Use Week of:

Unit 17 • Session 1

Obadiah the Prophet

BIBLE PASSAGE:
Obadiah

STORY POINT:
God promised to restore Israel and rule the earth as King.

KEY PASSAGE:
Jeremiah 29:11

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

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LEADER Bible Study

The conflict between Edom and Israel originates in the story of Jacob and Esau. The twins struggled in the womb, and their mother Rebekah asked God why. God explained that from her womb would come two nations, and the older would serve the younger. (Gen. 25:23)

The nation of Israel descended from Jacob (the younger), and the nation of Edom descended from Esau (the older). God promised to Jacob the same promises He made to Abraham (Gen. 28:15), but Esau was a godless man who despised God's promises. (Heb. 12:16)

For centuries, the two families were at odds. When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, the king of Edom refused to let the Israelites pass through his country to get to the promised land. (Num. 20:14-21) Edom fought against Israel on several occasions. (See 2 Chron. 20:2; 28:17; 2 Kings 8:20-22.)

The Book of Obadiah is God's message about Edom in response to their sin—specifically their gloating over the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem. When the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem, the people of Edom didn't help. Like an envious brother, Edom was glad to see Judah overcome. In fact, Edom was a guilty participant in the action against Judah. (Obad. 11)

The prophet Obadiah detailed the charges against Edom, announced their guilt, and handed down the sentence from the Lord: Edom would be totally destroyed. No remnant of Esau's family would remain. On the other hand, Obadiah said God's people would be restored.

God said the people of Edom would get what they deserved. "As you have done, it will be done to you; what you deserve will return on your own head" (Obad. 15). God's rule is just. The fate of the Edomites might as well be ours. But here's the reality: As you have done, it was done to Christ; what you deserve was returned on His head. Jesus is King, and one day He will deliver His people from their enemies once and for all.

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Obadiah the Prophet

Obadiah

God sent a message to Obadiah (oh buh DIGH uh) the prophet in a vision. **God had news about a country called Edom** (EE duhm)**. The people who lived in Edom were like brothers to the people in Judah. Both groups were descendants of Isaac's twin sons, Jacob and Esau. The people in Edom came from the family of Esau; God's people came from the family of Jacob.**

The people of Edom didn't love God. They worshiped false gods. They lived in the mountains and trusted the mountains and their own strength to protect them. **The people thought they were better than everyone else.**

The Edomites didn't get along with God's people in Judah. When the Babylonians took over the city of Jerusalem, the people in Edom just sat back and watched. They didn't try to protect Judah. The people of Edom even went into Jerusalem and took things that didn't belong to them. **God said He was going to punish Edom.**

"Listen up!" God said. "Out of all the nations, you will be the least important. No one will like you. You were proud, and I will punish you. You thought you were safe, but I will bring you down."

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Obadiah's message for the people of Edom was bad news. God was going to allow Edom's enemies to take away everything they had. Even the people who were their friends would steal from them. Many people would be killed.

God said to Edom, "You were cruel to the people in Judah, so you will be punished. When Judah needed your help, you stood back and did nothing. You laughed and were happy that they were attacked. **Every bad thing you did to others will be done to you."**

"The Day of the Lord is near," Obadiah warned. "Every evil thing you did to others will be done to you."

God said that the bad things that were happening to His people in Judah were only for a little while. God would deliver His people. "But when I punish you, Edom," God said, "everything will be destroyed."

Obadiah's message from God had good news for God's people. "My people will have the land that belongs to Edom," God said. God's people would return to their homes and God would take care of His people, but Edom's punishment was forever.

Christ Connection: Like God's people were mistreated by the people of Edom, Jesus was mistreated by His own people. God will punish sin. Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment we deserve for our sin. We can trust Jesus to make wrong things right.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Active listening:** Assign key words (*God, Edom, bad news, good news*) a motion or a verbal response. Instruct kids to listen closely during the story and respond to each of the assigned words.
- **Vary position:** Stand at one side of the room when telling about the bad news for Edom. Move to another spot to tell the good news for Judah.

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INTRODUCE the Story

SESSION TITLE: Obadiah the Prophet

BIBLE PASSAGE: Obadiah

STORY POINT: God promised to restore Israel and rule the earth as King.

KEY PASSAGE: Jeremiah 29:11

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive ask them how they would let their friends know when something really great happens to them.

SAY • We like to share good news. Telling other people about great things we have experienced comes naturally for us. Today we will hear about some news the prophet Obediah shared. It was good news for some, but not so good for others.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Getting the Message" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the "Getting the Message" activity page. Kids will use the picture code to reveal the story point.

SAY • We can communicate with our friends in lots of ways: texting, phone calls, or seeing them face-to-face. In the Old Testament, God often communicated through prophets, who heard God's words and spoke or wrote them for God's people to hear or read. Today we'll learn about the prophet Obediah.

