

3. THE WORD OF GOD

Objective:

To review with the families familiar stories from the Hebrew and New Testaments, and to reveal the importance of the Bible in our worship and in our daily lives.

Setting:

On the center of each table where the families will be sitting, there is a wrapped Bible. The Bibles are wrapped in either brown paper, gold paper, comic strip paper, or white paper. Inside the Bibles are pictures or clues of items to be used in the activity as the stories are being narrated. There is a backdrop running along the wall comprised of black paper; a mountain sketch with the figure of Abraham, his three visitors, and his tent; a rainbow; a coloring book outline of a pillar of fire and a pillar of clouds; and a crown. These symbols represent the Hebrew Scripture stories of Creation; Abraham; Noah; the desert journey of Moses and the Israelites; and the reign of Solomon. There is a simple manger (real or a picture) scene to end the backdrop. A figure of "Moses," the Ten Commandments, and an "ark" are elsewhere in the room. The refreshment table is covered until after the activity.

Activity Summary:

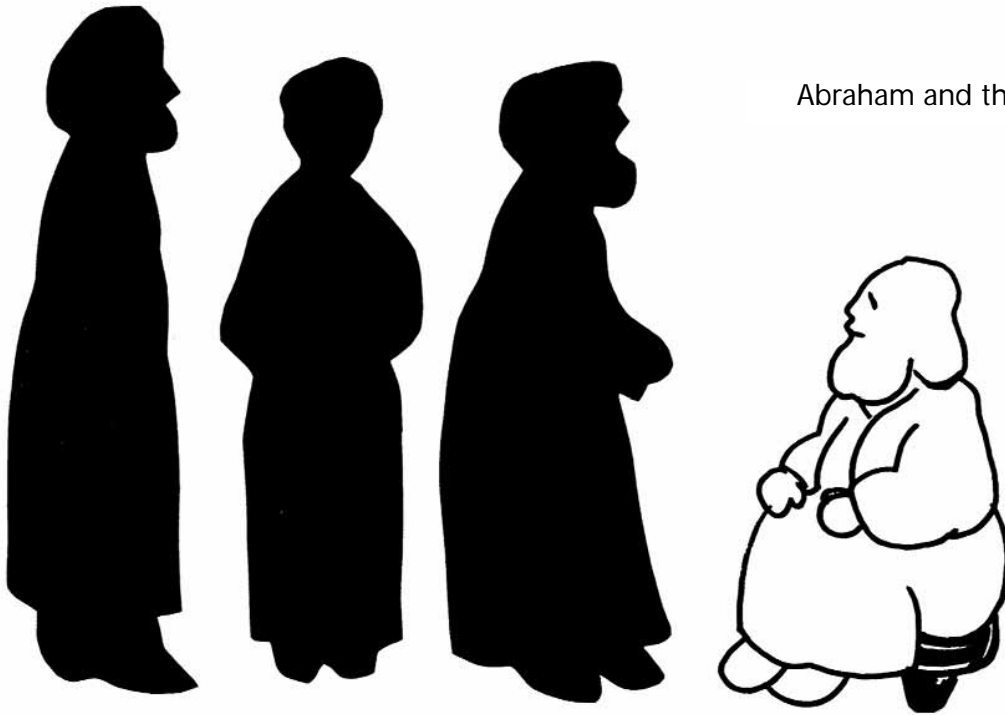
After greeting the families, the Narrator directs the families to unwrap the Bibles, explaining the significance of each of the four colors of wrapping paper. Then the children listen to the summary of each story, and come forward to place the appropriate pictures found in their Bibles on the backdrop. The Hebrew Testament stories end with the Nativity scene — at which time, a simple play follows with the actors of Jesus and the two disciples. The disciples gather the children around Jesus, and he performs two miracles and tells the children a parable. After the play, all share hospitality. Families are invited to make a "Shema Prayer Scroll."

