

# Lesson 9: The Prophets Zephaniah, Nahum & Habakkuk

**Objectives:** Students will...

- 1) Learn about these three prophets, who they preached to and what they said.
- 2) See that God will indeed punish those who do evil, even when it takes time.
- 3) Do activities to remember to whom did they preach, what was their message and to see the last prophets who spoke against Judah, Assyria, and Babylon before the destruction of Judah.

**Accommodations:** How will I accommodate individual needs of students? See Lesson 1

## Supplies:

### Teacher Materials (provided in classroom)

- Bible(s)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Chart (See Template)
- Stickers for Attendance
- Lesson Review Visual Aids – one for teacher to share at the beginning of each class
- Prophets Timeline Chart – one per student to keep in class for duration of lessons
- Prophets Timeline Chart Answer Key – one for teacher
- Matching Game – one set per two students cut out on cardstock paper (can use sets from Lesson 1)
- Prophets Matching Game Sheet – one for every two students
- Map and Questions – one per student
- Map and Questions Answer Key – one for teacher

### Optional:

- Storybook or visuals to show students if available
- Map of Captivities – one for teacher (visual aid)
- Prophets Word Search – one per student

### Snack:

- Bread or crackers (to represent living on bread and water)      enough to share
- Napkins      one per student
- Water/Cup      one per student

### Lesson:

#### 1) Introduction to Lesson

5 minutes

As students enter, welcome them and help find a chair to sit at. Take attendance.

\*Have Bibles for those who need them and Lesson Review Visual Aid Sheet to show students.

Show the lesson review visual aid sheet.

**Can anyone remember what we have studied so far? Look at each picture, name what happened for the lesson we have already studied, and what we learned from that lesson.**



**Lesson 1:** The prophets were those that spoke the word of God. They spoke to bring the people back to God and taught about Jesus. There are many prophets in the Old Testament all are important.

**Lesson 2:** Elijah was cared for by God through the ravens and widow and Elijah stood up for God when he opposed the false prophets of Baal. We learned that God is the Only True God.

**Lesson 3:** Elisha received a double portion because of his boldness and willingness to serve God. Because of God Elisha helped a widow, stopped the Syrian army, and raised a boy from the dead. We learned that God is powerful and willing to provide.

**Lesson 4:** Jonah disobeyed God when told to go warn the Ninevites. After a storm and being rescued by a fish that God provided, Jonah obeyed but still did not want God to be merciful to the Ninevites even though Jonah enjoyed God's mercy for himself. We learn that God is forgiving and loving and willing to give second chances.

**Lesson 5:** Amos and Hosea were two prophets sent to preach to wicked Israel. Hosea married a woman who did not love him back to show the sad relationship the Israelites had with God. Amos told the people that God expects justice and righteousness and that the people (and us) are to respect and care for others in need.

**Lesson 6:** Joel and Micah were two prophets that preached to Judah. Joel warned the people that God uses natural calamities to encourage ungodly people to repent and turn to Him when he sent the locusts. Micah taught that God is merciful but expects us to be merciful as well and help the poor and needy.

**Lesson 7:** Isaiah was a faithful prophet who listed many prophecies concerning Jesus, all of which came true. Isaiah spoke that God is able to save and willing to suffer to redeem His people.

**Lesson 8:** Jeremiah continued to speak God's message that the people needed to turn back to God even though no one would listen. He spoke to Judah in the last decades before Babylon destroyed the nation. We learned that we can and need to stand up for God even when we are young.

## **2) The Three Prophets in Judah's Last Days**

**20-25 minutes**

**Optional:** Have visual aids ready to show students if available

**Say: Today we will learn about the other three prophets, beside Jeremiah, who spoke after the fall of Israel and who tried to warn the people of Judah and some of the surrounding nations of their coming destruction.**

**The first prophet we will look at today is Nahum. Let's all turn to Nahum Chapter 1 now. Provide Bibles and help as needed.**

**Say: Remember Jonah who didn't want to speak to the Ninevites because they were so evil and he knew that if they repented, God wouldn't have destroyed them?**

**Jonah would have loved to have been there to hear Nahum preach the final destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria years later. Assyria was known as the fiercest, most cruel, and arrogant nation. They obviously did not repent for very long and their wickedness and sins leads God to send Nahum to tell them that their nation would be totally destroyed.**

