stars or the grains of sand."

"It was then that God said we should change our names from Abram to Abraham, and from Sarai to Sarah."

"We waited many years, but we trusted God's promises. Now here we are, with this beautiful baby boy."

We said, "But one child is a very small family. Will you have more children?"

Abraham and Sarah both chuckled. "We will leave it up to God to make our descendants grow in number. We know the promise has begun in Isaac."
With his father, Abram went from Ur to Haran. Abram left Haran before the death of his father, Terah. With Sarai and their whole household, he traveled to Canaan. There, at a place called Shechem, the Lord gave him the land.

From there they moved to the hill country east of Bethel. They pitched a tent and built an altar to the Lord.

Next, they journeyed on by stages to the Negeb, a region south of the Dead Sea. There was a famine in that land, so Abram and Sarai went into Egypt.

After a time, they returned to the Negeb. Abram moved to the oaks of Mamre (Hebron), where he again built an altar to the Lord. Sarah died here and was buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah. Abraham was buried in this same cave at the age of one hundred seventy-five years.
How to Find Your Way in the Bible

When we need to find something in the Bible, we look for chapter and verse. How would you explain how we do this?

In print, the larger numbers mark the chapters. Smaller numbers divide the sentences and indicate the verses.

When writers refer to Scripture passages, they use abbreviations like ch. for “chapter,” and v. or vs. for “verse” and “verses.”

To illustrate, Genesis 15:5 can also be written The Book of Genesis, ch. 15, v. 5. We understand that this means: Find the book of the Bible called Genesis, then look for the large number for chapter 15. The smaller number 5 will be the correct verse.

MEMORY CHALLENGE

Add these to your mental list.

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

PENTATEUCH

HISTORY

POETRY

PROPHETS (MAJOR)

PROPHETS (MINOR)

1050-925 BCE  925-586 BCE  586-444 BCE  539-520 BCE
**Unit I: LEARNING SCRIPTURE**

**Verses for the Unit:**

Session 1: *Genesis 9:13, 16*

Session 2: *Genesis 15:5b,c; 17:9*

Session 3: *Exodus 20:3, 4a, 7a, 8, 12a, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17a, 24:12*

Session 4: *Deuteronomy 10:5; Joshua 24:15b,e*

Session 5: *II Chronicles 3:1; Psalm 51:15*

Session 6: *I Kings 12:16b; Psalm 122:1; Psalm 124:8*

Session 7: *Psalm 137:1-2, 4*

Session 8: *Isaiah 40:3, 4, 5*

Session 9: *Psalm 145:10, 13*

**Session 2:**

"..."Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them. . . . So shall your descendants be."

—*Genesis 15:5b,c* (NRSV)

"God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.'” —*Genesis 17:9* (NRSV)
Moses, the great leader of the Hebrew people, died today at the age of 120 years. He was in excellent health at the time of his death. People are overcome with grief, weeping and mourning so great a loss.

"We are all in great sorrow," said Joshua, son of Nun, who is the designated successor to Moses. "We are just now ready to move into the promised land about which he dreamed for so long!"

It is reported that Moses knew he would not be able to lead his people into their new home. He was seen walking toward Mount Nebo where one can get a spectacular view of the whole of Canaan. No one knows where he will be buried.

Miriam Recalls Moses’ Life

Moses’ life began in Egypt, in the time when the people of Israel were slaves to Pharaoh. His life was in danger then just as it was many times throughout his lifetime.

We talked to his sister Miriam about those early years.

“I remember it as if it were yesterday,” recalled Miriam. “My mother was terribly frightened when Moses was born. Pharaoh had ordered that all male babies should be killed. We kept him hidden for three months, but then we had to do something.

“Mother devised this plan to put him in a basket during the day and hide him by the river in the reeds. I was to watch over him to keep him safe.

“I was observing from the reeds nearby on a day when Pharaoh’s daughter came to bathe in the river. When she found the basket, I was really alarmed. until I heard her begin to speak softly to the baby. I ran to see if she needed a nurse. She said yes, so I hurried to get my mother.

“Mother cared for Moses until he was old enough to live in the palace as a son to Pharaoh’s daughter. From a distance, our family watched Moses grow up strong and healthy.

“It was hard to tell what Moses was thinking all that time. He was living like an Egyptian, but he knew he was a Hebrew.

“One day, one of our friends came running to tell us that Moses had killed an Egyptian who was mistreating the Hebrew slaves. We held our breath waiting to see what would happen. When some slaves confronted Moses to tell him they had seen the murder, he left.

“We didn’t see him again until years later.”

Moses Faces Down Pharaoh

Moses’ brother Aaron, a priest of the Hebrew people, told us what happened next in the strange life of this man chosen by God.

Continued on page 2
MOSES, Continued from page 1

“..."My brother came back to Egypt quite suddenly," began Aaron, “with a strange tale about a burning bush. Naturally we were all glad to see him. We learned that Moses had been in Midian and had married Zipporah. One day while he was tending his father-in-law’s sheep he came upon a bush that was burning but was not being consumed. He told us that God spoke to him out of the bush and told him to come back to Egypt to save our people. I was to help him.

“I must admit that I was worried by his plan, but he convinced me that this was truly what God wanted us to do.

“We went before Pharaoh the next day, and several days after that. Each time Pharaoh said no, the Egyptians suffered from another plague—staffs into serpents, the Nile River turning to blood, the frogs, the gnats and flies, the cattle dying, and the boils on everybody.

“I thought the plagues had gone too far with the hail and thunderstorms, but then the locusts came and the day of total darkness. Still nothing worked on Pharaoh, so my brother had to rely on the most devastating plan.

“He told us all to prepare to leave, and to kill a lamb and put its blood on the doorposts of our houses. That night the Lord passed through Egypt, and the firstborn in each household died, except for the Hebrew families that had put the lambs’ blood on their houses. Our houses were passed over.

“Pharaoh gave in to Moses and let us go. We had arrived at the Red Sea when we realized Pharaoh had changed his mind! He was sending his army after us. We were trapped. Moses calmly raised his staff, and the waters parted. We crossed over safely, but the Egyptians were drowned. It was a miracle. At last we were free!

