

Hard Times and Hope

By Karen Strubel

Week 1 – Indentured Servants

When England first settled the Colonies in America, there were people who wanted to come to America but did not have the money to do so. Instead of staying in England, these people could sign an indenture (a contract) that would help them. The person would agree to work for 4–7 years, and the person for whom they worked agreed to take care of their bills, feed them, and give them land on which to live. The worker was called an indentured servant. When the indentured servant completed the years of work agreed upon, he would have earned land of his own on which to live. Many of the colonists came to America as indentured servants. As long as these servants were granted their freedom as agreed, it was not wrong.



(What is a contract? When two people make an agreement, they write down their agreement and sign it.)

Read the article in the World Book to learn more about indentured servants:

<http://www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar274220&st=indentured+servants#tab=homepage>

(If you haven't already signed into World Book, please go to the World Book page on SchoolhouseTeachers.com and sign in now.)

What do you understand?

Tell a family member what an indentured servant is.

Read Genesis 29:15–30

Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?” Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah’s eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, “I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.” Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.” So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.” So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?” Laban said, “It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.” Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.) So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.



In the Bible, Jacob worked for seven years to “earn” the right to marry his Rachel. This is much like being an indentured servant. Laban tricked Jacob by telling him he would give him Rachel as his wife. Instead, he gave his older daughter, Leah, to Jacob. Because Jacob loved Rachel so much, he agreed to work seven more years so that he could marry her also. This example shows us that even in Bible times, masters did not always keep their promises of payment. It is very important to be honest and keep our promises.

What do you think?

How long do you think an indentured servant should work for a home and land?

What do you think about working as an indentured servant so that you can get married? What is good about this idea? What is bad about this idea?

Ask your parents and siblings these questions.
(Were your answers the same as others in your family?)

How about you?

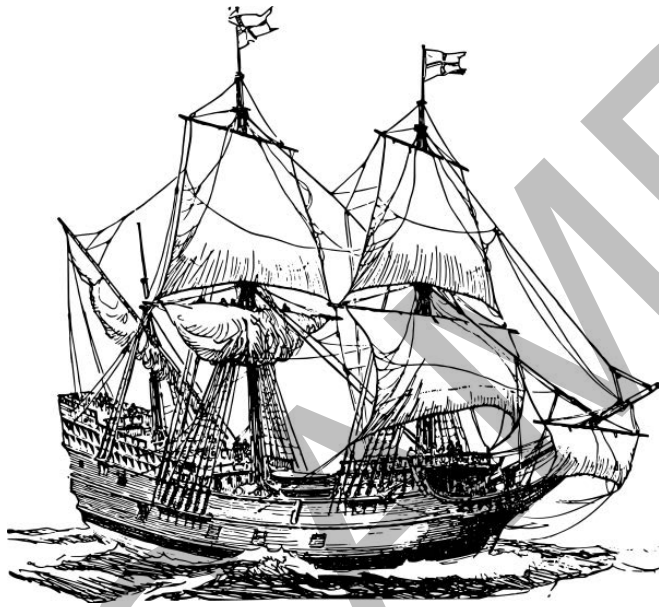
Draw a picture of something for which you would be willing to work hard, even if it took a long time to receive it.

Hard Times and Hope

By Karen Strubel

Slavery in America

In American history, some colonists acted as dishonorably as Laban did in yesterday's Bible reading. This is how the practice of being an indentured servant led to keeping slaves as property. In 1619, a Dutch ship was damaged and landed in the colonies; twenty kidnapped Africans were on this ship. The colonists traded the materials the ship owners needed for these twenty human beings. But people are not belongings to be traded as possessions. Since America didn't have any laws about slavery, these Africans were forced to be indentured servants. It was promised they would be given land and freedom in exchange for seven years of hard work.



Since these Africans were hard workers, the colonists and their farms or businesses made a lot of money; however, these kidnapped workers did not have rights since they were not English citizens. After they had completed their seven years of hard work, the owners backed out of the indenture which they had agreed upon and made them work without pay. It was wrong for these colonists to treat the African servants as property and to not keep their promise for freedom when the seven years of work were completed. These people were no longer indentured servants. They were slaves. Although there have been many cultures that have kept

slaves in history, these were the first known slaves in the English colonies.

In 1641, slavery was made legal in America. The dark-skinned people who had been kidnapped and traded for goods were now owned as property. The colonists who "owned" these people had become very rich because they used slaves to do their work and did not pay them. Since they enjoyed being rich, the colonists convinced themselves this behavior was fine. We know the Bible says that the one who works is worthy to be paid. We also know that Jesus has said that when we love our neighbor as ourselves we are doing what is right. These are some of the Biblical reasons we know slavery is wrong.