**Nahum's book shows that no one can have sinful disregard of God and His righteous standards. God will bring swift and definite judgment on those who willfully turn away from Him. Any nation that deliberately defies God and hurts innocent people will face God's punishment.**

## **Nahum**

**Explain: Nahum is speaking about Nineveh and then switches to Judah and tells them that Nineveh will harm them no more.**

Read **Nahum 1:1-3, 12-15**

**What does God say is going to happen to Nineveh?** Nineveh will be completely overthrown

**Why?** Because of their evil deeds and wickedness

**What is the result of Nineveh being destroyed for those in Judah does in verses 12-13?** Because God will overthrow Nineveh, they will not be able to hurt or go to war against Judah anymore.

**Judah is promised deliverance. Problems will not come from Assyria anymore.**

**In 1:15 Zion (Jerusalem) will rejoice when they see the enemy of God destroyed by the will and command of God.**



## **Habakkuk**

The next prophet we will look at is Habakkuk. Habakkuk speaks to God concerning the evil he sees in Judah. God tells Habakkuk that God will deal with the evil people and they will be punished, and God was going to use the wicked Babylonians to do it! Habakkuk preaches just a few years from Judah's total destruction. Assyria had already fallen by the Babylonians as Nahum had predicted at this point. So we see that Israel was captured by Assyria, Assyria was destroyed, and now Judah is to be captured by Babylon and then later God says He will destroy Babylon for their wickedness also!

Read **1:1-6**

**Why was Habakkuk upset?** Because of all the evil he saw in Judah.

**What was God's response?** I'm sending Babylon to punish them.

**Habakkuk addressed his book to God, not people. He discussed problems of suffering and justice. He warned the people that the Babylonians were coming. He reminded the righteous that even when it looks like the wicked are doing well, God is in control and will rightfully deal with them.**

**1:1-6**

**Habakkuk asks:**

**How come the Lord is not punishing the wicked people of Judah?**

**God's response:**

**I am going to punish them! I am raising up the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to judge wicked Judah.**

Read **1:17-2:4**

**Habakkuk asks:**

**How can a holy God use wicked people to punish the sins of others?**

**God's response:**

**Wait and see the sure judgment of God upon all the wicked!**

**God responds that the just will live by faith. God will take care of all situations.**

**And, God calls for the faithfulness of His people.**

Read **Habakkuk 2:5 and 8**

**What does God say He will do to Babylon after they are done destroying Judah?** He will punish them for their wickedness and they will be plundered.

Read **Habakkuk 3:1, 17-19**

**What was Habakkuk's response to God's news of sending the Babylonians against Judah?** He prayed! He remained faithful saying that even if there is no food and trouble all around, he will trust in God and know God will take care of him!

**We can learn from Habakkuk that:**

- 1. Evil is self-destructive – it will never work and will never last.**
- 2. The faithful can always rely on God.**
- 3. When we deal with doubt and struggles, God invites us to turn to Him and wait for His answer.**
- 4. God can and will judge His people when they become wicked. And, He can use someone more wicked than they to do it!**
- 5. But, know that the wicked, even though they might be used by God, are always responsible for their own wickedness and will be punished as well.**
- 6. Prayer is the answer and is necessary for the faithful and those turning away from sin to God.**

**\*Stop here, go to Activity Sheet (See section 3 below) and do the first 2 questions on the right. Hand out pencils and read the directions aloud. Do answers as a class. When done, have students put down their pencils and go back to the last prophet to study today. Zephaniah.**

## **Zephaniah**

**Read 1:1-6, 14-17** Judgment on Judah as the day of the Lord

**In verse 1, Zephaniah traces his family back to four generations to King Hezekiah. Therefore, Zephaniah is of royal ancestry and would be welcome at the royal palace.**

**Zephaniah focused on the coming “day of the Lord,” which would destroy Judah. Zephaniah stated that even though there was wickedness, there was hope for the humble and righteous and God would bring restoration.**

**Day of the Lord Read:**

**1:1-3 – would be total destruction upon Judah and Jerusalem**

**1:14-17 – the judgement described**

**Read 2:1-3**

**What were the people of Judah to do?** Seek the Lord and repent

**What would God do for the humble and righteous?** Provide hope and help if they sought the Lord for help and protection.

