



TEACHER BOOK

YEAR 1 • BOOK 2

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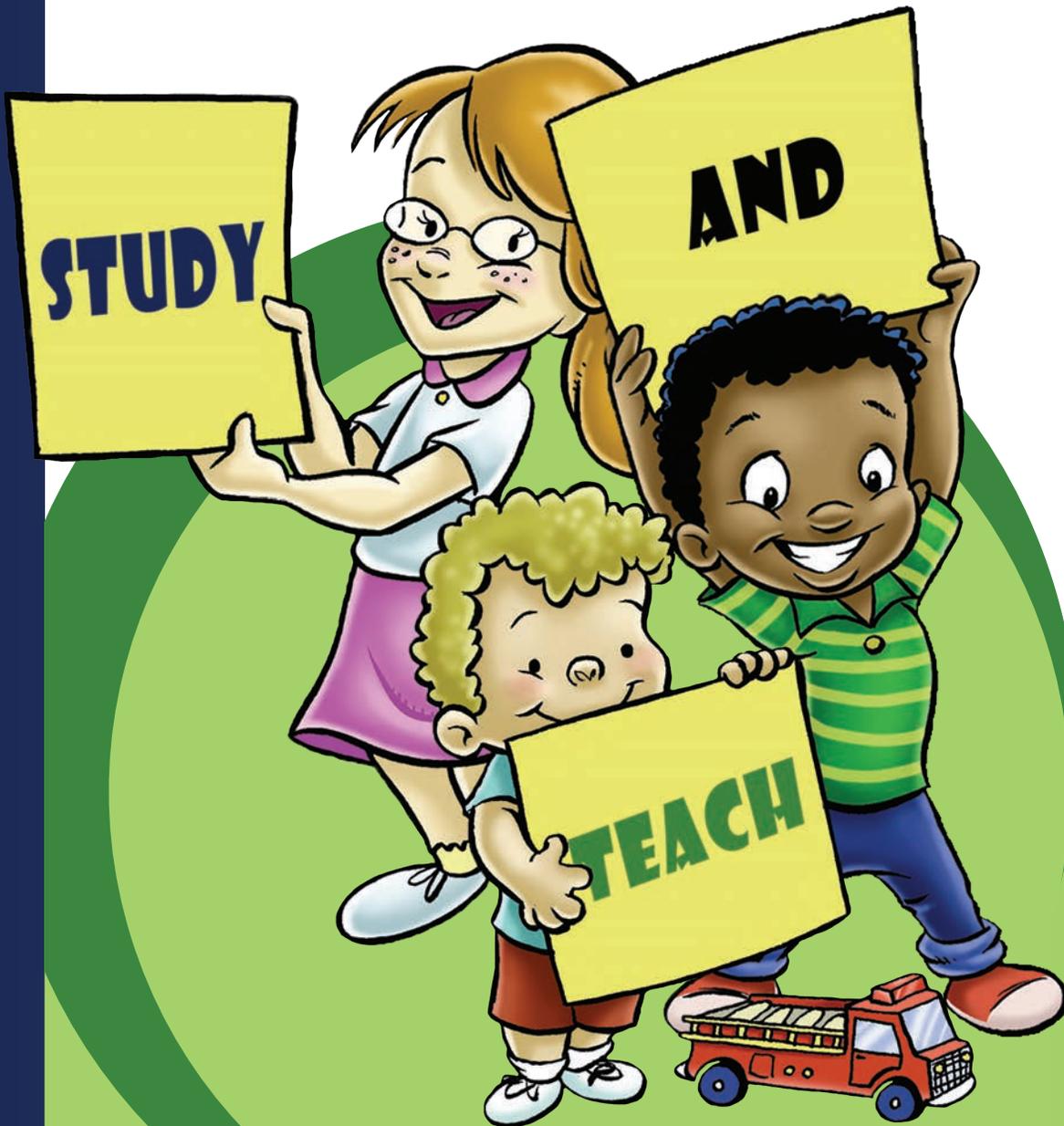
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WELCOME TO
Generations of Grace



This curriculum has been designed to deepen your own study of God's word so that you might be able to properly understand and accurately teach each lesson. It's our prayer that this curriculum would be a blessing to your ministry and home as God uses it to edify your teachers, evangelize your children, and encourage your families.



Study the Lesson

This section is designed to edify and equip teachers and to guide you through the preparation of an age appropriate Bible lesson.

- **Central Truth** – Identifies the theme and focal point of lesson.
- **Supporting Truths** – Provides appropriate objectives for mastering the central truth.
- **Spotlight on the Gospel** – Explains how each lesson connects to the gospel.
- **Lesson Commentary** – Communicates the truth of each lesson to the teacher's heart and mind.



Teach the Lesson

Use the child involvement resources to engage children from the moment they walk into the classroom until pick-up time.

- **Outlines** – Guide both teachers and children through the lesson.
- **Lesson Questions** – Foster greater interaction between teacher and child.
- **Activities** – Creative opening ideas, visual aids, and crafts to introduce, illustrate, and apply lesson.

Additional Resources

Use these additional resources to help support your lessons and to knit together the church and the home, ensuring that what is taught on Sunday matches what is learned throughout the week.

- **Coloring Book**
- **Craft Book**
- **Activity Book**
- **Student Journal**
- **Family Devotional**

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LESSON 17

God prepares Israel for deliverance

EXODUS 1:1-2:25



God is faithful in times of trouble.



“And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob”
(Exod 2:24).

Supporting Truths

1. No trouble can stop God from helping His people.
2. God is faithful to His promises.
3. God is faithful to answer prayer.
4. God prepares His people through trouble.
5. God’s people must respond to trouble in God’s way, not in man’s way.

Objectives

1. Describe how Pharaoh tried to stop Israel from growing or Moses from being saved.
2. Identify the how Israel’s growth fulfills God’s promise to Abraham.
3. Explain how God had begun answering Israel’s prayer before they even prayed.
4. Point out that Israel’s pain led them to pray, and Moses’ exile prepared him to lead.
5. Explain that Moses was a godly man but still needed to learn to do things God’s way.



Lesson Summary

A new king arose over Egypt. This king did not know Joseph and oppressed the Israelites by making them slaves. Pharaoh even ordered all Hebrew boys to be killed at birth, yet even in this suffering God was in control. But God rescued one of these baby boys, Moses, and began preparing him to be the deliverer of His people.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God used Joseph to save His people, and the line of the Messiah, by bringing his family to Egypt. While in Egypt, God protected His people and prepared Moses to deliver them from bondage to the Egyptians. Now, through the Messiah, we trust God to deliver us too. He has appointed Jesus as an even greater deliverer than Moses, and when we cry out to Him, Jesus will set us free from our bondage to sin.

LAST WEEK



God delivers Joseph
Genesis 39:1–50:26

THIS WEEK



God prepares Israel
for deliverance
Exodus 1:1–2:25

NEXT WEEK



God raises Moses to
lead Israel
Exodus 3:1–4:31

Lesson Commentary

God is faithful in times of trouble.

Exodus begins with sadness and hope. The sadness is that Israel went from being honored by the Egyptians to being their slaves. But the hope is that even through trouble, God is faithful to do exactly what He had promised (Ps 136). He was going to make Israel His own special nation, and the first step was to cause them to multiply and to prepare Moses to be their deliverer.



THINK ABOUT IT

Faith grows stronger through a deeper understanding of God's faithfulness.

God caused Israel to grow even though they were oppressed (1:1–22)

The first chapter of Exodus is a cycle of growth and **oppression**, showing that despite unfair and cruel

treatment, God was accomplishing His promise to make Abraham a great nation (Gen 12:2), with descendants as numerous as the stars (Gen 15:5). No one, not even the most powerful Pharaoh, can stop God from keeping His promise to His people (Rom 8:31–39).

The first period of growth connects back to Genesis to show that God is faithful to His people (Deut 7:9). The first seven verses of Exodus repeat what we have already read in Genesis. These connections focus our attention on God's faithfulness to make the descendants of Jacob a mighty nation. The Israelites grew from 70 men when they came to Egypt to 600,000 men when they left (Num 1:46). Five different words for growth are used in one verse to emphasize how dramatically God was fulfilling His promise (Exod 1:7). Because of this rapid growth, Israel could now be called a nation (1:9).

So it is no wonder that the new king was concerned about the Israelites (1:8–10). This new king was probably the founder of the Hyksos dynasty, since Exodus 1:8 literally says a new king arose "against"

Egypt. The Hyksos came from outside Egypt and took over in 1730 BC, about 150 years after Jacob had brought his family to Egypt. This new king feared the growing population of Hebrews so much that he made them slaves (1:11). But the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they increased (1:12).

Verse 12 implies a period of time, and by verse 13 the Egyptians were back in power and the Hyksos were gone. This would have been about 1575 BC, when Egypt's most powerful dynasty, the 18th dynasty, began. This dynasty continued to oppress the Israelites by making their lives bitter with hard work (1:14). The Israelites would later remember their bitter suffering by celebrating the Passover with bitter herbs (12:8).

One Pharaoh (remember that **Pharaoh** is just a title, like "king") also ordered the Hebrew midwives, women whose job was to help with the birth of babies, to kill any Hebrew boys at birth (1:15–16). The midwives refused, and when questioned by Pharaoh they offered the excuse that Hebrew women give birth before the midwives arrive (1:17–19). God responded by blessing the midwives because they feared Him more than Pharaoh (1:20–21).

So the people of Israel continued to increase until they became very mighty (1:20). Again Pharaoh tried to restrain their growth, this time by giving every Egyptian the orders he had given to the midwives (1:22). The Egyptians should have rejoiced at Israel's growth and been good to them, because God blesses those who bless Abraham's descendants (Gen 12:3). But by oppressing the Israelites, the Egyptians brought a curse upon themselves. God was against them, so that even one of the most powerful dynasties proved powerless to stop God from blessing His people.

THINK ABOUT IT
Pharaoh did not fear God and was cursed but the mid-wives feared God and were blessed.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God prepares Israel for deliverance • Exodus 1:1–2:25



God prepared a deliverer for Israel even before they asked for one (2:1–22)

Despite Pharaoh's vigilance to kill all the Hebrew baby boys, we are told of a baby whom God would raise up to be Israel's deliverer. God not only saved the baby's life (2:2–9), but also gave him an elite Egyptian education under the oversight of Pharaoh's own daughter (2:10; Acts 7:22)! God cared for Moses because He was going to use him to carry out His promises to bring Israel out of Egypt (Gen 15:16) and to bless all nations through Abraham's seed (Gen 12:3).

God saved Moses using a basket coated in tar (Exod 2:3). The word for "basket" is used only to describe Moses' basket and Noah's ark (Gen 6:14). Since Moses wrote both of these accounts, he may have been making a connection between the huge ark that saved Noah and the tiny ark that saved him. Moses and Noah were both saved in order to rescue the line of the Messiah, fulfilling God's promise to crush Satan's head through the seed of the woman (3:15).

When Moses was grown, he could have stayed with the Egyptians to enjoy life as a ruler. Instead, he showed his faith in God by joining his people (Heb 11:24). In his zeal for justice, he even killed an Egyptian (Exod 2:11–12). Despite his righteous motive, this was not yet God's time to deliver Israel.

The Israelites needed more time. Just as Israel would later reject their Messiah, so the Israelites in Egypt rejected the man who would deliver them from slavery (Exod 2:13–14). Moses fled into exile, where he again displayed his zeal for justice by kindly helping the seven daughters of Reuel against the selfish shepherds. The Israelites had rejected him when he tried to rescue them, but Reuel, a Midianite, accepted him and even made Moses his son-in-law.

God heard Israel's cry for deliverance (2:23–25)

During this time, Israel cried out to God. Even before they cried out in Exodus 2:23–25, God was at work preparing to answer their call for help. He was preparing Moses by sparing his life, providing him the best Egyptian education, and humbling him in exile (1 Pet 1:6–7; 4:1–2). God used Israel's desperate situation to demonstrate the greatness of His deliverance.

Today, God is still in control and still hears the prayers of those who cry out to Him, seeking deliverance from their slavery to sin.

THINK ABOUT IT

God used Israel's desperation as a means to prepare them for His deliverance.



Lesson Outline

God is faithful in times of trouble.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God caused Israel to grow even though the Egyptians were mean to them (1:1–22).
2. God protected baby Moses and prepared him to rescue Israel (2:1–22).
3. God heard Israel asking Him for help (2:23–25).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God caused Israel to grow even though they were oppressed (1:1–22).
 - Growth: After Joseph died, Israel became mighty and numerous (1:1–7)
 - Oppression: A new king made them slaves (1:8–11).
 - Growth: The more Israel was afflicted, the more they grew (1:12–14).
 - Oppression: Pharaoh told the midwives to kill all the baby boys (1:15–16).
 - Growth: The midwives refused to obey, and the people became very strong (1:17–21).
 - Oppression: Pharaoh told all the Egyptians to kill every Hebrew baby boy (1:22).
2. God prepared a deliverer for Israel even before they asked for one (2:1–22)
 - Moses was born and was put in a waterproof basket in the Nile River (2:1–4).
 - Moses was protected, adopted, and raised by Pharaoh's daughter (2:5–10).
 - Moses sided with his people to rescue them, but they rejected him (2:11–14).
 - Moses rescued Reuel's daughters, and Reuel accepted him (2:15–22).
3. God heard Israel's cry for deliverance (2:23–25).
 - Israel cried out for help because of their slavery (2:23).
 - God heard their cry and remembered His covenant (2:24–25).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why were the Egyptians mean to the Israelites?**
They wanted to stop the Israelites from growing into a mighty nation.
- 2. Did the Egyptians' plan work?**
No. God caused Israel to grow even more.
- 3. Who did God rescue from the command to kill all baby boys?**
God rescued Moses.
- 4. What did the Israelites finally do?**
They cried out to God for help, and He heard them.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. In the first verses of Exodus, how did God show His faithfulness to Abraham?**
He caused Israel to grow into a large nation.
- 2. What did the new king over Egypt do?**
He made them work hard as slaves to try to stop them from increasing.
- 3. Did the oppression stop Israel from growing?**
No. The more they were oppressed, the more they grew.
- 4. What other plan also failed to stop Israel from growing?**
Pharaoh ordered all the boys to be killed at birth, but the midwives refused and God continued to make Israel grow.
- 5. Who did God rescue, and how?**
He rescued Moses by using a waterproof basket (a little ark) and by causing Pharaoh's own daughter to raise and educate Moses.
- 6. Why did God rescue Moses?**
God was already preparing to rescue His people. Moses was going to be their deliverer. That is why Moses chose to side with his people instead of with the Egyptians who raised him.
- 7. How did Moses try to start delivering Israel?**
Moses killed an Egyptian and tried to stop Israelites from arguing. Moses needed to realize that he couldn't rely on his own strength or abilities to do God's work.
- 8. Why did God let Israel suffer so long before rescuing them?**
God wanted them to learn through their suffering that they needed God to deliver them. God was waiting for them to pray to Him for help.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

CARDBOARD BRICKS

Build walls and towers with large cardboard bricks. Today's Bible lesson tells about God's people being slaves in Egypt. They were forced to make bricks from clay and straw to build great houses for the Egyptians. It was hard work, and God's people were treated harshly.

