

## Lamentations:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the prophet Jeremiah and do a synopsis of Lamentations:

Materials needed for 2 activities:

### Activity 1:

Small cups (1 per student)

Peanut butter

Small cracker/cookie figures (at least 1 per student) I used Teddy Grahams

### Activity 2:

Large bowl

Package of chocolate Oreos

Quart sized Ziplock bags (1 per student)

Cheesecake filling (I used store-bought mixture that doesn't require baking but you can use a mixture of cream cheese and Coolwhip—already mixed—if you prefer)

We begin with a verse out of Matthew 24:37-38 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!

Then, we backtrack to the time of Jeremiah—after David and Solomon, after the kingdom is split into Israel and Judah—to a time when God's people have been taken captive by the king of Babylon. Another prophet prophesied lies—that Babylon was conquered and the people, king and vessels would be brought back to Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Jeremiah prophesied doom and gloom and pointed out Judah's sinfulness—he was treated very poorly—mocked, put in stocks, thrown into a pit.

Ask the students who they would prefer to listen to: Someone who tells them they will have chocolate cake and ice cream to eat...or someone who tells them they will have overcooked Brussels sprouts and mud to eat?

### ACTIVITY 1: Jeremiah in the pit

Put peanut butter in the small cups and give each student one along with a cookie figure. Re-enact Jeremiah being thrown in the pit. (Then, eat poor Jeremiah...our kids asked for more Jeremiahs, which they gleefully dunked repeatedly into the peanut butter mixture. These kids are brutal.)

Then, introduce Lamentations as one of the books that Jeremiah wrote:

Lamentations is a book of 5 poems written by Jeremiah soon after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. (They were burned on August 15<sup>th</sup> 586 BC.) They are written A-Z form—covering his anguish from A-Z. He is mourning the loss of Jerusalem.

Chapter 1: The destruction of Jerusalem—she has sinned and is desolate and her enemies are thriving.

Ask the kids if they have ever tried to warn someone but that person wouldn't listen. Jeremiah tried to warn God's people, but they would not listen to God.

Chapter 2: The anger of God—the Lord has become like an enemy.

Who do you turn to when everything is against you? If you are used to praying to God for help, and he is your enemy, what do you do? If God, Himself is against you, to whom can you turn?

(When I asked this of my students, they said to turn to God anyway...which leads into the next chapter, nicely)

Chapter 3: The prayer for mercy—vs. 18 “My strength has perished and so has my hope from the Lord.” Continue reading through vs. 23

(We sang the song, “The Steadfast Love of the Lord Never Ceases”, and talked about how odd it was to find that poem in the midst of Jeremiah's lament over Jerusalem.

Continue reading through 26—and compare to Psalm 73:25 “Whom have I in heaven but thee and besides thee I desire, nothing in the earth.

Though my heart and flesh may fail. God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Chapter 4: The siege of Jerusalem—people of the city starving.

Discuss what a “siege” is. What would the people eat if food had run out?

#### ACTIVITY 2: Dirt Dessert

Make dirt dessert by distributing the chocolate Oreos between the Ziplock bags. Have each student crush the cookies until they are thoroughly crumbled.

Put the cheesecake filling in a large bowl and mix in most of the crumbled cookies. Pour the rest of the cookies across the top to look like dirt. Since we have lunch immediately after service, we served this for dessert.

Chapter 5: The prayer for restoration “Restore us to You, O LORD, that we may be restored; Renew our days as of old,” (Lamentations 5:21 NAS95)

“Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.” (Lamentations 5:21 AV)

Basically, Jeremiah prays for the Lord to “repent us!”

Turn the students around so that it is not their effort that causes them to be turned. Jeremiah asked the Lord to turn His people. He knew it would take the LORD to accomplish this.

We had learned a song “When I Turn to See”

We added this verse to the same melody for the study on Lamentations:

When YOU turn, turn, turn us to You Lord, Lord, Lord  
We will be turned, turned, turned, by you alone, lone, lone.

For the melody and words to “When I Turn to See”, go to [www.cmintl.org](http://www.cmintl.org), click on:

Enter

Kids’ Corner

Songs

When I Turned to See