



Use Week of:

Unit 15 • Session 4

Habakkuk the Prophet

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Habakkuk

STORY POINT:

Habakkuk learned to have faith and trust in God.

KEY PASSAGE:

2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.

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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

How much time do you spend waiting? Think about it. Waiting for a traffic light to turn green, waiting at the doctor's office, waiting at the drive-thru, waiting for a phone call, waiting for a birthday, waiting on someone else.

The fact is, we spend a lot of our time waiting. Why do we wait? We know something is coming. A major factor in waiting is faith—"the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen" (Heb. 11:1). This is precisely what the prophet Habakkuk addressed. Habakkuk was a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah, living in Judah shortly before it was taken into captivity. He found himself in a period of waiting, first for judgment and then for revival.

All around him, people were oppressed and violence escalated. The Book of Habakkuk records the prophet's dialogue with the Lord. "How long, Lord, must I call for help?" Habakkuk asked. "Why do You tolerate wrongdoing?"

God answered. He was going to raise up the Babylonians, and they would hold captive the people of Judah. Habakkuk prayed again. Judah deserved to be punished, but the Babylonians were even more wicked than Judah; how could God, in essence, bless them?

God answered. The Babylonian captivity would not last forever. After some time, God was going to rescue His people and punish the Babylonians.

God's people waited to be delivered from captivity, and those who are in Christ are waiting for the fulfillment of Christ's return. Until then, we live by faith. (See Heb. 10:35-38.) We can trust that God is sovereign over the future, so "though the fig tree does not bud and there is no fruit on the vines ... yet I will celebrate in the LORD; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!" (Hab. 3:17-18).

The BIBLE Story

Habakkuk the Prophet

Habakkuk

Habakkuk (huh BAK kuk) **the prophet prayed to God.** “How long, O Lord?” he prayed. “How long will I cry to You for help and You do not hear me?” Habakkuk had told God about all the violence that was happening in Judah, but nothing seemed to change.

“Why do You let bad things happen?

People are fighting and stealing. The bad guys always win,” **Habakkuk said.**

God was listening. He knew what was happening. **God answered, “Watch! I am doing something amazing, something you wouldn’t believe if I told you.”**

Then God told

Habakkuk what was going to happen. God was raising up enemies—the mighty Babylonians. No one could

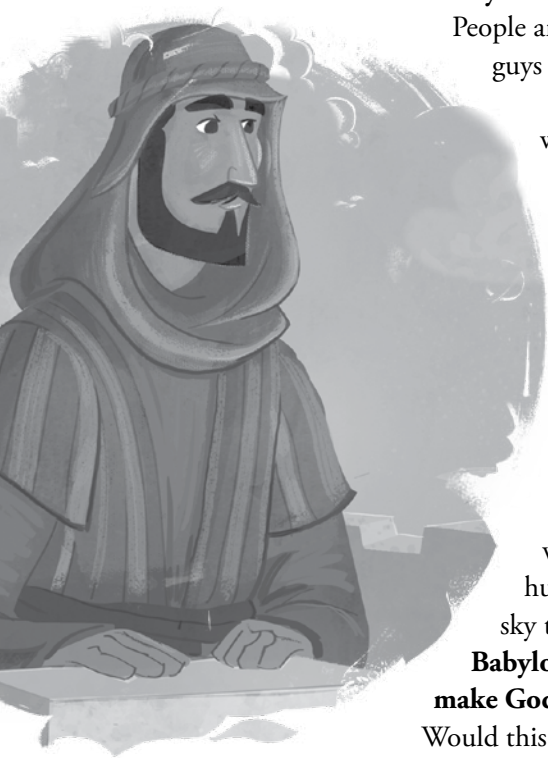
stand in their way. Their army would be strong and fast, like hungry eagles that swoop from the sky to catch little mice in a field. **The**

Babylonians were going to come and make God’s people prisoners!

Would this really happen? Habakkuk wanted the evil in Judah to stop, but the people of Babylon were evil too.

“Why do it this way, Lord?” Habakkuk asked.

