

The Sun Stands Still

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- yellow construction paper
- scissors
- glue
- markers, stickers, other scraps



Scriptures

Josh 9:1-10:14

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God controls the sun and all the things in this world; God uses special ways to help and protect us

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify ways God helps things grow; to give thanks to God for the things He provides for us

Memory Verse

"So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped." (Josh 10:13)



Bible Knowledge

The Treaty with the Gibeonites

God had specifically instructed Israel to make no treaties with the inhabitants of Canaan (Ex 23:32; 34:12; Num 33:55; Deut 7:2; 20:17, 18), although treaties with far away countries were permissible (Deut 20:11). That is why the Gibeonites went to great lengths to disguise themselves. Gibeon was in fact very close to Ai and only about five miles northwest of Jerusalem.

Joshua knew it was important to talk to God before leading his troops into battle. But the peace treaty with the Gibeonites seemed innocent enough, so Joshua and the leaders made this decision on their own. By failing to seek God's guidance and rushing ahead with their own plans, they had to deal with angry people and an awkward alliance when it was discovered that the people who claimed to be from a far away place were actually their neighbors.

The Israelites, who were supposed to have destroyed the Gibeonites, were now allied with

them. Even though this was a big mistake, God remained faithful to His promise and helped Israel defeat the coalition of nations now on the attack.

Although Joshua had been deceived by the Gibeonites, he did not hesitate in rescuing them when they were under attack. Joshua's response shows his integrity, even though he had been tricked.

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Two explanations have been given for how this event occurred:

1. A slowing of the earth's normal rotation gave Joshua more time, as the original Hebrew language seems to indicate.
2. Some unusual refraction of the sun's rays gave additional hours of light.

Regardless of God's chosen method, the Bible is clear that this day was prolonged by a miracle, and that God's intervention turned the tide of battle for His people.



Understanding Your Students

It says in Hebrew 11:3 that "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Children at this age will wonder a lot about God's creation. Especially in this lesson, we need to once again stress that God is the Creator of all things. He has the divine power to control the sun and the moon, and everything else. Take opportunities to impart some of the wonders of God's creation to your students so that they can know, not just believe, that God is the Creator.

While your students usually accept the fact that God made everything, they may not know what the

word "create" means. Throughout the lesson, it is important the students understand that only God can make something from nothing.

Take time to decorate your classroom and include the phrase "God is great." As the children come in for today's class, greet them by saying, "We are happy that you are here today. God is great. God gave us our wonderful world." Filling the room with God's creation and wonders can only help them come to know God more.

Children are naturally curious; therefore, be prepared to answer the question regarding from whom God was created. Understand that this is a common question among children, and the answer need not be elaborate. It can be a simple answer to the effect of, "God has always been here, before there was anything else, and He will always be here."



Vocabulary

Canaan

the promised land God gave the Israelites

Gibeonites

the neighbors of the Israelites

Enemy

someone who is not your friend; sometimes, that person may want to hurt you

Hail

when rain freezes to ice cubes



Before You Teach

When Joshua and the Israelites made a treaty with the Gibeonites, it seemed innocent enough. After all, the Israelites were trying to make peace, instead of war. But because they failed to talk to God, they ended up in a situation that they didn't want to be in. What can we learn from this story?

1. It is never wise to rush into a decision. It did not take long for the Israelites to decide it would be okay to make a covenant with people they had only met hours ago. The Bible records that at the end of three days, they discovered their neighbors' trickery. Had they waited it out, they might not have been in such an awkward situation. God's plan often takes time and patience. If it is His will, it will still happen accordingly.
2. It is important to constantly pray to God for guidance. Because the Israelites did not ask for

God's advice, they actually did not follow God's instruction to completely destroy the people of the land.

