

Aim of lesson

To learn that God is consistent in his dealings with mankind and that 'the spirit of Christ' was at work in Old Testament times.

Bible background

Hebrews 2:14-18, 4:15

Preparation required

Read through the notes and decide how you are going to get the young people to discover the patterns in question. Depending on the size and ability of the class they could take one Old Testament character each or work in pairs. Decide how many characters you are going to study. Young people sometimes find this sort of exercise unrewarding so you may decide to take one in detail and quickly go over some others from the students' memory so that they get the gist of the lesson and maybe follow it up at a later date.

Suggested outline of lesson

Introduction

Discuss with the class the idea of a 'type of Christ'. This expression may have become a bit of a Christadelphian cliché so you may prefer to use the word 'shadow' or 'echo' or 'pattern' but explain the principle that the lives of many of the Old Testament characters follow a similar pattern to that of Jesus. Share out the characters in the students' notes. The references will help them to work out the parallels between this character and that of Jesus but you may prefer them to do what they can from memory first or illicit the information by asking questions.

Here are some thoughts that you might bring out:

Isaac - Genesis 17:19-22

- A promised son
- Sacrificed by his father
- On Mount Moriah (Jerusalem)
- 3 day's journey
- As good as dead to Abraham
- Carried the wood (cross)
- Was willing
- Saved by an angel

Joseph - Genesis 37; 41:41-57; 41:46; 42-46

- Favourite son
- Shepherd
- Had a special coat (seamless robe)
- Put in a pit by his brothers (the Jews killed Jesus)
- Sold for silver
- Saved the Gentiles
- Saved the Israelites (Jews)
- Fed Israelites and Gentiles
- His brothers ate and drank at his table
- He knew what they were thinking

- They bowed down to him (future still for Jesus?)
- He was 30 years old

Joshua - Joshua 3 and 6

- Name means 'Saviour'
- Led the people into the promised land through water (baptism)
- The people had to trust him
- Gentiles were spared

David - 1 Samuel 16:11; 17:28; 2 Samuel 5:1-5; 1 Chronicles 28

- He was a shepherd
- Despised by his brothers
- King over Israel
- Prepared a house for God

Elisha - 1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:23-25; 4:8-36, 42-44; 6:1-6; 13:20-21

- Was preceded by Elijah (John the Baptist)
- He was mocked
- Restored life
- Power over nature
- Saved others even after his death

Job - Job 1:1, 4-5; 2; 38; 42:10 and 12

- Blameless
- Prayed for his family
- Afflicted by God
- God who made the world knows what he is doing
- He prayed for his friends
- God blessed his latter end more than his beginning

Jonah - Jonah 1:15-16; 1:17; 2:10; 3:1-3

- Saved others by his death (or apparent death)
- 3 days and 3 nights
- God saved him
- Preached to the Gentiles and saved them

You may wish to bring out parallels of your own or discuss other characters but it is important not to get bogged down in the types and not talk about what we can learn. We should understand that God is consistent in his dealing with his people. How can this help us? We can realise that he will always provide a way out, show mercy and kindness. Beware of the dangers - all the characters are human and therefore did wrong which Jesus did not do. Look up Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15 and discuss the implications of Jesus being like his brothers and understanding them.

Relevance to our lives

It should encourage us that God can always be trusted to be consistent and that Jesus understands us perfectly having gone through what is common to man.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, we thank you that we can see so many examples of people who were like your Son, and who went through experiences that were like his. Help us to follow in his footsteps, so that we may become more like him. Amen

Other suggestions for activities

The young people may like to consider the parallels between the journey of the Israelites through the desert and our own lives as shown in 1 Corinthians 10:1-6.