
Leader BIBLE STUDY

The prophet Joel spoke to the Southern Kingdom of Judah at a time when the nation faced a crisis. The land had been invaded by locusts; swarms of the insects had devastated the plants. In addition to the locusts, Judah was affected by a severe drought. Joel looked back on these events and announced that these were not mere natural disasters—the Lord was judging the people for their sin.

In Deuteronomy 28, God told His people, “If you do not obey the Lord your God by carefully following all His commands and statutes I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overtake you: ... You will sow much seed in the field but harvest little, because locusts will devour it” (vv. 15,38). That is exactly what happened.

These disasters were a wake-up call. Joel told the people to repent. He told them to fast. He told them to gather and repent together, crying out to God and asking Him to show them mercy. Then Joel looked ahead to the future. In essence he said, “You think this is bad? This is only the beginning!”

God’s judgment of Judah was not over. The Day of the Lord was coming, a day when God would show His strength through an invading army. For those who were not right with God, this was bad news. God’s power would be against them. So Joel implored them, “Return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.”

God had pity on His people and promised to restore them. God would rather forgive His people than punish them. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for sins so people could be right with God. An ultimate Day of the Lord is coming, and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Preschool BIBLE STUDY OVERVIEW

Session Title: Joel, Prophet to Judah

Bible Passage: Joel 1–3

Big Picture Question: What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.

Key Passage: Jonah 4:2

Unit Christ Connection: Through these prophets we see a picture of the salvation provided through Jesus Christ.

Small Group Opening

(15–20 minutes)

Large Group Bible Study

(10–15 minutes)

Small Group Activities

(20–25 minutes)

Snack and Transition

(20 minutes)

The BIBLE STORY

Joel, Prophet to Judah

Joel 1–3

Joel was a prophet. God spoke to Joel, and Joel told people what God said. **God gave Joel a message to tell to the people in Judah.** Bad things had been happening in Judah. **No rain had fallen for a long time.** The people ignored God. They did not do what God said to do. **God warned the people what would happen if they did not obey Him.** **One of the things God said would happen was this: “You will plant seeds in your field, but the locusts will eat the plants.”**

What do you think happened when the people of Judah disobeyed God? Swarms of locusts came into the land. They ate the plants. When the locusts went away, more locusts came. They ate up any plants that were left. When they went away, more locusts came. One, two, three, four. Four swarms of locusts came to Judah. **They ate the plants for growing grapes, grain, apples, and other fruits.**

Joel said, “Listen to me! Has this ever happened before?” No, the locusts had never eaten all the plants in Judah before. But there had been locusts somewhere else. Do you remember where? Some of the people might have remembered hearing the story. **Many, many years before—when Moses led God’s people out of Egypt—God sent locusts to punish the Egyptians for doing bad things. Now God was punishing the people of Judah for doing bad things too.**

“Be sad for your sin,” Joel said. “Ask God to forgive you.” Joel told the people to get together and cry out to God. “A day is coming when God will punish sin once and for all!” Joel said. “That day will be terrible!”

What would happen on such a terrible day? Joel said that God was going to send a strong army to Judah. This was very bad news! The army would take over Judah. Everyone would be scared. No one would be able to survive their attack.

“Stop doing bad things and turn back to God,” Joel said. “God is

loving. He would rather forgive you than punish you.”

Joel had some good news from God. One day, God was going to send rain to make the plants grow. God would send rain so the animals could drink water. God said, “I will save anyone who calls to Me. I will bring My people back together.”

Then God said, “Another day of punishment is coming. I will punish people who turn away from Me. I will pay back all of your enemies for the bad things they did to you. I am your God. If you stop sinning, I will forgive you. I will be with My people forever.”

Christ Connection: The people in Judah sinned. To punish them, God sent locusts and stopped the rain. Joel told the people to be sorry for their sin. Jesus also wants people to be sorry for their sin. Jesus died to take away our sin, and He is alive. If we trust in Jesus and are sorry for our sin, God forgives us.

Small Group OPENING

Session Title: Joel, Prophet to Judah

Bible Passage: Joel 1–3

Big Picture Question: What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.

Key Passage: Jonah 4:2

Unit Christ Connection: Through these prophets we see a picture of the salvation provided through Jesus Christ.

- “Live Like That” song
- offering basket
- favorite toys
- Allergy Alert



- “Find the Hidden Objects” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or crayons

- plastic fruits and vegetables or pictures of fruits, vegetables, grains
- basket

Welcome and Session Starter (15–20 minutes)

Play the unit song “Live Like That” in the background. Set an offering basket near the door. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite toys such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity Page: Find the Hidden Objects

Look at the objects shown in the margin. Find them hidden in the picture.

