

Lesson #3-13

Joel's Prophecy of Hope

Joel 2:12-13, 28-29

PK-2nd

Key Verse:

Return to the LORD, your God, for [God] is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

Joel 2:13b

The Point:

God patiently and lovingly calls us to repent.

Making Connections:

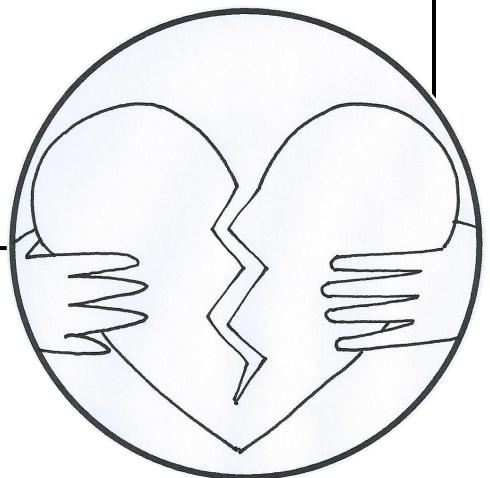
The Hope of the Messiah

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

The World to Come

Spiritual Practice:

Prayer



Activities a la Carte

Activities

Story Centers (PK-K)

Rebuild

Knock down and build up.

Clean Up

Bring together what is scattered.

Celebrate

Dance for Jesus.

Into the Story (1st-2nd)

Old and New

Classify items, old and new.

Bible Nuts & Bolts (1st-2nd)

A World to Come

Mark new beginnings.

15 min.

Supplies

† Building blocks

† Empty boxes

† Toys

† Colored paper

† Party hats

† Christmas music

† Music player

10 min.

† Old and new items

10 min.

† Bibles

† Construction paper or cardstock

† Circle labels or globe stickers

† Pens or pencils

† Scissors

Activities a la Carte

Learning the Story (PK-2nd)

After Time Out

Identifying before and after.

15 min.

- † Bibles
- † Pictures of desert, fertile land, rags, nice clothing, destruction, a big city
- † Optional: Internet-connected projector

Living the Story (PK-2nd)

New Prayers

Forgive and bless.

10 min.

- † None

Singing the Story (PK-2nd)

A Better Day

Sing a piggyback song to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”

5 min.

- † None

Additional Activities

Restored (PK-2nd)

Restore a lifeless mural.

15 min.

- † Mural paper
- † Dark markers
- † Bright markers

Brighter Days (PK-2nd)

Everything in better shape.

15 min.

- † Activity Sheet #3-13.A
- † Brightly-colored copy paper
- † Scissors
- † Mural paper
- † Glue sticks
- † Large bag

Activities a la Carte

Additional Activities

Come Back (PK-2nd)

Play a memory verse game.

15 min.

† Bibles

Bible Book (PK-2nd)

Optional ongoing activity.

5 min.

† Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
† Cardstock or plain paper
† Markers or crayons
† Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Sending the Story (PK-2nd)

5 min.

† Advent wreath
† Candles
† Optional: matches or lighter

Background for Teachers

Making Connections

Through Daniel we saw that God is faithful to deliver us, and our response to God's faithfulness affects our actions. Today we get a glimpse of God's future activity. The passages in Joel have a strong theme of repentance in anticipation of the coming Day of the Lord.

Story Summary:

Joel's Prophecy of Hope

The prophet Joel warned Jerusalem and Judah of the impending "Day of the Lord," a period of time when people would know for sure that God is indeed the one and only God. Joel's message was for people to return to God. The people were looking away from God rather than to God. Joel stressed the hope in knowing that even though God is perfect and all powerful, and even though God hates sin, God is also "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love" (Joel 2:13). God worked to get the people to change their ways through warnings of what would happen if they continued on their path.

God told Joel to let the people know that God would be pleased by their repentance: when their hearts and minds changed and they returned to God. Not only that, but God would also pour out the Holy Spirit on them. They would be restored to fellowship with God, and their land and lives would once again yield fruit. No matter how off-track the people were, God's love embraced them and God longed for fellowship to be restored. God is faithful to God's commitment to us even when we are not faithful in our commitment to God.

