

Session 1

Rolls of scrolls



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The story of the Bible's history is fascinating. Stories were passed on from one generation to the next and then painstakingly copied by scribes onto scrolls. This session introduces children to the making of the Old Testament.

BIBLE TEXT

2 Kings 22:1-13; 23:1-3

FAITH CHALLENGE

We discover the Old Testament.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Read through the entire session, and decide what you will do.
- Set up the room/space for the various activities.
- Gather supplies for the activities you choose to do.
- Prepare a snack (p. 14).

Kids Cluster

1. **Plan an activity for the early arrivals.** Check page 6 for ideas.
2. **If the children do not know each other,** make name tags and play some ice-breaker games (p. 6).
3. **Welcome the children, and gather for a time of singing** (p. 8). Be sure to include action songs, familiar songs, favorite songs, and new songs.

Kids Dig the Bible

Tip

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If there are those who like to act, consider handing out parts ahead of time to “King Josiah Chooses to Obey God” from *Fun Bible Skits 3* by David M. Morrow (Scottsdale, PA: Faith and Life Resources, 2007).

Tip

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Use these questions/ideas as conversation points during the craft time. It is not necessary to sit quietly and reflect on these points, but do include them during other activities.

Tip

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Some people use the terms “Hebrew Scriptures” or “Hebrew Bible” instead of “Old Testament.” “Old Testament” is the Christian name for this material.

Fun Fact

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Scrolls were often stored in clay jars for safe keeping.

Memory tip

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Make an index card with today’s memory verse for children to put in their treasure chests made last session. Children can continue to decorate their chests as an optional activity.

1. **Begin with the theme song**, “I Have the Light of the Lord” (p. 8), or a simple prayer.
2. **Introduce the theme of the day:** We discover the Old Testament.
3. **Show where 2 Kings can be found in your Bible.** Read this Bible story based on 2 Kings 22:1-13; 23:1-3.

Josiah was eight years old when he became king. What an important job for a young boy! Josiah wanted to worship God. He decided to hire carpenters and builders to repair the temple.

During the repairs, the priest found a treasure in the temple.

He shouted with joy, “I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord! Go tell the king!”

King Josiah was so excited that the priest had found a long-lost scroll of God’s laws. What a wonderful treasure! But when the king heard the scroll being read, he said, “The people have not been following God’s teaching. Something must change.”

King Josiah called all the people together. They gathered at the temple. The king read the words in the Book of the Law so that everyone could hear them. Then King Josiah promised to love and worship God with all his heart and soul. And all the people made the same promise.

4. **Talk about the Bible**
 - I wonder why King Josiah was so excited about finding and reading these scrolls.
 - Imagine being excited to open the Bible and read a story.
 - King Josiah was a young king who treasured God’s word. How can we show that we treasure the Bible today?
 - Hearing the scroll read out loud caused the people to change. What story have you heard that made you change your behavior in some way?
5. **Talk about the Book of the Law**, which may have referred to Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is one of the first five books in the Bible and is in a section called the Books of the Law, the Torah, or the Pentateuch (“five books”). This group of writings includes Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These five books were written onto one scroll.
6. **Continue to learn the books of the Bible in order.** Listen to the song “Genesis” (p. 10) to recite the books of the Old Testament together.

Recite together Psalm 19:7: “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple.” Use ideas from page 12 to aid in Bible memory.
7. **Briefly tell about a young shepherd boy’s exciting discovery** of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. Read “Writings Hidden in a Cave” (p. 30). People all over the world were excited about this discovery. Archaeologists studied these scrolls and found they were very close to what the scribes had copied thousands of years before. This young shepherd boy had made a wonderful discovery.

Kids Create

BISCUIT BIBLE SCROLLS

(SMALL GROUP)

Materials: canned biscuits or croissants, butter, cinnamon sugar, pretzel sticks, baking sheet

Divide the children into small groups for this activity, each group with adult supervision, then guide the children in the following:

- Flatten a biscuit to make a long, thin rectangle.
- Spread with a small amount of butter, and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. This can represent the sweetness of the words in the Bible.
- Place a pretzel stick at each end, and roll toward the center. Bake according to directions on the biscuit can.

TIP

While you make and eat these, tell the story of God telling Ezekiel to eat a scroll. Ezekiel ate the scroll and thought it tasted as sweet as honey. This can be found in Ezekiel 3:1-3.

MAKE A SCROLL

(INDIVIDUAL)

Materials: long piece of paper, dowel rods or wooden chopsticks, tape or glue, ribbon

Guide the children in the following:

- Tape or glue wooden sticks to the ends of the paper.
- Roll to form a scroll, and tie a ribbon around it.
- The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. On the scrolls, practice writing in Hebrew by looking at the Hebrew alphabet on page 31.
- Write this session's memory verse in the scroll.

Optional: Make tiny scrolls out of paper and toothpicks. Use self-hardening clay to make pots to store them.

