STORIES AND RITUALS

LESSON 10

Stories & Rituals: The Bible in Broad Strokes

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God Calls Isaiah

Texts: **Isaiah 6:1-13**

Big Idea: **God calls us to proclaim the Word.**

Lesson Objectives

Participants will:

1. Show the importance of communication by playing a game of charades.
2. Recognize our call to evangelism by hearing a re-telling of the story of Isaiah's call.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of God's guidance by participating in a prayer ritual.

ACTIVITY (TIME)	MATERIALS NEEDED
Dive In (10 minutes) **Group Check-In**	• Nothing
Community Builder (15 minutes) **Charades!**	• Pens • Basket, bowl or cup • Slips of paper
The Story (15 minutes) **God Calls Isaiah**	• Copy of Lesson Sheet 10.1
The Ritual (15 minutes) **What Holds Us Back**	• Soft, instrumental music (optional) • Method for playing music (optional) • Charcoal (one piece per person) • Large bowl for charcoal • Large bowl of water • Towel or paper towels
Dig Deeper (10 minutes) **Communicating God's Word**	• Copies of Lesson Sheet 10.2
Wrap it Up (5 minutes) **Closing Prayer**	• Nothing

LESSON OVERVIEW

What's the Story?

Today your group will explore the story of Isaiah's call in Isaiah 6:1-13. In this story, God comes to Isaiah through a vision and calls him to proclaim God's word to the people. At first, Isaiah does not feel that he is equipped or capable to do this task. Like other characters in the Bible, he does not accept the call right away and questions God's choice. However, a creature comes down and places a burning piece of coal on Isaiah's lips, burning away all of this guilt and unworthiness. Isaiah accepts God's call and proclaims the messages of his vision to the people of God, bringing them judgment and hope.

This story is important in the Biblical narrative as it introduces us to Isaiah, a prophet whose messages of hope and liberation will prepare us for the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah's prophecies of the coming of a Savior lay the foundation for what is the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament.

What's the "Big Idea?"

Today's lesson focuses on the big idea that *God calls us to proclaim the Word.* In today's story, God calls Isaiah to preach to the people of God. We are also called by God to proclaim the Word to other people. In our Baptismal Covenant, we promise to "proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ." Acts of evangelism are important for the Church, but there are fears, worries, and anxieties that prevent us from boldly proclaiming the Word and sharing the Gospel with other people.

What's the Symbol?

In today's story, a creature touches a piece of coal to Isaiah's lips. After doing this, the creature tells Isaiah that all of his guilt and fear are gone, which frees Isaiah to boldly live out God's calling and proclaim God's Word to all people. Today's ritual, described below, includes charcoal, which represents our fears, worries, and anxieties that stand in the way of us living out what God calls us to do.

What's the Ritual?

Today's ritual will invite participants to reflect on what keeps them from proclaiming the Word. While reflecting, each individual will dirty their hand with a piece of charcoal. Then, participants will wash their hands, ridding themselves of their worries, fears, and anxieties. This action will help reinforce the point that God calls us and equips us to proclaim the Gospel to the world.

Setting Up Your Space

Set up your "altar" area. Cover a large table with a piece of fabric or linen. On the altar place a cross and some candles. Gather some charcoal (one piece per person) and place it in a large bowl on the altar. Have a large tub or bowl of water and a towel or paper towels nearby (you may want to display them near the altar, too) for the ritual.

DIVE IN
(10 MINUTES)

Group Check-In

Materials:

- Nothing

During the session:

- Open your session with a quick prayer. Use this one or a prayer of your own:
  Holy Lord, open our eyes, ears, and hearts to see your love and faithfulness in the world around us. Help us see your love for us in your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
- **Let's start our time together by sharing some of the great and not-so-great things that have happened to us this week. What were the high points and low points of your week?** Go around the group and invite everyone to share.

COMMUNITY BUILDER
(15 MINUTES)

Charades!

Materials:

- Slips of paper • Pen • Bowl, basket, or cup

Before the session:

- Make 20-25 slips of paper. On each slip, write the titles of books, movies, music, TV shows, or other objects and actions the group will be able to act out (one per slip).
- Fold each slip of paper in half and place it in a bowl, basket, or cup.

During the session:

- Split your group into two teams.
- **What are some of the ways you communicate with other people?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: phone, email, texting, social media, etc.]*
- **Today we are going to play a game that asks you to communicate with a team of people. Let's see if you can communicate clearly!**
- Split the group into two teams. Label them team "A" and team "B." (Or give them any names/labels you want!)
- Invite a representative from each to stand in front of their team. One of the representatives should draw a slip of paper from the collection.
- Each representative must look at the slip of paper. Then, they must try to act out the title for their team. They can only use hand gestures and body movements. No vocals allowed!

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COMMUNITY BUILDER CONTINUED...