Say • *What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.* Sometimes God used locusts to make people know they were sinning and needed to ask for forgiveness.

Play out a swarm

Before class, gather the plastic fruits and vegetables or the pictures of fruits, vegetables, and grains into a basket. Place the basket in the center of the room in front of you. When you give the signal to go, invite the kids to quickly “gather” as much food as they can until the basket is empty.

Say • The fruit and vegetables were ready to eat, but now the basket is empty! Joel told the people of Judah that God was going to send locusts to eat up their food.

- paper towel tubes or rolled up construction paper
- waxed paper or tissue wrapping paper
- transparent tape
- scissors
- rubber bands
- small, black plastic combs (optional)



March with a kazoo

Make a kazoo using a paper towel tube or a piece of construction paper rolled up and taped securely along the seam. Cover one end of the tube with waxed paper and secure it with a rubber band. Show kids how to hum a tune through the open end or shout fun words into their kazoos.

Alternate suggestion: Use small, black plastic combs.

Cut squares of waxed paper or tissue paper (gift-wrap tissue) that are slightly shorter than the length of the comb and twice as wide as the width of the comb. Fold the paper in half, and place it over the teeth of the comb. Avoid pulling the paper too tightly as you tape the bottom of the folded paper to the comb with a small piece of tape. Place dry lips against the paper and hum.

March, playing the kazoos. Play louder as you march in order to sound like an army approaching.

Say •A large army approaching was scary to hear! Joel told the people that God would send the army because they were not obeying God.

Transition to Bible study

Transition cue: Ring the bell, show the countdown video, flip the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for children to copy to gain attention.

March to group time, playing the kazoos.

Large Group BIBLE STUDY

Session Title: Joel, Prophet to Judah

Bible Passage: Joel 1–3

Big Picture Question: What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.

Key Passage: Jonah 4:2

Unit Christ Connection: Through these prophets we see a picture of the salvation provided through Jesus Christ.

Large Group Bible Study (10–15 minutes)

Introduce the Bible story

• globe or world map
(optional)

To get the wiggles out and introduce the big picture question, walk in a circle, singing this song (tune “Skip to My Lou”). At the end, stop, turn to a friend, and say, “Jesus loves you.” Put a globe or map in the center of the circle.

“Walk in a circle, one, two, three.

Around the world you go with me.

Stop and tell a friend you see—

‘I know Jesus loves you.’”

Say • God really, really loves people. God sent prophets to warn people about something. What did God want to warn people about? (*They were sinning. They worshiped idols instead of God. They were not kind to people. They needed to stop and ask God to forgive them!*)

What would happen if they didn’t want God to forgive them? (*God would punish them.*)

If God punished them, would He always be mad at them after that? (*No. He loved them.*)

What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.

- “Joel, Prophet to Judah” video
- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster

Watch or tell the Bible story

Say • Today’s Bible story is found in the Book of Joel.

[*Show the book. Show the timeline picture or the Bible story picture.*] Look at the picture. What punishment do you think God said He would send if people didn’t repent—say they were sorry? Listen to (or watch) the Bible story to learn whether your guess was right.

Tell the Bible story with your Bible open, or watch the video “Joel, Prophet to Judah.”

Talk about the Bible story

Say • The people in Judah, the Southern Kingdom, did not start obeying God. They kept on disobeying Him even though He had been so good to them and taken care of them. What punishment did God send? (*no rain, swarms of locusts*)

If the people did not repent, a terrible Day of the Lord would come. God would send an army to ruin their land, as the locusts did. But the good news was that God said, “I will save anyone who calls to Me. I will pay back all of your enemies for the bad things they did to you. I am your God. If you stop sinning, I will forgive you. I will be with My people forever.”

Joel told the people to be sorry for their sin. Jesus also wants people to be sorry for their sin. Jesus died to take away our sin, and He is alive. If we trust in Jesus and are sorry for our sin, God forgives us

What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.

Transition to small groups

Describe the small group activities. Let kids buzz like locusts and fly to the activities.

- Tip: Do activities one of these ways:
- as a group, all at the same time
 - in small groups that rotate through each activity
 - set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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Unit Christ Connection: Through these prophets we see a picture of the salvation provided through Jesus Christ.

