

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Bible Basis: Isaiah 3:1–13; 14:1–5; 48:8–9; 53:1–6

Key Verse: When it is time to save you, I will help you. I will keep you safe. —Isaiah 49:8, NIV

Bible Point: God doesn't give up on his people. God won't give up on me.

Resource: *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 16: "The Beginning of the End"

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff You Need: Tongue Twisters Activity Sheet

Optional: Tongue Twister PowerPoint slide, projection equipment

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have some fun with the children by exploring tongue twisters on the activity sheet. Start with simpler ones and say them slowly as children learn them. Then try to speed up. Move on to longer, more complicated ones. When you get to the hardest one, have the class stand up and try to say it accurately and quickly. (You might need to practice ahead of time!) Ask the children to sit down when they know they've made a mistake or when they can no longer keep up the speed. Talk about:

- What did it feel like when you had to give up?
- Tell me about something that happened to you when you had to give up.

Say, **Our Bible story today is about a time when God's people probably felt like giving up, but they discovered that God does not give up on them.**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff You Need: copies of *The Story for Kids*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 16*

Tell the story from *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 16. You can also have the children find Isaiah 53 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

God Takes and Gives

Ask three fluent readers to present the Bible story to the large group. Two are narrators. One is the "Echo Leader." Explain to the large group that everyone should repeat everything the Echo Leader says (as indicated in bold).

Narrator 1: God's people wanted a king, so he gave them a king.

Echo Leader: God gave them a king.

Group: God gave them a king.

Narrator 2: But as the years passed, the kings fell away from following God. The Lord sent prophets to warn the people, but the people ignored God's messengers. They didn't follow God's rules. They didn't listen to God's messages.

Echo Leader: They didn't listen!

Group: They didn't listen!

Narrator 1: So God let the punishment come. The kingdom split into Israel and Judah. Kings from other nations came in and took away all the money in Israel and destroyed houses and cities. In fact, the people of Israel were captured and led away to live in other countries.

Narrator 2: Things were not much better in Judah, where the other group of God's people lived. A few good kings tried to turn things around, but most of the people paid no attention. God sent another messenger, a prophet named Isaiah, to tell the people to change their ways.

Narrator 1: If Judah shaped up and started obeying God like they were supposed to, God would forgive them and protect them from the kings of other countries. Isaiah tried really hard to get the people to listen. He told the people all the things God would take away from them if they didn't change.

Echo Leader: Supplies.

Group: Supplies.

Echo Leader: Food and water.

Group: Food and water.

Echo Leader: Heroes and soldiers.

Group: Heroes and soldiers.

Echo Leader: Judges and prophets.

Group: Judges and prophets.

Echo Leader: Elders and captains.

Group: Elders and captains.

Echo Leader: Government leaders.

Group: Government leaders.

Echo Leader: Advisers.

Group: Advisers.

Echo Leader: Skilled workers.

Group: Skilled workers.

Narrator 2: All these good things would go away because the people were not following God. The people would fight with each other, and everyone would suffer.

Echo Leader: Everyone would suffer.

Group: Everyone would suffer.

Narrator 1: Isaiah said, “Your leaders have taken you down the wrong path. They have turned you from the right path.” But the people paid no attention. Isaiah said that the cities would fall apart and the people of Judah would be marched off to another country in chains!

Narrator 2: But Isaiah’s message was not all doom and gloom. He knew that God still loved his people and was not going to give up on them. So his message was also about the good things that would happen after the horrible stuff was over. God was going to bring good things back.

Echo Leader: God would show his tender love toward his people.

Group: God would show his tender love toward his people.

Echo Leader: God would settle the people back in their own land.

Group: God would settle the people back in their own land.

Echo Leader: Israel’s suffering would end.

Group: Israel’s suffering would end.

Echo Leader: Other nations would help God’s people.

Group: Other nations would help God’s people.

Echo Leader: God would break the power of evil rulers.

Group: God would break the power of evil rulers.

Echo Leader: God would answer prayers.

Group: God would answer prayers.

Echo Leader: God would save his people.

Group: God would save his people.

