Zechariah was a priest who had been born in Babylon. He had returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. At this time, the prophet Haggai was bringing God’s message to His people. The Judean exiles were struggling to finish rebuilding God’s temple. In fact, several years had passed without progress on the temple when God called Zechariah to prophesy to His people.

Zechariah’s message was twofold: first, look back and remember the past. Second, look forward and prepare for the future. God wanted His people to learn from the mistakes of their parents and grandparents who had ignored the prophets’ warnings. Zechariah set out to encourage the people.

The Book of Zechariah is organized into eight visions, four messages, and two oracles. The visions Zechariah saw each symbolized something God would do—such as rebuild Jerusalem, judge Israel’s enemies, and remove national sin. (See Zech. 1–6.) A couple of years later, God spoke to Zechariah again. This time, God spoke four messages to respond to a question the people had about fasting. (Zech. 7:3)

In the last six chapters, Zechariah changed the subject to the future of God’s kingdom. Chapters 9–12 are rich with Messianic prophecy; the words are quoted often in the New Testament. Compare Zechariah 9:9 with John 12:15; Zechariah 11:13 with Matthew 27:9-10; and Zechariah 12:10 with John 19:37.

As you teach kids about Zechariah, emphasize God’s promise: “A king is coming.” Zechariah’s visions were significant to the reality of God’s people at that time, but a greater reality awaited. Zechariah pointed to Jesus, the coming deliverer who would be struck and pierced to take away sin. God would deal with His people’s enemies. He would cleanse His people. “They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say: They are My people, and they will say: Yahweh is our God” (Zech. 13:9). Under the rule of King Jesus, their future is incredibly bright.
Older Kids BIBLE STUDY OVERVIEW

Session Title: Zechariah, Prophet to Judah
Bible Passage: Zechariah 1–14
Big Picture Question: What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9
Unit Christ Connection: God saved His people who were in physical captivity as He would one day send Jesus to save and restore His people who are in spiritual captivity.

Small Group Opening
Welcome time
Activity page (5 minutes)
Session starter (10 minutes)

Large Group Leader
Countdown
Sing (4 minutes)
Introduce the session (2 minutes)
Timeline map (2 minutes)
Big picture question (1 minute)
Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)
The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me (optional)
Key passage (5 minutes)
Discussion starter video (4 minutes)
Prayer (2 minutes)

Small Group Leader
Key passage activity (5 minutes)
Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)
Activity choice (10 minutes)
Journal and prayer (5 minutes)
The exile in Babylon was over. A group of God’s people had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild God’s temple. Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest led the people. When they stopped rebuilding God’s temple, God sent prophets to give His people a message. One of those prophets was named Zechariah (zek uh RIGH uh). God told Zechariah what would happen in the future, and then Zechariah told the people what God said.

This was God’s message for His people: “Return to Me, and I will return to you.” God reminded the people about their parents and grandparents and great-grandparents. “The prophets told them to stop sinning,” God said, “but they did not listen.” So God had punished the people for their sin. “Don’t be like them,” God said.

One night, God gave Zechariah some messages through visions. Zechariah saw eight visions; each vision was a different message from God about something that was going to happen. In the first vision, Zechariah saw a man riding on a red horse. Behind him were other horses. They had been patrolling the earth. Everything was calm and quiet. But soon the Lord would punish His enemies. The Lord’s house would be rebuilt, and His cities would be blessed again.

In the second vision, Zechariah saw four horns—these stood for Israel’s enemies. Zechariah also saw four craftsmen, who would defeat those enemies. Next, Zechariah saw a man going out to measure Jerusalem, but the city could not be measured because it was too big for walls. Instead, the Lord would be a wall of fire around it.

God then showed Zechariah how He would forgive His people if they would follow Him. In the fifth vision, Zechariah saw a solid gold lampstand, which showed how all the Lord’s plans would happen because of His Spirit.