“Miriam led a wonderful dance of joy that we were all safe on the other side.”

At that time, the Hebrews thought they had triumphed over the worst that could happen, but their next forty years in the wilderness were far from easy. Food supplies ran low, and living conditions were difficult. Many people wished to return to Egypt.

Stone Tablets Received

The great highlight of Moses’ life came when, on Mt. Sinai, he was given the Ten Commandments by God. He came down from the mountain to find that the people had made a golden calf to worship.

Joshua, Moses’ assistant, reported that the golden calf episode made Moses so furious that he broke the tablets of the Law in pieces. He wanted to quit as the Hebrew leader. Instead, he trudged patiently back up the mountain to receive the Commandments once more.

These Commandments are now the Hebrews’ most precious possession as they prepare to enter the promised land.

“We will miss Moses,” one of the Hebrew women said as she struggled to speak through her tears. “He was faithful to God, and he kept us together when things were hard. I’m heartbroken that he cannot go with us into the land he told us about—the land flowing with milk and honey.”
Christians Honor Decalogue
In Worship and Daily Living

Since the time of Moses, faithful Christians have looked to the Ten Commandments as a summary of The Law by which we should live. The commandments are personal, meant to guide each one of us in all aspects of our daily life.

Through the centuries, the original Ten Commandments were interpreted and explained as people sought to apply The Law to their daily activities. Over time, many of these expanded versions of the commandments came to be thought of as “laws” with the full authority and weight of the original. There were laws about what to eat, when to work—when not to work, when to travel, and laws about family matters, and personal possessions. At one point, there were over seven hundred laws!

Jesus spoke of God’s love for us as the eternal foundation of The Law. As God loves us, so we are bound to love our neighbors as ourselves. The Ten Commandments continue to guide us in keeping God’s Law.

The Book of Common Prayer (p. 350) contains the Decalogue—a restating of the Scriptural commandments and our responses to them.

**MEMORY CHALLENGE**

Add these to your mental list.

- **OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS**
  - EZRA
  - NEHEMIAH
  - ESTHER

- **PENTATEUCH**
- **HISTORY**
- **POETRY**
- **PROPHETS (MAJOR)**
- **PROPHETS (MINOR)**

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### The Decalogue: Contemporary

Hear the commandments of God to his people:

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage.

You shall have no other gods but me.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

Honor your father and your mother.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

You shall not commit murder.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

You shall not commit adultery.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

You shall not steal.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

You shall not be a false witness.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

_Amen. Lord have mercy._

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### Puzzle Solution

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9. **POLEBRA**
13. **EGERIL**
14. **CHNEAT**
15. **EWhnTA**
16. **TENHow**

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Shell Year—Intermediate, Episcopal Children's Curriculum
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-I-3 Page 3
ACROSS
1. Where was Moses when he received the Ten Commandments? ________________
2. Don't worship ____________________
3. ________ thy father and mother.
4. You shall not ____________________
5. Don’t bear false witness against your ________________
6. The Hebrew people were slaves in ________________
7. “I am the ________________
8. your ________________ , who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”

DOWN
9. An agreement or promise.
10. Keep holy the ________ day.
11. ________________ received the Ten Commandments from God.
12. Do not take the Lord’s Name in ________________
13. Do not ________ adultery.
14. ________________ means to want something very badly.
15. A golden calf is an example of a graven ________________
16. God rescued the people of Israel out of ________________ in Egypt.

Unit I: LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Verses for the Unit:
Session 1: Genesis 9:13, 16
Session 2: Genesis 15:5b,c; 17:9
Session 3: Exodus 20:3, 4a, 7a, 8, 12a, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17a, 24:12
Session 4: Deuteronomy 10:5; Joshua 24:15b,e
Session 5: II Chronicles 3:1; Psalm 51:15
Session 6: I Kings 12:16b; Psalm 122:1; Psalm 124:8
Session 7: Psalm 137:1-2, 4
Session 8: Isaiah 40:3, 4, 5
Session 9: Psalm 145:10, 13

LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Session 3:
Choose one or more "commandments" to memorize.
“‘You shall have no other gods before me.’—Exodus 20:3 (NRSV)
“‘You shall not make for yourself an idol.’—Exodus 20:4a (NRSV)
“‘You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.’
—Exodus 20:7a (NRSV)
“Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.’—Exodus 20:8 (NRSV)
“Honor your father and your mother.’—Exodus 20:12a (NRSV)
“‘You shall not murder.’—Exodus 20:13 (NRSV)
“‘You shall not commit adultery.’—Exodus 20:14 (NRSV)
“‘You shall not steal.’—Exodus 20:15 (NRSV)
“‘You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.’—Exodus 20:16 (NRSV)
“‘You shall not covet.’—Exodus 20:17a (NRSV)
“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.’”—Exodus 24:12 (NRSV)
Walls of Jericho Fall As Trumpets Blow
On Day Seven of Hebrew Army's March

The walls of Jericho came tumbling down yesterday in an unusual assault.
The city had been under siege for six days by the invading Hebrews. The people of Jericho, having heard of the experiences of this army, had shut the gates and hidden in their homes—not knowing what to expect.

On each of the preceding six days, seven leaders of the Hebrew army (said to be priests) marched around outside the walls of the city blowing on trumpets made of rams' horns. Others carried the Ark of the Covenant. All the others followed. No attempt was made to attack.

These six days of marching increased the tension within Jericho.

Climactic Moment

Yesterday at the crack of dawn, the marching began again. On this seventh day, however, the leaders marched around the city walls seven times. They did not stop blowing on the trumpets. On the seventh trip around, at the sound of a long blast of the trumpets, the Hebrew invaders began a wild shouting. Immediately, the walls of the city fell flat. The Hebrew army quickly took possession of the city.

Joshua Takes on Leadership
To Move People into Canaan

Joshua, son of Nun, is the heroic leader of the Hebrew tribes. He was an aide to the beloved leader Moses since the Exodus from Egypt.

It was widely feared that the death of Moses would leave a void in the leadership of the Israelites. Some wondered if Aaron, Moses' brother, would take over. It appears, however, that Joshua was truly God's choice. The people have responded enthusiastically. He has received strong assurance that the people will support his leadership.