The Point

God patiently and lovingly calls us to repent.
Joel preaches about God's patient, loving, and faithful nature, which will be most fully revealed in

the unspecified "Day of the Lord." Then all people will have access to God's vision for human community. In our current unstable world, in the midst of fear and corruption, this passage brings us hope. As we prepare to experience the Day of the Lord, we can put our hope in a faithful God who longs for a restored relationship with humankind. We can press on with confidence, assured that the day is coming when all people will have access to God's vision for human community.

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

The World to Come

One of the promises of Scripture is that God is bringing God's kingdom into our world now and will bring the kingdom in all of its fullness in the future. This is seen in the promises of the world to come in the Hebrew prophets (for example, Isaiah 2:1-4) as well as Revelation 21:3-5 (and many others). We even pray for it in the Lord's Prayer ("Your kingdom come, your will be done..."). Help students look forward to this reality and new creation with hope and longing for a day when God's love will be all-encompassing and all bad things will be no more.

Spiritual Practice: Prayer

Prayer is a significant part of a relationship with God, and prayer helps us keep open communication with God regarding our struggles and our mistakes. It is through prayer that we repent. When Joel gave God's message to "rend your heart," (Joel 2:13) a response to God from humankind would be in the form of prayers of confession and repentance. Outward actions like tearing your clothes (Joel 2:13) were not as important. God was looking for meaningful and true change of heart with a restored communion through prayer.

Lesson Plan



Story Centers (PK-K; 15 minutes)

Story Centers are mini-activities designed specifically for preschool and kindergarten students. Depending on the size of your class, you can set these up as centers for in-class rotations or do them as a whole class one after another. In most preschool and kindergarten classes, these centers along with a snack, the “Learning the Story” activity, and the “Living the Story” activity will fill the education time, but feel free to choose any activity you think would be fun and appropriate for your class.

Rebuild

Blocks will be scattered on the floor. Students will “rebuild” or build up a city of blocks. In today’s lesson they will learn about being restored.

Clean Up

Boxes for cleanup are placed around the room. Boxes are flagged with colored construction paper. Items to be cleaned up are scattered, each either sitting on a piece of colored construction paper or with a construction paper tag on it. Students will clean up, matching the color of each item’s tag with the color on the box. God cleans up our hearts and lives.

Celebrate

Students wear party hats and dance to Christmas music. Dance and sing because Jesus makes things new.

Into the Story (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

Old and New

Classify items as old and new.

You will need:

- † Old and new items

Before class:

1. Find pairs of old and new items, such as old shoe, new shoe; old pencil, new pencil; old toothbrush, new toothbrush, etc. If you can find some broken items (even a broken shoelace works), that would be good. Or if you can locate some once broken items where it was obvious they were repaired, that would be good, too.

During class:

1. Ask the students to help you organize the items by old, new, broken, and repaired.
2. Examine two of the same item, looking at the differences and similarities between the old and new.
3. **Would you want to use the old item? When is it time to get a new one of these?** Some old items we can use for a long time, so focus on the old that is in bad shape.
4. Examine a few more of the items.
5. If you have a broken item, talk about broken items. **Do you have any broken toys or furniture at home? What do we do with broken items?**
6. If you have a repaired item, show that and talk about being able to use something again after it has been fixed.
7. **Today we are going to learn about when God fixes things and makes all things new.**

Bible Nuts & Bolts (1st-2nd; 10 minutes)

A World to Come

Mark the new beginnings.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Construction paper or cardstock
- † Circle labels or globe stickers
- † Pens or pencils
- † Scissors

Before class:

1. Cut the construction paper cardstock into rectangles for bookmarks.

During class:

1. Explain that the Bible tells a story of God's love.
2. **First, our loving God created a beautiful perfect world.** Ask if anyone can share anything about that garden. Distribute bookmarks and pens. Ask the students to draw a small circle at the bottom of their bookmark.
3. **Then, Adam and Eve sinned and the world suffered.** Ask the students to draw a slash line on the small circle at the bottom of their bookmark.
4. **Our loving God promised that Jesus would come to free the world from this sin. Finally, Jesus was born and taught the world about God's love and forgiveness.** Ask if anyone can share anything about Jesus' birth or message. Ask the students to draw a cross about midway up the bookmark.
5. **Next, our loving God will bring back a perfect world. That is something for us to look forward to.**
6. Ask the students to stick the circle label or globe sticker near the top of the bookmark to represent a new world. For those who can write, they might want to write, "A World to Come" on the other side of the bookmark.
7. Help the students locate the Book of Revelation. Insert the bookmarks at Revelation 21. You can read Revelation 21:3-4 aloud, if desired.