Then, Zechariah saw a flying scroll, which was a curse on everyone who
disobeyed God. In the seventh vision, a woman sat inside a basket. She represented the wickedness of those who worshiped false gods. She was lifted up and taken back to Babylon. In the eighth vision, Zechariah saw four chariots. Like the horses of the first vision, they would patrol the earth.

God then told Zechariah to collect silver and gold from the people. “Use the gold and silver to make crowns,” He said, “and place them on the head of Joshua, the high priest.”

The crowns on the head of Joshua were a sign to the people that a special king was coming to bring peace for everyone. “Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey,” Zechariah said.

God promised to bless His people and punish the rest of the nations for their sin. One day everyone will worship the Lord.

Christ Connection: God was going to help His people and give them a different kind of king. Jesus is the King who came and rode humbly on a donkey, just as Zechariah said. Because Zechariah’s prophecy came true in Jesus, we can have hope and forgiveness of sins when we trust in Jesus.
Welcome time
Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Invite kids to review the previous Bible stories in this unit. Challenge kids to share one sentence about each Bible story.

Activity page (5 minutes)
Help kids complete the activity page “Zechariah Word Search.” Invite kids to name as many books of the Old Testament as they can in 60 seconds.

Say • Zechariah is 1 of the 39 books of the Old Testament.
He was a prophet who had several visions. God used Zechariah to tell His people in Judah several different messages.

Transition to large group
Session Title: Zechariah, Prophet to Judah
Bible Passage: Zechariah 1–14
Big Picture Question: What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.
Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9
Unit Christ Connection: God saved His people who were in physical captivity as He would one day send Jesus to save and restore His people who are in spiritual captivity.

Countdown
Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Sing (4 minutes)

[Large Group Leader enters wearing a hard hat and a tool belt or nail apron. Tuck a small Bible into one of the pockets of the tool belt.]

Leader • Good day, construction crew! I decided that today we would start by praising God and singing our theme song. So I need everybody to stand up, and I need a few volunteers to lead our group.

Select some volunteers. Sing “Broken Hallelujah.”

Leader • Is it easy to praise God when everything is good?
Sometimes it is. Who remembers our big picture question and answer from last week? How can we honor God? We can put God first in our lives.

Introduce the session (2 minutes)
Leader • OK. We have studied three Bible stories so far in our unit. God is serious about sin and about keeping His
promises. Let’s review our first three big picture questions and answers.

Read the first question. Select kids to share the answer.
Repeat this pattern with the other questions and answers.

- **Why did God judge Edom’s pride?** Pride steals God’s glory.
- **How did God keep His promise to the Israelites?** God changed King Cyrus’s heart so the Israelites could go home.
- **How can we honor God?** We can put God first in our lives.

**Timeline map (2 minutes)**

**Leader** • You have been listening really well during the last few weeks. So let’s review what Bible stories each question and answer was a part of.
Select a few kids to come to the timeline map and point out one of the Bible stories. Ask kids to share any details they remember about each story.

**Big picture question (1 minute)**

**Leader** • If you are ready to hear today’s Bible story and today’s big picture question and answer, I need to hear you yell, “Jesus is our Savior.” One. Two. Three. “Jesus is our Savior!” Cool! Today our big picture question is, **What was Zechariah’s message?**

**Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)**

**Leader** • Anyone want to guess if Zechariah was a major or a minor prophet? I heard the right answer! Zechariah is one of the twelve minor prophets. Find Zechariah in your Bible and let’s find out what message God gave him to share and who the message was for.
Open your Bible to Zechariah 1 and tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video “Zechariah, Prophet to Judah.”

**Leader** • Zechariah had a lot of visions. He saw some cool stuff. He saw some interesting stuff. He saw stuff that sounds weird to us today. But everything Zechariah saw in one of his visions was meant to share a message with God’s people. Sometimes God used pictures or images to share His messages with the prophets.

Who remembers the first vision Zechariah saw? Zechariah saw horses. He also saw one man riding a red horse. This vision was a message that right now things were calm and quiet on earth, but one day soon God would punish His enemies. People who refuse to worship God as the one true God are enemies of God.