He has moved quickly as the Hebrews' leader. Just after assuming command, he issued an order directing the tribes to go over the Jordan River into the promised land. The crossing began just three days later.

In a matter of weeks, he has led a successful attack on the city of Jericho.
Witness Describes Crossing of Jordan: Twelve Stones Piled in River Bottom

An eyewitness has sent us the following unusual account of the Hebrews' recent crossing of the Jordan River:

"I was standing on the banks of the Jordan watching the rising waters. This time of year, the Jordan always overflows its banks. We expect it during harvest season.

"That day, the waters were quite high. I saw the Hebrew people standing on the other side of the river looking as if they were going to cross. I tried to motion to them to stay back—those currents are dangerous—but they paid no attention to me. They headed right in.

"Twelve men carrying a huge gold box on their shoulders went in first. With that heavy box, I thought they were gone for sure. But the next thing I knew the waters had stopped. I don't mean slowed down—they just downright stopped.

"Those twelve men stood there in the middle of the river until all the people crossed over. Then twelve others ran out and picked up twelve rocks from the middle of the river and carried them to the shore.

"The leader, Joshua, ran back out and piled up twelve more rocks smack-dab in the middle of the river. You can see them right now. Weirdest thing I ever saw."

The Hebrew name, Joshua, means "God saves." In a very real way, he was a heroic figure who kept the chosen people together and brought them into the land God had promised them.

When we read that the angel Gabriel told Mary her child would be called Jesus, we recognize it as a special name indeed. "Jesus" is the Greek form of "Joshua."

(When we look at the words in English, we can see that the J, the first s, and the u in Jesus' name are in the same order as in Joshua.)
Tribal Heroes Called Judges Deliver Israel from Enemies

After Joshua's death, no one leader emerged for the Hebrew people. Instead, various tribal figures arose from time to time when Israel needed to be delivered from enemies. They were long remembered.

Othniel. The first of the judges, he was a successful military leader.

Ehud. With a sword that he had made himself, he killed Eglon, king of Moab. He delivered his people from eighteen years of serving the Moabites.

Shamgar. Another deliverer of Israel, he killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad (an iron-pointed stick for driving oxen).

Deborah. A prophetess, Deborah would sit under a palm tree and receive people who came to her for solutions to their problems and disagreements.

She called Barak to be the general for an attack on the army of Jabin, king of Canaan. He refused to go unless Deborah agreed to go with him. She did so, and the army was defeated.

Deborah and Barak sang a song of victory, and Israel was at peace for forty years.

(Sisera, commander of Jabin's army, was killed by Jael with a tent peg.)

Gideon. The youngest in his family, he was called by God to deliver Israel from the Midianites.

Leading three hundred men, Gideon surrounded the enemy in the night. They blew trumpets and smashed jars, while holding torches in their left hands. They shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" The Midianites fell into their hands.

Tola. He was a judge in Israel twenty-three years.

Jair. He had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys and had thirty towns in Gilead. He ruled twenty-two years.

Jephthah. He judged six years and delivered Israel from the Ammonites.

Ibzan. Judge in Israel for seven years, he had thirty sons and thirty daughters.

Elon. He was a leader for ten years.

Abdon. This judge had forty sons and thirty grandsons; they rode on seventy donkeys. He was a leader for eight years.

Samson. One of the best-known warriors, he was noted for his great strength and for his tragic involvement with Delilah.

In one final sacrificial act, he pulled down the house in which the Philistines worshiped their god. He was killed along with the people inside.

Two additional judges, Eli and Samuel, are named in the book of 1 Samuel. They were priestly leaders rather than warriors.

Memory Challenge

Puzzle Solution

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Words from Joshua and Judges

Directions: Find the words in the puzzle. Circle each word as you find it. You can move in any direction.

Joshua judges promised land covenant false gods oppressed Israel symbol ark leaders temptations groaned nations servant wilderness strength courage pity prosperous success Jordan priests obeyed stubborn

Unit I: LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Verses for the Unit:
Session 1: Genesis 9:13, 16
Session 2: Genesis 15:5b,c; 17:9
Session 3: Exodus 20:3, 4a, 7a, 8, 12a, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17a, 24:12
Session 4: Deuteronomy 10:5:
Joshua 24:15b,e
Session 5: II Chronicles 3:1;
Psalm 51:15
Session 6: I Kings 12:16b;
Psalm 122:1; Psalm 124:8
Session 7: Psalm 137:1-2, 4
Session 8: Isaiah 40:3, 4, 5
Session 9: Psalm 145:10, 13

Session 4:
(Moses said,) “. . . So I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark that I had made; and there they are, as the Lord commanded me.” —Deuteronomy 10:5 (RSV)

(Joshua said,) “. . . [C]hoose this day whom you will serve, . . . but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” —Joshua 24:15b,e (RSV)
Solomon Completes Plans for a Great Temple Building in City of Jerusalem

King Solomon has released plans for the building of a temple in Jerusalem. The temple, also known as the House of the Lord, will be built on a hill-site in the center of the city.

The temple was originally conceived by Solomon's father, King David. It was David's wish that the Ark of the Covenant have a permanent resting place in the city of Jerusalem.

Constant warfare with various enemies kept David from fulfilling his dream. Since David's death and Solomon's ascendancy to the throne, peace has reigned. According to Solomon the time has come to commence this vast undertaking.

Construction to Begin

The construction is slated to begin on the four hundred eightieth anniversary of the exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt and is expected to take seven years to complete.

Contracts for the necessary supply of cedar and cypress have been awarded to King Hiram of Tyre. King Hiram is a longtime friend of Solomon's father.

It has been stated by palace officials that 30,000 men will be needed to go to Lebanon to obtain the lumber. They will be dispatched in shifts, working in Lebanon for one month and being at home for two. Adoniram has been named to coordinate this effort.

An additional work force of 70,000 laborers and 80,000 stonemasons will be supervised by 3,300 foremen.

