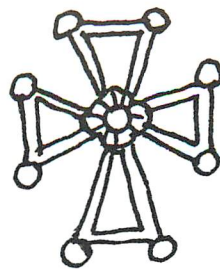
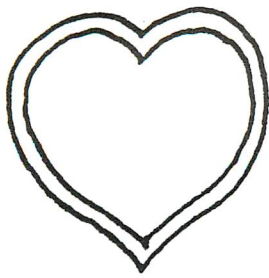


A Special Gift





John and Elizabeth had been watching the movers carry boxes and boxes of stuff into the house next door. Some things looked very interesting, but so far, nothing looked like it belonged to a child. They were beginning to think that the new family next door had no children. As the moving van pulled away, they saw the couple go into their new house alone. No children.

“John! Elizabeth!” Mother was calling them. “Come in and wash up. I want you two to come with me when I take this dish of cookies to our new neighbors.” At the word, “cookies,” the children perked

up and rushed into the house to get ready. In no time at all they were ringing the bell of the new neighbors' house.

"Hello," mother said. "I'm your neighbor, Mary. These are my children, John and Elizabeth. I brought you a dish of cookies and came to say welcome to the neighborhood." Mother had on her special smile.

"Thank you," said a tall tired-looking man. He took the cookies and invited them in to meet his wife. "My name is William. My wife's name is Betty." Betty was at the sink washing dishes and William went up to her and tapped her on the shoulder. She turned and glanced at mother, John and Elizabeth, and smiled; but then she looked directly at William. He spoke slowly to her, moving his lips carefully. "Betty, these are our neighbors, Mary, John and Elizabeth."

Betty came over to them and said, "Nice to meet you." Her voice sounded different, but she was smiling just like mother, a special, nice smile.

"You've probably guessed that my wife can't hear. She can understand what you say if she is looking at your lips. Please speak carefully so she can read your lips."

"We brought you some cookies and came to welcome you to our neighborhood," mother said slowly.

Betty took the cookies and said, "Thank you." She smiled again and John and Elizabeth knew she would be a good neighbor. After a few moments talking with William, mother said she knew they must be very busy and said good-bye. The children shook hands with Betty and William and followed mother home.

In the months that went by, the children got to know Betty and William very well. They felt funny talking to Betty at first, but soon got used to it. They also got used to looking for William to come home from work each day. He always gave a special beep with his car horn when he saw them. It was a special signal between William and the children.

Today when William came home he had a big bunch of flowers and a gift box in his hands. "It must be a special day," John said.

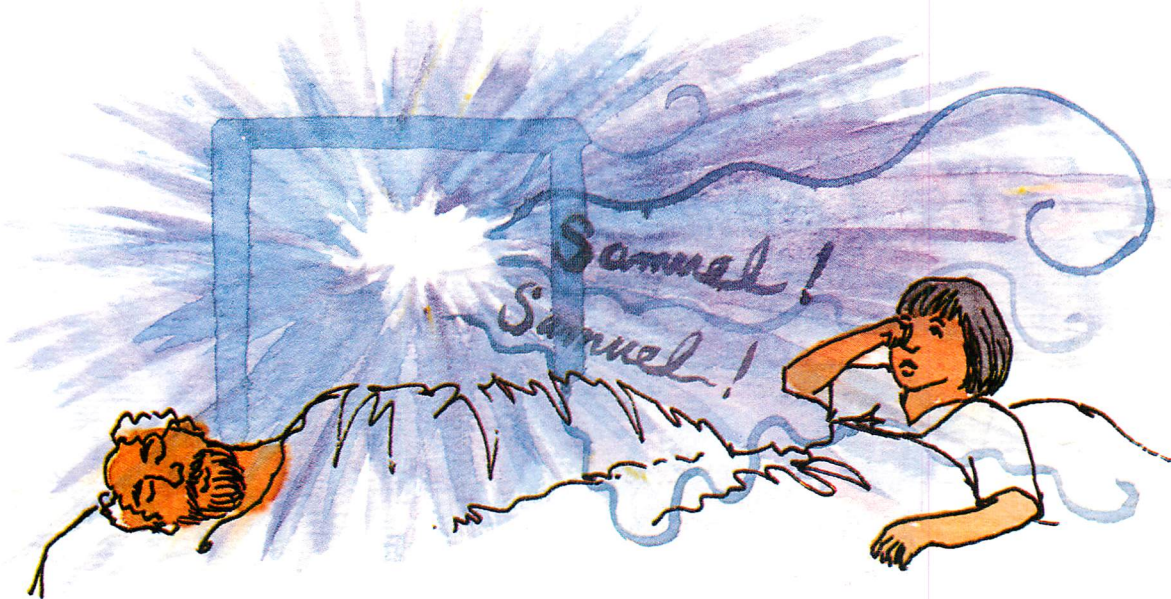
"Maybe it's their anniversary," Elizabeth said. "We'd better not bother them."