JUMPING THE NILE

Lay two ropes parallel on the floor, about a foot apart. Have the children line up along one rope, and then tell them to jump across the "river." Move the ropes a bit farther apart, and have the children jump across again. Continue to widen the river as the children try to jump across without "getting wet." Tell the children to listen to what will happen in the Nile River in the Bible lesson today.



ILLUSTRATE

A BABY IN A BASKET

Bring in a baby boy doll, basket, and paint brush (to paint on tar). Use these props as you teach the lesson.

HARD LABOR

During the lesson, when you come to verse 11, tell the children that the Egyptians made the Israelites slaves because they were afraid of them. They made the Israelites do all kinds of hard labor. As you read through Exodus 1:8–14, invite children to come up to the front of the class to act as Israelites performing hard labor. Allow them to continue working while you read through the text, stopping to add more workers as you read through the story. Provide the children with props from around the house.

1. Built storage cities (1:11) – Hammers, pieces of wood, measuring tape, level.
2. Mortar and bricks (1:14) – Bricks, bucket, trowel.
3. Labor in the field (1:14) – Shovel, hoe, rake.



APPLY

GOD HEARS ISRAEL'S CRY FOR HELP

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, cardstock, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Pre-cut pictures from craft sheet and fold along the solid line to create bases for the pictures. Pre-cut a sheet of blue paper in half and cut two yellow triangles per student. In class, have students color the pictures and then glue the bases to the bottom half of a sheet of folded cardstock. Have them glue the two yellow triangles to the blue paper, and then glue the blue half sheet to the top half of the folded cardstock.



God Hears Israel's Cry for Help
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God prepares Israel for deliverance • Exodus 1:1–2:25



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

SINK OR FLOAT

Provide a dishpan partially filled with water. Drop various objects into the water to see whether they would float on a river. Some materials could be cork, wood, rocks, feathers, sponges, plastic lids, baskets, and fruit. Moses' mother made a basket from things that she knew would float on top of the water. She wanted baby Moses to stay safely on top of the water while he was hiding from the Egyptians.

MULTIPLY EXCEEDINGLY

Start with seven big balls of clay to represent Jacob's 70 descendants. Have the students divide the dough into smaller bits and roll them into balls. Collect the balls in a clear plastic container. Talk about how Jacob's family started out in Egypt as 70 and multiplied to more than 600,000.



ILLUSTRATE

A MOTHER'S SORROW TURNED TO JOY

Try telling the Bible lesson from the perspective of Jochabed, the mother of Moses, who put Moses in the basket and set him on the Nile.

BABY OR WEDDING SCRAPBOOK

Bring a baby or wedding scrapbook to class to use at the beginning of your lesson. Share a few pages of pictures with the children and talk about how a scrapbook helps you to remember special things that happened in your life. Explain that today you will start teaching about Moses and some of the special things that happened early in his life, beginning with his birth.



APPLY

GOD PROTECTS MOSES

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, green construction paper, green and tan cardstock, blue paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Instruct children to color and cut out the pictures from craft sheet. Glue the baby and the basket top to the basket. Have the children cut a strip of blue paper that looks like a river and glue it to the green construction paper. Form a palm tree by rolling a half sheet of tan cardstock and taping it together. Make cuts from the top down to create branches. Insert palm leaves cut from green cardstock. Create tall grass from green cardstock and glue it the side of the river. Glue pictures and palm tree to the green construction paper.

God Protects Moses
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

FROM EGYPT TO MIDIAN

Use a map to show the place where today's story takes place. Review how the family of Israel came from the land of Canaan to Egypt. Show Goshen, the section of Egypt where the people of Israel lived and grew into a nation.

WHAT IS SOVEREIGN?

What does **sovereign** mean? It means that God is in total control of everything at every moment. The one who is sovereign is the one in charge, the supreme ruler (like a king). God is sovereign over the universe. Ask the children to explain what this means. If God is sovereign over the universe, then He has authority over what happens on this planet, including all those who live on this planet. Whatever God has planned to happen will happen because He is sovereign; there is no such thing as luck or chance.

- Read Psalm 115:3. "But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases."
- Read Psalm 47:7–8. "For God is the King of all the earth...God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne."
- This week, we will focus on God's sovereignty in the birth and the protection of Moses.



ILLUSTRATE

HEAVY BURDENS

Ask a child to stand in front of the class. As you describe the first four terrible actions of Pharaoh, have the child hold a brick. Add a brick to the child's load each time you discuss a new heavy burden in the passage.

1. Set taskmasters over the Israelites (Exod 1:11)
2. Made them serve with rigor (Exod 1:13)
3. Commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill newborn boys (Exod 1:16)
4. Commanded "all his people" to cast every Israelite son into the water (Exod 1:22)

RIGHT THING, WRONG WAY/TIME

Just like Abraham and Jacob, Moses failed to act in God's way and in God's time (Gen 17:18; 27:19). Use the following humorous examples to illustrate this truth.

1. *Disgusting lunch* – Pack a brown bag lunch using unusual and disgusting foods.
2. *Rain's a coming!* – Put on rubber boots, raincoat or poncho, and hat. Open an umbrella and stand under it.
3. *Verse jumble* – Read John 3:16 backwards, beginning with last word of the verse and ending with the first word of the verse
4. *Delayed response* – Ask a child to throw a ball to you. Don't move until after the ball has landed (or hit you!), then move like you're trying to catch it.



APPLY

ACTING REVIEW

Act out various parts of the lesson without using any words, and have the children guess what you are acting out. After discussing the answer, let the children imitate you and then go on and guess the next action.

- Pretend to be digging and forming block bricks with your hands. (*The Israelites were slaves and worked very hard making bricks.*)
- Hold your hands together as if praying, and look up to God while mouthing, "Help!" (*The Israelites groaned and asked God to help them.*)
- Pretend to hold and rock an imaginary baby. (*The Israelites had babies and loved them very much.*)
- Hold your index finger to your mouth and say "shh, shh." (*Moses' mother hid her baby for three months and kept people from hearing his cries.*)
- Pretend to weave a basket and place a baby inside. (*Moses' mother made a basket boat for her baby and put it in the river.*)
- Make a sad face and pretend to cry. (*The crying baby was found by the princess.*)
- Run in place. (*Miriam ran back to get Moses' mother to feed and take care of him.*)
- Point to heaven while holding and rocking a baby. (*God cared for Moses.*)



LESSON 18

God raises Moses to lead Israel

EXODUS 3:1-4:31



God makes His servants humble and obedient.



“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Exod 3:14).

Supporting Truths

1. God is omnipotent.
2. God displays His power through those He has humbled.
3. God loves and delivers His people.
4. The godly man leads by faith in God, not in himself.
5. God always exists and is always present to keep His promises.

Objectives

1. Describe how God is going to defeat Pharaoh.
2. Describe how God’s plan for Moses is pictured in the burning bush.
3. List three ways God shows His love for Israel in Exodus 3–4.
4. Compare Moses’ objections to God’s answers.
5. Explain what “I AM WHO I AM” means.



Lesson Summary

Before using Moses to deliver the people of Israel, God used forty years of shepherding sheep to humble Moses. God appeared to him in a flaming bush that did not burn up. He called Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, but Moses doubted his ability to carry out God's plan. He questioned God, pointing out his own weaknesses and the many difficulties that lay ahead. But God answered Moses, by declaring His power and control over the coming deliverance.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God reveals Himself in order to deliver His people. In the gospel, just as in Exodus, it is God who saves, not the person delivering the message.

LAST WEEK



God prepares Israel
for deliverance
Exodus 1:1–2:25

THIS WEEK



God raises Moses to
lead Israel
Exodus 3:1–4:31

NEXT WEEK



God sends plagues
on Egypt
Exodus 7:1–10:29

Lesson Commentary

God makes His servants humble and obedient.

In Egypt Moses was a prince, educated in all the learning of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22). He loved his people, the oppressed Hebrews, but his initial attempt to free them was a total failure (Exod 2:11–14). On the run from Pharaoh, he fled to Midian where he became a shepherd (2:15, 3:1). The only crowd willing to follow him in Midian was a flock of sheep (3:1), and they weren't even his sheep! They belonged to Jethro, his father-in-law. Moses' life, like that of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, shows us that when God chooses men to lead, He first humbles them so that His own power, not theirs, is put on display (1 Cor 1:26–31).

God reveals Himself (3:1–10)

As 80 year-old Moses shepherded the sheep at Mt Horeb (Acts 7:23, 30), God appeared to him in a

miraculous way: He revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush that was not burned up. The bush itself was unimpressive, but God's holy presence blazed in the bush and drew Moses to it. After many years of oppression God spoke to one of His people to reveal He was still the God in control and that He had not forgotten the promises that He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God's plan of deliverance was based on His character. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 3:6), the God who remains the same throughout the ages. He heard His people's cry and did not forget His promise to bring Abraham's descendants from Egypt to Canaan (Gen 15:13–16; Exod 3:7–8). For the first time Israel is called "My people" (Exod 3:7), and God was willing to "come down" to them in their suffering in order to save (3:8). God would powerfully deliver them because He faithfully loved them.

God reveals His power (3:11–4:17)

Moses was no longer a self-confident prince.

He questioned God's plan five times. First, he asked, "Who am I?" (3:11). How could

an old, forgotten shepherd oppose the powerful Pharaoh? God responded by encouraging Moses to trust in God (**faith**), not trust in self (**pride**). God said, "I will be with you" (3:12). God also gave Moses a sign: he and the people would worship God on that very mountain, Mt Sinai (3:1, 12). This sign assured success, but it also explains the purpose of deliverance. God saves so that those who are saved will worship Him. The Israelites were delivered from slavery to Pharaoh in order to be slaves to God, and we who are freed from sin to become slaves of God (Rom 6:22).

Second, Moses asked what he should say if the Israelites asked, "What is His name?" (3:13). The question concerns God's character: what can we learn about God from His name? Is He able to deliver? Is He worth listening to? God answered, "I AM WHO I AM" (3:14). In other words, "I am the One who is and will be, the One who is always present." God was reassuring Moses and Israel that just as He was with the fathers, so He would be with them to deliver them and bring them into Canaan (3:15–18). He would do so with such great power that the Hebrew slaves would plunder the most powerful kingdom without fighting a single battle (3:19–22). They would later use this plunder to build the tabernacle to worship their strong Deliverer (38:24–31).

Third, Moses wondered whether the Israelites would believe him (4:1). God again turned Moses' eyes away from his own weakness and toward God's strength. He gave three miraculous signs (Exod 4:2–9). These signs would confirm Moses' message. The purpose of miracles is always to confirm the Word of God by displaying the power of God (Heb 2:3–4). Through

THINK ABOUT IT
The confidence of God's presence is a powerful motivation for ministry (Matt 28:20).



THINK ABOUT IT
God's leader will be humble or he will be humbled!

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God raises Moses to lead Israel • Exodus 3:1–4:31



Moses, God displayed His power in order to call Israel to hear His words and be His faithful people.

heart in order to prove His omnipotence, his unbeatable power to do as He pleases (4:21–23).

Fourth, Moses said he was not quick-witted or eloquent (4:10). Again God focused Moses' attention on God's power instead of on human weakness. He reminded Moses that since He was powerful enough to make man's mouth, He was powerful

Aaron and Moses met and traveled to Egypt (Exod 4:27), where Aaron spoke, Moses performed the signs (4:28–30), and the people believed and worshiped God (4:31). When God's people act upon God's promise, God brings success. Success is ultimately being faithful to do

what God has commanded. But the display of God's power had only just begun. God would powerfully rescue Israel through the humbled leader, just as God now powerfully redeems sinners through Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself to the point of death (Phil 2:5–8). Jesus Himself said that salvation belongs to those who are humble (Mt 5:3). Those who are poor in spirit, who recognize their spiritual weakness and fully depend on God's strength to save them, receive the kingdom of heaven—salvation.

enough to give the right words (4:11–12). God had made Moses' mouth just as He intended, just as He perfectly equips every believer to accomplish their God-given mission by God's strength (Heb 13:21).

Fifth, Moses bluntly told God to find someone else (Exod 4:13). God rightly became angry with Moses. He had already been patient to answer Moses' excuses, and He had already given Moses plenty of evidence to confirm His own power. God graciously chose Aaron as a spokesman for Moses (4:14–16), but because of Moses' lack of faith, Moses would miss out on a glorious part of God's redemptive plan: Aaron's line, not Moses', would be the priests of God. Though God is gracious and patient, those who doubt His power lose some of the joy and success they could have had in His service.

God blesses leaders who obey (4:18–31)

Moses finally obeyed (4:18–20). Before he left for Egypt, God reminded him of His covenant of love and power. He loved Israel His firstborn son (4:22). He was also powerful, promising to harden Pharaoh's



THINK ABOUT IT

Moses was learning that everything he had was from

God and everything he would do would come through God.

THINK ABOUT IT

Success is ultimately being faithful to do what God has commanded.