Items Needed for the Bible Activity:

- Bibles for each table — evenly wrapped in either brown, gold, comic, or white paper
- Pictures of animals, people, trees, stars (creation)
- Abraham's sons (comic book figures cut out and colored)
- Cardboard ark (cardboard with black lines shaped like an ark)
- Moses figure
- Ten Commandments (list or scroll)
- Yellow flames
- Cloud pictures

The Word of God

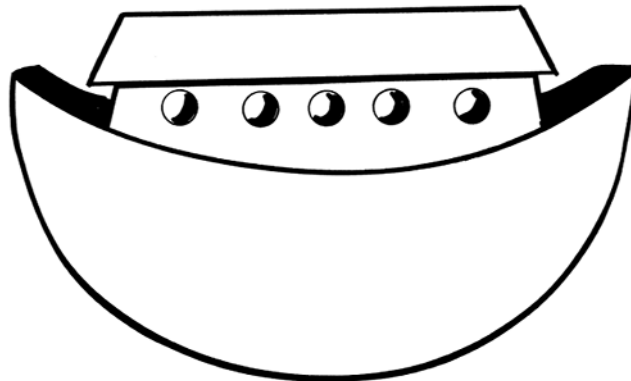
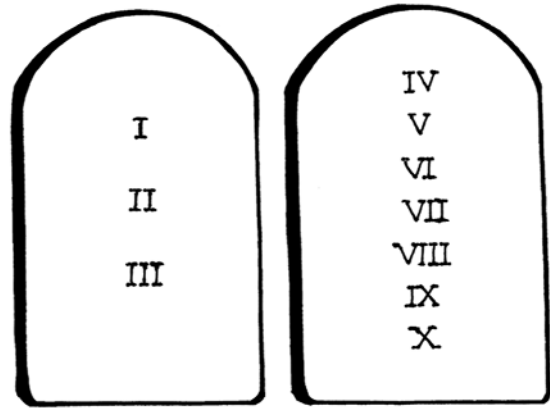
- Picture of the Temple (enlarge one found in a book, or on the Internet)
- Tape
- Manger with straw (a star behind it works well!)
- Doll (representing Jesus)



Abraham and the three visitors



Abraham's Sons: (Color distinctively.)



The Word of God

Bible Activity Script:

Today, we are learning about the Bible — the Word of God. Let's look at your tables — how many of you have a brown package in the middle of your table? Brown means OLD — it means something that has a long history, something that has been around "forever." Unwrap it — see what it is? It is a Bible. The Bible has been around for thousands of years — a thousand years before Jesus was even born! That is why we wrapped it in brown to help you remember how old the Bible is.

I see other packages in the middle of your tables — I see GOLD paper — Gold means something very expensive, very precious — very important. Unwrap it now and see what it is. Why do you think we put gold on this Bible? Because the Bible is SO VALUABLE! It is a treasure!

Let's see — I think I see cartoons on some tables. What is that? Are there people on the pictures — families, Moms and Dads, Grandmothers and Grandfathers — on your comic strips? What is in the package? It is the Bible again! Does the Bible tell stories about people? Yes, it does! The Bible is full of all types of stories about people's lives.

I think there are still some packages on some tables that haven't been unwrapped — are they white? What do you think this means? White means clean — pure — like when you were baptized, your parents placed you in white clothing. Maybe you have seen pictures of that. White means it is special to God — the Bible is God's Word!

I think some of you may have found that inside your Bible are pictures, or maybe clues. Look around the room, there are some interesting things on the wall behind me — and in other parts of the room here.

This is a time line behind me — a time line of the Old Testament. (Hold up Bible.) This is the part of the Bible that Jesus knew when He was a little boy — it was the history of Jesus' family. Stories that are part of our family history too, stories that Jesus knew so well from hearing them as a child. Stories of the Old Testament — we hear one reading from the Old Testament when we go to Mass each week.

Let's open the Bible and see if there are things in it to help us learn about these stories. Just like in our lives, the Bible gives us answers to our questions.

Our first story is when God created the earth — He created the sun, moon, stars, water, animals, flowers — everything on Earth God created, and God called all His creations GOOD. Do some of you have pictures of God's creations in your Bibles? Please bring them up and put them on this black part of our backdrop.