The children were playing on their swing set when William walked over to them. "Come over after supper with your parents. It's Betty's birthday and she baked a cake. She wants to share it with you."

After supper the family went next door for a visit. "Mother," Elizabeth said, "I wish I had known it was Betty's birthday. I would have brought her a gift to show her I love her."

William heard what Elizabeth said. "Betty doesn't need a present from you to know you love her. She knows that already. Let me show you something she made for me a long time ago. She made it because I felt the same way you feel and wondered how I could show her that I love her." William went into another room and came back with a needlepoint picture Betty had made. It said, "If you love me, just smile."

Elizabeth read it and went over to Betty who was looking at dad to see what he was saying. She tapped Betty on the shoulder and when she turned to look at Elizabeth, Elizabeth gave her a big, special smile. Betty knew at once what Elizabeth was trying to tell her. She hugged Elizabeth and gave her a big, special smile right back.



God Calls a Boy Named Samuel

Long ago there lived a woman named Hannah. She loved her husband very much, but they had no children. One day Hannah went to the temple and prayed to God for a child. She told God she would give the child to the Lord to serve him. A priest named Eli saw

Hannah praying, but he could not hear what she was saying. Eli told Hannah she would have what she prayed for.

Hannah had a son and called him Samuel. When he was old enough, she took Samuel to the temple as she had promised. Samuel lived at the temple and helped Eli.

Eli had two sons, but they were not good men. When Eli got old, he went blind. Samuel helped him. One night Samuel was in bed asleep, but a voice woke him up. He thought it was Eli, but Eli said he had not called. This happened two more times. Eli realized it was the Lord who was calling Samuel and told Samuel to say to the voice, "Speak, my Lord, I will listen."

Again the voice called Samuel and Samuel stood up and said, "Speak, my Lord, I will listen." God spoke to Samuel. As Samuel grew up he always listened to God and told the people what God wanted them to do. He was a man the people loved and respected because he did God's work.

Based on Samuel 1 and 2

The Bible tells us of God's Love for us



Unit I: The Bible

Session 1—A Special Gift

Key Concepts

1. God loves us; his love is a special gift to us.
2. We respond to God's gift of love.
3. All people, past, present and future, are called to respond to God's love.
4. The Bible is, in part, an historic account of God's calling people, and their response to his gift of love.
5. Accepting God's love is a privilege.

Objectives

Students will

1. Analyze how God shows his love for us.
2. Describe ways we respond to God's gift of love.
3. Draw a picture to symbolically represent God's love.
4. Recall how God showed his love for us and for the people in the Bible.

Background for Teacher

This year's course of study centers on our belief that God loves us, that this love is a great gift that he has freely and generously given us, and that we must respond to that great gift of love by accepting it and sharing it with others.

The first lesson will develop this understanding and show that the Bible is our source of knowledge of how others were called to respond to God's gift of love. Both in the Old and New Testaments we find many examples of God's love. We also find that people were often called by God to do something in return for that gift of love. Many times the people involved had great tasks to accomplish to help others come closer to God and feel his love more deeply. Often the people God chose doubted their ability; but God's love for them gave these individuals the strength, knowledge and ability to do their task.

Stress throughout this introductory lesson and throughout the year that God does love us and shows us his love every day. We love God and can show him our love every day in many ways. We don't have to do extraordinary things like many of the people we will read about this year; one of the ways we show our love of God is by loving others.

Get to know the children you will be working with all year long. Keep a pad and pencil handy at all times and jot down notes about the children as the year progresses. Meet their parents.

Be sure to give each child some personal, individual time and attention during each lesson.

Especially during this lesson, be sure to talk to each child. Tell each one how special he/she is to you and to God.

This is also your opportunity to find out about the abilities of the children you will be teaching. Note which are better readers, which are average and which are poor readers. Note which are shy and which are outgoing. Note their behavior patterns, attention spans, attitudes, artistic ability, talent. From what you observe today, and in future sessions, you will make adjustments in class activities throughout the year. If it is possible, make notes as the lesson is in progress, or jot down pertinent information after class.

