THE BEGINNING OF THE END
(OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL)

Personal Preparation for the Study:
The most effective way to prepare is to experience the study first as a participant. Each of the studies centers on Bible stories that have rich meaning and can impact your life in deep ways.

Take at least an hour to go through the exercises as a participant. Make sure you spend time watching the videos, doing the reading, and engaging in the response activities. Write down your answers to the discussion questions. Try hard not to let your mind wander to how you will teach this lesson! This will be an important time for you to discover your own insights, and it will also help you anticipate your group’s responses.

Leading this Study:
After you go through the study for your own growth, go through it from a teacher’s perspective. Note activities and options that you feel will work well with your group and ones that you want to change or omit.

In chapter 16, the story touches on themes in the lives of King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah. Since Isaiah’s prophecies are too numerous to be included in the StoryReader script for this lesson, you may want to investigate additional writings of Isaiah. One way of doing this would be to utilize the Creative Option for this lesson, which gives teens an opportunity to engage with Isaiah’s prophetic visions in Isaiah 6.

As always, continue to encourage your teens to give their full attention while engaging with this story. Remind them that discussion outside of the parameters of this story is for another time. Encourage teens that if they engage the story like a movie, allowing themselves to enter it, they will learn new things.

Chapter 16: “The Beginning of the End (of the Kingdom of Israel)” can be found in 2 Kings 17–19; Isaiah 3; 6; 13–14; 49; and 53.

BREAK INTO PAIRS!
Mix up your discussion’s dynamic by encouraging partner interaction.

If you find that your teens tend to lose focus, or if your discussion tends to be dominated by a few, mix it up by asking teens to discuss a specific question in pairs.

You can say something as simple as: “For the next question, turn to the person next to you...” This strategy can help everyone feel included in the discussion, especially in larger groups. Once the pairs have had a few minutes to discuss, ask each group to share what they came up with for a response.

For some added intrigue, have the pairs discuss a more “controversial” question, with each person taking a different “side” of the argument. Then have them report back to the larger group with perspectives from each side.
Supplies:

- Copies for every participant of the *Chapter 16 Handout: The Beginning of the End* (on curriculum DVD)
- Provide 6 to 8 copies of the StoryReader for your storytellers (on curriculum DVD). See the StoryReader Assignment section below for details. Make extra copies for teens who’d like to read along.
- Copies of the JOIN the Story sections of this guide for Small Group Leaders
- Show the *StoryRewind 5 video* and *The Beginning of the End video* from the curriculum DVD.
- **JOIN the Story Activity:** Extra paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Creative Option:** One printout of Isaiah 6; one large sheet of paper; and pens, pencils, markers for every 2 to 3 teens (You may substitute OR add other passages from Isaiah, if you wish. Recommended: Isaiah 3; 6; 13–14; 49; 53)
- **Optional:** *The Story: Teen Edition*—a Bible that corresponds with this study (published by Zondervan)

**StoryReader Assignment:**

Give out StoryReader scripts (from curriculum DVD) to teen and adult volunteers as far in advance as you can. Ask for volunteers who are comfortable with and skilled at reading aloud. *Never force a teen to read!* Mix this up and use different people each week. Often the best storytellers are those who have some dramatic training.

The StoryReader scripts are segments of Scripture taken directly from Zondervan’s *The Story: Teen Edition* (NIV). Each script takes about 10 minutes to be read aloud. These segments have been formatted into a Readers’ Theater. A Readers’ Theater is an activity in which a few participants are asked to read directly from a script, with the intent of telling a story in a lively manner. Readers are not expected to memorize or improvise from the script, but use voice inflection and some gestures appropriate to their characters’ actions and words in order to bring the story to life.

(The major parts in this week’s story are read by the Narrators. Make sure to pick a teen or leader who won’t mind reading large portions of the story.)

**Additional Storytelling Options**

For each lesson, we recommend three additional storytelling options in order to provide some variety to your teens’ experience of the Scripture. You may use them to either supplement or replace the Readers’ Theater experience. For each of the three options, you may use the StoryReader script provided or have teens read directly from Scripture. (Scripture references are noted at the top of the StoryReader script.)
(NOTE: The Additional Storytelling Options may take longer than the allotted 10 minutes, depending on the type of exercise and number of teens.)

