LOWER ELEM Flight Plan
November 22nd

Lesson	**Malachi the Prophet**
Bible Passage	Malachi
Story Point	Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah.
Key Passage	"The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while." 1 Peter 5:10
Big Picture Q & A	**Who is in control of everything?** God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.





After many years living as prisoners in Babylon, God's people had returned to Judah. They had worked hard and overcome opposition to rebuild the temple and the walls around Jerusalem. The people had gathered, Ezra read from God's word and they promised to be obedient and faithful. Surely, after all this God would restore their former blessing of a land flowing with milk and honey. But nothing happened. As they waited, they faced drought and economic uncertainty. God's people probably didn't feel like God had blessed them at all.

"It is useless to serve God," they said. "What have we gained by keeping his requirements?" (Mal. 3:14). Did God still care? It wasn't long until God's people fell back into the same patterns of sin that led to their exile in the first place: idolatry, covetousness, hypocrisy, arrogance, and abuse of the poor. But God *did* still love His people. He had been working out His divine plan of redemption, and He never gave up on them. God sent a message to His people through the prophet Malachi.

Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets. He spoke to God's people approximately 100 years after the end of the Babylonian captivity. Malachi's message from God was a wake-up call.

God communicated through Malachi that the people's lack of blessing didn't mean that God didn't care. God exposed His people's sin and their need to repent and turn back to God. "But for you who fear my name," God said, "the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings" (Mal. 4:2). Malachi promises that God will send another prophet to prepare the way and then that Jesus will come! "See, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty." (Mal.3:1)

Explain to kids that 400 years of silence followed Malachi's prophecy; God did not communicate to His people. This period brings us to the New Testament, when the silence would be broken by the last prophet before Jesus, John the Baptist.

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Gospel—Centered Preparation:

The heart of preparation is rooted in your understanding of the gospel and your personal application of the story.

After your study ask yourself:

- How do the verse and Big Picture Question connect to this story?
- What am I excited to teach from this passage?
- The main point this week is: _____
- Where is the gospel in this story?

November Focus: God's People are Restored

NOV 1st: The Temple was Rebuilt *Ezra 4-6; Haggai*
Story point: God's people rebuilt the temple to glorify God.



NOV 8th: The Walls Rebuilt *Nehemiah 1-6*
Story Point: God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.



NOV 15th: God's People Restored *Nehemiah 8-13*
Story Point: God's people repented and Promised to be faithful.



NOV 22nd: Malachi the Prophet *Malachi*
Story Point: Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah.



Co-Pilot—Included Preparation:

On a Sunday morning, the Pilot is leading everyone in our ongoing journey to Jesus– that includes both flyers and Co-Pilots! The more consistency and continuity we have between Pilots, the better we can prepare our helpers to succeed and grow! With that consistency comes the mentorship aspect for our youth volunteers in particular, and utilizing our adult co-pilots as well: sharing activities, engaging them in the morning, and encouraging their involvement.

As you prepare for the lesson, ask yourself:

- **Does my planning allow for Co-Pilot participation throughout the morning?**
- **How did I prepare my Co-Pilot to help with classroom management?**
- **What specific activities will my Co-Pilot assist with today?**
- **In what ways can I encourage my Co-Pilot?**

Engagement

- Sit with child during the story
- Playing alongside flyers
- Reengage chatty/distracted kids
- Ask to volunteer an example during discussion
- Help play to Co-Pilot's strengths

Activities

- Attendance stickers
- Timeline
- Joining in the verse and BPQ&A
- Assigned to a specific flyer
- Helping find books in the Bible
- Leading crafts & songs

Encouragement

- Thank you for stepping in there!
- You did a great job with _____.
- You really helped me while I was _____.
- Thank you for being _____'s buddy today.
- Your help really made this morning go smoothly.
- _____ was the right thing to do. You handled it well!
- I'm so glad you are here today!

Sunday Morning Flight Plan



Take Off

- Open in Prayer
- Hook
- BPQ and A & Key Passage
- Timeline & Introduce Story

10 Min

Journey

- Attendance & Bible Sticker
- Bible Story
- God's Attributes

15 Min

Flight Lab

- Experience of the Bible Story (Make connections through an activity & motion)

15 Min

Pilot's Log

- Pray
- Calm activity during pick-up
- Give activity sheets to parents as they pick up students

5 Min

PICK UP:

First Service:
Around 9:45

Second Service:
Around 11:45

10 min Take Off

Celebrate being here! Introduce the morning.

