

The Calling of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 1:1-12

MEMORY VERSE

JEREMIAH 1:5

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A large piece of thin cardboard or poster board, a pencil, markers and scissors.

A paper plate for each child. You may want to consider using smooth edged paper plates. You will also need markers or crayons and scissors.

Several 3 x 5 cards, your chalk or dry erase board and chalk or dry erase markers.

ATTENTION GETTER!

We Each Have a Part!

You will need a large piece of thin cardboard or poster board, a pencil, markers, and scissors.

Prior to class, take a large piece of thin cardboard or poster board and draw a large picture on it. You can be as simple or get as fancy as you like. If you are artistically challenged, you can just write out the lesson’s memory verse. Next, use a pencil to lightly mark on lines on your picture for large-size puzzle pieces (the younger the class, the larger the pieces). After marking your lines, cut out the puzzle pieces. Give each child a puzzle piece and have all of the children work together on the floor to put together the puzzle.

God has a special purpose and place for all of us in His kingdom. When we are all faithful and obedient to what He has for us, we all join together in the body of Christ to make a beautiful work of art, one that will bring glory to God. God had a special calling and purpose for Jeremiah. Let's look at how God used Jeremiah's life.

LESSON TIME!

What is success? Many people believe that success comes in the form of making a lot of money, or perhaps being popular, or really powerful and influential, a leader with many followers—all the things the world holds as valuable. In our culture, we are pushed to be rich, beautiful, and powerful; Sadly, if we do not match up to that standard, we are made to feel worthless.

By these standards, Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet, would be considered a miserable failure. For 40 years, he served God as His spokesman to the people of Judah; but, when Jeremiah spoke, nobody listened. Consistently and passionately he urged them to respond to God's call for holiness, to turn from their wickedness, but nobody moved. Jeremiah was a preacher who had no converts, no one responded to the message. He stood alone declaring God's message of judgment on a nation that had rejected God, and he wept over the fate of his beloved country. In the eyes of Israel, Jeremiah was a failure. Not only was Jeremiah not to be successful in turning the people back to God, he was not successful by other standards. He was poor in material things; he sacrificed many of the comforts of life; and, he endured severe trials in order to faithfully deliver his prophecies.

In the eyes of God, Jeremiah, a young man called to an overwhelming ministry, was huge success—for he was obedient and faithful to God's calling upon his life. He courageously and faithfully proclaimed God's Word to the people, even when no one listened. **A successful life is one where God's purposes are accomplished.**

JEREMIAH 1:1-3

The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,

to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

Jeremiah lived in a village called Anathoth, which was about three miles northeast of Jerusalem in the land of Benjamin. He held a very important position as of one of the priests. Jeremiah was a young man, probably only 17 years old, when God called him to a challenging ministry.

God can use anyone who comes to Him at any time in his or her lives, but it is a special blessing to know the Lord at a young age and to be used by Him for many years. **A successful life is one where God's purposes are accomplished.**

JEREMIAH 1:4-5

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

God had prepared Jeremiah for this day. He had been chosen to be a prophet to the nations before he had even been formed in his mother's womb. Jeremiah had been set apart, gifted, and appointed to be a spokesman for the Lord, before He was born.

God also knew you, as He knew Jeremiah, long before you were born. He knew you, thought about you, and had a plan for you. In Psalm 139:13-17, David takes pleasure in God's intimate involvement in our lives: "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"

When you feel discouraged or inadequate, remember the great value that God puts upon you. He not only formed you with careful consideration, He has a great plan for your life, a plan established before you were ever born. We must discover and come into harmony with the plan God has for our lives. **A successful life is one where God's purposes are accomplished.**

Good News Frisbee Rings

For this craft, you will need a paper plate for each child. You may want to consider using smooth edged paper plates. You will also need markers or crayons and scissors.

Using your scissors, poke a hole near the rim. Make your cut 1 to 1 1/2 inches from the edge. Cut out the middle of the paper plate leaving a ring. Using your markers or crayons, write "Jesus Loves

You” around the edge. For younger children, you may need to help them with the writing. You may also decorate the Frisbee. Allow the children to toss the ring back and forth and tell each other, “Jesus loves you” as they do.

God told Jeremiah that he would be a prophet to all the nations. God has also called us to go into all the nations and make disciples (Matthew 28:18-19). These Frisbee rings will help us to remember to spread the good news of Jesus’ love for us.

JEREMIAH 1:6

Then said I: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth."

God had called Jeremiah into an incredible ministry as His ambassador or representative to the nations. Jeremiah realized the importance of the job he was called to; he looked at himself and could see only his inadequacies as a youth. He felt he lacked the speaking ability necessary for such a ministry.

