

8. Community in the Wilderness

(Exodus 15:22–17:7)

“I’ll be with you.” (Exodus 3:12)



PLAN

Session Outline

1. Gather

Greeting
Puzzlers
Speed Gratitude
Transition to Explore

2. Explore

Sacred Conversations
Hear and See the Bible Story
Interact with the Bible Story
Say the Bible Verse
Transition to Respond

3. Respond

Rock at Horeb
Bird-watching
Loving God, Loving Neighbor
Transition to Bless

4. Bless

Inviting
Praising
Blessing
At Home with God

Supplies

Basic Supplies: Pencils | Paper

Gather: TV/DVD player | Timekeeping device

Explore: TV/DVD player

Respond: Sand | Plastic jars | Rocks | Outdoor area or internet access | Binoculars (optional) | LED candle | Tablecloth | Hourglass | Spoons

Bless: TV/DVD player | LED candle | Tablecloth | Hourglass

Before You Teach

Our lesson for today covers the Israelites’ escape from Egypt under Moses’s leadership. The Israelites left Egypt guided by God in the forms of a column of cloud during the day and a column of lightning during the night. When they found only bitter water to drink, God instructed Moses to throw a tree in the water that would make it sweet.

Then the Israelites complained to Moses and Aaron about food. The LORD responded by providing quail and manna for them to eat. Manna is a mysterious food. It is generally referred to as bread, but some people think it was like crackers; others think it was like marshmallows. No one, even the Israelites, knew for sure what it was. Each morning the manna would rain down from heaven for the Israelites to pick up and eat. However, God instructed the Israelites to only take what they needed for the day. Some of them tried to hoard extra for later, but each time they did that it spoiled. God did this to teach them to obey his commands. However, the God did allow them to set aside extra for the Sabbath, or day of rest.

Even though God had done all of this, the Israelites still doubted Moses’s leadership under God when they had trouble finding water again. This time, God instructed Moses to take his staff and hit the rock at Horeb, and water came out of the rock.

This story provides opportunities to explore gratitude to and having faith in God’s ability to provide. You’ll want your children to know that God is able to provide for them even in unusual or challenging circumstances.

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GATHER

Greeting

Before class: Display your choice of “Attendance Chart” (Class Kit—pp. 15 & 18, or 16–17) at eye level.

- Play “Unstoppable” (Adventure DVD), as you welcome each child.
- Show the children where to place their offerings on the worship table.
- Have each child mark the “Attendance Chart.” For the “Community Attendance Chart,” the children can write their first names or initials on the building marked #8.

SAY: Our Bible story is about how God provided for the Israelites during a difficult time.

A—Puzzlers (Activity Sheets)

Before class: Tear out the Session 8 Activity Sheets for each child.

- Give each child a copy of “Wilderness” (Activity Sheets—p. 17). Let them complete the puzzle.
- Allow them to work on the “Sounds Like” activity (Activity Sheets—p. 18).

SAY: Today’s Bible story reminds us that God will provide for us.

OR

B—Speed Gratitude (Activity/Discussion)

Before class: Gather paper and pencils for each child and a device for timing the exercise.

SAY: In our Bible story, God provides food and water for the Israelites. Let’s see how many things we can quickly think of that God provides for us. Let’s set a timer for two minutes and see how many things we come up with.

- Give the children time to write. Call time when the time is up.

ASK: What did you come up with?

- Give each child who would like to share an opportunity to do so.

SAY: Wow, we came up with a lot of things in just two minutes! Imagine how many we could think of in five minutes or an hour or a day. God really does a lot for each of us.

TIP: Give a longer time limit if you feel that will work best for your particular class.

Transition to Explore

- Encourage children to bring chairs or to sit on the floor in a carpeted area.
- Invite children to form a circle on the floor.

TIP: Transitions are a useful way to help children easily move from one activity to the next.

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EXPLORE

Sacred Conversations

- Encourage children to join and sit in the circle.
- Demonstrate a listening position for the children.
- Ask wondering questions.

ASK: I wonder:

- What are some ways that you show gratitude to God for all that God does for you?
 - God provided for the Israelites in unexpected ways. What are some unexpected ways that God has provided for you?
 - When have you had to show restraint by not taking more of something than you needed even though you wanted to take more?
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Hear and See the Bible Story

- Read the Bible story together (*CEB Deep Blue Kids Bible*—Exodus 15:22–17:7).
- Watch the Adventure DVD Session 8.

