



SMALL GROUP OUTLINES



MORE MINOR PROPHETS

These Small Group Outlines are produced by the Youth and Children's Ministry Unit in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview). They are available every month from our website.

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SESSION ONE:

NAHUM – A MESSAGE OF HOPE

On the surface, the book of Nahum describes a jealous, wrathful God full of anger. When we look a little closer, we discover that God is angry about the injustice he sees in the world and is not willing to put up with it any more. Nahum brings God's message of hope to those who are oppressed by the cruelty of others. In today's session we'll explore how we can be messengers of hope in our world, sharing the good news and proclaiming peace.

SESSION TWO:

ZEPHANIAH – THE GOD WHO SINGS

As was the case with most of the minor prophets, Zephaniah brought a word of warning to the Israelites and the surrounding nations. God was fed up with their idolatry and complacency. In this session, we'll explore what idolatry looks like today, search our own hearts and consider how we need to place God at the centre of our lives. We'll also explore one of the most well-known verses in the book of Zephaniah and discover how God rejoices over us with singing when we turn our hearts to him.

SESSION THREE:

HABAKKUK – THE QUESTIONING PROPHET

As Habakkuk looked at the world around him, it was full of evil. He cried out to God with questions about the evil he saw in the world. In today's session we'll explore the challenging topic of evil and join the questioning prophet in his lament about the state of our world. We'll learn from Habakkuk that no matter the circumstances, we can always turn our confusion about this world into prayer and God will listen.

SESSION FOUR:

OBADIAH – A WARNING ABOUT REVENGE


Whether it's in a film, song or book, many of us love a good revenge story. We revel in the moment where the main character, after carrying their anger for years, gets to exact revenge. Although the moment may feel exhilarating, the prophet Obadiah gives us an insight into what happens next! In our session today, we'll explore God's response to the pride-filled hearts of the Edomites and see how he felt about their thirst for revenge.

Any text in italics represents notes for the leader. It gives more context around the Scripture/activity. You may choose to share verbatim, summarise or not share at all.

NAHUM – A MESSAGE OF HOPE


On the surface, the book of Nahum describes a jealous, wrathful God full of anger. When we look a little closer, we discover that God is angry about the injustice he sees in the world and is not willing to put up with it any more. Nahum brings God's message of hope to those who are oppressed by the cruelty of others. In today's session we'll explore how we can be messengers of hope in our world, sharing the good news and proclaiming peace.


WELCOME


 Once a film has been a success at the box office, what usually happens next?

Many films that become big hits at the cinema are usually followed by a sequel ... or two, or three.

 What film sequels can you think of?

 What's the best film sequel you've seen?

 What's the worst film sequel you've seen?

 What films can you think of that don't currently have a film sequel but either need one, or are likely to get one?

Leader's notes: *Divide the group into teams. Each group needs to choose a film from the previous discussion that currently doesn't have a sequel. Their job is to plot and cast the sequel for the film. Give the group five minutes to complete their task and share their ideas with the whole group.*


Which sequel would everyone like to see the most?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

A prequel is often the origin story of an individual or group of characters. If you could choose, what prequel would you like to see at the cinema? Explain your answer.

WORD

To begin to understand the story of the prophet Nahum we need to look back to the original film (or book) in the series. We need to return to a prophet we met a few weeks ago.

 Which prophet was sent with a word from God for the Assyrians, witnessed their mass repentance, and then sulked when God forgave them all?

 **Read:**

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.'

— (JONAH 1:1)

Ask the group to summarise the plot of Jonah as if it is a film they have watched and are describing to a friend. Check that they have outlined the plot that is in Scripture rather than the children's story version they may have heard when they were younger.

The book of Jonah demonstrates that the Assyrians were always considered a threat to the people of Israel. Around 722 BC the Northern Kingdom, and its capital Samaria, were defeated by the Assyrians. If the people of Assyria's capital Nineveh had indeed repented, that was long forgotten and they now believed that their defeat of the Israelites was also a triumph over the God of Israel. Our prophet for today, Nahum, arrived on the scene around 150 years later to let the Ninevites know that God had not forgotten their actions!

