Kingdom Divided

“Hosea”

Series Objective:

 Students will learn:

* The Kingdom of Israel divided after Solomon’s death
* The story of King Jehoshephat
* The story of the Prophet Hosea
* The story of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Exile

Series Theme Verse: “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.” – Hosea 6:6

Lesson Objective: For students to understand that God used prophets like Hosea to call the two kingdoms back to worship of God.

Lesson Passage: Hosea 1:2-11; 3:1-5

Materials Needed: Bibles, White Board, Markers, Series Theme Verse on poster

Lesson Plan:

 Talking Points: Hosea 1:2-9

* Most prophets were told by God to tell something to a king or one of the kingdoms. Hosea is different, what does God say to Hosea? (Go marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her)
* Why did God tell Hosea to do this? (Hosea’s life would become a living metaphor about the relationship between the Kingdom of Israel and God)
* Why did God want Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman? (She would be adulterous like Israel was being promiscuous in its relationship with God)
* How is Israel being adulterous in her relationship with God? (The people of Israel are worshipping other gods)
* Does Hosea do what God tells him to do? (Yes, Hosea marries Gomer and has a son)
* Does Hosea get to name his own child? (No, God tells Hosea to name his son Jezreel)
* What does Hosea’s son’s name represent? (It is a reminder that Israel will be defeated and conquered because of their unfaithfulness in the Valley of Jezreel)
* Gomer conceived a daughter, did Hosea name this child? (No, God said to name her Lo-Ruhamah)
* What does Lo-Ruhamah mean? (“Not loved” because God is going to stop showing love to Israel for her unfaithfulness, but God will show love to Judah, the southern kingdom because they remain faithful to God)
* Gomer had a second son, what did God tell Hosea to name him? (Lo-Ammi)
* What does Lo-Ammi mean? (“Not my people” because God no longer claims Israel as God’s people since they no longer worship God as their God)
* If the story of Hosea ends here, how do you feel? (Answers are various, some might feel God is no longer a loving God or that Hosea got a bad deal or that Israel is doomed)

 Talking Points: Hosea 1:10-11

* What is God remembering in talking with Hosea in verse 10? (His covenant with Abraham)
* In verses 10-11, what does God’s tone change to? (Love and compassion for God’s people)
* God may be angry, but even in the midst of Israel’s unfaithfulness, God will remain faithful to Israel and Judah, even bringing them back eventually to being a united kingdom.

 Talking Points: Hosea 3:1-5

* At some point, Hosea’s living metaphor takes a bad turn and Gomer has gone back to her promiscuous ways and has become a slave, being sold as a prostitute.
* What does God tell Hosea? (Go love Gomer as God loves Israel, even though she has rejected your love as Israel has rejected God’s love)
* What did Hosea do? (Bought Gomer, his wife, rescuing her from slavery)
* What does he say to Gomer? (You must remain faithful to me and I will remain faithful to you)
* How did this represent the future relationship of God and Israel? (God was redeeming Israel and they would one day remain faithful in worship to only God)

 The Story Retold:

* Remind students that Israel’s main problem was they kept walking away from the love of God.
* Take students to a darkened room. Have Pieces of paper on the ground that represent sin in our lives, but do not tell the students what the papers represent.
* Have students slowly wander through the darkness and stop when they think they have stepped on a piece of paper.
* Once everyone has had time to wander, turn on the lights. Explain to students what the papers represent.
* Now start over with the lights on and let students wander the room, avoiding the papers.
* Explain to students that when Israel remained faithful in worship of God, they avoided the traps of sin. Our lives are the same way. When we worship God and make God the focus of our lives, we are better able to avoid the pitfalls of sin because God brings light to our lives.

The Story and Me:

* Explain to students that as you read through Hosea you find out that Israel was not just worshipping other gods, but they had forgot what true worship really was.
* God did not want just checklist worship, but God looked at their hearts. God wanted to see them live out mercy and a life for God.
* Our lives are the same way. We should never give up coming to church, but if we do not live out our worship every day, then we begin to look like Israel did in its unfaithfulness.
* Have the verse written on white poster board or paper in yellow highlighter. Turn off the lights and use a black light to reveal the verse. Say the verse together.
* Ask students one way they can live out mercy this week. Mercy is “compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm.”