Lesson Outline

God makes His servants humble and obedient.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God chose Moses, a humble man (3:1, 10).
2. God spoke to Moses through a burning bush (3:2–9).
3. When Moses thought he was too weak, God showed He was very strong (3:11–4:17).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God chose a humbled leader (3:1–10).
 - Moses was a shepherd for forty years (3:1).
 - God spoke to Moses from a flaming bush (3:2–4).
 - God reminded Moses that He is holy (3:5–6).
 - God called Moses to deliver His people from Egypt (3:7–10).
2. When the humbled leader doubted himself, God confirmed His own power (3:11–4:17).
 - Moses: “Who am I?” God: “I will be with you.”
 - Moses: “What if they ask me Your name?” God: “I AM WHO I AM.”
 - Moses: “What if they do not believe me?” God gave miraculous signs.
 - Moses: “I cannot speak well.” God: “I made your mouth and will help you speak.”
 - Moses: “Send someone else.” God was angry but allowed Aaron to help.
3. When the humbled leader obeyed, God gave success (4:18–31).
 - Moses obeyed and headed to Egypt (4:18–20).
 - The LORD reminded Moses of His power and love for His people (4:21–23).
 - The LORD rebuked Moses for neglecting to keep the covenant (4:24–26).
 - The people believed Moses and Aaron and worshiped the LORD (4:27–31).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What was Moses doing when God spoke to him?**
Shepherding sheep.
- 2. How did God appear to him?**
In a burning bush that did not burn up.
- 3. What job did God give Moses?**
God told Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt.
- 4. How did God answer Moses' questions?**
God helped Moses to see God's great power.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What was Moses doing when God spoke to him?**
Humbly shepherding sheep.
- 2. Why did God appear to him in a burning bush?**
To show a picture of what Moses was going to be. The bush was a humble thing, but God used it to display His glory, get Moses' attention, and speak His words to Moses. God would use humble Moses to display His glory, point people toward God, and speak His words.
- 3. What was Moses' first objection, and how did God answer?**
Moses asked, "Who am I?" He knew he did not have the ability to do God's plan. God answered by promising to be with Moses.
- 4. What was Moses' second objection, and how did God answer?**
Moses asked what he should say about God's name. God answered, "I AM WHO I AM," promising that He is always present to redeem His people.
- 5. What was Moses' third objection, and how did God answer?**
Moses asked, "What if they don't believe me?" They didn't believe him before. But the first time Moses had relied on his own abilities. This time, God gave him three signs to show God's power.
- 6. What was Moses' fourth objection, and how did God answer?**
Moses complained that he did not speak well. He was still focused on his own abilities. God answered that He was in control of Moses' mouth. It was about God's power, not Moses'.
- 7. What was Moses' fifth objection, and how did God answer?**
Moses told God to find someone else. God was angry, and would not let Moses get out of his calling. But He graciously allowed Aaron to help do the speaking.
- 8. What do Moses, the bush, and God's answers show about God's purpose in delivering Israel?**
God's purpose was to display His great power. That is why He required a humble leader, so that Israel would put their faith in God and not in Moses.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



PHONE CALL

Bring in two phones. Choose one child at a time to talk with you on the phone. Pretend to be the president, a police officer, or even the pastor. Call the child on the phone. Make up a conversation with the child and tell them that you have a very important job for them to do. After you have done this with several children, tell them that in today's lesson, they will learn about a call that was much more amazing than a phone call.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

As the children imitate your actions or those of another child, do the following: clapping, toe tapping, tummy rubbing, jumping, hopping on left foot, hopping on right foot, clapping a friend's hands, reaching for the sky, and putting a hand in a pocket. In today's Bible lesson, they will learn about how God wanted the Israelites to follow their leader, Moses.



A HUMBLE SHEPHERD

Dress up as Moses (robe, head covering, beard, shepherd's staff) and tell the Bible story as Moses.

BURNING BUSH

Cut a large bush or branch without foliage. "Plant" it in a coffee can or bucket with dirt and rocks. Add tissue-paper flames to the "bush." Use this flaming bush as a prop for today's Bible story.



GOD APPEARS TO MOSES

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, blue construction paper, red and yellow and orange paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Pre-cut Moses picture and burning bush outline from craft sheet. Pre-cut small green and brown rectangles and flame pieces of red, yellow, and orange. In class, children should color Moses and glue him to the construction paper. Have children glue the burning bush outline to the construction paper and then fill it in by gluing on the flames and bush pieces.



*God Appears to Moses
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.*

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God raises Moses to lead Israel • Exodus 3:1–4:31



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE

Some things seem to never change. Bring in examples of things that take a long time to change, such as rocks and metal objects. Also bring in things that change easily, such as Play Doh, water, or even paper. Talk about what it takes to make these things change. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about one person who never changes—God. God tells Moses His name. The name is “I AM.” It means that God always was, always is, and always will be. God never changes, and His plans never change. In today's lesson, we will see that God's plan to fulfill His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was one step closer.

PHONE CALL FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ask children what they would do if they got a call from the governor or the president. If he asked them to do something, would they do it? It would be a very strange thing for most of us to get a call from the president. In today's lesson, we will learn about a call that was much more amazing.



ILLUSTRATE

THE LIFE OF MOSES

Tell the children that the life of Moses can be divided into three 40-year periods. Bring in a symbol to represent each of these three periods: crown (prince), shepherd's staff (shepherd), and bull horn to proclaim “Let my people go!” (deliverer). Today's lesson covers portions of the last two periods of Moses' life. As you teach the lesson, utilize the symbols to identify the different periods of Moses' life.

REMOVE YOUR SHOES

Ask the children to take off their shoes when you get to Exodus 3:5. Does this seem like a strange request? This is what God told Moses to do when He called to him from the midst of the burning bush. Tell the children that by taking off his sandals, Moses was showing God that he understood that God is worthy of worship. Specifically, he was showing God that he understood that God was holy, separate from sin. The ground where Moses was standing was holy because God was there. God's presence set apart the bush and the land surrounding it. Remind the children that God has said that we are to be holy because God is holy (1 Pet 1:16).



APPLY

THE BURNING BUSH

Materials: Paper plate, green and brown construction paper, orange and yellow tissue paper, and glue.

Directions: Instruct children to cut a tree shape out of a paper plate. Have them cut small rectangles from green and brown construction paper and glue them onto the plate as shown below. Tear and glue on pieces of tissue paper and fill to the edge of the plate, twisting each piece with the eraser end of a pencil.



AGES 9–11

**DOUBLE TAKE**

Have you ever been walking along and seen something strange or interesting? Did you pause and go closer for a better look? Allow the children to share a few stories. Something like this happened to a shepherd in today's Bible lesson, and his story tops them all!

HOLY GROUND

Have a volunteer stand at the door before class begins, directing children to take off their shoes and leave them outside. Begin class by reading Exodus 3:5 aloud. Use this activity to lead the class in a discussion of how serious it is to be in the presence of our Holy God! You may choose to cite other Bible passages where people experienced the presence of God firsthand. Remind the children that God is omnipresent, which means He is present everywhere.

**WORDS ON FIRE**

Act out the Bible lesson, using the dialogue between God and Moses to help the children remember the story.

Moses: "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh?"

God: "I will be with you."

Moses: "What if they ask me Your name?"

God: "I AM WHO I AM."

Moses: "What if they do not believe me?"

God: "I will give you miraculous signs (staff to serpent, leprous hand, water to blood)."

Moses: "I cannot speak well."

God: "I made your mouth and will help you speak."

Moses: "Send someone else."

God: "I will allow Aaron to help."

SIGNS OF MOSES

Ask an adult volunteer to dress up as Moses. Provide the following props for Moses to use: rod, snake (live, if possible), leprous glove (coat a glove with coconut to look like flaking skin), black cloth, cup of water, red food coloring, and pan with dirt. Use these props to illustrate the miraculous signs God gave Moses in Exodus 4:1–9: (1) Rod to snake to rod, (2) normal hand to leprous hand to normal hand, and (3) water to blood on dry land.

**SIGNIFICANT REPETITIONS**

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Ask the class whether they noticed any phrase being repeated in this week's lesson. Direct the children to read Exodus 3:6, 15, 16; and 4:5. They will discover the phrase "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" repeated in these verses. Ask the children what point they believe God was trying to emphasize by repeating this list of forefathers. Read Exodus 2:24 aloud. Point out that God remembered His covenant with Israel. Pass out the chart to each child, and lead a discussion of how God kept His promises to each of these people we learned about in Genesis. Direct the children to take notes on the chart, listing how God abundantly blessed each forefather by His grace. Some notes are provided, and you may want to review additional portions of Genesis with your class.



LESSON 19

God sends plagues on Egypt

EXODUS 7:1-10:29



God is the most powerful.



“But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth” (Exod 9:16).

Supporting Truths

1. God is very strong.
2. God is powerful over all so-called gods.
3. The right response to God’s power is to fear God.
4. God is powerful everywhere in every way.
5. God displays His power in order to save a people to serve Him.

Objectives

1. List and describe the plagues to see God’s power.
2. Explain how God defeated the Egyptian gods.
3. Contrast Pharaoh’s response with the response God expects from His people.
4. Describe the organization of the plagues to show how they unfold aspects of God’s power.
5. Compare God’s purpose in saving Israel to His purpose in saving believers today.



Lesson Summary

Moses told Pharaoh to let God’s people go, but just as God had told Moses, Pharaoh hardened his heart. God continued to harden Pharaoh’s heart in order to display the greatness of His power. With plagues from the earth and plagues from the sky, with irritating plagues and deadly plagues, and with plagues undermining all the Egyptian gods, God proved that He alone is God. He wanted Israel to trust and serve Him alone, and He wanted all the earth to fear His great power.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God’s great power presents us with a choice. We can choose to be like Pharaoh, who refused to humble himself before God. He was sorry when bad things happened to him, but he did not repent. Or we can choose to do what God said: we can trust Him as our deliverer and serve Him alone. If we do repent and believe, then just as God powerfully crushed the rule of Pharaoh over Israel, so He will powerfully crush the rule of sin, Satan, and death over us.

LAST WEEK



God raises Moses to lead Israel
Exodus 3:1–4:31

THIS WEEK



God sends plagues on Egypt
Exodus 7:1–10:29

NEXT WEEK



God ordains the Passover
Exodus 11:1–13:22

Lesson Commentary

God is the most powerful.

God called Moses to be a humble leader through whom God would display His own great power (Exod 3–4). Eventually, Moses obeyed and delivered God’s message to Pharaoh (5:1–3). Instead of listening and obeying, Pharaoh oppressed the Israelites even more, so that even the Israelites hated Moses (5:4–21). God had told Moses this would happen (4:21), but Moses was still discouraged and upset at God (5:22–23). So God reminded Moses of His purpose: God was going to use Pharaoh’s hard heart as an opportunity to display His **omnipotence**, His unbeatable power (6:1). By showing His great power, God would convince the Egyptians to release the Israelites, and He would show the Israelites that He is a God worthy to be served (19:4–6). So the plagues are all about God’s power, to prove both to Israel, to Egypt, and to the nations that He and He alone is God (7:5; 9:14).

God acts in order to display His power (7:1–13)

Even after God reminded Moses of His power and love (6:1–8), Moses did not want to go back to Pharaoh (6:12). He felt too weak (6:30). So for a third time God reminded Moses of His purpose: He would harden Pharaoh’s **heart**, the spiritual control center of man that drives his mind, emotions, and will, in order to do many signs and wonders (7:3). As a result of these miracles, God would deliver Israel (7:4) and cause the Egyptians to know for sure that He and He alone is Yahweh (7:5). Pharaoh’s hard heart and God’s miraculous judgment had one purpose: to display God’s power.

Pharaoh’s **hard heart** is a key part of this story. A hard heart is that which is resistant and obstinate to the Word and ways of God. To have a hard heart is to be calloused, stubborn and defiant toward God. Ten times the story says that God is the one who hardens Pharaoh’s heart (4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17), further displaying how God personally and sovereignly directs the affairs and hearts of men

to fulfill His ultimate plan and purpose of demonstrating His glory. However, this truth must be kept in balance because the story also says ten times that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (7:13–14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34–35; 13:15). Therefore, while God has the inscrutable prerogative to intervene however He deems best (Rom 9:16–18), it is never at the loss of man’s personal responsibility for his own choices and actions (4:23; 8:15). The Bible never attempts to explain away the tension between God’s acting and Pharaoh’s acting. It can only be resolved by accepting the record as it stands and by taking refuge in the perfect knowledge and power of God who planned and brought about Israel’s deliverance from Egypt while also judging Pharaoh’s sinfulness (7:3–5).

After this reminder, Moses and Aaron obeyed and went back to Pharaoh (7:6–7). Pharaoh proudly challenged them to prove their authority by doing a miracle (7:8–9). Aaron acted as Moses’ spokesman and threw down the staff, which became a serpent (7:10). The word for serpent here is not the same word for snake used earlier (4:3). Here it is a word that often describes larger animals like giant snakes or crocodiles or, as in other places, even a monster or dragon (cf. Isa 27:1). It can even refer to Egypt itself, so Aaron’s staff showed God’s authority over the power of Egypt (Ezek 29:3). Pharaoh’s magicians copied Aaron, either through deception, like snake-charming, or through demonic power (Exod 7:11). Aaron’s serpent ate up all the others, but still Pharaoh’s heart was hardened. He refused to believe that Moses and Aaron came in the authority of the true God (7:12–13).

Because of Pharaoh’s hard heart, God sent the plagues. A **plague** is an event or sickness that causes suffering, loss, and usually death on a horrific scale. There were ten plagues, but the first nine plagues came in groups of three, with the tenth plague serving as the grand finale. The way it is written shows the groups of threes. The plagues follow a similar pattern: (1) before the first plague in each group Moses is always told to stand before Pharaoh, and to do so in the morning; (2) before the second plague in

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends plagues on Egypt • Exodus 7:1–10:29



each group, Moses is always told to go to Pharaoh; (3) and before the third plague in each group Pharaoh is not warned at all.

These three sets of three plagues show the completeness of God's power. First, God is powerful everywhere: the first three plagues showed God's power over the earth, the second three plagues over those who walked upon the earth, and the third three plagues over the sky. Second, God's power is inexhaustible: what began as annoying and troublesome in the first set of plagues became physically harmful in the second set and completely overwhelming in the third. Finally, God is powerful over all other powers: at the end of the first set, Pharaoh's magicians had to admit their impotence, at the end of the second, they could not even come into Pharaoh's presence; and at the end of the third, they were not even important enough to be mentioned anymore.