Learning the Story (PK-2nd; 15 minutes)

After Time Out

Identifying before and after.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Pictures of desert, fertile land, rags, nice clothing, destruction, a big city
- † Optional: Internet-connected projector

Before class:

1. Locate pictures in magazines or on the Internet. You may also project the images onto a screen if you have that capability.
2. Optional: complete the activity without pictures.

During class:

1. **Sometimes it is hard to obey, but we still try.** In today's Bible story, it does not seem like the people even tried to do the right thing anymore. They did not obey God. They did whatever they felt like doing. God was patient with them, and kept reminding them to obey, but they did not listen.
2. **God needed to teach the people to worship and obey.** God knew life would be much better for them if they followed God's plan for living.
3. Pull a chair aside. **This is a timeout chair.** Perhaps you have one in your home or school. **What kinds of things do we do that get us in trouble?** *[Answers will vary.]*
4. **What does it feel like to sit in the timeout chair?** *[Answers will vary.]*
5. **What does it feel like when we get out of the timeout chair?** *[Answers will vary.]*
6. **Joel had a message from God:** after the people had their timeout, when they were sorry and returned to God, things would be even better than before.
7. If you are using pictures, continue with this step. Otherwise, go to step 8. Show a picture of the desert. Show a picture of fertile land. **Timeout for them was like living in this desert; being freed from time out was like seeing all this pretty growth.** Show a picture of the rags and a picture of nice clothes. Show a picture of destruction and of a big city. **What kind of God makes all things new like this after the people are sorry they disobeyed?** *[A loving God.]*
8. Read Joel 2:12-13, 28-29.

Living the Story (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

New Prayers

Forgive and bless.

You will need:

† Nothing

During class:

1. Form a line. While in the line, instruct students to pray for our sins to be forgiven and to pray for help in forgiving others.
2. Ask everyone to turn around, so the line is facing the opposite direction.
3. **Now pray and thank God for blessing us.** Working down the line, each student can give thanks for a specific blessing.
4. After giving thanks, each student will take a few steps forward.
5. **Pray and ask God to help us obey.**
6. After praying, each student will take a few steps forward.
7. **Pray and ask God to help us be a blessing to others.**

Singing the Story (PK-2nd; 5 minutes)

ABetterDay

Sing a piggyback song to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”

**I sit in timeout
When I disobey
I’m sorry, forgive me, I love you, it’s done
Now it’s a better day.**

Additional Activities

Restored (PK-2nd; 15 minutes)

Restore a lifeless mural.

You will need:

- † Mural paper
- † Dark markers
- † Bright markers

Before class:

1. Cover a table with mural paper.
2. Using a dark brown marker, draw a line across the paper about one quarter of the way up from the bottom of the paper. This line represents the dry ground.

During class:

1. Show the paper to the students. **This is the barren land. It matches the hearts of the people when they turn away from God. It is empty and dry. The people would not listen to God, but living in this land showed them they needed to return to God.**
2. Distribute bright markers for the students to show what the place looks like restored. They can draw flowers, trees, and buildings to bring life to the mural of barren land.
3. Ask them to include things they would like to see in the world to come, too. Take time to talk about those additions when the mural is finished.

Brighter Days (PK-2nd; 15 minutes)

Everything in better shape.

You will need:

- † Activity Sheet #3-13.A
- † Brightly-colored copy paper
- † Crayons or markers
- † Scissors
- † Mural paper
- † Glue sticks
- † Large bag

Before class:

1. Either using the Activity Sheet or freehand, cut shapes from brightly-colored paper.
2. Mix up the shapes and put them in a bag.
3. Draw outlines of the shapes in matching colors on newsprint.
4. Place the mural paper on a table.