**Zephaniah mentions many other nations that God was going to punish for their wickedness.**

**Read 2:4-9, 12-13**

**Zephaniah gives God’s judgment on the surrounding nations – Philistia (to the west vs 4-7), Moab and Ammon (to the east vs 8-11), Ethiopia (to the south v12), Assyria (to the north vs 13-15).**

**Read 3:12-17**

**What does God say He will do to Judah?** Clear the enemy, be present with them, care and leave a remnant that will be humble and seek the Lord.

**The purpose of judgment was to bring salvation and restoration in the establishment of Jesus’ eternal kingdom. Zephaniah predicts the redemption, restoration and salvation with the coming of Christ to those who believe and obey.**

**Lessons:**

- 1. God gives assurance that humble seekers will be safe in the day of judgment.**

## 2. God's purpose is not vengeance but to cleanse, refine and save those who will allow Him to save them.

**What do these three prophets show us for our lives today?** We need to turn and remain faithful to God. He will protect those who do, but will punish those who aren't willing to repent and change. God is the God of all the world. He controls nations, kings, powers and authorities. He can and will put a stop to evil when the time is right and we can trust in Him to do so.

### 3) Map and Questions Activity

Hand out one sheet to each student with pencil crayons. Read the directions aloud, go through the questions as a class and help as needed.

\*See answer key for answers.


Show students the map on the left of where Judah and Israel were taken. Then show them the map at the bottom and help them draw a line from Judah to Babylon and Israel to Assyria.

Ask:

**Does it ever pay to be evil and do evil things according to these three prophets?** No. Everything evil will be punished and stopped. Only the humble, righteous and obedient to God will be safe and secure.

15-20 minutes

**THE DIVIDED KINGDOMS**



**WHO DID EACH PROPHET PROPHESY AGAINST?**

Sukhom: \_\_\_\_\_

Habakkuk (There are two): \_\_\_\_\_

and: \_\_\_\_\_

Zephaniah: \_\_\_\_\_

**TRUE OR FALSE**

**CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER AND THEN IF IT IS FALSE, WRITE THE CORRECT ANSWER INSTEAD.**

1. Nahum spoke against Babylon. T F
2. Zephaniah spoke of the day of the Lord. T F
3. Zephaniah spoke that the wicked would be safe. T F
4. God can use even the wicked to punish others. T F
5. God punishes those who are faithful. T F
6. The faithful won't have any difficulties. T F
7. Habakkuk spoke and asked God questions. T F
8. God got mad because Habakkuk spoke. T F
9. God will punish those who are wicked. T F

**JOIN THE MAP BELOW.** Draw a line from Jerusalem (Judah) to where they were taken captive. Then draw a line from Samaria (Israel) to where they were taken captive. Why were the people of Israel taken to captivity? \_\_\_\_\_

How did God try to stop them from having to go? \_\_\_\_\_



### 4) Prophets Timeline

5 minutes

Hand out one sheet to each student. You will gather them up again for later use. Read through the top part of the sheet showing the prophets of the Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

Ask them:

**What time did Jeremiah preach?** During the end of Judah and its captivity.

**What did we learn last time about Jeremiah?** See Teacher Answer Key

**What can we fill in under the three prophets we studied for major events?** See Teacher Answer Key

**What did we see in today's lesson about the power of God?** See Teacher Answer Key

**Prophets**

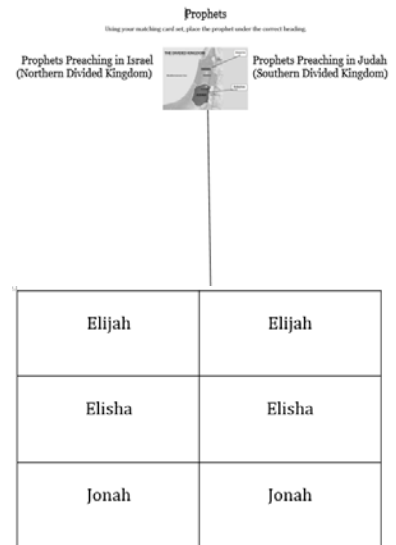
Prophets who spoke during the time of the divided kingdom and the exile. Some and others were based on long periods of time and were not exact.