Narrator 1: God said to his people, “When it is time to save you, I will help you. I will keep you safe.”

Narrator 2: Isaiah’s message got even better. God let him see things that would happen in the future—way in the future. Isaiah had visions of the Messiah, the person who would save all of Judah and the whole world.

Narrator 1: Isaiah knew about Jesus hundreds of years before Jesus was born. God wanted to give his people hope for the future. No matter how many bad choices God’s people made, he wasn’t going to give up on them.

Narrator 2: Isaiah told the people that God’s servant would grow up like a tender young plant. He said, *Read Isaiah 53:4a, 5.*

Read Isaiah 53:6.

Narrator 2: Isaiah was talking about Jesus long before Jesus was ever born. That's because God had a plan, not just for the people of Israel and Judah, but for all people. He doesn't give up on any of us.

Narrator 1: He sent Jesus so that all of us can have the same close relationship with God that the Israelites had in the Old Testament. God doesn't give up on his people, and he doesn't give up on us.

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 16*. Ask the children to look at the picture and tell you about Isaiah's job. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- **Why did God take so many things away from his people?**
- **What did God have planned for his people in the future?**

Say, **We feel like giving up plenty of times. It's good to know that God doesn't give up on us.**

Collect the cards for now. You'll send them home with the children later.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose any or all of these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: NEVER GIVE UP

Stuff You Need: classroom chairs

To start, make a circle using classroom chairs with one less chair than children. The chairs should face inward. Have the children sit in the chairs with one child standing in the middle. The child in the middle should say a time when they wanted to give up. If any of the other children have wanted to give up over the same thing, they should get up and find a new seat, at least two seats over, while the child in the middle tries to find a seat. The new child standing in the middle will say something they wanted to give up on. Play continues as long as you have time. At the end of the game, remind children that God never gives up on them.

OPTION 2: BIBLE VERSE CAKE WALK

Stuff You Need: sturdy paper, marker, masking tape, CD player, music

Use the marker to write words or phrases of the Bible verse on sheets of paper. On an extra sheet, draw a big star. Tape the sheets to the floor in a circle with a step or two in between. Aim to have a circle of about twelve sheets for eight to ten children. Enlarge the circle with blank sheets for a larger group or run two circles. Begin your activity time by reviewing the words of the Bible verse: "When it is time to save you, I will help you. I will keep you safe" (Isaiah 49:8). Play this Bible verse game like a cake walk. Have children walk around the circle while music plays. Randomly stop the music. The child standing on the starred sheet chooses any word from the Bible verse. The player behind this child must

begin with that word and say the rest of the Bible verse. If a player chooses the Bible reference, the next player says the Bible verse from the beginning. Start the music again. After the game, talk about:

- Tell me about a time when you need God's help.
- Describe some ways that God helps you.

Say, **This verse doesn't mean that nothing bad will ever happen to us, but it does mean that God is close to us all the time. He's always there to help and plans good things for us.**

OPTION 3: I WILL HELP YOU

Stuff You Need: I Will Help You Activity Sheet, colored pencils,

Give an activity sheet to each child. **God made the promise to help people in Bible times. He makes that same promise to us.** Have the children think about times in their lives that show clearly that God was helping and keeping someone (or themselves) safe. Draw and describe four of these events on the activity sheet. Share the drawing and the verse with families at home.

OPTION 4: UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

As a large group talk about what it feels like to know that someone really cares about you and loves you ... parents, siblings, grandparents, other relatives, friends.

- What does it mean to say "unconditional love"?
- Does anyone in your life have unconditional love for you? How do you know?
- Does God have unconditional love for us? How do you know?
- Give some examples of times when it is obvious that someone loves you no matter what you say or do.

Ahead of time, write the following words on index cards. Add words so that each student will have a card. Fold the cards in half and pass one to each of the students in the group. Take turns opening the cards. Have each student read their card and talk about whether it would be easy to love someone that does the thing on the card. Think about how God loves us no matter what we do.

lie	yell	cheat	mock	help with homework
steal	hug	break things	hit	encourage

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Pray together, asking God's help to never give up. Encourage children to pray about a specific area where they feel like giving up. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 16*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.