3. We should not make promises that we can't keep. Because the Israelites made an oath that was unbreakable, they had no choice but to follow through. In the end, they probably made many compromises with the Gibeonites in order to live with them peacefully. Today for us, making promises we can't keep can also lead us into disastrous situations. God has said that we should let our "yes," be "yes," and our "no," be "no."
4. When we find ourselves confident in our own ability and trust in ourselves more than we rely on God, that is the time we need to take a step back and evaluate our relationship with God. The Israelites thought they could decide this one thing on their own because they had the ability and strength to do so. But God always wants us to put our reliance in Him.



Bible Story

The Gibeonites Are Afraid

Dear children, do you still remember how God helped the Israelites defeat the cities of Jericho and Ai? Jericho was the city with a very big, tall wall around it, and God helped the Israelites break down the wall when they followed His instructions to march around it for seven days. After seven days, the wall fell down with a big BANG! When the other enemies in Canaan heard about this, they were afraid of the Israelites because God always helped them. After the Israelites defeated Jericho, which city did they fight next? They fought against a small city called Ai. At first, the Israelites didn't win the battle over Ai because an Israelite named Achan stole things from Jericho and lied to God. After they got rid of Achan, God helped the Israelites and they took over Ai. Now, the Israelites had taken over two cities: Jericho and Ai. By now, all the people in Canaan were really afraid, because God always helped the Israelites defeat their enemies. One group of people called the Gibeonites lived near the Israelites, and they thought, "We're next! The Israelites are going to attack us next, and they will win and we will be destroyed!" They were so afraid, they tried to think of a way to trick the Israelites so that they would not be destroyed like Jericho and Ai.

The Gibeonites Think of a Plan

The Gibeonites knew that God told the Israelites to get rid of all the people who lived near them. They thought, "Hmm, if we tell the Israelites that we live really far away, maybe they won't fight with us." How could they show the Israelites that they lived far away? Imagine that you lived a long time ago, before there were cars. Before there were cars, people traveled by walking, and had donkeys to carry their heavy things. If you walked for a very long time, then your shoes would become old and broken, right? And if you walked in the middle of a desert, then you would not have time to make new clothes or buy new things. So the Gibeonites were going to pretend they walked a long time, from a far away place by wearing old, broken shoes, and carrying old things on their donkeys. The Gibeonites thought, "If the Israelites see our old, broken shoes

and clothes, they will think that we came from a place far far away. Then maybe they will promise not to fight with us." So they went with loaded donkeys with worn-out sacks and old clothes. The men put old and broken sandals on their feet and wore old clothes too. They carried bread and food that were dry and molded. They practiced acting like they were very tired from walking from a far away place. When they were ready, they went to Joshua.

They said to him, "We have come from a far away place. We have heard about how your God helps you. Please make a promise to us that you won't attack us and fight with us."

The Israelites looked at their sandals. They did look really old and broken! And they looked at their smelly old food, and torn up clothes. It really looked like the Gibeonites had walked for a very long time, and were from a very far away place. Joshua remembered that God said they had to fight the people who lived near them, but God did not say to get rid of the people from far away places. Since the Gibeonites acted like they didn't live close to them, Joshua made a promise to never ever attack and kill them without asking God first. Do you think this was a good idea? No! The best idea is to always ask for God's permission before doing anything. Joshua should have asked God if it was okay to make a promise to the Gibeonites, but he did not.

The Israelites Are Tricked

Three days after the Israelites made a promise to the Gibeonites to never attack or kill them, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. They were tricked! The Gibeonites said they lived far away, but they really lived next door to them!

Joshua called the Gibeonites back and said, "Why did you trick us by saying, 'We live a long way from you,' while actually you live near us? As a punishment for lying, your people will always have to carry water for us, and cut wood for us to use. You also have to carry water for the temple, and cut wood for the temple."

The Gibeonites said, "Okay! As long as you don't attack and kill us, we will always carry water and cut wood for you."

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Other people in Canaan heard that the Israelites had the Gibeonites serving them, and they were very unhappy. The Canaanites were unhappy because the Gibeonites lived in a very big city, and had a very good army. Now, all the fighting men were on Israel's side, not on the Canaanites' side. If Israel fought with other Canaanites, then they would win because God is helping them, and the Gibeonites have a good army.