Materials Needed

If possible, have on hand:

- A heart (a valentine type will do)
- A cross, candle, candleholder, Bible, table for altar area
- A large gift box with a bow and a tag, "for YOU"
- A children's Bible
- An adult Bible
- Pencils

Also useful:

- A chart of the books of the Bible or any other chart depicting basic information about the Bible
- Pictures of Bible people
- Crayons, pencils, scissors

Procedure

Getting the room ready: Before class have on display the gift box with the tag "for YOU" and pin up on the bulletin board or tape to the chalkboard a large paper heart or draw a large heart on the chalkboard. Be sure the room is neat, well-lit, airy and comfortable. Have a candle with holder, cross and Bible set up as a permanent altar area in the room. (Perhaps on a desk, cabinet, card table, snack table, or even the ledge of the chalkboard.)

1. As the children enter the class, greet each one individually and make a personal remark to each, such as, "How nice you look. I love your dress," etc.

When children are settled at their places (you may let them choose their own or assign seats) and it is time to begin class, introduce yourself and have them introduce themselves. Say you are glad to be their teacher and the course of study for this year will be one they all will enjoy.

Announce that each week class will start with a prayer. Light the candle and have everyone say the Lord's Prayer together. (You may want to have a

large chart of the prayer in your room to help those who may not know it yet.) (10 min.)

2. Draw the children's attention to the gift box and heart and ask for their comments on them. If no one volunteers any remarks, ask a specific child what it means when someone gives a gift. Accept all answers as this is an open-ended question with no right or wrong answers, just opinions. Wrap up the discussion by stating that this year students will learn about a special gift God gave us, his love.

(5 min.)

3. Pass out the texts and pencils and have the children write their names on their books. Have them open to the first lesson and look at the pictures. The pictures and symbols all show love. Have the children take turns talking about the pictures. (A boy hugging his dog, a mother kissing her baby, a teen couple holding hands, a grandmother hugging her granddaughter, etc.) Don't let the discussion take too long. Draw attention to the symbols and tell the children these also show love. The heart is most obvious. Tell them that the circle represents the eternity of God and his love for us. When people get married they exchange rings to symbolize the eternity of their love for each other. The cross represents God's love for us when he sent us Jesus.

In the blank space provided, have the children draw their own symbol of love. (10 min.)

4. Have the children take turns reading the first story, "If You Love Me, Just Smile!" After the reading have the children answer these questions:

Do people need words to tell someone how they feel?

How did Elizabeth tell Betty how she felt?

How did William tell the children he was glad to see them when he came home each day?

Now lead the children into discussing how God shows his love for us. Answers will vary. Ask: "How did Betty respond to Elizabeth's show of love?" After children have answered, ask: "How do we respond to God's love?" Again answers will vary. "Betty couldn't hear Elizabeth say I love you, but she could see it. How can you show God you love him? Can you tell me some of the ways?" Encourage children to talk about praying, helping each other, etc. How would you act in church? (10 min.)

5. Hold up the Bible and say to the children, "The Bible tells us a lot about God's love for us and how we show our love for God. Can any of you tell me a Bible story you know that shows God's love for someone and that person's love for God?" Children may recall from previous years the story of Daniel, the birth of Jesus, the wedding at Cana. You might want to read a short Bible story to the class from a children's Bible if there is time. A brief version of Noah and the Ark would do.

"In this first unit we're going to learn about peo-

ple whom God loved and who were called by God to respond to his love. Many people in the Bible did just that. But people today can do the same thing. Everyone is called to respond to God's gift of love. People who lived long ago were; people who live now are; and people who will be living a hundred years from now will be called to respond to God's gift of love.

(5 min.)

6. "Now let's read another story about someone else who was called to respond to God's gift of love." Have the children look at the next story in the lesson. You may read it to them or they may take turns reading. Discuss the story with these questions: Did Hannah love God? Did God love Hannah? How did God show his love for Hannah? How did Hannah respond to God's gift of love? Who called Samuel? How did Samuel respond to God's call? (5 min.)

7. "Now let's look at page 10. What is the book in the picture? That's right, it's a Bible. Does anyone know the Armenian words for Bible?" (If no one knows, tell them the Bible is called ASDVADZASHOONCH, The Breath of God — or SOORP KEERK, Holy Book).

"Let's write those titles on the picture." (10 min.)

8. End with reading a passage from the Bible about God's love: Psalm 117.

Praise the Lord, all nations!

Extol him, all peoples!

For great is his steadfast love toward us;

Praise the Lord!

(If time permits, you might want to discuss the psalm.) (5 min.)

Closing prayer: Hayr Mer.

Homework: Learn the names for the Bible in Armenian.