 **Watch: Book of Nahum Summary: A Complete Animated Overview (5:06)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y30DanA5EhU>

SMALL GROUP OUTLINES

SESSION ONE

Ask the group to read Nahum 1:2-7 and write down what they discover about God's character. What surprises them about the character of God as described? Discuss their thoughts together as a group. The Scripture and notes/questions below are provided to support discussion and give context to Nahum 1:2-7.

Nahum 1:2-7	Additional Notes
<p>² The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies. How is God's jealousy different from ours?</p>	<p>Dr RD Smith helps us to understand God's perspective of jealousy when he says: 'God wants to be first in your universe because he is first in the universe.' His jealousy does not come from a selfish perspective as it does with humans. As our creator, he is entitled to our allegiance. His wrath and anger is aimed at those who oppose everything he stands for.</p>
<p>³ The Lord is slow to anger but great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet.</p>	<p>The cruelty and arrogance of the inhabitants of Nineveh were legendary. They were warned about what would happen if they continued their wicked ways. God gives people time to turn away from their sin, but the Ninevites continued with their cruelty and destruction.</p>
<p>⁴ He rebukes the sea and dries it up; he makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carme wither and the blossoms of Lebanon fade. ⁵ The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it.</p>	<p>The final part of verse 3, with verses 4 and 5, remind us that we are dealing with the creator of the universe who is able to control the wind and the rain.</p>
<p>⁶ Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him.</p>	<p>These verses help us understand how God feels when he sees the viciousness of cruel nations. This is the context in which God displays indignation and fierce anger.</p>
<p>⁷ The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him ...</p>	<p>According to James Bruckner, 'Nahum is primarily a book of hope and comfort for those who are being or have been victimised or oppressed.' In what way does this change your understanding of the description of God in these verses? If you were a Christian living in an oppressive, violent regime today, how would these words bring you comfort?</p>

It is very easy for us to see God as angry and wrathful in these verses, but surely we want to follow a God who is filled with righteous anger when he sees injustice in his world.



Those oppressed by the Assyrians were filled with hope by the words of Nahum.


**¹⁵ Look, there on the mountains,
the feet of one who brings good news,
who proclaims peace!
Celebrate your festivals, Judah,
and fulfil your vows.
No more will the wicked invade you;
they will be completely destroyed.**
— (NAHUM 1:15)


The message of Nahum was not just for the people of Israel. Remember, there may well have been people in Nineveh who recognised God and it was likely that there were those who faithfully continued to follow him.

 What Christian communities in the world today would find hope in Nahum's words?

The *Bible Project* clip we watched earlier said the following:


“ Nahum is portraying Nineveh's fall as an example of how God won't allow violent empires to endure.”
— BIBLE PROJECT

 What does the book of Nahum teach us about God's character?

 As you look at the state of our world today, how does the message of Nahum give you hope?

WITNESS

Our world today needs the same message of hope that was delivered by Nahum centuries ago. As believers in Christ, we are the ones called to share that message of hope with others.

 How would you define the word hope?

Hope definition:

1. A feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen.
2. A feeling of trust.

 What is the Christian message of hope?

As Christians it is important for us to understand and explain how our faith brings hope to a hopeless world. There are still many people in the world who are oppressed and experience injustice. Through God's power, we are part of the solution.

 **Read:**


**¹⁵ Look, there on the mountains,
the feet of one who brings good news,
who proclaims peace!**
— (NAHUM 1:15A)

Today, we are going to think of ways that we can bring good news and proclaim peace.

Leader's notes: *For the Witness activity today, the young people are going to think about the message of hope they can bring into the world and how they can share that hope with others. We can often get caught up in the negativity of this world and think that God does not see the injustice and pain around us. Nahum shows us that this is not the case. The young people can plan or create a message of hope in whatever format they prefer. It could be a short video for social media, a poem, a song lyric, a piece of artwork, even a football chant. It can be*

anything that communicates to those who are oppressed that God is for them. The young people may decide to take a more practical approach, researching projects and initiatives to get involved with. They could discover who needs their prayer across the world. This is an opportunity for them to focus on the message of hope they can bring to the world. When they have had an opportunity to collate their ideas, share them together and discuss how they can turn their plans into action.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

 What is your response to the following quote?