So, some other cities in Canaan decided to gang up on against the Israelites by attacking the city where the Gibeonites lived. The Gibeonites told the Israelites, "Help us! We are being attacked by your enemies! Five kings and their big armies with many soldiers are fighting against us! We need your help!"

This time, Joshua thought before he said anything. He remembered that last time when they didn't ask God first, they lost the fight against the little city of Ai. Now, they would be fighting the armies from five big cities! They definitely needed God's help, so Joshua prayed to God before he fought against the armies from five big cities. Then God said, "Don't be afraid to fight them. I will help you win over them, and no matter how many they are, you will win." After Joshua heard this, he went to Gibeon to fight against the enemies' armies.

God helped the Israelites fight against the five enemies' armies in two ways. The first way God

helped Joshua was by sending down big balls of ice from the sky to hit the heads of the enemies. These big balls of ice are called "hail." The miraculous thing was that the hail only hit the enemies' heads, and not the Israelites' heads. Only the enemies were hurt by the hail, not the Israelites. Isn't that amazing? God can control the weather to help the Israelites because God is the one who created the sky.

The second way God helped the Israelites was by telling the sun to stay in the sky longer, so that it didn't get dark. God knew that it would be hard to fight in the dark because then you can't see. So, to help the Israelites, God made the sun stay in the sky for about a whole day so that there was more light and more time for the Israelites to fight against the five enemies' armies. Only God can do this because He created the sun. No one can control the sun except for God. Now, the Israelites could see clearly to fight their enemies! Never has the sun stayed in the sky as long as it did on the day God helped Joshua and the Israelites defeat the five enemies' armies.

God helped them so much that the Israelites won the battle against the five enemies' armies. They also saved the Gibeonites, even though they had tricked them! God really showed everyone His power over the sky by sending down big balls of ice to kill the enemies, and by telling the sun to stay in the sky longer. God can do anything, and with His help, the Israelites won a very big fight!



Check For Understanding

1. **Who told the Israelites that they wanted to make peace with them?** (The Gibeonites.)
2. **The Gibeonites said they had traveled from a far-away country. What might make you believe them?** (Their clothes and sandals were torn; they were carrying packs on their backs; they had molded food.)
3. **What did the Gibeonites want from the**

Israelites? (They wanted Joshua to promise that they wouldn't ever attack the Gibeonites.)

4. **Did Joshua ask God first before agreeing to never attack Gibeon?** (No.)
5. **Why did the Gibeonites play this trick?** (They were afraid and they didn't want to be killed by the Israelites.)
6. **What did God want the Israelites to do to the Canaanites?** (The Israelites were to destroy all the people in the land, so that these people would not turn the Israelites to practicing their wicked ways.)
7. **How did God help in the battle against**

the five enemies' armies? (God helped them by making the sun stand still and dropping hail from the sky.)

- 8. How long did the sun stop for?** (The sun stopped for about a whole day.)
- 9. Have you ever tried to ask the sun to keep from setting? Or have you ever asked the**

wind to stop blowing in your face? You see, these things are not possible for us to do. Do you know why they will only listen to God? It is because God created them. Joshua had such strong faith by believing that God could stop the sun from going down.



Life Application Story

God's Great Gift

Benjamin dashed through the front door after coming home from school one day.

"What's up?" asked his sister Lisa, as he whizzed by her in the kitchen. He went straight to the fridge and grabbed himself a glass of milk.

As he gulped down his drink, he replied, "We learned about the stars today. Did you know that the sun is actually a very hot star? And this hot star has been burning for a long time!"

"Yes, I did know that. God gave us the sun during the creation so it has definitely been around for a long time," said Lisa.

"There are so many things about the sun that I didn't know before. I always thought of the sun as something different. I mean, the stars we see at night just don't look anything like the sun," said Benjamin, as he rinsed out his cup in the sink.

"Well, the sun is a very big, hot star that can do a lot of things. It gives us warmth and daylight. If there was no sun, there would be no day because sun gives light during the day time."