Gold to be Used Extensively

The innermost structure of the temple, where the ark will reside, will be sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high. It is to contain two cherubim made of olive-wood, whose wings will span the entire width of the building. These are to be overlaid with gold.

The inner sanctuary will be surrounded by a vestibule ten cubits by twenty cubits.

Preliminary drawings indicate that while the temple will be built of stone, it is to be overlaid with cedar, cypress, and gold on all interior surfaces.

A total cost for the project has not yet been determined. However, the contract with Hiram of Tyre guarantees a payment of 20,000 cors of wheat and twenty cors of fine oil per year.
While Episcopal churches can be very different in their design and structure, they have some elements in common with the temple built in Jerusalem by King Solomon.

Worship. The temple was a place where people came to worship God. It was here that the people were connected with the power of God through remembering the Exodus and the Laws given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

In churches we come to worship God and remember our story. At the Eucharist we recall our connection with our spiritual ancestor, Abraham, and celebrate all that God has done in Christ to set us free from the power of sin and death.

Priests. Priests of Israel were selected and trained to be leaders of worship, to teach the people about God, and to preach God’s word. While priests today go about their duties in a much different way from the practices of priests at Solomon’s temple, they do speak for God and serve as Christ’s representatives.

Altar. The temple altar was made of stone, and it was a place of sacrifice. Our altars, also called Holy Tables, are made of varied materials. The altar’s use has changed dramatically from a place where animals were sacrificed as burnt offerings to a place where a holy meal is shared by the people. The table has been kept as a central focus for our worship.

Sanctuary. This was a term used for the place in the temple where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. It also referred to an outer area where incense was offered on a small altar. The term as it is used in churches today refers to the immediate area around the altar.

Sanctuary Lamp. In Solomon’s time, ten golden lampstands were placed in the temple to symbolize the light of God. Candles and sometimes sanctuary lamps are present in churches for the same purpose—to show us God’s light through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.
Ark of the Covenant Will Be Moved to Inner Sanctuary of the Temple

The Ark of the Covenant will be relocated from its place in the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle) to the inner sanctuary of the new temple to be built by King Solomon.

The ark, which contains a copy of the laws that were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, was built by Bezalel, an expert craftsman. He finished it in the early months of the Exodus from Israel 480 years ago. The ark was kept in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and guarded by Levitic priests. Whenever the Israelites broke camp, the ark was carried to the new campsite on the shoulders of the priests.

When the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into the promised land under Joshua’s leadership, the ark led the way and helped in the defeat of Jericho.

The ark was brought to Shiloh where it was kept for many years until it fell into the hands of the Philistines for a period of seven months. After its mysterious return, it was kept in the house of Abinadab until David, then King of Israel, carried it with great rejoicing to Jerusalem.

“The ark... contains a copy of the laws that were given to Moses on Mount Sinai....”
Temple Dedication

Clues: Follow the clues to find the word in the shaded box.

1. The ark was _________ into the temple by the _______.
2. The plan to build a temple was the idea of _______.
3. Solomon assembled the elders of _______.
4. The _______ of Israel was present for the ceremony.
5. The _______ was placed under the wings of the cherubim.
6. Many oxen and sheep were _______.
7. The house of God was also called a _______.
8. The ark, the tent of meeting, and all the _______ vessels were brought to the temple.
9. David's son, _______, was the third king of Israel.
10. The ark was _______ into the temple by the _______.

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LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Session 5

"Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, . . ."

—II Chronicles 3:1 (NRSV)

"O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise."

—Psalm 51:15 (NRSV)
When the great King Solomon died, his son Rehoboam assumed he would be the next monarch to preside over the people of God. He went down to Shechem and found a large gathering of the Israelites ready to declare him king.

He could not have been more surprised when a rebel leader suddenly appeared with threatening plans. He was Jeroboam, who had just returned from a stay in Egypt.

Jeroboam had been a servant of Solomon. When Solomon saw that Jeroboam was a hard worker, he put him in charge of forced labor.

One day, as Jeroboam was going out of the city of Jerusalem, a prophet named Ahijah found him on the road. To Jeroboam’s surprise, Ahijah took off a new robe he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces!

Ahijah said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces of my robe. This shows what God will do, for God has decided to tear the kingdom of Israel away and turn them over to new leadership. You will be ruler of ten tribes.

“God has said, ‘I will not do this while Solomon is still living, for the sake of David’s memory. But I will take the kingdom out of the hands of Solomon’s son. You will rule over all that your heart desires and be king over Israel. But you must keep my commandments in the way David did. I will be with you.’

“Solomon’s son will be left with just one of the tribes.”

Perhaps King Solomon heard about the meeting between Jeroboam and the prophet. Perhaps not. But for some reason, Solomon decided that Jeroboam should be killed.

Jeroboam, fearful for his life, hurried off into Egypt where he was with the Egyptian king. He made no effort to return to Israel until he heard that Solomon was dead and buried.

Now, at Shechem, the word spread among the people, “Jeroboam is back!” The celebrations for Rehoboam were interrupted. A messenger hurried to bring Jeroboam to the assembly.

Together, Jeroboam and the people confronted Rehoboam. They said, “Your father made things very hard for us. If you will make our lives more bearable and stop forcing us to labor, we will serve you.”

Rehoboam, of course, was quite surprised at this turn of events. “Give me three days to think about this,” he said. “Then come back to see me.”

At once Rehoboam called together some of the old men who had been faithful followers of Solomon and asked them what they thought he should do.

The men were honest with Rehoboam.
They said, "If you will be a servant of the people and speak kindly to them, they will follow you always."

But Rehoboam was as stubborn as his father before him. He ignored the advice of the old men and turned instead to a group of young men he had grown up with. He asked these younger advisers what they thought he ought to do.

They told Rehoboam just what he wanted to hear, "Tell those people that they may think life was bad under your father. But it will be even harder under your own leadership. Say to them, 'My father used whips to keep you in line. I will use scorpions.'"

So when Jeroboam and the people came to Rehoboam three days later, the new king was all ready for them. He spoke harshly and said the very things that his younger advisers had told him to say.

When the people of Israel saw that Rehoboam was paying no attention to their pleas, they said, "We will have no more to do with you. We will go back to our tents." And they did.