Divided Kingdoms	Exile of Israel	Exile of Judah	Exile of Babylon	Exile of Persia
<b>Prophets of Israel</b>	<b>Prophets of Judah</b>	<b>Prophets of Babylon</b>	<b>Prophets of Persia</b>	
<b>Isaiah</b>	<b>Jeremiah</b>	<b>Ezekiel</b>	<b>Daniel</b>	
<b>Amos</b>	<b>Lamentations</b>	<b>Baruch</b>		
<b>Jonah</b>	<b>Psalm 137</b>			
<b>Micah</b>	<b>Isaiah 40-66</b>			
<b>Nahum</b>	<b>Isaiah 67-69</b>			
<b>Zephaniah</b>	<b>Isaiah 70-71</b>			
<b>Habakkuk</b>	<b>Isaiah 72-73</b>			
<b>Jeremiah</b>	<b>Isaiah 74-75</b>			
<b>Ezekiel</b>	<b>Isaiah 76-77</b>			
<b>Daniel</b>	<b>Isaiah 78-79</b>			
<b>Baruch</b>	<b>Isaiah 80-81</b>			
<b>Lamentations</b>	<b>Isaiah 82-83</b>			
<b>Psalm 137</b>	<b>Isaiah 84-85</b>			
<b>Isaiah 40-66</b>	<b>Isaiah 86-87</b>			
<b>Isaiah 67-69</b>	<b>Isaiah 88-89</b>			
<b>Isaiah 70-71</b>	<b>Isaiah 90-91</b>			
<b>Isaiah 72-73</b>	<b>Isaiah 92-93</b>			
<b>Isaiah 74-75</b>	<b>Isaiah 94-95</b>			
<b>Isaiah 76-77</b>	<b>Isaiah 96-97</b>			
<b>Isaiah 78-79</b>	<b>Isaiah 98-99</b>			
<b>Isaiah 80-81</b>	<b>Isaiah 100-101</b>			
<b>Isaiah 82-83</b>	<b>Isaiah 102-103</b>			
<b>Isaiah 84-85</b>	<b>Isaiah 104-105</b>			
<b>Isaiah 86-87</b>	<b>Isaiah 106-107</b>			
<b>Isaiah 88-89</b>	<b>Isaiah 108-109</b>			
<b>Isaiah 90-91</b>	<b>Isaiah 110-111</b>			
<b>Isaiah 92-93</b>	<b>Isaiah 112-113</b>			
<b>Isaiah 94-95</b>	<b>Isaiah 114-115</b>			
<b>Isaiah 96-97</b>	<b>Isaiah 116-117</b>			
<b>Isaiah 98-99</b>	<b>Isaiah 118-119</b>			
<b>Isaiah 100-101</b>	<b>Isaiah 120-121</b>			
<b>Isaiah 102-103</b>	<b>Isaiah 122-123</b>			
<b>Isaiah 104-105</b>	<b>Isaiah 124-125</b>			
<b>Isaiah 106-107</b>	<b>Isaiah 126-127</b>			
<b>Isaiah 108-109</b>	<b>Isaiah 128-129</b>			
<b>Isaiah 110-111</b>	<b>Isaiah 130-131</b>			
<b>Isaiah 112-113</b>	<b>Isaiah 132-133</b>			
<b>Isaiah 114-115</b>	<b>Isaiah 134-135</b>			
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<b>Isaiah 126-127</b>	<b>Isaiah 146-147</b>			
<b>Isaiah 128-129</b>	<b>Isaiah 148-149</b>			
<b>Isaiah 130-131</b>	<b>Isaiah 150-151</b>			
<b>Isaiah 132-133</b>	<b>Isaiah 152-153</b>			
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<b>Isaiah 138-139</b>	<b>Isaiah 158-159</b>			
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<b>Isaiah 142-143</b>	<b>Isaiah 162-163</b>			
<b>Isaiah 144-145</b>	<b>Isaiah 164-165</b>			
<b>Isaiah 146-147</b>	<b>Isaiah 166-167</b>			
<b>Isaiah 148-149</b>	<b>Isaiah 168-169</b>			
<b>Isaiah 150-151</b>	<b>Isaiah 170-171</b>			
<b>Isaiah 152-153</b>	<b>Isaiah 172-173</b>			
<b>Isaiah 154-155</b>	<b>Isaiah 174-175</b>			
<b>Isaiah 156-157</b>	<b>Isaiah 176-177</b>			
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<b>Isaiah 164-165</b>	<b>Isaiah 184-185</b>			
<b>Isaiah 166-167</b>	<b>Isaiah 186-187</b>			
<b>Isaiah 168-169</b>	<b>Isaiah 188-189</b>			
<b>Isaiah 170-171</b>	<b>Isaiah 190-191</b>			
<b>Isaiah 172-173</b>	<b>Isaiah 192-193</b>			
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<b>Isaiah 386-387</b>	<b>Isaiah 406-407</b>			
<b>Isaiah 388-389</b>	<b>Isaiah 408-409</b>			
<b>Isaiah 390-391</b>	<b>Isaiah 410-411</b>			
<b>Isaiah 392-393</b>	<b>Isaiah 412-413</b>			
<b>Isaiah 394-395</b>	<b>Isaiah 414-415</b>			
<b>Isaiah 396-397</b>	<b>Isaiah 416-417</b>			
<b>Isaiah 398-399</b>	<b>Isaiah 418-419</b>			
<b>Isaiah 400-401</b>	<b>Isaiah 420-421</b>			
<b>Isaiah 402-403</b>	<b>Isaiah 422-423</b>			
<b>Isaiah 404-405</b>	<b>Isaiah 424-425</b>			
<b>Isaiah 406-407</b>	<b>Isaiah 426-427</b>			
<b>Isaiah 408-409</b>	<b>Isaiah 428-429</b>			
<b>Isaiah 410-411</b>	<b>Isaiah 430-431</b>			
<b>Isaiah 412-413</b>	<b>Isaiah 432-433</b>			
<b>Isaiah 414-415</b>	<b>Isaiah 434-435</b>			
<b>Isaiah 416-417</b>	<b>Isaiah 436-437</b>			
<b>Isaiah 418-419</b>	<b>Isaiah 438-439</b>			
<b>Isaiah 420-421</b>	<b>Isaiah 440-441</b>			
<b>Isaiah 422-423</b>	<b>Isaiah 442-443</b>			
<b>Isaiah 424-425</b>	<b>Isaiah 444-445</b>			
<b>Isaiah 426-427</b>	<b>Isaiah 446-447</b>			
<b>Isaiah 428-429</b>	<b>Isaiah 448-449</b>			