Open in Prayer

Hook

Prompt kids to discuss what it takes to get ready for guests to stay at their house. How does their family prepare to make them feel welcome? Why is being prepared important?

Big Picture Question

Do you all remember the question we have been answering the past few weeks? ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.*** *Even when it seems like God is silent, He has a plan and is in complete control.*

Key Passage

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read/sing **1 Peter 5:10** (with video/hand motions). Our key passage reminds us that God has promised to restore, establish, strengthen, and support us. God keeps His promises. God has a purpose and a plan for our lives. This verse also tells us that our life will have suffering and hard times. In today's story, the Jewish people question whether God loves them because they did not hear His voice. We can still trust that God keeps His promises, even when life is hard or it seems like God is silent.

Timeline/Introduce Bible Story:

A few weeks back, we learned the people who returned to Jerusalem rebuilt the temple. Then we learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem had been destroyed and that God's people were in danger from their enemies. Nehemiah went to Jerusalem, and **God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls**. Through Ezra, God had told the Jewish people that He would bless them, but time passed and the people began to doubt. God sent Malachi to remind His people that God keeps His promises. Malachi said that God is faithful. Listen closely to Malachi's story.

Transition to Bible Story: (OPTIONAL) Show the Bible Story Video.

15 Min Journey

Where we travel into God's word

Bible Story

Open your Bible to Malachi Read from the Bible or use the story example to help you tell the story.

Wrap up with the insights below.

Have you ever been in the car with your parents and saw a sign that said, "Warning: Road Closed Ahead"? Do you think it would be very smart to keep driving? Of course not! You would probably end up crashing your car because of a big hole in the road. Warning signs are meant to keep us safe and help us make the right choice about what to do.

The Bible has warnings too. God loves us and wants us to make choices that honor Him. The Book of Malachi contains lots of warnings. People were sinning and had turned their backs on God. In this short book, God warned the people that a day was coming when He would judge them for their sin. He was essentially telling them that they faced danger ahead. It was time to stop and turn around—to turn back to God.

Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah. God sent a prophet to point out the people's sin because He loved them. God knew that the way His people were living was hurting them. Their hearts did not fully love Him. God knows what is best for us; He is best for us! He wants to restore our broken, sinful hearts and bring us back to Him!



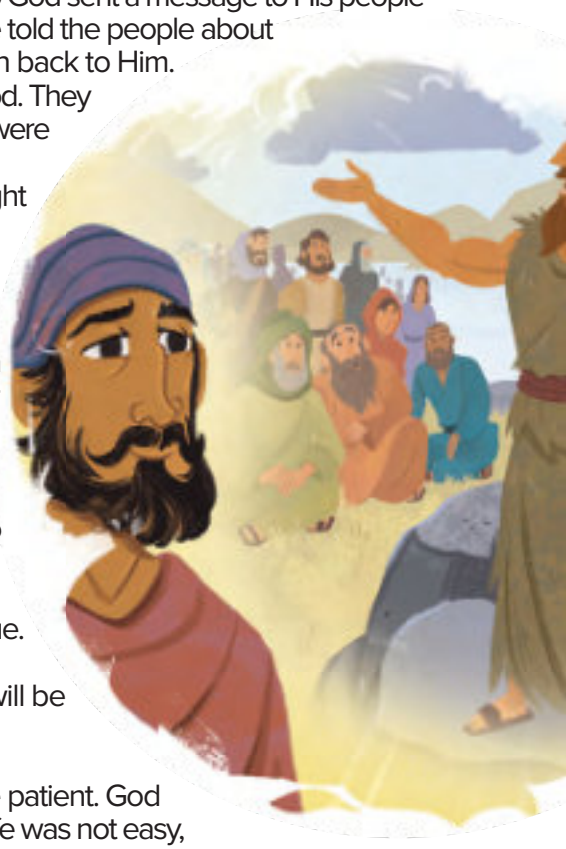
Malachi was a messenger—a prophet—who told God's people to repent. Malachi also told about another messenger God would send. This messenger, John the Baptist, would call people to repent and get them ready for a final Messenger, Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus would bring salvation to all the world through His payment for our sins! Malachi, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ all remind us that God keeps His promises and that He is trustworthy.

Age Appropriate Story

STORY POINT: MALACHI CALLED GOD'S PEOPLE TO REPENT TO PREPARE FOR THE MESSIAH.