“ ‘Our Christian hope is that we are going to live with Christ in a new earth, where there is not only no more death, but where life is what it was always meant to be.’

— TIMOTHY KELLER

WORSHIP

For our time of worship today we are going to spend time praying for Christians living within oppressive regimes. Every year Open Doors produces a World Watch List of places where Christians are mistreated. As you watch the clip, jot down the places and situations that need our prayer.

 **Watch: Open Doors' World Watch List 2024: Top 5 (2:27)**

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/>

Leader's notes: *When the clip has finished, encourage the group to share together in prayer. As you pray, remind the group that we are God's messengers of hope, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and bringing God's peace to the world.*

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Finish the session by reading the following quote about hope.

“ ‘Optimism is a wish without warrant; Christian hope is a certainty, guaranteed by God himself. Optimism reflects ignorance as to whether good things will ever actually come. Christian hope expresses knowledge that every day of his life, and every moment beyond it, the believer can say with truth, on the basis of God's own commitment, that the best is yet to come.’

— JI PACKER

ZEPHANIAH – THE GOD WHO SINGS

As was the case with most of the minor prophets, Zephaniah brought a word of warning to the Israelites and the surrounding nations. God was fed up with their idolatry and complacency. In this session, we'll explore what idolatry looks like today, search our own hearts and consider how we need to place God at the centre of our lives. We'll also explore one of the most well-known verses in the book of Zephaniah and discover how God rejoices over us with singing when we turn our hearts to him.

WELCOME

Leader's notes: Ask the group to write down the names of five family members or friends. Their task is to write down a song that sums up each person perfectly. It needs to be a song that the person would connect with and would in some way show that you know them well.

Give the group time to collect their ideas and then share them together.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

🗨️ What song connects with you and your personality the most? Explain your choice.

WORD

Our prophet for this week is Zephaniah. The message of Zephaniah is tricky to get our heads around but is worth our attention.

“Zephaniah's ministry probably took place around the time of Assyria's fall in 612 BC. Zephaniah warned the people of Judah that if they refused to repent, the entire nation, including the beloved city of Jerusalem, would be lost. The people knew that God would eventually bless them, but Zephaniah made it clear that there would be judgement first, then blessing.”

— TYNDALE CHRONOLOGICAL LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE

🗨️ What is the common pattern repeated in the message of the minor prophets?

Leader's notes: Watch the clip following the timings below, pausing to discuss different aspects of the book of Zephaniah.

📺 **Watch: Zephaniah: The Bible Explained**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eENvjSouW9Y>

Watch 0:00-2:33

🗨️ What were the main charges made against the people of Israel?


🗨️ Find 2 Kings 23:4-14. What did King Josiah try to do to turn the people back to God?

Despite his best efforts, the people continued to do their own thing, trusting in the gods of other nations and relying on their own personal wealth to see them through.

🗨️ How did the people seek other ways to defend and protect their lives?

🗨️ Read Zephaniah 1:12-13 which demonstrates another way the people turned away from God. What did God promise to do to those who were complacent?


🗨️ Why do you think God was so angry about their actions?

 God's people were meant to be set apart from the surrounding nations. How had this changed?

In chapter 2 of Zephaniah, the attention turns from the people of God to the surrounding nations. These included the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Cushites and Assyrians. God had something to say to all these nations.

Watch: 2:34-4:31

 Instead of pride, what quality was God looking for in his people?

 How would you define humility?

Definition:


Humility – the quality of having a modest or low view of one's importance.

Notice that the definition does not say that we should have a low view of ourselves. Humility is not demonstrated in low self-esteem or self-deprecation. God is looking for people who will humble themselves before him and recognise that he is the most important person in our lives.

 **Read:**

**³ Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land,
you who do what he commands.
Seek righteousness, seek humility;
perhaps you will be sheltered
on the day of the Lord's anger.**

— (ZEPHANIAH 2:3)

 What does it look like for us to seek righteousness and humility today?