\*Make sure you read the names allowed first as most names are difficult to pronounce.

## 10 minutes

Once you place your card on the sheet, don't move it. Once all students have picked where they want their card, I will then ask you to raise your hand if you placed the prophet under Israel or Judah. I will then give the correct answer. If you got it right, you can keep the prophet card in a pile of "correct" cards. If you got it wrong you will put the card face down on the table. At the end, the student with the most correct cards wins!



<b>Israel:</b>	<b>Judah:</b>
Elijah	Joel
Elisha	Isaiah
Jonah	Micah
Hosea	Nahum
Amos	Jeremiah
	Zephaniah
	Habakkuk

## 15-20 minutes

**alphabets word search:**

Use if you can find the words. They can be up, down, diagonal, forwards, or backwards.

E	M	O	L	V	R	A	B	K	I
C	I	N	J	U	D	H	A	B	B
H	R	I	U	H	T	R	D	U	S
A	E	N	E	N	E	N	E	N	E
R	A	I	Z	J	U	D	A	H	P
D	B	N	A	H	U	M	Z	O	P
P	V	E	E	H	A	B	D	L	P
E	N	E	N	E	N	E	N	E	N
R	A	E	I	L	R	A	L	E	P
C	B	H	A	N	S	P	H	T	M
P	A	N	A	N	A	T	S	L	N
U	J	A	H	P	B	R	O	I	J
R	O	N	I	M	A	L	T	S	A
A	B	A	P	T	V	I	T	P	C
C	A	P	T	V	I	T	P	C	
A	S	S	V	A	K	I	T	P	A
C	H	A	B	H	A	K	E	U	A
A	P	A	P	M	E	I	E	P	C

**words:**

carwash, empire, captivity, righteousness, bubble,  
 tropical, bubble, rubber, champagne, bubble,  
 bubble, bubble, bubble, bubble, bubble, bubble,

Say:

**What did we learn today?** Let students answer.

**Nahum** – Spoke against Nineveh – the Assyrians who had conquered and taken Israel captive and who did not continue in their repentance from Jonah’s time. Nahum also preached during the time of Josiah, just as Jeremiah, and Zephaniah.