Rehoboam was left with no one to follow him except the tribe of Judah. He tried to regain control of Israel, but it was no use. They called Jeroboam, their hero, to an assembly and made him king on the spot.

One might have supposed that Jeroboam would be a good and faithful king, keeping the command of Ahijah to serve and obey God in the way David had done. But Jeroboam became instead a sinful leader. He constructed golden calves for people to worship, and prepared altars to strange gods. As a punishment for his erring ways, Jeroboam's young son died of an illness. His rule of Israel, marked by war, lasted twenty-two years.

Rehoboam reigned in Judah seventeen years. But he was a corrupt king who encouraged pagan worship and immoral behavior.

The interesting stories of these two leaders—Rehoboam and Jeroboam—stand as reminders of the lasting division between the tribes of Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Never again will there be a united Israel like the one over which David reigned so gloriously.
Church's Teaching
Outlined in Catechism

The Old Covenant
(The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 846-847)
Q. What is meant by a covenant with God?
A. A covenant is a relationship initiated by God, to which a body of people responds in faith.

Q. What is the Old Covenant?
A. The Old Covenant is the one given by God to the Hebrew people.

Q. What did God promise them?
A. God promised that they would be his people to bring all the nations of the world to him.

Q. What response did God require from the chosen people?
A. God required the chosen people to be faithful; to love justice, to do mercy, and to walk humbly with their God.

Q. Where is this Old Covenant to be found?
A. The covenant with the Hebrew people is to be found in the books we call the Old Testament.

Q. Where in the Old Testament is God's will for us shown most clearly?
A. God's will for us is shown most clearly in the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments
(The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 847-848)
Q. What are the Ten Commandments?
A. The Ten Commandments are the laws given to Moses and the people of Israel.

Q. What do we learn from these commandments?
A. We learn two things: our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbors.

Q. What is our duty to God?
A. Our duty is to believe and trust in God:
   I To love and obey God and to bring others to know him;
   II To put nothing in the place of God;
   III To show God respect in thought, word, and deed;
   IV And to set aside regular times for worship, prayer, and the study of God's ways.

Q. What is our duty to our neighbors?
A. Our duty to our neighbors is to love them as ourselves, and to do to other people as we wish them to do to us;

V To love, honor, and help our parents and family; to honor those in authority, and to meet their just demands;
VI To show respect for the life God has given us; to work and pray for peace; to bear no malice, prejudice, or hatred in our hearts; and to be kind to all the creatures of God;
VII To use all our bodily desires as God intended;
VIII To be honest and fair in our dealings; to seek justice, freedom, and the necessities of life for all people; and to use our talents and possessions as one who must answer for them to God;
IX To speak the truth, and not to mislead others by our silence;
X To resist temptations to envy, greed, and jealousy; to rejoice in other people's gifts and graces; and to do our duty for the love of God, who has called us into fellowship with him.

Q. What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?
A. The Ten Commandments were given to define our relationship with God and our neighbors.

Q. Since we do not fully obey them, are they useful at all?
A. Since we do not fully obey them, we see more clearly our sin and our need for redemption.

The New Covenant
(The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 850-851)
Q. What is the New Covenant?
A. The New Covenant is the new relationship with God given by Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to the apostles; and through them, to all who believe in him.

Q. What did the Messiah promise in the New Covenant?
A. Christ promised to bring us into the kingdom of God and give us life in all its fullness.

Q. What response did Christ require?
A. Christ commanded us to believe in him and to keep his commandments.

Q. What are the commandments taught by Christ?
A. Christ taught us the Summary of the Law and gave us the New Commandment.

Q. What is the Summary of the Law?
A. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and the great commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Q. What is the New Commandment?
A. The New Commandment is that we love one another as Christ loved us.

Q. Where may we find what Christians believe about Christ?
A. What Christians believe about Christ is found in the Scriptures and summed up in the creeds.
Directions: Unscramble the jumbled Scripture words. Use your Bible to check your answers.

Verses given are from 1 Kings, ch. 11 and 12.

1 (11:33) VIDAD
2 (11:42) SMLNOOO
3 (12:1) BMAOHROE
4 (12:12) RMJOBEOA
5 (11:18) HPRAHAO
6 (11:9) SRELAI
7 (11:36) SMALERUJE
8 (12:11) SRPCCOIOIS
9 (11:11) VCONETNA
10 (11:13) BRTEI

LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Session 6
“...’What share do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, O David.’”
—1 Kings 12:16b (NRSV)

“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’”
—Psalm 122:1 (NRSV)

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”
—Psalm 124:8 (NRSV)
Sources in Babylon Describe Deportation Of Judah's People in Last Two Decades

The following is a dispatch from BABYLON, 581 BCE:

The great king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia has completed clearing out the people of the kingdom of Judah. This finishes off a campaign started more than two decades ago.

Thousands of Jewish people have entered this country, brought here by our armies and resettled.

Associates of the king recently described Nebuchadnezzar's strategy. "The first thing he did, 24 years ago, was to seize the sacred vessels in the Hebrew Temple at Jerusalem. Then he rounded up young members of the royal family and took them as hostages. That began to weaken the spirit of Judah," said a well-informed source.

Eight years later, the king directed the capture of King Jehoiachin of Judah. He and his mother and his wives, along with 3,000 princes, 7,000 strong men, and 1,000 artisans, were brought to Babylon.

Just five years ago, a crushing blow was delivered against Judah. Our army moved into Jerusalem and burned the Jewish temple, then destroyed the whole city. Nearly all the people who were left there were brought to Babylonia.

Just this year, a final group have been rounded up and deported to our country.

Reportedly, the only people allowed to stay in the former kingdom of Judah are some poor families who do farming and take care of grape vines.

Varied Reactions

Among the captives, reactions are varied. Some are very homesick and heartbroken about all that they have lost. Others are making the best of their new situation.

"Actually, the king's government has been generous to the exiles," a palace spokesman declared today. "They have been allowed to build and occupy houses. They are free to have servants if they wish. They can enter business if they want to. In fact, there is nothing to prevent these people from taking positions in our political system if they want to."

