

Prepare To Meet God

AMOS

MEMORY VERSE

AMOS 4:12

“Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Four bowls, masking tape, slips of paper, felt pen, and one drinking straw for each child.

Index cards and paper and pencils for two to four teams (depending on the size of the class).

Three similar sized baskets or similar sized boxes, a small index card for each child, felt pen, at least one beanbag, three large index card or sheets of paper, tape, and a chalk/dry erase board with chalk/dry erase markers.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Straw Verse Relay

Introduce today’s memory verse and story with this fun game with straws. You will need four bowls, masking tape, slips of paper, felt pen, and one drinking straw for each child. Prior to class, write one word from the verse (or groups of two words for younger classes) on slips of paper using a felt pen. Then make an identical set. Place each set in a separate bowl. Make a starting line with masking tape. Place two empty bowls on the starting line. Place the bowls containing the verses across the room from the starting line.

Divide the class into two teams. Teams line up behind the starting line. Give each child a straw. When the teach says, “go,” the first child from each team runs to the bowl containing the verse, uses the straw to lift one slip of paper, then runs back to the empty bowl and drops the paper in. Children in line repeat process until all

slips of paper have been transferred to the bowl on the starting line. Then the team members work together to put verse in order. The first team to finish is the winner.

LESSON TIME!

How many times have you heard, “If you disobey, you are going to get punished?” We hear this from our parents, teachers, and from others who are in authority. We do not want to hear this because we want to do our own thing. Yet our parents know what is best for us and if we do not obey, we will pay the price for our wrong choices.

Do you think when we are punished, it is because our parents are being mean to us; or is it because they care enough to guide us the right way? We are warned because they do not want us to hurt others or ourselves. Wrong choices are not worth the price of the pain they will cause.

Our parents love us enough to warn us of the consequences of our disobedience; in the same way, God our heavenly Father, loves us so much that He warns us in His Word, the Bible. He warns us to repent and turn from our sin, so we will be forgiven and healed and not reap the consequences of our foolish choices. He does not want to discipline us through painful processes, but He will do what is necessary to get us back on track.

In our lesson today, God sends His prophet Amos to warn the people to turn from their wicked ways. Amos’ message from God is very clear. “Change your ways or you will be punished and destroyed. It is time you turn to Me and do what is right or you won’t have My protection and blessing anymore. Prepare to meet the wrath of your God.” God did not want to punish them—He had warned them over and over--but His people were refusing to listen. He could not continue to let them do evil. God is righteous, and He expects His people to be righteous. **When God speaks, listen!**

Amos was a farmer and a shepherd by trade. He tended the Sycamore orchards, which produced figs for the very poor. His name meant, "burden bearer." He did not have much of an education—a pretty ordinary guy, not the type we expect to be chosen as God's prophet. Yet he was. Amos was called to prophesy, primarily in the northern kingdom of Israel, speaking of the judgment that would come to the surrounding nations, Israel, and Judah.

AMOS 1:1-2:16

The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

And he said: "The LORD roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers."

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron.

But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.

I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, And cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Aven, And the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden. The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir," Says the LORD.

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they took captive the whole captivity To deliver them up to Edom.

But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, Which shall devour its palaces.

I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon; I will turn My hand against Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish," Says the Lord GOD.

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.

But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, Which shall devour its palaces."

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, And cast off all pity; His anger tore perpetually, And he kept his wrath forever.

But I will send a fire upon Teman, Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead, That they might enlarge their territory.

But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, And it shall devour its palaces, Amid shouting in the day of battle, And a tempest in the day of the whirlwind.

Their king shall go into captivity, He and his princes together," Says the LORD.

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.

But I will send a fire upon Moab, And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth; Moab shall die with tumult, With shouting and trumpet sound.

And I will cut off the judge from its midst, And slay all its princes with him," Says the LORD.

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they have despised the law of the LORD, And have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, Lies which their fathers followed.

But I will send a fire upon Judah, And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem."

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they sell the righteous for silver, And the poor for a pair of sandals.

They pant after the dust of the earth which is on the head of the poor, And pervert the way of the humble. A man and his father go in to the same girl, To defile My holy name.

They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge, And drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, Whose height was like the height of the cedars, And he was as strong as the oaks; Yet I destroyed his fruit above And his roots beneath.

Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, And led you forty years through the wilderness, To possess the land of the Amorite.

I raised up some of your sons as prophets, And some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, O you children of Israel?" Says the LORD.

"But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, And commanded the prophets saying, 'Do not prophesy!'