Watch: 4:32-7:37

Zephaniah prophesied that those who trust in their own strength and were filled with pride would be removed from Jerusalem. Only the humble would remain.

 **Read:**


**¹¹ On that day you, Jerusalem, will not be put to shame
for all the wrongs you have done to me,
because I will remove from you
your arrogant boasters.
Never again will you be haughty
on my holy hill.
¹² But I will leave within you
the meek and humble.
The remnant of Israel
will trust in the name of the Lord.**

— (ZEPHANIAH 3:11-12)

 How did Jesus demonstrate the humility mentioned by Zephaniah?

 In what way does God purify us of our pride and self-importance?

 What is required to humble ourselves before God?

 How does the following quote help you to understand the meaning of humility?

““The Christian gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. It undermines both swaggering and snivelling. I cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more of myself nor less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less.”

— TIMOTHY KELLER

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

If the young people would like a deeper understanding of the book of Zephaniah, then watch and discuss the following clip.

 **Watch: The Prophet Zephaniah in 4 Minutes (3:39)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3e20CRC3FC0>

WITNESS

Leader's notes: *In the Witness section this week, the young people have an opportunity to consider what idolatry looks like in the life of Christians today. The clip provided explains what idolatry is and gives six areas for the young people to think about.*

You will need a large piece of flipchart paper and markers for this activity.

 **Watch: Idol Worship Today: 6 Modern Idols We Still Worship (7:26)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-RVtMO0uXM>

Watch: 0:00-1:30

Ask the group to define idolatry and write their definition at the top of the sheet. The clip emphasises that God wants us to enjoy good things. The problems arise when a 'good thing' becomes an 'ultimate thing' in our lives.





Watch: 1:31-6:30

As the clip plays, ask the group to write down on the flipchart paper the six examples of idolatry mentioned. When you have stopped the clip, discuss the six areas and add examples of what idolatry might look like for each one.

1. Our identity
2. Money
3. Entertainment
4. Sex
5. Comfort
6. Our phones


Watch 6:31-7:26

Ask the group to think about the following four questions. If they feel comfortable, then they can share their thoughts together.

-  Where do I spend my time?
-  Where do I spend my money?
-  Where do I find my joy?
-  What is always on my mind?

Ask the group to share one way that they have been challenged about idolatry in their lives.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

 How does the following quote help you to understand what idolatry looks like today?

“ ‘Our idols are not golden calves or carved statues. Idolatry is not tied to any specific idol, it exists whenever we look to someone or something in the world around us to save and satisfy.’

— ED STETZER

WORSHIP

When looking at Scripture we need to be careful that we don't pull out individual verses, ignoring the original context, and apply them to our lives with little thought. Here's a well-known example:

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

— (JEREMIAH 29:11)

Although God does have plans for us, these words were aimed at a specific group of people facing circumstances we are unlikely to experience.

 What other examples of verses like this can you think of?

Zephaniah 3:17 is the kind of verse we find on T-shirts and tea towels!


**'The Lord your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
But will rejoice over you with singing.'**

— (ZEPHANIAH 3:17)

Hopefully, after exploring the background of the prophet Zephaniah, you are now able to place these words in context and see them in a new way. When we turn away from the idols of our life and place God at the centre, he rejoices over us with singing.

Leader's notes: *Using the music track below, give the group time to reflect on the idols in their life. The aim of this time of reflection is not to feel shame but to turn away from the things that we have placed over God and place our trust in him alone.*

Listen: Zephaniah 3:17 (4:01)

 **Zephaniah 3:17 (youtube.com)**

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Pr8nRzwhek

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

To bring the session to a close, read The Message translation of Zephaniah 3:17.

**Your God is present among you,
A strong Warrior there to save you.
Happy to have you back, he'll calm you with his love
And delight you with his songs.**

— (ZEPHANIAH 3:17 MSG)

HABAKKUK – THE QUESTIONING PROPHET

As Habakkuk looked at the world around him, it was full of evil. He cried out to God with questions about the evil he saw in the world. In today's session we'll explore the challenging topic of evil and join the questioning prophet in his lament about the state of our world. We'll learn from Habakkuk that no matter the circumstances, we can always turn our confusion about this world into prayer and God will listen.