Extending the Lesson

If you need to extend the lesson, read from the children's Bible other stories of people who were called by God to do something special. Suggestions: The Annunciation—Mary's call to bear the Son of God and the angels' visit to Joseph (Luke 1:1-56, Matthew 1:18-25); Zacharias' call to have a son that would be one of God's men (Luke 1:1-56); Gideon's call to save Israel (Judges 6); Job (The Book of Job); the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10).

A children's Bible, the Arch Books, Palm Tree Books are good sources for Bible stories that are short and written in language the children can understand.

If your church has filmstrips of Bible figures called by God to do special tasks, you might want to use one here instead of reading.

The children could write a brief story of how God might call them to do something.

Vocabulary

Bible: The collection of books about God and his people.

Asdvadzashoonch: The Armenian word for Bible.

Soorp Keerk: Another Armenian word for Bible.

Samuel: The name of a person in the Bible who heard God's call.

Hannah: The name of a woman who asked God for something special.

Eli: The name of a priest in our story.

extol: To give very high and special praise.

steadfast: Always lasting, strong, steady, confident.

faithfulness: Loyalty, trustworthiness.

endures: Lasts, withstands.

The vocabulary words above will come up in the lesson for today. If your class is made up of average and below-average readers, you might want to list the words on the board and read them to the children before the stories are read. This will help them pronounce the words.

Children can make a vocabulary sheet, vocabulary cards, and add to them as the year progresses. From time to time, these can be referred to so that the children will retain this knowledge.

Session 2—Moses

Key Concepts

1. Moses was called to respond to God's gift of love by leading God's chosen people out of bondage in Egypt.
2. A new covenant between God and man was formed called the Ten Commandments.
3. By following the Ten Commandments, we can live happy lives.
4. Sometimes following the Commandments may not be easy, but God's love will help us.

Objectives

Students will

1. Read the story of Moses and identify key people and places.
2. Match the Ten Commandments with brief explanations of each.
3. Begin to memorize the Ten Commandments.
4. Relate the necessity of rules and the importance of good rules by reading the second story and answering questions about rules in their own lives.
5. Make sandcast Ten Commandment plaques.

Background for Teacher

The nation of Israel was enslaved in Egypt (after the people had moved there at the invitation of Pharaoh during the time of Joseph) because the later Phar-

aohs feared the Israelites would outnumber the Egyptians and take over the nation. Moses was born of Israelite parents in Egypt about 1520 B.C. At that time the Pharaoh ordered the execution of all Israelite children in order to keep their number down. Because of this terrible decree, Moses was hidden by his mother in a basket among the bulrushes of the riverbank. He was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter who wanted to keep the baby as her own child. She secured the assistance of none other than Moses' own mother to nurse and raise the baby until he was old enough to be brought to the palace and taught the things a prince should know. Thus, the first 40 years of his life were spent in Egypt in luxury. But he never forgot his ancestry.

Moses' first attempt to help his own people ended in failure. When he saw an Egyptian soldier beating an Israelite he became so angry he killed the soldier and hid the body. The next day he encountered two Israelites arguing. He approached them but they said they feared he would kill them as he had killed the Egyptian. Realizing that there had been witnesses to his crime and that Pharaoh would find out, he fled from Egypt. He went to Midian where he spent a 40-year period as a shepherd.

In Midian, Moses lived in the home of a priest named Jethro and married his daughter Zipporah. As shepherd of his father-in-law's flock, Moses got first-hand knowledge of the surrounding area of the Gulf of Aqaba. Little did he realize that through this same area he would one day lead the great nation of Israel.

One day Moses was confronted with a burning bush that did not get consumed by the fire. An angel and then God himself spoke to him. God had heard the prayers of the Israelite slaves in Egypt and was going to help them get free and reach the land of milk and honey he had promised their forefathers. He was going to use Moses to accomplish this. Moses' call to God was indeed significant in Christianity as it was yet another revelation of God to man.

God told Moses to deliver his people, the Israelites, from Egyptian bondage. However, when Moses protested because he felt inadequate, he was assured of divine support, as well as the help of his brother Aaron, to get the people out of Egypt. Aaron, who had remained in Egypt, was an able spokesman for his people, and respected by them. Moses, assured of support and desirous of fulfilling his relationship with God, returned to Egypt to deliver his people.

The new Pharaoh promised, but did not honor his promise, to let the Israelites go. Moses, through God's will, worked a number of miracles to convince the Egyptians of God's power. All attempts to reason with Pharaoh failed so God brought 10 plagues on Egypt to force Pharaoh to free the Israelites. He finally let them go after the 10th plague whereby the firstborn of Egyptians were killed by God's angel.