Three Computer Lab Lesson Plans
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Psalm 8  |  Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath  |  Pentecost

The first two lessons were originally written by me for the volunteer writing team project at rotation.org. The Pentecost lesson appears in my book “Teaching with Computers in Christian Education.” Since originally posting this doc, I’ve created a Widow of Zarephath worksheet at www.sundaysoftware.com/Elijah-Jonah/ElijahWidow.worksheet.pdf

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PSALM 8
COMPUTER WORKSHOP

Key/Memory Verse: Psalm 8

You can memorize as much or all of the Psalm as you can. Depending on the number of computers, age of students, software you choose, and time you have, you could assign different parts of the Psalm to different stations. Each station works on a part, then all students rotate to each station to learn from the presentation/verse scramble there.

Objectives for Rotation

Find Psalm 8 in the Old Testament of the Bible and memorize portions of it.

Learn some attributes of Psalms: David is credited with writing many; Psalms were/are songs and prayers used to worship God.

Contemplate God’s amazing creation to discover a feeling of wonder. Discuss ways to pay attention to God’s world so as to nurture this sense of awe. Discuss the goal of creation as one which puts us in awe of God.

Explore our relationship to God: compared to God’s vast creation we seem small, but yet we are important and valuable to God! Recognize that this is both humbling and uplifting.

Objectives for Computer Workshop

The computer lab will be focusing on memorizing the verse. While it would be nice if a long term memory was created, the goal of the lab is to create enough of a working memory so that the student can ponder the Psalm further, and use these memories to go deeper in the other workshops. It is therefore recommended that the older students go in the computer workshop FIRST so that the memorization can become a foundation which later workshops can build on.

Materials List

Bibles
Binoculars
Chalk or markers
Chalkboard, dry erase board, or newsprint pad
Computers/Monitors
Construction paper, red
Paper
Pencils
Pictures of images in Psalm 8
Scissors
Software: Let’s Talk CD, or Cal & Marty’s Scripture Memory Game and/or Kid Pix 3; Awesome Bible Stories [Optional]
Tape
Advance Preparation

Read the Bible Background.

Cut a large heart from red construction paper and attach it to the top of a pair of binoculars

Make sure the software is installed and preview it.

PRESENTATION

Open - Introduction

Open the lesson by writing an outline of "today's lesson" on the board.
Include which programs you will use and when. Add "what you hope they will learn today."
Begin the lesson by opening Bibles to Psalm 8 and reading the Psalm.

For younger children, bring several pictures that are descriptive of the Psalm's images.
For older children, have someone write a list of the images, things in the Psalm as they are read such as infants, moon, stars, sheep, oxen, fish.

Ask:

What BIG story in the beginning of the Bible does Psalm 8 remind you of?
What is the question in this Psalm? Can you find it?
How do you think the psalmist is feeling as he wrote these words? What is their emotion?
Have you ever had a similar emotion or feeling? Where? When?
What do you think the psalmist is trying to say about human beings? About God?

Option: For both older and younger classes, as you read the verses of the Psalm, distribute paper and pencils and have each student quickly draw an image of what the verse is describing. Give them no more than thirty seconds to draw their pictures. It will be fun to see if their pictures are recognizable. And you are beginning the memorization process - unbeknownst to them. What does "wonder" look like? The results should be interesting to see. Intersperse the above five questions in your discussion.

Dig into the Psalm at the Computers - Main Content

If you use Let’s Talk CD, you will find Psalm 8 is one of the example lessons. You can play it and move on to Cal & Marty CD, or invite the children to make their own “version” of Psalm 8 in the Let’s Talk “Lesson Builder.” They will be asked by the program to add a quiz and provide discussion questions, all of which get spoken out loud (which is the fun of Let’s Talk).

In Cal & Marty's Scripture Memory Game, students will be editing-in verses from Psalm 8, then working on unscrambling them. They can also create a quiz for each verse for other students to take. To begin, open the program, select "create a new verse" and use the verse editor to begin typing either the entire Psalm, or assigned verses. If you have more than two computers and not a lot of time, split up the verses between the computers. When they are done editing in the verse, they can also add their own "comment" about the verse, and three quiz questions about their verse. Have one student do the typing, and another do the reading/proofreading.

Once all the verses have been edited, let them play their own verse, then have students switch computers with each other and go see what the other computers have created.

Note about the Verse Editor: Get familiar with the verse editor BEFORE the lesson. You'll be creating several new verses. Don't put too many verses together or the editor won't have enough space. The teacher COULD edit-in the Psalm 8 verses ahead of time, but the students will really like to do it, and it is part of their memorization process.

