



3

God Loves Israel



Key Passages

- Hosea 4:1–2, 11:1

Lesson Focus

- God loves His people.

Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will color a picture of Amos the prophet as a review of last week's lesson and/or play with play dough.



Circle Time

Prayer—Using the Flip Chart Prayer Page, discuss prayer and give each child the opportunity to pray after determining what type of prayer you will offer today.

God's Word—Students will learn how God used Hosea to tell the Israelites just how much He loves His people.

Song—Students will have fun singing songs to help them remember God's mercy and love. Lyrics to the songs are found on the Flip Chart Song Page and the Song Sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide.



Activity 1: A Love Story

Students will act out the account of Hosea and his wife Gomer.



Activity 2: Hosea Puppet

Students will color and assemble the Hosea Fold-Over Puppet.



Memory Verse Review and Activity

Students will review the memory verse with the Memory Verse Flashcards while singing, clapping, and whispering.



Applying God's Word/Snack

Students will review the lesson while enjoying the snack for the day.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



FOR THE TEACHER

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



COME ON IN

- Print one Amos Coloring Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Play dough if appropriate.

- Amos Coloring Sheet
- Crayons
- Play dough



CIRCLE TIME

- Print the three Lesson Pictures—Hosea, Gomer, and the Children—from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use during the class. You can color them to make them more appealing to the children.
- Practice the songs on the Song Sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide.

- Lesson Flip Chart
- Bible
- Stuffed animal for prayer time
- Hosea, Gomer, and the Children Lesson Pictures



A LOVE STORY

- Print one A Love Story Skit from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use in leading the children in the skit.
- Costumes would add interest and excitement. Use head scarves, robes, sheets, towels, etc. to drape on the children.

- A Love Story Skit
- Costumes for the skit



HOSEA PUPPET

- Print and cut one Hosea Fold-Over Puppet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Assemble one puppet to show as an example.
- You can tape the puppets on the sides to make them finger puppets or use a craft stick.

- Hosea Fold-Over Puppet for each student
- Completed Hosea Fold-Over Puppet
- Crayons
- Craft sticks (optional)
- Tape



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW AND ACTIVITY

- Print and cut out one set of Memory Verse Flashcards from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Memory Verse Flashcards
- Flip Chart Memory Verse Page



APPLYING GOD'S WORD/SNACK

- Prepare and bring snacks.

- Lesson Flip Chart for Review
- Snacks



Prepare to share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the lesson key passages along with this background.

Hosea described one of the most shocking portrayals of God's relationship with His children. God compared His relationship with His children to a marriage with a prostitute who would not remain faithful. These are strong and bitter words through the mouth and actions of a prophet. They must have rung sharply in the ears of the people of Israel. And as the people witnessed Hosea take Gomer as his wife, observed Gomer leave Hosea for other men, and then watched as Hosea tenderly took Gomer back in love and forgiveness, the message that God meant to convey to His people became even clearer. Just as Gomer had abandoned her husband for other lovers, so had Israel turned from the one true God to false gods and idols (Hosea 2:2–13). And just as Gomer's husband bought her back from slavery, so God brings His children back in mercy and love.

The mercy and love of God is put on display in the book of Hosea in a way that is glorious. It is easy to love the lovable or to offer gifts to those who will return the favor, but it can be oh so difficult to offer forgiveness to those who have stolen from you or violated your trust in the most intimate of ways. That is the very thing God called Hosea to do when he was told to buy Gomer back from the slave market where she had landed and to love her (Hosea 3:1–3). In this act, God portrayed His relationship with the adulterous Israelites. God was willing to show mercy; God was willing to take them back again.

Israel surely deserved God's wrath for their constant violations of His commands. God would have been just in wiping out the nation for their sins, but He had made promises to Abraham and David to bring the Messiah from the nation of Israel. His mercy was shown in withholding punishment—He didn't give them what they deserved (though later He would). In fact, His love was demonstrated as He restored them in spite of their sin and their rejection of His authority.