1. **TWO LENSES**
   
   - Using copies of the StoryReader scripts (or the actual passages from the Bible), have teens read the selection quietly on their own. Have them read it with this particular question in mind: *What stands out as being most important or most unusual in this story?*
   
   - When they finish, have the teens read the story again. This time, have them focus on the question: *What does this story mean for my life?*
   
   - Encourage teens to take notes of things that stand out to them during each reading.

2. **RETELLING THE STORY**
   
   - Divide teens into 2 to 3 groups, depending on the length/complexity of the story and size of your group. Assign a different part of the story to each group. Have each group read their part of the story amongst themselves.
   
   - After 3 to 5 minutes, have members from each group retell what happened in their section of the story in front of the rest of the large group. Encourage them to recount as many details from the story as they can.
   
   - OPTIONAL: Encourage group members to act out what happens while the story is being retold. For a fun element, limit retellings to 1 minute each, so teens are forced to do a fast-paced reenactment.

3. **STORYBOARD**
   
   - Divide teens into groups of 3 to 4. Have each group read through the StoryReader script within their groups.
   
   - At the front of the room, hang 6 to 8 large pieces of paper. After 10 minutes, have one volunteer at a time (one from each group) come up and draw a major “scene” from the story on each large piece of paper. (Encourage teens to use stick figures—just enough to represent what is happening in the scene.)
   
   - When the storyboard outline is complete, review the series of events and ask the teens if they feel any major events from the story have been left out.

**Another Creative Option**

A story-specific idea for an additional creative exercise has also been provided with this lesson. You may use and adjust the instructions for the exercise to fit the needs of your group. (See the “Creative Option” sidebar under the JOIN the Story section of the Teacher Lesson Script.)

(Please note that additional materials may be required for this exercise, and the exercise may take longer than the allotted time for the JOIN the Story section, given the type of activity and the size of your group.)
LESSON OUTLINE

Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Prayer</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StoryRewind 5 Video</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief Responses to Video</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explanation and Handouts</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 16: The Beginning of the End Video</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Symbols for the Story</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share about Our Symbols</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY** *(large or small group)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StoryReader Scripture Telling</td>
<td>12 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Scripture</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>BREAK: Teens move to small groups</em></td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART FOUR: JOIN THE STORY** *(small group)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Responses to the Story</td>
<td>12 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Responses to the Story</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Prayer</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher Lesson Script

**PART ONE: REWIND THE STORY**  
**LARGE OR SMALL GROUP**  
**5 MINUTES**

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)
Welcome, everyone! I’m glad you’re all here for another great week together. Whether this is your first time with us or you’ve been here throughout this journey through The Story, I hope we all find this time exciting and important to our lives, no matter where we are in our relationship with God. We have another great part of the Story to get to today, but first let’s take a second to pray before we begin:

God, we thank you for all the ways you show yourself to us throughout the week—from nature to our relationships with our friends and families. We ask you to continue moving in our lives as we come together today. Show us new things about ourselves and about you as we enter into this Story yet again. We pray we’ll leave here today different than when we came in. Amen.

In today’s story, we’re picking up where we left off last week, with the nation of Israel in total chaos. But before we do, let’s take a look back at what’s happened so far from the very beginning of the Story. We’ve come quite a long way, so this recap should move pretty quickly—be sure to watch and listen carefully!

[CUE: Play the StoryRewind 5 video from the curriculum DVD (2 minutes).]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)
So what did you think of that video? What parts stood out to you? Was there anything you’d forgotten?

[CUE: SHARE—Get a few quick responses to these questions; don’t spend more than a minute or two discussing.]

Just as a reminder, in every Bible story we go through together, we’re looking for TWO story lines: An **Upper Story** and a **Lower Story**. The Upper Story tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with human beings as it unfolds throughout history. The Lower Story consists of the smaller stories we’ll look at each week that tell the details of particular people and the events that happen in their lives.

[CUE: It may be helpful to call on teens to briefly define the Upper Story and Lower Story to ensure that teens are starting to remember these from week to week.]