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Session starter (10 minutes)

LOW PREP

- cotton balls

OPTION 1: Cotton ball roundup

Give each kid a small handful of cotton balls and instruct the kids to stand in a circle. When you say "go," everyone must throw the cotton balls in the air. When you say "round up," everyone must race to collect as many cotton balls as possible. Count how many cotton balls kids collected. The kid with the most cotton balls is the winner. Play additional rounds as time allows.

SAY • It was fun to run around grabbing as many cotton balls as you could. But what if you were the only one doing it? It is a big job to clean up such a mess! It's not always easy to put things back the way they should be. Our story today is about *restoration*—putting things back how they should be. We'll hear how God promised to restore His people to where they needed to be.

- wooden blocks

OPTION 2: Wooden block tower tumble

Invite the kids to help you build a tower using wooden blocks. See how tall you can make it before it tumbles. Give the kids a few chances to build the tallest tower they can. When kids complete their tower, walk over to it and, using only your pinkie finger, knock it down.

SAY • The taller those towers got, the easier it was to knock them down. Pride is like that too. The more we think we can handle life without God's help, the more likely we are to come crashing down. We'll hear more about that in our story today.

Transition to teach the story

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TEACH the Story

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Decorate the room to look like the baggage claim area of an airport. Stack luggage on one side of the stage. Display a large map of your church building—or a local airport—with a big, red dot labeled *You Are Here*. Paint foam board to look like a departures and arrivals screen. Use roll paper and a table to simulate the appearance of a conveyor belt. You may display the theme background slide.

Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- suitcase
- travel pillow

[Leader enters with a suitcase and a travel pillow around his/her neck.]

LEADER• Hey, kids! Whoa, I wasn't expecting so many people to show up to pick me up from the airport. Are you sure we're all going to fit in the car? Oh, you must have brought a bus. But wow, you guys look pretty young. Do any of you have a driver's license? Haha, that's OK. I can drive us.

Unfortunately we might have to wait awhile for

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

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my luggage to come through. There were so many people on my flight! It's been a long day of flying so I'm so glad to have my feet on the ground again. While we wait for my bags, do you all want to hear a Bible story?

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • This story comes from the Book of Obadiah. Obadiah was a prophet of the Lord. Does anyone know what a prophet is? A *prophet* is someone who heard from God and told the people what He said. As we hear the story today let's think about this question: ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet?*** We'll see what the answer is in a few minutes.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • You may remember way back in the Book of Genesis we learned about Abraham's family. God had promised Abraham that his family would be so big, counting them would be like trying to count the stars in the sky. God's promises continued to Abraham's son Isaac. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. God chose Jacob to inherit the promise. Esau was jealous of Jacob and the brothers fought. While the nation of Israel came through Jacob's family, the nation of Edom came through Esau's family. Many years later the people of Edom were cruel to the Israelites. They wouldn't allow them to travel safely through their land, and they fought with them. Today we will hear about God's judgment on the nation of Edom.

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Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- Bibles
- "Obadiah the Prophet" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Open your Bible to the Book of Obadiah. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Obadiah the Prophet."

LEADER • I don't know about you, but when I was a kid, I often fought with my siblings. We argued, and our arguments often got one or both of us in trouble with Mom and Dad. But if I ever saw someone outside our family treating my little brother badly, things would always shift.

It didn't matter how angry I had been at my brother, I would always try to protect him. It's silly to think that I didn't mind being mean to him as long as no one else was, but in some ways that was true. Edom was like Israel's older sibling. When the people of Judah faced Babylon, Edom should have helped Judah, but they chose not to.

In the Book of Obadiah, we see that the nation of Edom was going to deal with the consequences of their choice to ignore Judah's trouble. The people of Edom were not faithful to the people of Judah. God planned to punish them for their unfaithfulness.

Obadiah's message for Edom was not happy news for the Edomites. They would have bad things happen to them, just as they had done bad things to Judah. But Obadiah's news was happy for the people of Judah. Though Edom failed to protect Judah, God would protect Judah. God was going to give Edom's land to Judah and make them a kingdom again. **God promised to restore Israel and rule the earth as King.**

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Christ connection

LEADER • The Book of Obadiah points us to Jesus. ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke***. When we are joined to Jesus we become part of God's promise to Abraham! We do not face the punishment our sin deserves, but instead, we are welcomed into God's kingdom forever! Like God's people were mistreated by the people of Edom, Jesus was mistreated by His own people. God will punish sin. Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment we deserve for our sin. We can trust Jesus to make wrong things right.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 17, Session 1" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how we should treat people who do bad things. Discuss how praying for our enemies might change our thoughts towards them.

- "Unit 17, Session 1" Questions from Kids Video

Missions moment (3 minutes)

Show the Adoniram Judson photo and explain that you will be learning about a missionary who lived a long time ago. He lived before we had television or cars or even electric lighting in houses!