"Behold, I am weighed down by you, As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.

Therefore flight shall perish from the swift, The strong shall not strengthen his power, Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;

He shall not stand who handles the bow, The swift of foot shall not escape, Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself.

The most courageous men of might Shall flee naked in that day," Says the LORD.

Amos prophesies God's impending judgment coming to the nations surrounding Israel. God is going to judge Syria, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. Then Amos turns his attention on Judah and Israel. They had rejected the laws of God and refused to obey Him. Though God had warned them over and over, they worshipped false gods and continued to practice wicked ways.

How sad that even God's people refused to listen to Him. God reminds the Israelites that He brought them out of slavery in Egypt and led them through the wilderness; yet they still turned away from Him. God speaks of being "weighed down"—a heart heavy with disappointment.

How we need to learn from those who have made the mistake of turning away from God. God wants to bless us. God has a purpose and plan for each one of us. But we have been given a choice. We can refuse to serve Him, and thus, walk away from the blessing of a rich and meaningful life in fellowship with God. Apart from God, we will be pursuing emptiness and eventually judgment for our sins. God is just and cannot allow sin to continue forever. If you are a child of God and you stray, God in His love will warn you and use whatever processes are necessary—though painful—to bring you back to Himself. **When God speaks, listen!**

The safest place, and the most fulfilling place, to be in a relation to a Holy God is as close as you can be. We, who are Christians, draw near to God through Jesus Christ who took the punishment for all of our sins on the cross in order that we might be forgiven and enjoy peace and rich fellowship with God. If you are not a Christian, decide today to embrace Him by faith.

AMOS 3:1-2

Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying:

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

With privilege comes responsibility. The Bible says, "...to whom much is given, from him much will be required..." (Luke 12:48). As a heart-broken father, God reminds Israel that they are His children, His family. He had heard their cries while in Egypt and delivered them. The nation Israel was God's special people. Now, it would be necessary to punish His rebellious children. How sad that God's special people had hardened their heart against their loving Father and forgotten His wondrous acts among them. They would rather serve the empty and useless idols of the nations around them.

AMOS 3:11

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "An adversary shall be all around the land; He shall sap your strength from you, And your palaces shall be plundered."

Amos prophesies that Israel will be surrounded and conquered by an enemy. All their wealth will be taken away, and the nation will be destroyed. God's Word will always come to pass. This prophecy was fulfilled when King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon surrounded and eventually conquered Jerusalem.

AMOS 4:5-11

Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven,
Proclaim and announce the freewill offerings; For
this you love, You children of Israel!" Says the Lord
GOD.

"Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities.
And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have
not returned to Me," Says the LORD.

"I also withheld rain from you, When there were still
three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one
city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was
rained upon, And where it did not rain the part
withered.

So two or three cities wandered to another city to
drink water, But they were not satisfied; Yet you
have not returned to Me," Says the LORD.

"I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your
gardens increased, Your vineyards, Your fig trees,
And your olive trees, The locust devoured them; Yet
you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD.

"I sent among you a plague after the manner of
Egypt; Your young men I killed with a sword, Along
with your captive horses; I made the stench of your
camps come up into your nostrils; Yet you have not
returned to Me," Says the LORD.

"I overthrew some of you, As God overthrew Sodom
and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand
plucked from the burning; Yet you have not returned
to Me," Says the LORD.

God reminds them of previous warnings He gave them, hoping they would turn to Him and repent. He brought hunger, thirst, crop failure, blight, mildew, and plague upon them; but they still refused to return. Is it not sad that God has to keep on saying and doing the same things over and over because they refused to turn to Him? Also, it is sad to think of all Israel endured because of their continual refusal to listen. They could have not only spared themselves a lot of pain, but been experiencing the great blessing of lives lived in harmony with God.

We can be wiser than that and learn from their mistakes. We can listen to the Lord's voice and turn to Him with all of our hearts. **When God speaks, listen!**

Preparation Picture Challenge

Having a relationship with Jesus is just the beginning to a wonderful life with God. In this game, we will learn other things we can do to prepare ourselves for God's service as we grow older. You will need to split children into two teams (you can have up to 4 teams if you have a large class). You will need index cards and paper and pencils for each team.

Before class, think of several ways the children can prepare themselves for growing in their service to the Lord. Come up with one word or phrase such as read the Bible, go to church, or pray. Write these down on index cards prior to class.