"We've even allowed them to keep their priests and teachers. They have one very odd prophet named Ezekiel who has been sharing his strange visions. He's free to do so," the spokesman added.

The treatment received by the people of Judah has been nothing like what happened to the kingdom of Israel. Over a period of thirty years—a century and a half ago—the Assyrians overran their territory, arranged the assassination of one of their kings, and placed the whole population under their tight control. The kingdom of Israel is decimated and will never exist again. The deported Israelites were mixed in with Samaritans so fully that they could not preserve the worship of their God as it had been.
Exiles Describe Feelings During Separation From Homes and Temple; Ezekiel Gives Hope

What has it been like for a people from Judah to be deported to Babylon—far from home and familiar surroundings? We have asked some of the early wave of exiles to share their feelings.

One man whose family was among the early exiles had this to say: "At first, we were in a state of severe shock. You cannot imagine what it is like to have your home taken away from you, and to witness the destruction of your precious place of worship! Our temple was built under Solomon's direction and had been standing there in the center of Jerusalem for almost four hundred years!

"For many days we could not sleep. When we woke in the mornings, it was impossible to smile."

Resentment and Despair

His wife joined in, saying, "It was such a great loss. We were unable to take it all in.

"Then, after a while, we grew so bitter. We resented the fact that this awful experience had closed in on our family. To be sure, the prophets had been telling us for a long, long time that our leaders were not obeying God—and that we could expect a serious fall. We listened now and then, but we didn’t quite believe what they said."

As we interviewed still others in the city of Babylon, we discovered exiles who were despondent to the point of having lost hope. An older man lamented:

"I cannot pray. There is no temple. There is no music. We have nothing like the worship we had learned from our ancestors. The great God of heaven and earth, the One who made us and who gave us the Law, has turned a deaf ear. God no longer hears us. It would be better to die than to live as we do."

Ezekiel Offers Hope

The old man's grandson, like others in his generation, has no memories of a former life in Judah. He said, "I know it's a struggle for older Jewish people. But I am ready to make the best of our situation. And Ezekiel, our prophet, has made it quite clear that our suffering is the result of our sins. We have done this to ourselves, since we did not keep the Commandments.

"One day everything will be better. Our tears will go away, and our nation will be restored. We can take comfort that God has not forgotten us. If we are obedient and faithful, God will be faithful to restore us to our land. So I do not lose hope."

"Ezekiel said we are like dead bones in a dry valley. But the Spirit of the Lord can breathe new life into us!"
Babylon was one of the most famous of ancient cities. Between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (in what is now Iraq), it was in a strategic location for interrupting travel between the Persian Gulf and Syria. It was an important place for travelers to visit and explore.

Babylon was the center for pagan worship, and it had a great temple of the god Marduk, along with other shrines. Surrounded by thick double walls made of sun-dried and burned brick, the city was circled by towers. An impressive sight was a great gate made of brick, decorated with 575 dragons and bulls arranged in thirteen rows.

The streets were lined with 120 brick lions. Some have been reconstructed by the government of Iraq. The palace area covered more than thirteen acres, and there were five blocks of side buildings, each one with a courtyard. Everything was elaborately decorated. Hundreds of rooms contained great treasures of the Babylonian empire.

Some descriptions of Babylon include great hanging gardens, but archaeologists have concluded that these did not exist.

Tablets discovered at the site confirm the fact that Jehoiachin, king of Judah, and his followers, were held in captivity by King Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BCE.
EXILE IN BABYLON

Directions: Complete the sentences below, and put the missing words in the puzzle boxes to the left. Then see what phrase appears in the thick vertical boxes.

1. The temple at ________ was destroyed.
2. The people of God were taken into ________.
3. ________ Nebuchadnezzar led his army to Jerusalem.
4. The house of the ________ was destroyed.
5. ________ rebelled against Rehoboam's rule.
6. The harp in the ________ tree is a symbol of exile.
7. King ________ destroyed Jerusalem.
8. The temple, palace, and houses were ________.
9. The Babylonian ________ was a sad time.
10. Zedekiah was ________ in fetters.
11. God's people were exiled in ________.
12. Gold and silver were taken from ________.
13. Jeremiah spoke words of hope.
14. The people longed to be back in their own ________.

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LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Session 7

"By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps."
—Psalm 137:1-2 (NRSV)

"How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?"
—Psalm 137:4 (NRSV)
People Listen as Ezra Reads God’s Law; Nehemiah Declares a Holy Day in Judah

Facing the square before the Water Gate this morning, Ezra, a priest and scribe of the restored temple, read aloud from the book of the law of Moses.

Men and women who could both hear and understand were assembled. They listened attentively from early morning to midday—weeping as they heard the words.

Nehemiah, the governor, joined Ezra on the wooden platform to assure the people that this was a great day for God and for God’s people.

He declared, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep. Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Many Years of Effort

Since their release from captivity in Babylon, the people of God have struggled off and on to restore their beloved city of Jerusalem. The rebuilding of the temple took nearly twenty years and was completed some time ago. More recently the governor, Nehemiah, spurred efforts to complete the rebuilding of the city wall in just fifty-two days.

Still, there has been unrest within the city. The governor has been concerned that the people were not keeping God’s law. He even locked the gates on the Sabbath to keep people from doing business as usual.

Today’s reading of the law was a further attempt to bring the people back to God. Nehemiah turned to Ezra, who is a recent newcomer to Jerusalem.

When Ezra arrived from Babylon, he brought with him the book of the law of Moses from which he read today.

Festivities to Continue

The celebration will continue tomorrow with the festival of the booths. Families will be gathering branches of olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to create the booths where they will dwell for the seven days of the festivities. During this time the people will cease from their daily work, present burnt offerings, and participate in religious activities.
Nehemiah Looks Back on the Events Leading to Today's Reading of God's Law

Following today's reading of the law, we asked Nehemiah to reflect on the recent history of our people and his own role in it.

He began by telling about Cyrus, king of Persia, who conquered Babylon years ago and allowed exiles from Judah to return to Jerusalem from Babylon.