God spoke of Israel as a child He had raised (Hosea 11:1), lovingly guiding Israel from their bondage in Egypt into the Promised Land where He lavished His child with blessings and care. As a loving father, God would administer discipline to His child as Assyria brought destruction and captivity, but it grieved God to have to do it (Hosea 11:5–8). However, God would not utterly destroy Israel forever, and He promised His

people the hope of restoration in the future. If they would again walk after the Lord, the Lord would take them back and let them dwell again in their houses (Hosea 11:9–11).

God offered a call of repentance from seeking after idols and trusting in the gods and kings of other nations. However, Israel did not respond to His call. He promised to heal their backsliding and love them freely. He wanted them to turn from their gods and trust in the His mercy (Hosea 14:1–4). In the end, if His children would return, they would be revived and grow in the Lord (Hosea 14:8). The wise would recognize that He is a merciful God and the only God worthy of their worship. The future restoration of Israel (see section below) would demonstrate God's love for those who are truly His children.

The parallels between the book of Hosea and the lives of Christians today are not difficult to see. We are born in sin, and God is dishonored by our disobedience, rebellion, and idolatry. Yet God has purchased us with the price of His Son from the slave market of sin (Ephesians 2:1–10). We have been brought from pursuing our own selfish interests to pursuing the righteousness of Christ. And when we backslide, God uses discipline to bring us back to Himself (Hebrews 12:5–14). This book demonstrates God's unconditional mercy and love to His children as Hosea reunites with his wife and reconciliation occurs.

And the account reminds us of the unconditional love of God offered to us through Jesus Christ. We have rebelled and deserve only His wrath and justice because of that rebellion. But God is faithful and merciful to forgive, through Jesus Christ, those who humbly repent and turn from their sins. What a glorious God we serve, what an amazing message we have to share, and what a responsibility and privilege God has given us to convey this message to the next generation.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah, Amos, Nahum, and Micah. He prophesied in the Northern Kingdom of Israel through the reigns of four kings of Judah (Hosea 1:1). Though he prophesied for more than 60 years, Hosea is still considered one of the minor prophets for his relatively short book. In his writing, Hosea refers to Israel as Ephraim and Jacob interchangeably. Ephraim was one of the tribes that had settled in the north after the conquest. When the

Northern tribes had wholly abandoned the worship of the true God, they fell under the control of the Assyrians. This was what God warned His people of through Hosea (Hosea 11:5). And it was only about 75 years after Hosea began prophesying that Samaria (the capital of Israel) fell to the Assyrian king and God's chastening began for the Northern Kingdom.

Within Hosea's prophecies are clear references to the future restoration of Israel. Exactly when that restoration will occur is a point of debate among sincere believers. Some see the promises made to Israel as unfulfilled and pointing to a period when the nation will be restored to the Promised Land. Particularly, this is often connected to the millennial reign depicted in Revelation as a period of peace (Hosea 2:16–20). In general, those who hold a premillennial view of Christ's Second Coming would understand these passages as looking to the future restoration of Israel as a nation. Those who take an amillennial view typically see these passages as prophetic imagery and not as actual events that will take place. Amillennialists believe the events will be fulfilled as Christ returns to initiate the eternal state, but not in a distinct 1000-year period. While these are important ideas to seek answers to, we must be charitable to those who come to different conclusions than ours, providing those conclusions are based on Scripture alone. Regardless of our view on

this particular subject, we know that God is faithful to His promises, and we can trust that the warnings present in Hosea's writings are still relevant today. We are to worship God alone, trust in Him alone, and put our faith in Christ alone.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord of heaven and earth, honestly, I cringe when I think of Gomer's occupation. How can I be compared to her? Yet it's true. I have betrayed you at times. My heart is prone to wander. So I find your love for me almost impossible to grasp. How honored we are that you have given us the book of Hosea to help us understand your remarkable ability to love us—even when we've been unfaithful. Maybe there is one in my class who feels unlovable. Help me to reach out with the message in this lesson to show him or her the depth and breadth of your love. Draw each one to you with your beautiful redeeming love and mercy.