God's power displayed by three plagues from the earth (7:14–8:19)

For the first plague, Aaron struck the Nile with the staff, so that all the water turned to blood and all the fish died (7:20). Even water in containers became blood, throughout the whole of Egypt (7:19, 21). This plague was a terrible inconvenience, forcing people to dig to find drinkable water (7:24), and it was very smelly (7:18). It proved God's power over Egypt, because Egypt depended on the Nile. Each year the Nile would flood, watering and fertilizing the fields; without the Nile, there would be no Egypt. This plague also proved God's power over Egypt's gods. Egypt worshipped many **false gods, objects, animals, and even people that were worshipped and served instead of the one true God**. The Nile was itself considered a god, Khnum was the guardian of the Nile's sources, Hapi was the spirit of the Nile, and the Nile was said to be the bloodstream of Osiris. Also,

THINK ABOUT IT

A false god is powerless, lifeless, and useless to provide, protect, and save.



THE TEN PLAGUES OF EGYPT

	PLAGUE	PATTERN	SPHERE	SEVERITY	EFFECT
1	Blood	In the morning stand	Earth	Annoying	Emotional
2	Frogs	Go to Pharaoh	Earth	Annoying	Emotional
3	Gnats	No warning, magicians give up	Earth	Annoying	Emotional
4	Flies	In the morning stand	On earth	Painful	Physical
5	Disease	Go to Pharaoh	On earth	Painful	Physical
6	Boils	No warning, magicians defiled	On earth	Painful	Physical
7	Hail	In the morning stand	Sky	Deadly	Psychological
8	Locusts	Go to Pharaoh	Sky	Deadly	Psychological
9	Darkness	No warning, no magicians	Sky	Deadly	Psychological

Neith and Hathor protected fish in the Nile. All of these gods were humiliated when they could not protect the Nile or its fish. But since the magicians were able to imitate the plague, Pharaoh remained harden, refusing to admit God's supreme power (7:22–23).

Seven days later, God brought the second plague: frogs came out of the water, covered the land, and invaded houses, beds, ovens, and bowls (7:25–8:6). Normally the Egyptians valued and enjoyed frogs, because their pleasant croaking was a sign that the Nile had flooded and brought fruitfulness to the land. The goddess Heqt even had the form of a frog. But now frogs were everywhere, crunching underfoot, slimy in bed, swimming in the soup. Even after Moses prayed and the plague ended, the piles of dead frogs filled the whole land with a stench (8:14). Pharaoh, who was himself considered a god, was forced to ask Moses to pray to Yahweh (8:8). Even so, the magicians could still imitate the plague, and when the plague ended, Pharaoh hardened his heart (8:7, 15). He would not admit God's great power.

So God brought the third plague without warning, turning dust into swarming gnats or mosquitoes (8:16–17). These tiny little insects, nearly invisible, irritated the eyes, nose, and ears, and could also bite. Not only was this annoying, but it also proved the magicians' weakness. They could not create life like God could. They admitted that it was the power of God, but Pharaoh's heart was still hard (8:18–19).

God's power displayed by three plagues on those upon the earth (8:20–9:12)

The next set of three plagues began with a plague of flies (8:20–21). Since the Hebrew just says "swarms," it is unclear what they were swarms of. It may have been a blood-sucking fly like the gadfly. These flies may have increased dramatically after laying eggs in the piles of rotting frogs. Such flies weaken and can even kill livestock by sucking blood, as well as spreading skin disease among livestock and possibly even humans. This plague affected all

Egyptians (8:21), but it was the first plague that did not affect the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived (8:22–23). In response, Pharaoh said he would let the Israelites go make sacrifices (8:28), but when the plague ended, Pharaoh hardened his heart (8:31–32).

The fifth plague was a deadly disease among the livestock (9:1–3). This may have been due to a disease spread by the flies, but whatever the cause, God again made a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites to show that He, the God of Israel, was God over all (9:4). Although it says "all" the livestock of the Egyptians died, it also limits the plague to livestock in the field (9:3). There were still livestock around to be affected by later plagues. This plague humiliated the Egyptian god Ptah's sacred bull Apis and Ra's sacred bull Mnevis, bulls which the Egyptians worshiped. It also humiliated Hathor, a goddess in the form of a cow. Even though Pharaoh confirmed that the Israelites were unharmed, his heart would still not yield to God's power (9:7).

The sixth plague was oozing boils, a painful blister like sore, on humans and animals (9:9). It began after Moses threw soot from a kiln into the air. This was fitting, since the brick kilns that were involved in Israel's pain would now afflict Egypt. Besides the figurative justice and physical pain, the plague humiliated the priests and magicians of Egypt by making them unclean (9:11), and it mocked gods of healing, such as Serapis. Again Pharaoh's heart was hard, but now for the first time it says that God actively hardened Pharaoh's heart (9:12). Though God is **sovereign, in complete control** over the heart from the beginning, He acts in such a way that His hardening works alongside the one who is already hardening his own heart (Rom 1:28).

THINK ABOUT IT
God's sovereignty over man's heart does not remove man's responsibility for his own sin.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends plagues on Egypt • Exodus 7:1–10:29



THINK ABOUT IT

Even during the plagues, God's grace was present.

God's power displayed by three plagues from the sky (9:13–10:29)

God again sent Moses to Pharaoh, telling him literally, “send” my people

out or I will “send” the full force of my plagues against you (9:13–14). This final set of plagues would be even more powerful. They would be directed against all the Egyptians, but first against Pharaoh, or as the Hebrew literally says, against Pharaoh's heart (9:14). These final plagues were designed to shake Pharaoh to the core, despite his claims to be a god. God reminded him that He could have already wiped Pharaoh and the Egyptians off the earth (9:15), but He had kept them around in order to show His power and proclaim His name throughout the earth (9:16; Josh 2:10). Ultimately, this is God's purpose for all things: to show His greatness (Ezek 36:22). Even so, God gives many opportunities for faith and repentance, as He gave the Egyptians a chance to prepare for the coming storm (Exod 9:19). Some believed, but others ignored God's warning (9:20–21).



THINK ABOUT IT

God will turn His back on all unbelievers one day and cast them into utter darkness because of their unrepentant hearts (Matt 25:41).

So God sent the worst hailstorm Egypt had ever known (9:18), with lightning flashing back and forth across the ground (9:23–24). Man and animals who were outside were killed (9:25). The barley and flax, which the Egyptians had worked so hard to grow for food and

clothing, were crushed by hail and burned by lightning (9:31). The Egyptian economy was devastated, while the Israelites remained unharmed (9:26). The Egyptian god Nut, the god of the sky, and Isis and Seth, gods of the crops, were powerless to halt the devastation.

Unlike false gods, whose power was limited to a specific place or thing, God claimed to be powerful in the whole earth (9:29). To end the plague, Pharaoh admitted that he had sinned, but he arrogantly acted as if this was his first sin (9:27). He again promised to let Israel go, but as soon as this seventh plague ended, his heart remained hard (9:35).

God then announced the eighth plague, locusts (10:4). Locusts are devastating. They consume all crops and damage trees and fruit as well. Reported swarms have covered more than 400 square miles at once, with on average between 100 million and 200 million locusts per square mile. They can fly without stopping for up to twenty hours. Between 1930 and 1932, locust swarms attacked 5 million square miles of Africa, an area twice the size of the United States. After announcing this terrifying plague, Moses turned his back on Pharaoh—something never done to a Pharaoh—and left (10:6).

But the Egyptian officials, who had already lost half their crops and most if not all of their livestock, urged Pharaoh to let the people go (10:7). “Don't you realize Egypt is already ruined?” they asked. They no longer trusted their supposedly divine king to make the right decision or protect the nation from disaster. Pharaoh called Moses back, but then in his pride he rudely drove Moses and Aaron away (10:10–11).

So the locusts came, carried along by a strong wind from Arabia (10:12–13). Ordinary locust swarms are already massive and devastating, but this one was larger than any that has ever been (10:14). There were so many that the ground was black with them. There is no mention of Goshen this time: perhaps the locusts invaded Goshen too, but by this time Israel was about to leave. They would not be around to harvest the crops anyway. Either way, Egypt was stripped of all crops, fruits, and trees; by the time the locusts left, nothing green remained in all of Egypt. Pharaoh didn't wait this time; he quickly called Moses and Aaron back,

and he even asked for forgiveness (10:16–17). But after the locusts were blown into the Red Sea, God hardened Pharaoh’s heart again (10:18–20).



THINK ABOUT IT

In the future God will once again bring plagues like this upon the earth to display His glory through judgment and just like Pharaoh man will openly curse God and refuse to repent (Rev 16).

So God sent the ninth plague: darkness so complete that it could be felt (10:21). Only the Israelites had light where they lived (10:23). The darkness lasted for three days (10:22), paralyzing Egyptian society. They had no food and barely any livestock; they were weakened by disease and exhaustion. And now they were trapped in their homes, unable to see even indoors. They were

overwhelmed by terror and despair, completely at the mercy of this God called Yahweh. None of their gods associated with the sun, not even the great sun god Ra, could do anything against Yahweh. So Pharaoh expanded his original offer, requesting that only Israel’s flocks and herds remain behind (10:24). However, when Moses restated his original demands, Yahweh again hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Pharaoh told Moses to leave and threatened Moses’ with death if he ever saw Pharaoh’s face again (10:27–28). Moses, once timid and uncertain, was now very bold. He would have the final word, not Pharaoh. He told Pharaoh that he would never see his face again (10:29).

A mighty kingdom had been crushed. To the human eye it might have appeared that two ordinary men had defeated Pharaoh, his magicians, and all of Egypt. But by now it was clear that this was much bigger than man. God had shown that He and He alone was God, which was His purpose the whole

time (7:7, 17; 8:22; 9:16, 29). If we, like the Egyptians, live in rebellion against God, we ought to be very afraid of such a powerful God. Pharaoh’s example should warn us that being sorry when bad things happen to us is not the same as true repentance. There is a sorrow over sin that leads to death (1 Cor 7:10).

But God also wanted to show His power to secure the faith of His own people Israel (10:1–2). God did not want just to **deliver** Israel; He repeated that He would rescue, free, and save them so that they would serve and worship Him (7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13). Often throughout Israel’s history God would point back to the power He displayed in Egypt to remind Israel to trust and worship Him alone (19:4–6).

If that was clear for Israel at that time, it is even clearer for believers today. Just as God crushed the kingdom of Egypt and the gods of Egypt, so Jesus Christ has defeated the rulers of this world in order to transfer His people from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light (Col 1:13). Just as Israel was to respond to God’s power in Egypt by worshiping Him alone, so believers are to respond to Jesus’ power against sin and Satan by worshiping Him alone (1 Pet 2:9). That is what He saved us for, to serve Him (Eph 2:10).

THINK ABOUT IT

There is a sorrow over sin that leads to death (1 Cor 7:10).



Lesson Outline

God is the most powerful.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Water became blood (7:14–25) | 5. Livestock diseased (9:1–7) | 9. Darkness (10:21–29) |
| 2. Frogs (8:1–15) | 6. Boils (9:8–12) | 10. Death (11:1–10; 12:29–32) |
| 3. Gnats (8:16–19) | 7. Hail (9:13–33) | |
| 4. Flies (8:20–32) | 8. Locusts (10:1–20) | |



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

- God acts in order to display His power (7:1–13).
 - The purpose of the plagues is to prove God's great power (7:1–5).
 - The sign of a monstrous reptile confirms God's messengers (7:6–13).
- God's power displayed by three plagues from the earth (7:14–8:19).
 - Water became blood (7:14–25).
 - Frogs (8:1–15).
 - Gnats (8:16–19).
- God's power displayed by three plagues on those upon the earth (8:20–9:12).
 - Flies (8:20–32).
 - Livestock diseased (9:1–7).
 - Oozing boils (9:8–12).
- God's power displayed by three plagues from the sky (9:13–10:29).
 - Hail and fire (9:13–33).
 - Locusts (10:1–20).
 - Darkness (10:21–29).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did Moses tell Pharaoh to do?**
Let God's people go.
- 2. How did Moses prove to Pharaoh that he should let God's people go?**
His staff turned into a snake, and God sent 10 plagues.
- 3. Do you know any of the plagues?**
Blood, frogs, gnats, flies, animal disease, boils, hail and fire, locusts, darkness, death of firstborn.
- 4. Why did God send the plagues?**
To show that He is God and is very powerful. To make Pharaoh let Israel go.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did God send plagues against Pharaoh and Egypt?**
God was going to use Pharaoh's hard heart in order to show His power and deliver His people.
- 2. How did Moses and Aaron prove they were God's messengers?**
Their staff turned into a large serpent which ate up the serpents of the magicians.
- 3. Describe the first three plagues.**
All three were from the earth and were very irritating. The Nile turned to blood, killing the fish and stinking up the land. Frogs infested everything. Gnats or mosquitoes buzzed and bit everywhere. By the end, the magicians could not copy Moses and Aaron.
- 4. Describe the next three plagues.**
All three were against people or animals on the earth. They caused physical harm. Flies swarmed and bit, livestock became sick and died, people suffered from gross, oozing boils. By the end, the magicians could not even appear in court.
- 5. Describe the last three plagues (besides the 10th).**
All three were from the sky. They were terrifying and led to lots of death. Hail and fire killed people and destroyed crops, locusts ate every green thing leading to famine, and thick darkness lasted for three days. The magicians are never even mentioned.
- 6. What did these plagues show about the Egyptian gods (including Pharaoh)?**
They could do nothing against the power of the one true God. For example, the great Egyptian sun god Ra could not even keep the sun shining.
- 7. Did Pharaoh repent?**
Pharaoh kept pretending to repent and submit, but whenever the plagues were taken away, he hardened his heart or God hardened his heart. This is not true repentance.
- 8. Why did God want to show Israel His great power?**
He wanted them to trust and serve Him. He wanted them to remember what they saw and tell their children and grandchildren and so on, so that they would never forget that God is God.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

FIND THE FROGS

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Copy the “Find the Frogs” sheet onto green paper. Copy and cut out as many frogs as you think you need. Before the children arrive, hide the frogs in various places around the room. As the children find the frogs, have them take them to the leaders. Talk about Egypt being covered with frogs. In the Bible lesson, God showed His mighty power by covering the entire land of Egypt with frogs.

SILLY ACTING PLAGUES

Direct the children to follow you in acting out the plagues. Explain that God did this to tell everyone that He was God and the Israelites were His people.

River: Lie on the floor and wiggle back and forth.

Frogs: Jump like a frog.

Gnats: Open your fingers like starbursts all over in the air and talk about small flying things.