- "Adoniram Judson Picture" printable

LEADER • Adoniram (a-doh-NIGH-rum) Judson was one of the very first American missionaries. He went to the country Burma—now called Myanmar—to tell them about Jesus. He wrote the Bible in their language so the people could read God's Word. Life was very hard for Adoniram and his family, but he remained faithful to God so he could share God's promises.

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Key passage (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- "A Future and a Hope" song

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Jeremiah 29:11. Then sing "A Future and a Hope."

LEADER • God promised to do good things for His people, and He did just that. When we trust in Jesus, we experience a similar promise. God gives us everlasting life with Him. No matter what hard times we face now, someday Jesus will return and fix everything sin has broken. At that time, we will fully experience all the joy of being with God forever; God's plans are good and He is faithful to keep promises.

Sing (4 minutes)

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song

LEADER • **God promised to restore Israel and rule the earth as King**. God has kept His promise by sending His only Son, Jesus, to be our Savior and our King. Let's sing praise to Him now.

Sing together "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, thank You for giving us Your Word. We thank You for inviting us into Your kingdom. We are humbled to know that You do not treat us as our sin deserves. Instead You have shown us mercy and grace. Thank You for saving us. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

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APPLY the Story

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KEY PASSAGE: Jeremiah 29:11

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- wooden blocks
- index cards
- marker
- tape

Write each word of the key passage on a separate index card and tape each card to a wooden block. Mix up the blocks. Give each child a block and invite the kids to work together to build a tower with the words in the correct order.

SAY • Our key passage was written by the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah's promise of a good plan was for the people of Judah, but we have similar promises through Jesus. God sent Jesus to die for us and make the way for us to be set free from sin. When we trust in Jesus, we get to experience all the wonderful things God has planned for His people, including living with Him forever in His perfect kingdom.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find the Book of Obadiah. Ask the kids to tell you if this book is in the Old or New Testament. (*Old Testament*) Explain that this book is considered one of the Minor Prophets. Ask a kid to explain the reason Obadiah is called a minor prophet (*because the Book of Obadiah is short*). You may use the Old Testament Mediterranean Map to show Edom's location. (*H10*)

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Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. The prophet Obadiah wrote to which nation? (*Edom, Obad. 1*)
2. How had Edom disobeyed God? (*They had turned their back on Israel and not trusted God, Obad. 4*)
3. What was God's promise to Israel? (*They would be restored to their land, Obad. 19-21*)
4. Why do you think God punished the nation of Edom so severely? *Help kids understand that Edom was the nation of Esau's descendants. They should have been like brothers and sisters to Israel. If anyone understood God's love and plans for Israel, it should have been Edom. By ignoring Judah's trouble, they were actively going against God's plans.*
5. Do you think we should only help our siblings and family members? Why or why not? *Discuss the idea of loving our enemies. Remind kids that God adopts believers into His family, and that salvation is free to everyone who believes. This means everyone we meet is, or could become, part of our spiritual family.*
6. What does it show about God when we love our enemies? *Discuss what the Bible teaches about our standing towards God. Remind the kids that we are born in sin, and thus are enemies of God. (Romans 5:10) But He loves us anyway and sent Jesus for us. When we love those who treat us badly, it provides a picture of God's love for sinners.*

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

SAY • It's important to remember that the nation of Israel wasn't sinless. They needed God's forgiveness just as much as any other nation. God's promise to His children is evidence of God's grace. **God promised to restore Israel and rule the earth as King.**

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Activity choice (10 minutes)

LOW PREP

- slips of paper (optional)
- marker (optional)

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

OPTION 1: Act it out

Ask for volunteers to act out a familiar Bible story while the others guess the story or Bible person. You may write familiar Bible stories on slips of paper or be prepared to whisper suggestions in the volunteer's ear. Sample stories: God created the world; Noah built the ark; David killed Goliath; Jonah was swallowed by a fish; Jesus was born; Jesus died on the cross; Jesus rose again on the third day.

SAY • Acting out stories from the Bible is something missionaries sometimes have to do when they don't know the language of the people. Missionaries can use actions, pictures, things in nature, and even sounds to help people understand the stories from the Bible. God helps missionaries communicate His love to others even before they have learned the new language. Like the prophets told the people about God's Word, we can tell people about God.

- large sheets of paper
- crayons and markers
- scissors
- Story Point Poster (optional)

OPTION 2: Story point puzzles

Form groups of three to five kids. Give each group a large sheet of paper with the story point written on it. Invite the kids to decorate their papers, illustrating the story point in their own way. Then give each group a pair of scissors to cut their paper into a few puzzle pieces. The groups will then trade puzzles and try to assemble a different team's puzzle.

SAY • **God promised to restore Israel and rule the earth as King.** God always keeps His promises. God kept His promise to restore Israel. Though they had been exiled from their land, God brought them back home. God has promised to rule the earth as King. God rules His kingdom now and one day He will

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return to earth to rule completely over all creation.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

Tip: Give parents this week's Big Picture Cards for Families to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

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