Small Group Activities (20–25 minutes)



- large sheet of paper
- green markers or crayons
- washable ink pads
- tape
- hand wipes

Make a locust mural

Tape a large sheet of paper to the wall. Ask kids to draw tall green grass on the page and then make thumbprints all over the paper to represent locusts. See how many locusts they can make in the grass and flying above the grass. Keep hand wipes nearby to wash the ink off their thumbs. Kids may like to make locust buzzing sounds as they work.

Say • The people in Judah sinned. To punish them, God sent locusts and stopped the rain. Joel told the people to be sorry for their sin. ***What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.***



- 4 sets of different colored flat buttons or game tokens, 4 to 6 of each color
- big white or black flat buttons, 4
- soft cloth or felt
- cup or small bowl

Make tiddlywinks hop

Make small plastic discs, buttons, or game tokens hop or fly through the air like a swarm of locusts. Cover the table with a soft cloth, or cut square launch pads from scrap felt. Practice hopping the buttons by pressing the edge of a smaller button with the edge of a larger button.

Draw a circle on the felt in the middle of the table, or place a bowl in the center. Try to hop the buttons to the target—the circle or bowl.

Say • “Stop doing bad things and turn back to God,” Joel said. “God loves you. He would rather forgive you than punish you.” *What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.*

Play a kind of musical chairs

- chairs, 1 per kid
- several colors of construction paper name cards
- reusable adhesive putty
- “I Know” song

This game encourages name recognition. Make a name card for each child. Let kids choose the color for their name cards. Print the name clearly and large. Young preschoolers may add a sticker on the card to help them “read.” Set up the chairs as in musical chairs, but fix each child’s name card onto a chair with adhesive putty where it is easily seen.

Start the music with kids marching or walking around the chairs. When the music stops, they must find the chair with their name on it. Start the music again while an assistant quickly moves the name tags to different chairs.

Say • Joel had bad news for the people in Judah because they had not been doing what God said. But then Joel told them good news from God.

We have good news, too. Jesus also wants people to be sorry for their sin. Jesus died to take away our sin, and He is alive. If we trust in Jesus and are sorry for our sin, God forgives us. *What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.*

Make a locust swatter

- construction paper, thin sheets of foam, or plastic canvas
- chenille stems
- plastic bugs (optional)
- glue
- scissors
- hole punch (optional)

Guide kids to cut a square of paper, foam, or plastic canvas. Assist them in punching a hole in the center edge of one side and threading a chenille stem through it for a handle. Glue plastic bugs to the swatter if available.

Say • The people of Judah had to swat locusts and be hungry for a while, but God promised good news after that. *What is God’s desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.*

- carrots, 2 or 3
- shallow bowl
- sand, small pebbles, or marbles
- water

Plant a carrot top

Cut off the top inch or so of three carrots. Fill a shallow bowl with sand, small pebbles, or marbles, and push the carrot tops into the bowl so the cut ends will be in water. Fill the bowl with lukewarm water. Place the bowl near a sunny window, and keep the water level the same so the carrots won't dry out. Soon you will see fernlike growth sprouting.

You might want to plant one carrot top per child. In that case, use clear plastic cups and put the planted carrot tops into ziplock bags. Label each kid's bag with her name, and include a note saying that the carrot needs water and sunlight.

If you don't plant one per child, let a teacher take home the carrot to care for during the week and return with it on the next few Sundays to check for growth.

Say • What do you think would happen if locusts found our carrots? [*Listen to answers.*] They would eat up the carrots, leaves and all. There would be no carrots left for people to eat. That is what happened in today's Bible story.

The people in Judah sinned. To punish them, God sent locusts and stopped the rain. Joel told the people to be sorry for their sin. Jesus also wants people to be sorry for their sin. Jesus died to take away our sin, and He is alive. When we trust in Jesus and are sorry for our sin, God forgives us.

What is God's desire for people? God wants all people to be saved.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Snack and Transition (20 minutes)

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities time and gather for snack time. Take a bathroom break and wash hands or use hand sanitizer. Choose volunteers to help set up for the snack; remind kids during snack time to say please and thank you. Thank God for the snack.

Joel told the people that after the time when their crops would be destroyed and there wouldn't be much food, God would send rain, and wonderful fruits would grow again. Serve apple slices, grapes, and water.

Transition

- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- books, puzzles, and play dough
- crayons

When a child finishes her snack and throws away the trash, she may select a puzzle or book to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring picture. Offer the journal page for drawing something related to the Bible story.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something positive about their child's day. Inform incoming leaders if there is something they need to know about a child.