The Bible also says that “the love of money is the root of all evil.” Looking back on history, we can see how the colonists’ love of their wealth was their desire to use people as slaves. As an American, these horrible choices in our country’s past make me very sad. We cannot go back and change what happened, but we should learn from the past how to make better choices as we live our lives now.

What do you understand?

Tell a family member the difference between indentured servants and slaves.

Watch this short video about the beginning of slavery.

Introduction to Slavery Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUfJCh7Rd_Q

SchoolhouseTeachers.com note: Parents should closely monitor children’s use of YouTube and Wikipedia if you navigate away from the videos and articles cited in these lessons. We also recommend viewing the videos on a full screen setting in order to minimize your students’ exposure to potentially offensive ads and inappropriate comments beside or beneath the video.

What do you think?

In what way(s) do you think the sin of early America affects the country today.

I believe the primary effect we see in America today is racism. *Racism* is division or unkindness shown to a person because of the color of his/her skin. A person who believes this way is called a racist. A racist will not treat all people with respect. He will only treat those like himself with kindness. As we learn more about Jesus and become more like him, we find that we do not want to act this way toward others.

How about you?

One of the things I do as an adult in the South is to purposefully smile and have conversations with those who would say I am of a different race. Although this is something small, if all of us would change to act in kind ways, big changes would happen.

As a child, you need to show great attention to safety by not talking to strangers without your parents. Perhaps you can work to be kind and friendly to all the kids in your neighborhood and reach out to those who look different from you. Take some time to pray to ask God how you can make a difference in your community. Make a list with you parents of three things you can do to show kindness and love to all people.

Hard Times and Hope

By Karen Strubel

Plantations

The Southern States in the early 1800s had large farms. These huge farms were called plantations. The wealthy plantation owners usually had a grand and beautiful house. The slaves not only worked on the plantation, but they also lived in small cabins on the plantation owner's land. Some slaves were called "domesticated slaves" or "house slaves." These slaves worked in the master's home. They would do whatever the master needed in his home—cleaning, laundry, house repair, cooking, and even caring for children. These slaves worked in the "big house" rather than the fields.

Here is a History Illustrated video about plantations:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sCN671aBUM>

SchoolhouseTeachers.com note: Parents should closely monitor children's use of YouTube and Wikipedia if you navigate away from the videos and articles cited in these lessons. We also recommend viewing the videos on a full screen setting in order to minimize your students' exposure to potentially offensive ads and inappropriate comments beside or beneath the video.

The primary plants that were grown on plantations were tobacco, cotton, and sometimes rice. The slaves in the fields had very hard physical work every day. At times, the house slaves and field slaves would fight with each other. Generally, this seemed to be because the field slaves thought the house slaves had more privileges and were treated better.

In America, the slave owners were white-skinned people, and the slaves were dark-skinned people. The slave was not free to make decisions for himself, not even decisions of where to live or what to eat. Some slaves were told who they could marry or that they could not marry someone they loved. While there were some slave owners who treated their slaves kindly and cared for their needs, many treated their slaves as though they were less than human. Many slave owners would whip slaves who didn't do what they wanted. Some would hurt the slaves and look for ways to be cruel. The Bible tells us that all people were made in the image of God at Creation, so we know that slaves were just as human as any other person. It is a shame that, in our country, slavery was permitted for so many years.



Read what the World Book says about plantations:
<http://www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar433800&st=plantation#tab=homepage>

(If you haven't already signed into World Book, please go to the World Book page on SchoolhouseTeachers.com and sign in now.)

Here is a video about plantation life:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20191003233130/http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYqllZ3kdrc&gl=US&hl=en>

SchoolhouseTeachers.com note: Parents should closely monitor children's use of YouTube and Wikipedia if you navigate away from the videos and articles cited in these lessons. We also recommend viewing the videos on a full screen setting in order to minimize your students' exposure to potentially offensive ads and inappropriate comments beside or beneath the video.

What do you understand?

Tell a family member the difference between a domestic slave and a field slave.

What do you think?

Read Romans 12:9–13, ESV

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”

These verses describe someone who is a Christian. Did unkind slave owners show living proof that they knew Jesus? Remember these verses in the next few lessons and see if they describe the slaves (in general).

How about you?

After reading Romans 12:9–13, did you think about the signs of a true Christian? Did you find some of these good fruits in your own life? Choose one quality you want to change in your life and work on it.

If you believe you are not a Christian and want to do something about that, be sure to talk to your parents today about it. Trusting Jesus for salvation is most important, and you need to think about it.

Coloring Sheet: <http://www.netart.us/plantations-house-in-houses-coloring-page/>