► As you teach, refer often to the Lesson Flip Chart Page to keep the children engaged. When reading the lesson Scriptures, stand up, be enthusiastic, look at the children, and emphasize the answers to the questions you will be asking. This will help to keep the children interested.



COME ON IN

As children arrive . . .

- They will color the Amos Coloring Sheet for review.
- If there is time, they can play with play dough.

During this time you should be at the door welcoming the children as they come in and directing them to sit down at the tables and begin the activity. Have an aid/helper ready to engage the children with the activity.



REVIEW

Using the Flip Chart, quickly review the previous lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Flip Chart Pages. Remind the children of each lesson's focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Circle Time

In an orderly manner, have the children assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs. Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, Lesson Pictures of Hosea, Gomer, and the Children, and any other props you brought or prepared for this lesson.

PRAYER

This prayer time is designed to get children to begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to get them to understand that they can pray. Use a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—or appropriate object to pass around the circle as each child gets his/her turn to pray. Only the child with the stuffed animal is allowed to pray or speak during this time. Using the same stuffed animal or other object all year will add continuity and structure to this time.

We start our Bible study with prayer. Let's pray. Turn to the Flip Chart Prayer Page. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there. Then determine which type you want the children to pray today.

- I love you prayers—Adoration
- I'm sorry prayers—Confession
- Thank you prayers—Thanksgiving
- Please prayers—Supplication

Today Thanksgiving is suggested. You might proceed this way:

Today let's say prayers of thanksgiving—and tell God how thankful we are for His faithfulness to us.

The prayers you begin with should be specific to your needs. This will model to the children that you believe God does care about all the details of your life, and you pray to Him about these things. Your example will increase their confidence in praying to God.

I'll start. Dear God, you are the author and giver of life. You give us all things we need. Thank you for . . . (insert personal prayer).

➤ Prior to making your transition to Circle Time, we suggest you take time for restroom breaks and hand washing.

➤ Preschoolers need to move. This is a good opportunity to get them to move. Make an orderly transition to the Circle Time. You can have carpet squares if you want to sit on the floor, or help them to move their chairs into the circle.

Pass the stuffed animal around the circle giving all the children an opportunity to say a prayer of thanksgiving.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away, and we'll get into God's Word.

GOD'S WORD

These first five questions will be repeated each week. The repetition of these questions will help to solidify these simple but foundational truths in the children's minds at a young age.

- ? Who made you? *God.*
- ? What else did God make? *All things.*
- ? Why did God make you and all things? *For His own glory.*
- ? Can you see God? *No, I cannot see God, but He can always see me.*
- ? Where is God? *God is everywhere.*

The following activity should be repeated at the beginning of each lesson to encourage anticipation and enthusiasm for looking into the Word of God. Use a sticky note to mark today's passage before you begin.

► Before Bible Pass Around, place a sticky note in your Bible to mark the first passage to be read.

Bible Pass Around

We are going to start out today by looking into God's Word, the Bible. *Hold up Bible.* God's Word is true, and we can trust what it says. But where should we look? One of you will help me with that. We're going to play Bible Pass Around. Whoever ends up with the Bible must hold it very carefully until it is time to look in it. When it is time to read, you can bring it to me, and we'll open it to see what we are going to talk about! Here's what we're going to do. I want everyone to count with me up to the number *choose a number.* You may also choose to practice the alphabet, recite the books of the Bible, sing one of the lesson songs, or recite the memory verse as you do this activity. **We'll start right here.** Hand the Bible to the first student. As we say each number (or word) you must carefully pass the Bible to the person beside you—remember, we don't want to drop it or tear it. Then when we get to the last number (or word), whoever has the Bible will hold on to it until we are ready to start our lesson. Are you ready? Let's begin. *When finished with Bible Pass Around you may want to have the student with the Bible stand next to you until it is time to open it.*

► When the Bible Pass Around Activity is completed, continue with the lesson.

