

*A Sinful Marriage
And A Sinful Nation*

Hosea

MEMORY VERSE

HOSEA 4:1

“Hear the word of the LORD, you children of Israel, for the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: ‘there is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land.’”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two pairs of adult shoes.

An “I Follow Jesus“ Tie template for each child, copied onto cardstock, markers or crayons, scissors, a hole punch and yarn.

ATTENTION GETTER!

The Wave

Have your entire class stand in a single-file line. Explain that the leader will make a movement, such as raising both hands over his or her head. The next person in line will follow, but the third person will keep his or her eyes on the second person and not perform the action until the second person has completed it. This process will continue down the line until every player has performed the action in turn. The result will be a pattern, like a “wave.”

Some other actions that the leader might do are bending down on one knee, leaning far to the left or right, raising and lowering a leg to the side, putting hands on hips, or jumping straight up. Optional: try adding music once the children have caught on.

Use this activity to introduce today’s lesson and to show how important it is to follow Jesus no matter what.

LESSON TIME!

Hosea, whose name means help, or salvation served as a prophet during the same time as Isaiah and Amos. His book is the first of the Minor Prophets. Hosea prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, and those of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Sadly in the history of God's people, there was much to be rebuked in the two nations. Although there was a time of prosperity in the country, inwardly, in their hearts, there was a great deal of corruption. The people no longer worshipped God, but worshipped false gods and idols and were involved in pagan practices. God sent Hosea to show the people that their sin broke God's heart. It was terrible what they were doing and God was going to have Hosea do something bad to show the people how their sin broke His heart. **Sin makes God very sad.**

HOSEA 1:1-10:

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the LORD."

So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

Then the LORD said to him: "Call his name Jezreel, For in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.

It shall come to pass in that day That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: "Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them away.

Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, Will save them by the LORD their God, And will not save them by bow, Nor by sword or battle, By horses or horsemen."

Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.

Then God said: "Call his name Lo-Ammi, For you are not My people, And I will not be your God.

"Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.'

At the beginning of Hosea's ministry, God commanded Hosea to marry a woman who did not believe in the Lord. He chose Gomer, an idol worshipper, and a woman involved in religious prostitution, as his wife. She was doing a lot of bad things. Why do you think that God would have Hosea, who loved and served God to marry a woman who forsook God? He did this as a picture of His relationship with the nation of Israel, who had been very unfaithful to Him with their worship of false gods. Hosea's life depicted God's heart. Gomer's unfaithfulness hurt Hosea; likewise, our sin hurts God's heart. **Sin makes God very sad.**

Hosea and Gomer had three children, and Hosea's wife left him and returned to a life of sin, but Hosea never stopped loving his wife. Just like God never stopped loving Israel. Eventually Gomer became the slave of another man.

When we put anything ahead of God in our hearts we are going to break God's heart. Imagine Hosea who loved Gomer very much having to worry about her. He only wanted to have a relationship with her, but she refused. How the Lord desires to have a relationship with each one of us. Let us not turn away from Him. He loves us so much. **Sin makes God very sad.**

HOSEA 3:1-5:

Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans."

So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley.

And I said to her, "You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man; so, too, will I be toward you."

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim.

Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.

The Lord told Hosea to buy back Gomer and restore her to the position of his wife. By Hosea doing this, we see a beautiful example of mercy that Hosea had toward his wife. We also see God's great love for His people, Israel. Through all of this, how do you think Hosea felt? Was he happy at what his wife did? Certainly not! It must have made him very sad. When we love someone, and they reject our love, it breaks our hearts. Gomer broke Hosea's heart, and God's heart is broken when we reject His perfect love for us. **Sin makes God very sad.**

Yet, with God, there is always hope of restoration. Hosea was told to buy her back. Did you know that is exactly what God did for us by sending Jesus? We were dead in our sin, but God still loved us and wanted to have a relationship with us so He sent Jesus to die in our place. Now when we believe in Him we can be forgiven of our sin (bought back from sin) and live for Him completely cleansed. Is that not wonderful news?

Walking in Someone Else's Shoes

God had Hosea do something that showed the nation of Israel how it felt for Him that they turned away from Him. Hosea kind of had to walk in God's shoes. It was not easy for him to do and made him sad. Just like Israel's sin made God sad. God had a reason to have Hosea "walk in His shoes."