Flies: Buzz around the room.

Animals: Pretend to be a favorite animal and then fall dead.

Boils: Pinch your skin all over your body.

Hail: Cover your head and duck for cover.

Grasshoppers: Make small wings with your hands; crawl, jump, and make a clicking noise.

Darkness: Cover your eyes so you can't see anything.



ILLUSTRATE

PLAGUE PROPS

Find several items to correspond to the plagues in Egypt. Bring them to class and show them as you tell the Bible lesson. Examples include frogs, flies, tomato juice for blood, and plastic grasshoppers. When you tell the Bible story, stand up and walk close to the children so they can see each item.

HEART CONDITION

Bring two heart-shaped containers to class. Fill one with cotton balls and one with a handful of small rocks. Pass around the containers. Allow all the children to touch the items, and ask them what the differences are between the two (heavy and light, soft and hard, etc.). Explain that Pharaoh was a man with a hardened heart. His heart was heavy with sin. A soft heart is light, free from the burden of sin.



APPLY

GOD SENDS THE TEN PLAGUES

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, red cardstock, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Before class, print the template that has the empty boxes with numbers 1-10 onto red cardstock. Pre-cut pictures from the craft sheet. Have the children color the pictures and glue them onto the red cardstock according to corresponding numbers.

God Sends the Ten Plagues
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends plagues on Egypt • Exodus 7:1–10:29



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

PLAGUES: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Bring in library books or posters with enlarged pictures of frogs, lice, flies, and locusts. Share the pictures with the children and ask them how they would feel if the whole Sunday school room was covered with these creatures. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about the nine plagues in Egypt where these creatures did cover the land.

INSECTS EVERYWHERE

Place a variety of items on the table (Play-Doh, buttons, pipe cleaners, raisins, etc.). Have the children create insects. In today's lesson, God demonstrates His power by sending plagues of lice and flies.



ILLUSTRATE

DARKNESS FELT

The ninth plague was darkness so thick that it could be felt. Ask the children what they think that would have been like. Select a couple of volunteers to be blindfolded and draped with pieces of black felt. Ask them how dark it is. Ask them what they think it would be like to walk around in darkness like that. Encourage the class to imagine how it might have felt in the darkness.

DECORATE LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

Make pyramids, palm trees, and a river out of large sheets of butcher paper. Tape them on the walls of the room. Use this as the "set" for today's Bible lesson.



APPLY

THE TEN PLAGUES OF EGYPT

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, black and tan construction paper, white paper, scissors, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Instruct children to color and cut out the pictures from the craft page and then glue them onto the bottom half of a sheet of folded black construction paper. Have them cut out two tan triangles and one white circle and then glue them onto the top half of the folded black construction paper.



The Ten Plagues of Egypt
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

EGYPTOLOGIST

Bring in issues of National Geographic, library books, or utilize the Internet to show the children images of ancient Egypt—pharaohs, pyramids, the Nile River, the sphinx, etc. Moses would have seen all these things. Tell children about some of the gods the Egyptians worshiped. In today's lesson, we will learn how the Lord proved these gods to be false.

RACE AGAINST THE PLAGUES

Write out the ten plagues on separate sheets of paper. Form two (or more) teams. Race to see which team can arrange the plagues in the correct order. Allow children to use their Bibles. The order in which the plagues occurred is as follows: (1) Water Becomes Blood, (2) Frogs, (3) Lice, (4) Flies, (5) Livestock Diseased, (6) Boils, (7) Hail, (8) Locusts, (9) Darkness, and (10) Death of the Firstborn.



ILLUSTRATE

HARD HEART

Bring a rock, sponge, and a small bucket of water to class. Dip both the rock and the sponge in the water. Explain that when you put the rock in the water, it does not get softer; but when you put the sponge in, it does. Pharaoh is like the rock. He had a hard heart. He heard God's Word, saw God's power, but did not listen and obey, he had a hard heart. But when a person is ready to hear God's Word and obey, he is like the sponge. We would say that he has a soft heart. He is ready to absorb what God has to say and make His word part of his life.

FAVORITE TOY

Tell the children what some of your favorite toys were when you were a child. You may wish to bring in an example. Ask the children what their favorite toys are. Are these toys for sale? What would you endure to keep them? Would you give them away if God asked you to? Today we are going to learn about someone who had people for his possession. This person would not let his slaves go, no matter what God did.



APPLY

TELL THE NATIONS

Tell the children that one reason God demonstrated such great signs in Egypt was to make His power known throughout the earth. Explain that this is just what missionaries do. They go to places where people do not know Jesus Christ and His great power over sin. Discuss with the children whom they can tell about God's incredible power. Encourage them to tell friends, family, and neighbors about God's awesome power.



LESSON 20

God ordains the Passover

EXODUS 11:1-13:22



God delivers with power and by blood.



“For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you” (Exod 12:23).

Supporting Truths

1. God uses the blood of a spotless lamb to deliver from death.
2. God delivers those who trust in perfect blood shed for them.
3. God uses His great power to deliver from slavery.
4. Those God delivers belong to God.
5. Those who are delivered are to remember and teach that God delivered them.

Objectives

1. Describe what the Israelites did with the lamb and its blood.
2. Compare the Passover lamb to Jesus, the Lamb of God.
3. Describe how the last plague caused the Egyptians to set Israel free.
4. Explain how God became their leader and required their firstborn to be His.
5. Explain the meaning of the three memorials God gave to Israel.



Lesson Summary

God used one final plague, the death of the firstborn, to overcome Pharaoh's resistance. However, during the plague, Israel was also in danger, unless they followed God's specific instructions. Each household killed a lamb, brushed its blood around the doorway, and waited inside until God passed over their homes. By His great power and by the blood of spotless lambs, God delivered His people. He also established Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the consecration of the firstborn as reminders of His power to deliver.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Jesus shared his last supper with the disciples on the night of Passover. During this celebration, Jesus identified the unleavened bread and the cup of wine with His own body and blood. In so doing, Jesus declared that deliverance from sin and from God's wrath comes only through His blood (Matt 26:26–28). Those who come to Jesus are protected by His blood just as the Israelites who stayed inside were protected by the blood of the Passover lamb.

LAST WEEK



God sends plagues
on Egypt
Exodus 7:1–10:29

THIS WEEK



God ordains the Passover
Exodus 11:1–13:22

NEXT WEEK



God parts the Red Sea
Exodus 14:1–15:21

Lesson Commentary

God delivers with power and by blood.

God's purpose in the first half of Exodus was to display His power and deliver His people. But after nine powerful plagues, Israel was still enslaved by Egypt. So God sent a tenth and final plague, the most powerful, to **deliver** His people (Exod 11:1). God had chosen Israel to be His firstborn (4:22), and because of this, not because of anything special Israel had done, God *rescued* them. He instructed Israel to make a blood sacrifice to spare them from judgment, and God established Passover as a sign that He delivers with power and by blood.



THINK ABOUT IT

When God decides to deliver, there is no power or person that can stand in His way (Col 2:15).

The LORD planned one last plague to deliver Israel from Egypt (11:1–8; 12:12)

God announced the death of every firstborn male in all of

Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, to the firstborn of the slave, even the firstborn of the livestock (11:4–5). Unlike the previous plagues, God Himself would go through Egypt to accomplish this judgment (11:4). This plague would also be a final judgment on all the gods of Egypt (12:12). The death of the firstborn was a fitting punishment. Since Pharaoh refused to release Israel, whom God had chosen to be His firstborn, God would kill Pharaoh's firstborn (4:22–23). This plague would cause Pharaoh to send his officials to bow before Moses and desperately beg the Israelites to leave (11:8).

The LORD gave a Passover sacrifice to deliver Israel's firstborn (12:1–13, 21–23)

In order to spare Israel from the final plague, God gave the *Passover* sacrifice. Each family (or group of small families) chose a one-year-old, unblemished lamb and kept it with them for four days (12:3–6). On the fourteenth of the month, in the evening, they slaughtered the lamb without breaking any of its bones, and then they used hyssop to brush the blood on the sides

and top of the doorway (12:6–7, 22, 46). Then they stayed inside the house until morning (12:22). They roasted the lamb, ate it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and burnt any leftovers (12:8–10). While eating, they were ready to leave at a moment's notice (12:11). Then when the LORD passed through Egypt, He saw the blood, passed over them, and did not allow the destroyer to enter their houses (12:13, 23).

The Passover pointed forward to Christ our Passover (1 Cor 5:7). The lamb looked forward to the Messiah, who was slaughtered like a lamb without any bones being broken (Isa 53:7; John 19:36). The blood of the lamb that delivered Israel from physical death is a sign of the blood of Jesus that delivers believers from eternal death (Eph 1:7). The hyssop represented purification and cleansing from sin (Heb 9:19; Ps 51:7). The need to stay in the house protected by the blood illustrates that only those protected by Christ's blood are delivered from hell (Heb 10:29). The unleavened bread represented Israel's hasty departure from idolatrous Egypt. The bitter herbs reminded Israel of bitter slavery in Egypt. Israel's deliverance when God saw the blood and passed over them illustrates how God's wrath passes over those covered by the blood of Jesus (Rom 5:9).

Deliverance has always been through the Lamb of God, even for Old Testament saints (Rom 3:24–25). Blood is necessary for sins to be forgiven (Heb 9:22). That is why Abel, Noah, and Abraham all made blood *sacrifices*, killing animals to atone for sin and to please God. But the blood of animals cannot finally pay for sins (Heb 10:4), and faithful believers in the Old Testament sacrificed by faith in what the animal sacrifices looked forward to (Gen 22:14). Even the life of a man cannot redeem the life of another (Ps 49:7–9). Only God can redeem from hell (Ps 49:15). So the Passover looks forward to Christ the Passover Lamb, who, as God become man, died to deliver and purify a people for Himself (Titus 2:13–14). Christ confirmed this when He identified the bread and the cup of the Passover meal with His own body and blood (Matt 26:26–28). In remembering deliverance from Egypt, the Passover meal looked forward to Christ. Today, the Lord's

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God ordains the Passover • Exodus 11:1–13:16



Supper remembers Christ's final Passover sacrifice (1 Cor 11:24).

The LORD killed the firstborn to deliver Israel from slavery (12:29–41; 13:17–22)

At midnight God struck every firstborn in Egypt (12:29). Loud wailing filled the land, for there was someone dead in every

house (12:30). This horrible night reminds us that although God always provides a way to be saved, those who reject His salvation will be punished (Rom 2:4–5). In their agony, Pharaoh and the Egyptians urged the Israelites to leave immediately (12:31–34), and just as God promised, they gave the Israelites gold and silver jewelry, which would later be used to build God's tabernacle (12:35–36; 38:24–31).

During their 430 years in Egypt (12:40), Israel had grown from 68 to 600,000 men, and there were likely over 2 million people total (12:37). Besides the Israelites, a large crowd of other people went with them (12:38). This was a taste of the promise that all nations would be blessed through Abraham (Gen 12:3).

As Israel departed, God led them with His own presence, appearing in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (12:51; 13:21–22). Moses brought along the bones of Joseph (13:19), a reminder of Joseph's faith that God would deliver Israel (Gen 50:24–25).

The LORD told Israel to remember forever how He delivered them (12:14–28; 13:1–16)

God delivered Israel with such incredible power so that they would trust Him as their God forever (10:1–2). God gave three rituals to help them remember. First,

the Passover meal reminded them that the LORD had passed over them when He killed the firstborn in Egypt. They were to eat this meal in the evening following the fourteenth day of the first month every year (12:2, 6), and they were to diligently teach their children what it meant (12:26–27).

Second, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to remind them and their children that the LORD had brought them out of slavery in Egypt (13:8). **Unleavened bread does not rise because it has no leaven (yeast); it is flat and dense.** The ritual began on Passover and continued for one week (12:18). There was to be no leaven in the house (12:15), and on the first and seventh days, there was to be a holy assembly and no work (12:16). It reminded them of the haste of their departure, since they did not even have time to let their dough become leavened (12:34).

Third, they were to set apart every firstborn male as belonging to the LORD (13:1–2). Human firstborn were to be redeemed by an animal sacrifice (13:13). The Israelites were to teach their children what it meant: all the firstborn belonged to God, since He had delivered them (13:15). Also, all Israel belonged to God as His firstborn and as His redeemed people (13:16). Later, God would choose the Levites in the place of the firstborn to serve as His special ministers (Num 3:12–13).

With these three rituals, Israel was to remember how God delivered them from Egypt, and they were to teach their children forever. With great power God had broken the might of Egypt, and with the blood of a spotless lamb God had spared His own firstborn, Israel. They now belonged to God forever, because He had delivered them. So we also may become God's own if we look to His power to deliver us from the power of sin, and if we look to the blood of the Lamb of God to rescue us from God's wrath.



THINK ABOUT IT

While there was great wailing in Egypt during this time, there was peace and tranquility with Israel (11:6).

Lesson Outline

God delivers with power and by blood.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God planned the tenth plague to deliver Israel from Egypt (11:1–8).
2. God delivered Israel's firstborn from the plague by the blood of a lamb (12:1–23).
3. God sent the tenth plague to deliver Israel from Egypt (12:29–41).
4. God told Israel to always remember that He delivered them (12:14–28; 13:1–16).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. The LORD planned one last plague to deliver Israel from Egypt (11:1–8).
 - The LORD said the Egyptians would send Israel out after one last plague (11:1–3).
 - The LORD told Pharaoh that every firstborn male would die (11:4–8).
2. The LORD gave a Passover sacrifice to deliver Israel's firstborn (12:1–13, 21–23).
 - Kill a spotless lamb at twilight as a sacrifice (12:3–6).
 - Brush the lamb's blood around the door and stay inside (12:7, 22).
 - Eat the meat with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (12:8).
 - Burn up any leftovers and be ready to leave in a hurry (12:10–11).
 - When the Lord sees the blood, He will pass over that house (12:12–13, 23).
3. The LORD killed the firstborn to deliver Israel from slavery (12:29–41; 13:17–22).
 - The LORD struck every firstborn male, and wailing filled the land (12:29–30).
 - Pharaoh and the Egyptians told the Israelites to leave quickly (12:31–41).
 - The LORD was Israel's leader as they left Egypt (13:17–22).
4. The LORD told Israel to remember forever how He delivered them (12:14–28; 13:1–16).
 - The Passover sacrifice reminded Israel that the LORD passed over their houses (12:24–28).
 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread reminded that the LORD brought them out of slavery (12:14–20; 13:3–10).
 - The consecration of the firstborn reminded that the LORD had delivered the firstborn to be His own (13:1–2, 11–16).