WELCOME

Leader's notes: Ask the group to name ten 'evil' characters. Discuss what characteristics a character needs to show to qualify as 'evil'. Focus on fictional characters if possible. Write each of the ten names on separate slips of paper and place them on the floor in a random order. Ask the group to rank the characters from least evil to most evil. Discuss how they made their choices.

Based on their discussion, what elements of evil do they see in the world today? Which ones frustrate or anger them the most?

Our prophet for today had a few questions to ask God about the evil he saw in the world, and he wasn't afraid to ask them.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

 As you look at the ten 'evil' characters listed by the group, which one would you most like to play in a film? Explain your answer.

WORD




Leader's notes: Explain to the group that our prophet for this week is Habakkuk. Instead of starting with an introduction to Habakkuk, the young people are going to read the Scripture and discover for themselves what the book is about. Working in pairs or threes, they need to divide a sheet of paper into two columns, writing 'Habakkuk' at the top of one, and 'God' at the top of the other. Using any translation they prefer, they need to read through Habakkuk chapters 1-2 and jot down the main themes raised by Habakkuk and by God.

If you feel it would work better, work as a whole group together using the NIV and listening to the BibleGateway audio version. The young people will need to follow in the NIV Bible, rather than just listen, as they will be able to distinguish who is speaking.

 <https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/mclean/niv/Hab.2>

 For a UK alternative, try the reading by David Suchet:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9uQrzcATc4> (start at 2:50)

When they have completed their notes, discuss the following questions:

-  What are Habakkuk's main complaints against God?
-  How does God respond?
-  In what ways do you relate to what Habakkuk has to say?

Now that we have explored Habakkuk for ourselves, let's discover more about his story.

 **Watch: Habakkuk 1-2 - Why does God Tolerate Evil? | Bible Study (4:50)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osLl0ZGClD8>

The clip summarises Habakkuk's words into two main questions.

1. If God is good, why does he tolerate evil?
2. How can God use evil if God is good?

Habakkuk brought these questions to God in a poetic lament, where he shared his sorrow and pain about the evil he saw in the world.

- 🗣️ What are your answers to the questions and what do you find challenging as you try to answer them?
- 🗣️ How does this teaching help you to understand the presence of evil in the world today?

For thousands of years people have grappled with the presence of evil in the world and tried to understand why God allows it. It's OK not to have an answer to these questions. Habakkuk reminds us that we can bring these questions and struggles with our faith to God, and he will listen. Prayers of lament are not just for Habakkuk and the psalmists; we can share our sorrow and pain with God today.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

What is your response to the following quote?

“ ‘God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to suffer no evil to exist.’
— AUGUSTINE

WITNESS

After grappling with the presence of evil in the world in Habakkuk 1-2, the prophet penned a beautiful prayer in chapter 3.

Leader's notes: Read Habakkuk 3 to the group or listen to the audio version at BibleGateway from The Message translation. This translation uses more accessible language and should help the group write their own prayer of lament as part of the Witness activity. As the group listen to the prayer, ask them to jot down the main themes Habakkuk is trying to share with God and discuss them together.


🔊 **Listen: Habakkuk 3**
<https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/dolan/msg/Hab.3>

🗣️ Read Habakkuk 3:1. How was this prayer used within the worshipping community?

Traditionally, these words were set to music and were sung by the worshippers. Working either individually or in small groups, your task today is to create your own prayer of lament. If you are musical, you may like to create a melody to accompany your prayer poem. If music and poetry is not your thing, then you still have a contribution to make, as we have all struggled to make sense of evil in the world.

If you are not sure where to begin, then you could use Habakkuk 3:17-19 as a starting point for your lament prayer.