Nehemiah said, "King Cyrus' decree releasing the captives was a surprise to most leaders in the region. But we knew in our hearts that it was the God of the Hebrew people who stirred the spirit of the people. He even encouraged the exiles to rebuild their temple upon their return.

"People were so surprised! King Cyrus also returned the silver and gold vessels that had been taken by his predecessor, King Nebuchadnezzar, as the spoils of war."

Some of the people returned to Jerusalem and began rebuilding the temple. It took nearly twenty years to finish.

But Jerusalem was not a safe city. Enemies attacked it, and the people were helpless to protect themselves. Also, the people had forgotten how to worship God and how to live by God's law.

Nehemiah sighed. He spoke sadly about those years. He had remained in Babylon as a servant of a new king of Persia. (Cyrus was already dead.)

Return to Jerusalem

Nehemiah recalled, "One day some travelers from Jerusalem arrived in Babylon and told me more about all the troubles in Judah. I was dismayed to hear the details about our beloved Jerusalem.

"The beautiful gates that protected the city had been destroyed by war, fire, and neglect. The great wall of Jerusalem was still a scattered pile of rocks."

"The king noticed how worried I was. He asked me what was wrong. When I told him, he was very kind. He said I could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall. He said he would name me the governor of all Judah!"

"After I arrived, I inspected every inch of the walls. I went as far as I could on my animal and then a little farther on foot."

"It was clear that we had to get to work! I called on all the city's people to join in the effort. We allowed nothing to stop us. In just fifty-two days the job was done!"

We asked Nehemiah to speak about his dreams of the future. He said, "I just want the people to return to faith in God and keep the law we received from our forefather, Moses. I rejoice today that Ezra read the book of the law aloud. It gives me great hope to know that the people listened!"
**MAJOR FIGURES**

**Cyrus**, emperor of Persia, defeated the Babylonians in 539 BCE, while the Israelites were still being held in exile there. Believing in religious freedom, Cyrus allowed the Hebrews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. He promised to pay for the materials. He is called Cyrus the Great.

**Ezra** was a priest and writer (scribe) who was sent by the Persian emperor to Jerusalem, in 428 BCE, as the Israelites continued to return from their exile in Babylon. His job was to instruct the people in the Torah (teachings of God). He inspired the people to practice their religion faithfully. He raised money for the Temple, and he urged Hebrew men not to marry outside their faith.

**Nehemiah** was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, the Persian emperor who followed Cyrus the Great. He heard about the many difficulties the returned exiles were having in Jerusalem, and he wanted to be with them. When the emperor found out what Nehemiah longed to do, he sent him to Jerusalem for a twelve-year stay (445-433 BCE). As a practical man, he took over the rebuilding of the walls of the city, and it was accomplished in just 52 days.

**Isaiah** was born in the southern kingdom of Judah. He became a prophet while on a visit to Jerusalem in 742 BCE. He spoke God's warnings to Judah's kings, telling them not to make military alliances with other nations. He called for social justice and repentance.

(Isaiah's name is not mentioned in the last part of the Book of Isaiah, chs. 40-66. But these chapters seem to have been written much later while Cyrus was king of Persia and the people of God were in exile in Babylon. Many scholars believe there were two writers of the book, many years apart. Still, Isaiah is regarded traditionally as one who spoke a message of hope for captives.)

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**Jeremiah** was a young man when he became a prophet, around 645 BCE. He was reluctant to take on this role, but the sinfulness of the kingdom of Judah nearly broke his heart. He had to speak out. He warned that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people carried away into Babylon. In 609 BCE he said the Temple would be destroyed. Some years later, he wore a yoke around his neck to dramatize what would happen to Judah's people. In 588, the Babylonians began the siege of Jerusalem, just as Jeremiah had said.

**Ezekiel** was a prophet of the exile. He lived in Babylonia where he spoke out for twenty years, from 593-573 BCE. He wrote of colorful visions. His story of the valley of dry bones that came back to life showed his belief that Israel would finally be delivered from disaster. Although people did not take his prophecies as seriously as he hoped, he made it clear that people suffer for their own misdeeds and disobedience to God.
Directions: Use the letters from the words in the sentence below to form words found in the first chapter of the Book of Ezra. Use the box below to keep a list of other key words from Ezra that cannot be made using only the letters in the sentence.

God's people returned from exile in Babylon.

Words from Ezra, ch. 1

1. 
2. 
3. 
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Other Important Words from Ezra

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Unit I:
LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Verses for the Unit:
Session 1: Genesis 9:13, 16
Session 2: Genesis 15:5b,c; 17:9
Session 3: Exodus 20:3, 4a, 7a, 8, 12a, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17a, 24:12
Session 4: Deuteronomy 10:5; Joshua 24:15b,e
Session 5: II Chronicles 3:1; Psalm 51:15
Session 6: I Kings 12:16b; Psalm 122:1; Psalm 124:8
Session 7: Psalm 137:1-2, 4
Session 8: Isaiah 40:3, 4, 5
Session 9: Psalm 145:10, 13

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LEARNING SCRIPTURE

Session 8

"A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'" —Isaiah 40:3 (NRSV)

"Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain."
—Isaiah 40:4 (NRSV)

"Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all the people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." —Isaiah 40:5 (NRSV)
The Church has recognized special people as Saints since the second century. The earliest Christian saints were called “martyrs”—a word that means witness.

The first martyrs (saints) were New Testament witnesses to Jesus Christ. These are the familiar saints who have special Feast days during the year. They include: Mary and Joseph, Peter and the other apostles, Mary Magdalene, and Paul and others mentioned in the Book of Acts.

Later, “martyr” came to mean persons who gave their lives for their faith. The first person to die in this way was Stephen, whose story is told in Acts.

The earliest martyr recorded in church history—after New Testament times—is Polycarp, a Bishop of the Church who may have been a pupil of John, “the disciple of the Lord.” Polycarp was burned at the stake by the Roman magistrate of Smyrna, because he refused to curse God. He was 86 years old.

Polycarp and others who became saints in the early centuries were chosen by popular acclaim. That is, other Christians simply declared them to be saints.

Later, official sainthood depended on the approval of a local bishop. If someone was declared a saint, the body of that person would be placed in a respected site, often in the altar of a church. Because they died as Christians, the anniversaries of their deaths are celebrated as the times when they were reunited with Christ.