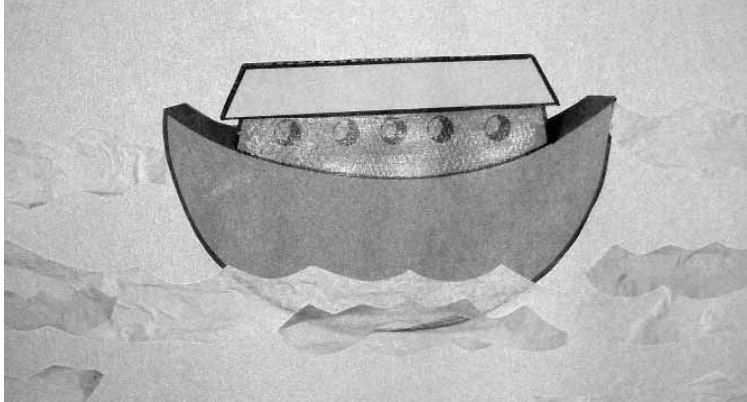
We have all heard of Noah — the kind and honest man whom God the Father chose to



Sample picture of Abraham's tent

build an ark and take two animals of every kind and keep them safe during a flood on Earth. There is a large ark in the room. I think in someone's Bible there is a clue about where to find the ark. We are going to place the ark next to the rainbow. Remember, after the flood, God said He would never flood the earth again — and He sent a rainbow to remind us of that promise.

Our next story from the Old Testament is about Abraham. Abraham was chosen by God

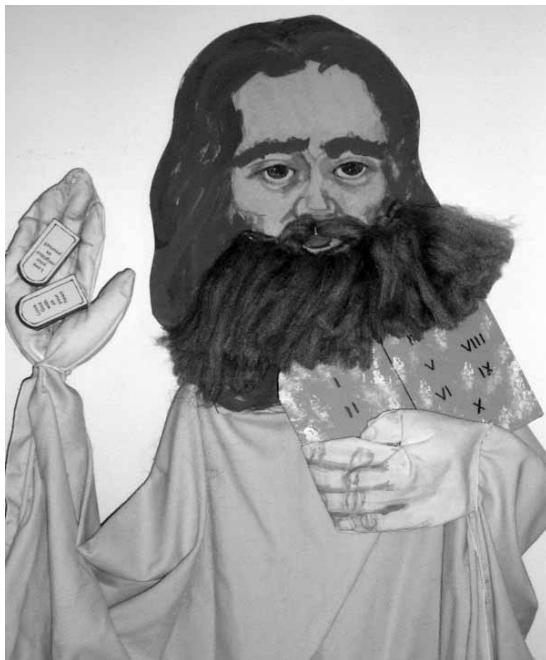


Sample pictures of ark and rainbow

for a special purpose! He was told by God that he would be the Father of a great number of people — the Father of many nations — his family would outnumber the stars! Does anyone have pictures of Abraham's sons, in their Bibles?

Then the Old Testament continues with the story of Moses — Moses, the leader of the Jewish people, who led them from slavery to freedom over forty years walking in the desert. Does anyone have a clue in their Bible to tell us where Moses can be found? Please bring him up. The Bible tells us that God led Moses by a cloud cover during the day and by fire in the cloud at night so that people could see their way. Please find the pictures of clouds and fire — and come up to fill in the outline.

God also chose Moses to give the Ten Commandments. These are rules the Jewish people and Jesus lived by — and we as Catholics live by today. Please bring up the list of the Ten Commandments and tape them on the figure of Moses.



Example of a Moses puppet, costume, or illustration and pillars of clouds and fire

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Sample picture of crown

When the Jewish people settled in the holy land, they were ruled by kings. One king — Solomon — asked God to give him wisdom to lead his people. God answered Solomon's prayer and blessed him with a wonderfully understanding heart and mind to judge right and wrong. In gratitude to God, Solomon built a magnificent temple to worship Him. Where can we find the temple to bring up?

Jesus knew all these stories, they were part of His life. Like your parents may read you stories at night before bed, or in the afternoon,

Jesus' Mother Mary, or Joseph, her husband, did the same for Jesus.

What happened next? We have gone through some important stories of the Old Testament, there are many more.

Now look — we have these items here — a manger, with straw — it must be a stable — oh, there is a baby inside. What happened in our history — told in the Bible now? This represents the birth of Jesus — we are now in the part of the Bible called the New Testament. We hear two readings from the New Testament each time we go to Sunday Mass. (Hold up the Bible and show how much of the Bible is the New Testament compared to the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures.)