**You might want to SKIP editing in verse 7, and perhaps verse 2 if you choose.

If you are using Kid Pix 3, you may want to NOT do the drawing game during the opening Bible study. Instead, after the study move into Kid Pix 3 to illustrate select verses in the Psalm. Create a two page slideshow in Kid Pix. Page 1 for the Psalm illustration and the verse itself; Page 2 to feature text (which Kid Pix 3 will speak aloud) that is a reflection on that verse. The reflection could be based on a simple question: "Re-write the Psalm in your own words and ideas." For example, have students substitute in the thing that THEY look at which makes them wonder about God - seashores, waves, babies
and so forth. Encourage the students to draw a background for their texts that reflects perhaps where the Psalmist was when he wrote the Psalm such as nighttime, star-gazing.

Be at the computers during this time of drawing to encourage the students to think through their Psalm text. These presentations can also be printed out and made into a wall display.

**Reflect – Closure**

You will be doing reflection as you work with students at the computers to create and view presentations. Finish your class by bringing out a pair of binoculars. On top of the binoculars you’ve taped a large heart with the phrase "God's Heart" written on it. Send a few students down the end of a hallway and say something like this: "From a distance, compared to planets and solar systems, we feel like tiny specks in the universe. But because God loves us, God's love makes us big and important in his eyes. In fact Jesus said, God knows us so well, that he even has the hairs on our head counted!" Share the binoculars around.

If you have time, create a list of "places I can feel close to God" and post it on your classroom door. Print out the psalm on a postcard, and have each student put their home address on it, then mail it to them later in the week with a personal note.

If you’re using Let’s Talk CD, you can also have the students use the “Talk Now” module to create a spoken prayer or reflection. They like that!

Another Software Alternative:

If you have Awesome Bible Stories CD you can use either the Creation Story in Awesome Bible Stories and/or the Creation Power Poem activity to create instead a "Psalm 8 Power Poem." The Creation Power Poem activity is a collection of words from Genesis 1 which students can form in any combination to and have "Gabby" the onscreen character speak aloud.

**ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS**

**Adaptations - Younger Children**

Non-readers can listen to Let’s Talk and watch your presentation. They can also use Cal & Marty WITH HELP, and will enjoy unscrambling the verses and taking the quizzes - if you are there to help them. For non-readers, the teacher should create the verses ahead of time. Select phrases rather than full sentences. Then when they join you at the computer, let them take turns at the mouse moving the correct words into the correct slots. You’ll have to verbally guide them by asking about words and pointing to the correct words on the screen. They’ll enjoy seeing the phrase come together and hearing Cal or Marty’s words of encouragement.

Younger children can easily draw with Kid Pix, but they will need help typing. Instead of full sentences, have them type words (they like looking for letters).
ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH
COMPUTER WORKSHOP

UPDATE: Print our free Student Worksheet for this story from www.sundaysoftware.com/Elijah-Jonah The worksheet also functions as a discussion guide and quasi-lesson plan for the teacher.

Scripture reference: 1 Kings 17
Key/Memory Verse: 1 Kings 17:24

PURPOSE

At the end of this lesson the children will:

Be able to find the story of Elijah in the Old Testament.

Understand that you can count on God's Promises, and know what those promises are.

Understand that Elijah's time away hiding was a time to strengthen his trust in God, and prepare for bigger challenges that were coming.

PREPARATION

Read Bible Background.

Materials List

- Bibles
- Chalk or dry erase markers
- Chalkboard or whiteboard
- Computers
- Elijah & Jonah CD
- Paper
- Printers

Advance Preparation

Install and preview the Elijah & Jonah CD.
Read the Teaching Tips (pdf) for the program.

PRESENTATION

Open – Introduction

Greet the children as they enter. Gather for discussion and ask them to list "Promises that people make to each other." Discuss what it feels like to break a promise, and have someone break their promise to you. Now have them come up with a list of "Promises God has made to us."

Ask: How do you know those Promises can be trusted?

Distribute Bibles and turn to 1 Kings 17:24. Remind your students where they are in Scripture (context), who the Kings are, and what is happening in Israel at this time.

Say: The widow in today's story had the same question. She didn't know if she could trust Elijah or his God. Today's memory verse is 1 Kings 17:24 (NLT). Find it and read it together.

Write the memory verse on your whiteboard, and go over it with your students.

Say: Today's story is about Elijah and God's compassion. But the story also has a "secret meaning" which you're going to discover today (that the Widow represents Israel and the son represents her future). We're going to find out who the Widow and the son represent. Write this question on the whiteboard.
Dig - Main Content

Split up into work groups of two to three students at your computers.

Start *Elijah & Jonah* CD and go to the Elijah & the Widow of Zarephath story.

Play through the entire story in sequence. Stop at all the interactive questions to answer them. Select options at the end of the story to dig deeper, reflect, and play.

Outline of the “pages” in the CD’s story

The story is presented as a series of interactive and narrated “comic book” pages. Clickable notes and activities are embedded in each page.

