



MINOR PROPHETS

JOEL

Scripture: Joel 1:1-4, 2:12-27

Open: Greet, Praises, Requests, Pray

Supplies: Printed trees, ink pads

Explain:

Today we will begin a journey through the Minor Prophets.

Can anyone tell me any of the Minor Prophets? Are these found in the OT or the NT?

These Minor Prophets aren't "worse" than the major prophets of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, we just call them minor prophets because the books that record their prophecies are much shorter than the major prophets.

Remember when we learned about Ezekiel? God was warning the people that they would soon be carried off by other lands. Well, Israel had split in two parts. Judah in the South and Israel in the North. Joel is preaching to the people of Judah. Most people believe he prophesied around 835 BC.

Joel's is the first book of the Bible to talk about the Day of the Lord. He points to the day when the Lord will return. That hasn't happened yet, so he was talking about a day almost 2860 years before now that still hasn't occurred. Think about that! God knows everything!

We don't know a lot about Joel. He is the son of Pethuel and he preached to the people of Judah. During the time of Joel, the people have faced devastation. Locusts have ruined their crops and their land, leading them to starvation. Joel uses this image to point to the ultimate judgement of God on the world.

Read: Joel 1:1-4

Ask:

Does anyone have a garden? Have you ever had pests ruin your crops? What kind of pests? What did you do? How did you feel when they ruined your plants?

Now imagine that you don't have a store to go to. Those crops are the only things your family has to eat. How would you feel about the pests?

The people in this time lived in an agrarian society, meaning they lived off the land they farmed. Bugs and bad weather could destroy their livelihood. Most people believe that is what the people of Judah had seen, and Joel is using it as a picture of a greater day of destruction to come.

Craft:

Print out the tree pictures at the end of the lesson or have the kids draw their own trees, lush and green. Then, using a stamp pad or finger paint, have the children blot out their trees with "locusts." Explain that when locusts arrive in swarms, they take out all trees and vegetation, they take out livestock. They leave everything barren.

Read: Joel 2:12-17

Explain:

Because of the destruction, God calls the people to repentance. Now, we aren't always punished in a tangible way when we sin, so if you get hurt or have a bad day, please don't feel like God is punishing you for something you did. But there are consequences to our actions. If you steal, you will likely get caught and there will be a consequence. Well, God had told his people the consequences they would face for worshiping other gods, and one of those consequences was actually locusts (Deut. 28:38). So we know that this was a consequence of their sin.

But Joel, speaking for God, calls the people to repentance. Can anyone tell me what repentance means? It means to turn from doing the wrong thing and move back towards God and his ways. God, speaking through Joel, is telling the people to return to him! He doesn't think they are a lost cause. He wants them to come back. And that is true for us as well. We can never have messed up too bad for God to write us off. He forgives us. He calls us to repentance.

Play a Game:

Play a repentance game (similar to Mother May I). One person is the tempter, and they tempt the kids to take 12 cookies or tell 3 lies etc. Whatever number they include in their temptation, the other kids have to take that many steps towards them. At some point, a leader will shout, "REPENT!" and the kids will try to run back to the place they started. If the tempter catches them, they join the tempter.

Read: Joel 2:18-27

Explain:

Maybe you felt a little scared at the idea of all this destruction that is coming on the Day of the Lord. In all honesty, it will be an incredible and terrible day. Incredible because the King of kings will enter in all his glory. He will bring justice and righteousness. But terrible for some. Those it will be terrible for are those who don't know God and harden their hearts against him. Those who harden their hearts will face the judgement that Joel is talking about and it will be far worse than locusts. But those who know Jesus, who walk with the Lord, will see him face to face and live with him forever. You see, we who know Jesus don't have to fear this destruction because we are saved in his grace. He covers us. That is why Jesus died on the cross, so we wouldn't have to face judgement. We all fall short and sin. We all deserve this judgment of locusts and worse. But praise be to God that he sent his only Son to die on a cross and offer us salvation. We need only to accept this free gift. Then, with changed lives, we can turn around and REPENT, REPENT! and live for him.

Memorize: Joel 2:27

Close in Prayer

Optional Game:

As an optional game, you can have the kids run around the room and grab everything green, pretending to be locusts. If you don't have a lot of green in your room, you can scatter green pieces of construction paper.





Joel



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