God answered, “I’m going to show you what will happen. Be



patient and wait for it. If you are righteous, you will live by faith. **It may seem like evil people are winning now, but they won't win in the end.**"

God knows how to deal with evil people like the Babylonians. He promised Habakkuk that the people's captivity in Babylon wouldn't last forever. God was going to bring His people back to their land.

Habakkuk prayed. People had forgotten about God. They didn't care about sin. They didn't pray. Habakkuk wanted that to change! He wanted people to wake up—to love God and hate sin.

"You have done so many amazing, powerful things. Please do it again so everyone will know You. Be merciful to us," Habakkuk said.

Habakkuk praised God for His power. The Babylonians were going to come, and life for the people in Judah would be very hard for a while. But Habakkuk had faith, and he would wait for the day when God would rescue His people from the Babylonians.

Finally Habakkuk said, "Even if the trees and vines do not produce fruit, even if nothing grows in the fields, and even if there are no sheep in the pens and no cattle in the barns, I will be glad because of the Lord. I will rejoice in God who saves."

Christ Connection: Habakkuk lived at a time when evil seemed to be everywhere. By faith, he trusted God's promise that God would deliver His people. Injustice, violence, and wickedness surround us today, but we can live by faith and trust that Jesus will return to make all things right.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use dramatic dialogue:** Speak Habakkuk's words as you look upward. Pause slightly between his dialogue and the rest of the narrative.
- **Display art:** Show the Bible story picture as you tell the Bible story.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Habakkuk the Prophet

BIBLE PASSAGE: Habakkuk

STORY POINT: Habakkuk learned to have faith and trust in God.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.

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. Prompt kids to think of a day when everything seemed to go wrong. Did they look forward to the day ending? How did they feel when they woke up the next day?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Triangles Everywhere!” on the activity page. Challenge kids to count the number of triangles in the picture.

SAY • How many triangles did you find? [*Allow kids to respond.*] Believe it or not, that picture has 24 triangles! Once you start to look for triangles, they seem to be everywhere!

In the Bible story we will hear today, a prophet named Habakkuk (huh BAK kuk) looked around and noticed that something else seemed to be everywhere! It wasn't triangles; we'll find out in today's story what it was.

- “Triangles Everywhere!” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Habakkuk name game

Instruct kids to stand or sit in a circle. Choose one player to be the *Answerer*. Guide others in the circle to ask any question they would like to the *Answerer*. The goal is to get the *Answerer* to laugh. The *Answerer* must respond to each question with the name “Habakkuk (huh BAK kuk).”

If the *Answerer* laughs or says something other than “Habakkuk,” the player asking the question becomes the *Answerer*.

SAY • Today’s Bible story is about Habakkuk the prophet. He asked God many questions, like “How long do I have to wait for You to answer my prayers?” We’ll find out how God responded.

OPTION 2: Questions from you!

Use a marker to write *Questions from You* on poster board or a large sheet of paper. Consider drawing question marks all over the poster board. Then display the poster.

Give each kid one or two sticky notes and a marker. Ask kids if they ever have questions about things they do not understand. Remind them that God is in control of all things, and invite them to write down one or two questions they would ask God. Guide kids to put their sticky note questions on the poster board. Read some of the questions aloud to get kids thinking.

SAY • Those are great questions. In the Bible story we will hear today, a prophet named Habakkuk did not understand what was happening, so he prayed and asked God some questions.

LOW PREP

Sample Questions:

- What’s the name of your pet?
- Where’s your favorite place to travel?

Option: Designate a new *Answerer* after several turns.

- poster board or large piece of paper
- sticky notes
- markers

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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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
- shoulder bag
- envelopes
- Bible

[Leader enters wearing dark pants, a light blue shirt, and a hat. He or she is carrying a bag across the shoulder that contains envelopes and a Bible.]

LEADER • Hi, everyone! Beautiful day today, isn't it? It's so good to see you. My name is [your name], and I am just a few weeks away from becoming an approved mail carrier. I've had interviews, taken tests, solved problems, and trained with experienced carriers.