Page 1: Introducing the story

Page 2: Elijah flees to be fed by ravens. (Stop and play the feeding game.)

Page 3: Elijah goes to Zarephath “a town just outside the Promised Land” and finds/tests the Widow’s faith. Study notes you’ll encounter will help describe the Widow as one who represents Israel, and her son – the future of Israel.

Page 4: When the son dies, the widow asks if she is being punished for her sins. But Elijah immediately attempts to revive the son.

Page 5: Elijah questions God in his prayer wondering if God had taken the widow’s son, and asks for his life back, which God grants. The widow replies, “Now I know you are a man of God and the word of the Lord in your mouth is to be trusted.” We don’t get a direct answer as to whether God caused this situation, or used it to his advantage to teach Israel and Elijah an important lesson. It’s important to remember that Elijah also was learning what God had in store for God’s people.

Choose from the following Options found at the end of Page 5:

- Listen to story again and every time you hear the word "Widow, she, or woman" say "Israel."
- Play the Zaresphlatt game. Answer questions in between levels to continue playing.
- Rewrite the story using images from the world.
- “Questions to Ponder”...for deeper study.

Gather back in your discussion area or around one computer and review the "Questions to Ponder" content from the CD.

Reflect – Closure

Gather in a circle and review the memory verse. Then go around to each student, having them repeat the verse, but substituting in their own words for what they know about God from this story. You may preview this with examples and write down suggested words on the whiteboard.

Now I know that God promises to (what) ____________________.
and that ____________________ is to be trusted.” Amen!
Pentecost Pirates!

Acts 2: Sharing the Gospel

The following lesson is from the book, *Teaching with Computers in Christian Education*  
www.sundaysoftware.com/book.htm

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Students will get to know the story of the Pentecost
- They will understand what the Gospel is, and think of new words with which to share it with others.

1. **OPEN** by outlining the lesson for the day:
   - Bible Study
   - Questions: What is Pentecost? What does the word Gospel mean? Why and How do you share it?
   - Kid Pix Software
   - Reflection Time

2. **SET UP** the context of the Pentecost Story.
   Ask: What big event has just happened? Where were the Disciples after the resurrection?
   What were they doing? How were they feeling?

   This is a dramatic story, so work on expressing its emotions of excitement & amazement.

4. **DIG:** As a few questions about the verses to make sure the understood the story. Explain that the Pentecost feast took place 50 days after Passover. Look again at how the passage describes the Holy Spirit. What are the images, sounds, words in this appearance? How do people feel when the Spirit is present?

   Ask: What was the message that the Disciples shared? What was “the Good News” about Jesus? What did his life, death and resurrection mean to all? Write down student answers on the whiteboard. Ask: What would have been the “bad news.” Write down those too.

5. **After discussion,** talk to the students about the Kid Pix software. Students will be creating a Pirate Scene using the Kid Pix drawing tools, and placing characters in the scene. Above one character, they will be typing a new version of Peter’s speech, a speech describing the Good News as if they were speaking to Pirates. “Just like the Disciples were given the gift of speaking in new languages so they could be understood, YOU have to speak the Good News to Pirates in pirate language.” (avast ye scurvy mate-y). Brainstorm some examples of how a pirate might talk. Kid Pix 3 can speak aloud whatever the kid’s type. They love this feature, and that means the entire class can hear and see what they came up with. *Have plenty of helpers to “take dictation” for younger children using the software.* (Option: you can also think up other “languages” to share the Gospel in.

   How would you share the Gospel in a two-year old’s language? In surfer dude language? This is a really fun way to get the students to dwell on key concepts and break them down into simpler language.)

   As students divide up and go about their task, work with them at the computer to make sure they think through their choices of words and ideas. Help them think through what the Good News is and how it could be said in pirate terms. (“We were all walking in the plank, for we had all let down the Captain, but Jesus walked the plank for us.” Etc.)

6. **REFLECT:** After each workstation has created their scene and pirate Gospel, take the entire class on a walking tour to each computer to see what each has come up with. Offer comments and ask questions based on what they’ve come up with.

7. **Continue group reflection by asking them “Who around them in their lives should they be sharing the Good News with.”**

   And… How does the church share the Good News? And how can the students help the church share the Good News?

   Finish by having each workstation come up with “A Pentecost Pirate Prayer” which the Kid Pix program can speak out loud. What would a pirate pray for in order to be a better Disciple who is willing to share the Good News? When each workstation has finished their prayer, play them one after the other.

**Alternate Software:** Use Let’s Talk CD and have the students create a character and imagine how that character (surfer, monk, alien characters included) would speak the Good News. Use “Conversation Now” module in that program to have students “practice” a conversation in which they are sharing their faith with someone else. Have students prepare their Reflection Prayer using the “Talk Now” module in Let’s Talk CD.

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