In the second vision, Zechariah saw four horns and four craftsmen. The four horns represented the enemies of Israel. God explained to Zechariah that the enemies of Israel would be defeated.

God wanted His people to understand that a special king was coming, so He told Zechariah to make crowns and place them on the high priest’s head. The crowns were a symbol of the king who would come. Who do you think the coming King was? Jesus! You are so intuitive, so clever.

Our big picture question is, *What was Zechariah’s message?* Zechariah shared many things, but we want to remember *What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.* Read the big picture question and answer with me. *What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.*

In the New Testament, we see Zechariah’s words again when Jesus entered Jerusalem the week of His death and resurrection. Jesus paid the price for our sin. When we
repent and trust in Jesus, we are forgiven and will spend eternity with Jesus!

The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me (optional)
Using Scripture and the guide provided, explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Tell kids how they can respond, and provide counselors to speak with each kid individually. Guide counselors to use open-ended questions to allow kids to determine the direction of the conversation.

Encourage girls and boys to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Key passage (5 minutes)
Leader • Someone tell me where our key passage is found in the Bible. Right! Zechariah 9:9. We learned in our Bible story why Zechariah shared this message about Jesus. We also know that Zechariah’s message was true. Jesus did come as a humble king, riding on a donkey. He came to free people from sin and death. Read our passage with me.
Lead kids to read the passage together. Form three groups. Challenge the kids to say the passage with their group. Hide the passage and invite kids to say the passage from memory. Choose a few volunteers to lead the group to sing “Look.”

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)
Leader • Have you ever had an important announcement or message to give and you couldn’t wait until you could tell someone? Think about that time as you watch this video. Show the “Unit 21 Session 4” video.
Leader • Who wants to know what the special announcement was? Me too. I don’t know what it was
either. God wanted people to know that Jesus was coming. **What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.** This was a message that God’s people heard many times. Can you imagine waiting for the Messiah to come? What would you think? What would you do? We have a special message to tell others. We get to tell people about Jesus and His death and resurrection. It’s the most important, most exciting, most urgent message ever!

**Prayer (2 minutes)**

**Leader** • Everyone find a partner or two. When I point to your group, I want someone in your group to tell me one thing you learned today.

Give the groups a minute to discuss and answer. Try to call on every group. If you have limited time, select four or five groups to respond and allow other groups to raise their hands if a group shared something they learned too.

**Leader** • **What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.** I hope you come again next week. We have some more construction work going on this week, and I can’t wait to tell you all about it next time. Do I have a volunteer who would like to close our time together by praying for our group?

Select a volunteer to pray.

**Dismiss to small groups**
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.
**Session Title:** Zechariah, Prophet to Judah  
**Bible Passage:** Zechariah 1–14  
**Big Picture Question:** What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.  
**Key Passage:** Zechariah 9:9  
**Unit Christ Connection:** God saved His people who were in physical captivity as He would one day send Jesus to save and restore His people who are in spiritual captivity.

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**Key passage activity (5 minutes)**  
Challenge kids to share the key passage from memory. You may opt to pair kids together and provide a 60 second practice time. Affirm each kid who participates. Assist kids as needed.  
**Say**  
- *What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.*  
- What did Zechariah say about the coming Messiah?

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**Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)**  
Distribute paper and markers to boys and girls. Encourage kids to draw pictures of a previously studied Old Testament story. Use the timeline in the small group visual pack to help kids remember stories. Discuss the various people in each of the Bible stories depicted and mention how people sinned in each of the stories. Lead girls and boys to review Zechariah 1:1-6.  
**Say**  
- God told His people again and again and again that He wanted them to follow Him. He told them to stop sinning and to return to following God.  
- The prophet Zechariah was another one of the
prophets who spoke to the people about their sin. God used visions to tell Zechariah and His people special messages about sin, Israel, Jesus, and more.

• **What was Zechariah’s message?** Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.