Now Jesus grew in wisdom, through prayer and reading the Scriptures, and He learned about God and the messages that God has for our lives. Then He became a man — and He gathered His friends who were fishermen. He said they would become "fishers of men."



A real manger can be used or glue some straw onto a picture like this one.

Actors for the Play:

Jesus
Two disciples
Blind man
Child with the bread and fish to offer

Props for Play:

- Simple costumes for the actors
- Fishing net (if desired)
- Construction paper for “loaves and fish”
- Two baskets, with paper cover over cut-up bread inside the baskets
- Large basket to cover up the “light”
- Light (battery candle)
- Bowl of water (if desired) for the blind man
- Clay (if desired) to put on the blind man

(PLAY BEGINS)

Jesus walks up from a back (hidden) area — and calls the fishermen (two disciples are sitting as if repairing a net) to follow Him.

Jesus: “Fishermen, come follow Me — I will make you fishers of men!”

Narrator: Many people, families with children, people of all ages, followed Jesus amazed at all He had to say. He was so kind and loving to all who met Him.

(The two disciples invite all the children to come and sit down around the floor at the feet of Jesus.)

Narrator: Jesus performed many miracles. *(A blind man — wearing a blindfold — walks in, feeling his way, stumbling or bumping into an obstacle. Jesus gets up and walks over to him.)*

Narrator: This man had been blind from birth. Imagine never being able to see the faces of people you love, or a flower, or anything around you!

(The disciples reach out to him, but he doesn't see them, and walks on, feeling the air in front of him.)

Narrator: But then something special happened, Jesus came into his life. Jesus did something strange, He spit on the dirt and made some mud. Then He put the mud on the man's eyes. *(Jesus leans down and with pretend spit and clay — rubs this on the man's eyes.)*

Narrator: “Go and wash your eyes.” Jesus said.

The blind man goes over to a nearby bowl of water and washes his eyes — opens them in great excitement and says...

Blind Man: “I can see! Thank you Jesus, I can see!”

Narrator: The man did what Jesus said — he washed the mud off his eyes, looked around, and could see! The man was so happy and worshipped Jesus!

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Narrator: Jesus also fed a large crowd of over 5,000 people who were hungry after traveling all day to come and listen to Him. When Jesus noticed the people were hungry, a small boy came forward with five small loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus took the boy's offering and held it up for God to bless. Jesus then gave baskets of bread and fish to His disciples to pass out to all the hungry people. After everyone was fed, there was still food left over!

(Following the script, a small child comes up and gives Jesus bread and fish. Jesus smiles and takes it from him, puts them in two baskets, holds them up to God in prayer, then gives them to His two disciples. The disciples break through the thin paper in the baskets, uncovering pieces of cut-up bread, and go through the crowd of children giving bread to everyone.)

Narrator: He told many stories that were about things in nature — things that were part of everyday life — such as water, seeds, and light. Let's listen to what Jesus said about light.

(With props of a candle and a bushel basket, Jesus reads the gospel.)

Jesus: "No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a vessel or puts under a bed, but puts it on a stand, that those who enter may see the light" (Luke 8:16). You, boys and girls, are the light of the world! Let your light shine so that everyone may see your good deeds and thank God your Father in Heaven!

Narrator: The most important teaching of Jesus was about Love — how we are to love and care for each other. Jesus loved children. No matter how tired He was, He wanted the children to sit at His side. They were so important to Him — just like you are today. Jesus loves you just as He loved the children in His days on Earth.

Jesus stands up, smiles and touches the children around him.

Narrator: These are the stories we hear in Mass every week. The importance of all that happened before Jesus, about how God loved and saved His people — and about Jesus, His teachings, and His love for us.

The Bible tells us how to live like Jesus. Let us leave here today, promising Jesus that we will listen always to what God tells us through the readings.

"Shema Prayer Scroll" Craft Activity:

Supplies

(per scroll)

- Rectangles of "Parchment" paper (if available, or any paper will do) with prayer printed in center (see next page)
- Two 6" round craft sticks
- Tape

Directions

Tape sticks on both ends of paper.

Roll toward center to make scroll.

Refreshments:

Anything is suitable!



"Hear, O Israel! The Lord your God

Is One.

And you shall love Him with all

Your heart,

With all your soul,

With all your strength,

And with all your mind."

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