17-19 Though the cherry trees don't blossom
and the strawberries don't ripen,
Though the apples are worm-eaten
and the wheat fields stunted,
Though the sheep pens are sheepless
and the cattle barns empty,
I'm singing joyful praise to God.
I'm turning cartwheels of joy to my Saviour God.
Counting on God's Rule to prevail,
I take heart and gain strength.
I run like a deer.
I feel like I'm king of the mountain!
— (HABAKKUK 3:17-19 MSG)

 Faced with the challenge of the evil around him, what choice does Habakkuk make?

Leader's notes: Give the group time to create their own prayer of lament, using the words of Habakkuk 3.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

If the group would like to discover more about Habakkuk 3, then watch and discuss the clip together.


 **Watch: Habakkuk 3 - Justice after Death | Bible Study (Spoken Gospel)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LNzVL8yj4w>

WORSHIP

Leader's notes: To bring the session to a close, listen to the song by Amanda Scrimale based on Habakkuk's prayer. Give the group time to reflect on what is a challenging topic. Once the song has finished, they may want to share their prayers of lament again. Alternatively, you can bring the session to a close by reading the following Scripture from the VOICE translation:

 **Read:**

¹⁷ Even if the fig tree does not blossom
and there are no grapes on the vines,
If the olive trees fail to give fruit
and the fields produce no food,
If the flocks die far from the fold
and there are no cattle in the stalls;
¹⁸ Then I will still rejoice in the Eternal!
I will rejoice in the God who saves me!
¹⁹ The Eternal Lord is my strength!
He has made my feet like the feet of a deer;
He allows me to walk on high places.
— (HABAKKUK 3:17-19, VOICE)

 **Watch: 'Healing Is Coming (Habakkuk's Prayer)' by Amanda Scrimale (OFFICIAL LYRIC VIDEO)**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2gv_dF3Yus

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Ask the group to share one thing they have discovered from the book of Habakkuk that will help them in their faith journey.





OBADIAH – A WARNING ABOUT REVENGE

Whether it's in a film, song or book, many of us love a good revenge story. We revel in the moment where the main character, after carrying their anger for years, gets to exact revenge. Although the moment may feel exhilarating, the prophet Obadiah gives us an insight into what happens next! In our session today, we'll explore God's response to the pride-filled hearts of the Edomites and see how he felt about their thirst for revenge.

WELCOME


Leader's notes: Start the session by playing the following clip.

 **Watch: Taylor Swift – 'Look What You Made Me Do' (Lyric Video)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3K0RzZGpyds>

-  What are the main themes running through this song?
-  What does Taylor Swift want?
-  What other songs, films, TV programmes or books can you think of where the person expresses a desire to get revenge?
-  Do you like a good revenge story? If so, why?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

'Look what you made me do' isn't the first Taylor Swift song to tackle the theme of revenge. In 2010, she released a song saying that there's nothing she does 'Better than revenge'.

-  Turning this idea on its head, what do you think is actually better than revenge?

WORD






Our prophet for today is Obadiah. His words were the result of a story of sibling rivalry and revenge. Despite being the shortest book in the Old Testament, with only 21 verses, Obadiah packs a punch. Let's find out the story behind this prophecy.

 **Watch: Obadiah: The Bible Explained (9:25) by Spoken Gospel**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gR7F6L56C0>

Watch: 0:00-2:34

Leader's notes: Ask the group to summarise the story so far. Who were the main characters? What happened? How do they feel about the response of each character? In what way was it justified?

Watch: 2:35-5:12

-  What nations did Esau and Jacob become?
-  What was the relationship between the two nations?
-  What happened to the nation of Israel?
-  How did the nation of Edom respond?
-  Why did Edom stand and watch Israel suffering?

In the book of Obadiah, the Israelites are given a breather from the words of destruction and doom we have seen from the other prophets. This time, judgement is reserved for the Edomites.

Leader's notes: Give each member of the group a copy of the Obadiah handout. Share out the speaking parts and read the Scripture together. The script is separated into four speaking parts but can be adapted for your group. Ask the group to think about the main messages God had for the Edomites as they read. Once you have read the Scripture together, write down the group's thoughts and ideas about Obadiah's prophecy.

The content for the handout is at the end of this session.