**PART TWO: SEE THE STORY**  
**LARGE OR SMALL GROUP**  
**10 MINUTES**

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)
Hopefully, this video has reminded you of where we’ve been or caught you up if you weren’t with us last week. I have another video that will give us a quick look at where our new story will take us this week. After the video we’ll take a moment to respond using these handouts.
Now, let’s watch this week’s video, *The Beginning of the End*. And as always, there will be a lot to take in, so pay close attention. You don’t want to miss anything. Ready?

[CUE: Play *The Beginning of the End* video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]

[CUE: Give each teen the *Chapter 16: The Beginning of the End* handout found on the curriculum DVD.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Get with a partner. The SEE the Story area in the upper left corner with the EYE on it is where you and a partner will now create an **image or symbol** for this story. It can be something simple, but put some thought into how it represents the story. In a couple of minutes, we’ll share our creations.

[CUE: DISCUSS—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share briefly about the symbol they created. Ask them to explain the thoughts behind their drawings. After 3 or 4 minutes of sharing, go to the next part.]

**PART THREE: HEAR THE STORY**

(LARGE OR SMALL GROUP) 25 MINUTES

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

As usual, there’s a lot to take in from this story. We want to spend some time diving deeper into it, so I’ve asked a few of you to help us as StoryReaders.

While the story is being read, I encourage you to draw or write down key events that stand out to you in the HEAR the Story section on your handout.

[CUE: Have preassigned teen and adult volunteers read the StoryReader script all the way through without stopping (10 minutes). *NOTE: For alternate ways of interacting with the text, see the Additional Storytelling Options section under Teacher Planning*.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Take the next minute to answer the questions in the HEAR section on your handout.

[CUE: DISCUSS—After 2 minutes, ask a few teens to share their responses with the entire group. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing. Use these questions from the handout as a guide:]

- What were the key events from the story?
- What was most meaningful to you from this story?

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Right now we’re going to explore the story a bit further in small groups.

[CUE: Send teens into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the JOIN the Story segment of this study.]
[CUE: DISCUSS—Adjust questions as needed and don’t feel like your group must answer all of them.]

- Not all of you got to share your responses from the HEAR the Story section of the handout. Would anyone like to share what you came up with?
- Why do you think Hezekiah experienced so much opposition?
- Do you think obedience to God guarantees success or freedom from hardship? Why or why not?
- How is God calling you to “rebel” against the opposition in your life?
- How does God give his followers confidence in the face of adversity? How does he give you confidence?
- What were some of the main themes in Isaiah’s prophecies? How would you have responded if you were an Israelite?
- How did God show mercy to his people in spite of their actions?
- How has God shown mercy to you?

**Teacher Script:**

Pick ONE of the following questions and create a response: *(These questions are also on the handout.)*

- In which character or part of the story did you see yourself?
- What current fears or worries can you lay before the Lord, as Hezekiah did?
- How did this story challenge or inspire you to live differently?

Create a sketch, collage, poem, prayer, journal entry, song, or whatever you can come up with in the next 10 minutes!

Don’t be afraid to be honest with your responses, and remember that this is a safe place to share—however you’d like to respond. Also, if there’s something you haven’t tried yet as a way of responding, I encourage you to try it. It’s always good to mix it up and relate to God in new ways! In a few minutes, we’ll talk about your responses. I’m really excited to see what you come up with!
(While teens are working on their responses, walk around and encourage them. Also ask adult leaders to participate in this activity.)

[CUE: SHARE—Ask a few willing teens to share their responses to the story. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing prayer.]

**Teacher Script:** (please personalize this)

Thank you so much for your willingness to share these things with the rest of us. Keep it up! Hopefully these are things we can all continue to think about throughout this week. I wish we had more time to continue our sharing, but we can look forward to the next part of our story next week!

Let’s pray as we end our time:

> God, we recognize through your Story that you are a God who is—and who always has been—in control of history. You are also in control of our lives, with all of the happiness and heartbreak that we experience. Please remind us that we can always lay our worries, our fears, and our problems before you, and that all of our joy and success belongs to you, as well. Thank you for fighting for us and giving us hope. Amen.