Refer to the Lesson 2 Flip Chart. Last week we learned about the prophet Amos. He was a simple shepherd. God used Amos to give the people of Israel a warning. Because they disobeyed, God was going to punish them. This was sad news for God's people. But God is just. He must punish sin.

Today we will talk about another prophet. This prophet also had a message for God's people. *Hold up the Lesson Picture of Hosea.* His name was Hosea. He wrote the book in the Bible called Hosea. Let's open the Bible to the book of Hosea now! We are going to read from this book today. *Make this a special time*

as the student brings the Bible, and he/she opens it to where the sticky note is. **Here it is in my Bible. As we go through our lesson today, we are going to see that God loves His people!** Show the students where the book is. Have the student sit back down.

The Bible tells us that the prophet Hosea told the people of Israel to stop sinning and to turn back to God! God sent Hosea to the people because God loves His people!

? **Can you say that with me?** Stop sinning and turn back to God! God loves His people! Have the students repeat the phrase a few times.

But Hosea didn't just tell them this, he showed them! You see, the book of Hosea is a love story! It is a love story about a man and his wife, AND it is a love story about God and His people. Let me explain.

God sent the prophet Hosea to help the people understand how much God loves His people. Hold up the Lesson Picture of Hosea. The people listened to what Hosea said because he was a prophet of God. And they watched what he did! And as they watched Hosea, the people began to understand God's message of love for them—that God loves His people.

This is what happened. Put the Lesson Picture of Hosea on the floor in the circle. **God's prophet Hosea was married to a lady named Gomer.** Put the Lesson Picture of Gomer next to Hosea. **Hosea and Gomer had three children.** Put the Lesson Picture of the three children by Hosea and Gomer. **But one day, Gomer stopped loving Hosea.** Refer to the Flip Chart and the Lesson Pictures. **She thought she would be happier with other men. So Gomer turned her back on Hosea and ran away.** Move the Lesson Picture of Gomer away from Hosea.

? **How do you think this made Hosea feel?** Allow discussion.

Hosea was very sad. His heart was broken. His wife had left him. She had sinned against Hosea by turning from him and running to other men. This was not good for Hosea.

But, at the same time, something was happening in Israel. The people were turning away from God like Gomer had turned away from her husband. The people were sinning against God! Remember, Hosea was a prophet of God. And God used Hosea to send a special message to His people.

Now I am going to read something from the Bible. It tells us something about how the people of Israel were treating God! Listen carefully! I will ask you some questions about it. Read Hosea 4:1–2.

This says the Lord brought a charge against His people. That means God was accusing them. He was saying, you are not doing right!

? **What was God accusing His people of?** Re-read Hosea 4:1 emphasizing the sins the people were committing against God. Allow discussion.

► You might want the children to participate by holding the Lesson Pictures you have brought to Circle Time or put the pictures on the floor in the center of the circle. Use the pictures and refer to the Flip Chart as you continue.

Hosea 4:1–2

► Re-read the verses or the portion of the verse(s) that answer the questions you are asking of the text. The children should hear God's Word and know that they can answer questions from it. It is not too hard for them!

Hosea 11:1

Refer to the Flip Chart. The Bible says there was no truth, mercy, or knowledge in the land. The people were killing, lying, swearing, and more! The Israelites turned away from God just like Gomer turned away from her husband, Hosea. The people did not remember God. Gomer did not remember Hosea. God's people were turning to other gods. They were worshipping idols. They no longer were worshipping the one true and living God.

? How do you think this made God feel? *Allow discussion.*

God was sad. His heart was broken for His people. The Israelites left God to worship idols. But God was about to do something no one expected.