Later today, I'm going to stop by and see one of my neighbors who keeps complaining about how long it takes to get a letter in the mail. I've tried explaining to her that many factors affect the time it takes to get a letter from point A to point B, but she doesn't seem to understand.

I'm finally going to tell her, "I think you might not understand the whole process, but just trust the system. We're working hard to get your mail to you.

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

It will get there. Just be patient and trust us.”

[*Reach in the bag and pull out a Bible.*] I know that waiting can be hard, especially when you don't understand what is going on. That's kind of the idea behind today's story—trusting God even when His ways don't seem to make sense.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • As you listen to our Bible story, keep our big picture question in mind: ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke?*** Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners. I'll ask the question, and then I want you to answer: ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke?*** [*Pause for kids to respond.*] ***Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.***

Giant timeline (1 minute)

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

LEADER • We have been hearing stories about the Southern Kingdom of Judah. **The prophet Isaiah told about the Messiah.** Then we heard about Hezekiah and Josiah—a king and his great-grandson—who were good kings in Judah. **Hezekiah and Josiah led the people back to God.** But after Josiah died, the people still disobeyed God. They broke their covenant with Him. The prophet **Jeremiah told God's people about a new and better covenant.**

Today's story is about a prophet named Habakkuk (huh BAK kuk). Say that name with me: *Habakkuk*. He wrote the Book of Habakkuk about 600 years

before Jesus was born. Let's find out what his story is all about.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

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

LEADER • The Book of Habakkuk isn't about a message God gave His people; it's about Habakkuk's prayer to God and how God answered Habakkuk.

Sometimes we think we are only supposed to talk to God about the good stuff. We think we should only tell God that we love Him and trust Him. God does want to hear the good stuff; He wants us to love Him and trust Him. But God also wants us to tell Him when we are frustrated and confused. God wants us to tell Him when we don't understand.

Habakkuk told God all that he was thinking and feeling. God didn't answer all of Habakkuk's questions; instead, He reminded Habakkuk that God's people must live by faith. **Habakkuk learned to have faith and trust in God.**

We may not understand why certain things happen. We might be confused and frustrated. But we can and should trust God because He does know exactly why everything happens the way it does. He is in control of all things, and He is good.

Christ connection

LEADER • Habakkuk lived at a time when evil seemed to be everywhere. By faith, he trusted God's promise that

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

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 181 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

God would deliver His people. Injustice, violence, and wickedness surround us today, but we can live by faith and trust that Jesus will return to make all things right. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.***

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 15, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how God can be everywhere at the same time. Guide them to discuss how God’s presence is comforting to us.

· “Unit 15, Session 4” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • Habakkuk learned to have faith and trust in God. Teenagers in Baltimore are learning to trust in God, too. Men who love Jesus are teaching them that the Bible is more important than football.

· “10:12 Sports (Part 2)” missions video

Show the “10:12 Sports (Part 2)” missions video. Ask kids to discuss the kinds of things the players are learning about Jesus. What did they hear in the video? (*learning that Jesus loves them, Jesus wants the best for them, Jesus is more important than football*)

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 2 Chronicles 7:14.

· Key Passage Poster
· “I Will Hear” song

LEADER • Memorizing this key passage is so important because it will help us remember the truth when we face sin and feel discouraged or ashamed. God wants people to turn back to Him! He doesn’t accept us because we are perfect; He accepts us because Jesus is.

No matter how many times we fail, we can turn back to Him. Let's sing.

Lead boys and girls in singing "I Will Hear."

Sing (4 minutes)

• "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" song

Open your Bible and read aloud John 16:33.

LEADER • In today's story, Habakkuk lived during a time when evil seemed to be everywhere! **Habakkuk learned to have faith and trust in God.** In the New Testament, Jesus told His followers that they would experience suffering in this world. Jesus said, "Be courageous! I have conquered the world." We too can have faith and trust in God; He is good and in control. Let's sing.