• Who was the King that Zechariah spoke about? (Jesus is the King who came and rode humbly on a donkey, just as Zechariah said. Because Zechariah’s prophecy came true in Jesus, we can have hope and forgiveness of sins when we trust in Jesus.)

If you choose to review with girls and boys how to become a Christian, explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

• **God rules.** God created and is in charge of everything. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; Col. 1:16-17)

• **We sinned.** Since Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23)

• **God provided.** God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9)

• **Jesus gives.** Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again so we can be welcomed into God’s family. (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18)

• **We respond.** Believe that Jesus alone saves you. Repent. Tell God that your faith is in Jesus. (Rom. 10:9-10,13)
**Activity:** Foil cross

Guide each kid to carefully cut a piece of foil to wrap around her piece of cardboard. Help kids secure the foil with tape. Lead boys and girls to take a pencil and outline a cross in the foil. Kids may use ultra-fine tip permanent markers to draw tiny loops or other designs on the inside or outside of the crosses to make them stand out. You may provide magnets for kids to attach to the back of the foil crosses for hanging in a locker or on a refrigerator.

**Say** • The Bible tells us about Jesus. From Genesis to Revelation, God revealed His plan to send Jesus to rescue people from sin and defeat evil. Each book of the Bible has an important message to tell us about Jesus Christ.

• What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.

**Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Invite kids to think about all that the Bible reveals about Jesus. Allow kids to write or draw some of those details on the journal page. Encourage kids to write a note of gratitude to God for giving His people the Book of Zechariah and all of the other books of the Bible.

**Say** • All of the books of the Bible are important. God had a message He wanted each author to share.

• What was Zechariah’s message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.

Take prayer requests and close the group in prayer. As time allows, lead kids to complete the activity page “The Gospel Crossword.”
Instructions: Find each word in the word search.

horses  horns  surveyor  gold lampstand  chariots  branch  woman in basket

craftsmen  flying scroll  high priest
God ____________
• God created and is in charge of everything. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; Col. 1:16-17)

We ____________
• Since Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23)

God ____________
• God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9)

Jesus ____________
• Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again so we can be welcomed into God’s family. (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18)

We ____________
• Believe that Jesus alone saves you. Repent. Tell God that your faith is in Jesus. (Rom. 10:9-10,13)

**Instructions:** Complete the crossword puzzle. Hint: The first answer belongs in the highest set of across boxes.

**How would you explain these three verses to a friend?**

John 3:16

1 Peter 3:18

Romans 10:9-10,13
The Exiles Returned

**Key Passage:** Zechariah 9:9

**Session 1:** Obadiah the Prophet  
*Obadiah 1-21*

**Session 2:** Zerubbabel Led the Captives Home  
*Ezra 1:1–2:2; 2:64–3:13*

**Session 3:** Haggai, Prophet to Judah  
*Haggai 1–2*

**Session 4:** Zechariah, Prophet to Judah  
*Zechariah 1–14*

**Session 5:** The Temple Was Completed  
*Ezra 4:24–6:22*

**Session 6:** Esther Saved Her People  
*Esther 1–10*
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah 9:9
What was Zechariah’s message?
Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.
Instructions: Print this poster. You may laminate it and reuse it throughout the quarter. Use a dry erase marker to fill in the necessary information. Display the poster where parents and kids can see it before class.

Today we will be tasting/touching/sniffing:

________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________

Please notify the leader if your child should not participate.
The **GOSPEL**

**GOD’S PLAN FOR ME**

gos-pel – *noun.* good news. the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation.

**GOD RULES.**
The Bible tells us God created everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of everything. *Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16-17*

**WE SINNED.**
We all choose to disobey God. The Bible calls this sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God’s punishment of death. *Romans 3:23; 6:23*

**GOD PROVIDED.**
God sent 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. *John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9*

**JESUS GIVES.**
He 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! *Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 2:8-9*

**WE RESPOND.**
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. *John 14:6; Romans 10:9-10,13*