God loved His people, and He wanted them to be holy. He wanted them to obey Him completely. So God sent a message to His people through the prophet Malachi. He told the people about their sins and called them to turn back to Him.

The priests had disobeyed God. They offered as sacrifices animals that were stolen, lame, or sick. They turned people away from God and taught them wrong things.



God warned that a day of judgment is coming when God will punish sin and reward righteousness. God would send a messenger to get people ready for God's promised Messiah. Next, God talked about some of the wrong things the people were doing. They were not offering to God a share of their wealth. Some of the people were saying things about God that weren't true.

Other people did honor God, and God noticed them. "They will be Mine," God said. "I will have compassion on them."

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.

Discussion & Bible Skills

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find the Book of Malachi. Explain that Malachi is a minor prophet in the Old Testament. It is the last book of the Old Testament, and there were 400 years in between the prophecies of Malachi and the prophet John the Baptist. God's people did hear from God for 400 years! Lead the group to discuss:

1. **Who was the last prophet in the Old Testament?** (*Malachi*)
2. **What kind of sacrifices were the people offering?** (*They brought lame or sick animals, Mal. 1:8*)
3. **God promised that when the Messiah comes the righteous would jump like what kind of animal?** (*calves, Mal. 4:2*)
4. **Why was God so unhappy with the people's sacrifices?** *God's people were going through the motions of worship, but their hearts were not in it. By offering sick and lame animals, they communicated that they did not believe God deserved their best. They were trying to save their best animals for themselves.*
5. **When is it easy to obey God? When is it difficult to obey Him?** *Obedience is easier when our hearts are full of love for God and those around us love Him too. Obedience can be difficult when we are surrounded by people who do not love God. But God promises to be with us and strengthen us.*
6. **What can we do when we realize that we are living in sin?** *When we confess our sin to God, we can ask Him to restore us. Jesus paid the price for our sin once and for all, so we can have forgiveness through Him.*



God's attributes- helping the children understand what God is like, shown to us in the Bible. In today's story we see that God is:

- PROMISE KEEPER

Travel Guide:

Use the travel guide for maps, charts, etc… as useful with helping the children learn and understand today's story.

15 min **Flight Lab**

Instill Wonder as you experience the Bible

CHOOSE ONE ACTIVITY

Prepare the Way

Invite the kids to draw pictures that represent reasons someone might not come to church. Then invite the kids to brainstorm ways to help people overcome those obstacles to attend church. Talk about ways we can try to prepare people to hear about Jesus.

• There are a lot of reasons people might choose not to come to church. We can invite people and try to make it easy for them to come, but some obstacles might still remain. In our story we learned about preparing the way for Jesus. What are some things that Malachi said to do to prepare? Which of these things is the hardest?

Crazy Directions

Create a sign with a large arrow on it. Instruct the class to stand on one side of the room. They must get to the other side, but they must follow the direction that the arrow is pointing. Continue directing them around the room by changing which way the arrow is pointing. After many twists and turns, let them reach the wall on the other side of the room. Play another round, but this time allow the kids to walk straight to the opposite wall with a straight path.

• Was it frustrating for you when I kept changing the direction of the arrow? In our story today, we heard that Malachi prophesied about a messenger who would come from God. This messenger would point people to Jesus and help make their paths straight.

Follow the Path

Make a path on the floor using carpet squares. Blindfold a kid and instruct him to follow the path you have made. He should be able to feel the difference if he steps off the path. Allow all the kids to take turns walking the path blindfolded. If kids are struggling to feel the difference between the floor and the carpet squares, allow the kids to remove their shoes and follow the path.

• Was it easy to stay on the path wearing the blindfold? It's hard to know where you're going when you can't see the road in front of you. **Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah.** Malachi prophesied that another messenger would prepare the way for Jesus to come. This messenger was John the Baptist, and he would be the last prophet before Jesus.

Map it Out

Instruct kids to create a map of their neighborhood. Encourage them to mark special places, like their favorite playground, their friends' houses, or their school. Guide them draw paths from their home to the other destinations. Invite volunteers to share their maps with the class.

• A map helps us get from one point to the next. It shows us which way to go and helps us recognize our final destination. Today we learned about a messenger whom God sent to help His people stay focused on where He wanted them to go and what He had planned for them. This messenger helped them get ready for Jesus.

Help or Hinder

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.