When the children are split into teams and ready to go, ask each team to designate a "drawer" and the rest of the children will be "guessers." You will then show one card to the drawer in each group (show them the same card). When you say, "go" have the children draw a picture to represent the action on the card, similar to the game Pictionary. The "drawer" cannot speak or make gestures, only draw. The first group to correctly guess the picture wins that round. Keep points as to which team has the most points

and declare a winner. Perhaps the winners could learn about preparing for a life of service by passing out the snack to the rest of the class for the evening.

God has great plans for each of us. He will not force His will and blessings upon us, however. We must choose to listen and obey. Choose to listen to God and prepare yourself to fulfill His plan and purpose.

AMOS 5:12-16

For I know your manifold transgressions And your mighty sins: Afflicting the just and taking bribes; Diverting the poor from justice at the gate.

Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time, For it is an evil time.

Seek good and not evil, That you may live; So the LORD God of hosts will be with you, As you have spoken.

Hate evil, love good; Establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this: "There shall be wailing in all streets, And they shall say in all the highways, 'Alas! Alas!' They shall call the farmer to mourning, And skillful lamenters to wailing.

God said, "Do not think you are fooling me. I know all about your sin." There is nothing hidden from God.

God implores them to seek good and not evil; hate evil and love good. Our God is a God of mercy--it is not too late for them to turn from their wicked ways. Yet, again, God warns them of the consequence of refusal to turn back to Him. If they continue to refuse to repent, there will be crying in the streets. All over the nation, people will be mourning the people lost in battle. **When God speaks, listen!**

AMOS 5:21-24

"I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.

Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.

Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.

But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.

God said He hated the big show they were putting on. They pretended to worship and honor Him with their religious feasts and solemn assemblies, but their heart was not with Him--they were just going through the motions. God hates hypocrisy (pretending). He searches the heart and knows where the heart of man really is. God would no longer accept their sacrifices and offerings. He refused to hear their music. He would rather see justice and righteousness instead of meaningless ceremonies.

AMOS 9:8-15

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob," Says the LORD.

"For surely I will command, And will sift the house of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.

All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, Who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.'

"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old;

That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name," Says the LORD who does this thing.

"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it.

I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.

I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them," Says the LORD your God.

Though judgment was sure to come to unrepentant Israel, God looks forward to the bright day of Israel's restoration. In the last days, God has promised to completely restore the tabernacle of David. He promises to bring back the captives of His people, Israel,

and give them back their land. God speaks joyfully, “The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. God will plant Israel securely in their land: “...no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them.” Today, in the land of Israel, this prophecy has been partly fulfilled before the eyes of the world. Israel has once more become a nation—a fruitful nation full of vineyards, orchards of oranges and other fruits, fields of flowers, and more. During the Millennium, we will see complete fulfillment. Seeing partial fulfillment--Israel in their own land--gives us a good clue that we should be looking for the rapture of the church and the glorious second coming.

In the middle of the promise to restore the nation of Israel, it appears there is also a promise to the Gentiles (Gentiles refers to all people who are not Jewish). God’s desire has always been to save all people, not just the Jews (1 Timothy 2:4). He loves us Gentiles, too! Galatians 3:8 states: “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

God loves to forgive. He loves to restore. God is loving, kind, and compassionate. He desires that we follow Him with our whole hearts in order that we might experience the rich blessings of fellowship with Him, now and through eternity. Because God so loves us, He speaks to us—loving us, guiding us, warning us that we might not go astray. Let us be wise and hear and obey the Word of God. **When God speaks, listen!**

Bean Bag Toss

Use this game to reinforce today's lesson. You will need three baskets or similar size boxes, a small index card for each child, felt pen, at least one bean bag, three large index card or sheets of paper, tape and a chalk/dry erase board with chalk/dry erase markers. Set the three baskets or boxes in the center of the classroom. Label the baskets either "true," "false" or "not in story." On each small index card write a statement about the Bible story that can be identified as true, false or not in the story.

Divide the class into two teams. Teams should line up about 6-8 feet from the three baskets. One child may act as the scorekeeper or the teacher can keep score. The first player on team one chooses a card and reads the statement. The player must identify the statement as true, false or not in story, then attempts to toss the beanbag into the correct basket. The player receives 5 points for stating the correct answer and 5 points if the beanbag lands in the basket. If the player does not give the correct answer, tell them what the correct answer is. The player may still earn five points by tossing the beanbag into the correct basket.

Have the teams take turns. The scorekeeper records each team's score on the board. The team with them most points wins.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving to God for our salvation He has provided through His Son Jesus. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.