

## Aim of lesson

To demonstrate the result of showing contempt for God's word.

## Bible background

Jeremiah 36.

## Outline of lesson

### Respect for God's word

Jeremiah began his work as a prophet when Josiah was on the throne. Josiah had been a good king who had respected God's word and had been deeply affected by the discovery of the scroll of the law in the Temple. Now Josiah's second son was on the throne. Jehoiakim had no respect for God's word as this lesson demonstrates.

### Jehoiakim burns the scroll

You may like to ask the class to imagine that they are one of the following people involved in the narrative. As the chapter is read they should listen particularly to what 'their' character is doing, and consider what he might be thinking. The characters are Jeremiah, Baruch, Micaiah, Elishama (and the other officials), Jehoiakim and Jehudi. The chapter could be read as a whole or in sections e.g. v1-10, v11-19, v20-32. After each section the characters involved should say what they did and how they felt.

### The workbook

The ideas which come from the 'characters' could form the basis of a discussion on what words would best represent the situation shown in the first picture in the workbook. The class could note the differences in reaction between some of the officials and others. Although they all tell Jeremiah and Baruch to hide (v19) only three protest when the king burns the scroll (v24-26).

### What would you say?

The second section in the workbook is designed to encourage the class to consider what they might say if they heard God's word spoken of with contempt. They could work in pairs to write an imaginary conversation, and then explain to the others what they have written.

## Digging deeper

### More about Jeremiah

This section looks into the background of Jeremiah's life.

## Relevance to our lives

The class have already begun thinking about what they might say if God's word were insulted. They could continue these thoughts by considering how they can show respect for what God says. Giving a high priority to reading his word and putting into practice what God teaches are two of the most obvious ways of showing respect.

## Prayer

'Help me to be brave next time someone challenges your word.'

Jeremiah and Baruch had to hide in fear of their lives for writing out and speaking God's words. The class could consider what they might have prayed while in hiding. The class could also consider what they (the class) might do and pray, if writing and reading God's word incurred such risks today.

## Other suggestions for activities

- The class could find out about other people who have tried to burn God's word. The story of how the Bible came to be available in English includes the account of men who not only saw the Bible they had translated burnt, but themselves risked death by burning.
- The newspaper of the time of Jeremiah could be continued.
- The class could write out a drama based on Jeremiah 36 or could write out an account of what happened in the form of a letter from Micaiah to a friend.