Watch: 5:13-8:41

At the end of the clip, the message of Obadiah is brought home to us as modern-day believers. It says:

“ ‘For Jesus is restoring the keys of the Kingdom to those who will do what Esau didn't – those who will humbly accept the Son God chose. And as we do, Jesus will use us to open doors so that all humble nations can live in the home where God meets us. So, don't be proud like Esau. Don't forfeit your place in God's Kingdom. Humble yourself under God's chosen Son. Humble yourself before Jesus.’

— SPOKEN GOSPEL

💬 What message do you think you need to hear from the book of Obadiah?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

If your group would like to discover more about the prophet Obadiah, then watch and discuss the clip together.

📺 **Watch: The Prophet Obadiah in 2 Minutes (2:02) by Pastor Landon**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxKUiTa0CLg>

WITNESS

The people of Edom lived in a mountainous region. They thought that living in this high position among the rocks would protect them. Edom looked down on the other nation, choosing to wallow in their hurt and wait for the moment to enjoy their revenge. They placed their security in the rocks that surrounded them, rather than in God.

💬 Have you ever felt the same desire for revenge experienced by the Edomites? What did it feel like? Did your emotions about the situation feel justified?

💬 In what ways do we see ourselves as superior to others, looking down on them from 'above'?

Leader's notes: Encourage the group to discuss some of the issues raised in the book of Obadiah and how they relate to situations they face today. The main themes of the book are pride and revenge.

You may want to incorporate the following Scripture verses into the discussion:

¹⁷ **Do not gloat when your enemy falls;
when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice,**

¹⁸ **or the Lord will see and disapprove
and turn his wrath away from them.**

— (PROVERBS 24:17-18)

The book of Obadiah challenges us to think about where we place our security and how we see ourselves in comparison to others. It encourages us to think about the way to respond when others need our help, no matter our history with them.

💬 What rocks create security in your life?

Leader's notes: For this activity you will need a selection of smooth rocks and resources to decorate them. You could use paint or permanent markers. The group can create any design, but the focus needs to be the word

'Jesus'. Although there are lots of places to find our security, Jesus must remain the only rock on which we build our lives. The Edomites refused to submit their lives to God, and they were filled with vengeance and pride. This is not the life God calls us to.

Place your decorated rock in a place that will remind you that Jesus is your security.

These rocks remind us that we can hand any injustice we experience over to him, rather than seeking revenge.

It also reminds us that Jesus wants us to put aside our pride and open the doors of his Kingdom to everyone.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Share the following Bible verse with the young people. It may help them to rely on God's wisdom when they feel overwhelmed and tempted to seek their own justice.

From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

— (PSALM 61:2)

WORSHIP

In moments when we feel mistreated, we may be tempted to respond like Esau.

In moments when we feel superior, we may be tempted to rely on the rocks we have built as our security.

Through the message of Obadiah, we learn to humble ourselves before God alone. He will deal with the injustices of our past and we do not need to take revenge. We don't need to rejoice in the downfall of others. Instead, we can build our lives on Jesus.

To bring today's session to a close, we're going to sing a song that reminds us that God is our cornerstone. It includes these lyrics:

**'The sun goes up, the sun comes down
This old world keeps spinnin' 'round
I'm here travellin' down this long and winding road
Seasons come and seasons go
They take me high, then leave me low
But I'm still standing on the only rock I know
You're my cornerstone
Oh, oh, oh, no matter where I go, my cornerstone.'**

— (TOBY MAC)

▶ Watch: TobyMac – 'Cornerstone' ft. Zach Williams (3:39)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7NQ5AvuMPM>

Leader's notes: When the song has finished, encourage the group to pray together. Help them to focus their prayers on building their lives on God rather than relying on other sources for their security.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

To bring the session to a close, share these words from Scripture.

17-19 Don't hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you've got it in you, get along with everybody. Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. 'I'll do the judging,' says God. 'I'll take care of it.'

— (ROMANS 12:17-19 MSG)

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH – VOICE TRANSLATION

Leader: ¹ This is the vision that came to Obadiah:

Listen carefully to what the Eternal Lord says about the nation of Edom.

Learn from their fate.