Great Prophets

Key Passage: Jonah 4:2

Session 1: Amos, Prophet to Israel
Amos 1–9

Session 2: Hosea, Prophet to Israel
Hosea 1–14

Session 3: Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh
Jonah 1–4

Session 4: Joel, Prophet to Judah
Joel 1–3



**I knew that You are
a merciful and
compassionate God,
slow to become angry,
rich in faithful love.**

Jonah 4:2



**I knew that thou art
a gracious God, and
merciful, slow to
anger, and of great
kindness.**

Jonah 4:2



**I knew that you are
a gracious God and
merciful, slow to anger
and abounding in
steadfast love.**

Jonah 4:2



**I knew that you are
a gracious and
compassionate God,
slow to anger and
abounding in love.**

Jonah 4:2



**I know that You are a
gracious and merciful
God, slow to anger
and abundant in
lovingkindness.**

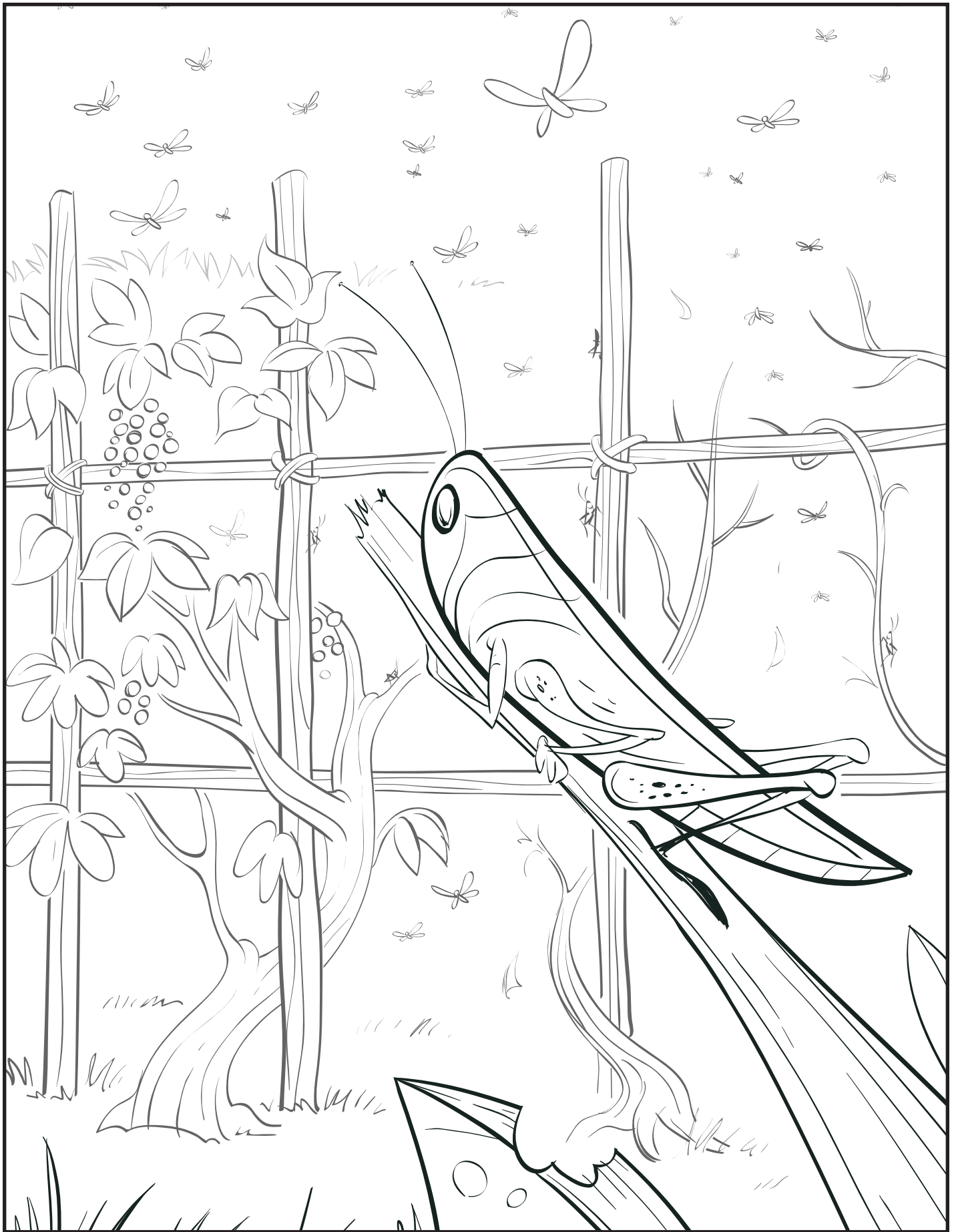
Jonah 4:2



Find the Hidden Objects

Instructions: Look at the objects shown in the margin. Find them hidden in the picture.