During class:

1. Instruct students to take turns reaching into the bag, picking out a shape, finding its matching outline on the table, and gluing the shape into place.
2. While the student is doing this, the others will say, **“Gone are the dark and gloomy days, Jesus will make all things new.”**
3. The objective is to find the matching piece (shape and color) and glue it on its outline, before the rest of the class says their lines X number of times (determine the number of times by the age group).
4. If the phrase has been said and the student was not successful, be gracious and merciful by encouraging, helping, and praising the student.
5. When the shapes have all been glued on, comment on how bright and fun the mural looks, now that it has been made new.

Come Back (PK-2nd; 15 minutes)

Play a memory verse game.

You will need:

† Bibles

During class:

1. When we go about the day, we often leave and return. We go somewhere to play. We return home. We go to school. We return home. We go to the store. We return home. Right now we are at church. Later, we will return home.
2. Today we learned that the people went away from God. They left God's ways and lived by their own ways. They were told to return to God. God did not want to punish them.
3. We are going to play a memory verse game that requires you to know some words and motions.
4. Repeat the lines and motions after me.

Return to the Lord, your God (use hands as megaphones)

For God is gracious and merciful (open arms from front out, take a gracious bow)

Slow to anger (crawl) (*if there is limited space, move body in slow-motion running*)

Abounding in steadfast love (big jumps)

And relents from punishing (lean back slightly and shield face with arm)

5. For the first or first couple of times after teaching them, recite the lines with the students and challenge them to remember and do the motions without your help. When they have mastered that, you can do the motions while they recite the lines. Finally, you can see if they can recite the lines and do the motions on their own.

Bible Book (PK-2nd; 5 minutes)

Optional ongoing activity.

You will need:

- † Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
- † Cardstock or plain paper
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Before class:

1. Make copies of this week's Bible Book page on cardstock or copy paper for each student.

During class:

1. Pass out Bible Book pages.
2. Read the bottom of the Bible Book page aloud, reminding students of what they learned in the lesson.
3. Have them put their names on their pages, and draw a picture of something they particularly liked or remember from story in the middle of the page.
4. Optional: Collect and three-hole punch the pages, and put them in individual binders for each student to be kept at church until the end of the year. If you wish, you can investigate other options for binding the Bible books through a local print shop at the end of the year instead of using a three-ring binder.

Sending the Story (PK-2nd; 5 minutes)

You will need:

- † Advent wreath
- † Candles

This is the second Sunday of Advent. Display the Advent wreath and follow your tradition in lighting the candle (or turn on the battery candle). Often the second week of Advent is associated with love. If your faith tradition uses a different symbol for this week, refer to that instead of love.

Why would God promise to restore the people, after they disobeyed? [Love.] Why does God plan a new world for us? [Love.]