Benjamin jumped in just as Lisa stopped speaking. "I also know that the sun allows plants, trees, flowers, and animals to grow! Without light and heat, not many plants and animals can survive."

"Well, I will bet there is something else you might not know. The sunlight is also good for us because our bones need sunlight to be hard and strong. The sun is good for our bodies because it keeps us warm, too."

Just then, Mrs. Lim walked into the kitchen.

"You're right, Lisa. But too much sunshine can be bad for our skin. The light of the sun can hurt our skin if we stand under the sun too long. This is why

we have sunburns," Mrs. Lim chimed in.

"And that's why we put on sunscreen before we go out on a sunny day," added Benjamin.

"Hey, this reminds me of the story I heard a few weeks ago in RE class. The sun was supposed to set when Joshua and the Israelites were fighting their enemies. But God told the sun to stand still and it did! This means that there was no night that day! God did this so the Israelites could see who they were fighting against. In the end, they won," said Lisa proudly.

Mrs. Lim smiled at her children. "Well, it seems like you two know a lot about the sun and God's creation. We should thank God for giving us such a wonderful gift."

"Do you want to know something else I just thought of?" asked Mrs. Lim.

"What are you thinking, mom?" asked Lisa.

"I think that God also wants us to be like the sun and bring light to other people. When we make others happy, like the way the sun makes us happy, then we make God happy too."

Mrs. Lim said, "Now, what about the two of you helping me to get dinner ready by washing the vegetables that God has helped to grow?"

Questions to Think About

- 1. What kinds of things can the sun do for us?** (Allow students to answer.)
- 2. Who made the sun?** (God.)
- 3. How can we thank God for the sun?** (Allow students to answer.)
- 4. How can we be like the sun and shine for God?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

The Sun Stands Still

Look at the picture. Who made the sun stand still?
(God.) Color in the picture.



Activity 2

God Helps Things Grow

Look at the pictures. Write down what God can help grow. In the box, draw in one more thing that God can help grow.

1. God can help _____ (flowers) grow.
2. God can help _____ (carrots or vegetables) grow.
3. God can help _____ (people, me) grow.
4. God can help _____ grow.



Activity 3

"A Thankful Sun"

Materials:

1. yellow construction paper
2. scissors
3. glue
4. markers or crayons
5. stickers or other scrap paper

Directions:

1. Give each student a piece of construction paper.
2. Help them draw a large circle and have them cut out the circle.
3. Help students brainstorm things they can thank God for. Write the ideas on the board in simple sentences.
4. Ask each student to copy down at least one of the things on the board onto their yellow sun circle.
5. Have students decorate the remaining space with drawings, stickers or other scrap paper.
6. Tell the students that the sun can help them remember to be thankful to God for all the things that they have. Conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving.

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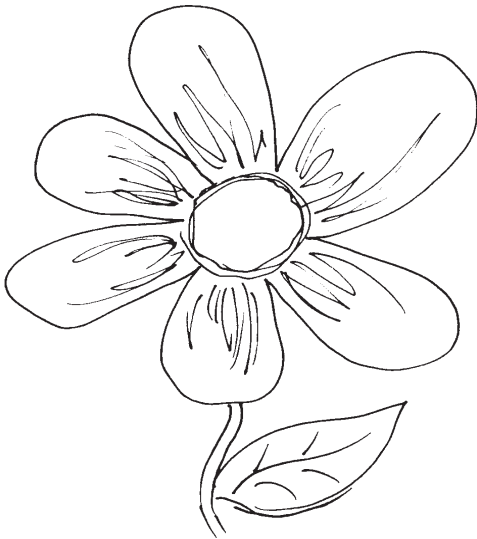
Who made the sun stand still?

Activity 7:2

God Makes Things Grow

Look at the following pictures. Write down what God can grow. In the box, draw one more thing that God can help grow.

1. God makes the _____ grow.



2. God makes the _____ grow.



3. God makes _____ grow.

God can make
_____ grow.