Moses, also, looking at his own inadequacies, sought to excuse himself from God’s calling. God had called him to lead His people out of Egypt; yet, overwhelmed by his inability to speak, Moses refused to trust in God for help and provoked Him to anger. God told Moses that He would send Aaron his brother to do the speaking.

Moses and Jeremiah needed some help. Who better than God to help them say and do the right things? People often try to excuse themselves from God’s service, recognizing their lack of talent and abilities; but God is not looking for talented and able people, He is looking for willing people. God will enable those He calls to the ministry to do what He wants them to do.

If the task God calls you to seems overwhelming, remember to consider not your own ability, but God's ability. In Zechariah 4:6, God encourages Zerubbabel, "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts." It is easy for us to focus on our weaknesses; but as we answer God's call, our capability to perform the task is not a concern. His purpose will be performed through His ability and power. If the task involves some of our weak areas, we can trust that He will provide the words, strength, courage and abilities we need.

JEREMIAH 1:7-10

But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak.

Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you," says the LORD.

Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant."

Jeremiah thought he had a good excuse to get out of God's call on his life; but with God, there are no limitations. God's answer was "Don't say you can't do it...don't say you are just a child." God answers Jeremiah's complaint with His commitment to provide His provision and protection.

First, God would lead Jeremiah. He commissions Jeremiah to go wherever He will send him and say whatever He commands him to say. The source of Jeremiah's message would be God. God appeared to him in a vision. Stretching out His hand to touch

Jeremiah's mouth, God provided the very words he would speak. Jeremiah need only to follow the Lord as a faithful messenger. God provided the plan and the message. **A successful life is one where God's purposes are accomplished.**

Second, God promised Jeremiah that He would deliver and protect him. It seems that Jeremiah was afraid for his personal safety and rightfully so. He would face persecution from the people. They would try to get rid of him (see 11:18-23; 12:6; 20:1-2; 26:11; 37:15-16; 38:4-6). Though God would not keep trouble from coming, God assures Jeremiah he will see Him through trouble. Jeremiah would be thrown in jail, insulted, beaten, sentenced to die, left for dead in a pit, and deported from his country. Yet, God was with Jeremiah in all that he suffered and was faithful to deliver him.

God does not keep us from encountering life's storms, but He will see us through them. He promises to be there for us, at our side and on our side, and help us as He did Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's work was to warn not only the Jews, but also all the nations of the world about God's judgment on sin. His message would be a message of both judgment and blessing. God's purpose is always that of building and planting; yet many times, He must first tear down what exists. God's judgment would tear down, destroy, and overthrow in order that He could begin a new work of building and planting.

Jeremiah had an awesome responsibility to be faithful in telling others God's message. So, do we! In Mark 16:15, Jesus commissioned, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Whether we are called to share among friends and family, be an over-seas missionary, prayer warrior, or financial supporter, let us be faithful to do our part in answering God's commission. **A successful life is one where God's purposes are accomplished.**

JEREMIAH 1:11-12

Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree."

Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."

Jeremiah sees an interesting vision from God. God wanted Jeremiah to know that He was with him to confirm His Word. An almond tree would be the first tree of the year in Palestine to bud and bear fruit. Its blooms would grow in January before the leaves appeared, thus earning the name "awake" tree. Whenever Jeremiah would look at the branch of the almond tree, he would remember that God was paying close attention to his ministry in order that His Word be fulfilled. Jeremiah could begin his ministry with the confidence that God would accomplish through him all that He would have him do.

God assured Jeremiah that the success of his ministry would be dependent on Him. Jeremiah's responsibility was to simply be available--willing and obedient. As we look back in history at the life of Jeremiah, we see that God was true to His Word; Jeremiah was successful to perform that for which God had called him. **A successful life is one where God's purposes are accomplished.**

What has God called you to do? Are you ready and willing to answer His call on your life with faith and obedience? You can trust that God will enable you to live the life that will make you successful in His eyes. God had a plan for Jeremiah, and He has an awesome plan for you.

Child of God

You will need several 3 x 5 cards, your chalkboard or dry erase board, and chalk or dry erase markers. This game is a variation of the old game “hangman,” except no one is hung. Before you begin, write down several questions and answers on 3 x 5 cards to review today’s lesson.

Stand by your chalk/dry erase board. Choose one of the 3 x 5 cards and read the question to the class. Ask the children who think they know the answer to raise their hands. If the child knows the answer, ask him or her to come up to the board and draw a body part on the board (head, hand, eye, etc.). Next, allow that child to select the next card and read the question to the class (if they are at a reading age). Play until the class completes the “child of God” on the chalkboard.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be available to answer God’s call. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.