Refer to the Lesson Pictures and/or refer to the Flip Chart. Remember, God was using Hosea to teach His people a lesson. God told Hosea to take his wife back! But she had been so mean to him! Besides, Gomer did not love Hosea anymore. Why should he take her back? Because God said so! Hosea was going to forgive Gomer even though she had left him and treated him badly. Hosea was going to take his wife back and take care of her again!

Hmmm! So, what was God trying to teach His children? Remember, the people were sinning against God like Gomer was sinning against her husband. But God loved His people. And just like Hosea forgave Gomer and brought her back, God wanted to forgive His people and be their God.

God is so good! God loves His people. Remember, just one sin will separate us from God forever! But God was willing to forgive them for all their sins against Him if they would stop sinning and worship Him alone! Listen to what God said about His people. I'm going to read from Hosea again. Pay close attention! *Read Hosea 11:1 emphasizing "a child" and "son."*

? What did God call Israel? *A child.*

God loved His people. It says so right here in the Bible! God loved His people like a father loves his son. Even though the people sinned, God still loved them. And God will forgive His people if they ask for forgiveness.

God used Hosea and Gomer to teach His people a lesson about His love. Just like Hosea was willing to forgive his wife for all the sins she committed, God was willing to forgive the people He loved so much if they would just turn back to Him and turn away from their sins.

The same message is for us today! God must punish sin; it is true. But God is also patient with us, just as He was patient with the Israelites. God was willing to forgive His people. And He is willing to forgive us!

You see, God loved the world and sinners so much that He sent Jesus to die on the Cross so that whoever would believe in Him would be forgiven and have eternal life. God will forgive His children just like Hosea forgave his wife, Gomer.

SONG

When God told Hosea to take his wife back, what did Hosea do? He brought Gomer back home to love and care for her. Now I want us to learn a new song to remind us of the love story of Hosea and Gomer AND God and His people. Sing "God's Love" while using hand motions.

Great job! Let's sing the song we learned last week called "God's Mercy." Sing "God's Mercy."

Refer to the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page. God is the Lord. There is no other. He wants us to love and worship Him alone. Let's sing the Memory Verse Song. Sing "Isaiah 42:8" while marching around the room.

► Turn to the Flip Chart Song Page and the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page during this part of the lesson.



A Love Story

MATERIALS

- A Love Story Skit from the Resource DVD-ROM
- Optional costumes

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose five children to be in the play. Read from the script as the children act out their parts. Bring the students up to the front of the room. Costumes would add interest and excitement. Head scarves, robes, sheets, etc. can be used. Repeat the skit, switching actors.

We are going to put on a play. One of you will play the part of Hosea, and someone else can

be Gomer. Now I need three of you to be the children. As I read the story, act out what I say. I will show you what to do. It will be fun!

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Refer to the Flip Chart. Hosea loved Gomer, but Gomer ran away. The people in Israel turned away from God, too! God told Hosea to forgive Gomer and bring her back. God wanted to show how much He loves His people. He is willing to forgive us if we turn back to Him. God wants His people to worship Him alone.



Hosea Puppet

MATERIALS

- Hosea Fold-Over Puppet for each student
- Crayons
- Tape
- Craft sticks (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Show the children the Hosea Fold-Over Puppet you have assembled. Have the children color the puppet. When they

are finished coloring, help them fold the puppet and tape it for a hand puppet or attach it to a craft stick.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Hosea was God's prophet. God wanted Hosea to forgive his wife, Gomer. Hosea did that. And just like Hosea showed love and forgiveness to Gomer, the Lord God shows His children love and forgiveness.



Memory Verse Review and Activity

Isaiah 42:8 I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images.

Use the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page. Explain the verse to the children as you go over the verse together. Say the verse and point at each picture several times. Ask the children if anyone wants to try and say it on their own.