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What was the last plague?**
All the firstborn would die.
- 2. What did the Israelites do to be protected from the plague?**
They killed a lamb and put its blood around their doorways.
- 3. What was this called?**
The Passover. God passed over them when He was judging Egypt.
- 4. Who is the Lamb whose blood protects us from death?**
Jesus.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What was the last plague?**
All the firstborn would die.
- 2. Why did God choose to send one more plague?**
God wanted to show His great power, defeat Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt, and deliver His people.
- 3. How could someone be protected from the plague?**
Each household killed a lamb and put its blood around their doorways.
- 4. What happened when the plague came?**
God passed over the houses of the Israelites when He came to judge.
- 5. What does the Passover sacrifice represent?**
It represents Jesus Christ's death as the Lamb of God. It shows us that only the blood of a perfect sacrifice can protect sinners from God's wrath.
- 6. What happened after Passover?**
Pharaoh and the Egyptians told the Israelites to leave right away. They even gave them gold and silver.
- 7. After being delivered from Pharaoh's power, who became their leader?**
God Himself led them on their way out of Egypt, by fire and cloud.
- 8. What was Israel supposed to do to remember their deliverance?**
They were supposed to teach their children, using three rituals: the Passover supper, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the consecration of the firstborn.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



PROTECTION

Use puppets to talk about “protection.” Baby ducks could tell how their moms protect them by swimming near them and scaring off anything that might harm them. The same could be discussed regarding kittens and puppies. Talk about God being our protector and giving us moms and dads to protect us from harm. God protected the Israelites in a special way. In today’s lesson, God wanted His people to leave Egypt so that they could worship Him.

PLAY-DOH CENTER

Make various bread and roll shapes with Play-Doh, and pretend to bake and eat them. Today’s Bible lesson tells that when the Israelites were finally allowed to leave Egypt, they took their bread dough with them so they would have food for their long journey.



DRESSED AND READY

Bring a suitcase and a jacket to class. Bring in various props and pictures (sheep, herbs, branches, etc.). Lay them in front of the suitcase as you teach. Put them in the suitcase one by one as you tell the story. Wear a jacket as you teach today, emphasizing that Moses and all the Israelites needed to be ready to go right when the Lord told them.

BLOOD ON THE DOOR POSTS

Build a doorframe or miniature house out of Popsicle sticks. During the lesson, apply “blood” (red paint) around the top and sides of the door. Use this model to demonstrate how the firstborn of Israel were protected from the destroyer.



THE PASSOVER LAMB

Materials: Paper plate, cotton balls, crazy eyes, brown and red construction paper, white cardstock, and glue.

Directions: Prior to class, cut out rectangles from white cardstock that will serve as legs (4 per student). Create a lamb’s head from brown construction paper and its mouth from red construction paper. During class, have the children glue the crazy eyes, nose, and the mouth to the lamb’s head. Glue the head onto one edge of the plate and glue cotton onto the rest of the plate. Finish by gluing legs onto the bottom.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God ordains the Passover • Exodus 11:1–13:16



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

PACKING RELAY

Using two suitcases and a few items to pack inside, let two teams compete to see who can fill a suitcase, empty it, and run back with it for the next person to do the same. Talk about the Israelites getting ready to pack to leave Egypt quickly.

READY, SET, GO

When the children arrive, tell them that they must be prepared at any moment to leave the classroom together and go to another location to receive a special surprise. Make sure they understand that as soon as the time comes, you will tell them, and they must immediately stop whatever they are doing and line up at the door. Emphasize that when they leave, they need to be quiet and serious as they walk to the new location. Once the time comes, make the announcement and take the children to the predetermined spot.

Once you all have reached the special location, you may reward the children for being prepared, leaving so quickly, and following your instructions.

This is a great activity to teach the children about how the Israelites were “prepared.”



ILLUSTRATE

UNLEAVENED SNACK

Purchase unleavened bread to use as a visual aid during your lesson. Allow each child to try a piece of the flat bread.

DESIGNATED DOTS

Pass out colored dot stickers as children walk in the door. Pass out twice as many yellow dots as all other colors combined. Instruct the children with the yellow dots to sit on the right side of the class and children with other colors to sit on the left side. Explain to the class that children on the right represent Israel and children on the left represent Egypt. When you get to Exodus 12:30, tell all the children wearing a particular color dot to lie down on the ground as though they have died. Point out that no one died on the Israelite side during the Passover. After Exodus 12:36, instruct all the Israelites to get up, take the possessions of the Egyptians (Bibles, sweaters, etc.) and leave the classroom. Be sure the possessions are returned to the rightful owners when the children return.

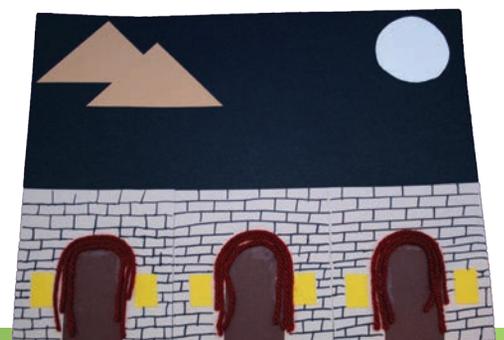


APPLY

BLOOD ON THE DOORPOSTS

Materials: Black, brown, tan, grey, and yellow construction paper, white paper, scarlet yarn, black marker, and glue.

Directions: Have children cut three rectangle buildings from grey paper and draw in the bricks with black marker. Cut three doors from brown construction paper and two windows from yellow construction paper and glue onto the buildings as shown below. Glue the scarlet string around the door to symbolize the blood of the lamb on the doorposts. Glue all three buildings, two tan triangles, and one white circle to black construction paper as shown below.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

CELEBRATIONS TO REMEMBER

Using a calendar as a visual aid, talk about the various celebrations we observe during our year. As you talk to the children about their favorite holidays, ask them what their families do to celebrate special times. Perhaps their families do things that their parents did as children. In today's Bible lesson, we will learn about a special event in the history of God's people, an event that Israelites continue to celebrate even today.

WHO IS THE FIRSTBORN?

Ask the children who is the firstborn child in each of their homes. Then ask whether any of them are the oldest boys in the room. Have all the firstborns come to the front of the class. Have the rest of the children slide to the left to fill in the empty chairs. Then have all the firstborns sit on the right side of the room. In today's lesson, we will see that all the firstborn boys of the Egyptians are going to have something dreadful happen to them. But the firstborn boys of the Israelites will be passed over.



ILLUSTRATE

LOOKING FORWARD

The Passover pointed forward to Christ (1 Cor 5:7). Use the following sword drills to show how different aspects of the Passover looked forward.

Isa 53:7 The lamb looked forward to the Messiah, who was like a lamb led to slaughter.

Eph 1:7 The blood of lambs looked forward to the blood of Christ

Ps 51:7 Hyssop represented purification and cleansing from sin

Heb 10:29 Need to stay in the house protected by blood illustrates that only those protected by Christ's blood are delivered from hell.

1 Cor 5:8 Unleavened bread represents how Christians flee impurity and live in sincerity and truth.

Rom 5:9 Passover illustrates how God's wrath passes over those covered by the blood of Jesus.

BREAD-BAKING EXPERIMENT

Before class, use a bread machine to make two kinds of bread. Use the same bread mix for both breads, but do not add the yeast to one of the loaves. Bring both loaves to class, labeling one "Leavened" and the other "Unleavened". Allow the children to taste both breads. Tell the class that both loaves were made using the same machine and identical bread mixes. Use the loaves to illustrate Exodus 12:34.



APPLY

FOLLOWING ORDERS

Ask the children what they think would have happened if an Israelite decided he was not going to exactly follow God's orders concerning the Passover. What if he did not want to kill one of his good lambs and instead sacrificed a sick one? Would God have accepted this offering? What would have happened if the lamb was not killed but was simply tied up at the doorstep and offered as a living sacrifice? We can come to God only according to God's will and plan. We cannot save ourselves our own way. Think back to Cain and Abel. Was God pleased with Cain's offering? Noah also had to build the ark exactly as God instructed him, and in the same way, the Israelites had to perform the Passover exactly as God had instructed Moses. Use these questions to discuss the importance of following God's instructions exactly as they are recorded in His word, the Bible.



LESSON 21

God parts the Red Sea

EXODUS 14:1-15:21



God fights to protect His people.



“Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent” (Exod 14:13–14).

Supporting Truths

1. God is powerful.
2. God is a warrior.
3. God saves by Himself.
4. God fights in order to glorify Himself.
5. Because God fights for us, we ought to sing praise to Him.

Objectives

1. Describe how God rescued Israel through the Red Sea.
2. Describe how God fought against the Egyptian army.
3. Describe what Israel was supposed to do while God fought for them.
4. Explain God’s purpose in defeating Pharaoh.
5. Explain the three things Israel sang about as they praised God.



Lesson Summary

After the 10 plagues and the Passover, God planned one more display of His power. He caused Pharaoh to lead his army against the Israelites so that He could win a huge victory while Israel just watched silently. He divided the Red Sea, and then after the Israelites crossed, He caused the sea to return to its place, drowning Pharaoh's entire army. In response, all Israel feared Him and sang about His great glory and power.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God saved His people and destroyed their enemies in the crossing of the Red Sea. Likewise, God will save the Christian from death and punish His enemies who have not repented and believed in the sacrifice of Christ.

LAST WEEK



God ordains the Passover
Exodus 11:1–13:22

THIS WEEK



God parts the Red Sea
Exodus 14:1–15:21

NEXT WEEK



God preserves Israel
Exodus 15:22–17:7

Lesson Commentary

God fights to protect His people.

God displayed His great power in the tenth plague, killing all the firstborn of Egypt and delivering His people Israel from slavery. But before leading Israel out of Egypt, He chose to give one more display of His power. God chose to fight for His people, personally delivering them from the army of the Egyptians. He did this so that all the nations would fear Him and so that Israel would also trust Him as their strong deliverer.



THINK ABOUT IT
God's ultimate purpose for all things is the declaration and praise of His own glory.

The Plan: The LORD chose to fight against Pharaoh and his army (14:1–12)

The LORD told Moses to lead the Israelites back toward Egypt in order to lure Pharaoh to attack (14:2). He

wanted Pharaoh to think the Israelites were lost and were no longer being cared for by their God (14:3). The LORD also hardened Pharaoh's heart; all this was in order to glorify His own name and cause the Egyptians to know that He is Yahweh (14:4). When trouble arises, God is still in control; He plans trouble in order to display His **glory**, His honor, splendor, greatness, and perfection (Rom 9:17).

When Pharaoh saw the Israelites "wandering," he fell for the trap. He forgot the destruction caused by his recent stubbornness in letting God's people go. All he and his servants could think about was the large number of slaves they were about to lose (14:5). So Pharaoh immediately pursued them with 600 of his best chariots, but he also summoned his entire army (14:7–9). They caught up with them as Israel was camped by the sea. From the human perspective, there seemed to be no hope. What hope did unarmed, untrained Israelites have against the powerful Egyptian army? The Israelites were terrified (14:10) and upset at Moses for rescuing them from slavery (14:11–12). They would have rather been

slaves than die in an attempt to gain their freedom. But from God's perspective, everything was going exactly as He planned.

The Battle: The LORD fought for Israel (14:13–30)

Moses reassured the people that the LORD was still on their side. In fact, the LORD would do all the fighting. All the Israelites needed to do was to stand firm, be quiet, and watch the LORD fight (14:13–14). This is how God always saves: He always saves for the sake of His name (Isa 48:11) and by His own power without needing any human effort (Eph 2:8). All that is required is to believe that He will save (Heb 3:12). Moses spoke by faith: he knew God had a plan to glorify Himself, but he did not yet know exactly how God planned to save Israel. Then, after Moses spoke, God revealed His plan to divide the sea (Exod 14:15–18).

All night long the Israelites crossed through the sea on dry ground as the Angel of God stood between them and the Egyptians (14:19). The Angel of God appeared as a cloud that gave light to the Israelites but darkness to the Egyptians (14:20). This Angel of God is the messenger of the LORD's presence (Isa 63:9) who is often equated with the LORD Himself (14:24; Judges 13:18, 21). This is the second person of the Trinity, Jesus (John 1:18). His appearance here, giving light to the path of some and confusing the path of others, shows how God's glory appears good to those who believe but repulsive and terrifying to those who do not (2 Cor 2:14–16).

After the Israelites had miraculously crossed the sea—with water like walls on each side (Exod 14:22)—dawn came and the Egyptians began to pursue (14:23). But the LORD looked down from the fiery cloud and caused their chariots to go out of control (14:24–25). The Egyptians realized the terrifying truth: "The LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians!" (14:25). They tried to retreat, but God brought the walls of water back down over them and not a single one who had entered the sea survived (14:26–28). How terrible it is to fight against the

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God parts the Red Sea • Exodus 14:1–15:21



omnipotent God (Heb 10:31)! He is so powerful He cannot be beaten.

The Celebration: Israel sang praise to the LORD their warrior (14:31–15:21)

The Israelites responded by fearing the LORD and believing both in the LORD and in

Moses (14:31). Those who worship God **fear** Him: they have great respect for His power and tremble at the thought of being His enemy. So they joined with Moses in singing to the LORD.



THINK ABOUT IT
It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31).

and He is mighty in power (15:5). It is by His power alone that any can be saved (Col 2:15). So those who worship God praise Him for who He is.

Second, they sang of the LORD's actions, focusing on what the LORD has done. He shattered the enemy (15:6), overthrew His enemies and devoured them with His fiery wrath (15:7), split the sea (15:8), and caused the enemy to sink like lead into the waves (15:10). The words of the enemy come in short, proud phrases, like the boasting of a warrior confident that he will be victorious (15:9). But all it took was God's breath to utterly confuse and destroy this proud enemy (15:10).

