



# MALACHI

Malachi the Prophet

**Welcome** students.

**Prayer Cards:** Ask, “How can I pray for you?” Ask students to fill out the cards. Tell the students, “I will pray for you this week.”

**Lesson Objective:** God’s character does not change. He is always faithful.

**Activity:** Help or Hinder (supplies: blindfold)

Blindfold a volunteer. Spin him around three times and then challenge him to walk across the room, but do not give him any more instructions. (Walk alongside for safety.) After he stumbles around, bring him back to the starting point. Again, instruct him to walk to the other side of the room, this time giving detailed instructions of which direction to move in. Allow other volunteers to take a turn.

## **Connect the Activity to the Lesson**

Which way was easier to do what I asked—when I let you wander around the room with no directions or when I gave you careful, detailed directions? What happens when a leader does not lead people well? Today we will learn about a time when Israelite leaders did not do a good job leading God’s people. But we will also learn about God’s plan to remedy that.

## **Introduction:**

In our last lesson, we learned how God’s people repented and turned toward God. They began to worship and obey Him which pleased God and was cause for celebration. In today’s lesson, we will see how the people became lazy in how they worshiped God. Their priests, who were to be their leaders, did not do a good job in leading them. Instead, they taught them wrong things and displeased God. So God sent a prophet to speak to them.

## **Video Recap: “Malachi the Prophet” – Malachi**

God loved His people and He wanted them to be holy. He wanted them to obey Him completely. So He sent a message through the prophet Malachi. God’s message told the people about their sins and called them to turn back to Him. The priests had disobeyed God even though they were supposed to lead the people in worship. Instead, they sacrificed stolen, lame, and sick animals rather than offering God the best animals. God said, “I am not pleased. I will not accept your offerings. It is your job to help the people follow Me; they look to you for instruction. But you have turned them away from Me. You taught them wrong things.” God warned the people that a day of judgment was coming when God would punish sin and reward righteousness. He told them, “I am going to send My messenger and he will clear the way before Me.” The messenger (John the Baptist) would have a very important job: to get the people ready for God’s promised Messiah (Jesus)! He then talked about some of the wrong things they had been doing. He declared, “You are robbing Me!” The people were not offering to God a share of their wealth. He told them, “Bring a tenth of your wealth to Me. And test Me in this. See if I will not give you even more blessings – more than you can count!” Other people did honor God and God noticed them. He told them, “They will be Mine. I will have compassion on them. A day is coming when the wicked will be destroyed. But those who honor Me will go out and playfully jump like calves.” Malachi told the

people to be patient. God had not forgotten about them. Life was not easy, but if they served God and followed Him, they would be happy on the day when God would keep His promise to rescue His people.

*Christ Connection: Malachi was a messenger—a prophet—who told God’s people to repent. Malachi also told about another messenger God would send. This messenger, John the Baptist, would call people to repent and get them ready for a final Messenger, Jesus Christ. Jesus would bring good news of salvation.*

**Debrief: Questions to ask**

**Why do you think the people offered God their sick animals instead of their healthy ones?** *(We sometimes try to take shortcuts to obey God because we don’t trust Him like we should or we act selfishly. But God wants us to obey Him completely, offering Him our very best. The people were supposed to make a sacrifice to worship God, but they gave Him their leftovers instead of their best.)*

**What does it mean to sacrifice something?** *(Sacrifice means offering God our very best of everything, sometimes even when it’s hard to or we rather not. Sacrifice expresses love, thanksgiving, or the need for forgiveness. It comes at a great cost to ourselves.)*

**What is something you can give (sacrifice) to God this week?** *(Think about sacrificing time or effort as well as something material. Maybe it is taking 10 minutes away from watching TV or playing on an electronic device and instead spending that time reading the Bible and praying or serving a family member.)*

**Apply the Story**

Malachi reminded the Jewish people that they could trust God, even when they didn’t hear His voice or see Him moving. We can trust God too, even when He seems silent. Even when we face trials and difficult times, we can still find joy in Jesus. We can praise God during good times and bad times because no matter what we are going through God’s character does not change. He is always faithful! Malachi told the Jewish people about another messenger that would come after him named John the Baptist and this messenger would call the people to repent and get them ready for a final Messenger, Jesus. How can we be a messenger for God to those around us? What can we say to our friends and family members who do not trust in God? How can we show God’s love to them?

**Bible Drills** (supplies: Bibles)

Challenge the students to look up the following verses and stand up when they find it. Recognize the first person to stand and ask them to read the verse. After all the verses are read, discuss the theme each verse has in common (Underlined Words below)

**God is Faithful and Does Not Change:**

Malachi 3:6

Isaiah 40:8

Numbers 23:19

Psalms 102:25-27

Matthew 24:35

Isaiah 40:28

Psalms 90:2

Revelation 22:13