Have the class split into two equal teams. Make two single file lines. Have all of the children take off their shoes. At the other end of the room have two pairs of adult shoes. When you say, "go" the first child in line will run to the other end of the room and put on the adult shoes and lace them up. Next, they will walk back to their team and give the shoes to the next person who will take the shoes to the other end of the room and come back. The third person will then go to the end and put on the shoes, etc. Continue play in this pattern until there is a pattern. Keep playing until the children tire of the game.

HOSEA: 11:1-11:

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

As they called them, So they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images.

"I taught Ephraim to walk, Taking them by their arms; But they did not know that I healed them.

I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.

"He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king, Because they refused to repent.

And the sword shall slash in his cities, Devour his districts, And consume them, Because of their own counsels.

My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, None at all exalt Him.

"How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred.

I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror.

"They shall walk after the LORD. He will roar like a lion. When He roars, Then His sons shall come trembling from the west;

They shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, Like a dove from the land of Assyria. And I will let them dwell in their houses," Says the LORD.

Despite Israel's unfaithfulness as a nation to the Lord, His love for them never stopped. In verse one, God declares his love for Israel, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Israel was God's chosen people and called his son. God brought them out of Egypt, showing His love and giving them the land of Canaan. He had promised it as an inheritance for many generations.

In Matthew 2:15, "...Out of Egypt have I called my son," we can see that God also had in mind His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, when Hosea said these words. According to C.I. Scofield, "The words quoted are in Hosea 11:1, and the passage illustrates the principle that prophecies often have a deeper meaning than at first appears. Israel, as a nation, was a son (Exodus 4:22), but Christ was the greater Son." Jesus was called out of Egypt, and He was the One who greatly pleased the Father.

What a contrast Jesus was to God's children, Israel. They were bought back by His awesome power from the terrible bondage in Egypt. God did this because of His tender love for them, yet they turned their hearts far from Him. God shares that He had taught Ephraim to take his earliest steps, as it were, holding his arms and directing his way. Just like an ungrateful child, they forgot the One to whom they owed so much, and did not know that He had healed them.

He gently remembers the days when He drew them with cords of a man and with bands of love, delivering them from the yoke, and

providing all they needed to live. How lovingly God delivered us also from sin and Satan, bringing us to the saving knowledge of Christ. Let us learn from the Israelites, that once we have been delivered from Egypt, to not allow any idols to again take our hearts into captivity, away from our Lord.

In verses 5 and 6, we see that Israel could not return to Egypt. Yet because of their sin, God delivered them into the hands of the Assyrians. It was “because of their own counsels” (verse 6). This was the fruit that came from the seeds they sowed in forgetting their God, and going their own foolish way. Though God continually called them to repentance, they were “bent to backsliding” from Him (verse 7).

In verse 8 we see God’s broken heart because of their sin - “How shall I give you up? ...My heart is turned within Me, My compassions are kindled together.” As we know, sin breaks God’s heart, and yet even with a broken heart, it is blessed to know that when God gives His Word, He will never change His mind about it. He does not alter His purposes like a man. **Sin makes God very sad.**

He can turn from anger, though the people may deserve it, and pour upon them loving kindness when they repent. In verse 10 we see that though Ephraim should have been destroyed for their sin, yet God preserved a remnant in grace, which shall yet “walk after the Lord.” In the day that “He shall roar like a lion,” He will cause the blinded people to tremble at His Word. In His love, He will place them “in their houses” as He has said.

There is much in this chapter that shows us the unfaithfulness of Israel. They were very ungrateful to God. They loved their idols. They did not know the God who healed them. They fell into apostasy. They did not want to repent and change. All of this broke God’s heart. In Matthew 23:37, Jesus laments over Jerusalem and says; “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kills the prophets, and

stones them who are sent to you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not let me!” This is the cry of a broken heart. We see God’s response to Israel; He gives them mercy and not judgment. **Sin makes God very sad.**

In the beginning of the lesson, we saw Hosea’s wife, who left him to live a life of adultery. She ended up as a slave, with no freedom or choice, no life, nothing but bondage. She could have had a wonderful home with Hosea, but she chose foolishly. Israel left the God who so loved them, to live a life of adultery apart from Him. They ended up as slaves, with no freedom or choice, no life, nothing but bondage.