Third, based on who the LORD is and what He had done (15:11–12), they sang of their confidence in the LORD to continue to fight for them in the future. They had **faith**: they trusted Him to lead and guide, because they had seen His commitment to His people and His power to save (15:13). They trusted Him to bring them into the land, knowing that all their enemies would be terrified when they heard what God had done to the Egyptians (15:14–16). Seven different words for fear are used in these verses in order to emphasize the fear inspired by God's power. When Israel finally did come to the land, the Canaanites were in fact terrified (Josh 2:8–10). Like Israel, we also ought to remember God's actions in the past, for our faith is built upon evidence of God's faithfulness (Ps 105:5).

God had done just as He planned. First, He developed a battle plan. Then He engaged in battle single-handedly and won a stunning victory. Finally, He received the praise due to a victorious warrior as His people sang His praises. If the plagues in Egypt had not been enough, the Israelites now should have had no doubt that this was the true God, worthy of their total trust. He is still worthy of our total trust, for we know He has not just conquered the king of Egypt. By saving Israel, God also saved the line of the Messiah, and through the Messiah He has conquered the ruler of this world, Satan (Col 2:15). One day Jesus Christ will return like a warrior to destroy all His enemies and be the King of His people (Ps 2:6–9).

THINK ABOUT IT
The life of faith is living actively in light of the past, present, and future work and person of God.



Lesson Outline

God fights to protect His people.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Problem:** Pharaoh and his army chased the Israelites (14:1–12).
2. **The Rescue:** The LORD parted the Red Sea to save Israel (14:13–22).
3. **The Victory:** The LORD drowned the Egyptian army (14:23–28).
4. **The Song:** Israel sang praise to their Deliverer (14:31–15:21).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Plan:** The LORD chose to fight against Pharaoh and his army (14:1–12).
 - The LORD lured Pharaoh to attack in order to glorify Himself (14:1–4).
 - Pharaoh and his whole army came to capture the Israelites (14:5–9).
 - The Israelites were terrified and wished they had never stopped being slaves (14:10–12).
2. **The Battle:** The LORD fought for Israel (14:13–30).
 - The LORD said, “Just be quiet and watch me save you.” (14:13–14).
 - The LORD planned to show the Egyptians that He is LORD (14:15–18).
 - The Angel of God gave light to Israel but darkness to the Egyptians (14:19–20).
 - The LORD divided the sea and Israel walked through on dry ground (14:21–22).
 - The LORD drowned all the Egyptians who tried to cross (14:23–30).
3. **The Celebration:** Israel sang praise to the LORD their warrior (14:31–15:18).
 - Israel feared the LORD and believed in Him (14:31).
 - Israel sang of the LORD’s glorious power (15:1–6a).
 - Israel sang of the LORD shattering the enemy (15:6b–10).
 - Israel sang of their confidence in the LORD to fight for them in the future (15:11–18).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why were the Israelites so afraid?**
Pharaoh's whole army had come to attack them.
- 2. How did God save the Israelites?**
He parted the Red Sea, and they crossed on dry ground.
- 3. What happened to Pharaoh's powerful army?**
Every soldier who followed Israel into the sea drowned.
- 4. What did the people do after God saved them?**
They sang a song about how good and powerful God is.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did God tell Moses to lead the people back toward Egypt?**
God wanted to make Pharaoh think the people were lost so that Pharaoh would try to attack them.
- 2. Why did God want Pharaoh to come after the Israelites?**
God wanted to show His glory and power by defeating Pharaoh and his army.
- 3. Did the Israelites trust God when they saw the army?**
No. They were afraid and wished they were still slaves in Egypt.
- 4. How did Moses answer them?**
Moses told them to be quiet, stand firm, and watch God defeat Pharaoh and his army.
- 5. How did God rescue Israel?**
He parted the Red Sea so that they crossed on dry land.
- 6. How did God protect Israel while they were crossing?**
The Angel of God stood like a fiery cloud between the Israelites and the Egyptians.
- 7. What happened to the Egyptians when they tried to cross?**
God made their chariots lose control, then He caused the water to come back and drown them.
- 8. What did Israel sing about after God saved them?**
They sang about God's character (His glorious power), His actions (His victory over Egypt), and their faith in Him to guide them and fight for them in the future.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3-5



INTRODUCE

PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE

Tell the children that God led Israel with a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. Construct your own pillar of cloud and pillar of fire and use this to lead the children around the room or church. Using the red, orange, and yellow construction paper, create flames. Cover one side of the flames completely with cotton balls. Attach the flames and cotton balls to the top of the yardstick.

READY, SET, GO!

Tell the children that they must be ready to leave the classroom at a moment's notice, just like the Israelites when God led them out of Egypt. Tell them that as soon as they see the pillar of cloud (see activity above) they must stop whatever they're doing and line up at the door. Provide the children with an activity to work on while they wait for the pillar of cloud.



ILLUSTRATE

FOLLOWING THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE

Use the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire (see above activity) to "lead" the children through the different scenes in the Bible lesson.

Exodus 14:1-4 Divide the class in two (Israelites and Egyptians). Lead the Israelites back towards Egypt in order to trick Pharaoh.

Exodus 14:5-12 Tell the Egyptians to move towards the Israelites.

Exodus 14:13-20 Move the pillar of cloud and fire between the Egyptians and Israelites to separate them.

Exodus 14:21-22 Tell the Israelites walk through the midst of the sea.

Exodus 14:23-30 Tell the Egyptians to follow Israel through the sea.

Exodus 14:31-15:21 Finish the story on the other side of the sea.

PARTING THE WATERS

Fill a small tub or bucket with water. Ask the children whether they think you can separate the water with your hand. Run your hand through the water and emphasize the fact that you cannot do it. What about using a straw to blow the water apart? Allow volunteers to try this method. Explain that in today's lesson, we will learn that God separated an entire sea of water and that only God could do such a miracle.



APPLY

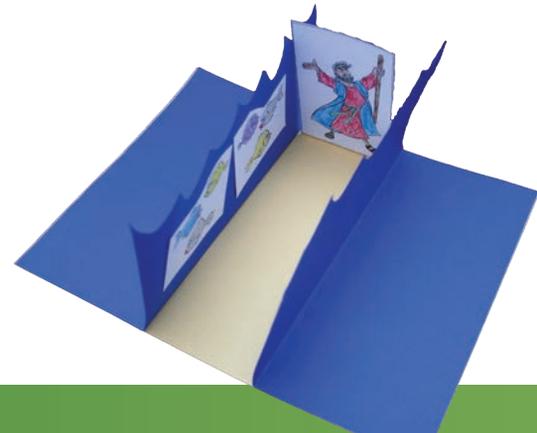
MOSES PARTS THE RED SEA

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, tan cardstock, blue paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Before class, cut out the pictures from the craft sheet. Take two sheets of blue paper and cut off 3 inches from the bottom of each sheet. Fold the two sheets of blue paper in half lengthwise. Design waves by cutting into the top edge of the two the papers (see below). In class, have children color the pictures and glue them onto the locations shown in the picture below.

Moses Parts the Red Sea
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God parts the Red Sea • Exodus 14:1–15:21



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

THINGS THAT FRIGHTEN

Ask the class what things make them afraid. In today's lesson, we will learn what made the Israelites afraid and what Moses told them God would do.

HEARTS OF CLAY

Before class, mold two hearts out of red modeling clay. Bake one heart in the oven to make it hard. Before the lesson, present the hearts to the class. Explain that a "soft heart" is one that can be molded by God because God has shown mercy to that person. An example of someone with a soft heart is Moses. In contrast, a hard heart is fixed in that condition and cannot be changed. You may choose to pass around the hearts so that children can feel the difference between the two. Emphasize that the "hard heart" will represent Pharaoh during the lesson. Read John 12:40 and Romans 9:18 to explain how God can justly show mercy to some and at the same time harden the hearts of others to fulfill His sovereign will.



ILLUSTRATE

HEARTS OF MOSES AND PHARAOH

While teaching through the lesson, alternate holding the two hearts (see "Hearts of Clay") when talking about Moses and Pharaoh.

WATER TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT

Supplies: 3–4 rolls of blue cellophane, cutouts of fish and other sea creatures.

Directions: Before class, cover a section of wall with wide pieces of blue cellophane, leaving a two-to-three-foot gap between the pieces. Attach the fish cutouts behind the cellophane with tape or thumbtacks. (Variation: If a dry-erase board is available, draw several large fish on the right and left ends of the board, and then cover the drawings with blue cellophane, leaving a gap in between.) When you begin your lesson, ask the children to guess what they will learn today. Explain that they will learn about a miracle by which God separated a sea of water, creating walls of water on the right and left. Use the backdrop during your lesson to illustrate the story.



APPLY

GOD PROTECTS THE ISRAELITES

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, tan construction paper, blue paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Have children fold a sheet of tan construction paper in half lengthwise. Create waves that are curling inward out of blue paper. Color the pictures and cut them out. Glue the fish to the waves. Glue everything to the tan construction paper as shown below.



God Protects the Israelites
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

AGES 9-11



INTRODUCE

MAPPING THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS

Using a map (print or digital) show the class the route the Israelites likely took when they left Egypt. Tell the children that although the locations of Pi-hahiroth, Migdol, and Baal-zephon are uncertain, it is likely that the Israelites, instead of continuing to head east into the Sinai north of the Bitter Lakes, turned to go south on the Egyptian side of the Bitter Lakes. In this case the Red Sea crossing would have taken place at the Bitter Lakes. Explain that this does not make the account any less miraculous, because the Bitter Lakes are large enough that battleships and aircraft carriers have passed through them. Remind the children that the body of water was deep enough to drown every single soldier in Pharaoh's army when God caused the water to return to normal.

DIVIDING THE WATER

Tell the children that you will demonstrate how to divide water before their very eyes. Do they think you can do this? Hold two ice cubes together and slowly pull them apart. Use this funny activity to prepare the children to learn about God's miraculous power to part the water of the Red Sea.



ILLUSTRATE

THE HOOVER DAM

Bring in a picture (print or digital) of the Hoover Dam. Use this illustration to show God's miraculous power to part the Red Sea. The Hoover Dam, located on the border between the states of Arizona and Nevada, was built across the Colorado River and created Lake Mead, the largest reservoir in the United States (by volume). The dam took 5 years to build (1931-1936) and cost \$49 million dollars (almost 1 billion in today's currency). This monumental project, constructed out of concrete, employed thousands of workers, hundreds of which lost their lives during construction. However, when God divided the Red Sea He did it instantaneously, by Himself, used water (not concrete) itself to create two walls, injured none of the Israelites, and returned the sea to normal at the exact time He wanted, killing every member of Pharaoh's army.

GOD FIGHTS FOR HIS PEOPLE

The Red Sea is not the only instance of God fighting for His people. Use the following sword drills to talk about other times God gained the victory for Israel.

- Joshua 6:20 God destroyed the walls of Jericho.
- Joshua 10:8-14 God defeated the Amorites.
- 2 Kings 19:35 The LORD killed 185,000 Assyrians.



APPLY

THE FIRST PROPHETESS

Miriam is the first prophetess mentioned in the Bible, but she is not alone. Ask the children if they can name any other women given this honor. Other women to receive this special honor: Deborah (Judg 4:4); Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14); Isaiah's wife (Isa 8:3); Anna (Luke 2:36); and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:9).



LESSON 22

God preserves Israel

EXODUS 15:22-17:7



The LORD provides for His people.



“If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer” (Exod 15:26).

Supporting Truths

1. God provides.
2. God deserves trust and obedience.
3. God tests His people.
4. God provides physical and spiritual life.
5. Grumbling is the wrong response to God’s testing, because God provides.

Objectives

1. Describe the three ways God provided food and water for Israel in the wilderness.
2. Explain how God proved that Israel should trust and obey Him.
3. Explain how and why God tested Israel.
4. Compare the manna and the water to God’s provision through Jesus.
5. Compare Israel’s grumbling with the right response to trouble.



Lesson Summary

After His powerful victory over the Egyptians, the LORD led His redeemed people into the wilderness. There He tested them with hunger and thirst. Instead of responding to the test by trusting God, the Israelites responded by testing God with grumbling. Even so, God was gracious. In answer to Moses' prayers, God provided fresh water, manna for bread, and quail for meat. The LORD commanded Israel to trust and obey Him, not just as their strong deliverer, but now also as their great provider and healer.

Spotlight on the Gospel

The same God who provided food and water for the Israelites continues to care for and provide for those who trust Christ for salvation. Just as the Israelites were supposed to respond to God's provision by obedience, so we must respond to God's provision through Jesus Christ by trusting and obeying.

LAST WEEK



God parts the Red Sea
Exodus 14:1–15:21

THIS WEEK



God preserves Israel
Exodus 15:22–17:7

NEXT WEEK



God prepares Israel for
the covenant
Exodus 19:1–25

Lesson Commentary

The LORD provides for His people.

The LORD had delivered the Israelites to be His servants, and He was about to make His covenant with them. To prepare them for this, the LORD showed the Israelites that He was worthy to be their God. They already knew His power in battle, seeing firsthand the plagues and the miracle at the Red Sea. Now, as they traveled through Sinai, they would see His power to heal and provide—despite their grumbling.

The LORD provided drinkable water (15:22–27)

After crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites traveled three days through the Wilderness of Shur (Exod 15:22), located in the

northwest region of the Sinai Peninsula, on the opposite side of the Bitter Lakes from Egypt. The Israelites were about 40 miles beyond their last source of fresh water, traveling first through a stony desert, and then across white, glaring sand dunes. Finally they came to “Marah,” which means “bitter,” because the water there was bitter and undrinkable (15:23). So the Israelites grumbled (15:24). They were not wrong to express their trouble; it is ok to express pain and distress to God (Ps 22:1), as long as it is with an attitude that still trusts God (22:3). But the Israelites were wrong to grumble, since **grumbling** is complaining in rebellion against God.

Just three days before, the LORD had delivered the Israelites at the Red Sea, and the Israelites had sung confidently that their LORD would lead them into the land of Canaan (15:13, 17). But now they were grumbling. This is a good reminder that we need to remember what God has done and let His past works strengthen our faith for the future (Ps 105:5).

God was gracious to provide. He gave what was needed despite Israel’s rebellious attitude. He made the water drinkable (Exod 15:25). But He also explained the meaning of His provision: it was a proof that He is the LORD who heals (15:26). God’s provision was to encourage the Israelites to obey, while God’s power to inflict illnesses, as He had done to the Egyptians, was to make them afraid to disobey. In fact, four different phrases

for obedience are used in just one verse to emphasize the importance of complete obedience (15:26). After emphasizing obedience, the LORD proved His provision by leading Israel to the fresh water oasis at Elim (15:27).