• 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? Today we learned about some priests in the Bible who disobeyed God and did not lead His people well. God sent a messenger to set them straight.

5 min Pilot's log

Where we prepare to depart.

Pray:

If time, share prayer requests and allow kids to record in the **prayer journal section of their *Travel Guide***.

ALWAYS CLOSE THE MORNING WITH PRAYER.

This is how we model incorporating prayer into their lives.

Waiting for parents/Activity Page:

Tie back into the lesson, remind them of the Big Picture Question/verse, etc…

Be sure to **re-set expectations on what their choices are while waiting for mom and dad:**

- Activity page
- Key Passage Activity (See next page for list of options)
- Coloring page
- Gospel Kit Activities
- Anything quiet at the tables you are ok with *(origami, free draw on blank paper, hangman game at white board, putting Book of the Bible cards in order, etc….)*

Be sure that the Co-Pilots hand out the Activity sheet to each child or to parents so they can go home with families.

Key Passage Review Extra Ideas:

Invite kids to sit around tables. Give each kid a pencil. Show the key passage poster and lead them to read it aloud.

Give a piece of paper to one kid at each table. Instruct him to write down the first word of the key passage and pass the paper to the person on his right. That person will write down the second word, pass the paper to her right, and so on. Kids will pass the paper around the table, writing one vword at a time until they finish the key passage. When kids finish, invite groups one at time to say the key passage together.

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Display the key passage poster. Lead the kids to read it aloud. Then challenge them to read it in various ways: whispering, shouting, quickly, slowly, and so on.

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Form two groups of kids. Call on the first group to say the key passage together. Then call on the second group to say it.

Prompt the first group to say the passage a few phrases at a time, pausing for the second group to echo. When kids finish saying the key passage, lead the second group to begin and the first group to echo.

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Instruct kids to sit or stand in a circle. Choose one kid to begin by saying the first word of the key passage. Guide kids to say the key passage, one word at a time, moving around the circle.

Allow kids to look at the key passage poster if they need help remembering the words. Continue around the circle a few times. Consider shouting, "Switch!" and letting kids move to another place in the circle before playing again. *Or toss the ball to different kids rather than go in order.*

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Before the session, write out the key passage on a chalkboard or dry erase board in eight separate phrases. Display the phrases where kids can see them. Give each kid a marker and eight craft sticks. Instruct kids to copy from the board, writing each phrase on a separate stick. Then instruct kids to mix up their sticks and then quickly rearrange the phrases in the correct order. Kids may work individually or in pairs. Provide rubber bands for kids to bundle their sticks and keep them as a method of practicing the key passage during the week.

Prayer Extra Ideas:

Prayer Chain—In small groups, ask children/co-pilot to write prayer requests on a few paper strips. Connect paper strips into a chain and display our growing conversation to the Lord. Feel free to revisit older requests as well.

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Painted Rocks—Have each child choose a painted rock to write on. Write a word of encouragement, a word about Jesus, a name, etc. The goal is to take it with them and place it somewhere near their typical living space– a neighbor's house, a store, a playground, etc. Then pray over the place or the people who are there.

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Pointing to a Map—Choose one or two kiddos to spin/close their eyes/find a certain color (you can be creative and have fun) and point to a country on the map. Place a pin in the place(s) and pray over it as a group. Even if you don't know anything about the country, we can lift up the people, pray for Jesus' light to shine there, the Gospel to be active there, and churches to grow, etc.

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Looking out the Window—Grab a dry erase marker, have the kids gather at the windows, and look outside. Ask the children to look for 3 things they can see out of the window to pray over. Using the dry erase marker, write those things on the window (Pre-K & K may draw things) and then pray over those things. Feel free to leave them on the window, so whenever we look through, those things are brought to our mind to pray for again.

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Head Shoulders Knees and Toes—Pray through the song.

- Head (mind, imagination, thoughts, creativity)
- Shoulders (physical strength, things we might be dealing with)
- Knees (dancing, playing, jumping, etc.)
- Toes (walking and following after Jesus, standing strong in our faith)
- Eyes, ears, mouth & nose (seeing goodness, listening to Him, speaking truthful words, our senses, etc.)

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Preschool Carpet Bag Prayers— Choose an item(s) out of the carpet bag. Discuss the item and different people/things the item could represent (car—driving safely, mechanics, trips, first responders, etc) Encourage kids to "think outside the bag" and help them make connections. Pray over the people, places, and things that were discussed.

You're ready for Sunday!