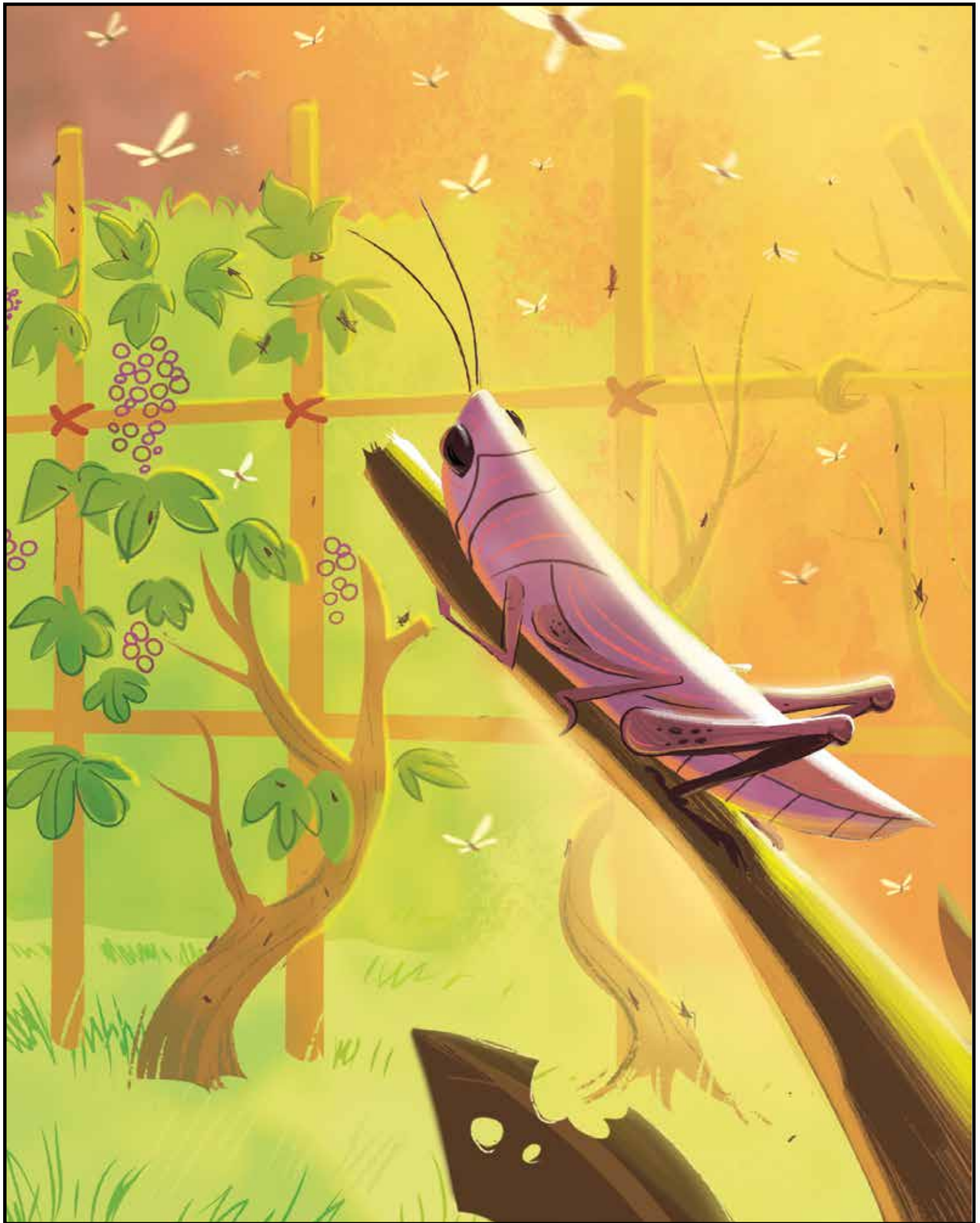




**What is God's desire
for people?**

**God wants all people
to be saved.**





Today your child will be
tasting/touching/sniffing

Please notify a teacher if
your child should not
participate in this activity.



Instructions: Print this poster, or laminate it and reuse it throughout the quarter. Use a dry erase marker to fill in the necessary information when bringing food, animals, things to smell, or nature items that might cause allergic reactions. Display the poster where parents can see it when they arrive with their children.