News Story Summary

In early December, the collective bargaining agreement between Major League Baseball (MLB) and the MLB Player's Association expired, causing a "lockout" or work stoppage, the first in more than 25 years. The lockout means all player activity stops for all major league baseball: no free-agent signings, no use of team facilities, no trades, and no contracts get processed, agents don't meet with their clients, and teams can't speak to the media.

Both sides have been in negotiations for several months, discussing items such as rule changes, player arbitration, salaries, the postseason, and a player's time in the minor leagues. The two sides are hopeful about coming to agreement by early February or spring training camps could be delayed.

For more about this story, search "Major League Baseball lockout."

Focus Attention

To replace the ideas under Focus Attention, direct the group to recall times when they were surprised by the response of another person. Allow adults to share their stories. After most have arrived, share a summary about the Major League Baseball lockout and the current lack of agreement. Ask: *Do you think either side was surprised by the response of the other side?* Transition by saying: *Today, we will look at a group that approached God and were surprised by His response.* Challenge the group to consider during today's study why the people who approached God should not have been surprised by His response.

Summarize and Challenge

To supplement the Reinforce idea under Summarize and Challenge, begin by recalling the story of the current Major League Baseball lockout. Highlight that the lockout calls for teams and players to not communicate with each other on an individual level, ignoring the other's phone calls. Lead the group to discuss if there would be anything that might cause God to ignore a request from His people, as suggested. Complete the rest of the step as written.