They could have had a wonderful life with the Lord, but they chose foolishly. Hosea bought back his own wife; God bought back His own people with the blood of His only Son whom He loved. God bought each one who will receive His gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Let us remember that our sin hurts Him; **Sin makes God very sad.** But as we repent from our sin, God’s broken heart rejoices.

HOSEA 12:1-13:8:

"Ephraim feeds on the wind, And pursues the east wind; He daily increases lies and desolation. Also they make a covenant with the Assyrians, And oil is carried to Egypt.

"The LORD also brings a charge against Judah, And will punish Jacob according to his ways; According to his deeds He will recompense him.

He took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength he struggled with God.

Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from Him. He found Him in Bethel, And there He spoke to us;

That is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name.

So you, by the help of your God, return; Observe mercy and justice, And wait on your God continually.

"A cunning Canaanite! Deceitful scales are in his hand; He loves to oppress.

And Ephraim said, 'Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; In all my labors They shall find in me no iniquity that is sin.'

"But I am the LORD your God, Ever since the land of Egypt; I will again make you dwell in tents, As in the days of the appointed feast.

I have also spoken by the prophets, And have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets."

Though Gilead has idols; Surely they are vanity; Though they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal, Indeed their altars shall be heaps in the furrows of the field.

Jacob fled to the country of Syria; Israel served for a spouse, And for a wife he tended sheep.

By a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, And by a prophet he was preserved.

Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly;
Therefore his Lord will leave the guilt of his
bloodshed upon him, And return his reproach upon
him.

When Ephraim spoke, trembling, He exalted himself
in Israel; But when he offended through Baal
worship, he died.

Now they sin more and more, And have made for
themselves molded images, Idols of their silver,
according to their skill; All of it is the work of
craftsmen. They say of them, "Let the men who
sacrifice kiss the calves!"

Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud And
like the early dew that passes away, Like chaff blown
off from a threshing floor And like smoke from a
chimney.

"Yet I am the LORD your God Ever since the land of
Egypt, And you shall know no God but Me; For there
is no Savior besides Me.

I knew you in the wilderness, In the land of great
drought.

When they had pasture, they were filled; They were
filled and their heart was exalted; Therefore they
forgot Me.

"So I will be to them like a lion; Like a leopard by the
road I will lurk;
I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs; I
will tear open their rib cage, And there I will devour
them like a lion. The wild beast shall tear them.

The spiritual adultery of Israel and the consequences of their sin are dealt with in the book of Hosea. Hosea preached to the people about their idolatry, a lack of love in their worship to God, their moral depravity and their oppression of the poor. God called them to repent from their wicked ways and to turn back to Him. He loved them, and it broke His heart to see their sin ever before Him. **Sin makes God very sad.**

In Hosea 10:12-13, God called them to repentance and a change of life by saying; “Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till He comes and rains righteousness on you. You have plowed wickedness; you have reaped iniquity. You have eaten the fruit of lies, because you trusted in your own way, in the multitude of your mighty men.” He asked them to sow in righteousness towards other people, and the fruit of this will be love toward the poor and those in need. He asked them to break up the fallow ground. “Plowing and planting are necessary preliminary steps for growing a crop, which eventually sprouts when the rain falls in season. In the same way, repentance would set the stage for restored blessing, which God would eventually rain down on His people” (Nelson Study Bible).

Though God wanted them to reap mercy, they sowed the seeds of sin and reaped a harvest of sin, the fruit of lies. The Holy Spirit gives to us the same warning as believers in Galatians 6:7-10 - “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” **Sin makes God very sad.**

We learn from Hosea that God loves each of us very much. When we sin, it breaks His heart. Yet, God has loved us so much He gave

us Jesus and bought us back. Let us remember to always be thankful to Him and to never leave or forsake Him. We know that He will never leave us!

“I Follow Jesus” Tie

You will need a template for each child in your classroom, markers or crayons, scissors, a hole-punch and yarn. Follow the instructions included with the template.

Hosea had to make a decision to follow God no matter what. We also need to follow God.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to forsake anything in their lives that has become more important than God. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

Template - I Will Follow Jesus Tie

1. Copy ties onto white cardstock.
2. Color and decorate.
3. Cut out tie.
4. Punch holes at top.
5. Use yarn to tie around neck, but not too tight.