The relics of the saints (bones, or items they owned, such as crosses and rings) were said to have special powers of healing. This power of healing after death came to be a reason for deciding that a person would be granted sainthood. Because of this healing power, stories of miracles often became associated with the saints.

Today in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, a long and complicated procedure leads to making a person a saint. Final approval is given by the Pope or Patriarch.

In the Episcopal Church, persons are honored and given a day of commemoration on the Church Calendar. (See The Book of Common Prayer, p. 19). In order for someone to be added to the Calendar, the name must be submitted to General Convention—a national gathering of bishops and deputies that meets every three years.

The members of the Convention vote on the names, and Collects (prayers) honoring the proposed persons are adopted “for trial use” for a three year-period. The names must be presented to the convention a second time and voted on again before they are added to the Church Calendar permanently.
All Saints’ Hymn Was Written in 1864
By a Bishop of the Church of England

The Hymnal 1982, contains a number of hymns for use on particular saints’ days as well as several for use on other days when we celebrate the lives of all the saints. One hymn that was written specifically for All Saints’ Day (November 1) is For all the saints, who from their labors rest, 287.

This hymn was written in 1864 by Bishop William How, while he was rector at Whittington, a pleasant farming village on the Welsh border in England. Bishop How was concerned for the welfare of the common people. He knew they could read very little, or not at all. He composed hymns to fit the needs of the average church-goer. “A good hymn should be like a good prayer—simple, real, earnest, and reverent,” Bishop How wrote.

The text of For all the saints . . . is taken from a line in the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in . . . the communion of saints.” It states simply, in eight stanzas, our hope in God through Jesus Christ.

Bishop How believed in the sainthood of all who work for God. After leaving Whittington, he eventually became Suffragan Bishop of London. While this sounds like a dignified and powerful position, it actually meant that he was bishop of a very poor section on the East Side of London. It paid him a very small salary and no special honors. This did not worry Bishop How. His only concerns were to make his life count and to serve the people of God.

He was called “the poor man’s bishop” because he had a very real love for the people of his flock. He wanted to give them spiritual strength. He lived and worked with the people and traveled around by bus, while other more powerful bishops lived in palaces and rode in private coaches.

Thanksgiving for Saints

We give thanks to you, O Lord our God, for all your servants and witnesses of time past: for Abraham, the father of all believers, and Sarah his wife; for Moses, the lawgiver, and Aaron, the priest; for Miriam and Joshua, Deborah and Gideon, and Samuel with Hannah his mother; for Isaiah and all the prophets; for Mary, the mother of our Lord; for Peter and Paul and all the apostles; for Mary and Martha, and Mary Magdalene; for Stephen, the first martyr, and all the martyrs and saints in every age and in every land. In your mercy, O Lord our God, give us, as you gave to them, the hope of salvation and the promise of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the first-born of many from the dead. Amen.

—For all Saints and Faithful Departed
The Book of Common Prayer, p.838
New Names Are Added to Episcopal Church's Calendar of Honored Saints

Three names of saints were added to the Episcopal Church Calendar at the General Convention of 1991.

• August 27 is the date for remembering Thomas Gallaudet, with Henry Winter Syle.

Gallaudet has been called “The Apostle to the Deaf” because of his energy and enthusiasm for the spiritual welfare of deaf persons. He was born in 1822. His father was Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, founder of the West Hartford School for the Deaf, in Connecticut. His mother, Sophia, was a deaf mute.

After graduating from college, he taught at the New York Institution for the Deaf. He was ordained deacon in 1850 and priest in 1851. He established a spiritual home for deaf people. With the help of his parish, he purchased a building that became a center for missionary work to the deaf.

Thomas Gallaudet was a good friend to Henry Winter Syle. Syle lost his hearing as a result of scarlet fever, yet he pursued his education in the hope of being ordained a priest. At that time, many people felt that his handicap should prevent him from becoming a priest. Gallaudet believed Syle could serve well, and he supported and encouraged him.

Syle was ordained in 1876, as the first deaf person to receive Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church. He built the first church that was constructed just for deaf people.

• Brigid, whose date is February 1, may have met Saint Patrick as a young girl. She is a beloved Irish saint who dedicated her life to the God of Christians, even though she had been raised in a Druid family. In 470, she founded a nunery in Kildare.

Some of the miracle stories that are told about Brigid concern the poor and the needy. She cured a woman of leprosy by giving her milk, and she restored the sight of two men.

One story says that Brigid tamed a wolf for one of the local chieftains. She loved animals, especially birds.

• Evelyn Underhill was born in England. She had little formal religious education, but a lively spiritual curiosity. She began to write serious things at age sixteen. Much of her writing was on meditation and prayer.

She encouraged all people to enrich their spiritual life, to nurture it, and to include it in their everyday affairs. This was a very new idea in her time, for most people thought that only saints could have profound spiritual experiences.

Evelyn Underhill died at age 90. June 15 is the date on which the Church gives thanks for her life.

Other Saints to Look Up

You can read about the saints of the Church in a book called Lesser Feasts and Fasts, published by The Church Hymnal Corporation.

The saints appear in order, by date, for the whole Church Year. Two pages are given to each saint, including a brief biography, the Collect, and Scripture readings. The book also contains Collects and Scriptures for each day of Lent and the weeks of the Easter season.

Some names you may want to look up are Cuthbert, Jonathan Daniels, Hilda, Absalom Jones, Martin Luther King Jr., Julian of Norwich, Nicholas of Myra, and David Oakerhater.

Many more names may be added to the Episcopal Church Calendar in the future. If you were asked to choose persons to honor in this way, who would they be?
SAINTS' SHIELDS

Directions: People are saints for many reasons. In each section of the shield at right, write in names or list saintlike qualities. When the shield is completed, you may wish to share your work with others.

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Session 8: Isaiah 40:3, 4, 5
Session 9: Psalm 145:10, 13

Learning Scripture

Session 9

"All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your faithful shall bless you." —Psalm 145:10 (NRSV)

"Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The Lord is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds." —Psalm 145:13 (NRSV)