**We learned that:**

- 1. God hates violence and wrong.**
- 2. There is a limit to God’s patience.**
- 3. The Lord is against any nation that uses oppression and war to become wealthy.**

**Habakkuk** – Prayed to God about the sins of Judah and the concern of using Babylon to punish them.

**We learned that:**

- 1. Evil is self-destructive – it will never work and will never last.**
- 2. The faithful can always rely on God.**
- 3. When we deal with doubt and struggles, God invites us to turn to Him and wait for His answer.**
- 4. God can and will judge His people when they become wicked. And, He can use someone more wicked than they to do it!**
- 5. But, know that the wicked, even though they might be used by God, are always responsible for their own wickedness and will be punished as well.**
- 6. Prayer is the answer and is necessary for the faithful and those turning away from sin to God.**

**Zephaniah** – Speaks of the day of the Lord – the punishment upon wicked nations.

Zephaniah predicts the redemption, restoration and salvation with the coming of Christ to those who believe and obey.

**We learned that:**

- 1. God gives assurance that humble seekers will be safe in the day of judgment.**
- 2. God’s purpose is not vengeance but to cleanse, refine and save those who will allow Him to save them.**

Optional questions to ask:

**What did you like best about today’s Bible lesson?**

**What questions do you have about today’s lesson?**

## **9) Learning the Prophets Through Song**

**5-10 minutes**

**Go to the front of your Bible and find the Table of Contents. You will see a long list of books of the Bible in the Old Testament. Remember that the order in the Bible is not necessarily the order in which the prophets lived and worked. But to make it easy for us, we will learn the books in the order listed in the Bible.**

Sing the Old Testament books to the tune of the Alphabet song. “Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers” (A,B,C,D,E,F,G)... you will have to repeat the alphabet tune twice to get through all the books.

When you get to Song of Solomon, that is when the alphabet tune starts again, that is where you will start each week, even though Song of Solomon is not a prophet book.



**Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.**

Repeat this section 2 times each week as a way to practice learning. Encourage students to practice at home as well. You may even decide to offer a prize or praise for each student who can recite all the books of the prophets from memory as you go through the quarter.

**10) Optional: Memory Verse 2-5 minutes**

For this quarter, each week have the students go to **Hebrews 1:1-2** in their Bibles and read the verse allowed as a class 2 times. Other options include:

- You saying a word and having them repeat it as you go through the verse
- Have students repeat a small phrase ex: "God, who at various times" a few times before working on the next phrase.
- Have students repeat after each other
- Ask students to think of hand gestures. Ex: Point up when you say "GOD", point to their mouths when they say "SPOKE", etc. and then go through verses as a class with gestures.

**Hebrews 1:1-2**

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.*

**11) Optional – Snack: Your choice 5 minutes**

Ensure you check for allergies first. Hand out a few pieces to each student and say,  
**Let's all remember that God loves us so much and will protect us when we tell others about Jesus. We need to pray to and rely on God to help us even when others around us are doing evil.**

Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands if needed. Review with students by asking them questions from the lesson again and discuss any questions they have while snacking. What did they like best about today's Bible reading? What questions do they have about today's lesson? How was God's power shown?

**12) Close in prayer**

\*If desired, ask the children if they have any prayer requests and write them down to help you remember. Then ask all children to bow their heads and fold their hands to pray.

**Thank You Lord for all You provide us. Thank You for Your Son who has given us Your complete words and will through the Bible. Who obeyed You and died for our sins. Forgive us when we sin and help us to learn Your words by looking in the Bible. Help us to take the time to devote and dedicate our lives to You, as the prophets did, eager to share Your word with others, for You are worthy, good, awesome and loving towards us. Help us be merciful and forgiving as You are. Pray for those who could not be here today, and pray for those here who have special issues in their life. Be with them, guide, comfort, and bless them. In Jesus' name, amen.**