- Each team must try to correctly guess what is being acted out. The team to give the correct guess first gets a point. If no one can give a correct guess, no one receives a point.
- Once a group receives a point, the round is over. Invite one new representative from each team to come forward, and play another round.
- Continue playing the game until you run out of time or slips of paper, whichever comes first.
- **When you played the game, how did you figure out what your teammates were trying to communicate?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: hand motions, gestures, specific movements, etc.]*
- **What are some of the things that you communicate to people? Why do you communicate these things?** *[Answers will vary.]*

THE STORY (15 MINUTES)

God Calls Isaiah

Materials:

- Copy of Lesson Sheet 10.1

Before the session:

- Make a copy of Lesson Sheet 10.1.
- Practice reading through the story several times so you are familiar with it.

During the session:

- Tell the story on Lesson Sheet 10.1.
- After the story, ask: **What is this story telling us about God?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: God calls us to proclaim the Word and God's love and grace to all people; God promises to be with us as we go out and proclaim.]*
- **What is this story telling us about humanity?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: We may be called, but we reject the call due to our own worries; we are scared.]*
- **What is this story telling us about the world?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: The world needs to hear the Word that we are asked to proclaim.]*
- **God called Isaiah to proclaim the Word to the people. Isaiah was scared and didn't feel equipped to complete this task, but God promised to be with him the whole time.**

THE RITUAL (15 MINUTES)

What Holds Us Back

Materials:

- Soft, instrumental music (optional)
- Method for playing music (optional)
- Charcoal (one piece per person)
- Large bowl for charcoal
- Large bowl of water
- Towel or paper towels

During the session:

- If you have not done so, light the candle on your altar area. If you are playing music, begin playing it softly.

- **God calls each of us to proclaim the gospel of love and freedom to all people. At the time of our baptism, we promise to proclaim the good news of Jesus through word and deed. But there are many things that keep us from proclaiming the Word to other people.**

- Place the bowl of charcoal in the middle of the group. **In a moment, I am going to invite you to come take a piece of charcoal from this bowl. Find a spot to sit and think about what might be holding you back from telling others about Christ. As you think, rub the charcoal between your hands. They will get dirty!**

- Invite the group forward to grab a piece of charcoal. Then, give them a few minutes to sit and reflect.

- As individuals finish direct their attention to the bowl or tub of water in front of the group. **We all have worries, anxieties, or fears that hold us back from proclaiming the Word to others. However, God still calls us to this task and promises to be with us. Come to the bowl of water one at a time and wash the charcoal off your hands. As you wash your hands, ask God to give you the strength to proclaim the good news to other people.**

- Invite individuals to wash and dry their hands one at a time.

DIG DEEPER
(10 MINUTES)

Communicating the Word

Materials:

- Copies of Lesson Sheet 10.2
- Scissors

Before the session:

- Make copies of Lesson Sheet 10.2. You should have one scenario for every two people in your group.
- Cut apart the scenarios.

During the session:

- Split the group into pairs.
- **There are many different ways and times that we can communicate God's Word to other people. With your partner, read the scenario I am about to give you, and create a one-minute skit that describes how you would show the Gospel in this situation**.
- Give each group one scenario, and give them time to create.
- After a few minutes, invite the group back together and have partners share their scenarios and skits.
- **What is one way you can communicate God's Word to someone in your home, school, or community this week?** *[Answers will vary.]*

WRAP IT UP
(5 MINUTES)

Closing Prayer

Invite the group to share any prayer concerns or requests they may have for the week. If you created prayer journals, you may wish to share what the group wrote. Then, close your time together in prayer. Use the following or pray your own prayer:

Amazing God, you called Isaiah to preach your Word to all people. Grant us the strength and courage to preach your Word to those far off and near to us, too. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Lesson Sheet 10.1

God Calls Isaiah

(A story about the prophet Isaiah)

In the year that King Uzziah died, I had a vision of God. I saw the Lord sitting on a high throne, and God's robe filled the whole temple. There were seraphs all around, and they all had six wings each! The wings covered their faces, and their feet, and helped them fly. These Seraphs called to each other, saying,

> "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!
> the whole earth is filled with his glory."

When the seraphs talked, the temple shook, and was filled with smoke. And I replied, "Woe to me! I am not perfect. I have unclean lips, and live with others who have unclean lips, yet I have seen the

King, the Lord!"

Then, one of the seraphs flew toward me. The seraph held in its hand a pair of tongs that carried a hot coal. It touched the coal to my mouth and said, "Because this coal has touched your lips, your guilt and sin have been taken away."

Then, I heard the voice of the Lord saying to me, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?"

And I replied, "Here am I. Send me!"

And God told me to go and talk to the people, to tell them things so that they could understand with their minds and their hearts, and so that they could be changed. And I was told to do this until cities lie uninhabited and the people were sent far from home.

Lesson Sheet 10.2
SCENARIOS

Cut apart these scenarios for use during the “Dig Deeper” activity.

Your best friend comes to school one day and tells you that her grandmother is very sick. She is very sad and nervous about the situation.

One of the families in your community has a large fire at their house, and they lost everything.

The person who sits next to you during math class reveals that his parents are getting a divorce. He doesn’t feel loved and accepted.

You meet a person who doesn’t understand why you go to church and youth group.

You know someone whose father has just lost his job, and their family has no income. They are afraid that they won’t have money for food or housing.

You notice a new person at school who is eating lunch by themselves. When you go to introduce yourself, you discover that they feel like they don’t fit in.