We have been put on notice through the Eternal's representative

who was sent to everyone among the nations saying,

'Get up. Get ready to charge against Edom in battle.'

Speaker 1: ² **Eternal One** (to Edom): See how insignificant I will make you compared to other nations;

you will be completely despised by the rest of the world.

³ Your deep pride has blinded you to the truth, tucked securely in the clefts of the rocks, safely out of reach.

You say to yourself,

'Whose attack can reach up here and bring me down to the ground?'

Speaker 2: Edom named its capital city 'Rock', and many of the people there were cave dwellers, virtually unreachable.

Speaker 3: ⁴ Even if you fly high as the eagle, believing yourselves strong and free, and put your nest among the stars, I will have no trouble bringing you down.

This is declared by the Eternal One.

Speaker 4: ⁵ Consider how thoroughly you will be wiped out.

If thieves come to steal from you
And robbers arrive under cover of night,
won't they take only what they want?

If the grape harvesters arrive,
doesn't their hasty picking usually leave some
fruit in the field for the poor?

⁶ But Esau, your nation will be ransacked;
there will be nothing left.

Every last treasure you had carefully hidden
will be taken.

⁷ Your supposed allies – every last one – will
turn against you;

they will run you out of your own town.

And those who promised you peace

will lie to your face and conquer you.

Even those who shared your bread will ambush
you.

You won't understand what is happening
until it is too late.

Speaker 1: ⁸ Eternal One: When this day comes,
won't I destroy the wisest citizens of Edom,
Make all insight vanish from Mount Esau,
and leave all helpless?

⁹ As for your warriors, great Edomite city of
Teman,

they will be routed, shattered.

Their slaughtered bodies will cut off
everyone's path to Mount Esau

¹⁰ because of your violent history against your
brother Jacob.

Shame will envelop you,

and your nation will be destroyed forever.

¹¹ You just stood there, doing nothing,

while strangers ransacked their city,

While invaders rushed through the gates and
divided up Jerusalem for themselves.

You might as well have been one of them.

Speaker 2: ¹² You should never have gloated
over your brother's tragedy that day
or been secretly happy about all their
misfortune.

You should never have celebrated the people
of Judah's decimation.

You should never have acted so arrogantly
on the day they suffered so much.

¹³ You should never have walked through the
city gates of my people

on the day of this disaster.

You should never have gloated at their
difficulties

on the day of this disaster.

You should never have taken advantage of
them and their wealth

on the day of this disaster.

¹⁴ You should never have lain in wait along the crossroads
to cut off those trying to escape;
You should never have handed over the handful of survivors to Babylonian captivity
on the day of their great distress.

Speaker 3: ¹⁵ The day of the Eternal's judgement for all the nations is near.

Whatever evil you have done will be done to you;
Your deeds will come crashing back on your head.

Speaker 4: ¹⁶ Eternal One: Just as you drank to the defeat of my people on my holy mountain,
now you and all the nations around you will always drink excessively.

They will be forced to drink and guzzle a mouthful of suffering,
and it will be as if they never existed.

¹⁷ But on Mount Zion will be a place of safety.

Some will escape to that holy hill,
And the people of Jacob will conquer and possess
those who conquered and dispossessed them.

¹⁸ The people of Jacob will become a fire
and the family of Joseph a flame.

They will ignite and consume the people of Esau as they execute divine punishment
until only dry stubble remains.
No one from the people of Esau will survive the conflagration.
So declares the Eternal One.

Leader: ¹⁹ Eternal One: The people from the southern desert will take over Mount Esau,
and those from the foothills will flood into the Philistines' coastal plain.

They will possess the fertile lands of Ephraim and Samaria,

and Benjamin's people will inhabit Gilead.

²⁰ The army of exiled sons and daughters of Israel will stream back home
and live along the coast and possess the Canaanites as far as Zarephath.

And the exiles of Jerusalem who live in Sepharad
will settle down in the cities and villages of the South.

²¹ These deliverers will go up to Mount Zion,
my holy hill,

and justly rule Mount Esau from there.

And the kingdom they establish will belong to the Eternal One alone.