SAY: Today, we’re learning about how God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness.

ASK: How does God provide for you each day?

Interact with the Bible Story

- Assign parts and act out “Community in the Wilderness” (Bible Story Sheets—Session 8).
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Say the Bible Verse

Before class: Display the “Unit 2 Bible Verse” poster (Class Kit—pp. 7 & 26).

- Read the memory verse to the children: “I will be with you” (Exodus 3:12).
- Have the children repeat the verse after you.

SAY: The Israelites doubted and complained when they were in the wilderness rather than having confidence in God’s ability to provide for them. Let’s practice saying this verse with confidence.

- Have the children say the verse in their most confident voices.
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Transition to Respond

- Encourage children to put away their chairs and/or get back to their places.

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RESPOND

Rock at Horeb (Sand Art)

Before class: Gather several colors of sand, spoons, a small plastic jar, and a rock for each child.

TIPS: Try to find jars with wide openings to make it easier to insert a rock. Colored sand can be purchased or you can make your own by adding a few drops of liquid food coloring to sand in freezer bags and shaking and squishing the bag to mix it together.

SAY: Today, we learned about some unusual ways that God provided food and water for the Israelites as they journeyed through the wilderness. Let’s make something to help us remember the end of this portion of the Israelites’ story, when God told Moses to strike the rock at Horeb with his staff to get water.

- Let the children layer different colored sands of their choosing. Then have them insert their rock into the sand and close the jar.

SAY: When you look at this jar, you can remember that God can provide for God’s people even in the most unusual circumstances.

OR

Bird-watching (Observation)

Before class: Survey the area around your church to see if you have birds in the area. If you don’t or if it is scheduled to rain, consider finding appropriate videos of birds online to show the class. Photocopy (“Bird Watching” —Leader p. 54) for each student and have a pencil on hand for each child.

SAY: Quail are birds that play a role in our Bible story. Let’s observe some other birds in our area.

- Go outside to bird-watch, or show videos of birds. Let the children record their observations.
- Discuss your observations together as a group.

ASK: Was there anything that you observed about the birds today that surprised you?

TIP: Have a few pairs of binoculars on hand if you will be far away from the birds.

Loving God, Loving Neighbor

Before class: Display the church and storytelling figures from the Class Kit.

ASK: What are some ways to show gratitude to God as a church community?

- Let the children act out a gratitude scenario with the storytelling figures at the Deep Blue church.

Transition to Bless

- Ring a bell to announce the transition.
- Create a worship center on a small table with a tablecloth, LED candle, and an hourglass.

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BLESS

Inviting

Before class: Display “Unit 2 Bible Verse Signs” poster (Class Kit—p. 30) on a wall or bulletin board.

SAY: Today, we learned about a time when the Israelites doubted, but God still provided for them. Let’s remind each other that God will be with us through signing the verse.

- Gather the children around the “Bible Verse Signs” poster. Have the children read the Bible verse.
- Teach the children to sign the verse.
- Have each child sign the verse to another child.

PRAY: Thank you, God, for being with us and for providing for us in all circumstances. Amen.

Praising

SAY: Today, we learned about how God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness. Let’s praise God with song and dance for all that God provides of us in our daily lives.

- Play “Unstoppable” (Adventure DVD), and let the children sing and dance.
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Blessing

SAY: Let’s pray for each person in our class as we remember that God is with us every hour of our lives.

- Have the children form a circle around the worship center, and light the candle.
- Pass the hourglass to the first child, and have him or her turn it upside down.
- Pray the following prayer.

PRAY: God, thank you for being with (insert child’s name) each and every day. We pray that you will provide for (him or her) in every way. Amen.

- Have the first child pass the hourglass to the next, who will flip it over again, and so on as you pray.
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At Home with God

SAY: What is one thing that you learned today about the Israelites’ time in the wilderness? What is one thing that you learned about gratitude? Can you share what you learned with your family?

- Send Bible Story Sheets, Session 8, and the Unit 2 Song Sheet home with each child.

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Bird-watching

What colors are the birds?

Do you know what kind of birds they are? If not, what’s your guess?

How big are the birds?

Where are the birds located?

What are the birds doing?

What do you find interesting or surprising about the birds?