Prayer

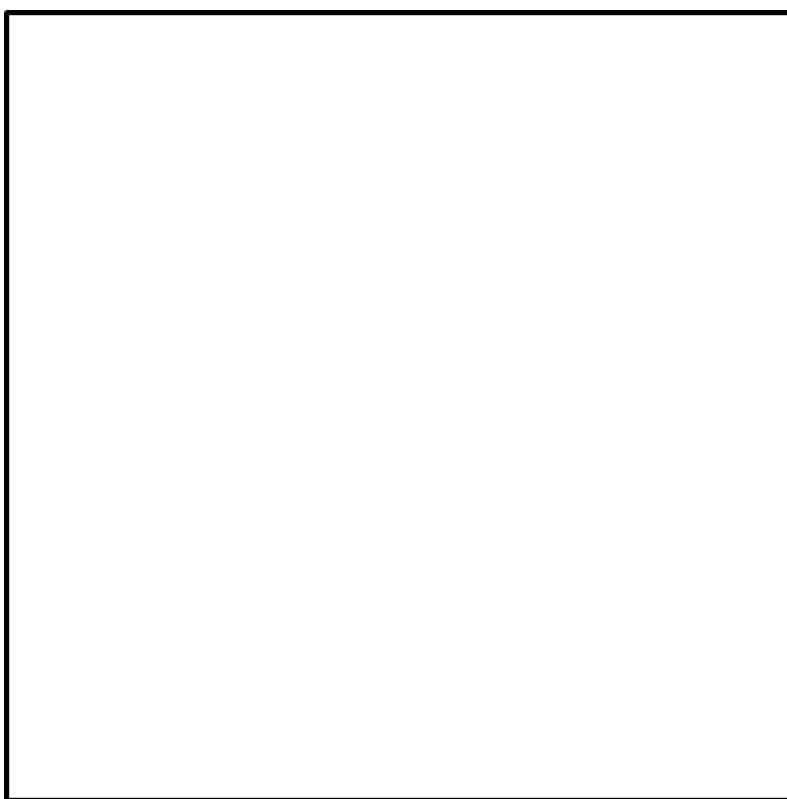
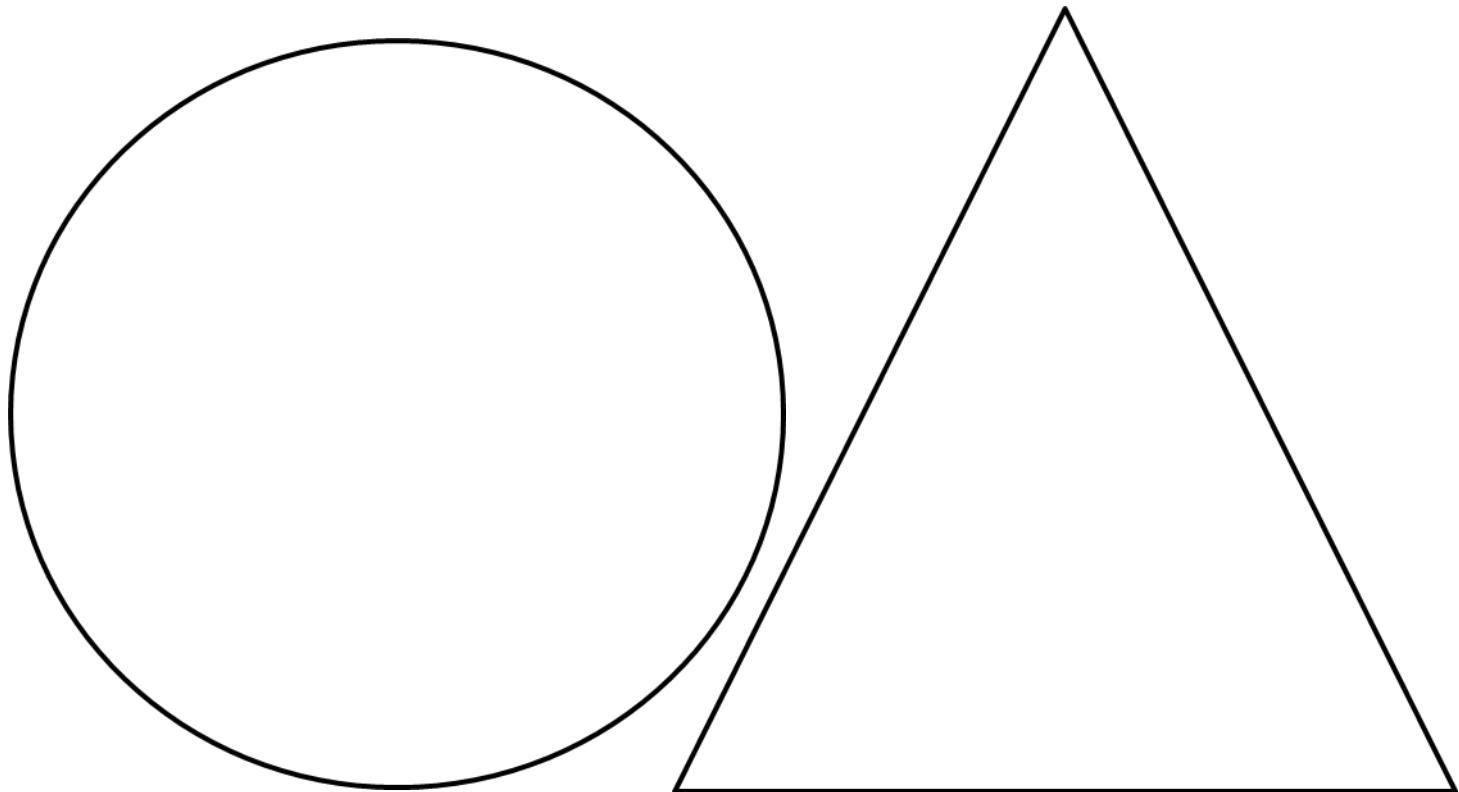
Before ending class, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Gather around the Advent wreath and pray:

**Jesus, you are the light of the world
Jesus, you are the light of my life
Jesus, you are the light of the world to come.
Thank you for your love.
Amen.**

BrighterDays

Everything in better shape.