Sing together "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, we thank You that You are always listening to the prayers of Your people. We pray with confidence that You are in control. Even if we do not understand Your ways, we trust that You will take care of us because You are good. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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.

APPLY the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- poster board or dry erase board
- marker

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 2 Chronicles 7:14 two times.

Then remove the poster and write on a dry erase board the first letter of each word in the key passage, leaving space between letters.

Call on volunteers to supply the missing words, and write them in one at a time. When kids fill in the entire key passage, prompt them to say it again together.

SAY • Great job! If you haven't memorized our key passage yet, keep working on it! Memorizing Scripture helps us remember what is true about God and about ourselves. We know that God is just to punish sin, but His heart is for sinners to repent, turn to Him, and receive forgiveness.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- "Kings of Israel and Judah" printable
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)
- tape

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to the Book of Habakkuk. Direct kids' attention to the lists of kings from the "Kings of Israel and Judah" printable.

Explain that Habakkuk was a prophet in Judah. Tape the Habakkuk name tag next to the list of Judah's kings.

Show the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Remind kids that the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been destroyed about 100 years earlier. Like Jeremiah, Habakkuk lived in the last years of the kingdom of Judah. Keep the arrow next to King Jehoiakim's name.

SAY • Habakkuk prayed to God because he did not understand what was happening. God answered Habakkuk, and **Habakkuk learned to have faith and trust in God.**

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Habakkuk 1:5. Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why do you think Habakkuk chose to praise God no matter what? *Guide kids to recognize that Habakkuk learned to trust God, who is in control of all things. Habakkuk had faith that God does what is for His glory and our good. We don't always understand God's ways, but we can trust Him to take care of us.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 4:11.)

2. Where do you turn for comfort? Why? *Invite kids to share where they turn when they face difficult circumstances. Remind kids that the Lord is with us and comforts us in our suffering. When we turn to Him, we can find peace and rest.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 11:28.)

3. What hope do we have when evil seems to be everywhere? *Assure kids that even though evil may sometimes seem to win in the world, God is really in control. Like Habakkuk, we can have faith and trust in God. Sooner or later, God will punish the wicked, but it will be in His own time and in His own way.*

4. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 20:22.)

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

LOW PREP

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

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Warming up

Instruct kids to pretend like they're a football team. Ask for volunteers to be the "coach" and give an exercise command to the rest of the group. Some exercise suggestions can include jogging in place, doing jumping jacks, twisting at the waist, or stretching. Allow several different "coaches" to have a turn while other kids follow the directions.

SAY • In sports, players learn to trust their coach. They trust that the coach wants what is best for the team. When we follow Jesus, we have faith and trust in Him. He loves us and always does what is best for us. Christians like those in Baltimore choose to spend their lives leading others to trust in God.

Guide kids to form pairs or small groups. Ask them to think of people they know who need to trust God. Encourage kids to tell someone about God this week. Suggest they start by inviting a friend to church.

OPTION 2: Triple moves

Instruct kids to stand up and move at least an arm's length apart from one another. Teach kids three different movements for key words you will say:

- *faith* (stretch your arms out to the side)
- *joy* (jump up and down)
- *patience* (touch your toes).

Practice each movement a few times. Explain that when you call out a word, kids should perform the corresponding movement. Call out "faith," "joy," and "patience" randomly.

If a kid performs the wrong movement, he should sit down. The goal is to be the last player standing.

SAY • Today we heard how **Habakkuk learned to have faith and trust in God.** Because God is in control of all things, we can live with faith, joy, and patience even when we don't understand His ways. Injustice, violence, and wickedness surround us today, but we can trust that one day, Jesus will return to make all things right.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

• pencils
• Journal Page
• "No Matter What" activity page,
1 per kid

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, acknowledging God's authority over all things. Pray that kids would live with faith, joy, and patience even when it seems like injustice, violence, and wickedness are everywhere. Thank Him for the hope we have in Jesus.

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

As time allows, lead kids to complete "No Matter What" on the activity page. Kids should choose a word for each category or part of speech and then use those words to fill in the blanks. Instruct kids to read the completed sentences.