MATERIALS

- Memory Verse Flashcards
- Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

INSTRUCTIONS

It's time to work on our memory verse. You know, when we hide God's Word in our hearts, it helps us to keep away from sin. So

come here and work on storing **Isaiah 42:8 in our hearts!** *Have students sit in the Circle Time area. Show the students the Memory Verse Flashcards. Use the flashcards as the children repeat the verse with you. Then as everyone speaks/sings, have the students do what you do. Pat your head, stomp your foot, tap your nose, clap to the beat, whisper, etc.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God's Word is like a big love letter to read over and over again. It tells us true things about God and what He has done to show His great love for His people! When we memorize God's Word, we hide it in our hearts so that we might not sin against Him. So let's do our best to learn the memory verse from God's Word.



Applying God's Word/Snack

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

After thanking God for your snack, review today's lesson using the Flip Chart and any other props you've used today.

It really hurt Hosea's heart when his wife Gomer left him for other men. But God told Hosea to take his wife back and to love her and care for her again. When Hosea took Gomer back, the Israelites watched and then understood the message God had for them. Stop sinning and turn back to me! I love you; I'll forgive you and will take care of you again! It really hurt God's heart when the Israelites left Him for other gods. It really hurts God's heart when we turn from God, too. But God is full of mercy and love. He wants to take us back into His arms. If we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus who died for sinners, we can experience God's love!

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

We are all sinners! But God wants us to turn away from our sins and turn back to Him. God must punish sin; it is true. But God is also patient with us, just as He was patient with the Israelites. God was willing to forgive His people.

You see, God loved the world and sinners so much that He sent Jesus to die on the Cross so that whoever would believe in Him would be forgiven and have eternal life. God will forgive His children just like Hosea forgave his wife Gomer.

► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



Group Prayer Time

- Thank God for His patience with us.
- Thank God for sending Jesus to take the punishment for sinners.
- Pray that we will turn from our sins and trust in Jesus.

Do you still have more time? Review the past quarters using the Flip Charts, add another coloring sheet, recite and review the current and past memory verses, sing more songs, bring out play dough. Keep the children occupied with intentional, God-centered activities until their parents come to pick them up.

Song Sheet

GOD'S LOVE

(To the tune of "This Old Man")

Ho-se-a, man of God,

Point up.

(This old man, he played one.)

Told God's people, "Do not sin."

(He played knick knack on my thumb.)

Wave your pointer finger from side to side.

But his wife did sin and left him all alone,

(With a knick knack paddywhack, give the dog a bone.)

Nod your head.

God told Hosea, "Take her back home!"

(This old man came rolling home.)

Wave your pointer finger up and down.

God loves you.

Point to a student.

God loves me.

Point to yourself.

He wants everyone to look and see,

Put one hand above your eyes as you look around.

That if we turn from our sins,

Turn around in a circle.

And put our faith in Him,

Point up.

God will forgive us of our sins!

Give yourself a hug.

GOD'S MERCY

(To the tune of "London Bridge")

Clap, stomp, whisper, and yell when singing "all our sins" and "punishment."

God must punish all our sins,

(London Bridge is falling down.)

All our sins, all our sins.

(Falling down, falling down.)

God must punish all our sins,

(London Bridge is falling down.)

Because He is ju-ust!

(My fair lady.)

Jesus took the punishment,

Punishment, punishment.

Jesus took the punishment,

For all who trust in Him!

ISAIAH 42:8

(To the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell")

Have the children march around the room.

I am the Lord, that is My name;

(The farmer in the dell, the farmer in the dell.)

And My glory I will no-ot give to another,

(Hi-ho the dairy-o, the farmer in the dell.)

Nor My praise to car-aved images.

(The farmer in the dell, the farmer in the dell.)

Isaiah forty-two-oo-oo, ver-erse eight.

(Hi-ho the dairy-o, the farmer in the dell.)

Think of fun ways to sing. Get children in a circle holding hands. They can go in one direction and at each verse quickly reverse direction. Put one or more than one child in the middle of the circle. Go around them then move in and back out! Get them into a straight line. Have them follow you around the room.