Joel's Prophecy of Hope

Joel 2:12-13, 28-29

The Point:

God patiently and lovingly calls us to repent.



The Story@Home

PK-2nd

Living the Word: Teaching Kids God's Story

Narrative Lectionary, Year 3 (2020-2021)

Lesson #3-13

Joel 2:12-13, 28-29

Last Week

The people did not listen to the prophets and are sent into exile. Daniel refuses to stop worshipping the God of Israel, so he is thrown into a lions' den. God keeps him safe throughout the night (Daniel 6:6-27).

This Week

The prophet Joel declares to those returning from exile that it is the gracious and merciful nature of God that will see the people through their difficulties, just as God saw Daniel through the lions' den (Joel 2:12-13, 28-29).

The Point

God patiently and lovingly calls us to repent.

Story Summary

Joel's Prophecy of Hope

The prophet Joel warned Jerusalem and Judah of the impending "Day of the Lord," a period of time when people would know for sure that God is indeed the one and only God. Joel urged the disobedient people to return to God because there would be serious consequences if they did not. Joel stressed that God is "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love" (Joel 2:13). God also promised to pour out the Holy Spirit on them. They would be restored to fellowship with God, and their land and lives would once again yield fruit. No matter how disobedient the people were, God's love embraced them and longed for fellowship to be restored.

Bible Nuts & Bolts

The World to Come

One of the promises of Scripture is that God is bringing God's kingdom into our world now and will bring the kingdom in all of its fullness in the future. We even pray for it in the Lord's Prayer ("Your kingdom come, your will be done"). We can look forward to this reality and new creation with hope and longing for a day when God's love will be supreme, and all bad things will be gone.

Practice: Prayer

Prayer is a significant part in a relationship with God. It helps us keep open communication with God regarding our struggles and our mistakes. It is through prayer that we begin our repentance, followed through with actions. As a family, make it a habit to check in with God daily, confessing sin and asking for help to walk in God's ways.

Next Week

Isaiah proclaims the promise that God will someday restore the people to their land and make life better than it was before, with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable (Isaiah 61:1-11).

Family Discussions

Use the questions below or other questions you think of to discuss today's Scripture reading (listed above) with your family.

- † What about this passage shows you that God is patient?
- † What about this passage shows you that God is forgiving?
- † How does this passage make you feel about God?

Family Devotions

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? How should we respond?

Sunday—Read Joel 2:12-13, 28-29

Joel's prophesy of hope includes a call to repentance. Make "I'm sorry" cards to give to one another as the need arises. Make plans as a family to hold an "I'm sorry" card and tell God when you are sorry for mistakes you have made.

Monday—Read Psalm 51:1-12

This is a prayer for cleansing. Work together to clean out a closet or under the bed. Even though those things were not out in the open, they still needed to be cleaned. Ask God to clean your hearts.

Tuesday—Read Acts 2:14-21

Peter addresses the crowd's reaction to Pentecost. Quoting Joel, he confirms the fulfillment of the prophesy of pouring out the Spirit onto flesh. Pour water into a glass, letting it overflow into the sink (or a bucket, so you can use the water later). Imagine God's Spirit filling you to overflowing.

Wednesday—Read Joel 3:1-2a, 17-18

God promises to restore the people after the judgment, making things better than they were before. Celebrate God's promises with a dance, a hug, or a kiss.

Thursday—Read Amos 9:11-15

This references the restoration of David's kingdom. Make a city together using toys. Take down the city. Rebuild. Talk about the way that God rebuilds and restores us.

Friday—Read Micah 5:2-4

This passage is about the coming Messiah, the ruler from Bethlehem. Make star-shaped cookies to prepare for celebrating Jesus the Messiah's birth.

Saturday—Read Isaiah 40:1-5

In this passage, God's people are comforted by the promise of a Messiah. Give each other hugs. Talk about how comforting hugs can be. Imagine Jesus hugging you.