PHYLACTERIES

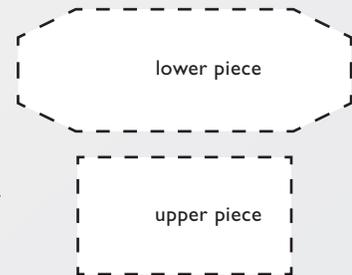
(INDIVIDUAL)

Children will make phylacteries (pockets) containing God's laws. The Hebrew people believed that God had given them important laws to follow. They wore small black leather boxes containing words from the Torah (first five books of the Bible) strapped to their upper left arm or above their forehead.

Materials: a piece of soft black leather, vinyl, or felt 6 by 6 in. / 15 by 15 cm; a thick needle; heavy thread; metal skewer; a thick polystyrene block; paper; pen; ink

Guide the children in the following (adults will need to supervise this activity):

- Cut the piece of leather as shown in the illustration.
- Place the upper piece in the center of the lower piece. Stitch with heavy thread, using a blanket stitch. Leave one short side open.
- Cut a piece of paper small enough to slip into the pocket.
- Copy a verse from the Old Testament onto the paper (particularly from the Torah).
- Roll the paper into a tight bundle, and tie it with thread. Place it inside the pocket.
- Stitch the opening shut, and stitch a second time around.
- Lay the pocket on a polystyrene block, and make a hole with a skewer.
- Thread three long pieces of thread through the hole. Braid each side of three threads into a cord, and knot the end. Tie the pocket onto forehead or arm.



Tip

Scribes followed special rules. Each letter and word was counted and compared with the original text. A page with more than three mistakes was thrown out. A scribe wiped his pen before writing God's name. A scribe did not write one word from memory but said each word before writing it.

COPYCAT SCRIBES

(INDIVIDUAL)

Scribes had very important jobs in the ancient world. There were no photocopiers back then! The scribe's skills were valued because he could write. Few people could read or write at that time. One of the scribe's jobs was to copy manuscripts very carefully, making no mistakes. Scribes wrote with ink on either papyrus, a paper made from stems of a reed plant, or vellum, animal skins that had been cleaned and treated. It was a lot of work to make papyrus paper or vellum, so scribes were careful to do their best work when writing.

Materials: paper, markers, colored pencils, pens, calligraphy markers (optional)

Guide the children in the following:

- Choose a memory text from this series to copy several times.
- Use markers to try to print in a calligraphy style (see p. 31).

Encourage children to take their time and do their best work, pretending to be scribes in Bible times.

Kids Move

HIDE AND SEEK

(GROUP)

The priest found a hidden scroll, and King Josiah rejoiced. Many years later, a shepherd boy found the Dead Sea scrolls in a cave. This caused much rejoicing as well. Hide and seek can be played in a couple of ways.

- A scroll can be hidden and the group needs to find it.
- A child could play the role of the shepherd boy while the rest of the group hides and pretends to be the hidden Dead Sea scrolls.

CARRY GOD'S MESSAGE

(GROUP)

This game is played like “Steal the bacon.”

Materials: an object to represent the “message”

Guide the children in the following:

- Form two lines of players, and number the players on each team.
- The leader places the “message” midway between the lines, and calls out numbers at random.
- The players whose number is called must try to take the “message” and return to their lines without being tagged by the other.
- A player may not be tagged if she or he is not holding the message.
- Successfully delivering the “message” gives the team a point.
- Renumber the teams occasionally so that players face different opponents.

JOSIAH SAYS

(GROUP)

After hearing the scroll read aloud, King Josiah and the people decided to follow God’s ways. King Josiah was a good leader in that he led his people to honor God.

Guide the children in the following:

- One child plays King Josiah, directing the others in actions, just like the game “Simon Says.”
- When King Josiah says, “King Josiah says jump in place (or another action),” follow the action.
- If King Josiah simply says, “Jump in place,” do not follow the action.
- Children who do the actions that are not preceded by “King Josiah says” are out of the game.
- Play until only one child is left, and he or she is the new King Josiah.

MIRROR GAME

(PARTNERS)

Scribes worked to copy the Old Testament writings word for word over and over again. They had to copy exactly what was on the page.

Guide the children in the following:

- Partner A moves slowly, facing Partner B.
- Partner B copies every move Partner A makes.
- Switch roles.

Closing

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For closing ideas, see page 7.

“WRITINGS HIDDEN IN A CAVE”

FROM “THE BIBLE: GOD’S GOOD NEWS”

by Phyllis Martens. (*Come and See Herald Press Bible School Series, 1989*).

One day a Bedouin shepherd boy was wandering through the bare hills near the Dead Sea, looking for a lost goat. The steep sides of the hills were full of caves. The boy threw a stone into a cave and heard something break. The shepherds found the stone had hit an earthen jar in which a scroll had been stored. In the caves, they found more writings in jars.

One book, Isaiah, was made of 17 leather sheets sewed together to make a roll 24 ft. / 7 m long. There were copies of every Old Testament book except Esther. These became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Until then, the oldest copies of the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament books) available were made in the ninth century. The 2,000-year-old Dead Sea Scrolls were made 1,000 years earlier! Yet scholars found very little difference between the early and later copies. The scribes had been very careful all those hundreds of years.

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