The LORD provided manna and quail for food (16:1–36)

A month after leaving Egypt, the Israelites grumbled again, this time because they were running out of food (16:1–2). They were so ungrateful that they wished they had died in Egypt (16:3). They also blamed Moses, forgetting that it was the LORD, not Moses, who had rescued them. So Moses reminded them that they were really grumbling against the LORD who had brought them out of Egypt (16:6–8). Instead of presenting their requests with thanksgiving for what God had already done (Phil 4:6), the Israelites complained with ungrateful attitudes.

Despite Israel’s bad attitude, God chose to provide in order to prove that He was present with

His people. He caused His glory to appear in the cloud before all of Israel (Exod 16:10), and He promised meat and bread so that Israel would know that He is Yahweh (16:12). This was the point of God’s provision: to prove that He is worthy to be served as God.

The meat was quail, and the bread was manna (16:13). Quail, a bird about ten inches long, was common on the Sinai peninsula since they would migrate between Syria and Arabia in the north and Central Africa in the south. Manna literally means “what is it?” since the Israelites did not know what it was (16:15). No attempt to explain manna in a natural way can account for the way manna came, the way it could be boiled or baked, the way it rotted in one night except before the Sabbath, and the way manna kept coming all year long for forty years in enough quantity to feed over two million people. Manna would become a symbol of God’s miraculous provision (16:32–33; Ps 78:24; 105:40). Ultimately, the way God provided physical life by giving manna illustrates how God provides spiritual life by giving Jesus Christ, who is the living bread (John 6:49–51).

The LORD intended Israel to suffer hunger and thirst in order to **test** them (Exod 16:4–5; 15:25). He brought



THINK ABOUT IT
Complaining and grumbling flows from a discontent and ungrateful heart.

THINK ABOUT IT
God’s commands are based upon His faithful character.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God preserves Israel • Exodus 15:22–17:7



trouble in order to humble them and show that in order to live they had to depend on the word of the LORD (Deut 8:3). So the testing included specific instructions from God for how to receive God's provision. When gathering the manna, they were to gather only enough for one day, except on the sixth day, when they were to gather enough for the Sabbath day as well (Exod 16:16, 22–23). Despite God's supernatural provision of food, the Israelites still did not trust His word. Some gathered extra manna and saved it until the next day, but it became rotten with worms (16:20). Also, some went out on the Sabbath day to gather, but found that there was no manna that day (16:27). Moses was rightly angry with them, because even after God's provision, they had not obeyed God's instruction (16:20, 28).

The LORD provided water out of a rock (17:1–7)

Again the LORD tested Israel with thirst (17:1). The people had come to Rephidim, which was likely a wadi (a river that is dry during parts of the year). They had come hoping for water, but it was already dried up. So again the people complained and held Moses responsible (17:2). Again Moses reminded them that they were complaining against God, not against him (17:2). In fact, they were **testing** the LORD. They were not trusting His kindness and provision, and risking bringing His punishment against them. That is why the place is called Massah (which means testing) and Meribah (which means arguing) (17:7). The people were so upset they were on the verge of stoning Moses (17:4). As before, Moses responded by crying out to God (17:4), showing the right way to handle trouble.

Again the LORD provided, despite Israel's grumbling. He told Moses to go ahead of the people, likely heading further up the wadi. There Moses struck a rock as the LORD commanded, and water came out (17:6). But the LORD's purpose was much bigger than providing water. Through His provision, the LORD was confirming Moses' position as leader and proving that He was present among His people. He appeared in front of Moses on the rock (17:6). This was to answer the people, who were wondering, "Is the LORD among us?" (17:7). Yes, the LORD was among them, and He proved it both by appearing before them (16:10; 17:7) and by providing for them.

With these three tests, the LORD was preparing Israel to serve Him and to accept the covenant He was about to give them. First, He tested His people by bringing difficulty into their lives, as He does with all those He loves as children (Heb 12:6). He also tested them by giving them specific instructions to see if they would obey (Exod 16:4). The point of this testing was to cause them to depend on His word and to become steadfast and mature in their faith (Deut 8:3; Jas 1:2–4).

Second, the LORD provided, proving that He is present with His people (Exod 3:12–15; Matt 1:23). Even when hope seems lost (Ezek 37:11–14), or when His people do not deserve His help (Deut 7:7), God provides. He provides just the right amount, and His provision must be accepted on His terms (Matt 6:33). Although He provides for all the needs of life (Ps 145:15–16), His greatest provision is through His Word (Deut 8:3) and through Jesus Christ (John 6:49–51). As God gave the Israelites physical water to keep their bodies alive, so now Jesus Christ provides living water to give life to the soul (John 4:13).

Third, because the LORD is provider, He deserves complete trust and obedience. He had already proved to Israel that He was their strong deliverer, and now He was showing them that He was their gracious healer and provider. Based on His proven character, the LORD would call Israel to be His holy nation (Exod 19:4–6). The same God who provided food and water for the Israelites will take care of His children today. Just as the Israelites were supposed to respond to God's provision by obedience, so we must respond to God's provision through Jesus Christ by trusting and obeying.

THINK ABOUT IT
God's testing is always an opportunity to prove and purify faith.



THINK ABOUT IT
What God requires of His people rightly flows from what He has already revealed about Himself.



Lesson Outline

The LORD provides for His people.



AGES 3-5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Israel grumbled three times when they were hungry and thirsty (15:22-24; 16:1-3; 17:1-3).
2. The LORD gave Israel fresh water to drink and manna and quail to eat (15:25; 16:13-31; 17:4-6).
3. The LORD told Israel to trust Him and obey, because He is their provider (15:26; 16:12).



AGES 6-11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. The LORD provided drinkable water (15:22-27).
 - The water at Marah was undrinkable, so the people grumbled (15:22-24).
 - The LORD made the water drinkable (15:25).
 - The LORD commanded obedience and promised to take care of His people (15:26).
2. The LORD provided manna and quail for food (16:1-36).
 - The Israelites grumbled against Moses because they had no food (16:1-3).
 - The Israelites were really grumbling against God (16:6-8).
 - The LORD showed His presence and proved that He is Yahweh their God (16:9-12).
 - The LORD provided manna and quail (16:13-18, 31).
 - The Israelites failed the LORD's tests twice (16:4-5; 19-28).
 - The LORD preserved Israel by providing manna for 40 years (16:32-36).
3. The LORD provided water out of a rock (17:1-7).
 - The Israelites complained that there was no water (17:1-3).
 - The LORD showed His presence and brought water out of a rock (17:4-6).
 - The people had tested the LORD (17:7).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did the Israelites grumble?**
They were thirsty and hungry.
- 2. How did God provide for them?**
He gave them water to drink and manna and quail to eat.
- 3. What does this show us about God?**
We can trust Him to provide for our needs.
- 4. Is it ok to grumble?**
No. We should be thankful for what God provides, and trust Him.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why was the first place called Marah?**
The water was too bitter to drink.
- 2. How did God provide at Marah?**
He told Moses to throw a tree into the water, making the water drinkable.
- 3. What did God want the Israelites to learn from this?**
He wanted them to learn to trust Him and obey Him, because He is always able to provide.
- 4. Why did the people grumble in the Wilderness of Shur?**
They were running out of food.
- 5. What was wrong with their grumbling?**
They were not thankful for what God had done for them, and they did not trust God to provide for their needs.
- 6. How did God provide for them?**
God sent manna in the morning for bread, and quail in the evening for meat.
- 7. Why did the people complain at Rephidim?**
They had no water.
- 8. How did God show them that He was still with them?**
He had Moses strike a rock, then He made water flow out of the rock.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

GRUMBLING PUPPET

Use a puppet to demonstrate how Israel complained while they were in the Wilderness. The puppet can exaggerate the whiny complaints of the Israelites, and you can then let the children imitate. Then explain how they should have responded.

PICK UP THE MANNA

Materials: large clean sheet, plastic bowls, corn flakes.

Directions: Before class, lay a sheet on the floor. Pour corn flakes on the sheet and spread them out. Tell the children that in today's lesson God is going to test the hearts of the Israelites. He wants to see whether they will obey His rules. One of the ways He did this was by giving them special rules for picking up manna. Ask the children whether they can obey the rules for picking up their "manna." Give them each a bowl and ask them to each pick up 10 corn flakes—no more, no less—and put them in their bowls. Tell them not to eat any until you say it is okay. If they obey, they can eat it for a snack just before the Bible lesson. Tell them that they will find out in today's lesson whether Israel obeyed.



ILLUSTRATE

WATER FROM A ROCK

Bring a large rock to class. Ask the children to squeeze it as hard as they can. Ask them if they can squeeze any water out of it. Ask them to try really, really hard. Then ask them why water will not come from the rock. Tell them that there is no water in the rock. To get water from this rock would be a miracle. Tell the children that God provided water from a rock as a sign of His power and His patience.

BITTER TO SWEET

Use this to illustrate how God made the bitter water sweet.

Materials: Clear water bottle, eye dropper, food coloring, bleach, and water.

Directions: Before class fill the water bottle with water. Add enough food coloring to turn the water another color (brown or black would be best). Show this water bottle during the lesson and tell the children that it represents the bitter (undrinkable) water. Next take the top off and, using the eye dropper filled with bleach, add drops of bleach until the water becomes clear (you may need to swish the water around). DO NOT DRINK THE WATER. Explain that God made miraculously made the bitter water sweet.



APPLY

GOD PROVIDES FOR ISRAEL

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, oatmeal, blue cardstock, white and yellow paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Before class, print out the "God Provides for Israel" template onto blue cardstock, cut out a yellow circle and a white crescent, and cut out the pictures from the craft sheet. In class, have children color the pictures and glue them to locations pictured below. Finish by gluing on the oatmeal to represent the manna.

God Provides for Israel
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God preserves Israel • Exodus 15:22–17:7



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

BITTER WATER

Materials: Can of tonic water, a can of lemon-lime soda, and clear plastic cups.

Directions: Ask for one or several volunteers to come to the front of the class to do a taste test. Explain that the children may not like what they are about to taste. Show the children that the cups' contents look the same but are very different. Give the volunteers a cup with a small amount of tonic water; ask everyone to drink at the same time. This should elicit a “yuck” response. Then give them a cup with a small amount of lemon-lime soda and instruct them to taste. They should like this better. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn how God made bitter water sweet and continually cared for the children of Israel.

FOOD PICTURES

Show the children pictures of different foods. Talk about what the children like to eat or drink when they get hungry or thirsty. In today's Bible lesson, God provided His people with food that tasted good. He gave them manna, which was like bread, and quail, which is like chicken. He also gave them water when they could not find any in the desert.



ILLUSTRATE

MIRACULOUS MANNA

No attempt to explain manna in a natural way can account for this bread from heaven; it was truly a miracle. As you read through chapter 16, ask the children to identify the different ways God's provision of manna was miraculous.

1. The way it appeared (16:14)
2. The way it rotted after one night except before the Sabbath (16:19–20)
3. The way it melted when the sun grew hot (16:21)
4. The way it came every day except on the Sabbath (16:27)
5. The way it kept coming all year long for forty years (16:35)
6. The way it was able to feed over two million people (16:35)

THE WILDERNESS

Ask the children to share what comes to their minds when they hear the word “wilderness”. This word can refer to many different types of regions, but when it is used to describe the area the Israelites wandered in for 40 years is describes a landscape that more resembles a rocky desert than lush jungle or wooded forest. Using photos from the internet or reference books, show the children what this region of the world looks like.



APPLY

GOD PROVIDES QUAIL

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, blue cardstock, white paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Instruct children to color and cut out the pictures from craft sheet. Fold a blue piece of cardstock in half lengthwise. Cut a crescent shape from white paper. Glue the pictures and the crescent to the blue cardstock as shown below.

God Provides Quail
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

REMEMBERING GOD'S GOODNESS

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Divide children into groups. Each group will need a set of the “Remembering God’s Goodness” cards, located in the craft book. Copy the cards onto cardstock and cut them apart. See how fast each group can arrange the cards in the correct order. These cards represent the miracles God performed for His people before and during this morning’s Bible lesson. The Israelites kept forgetting how trustworthy God was in taking care of all their needs. The correct order: (1) Moses in basket, (2) Pharaoh’s daughter finds Moses, (3) Burning bush, (4) Moses’ rod turns into a snake, (5) Plague of frogs, (6) Plague of lice, (7) Blood on the door, (8) Passover dinner, (9) Moses parts the Red Sea, and (10) The Egyptian armies flee.

GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE

Ask the children what they commonly grumble or complain about, recording their responses on the board. Emphasize that all complaints are ultimately against God (Exod 16:8). Help the children turn their grumbling into thanksgiving by making a list of things they should be thankful for instead. Write each thankful idea beside each complaint.



ILLUSTRATE

WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART?

God uses tough things to reveal what is in our hearts. Show the children various containers, and let them guess what is inside (ketchup, mustard, toothpaste, suntan lotion, etc.). Replace the contents of a well-known product with something else. Explain that if we look only on the outside (at the things we do and say), we may be wrong about what is inside (why we do them). Even though the Israelites were saying they loved God very much (Exod 15:1–21), when things were not going well, they grumbled and complained to God (Exod 15:24; 16:2; 17:3) and showed how ungrateful they really were and how little they trusted Him.

ISRAEL'S REPORT CARD

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Make a copy of the chart and place it on an overhead projector or PowerPoint slide to use during the lesson. Hide the answers in the last four columns to reveal answers later.



APPLY

PUTTING YOU TO THE TEST

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Use this test located in the craft book to assess the children’s knowledge of the passage after teaching time. Explain that Israel was also put to the test by God. Ask the children in what ways the Israelites could have passed the tests that God placed before them. Answer Key: (1) a, (2) b, (3) b, (4) d, (5) d, (6) d, (7) b, (8) c, (9) b, (10) a



LESSON 23

God prepares Israel for the covenant

EXODUS 19:1-25



The holy LORD chooses a people for Himself.



"You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod 19:4-6).

Supporting Truths

1. God is holy.
2. God rescues a people to be His own.
3. God calls a people to be His own.
4. God calls His people for a purpose.
5. God's people are to respect God's holiness.

Objectives

1. Describe what happened on the mountain that showed God's holiness.
2. Describe how God rescued and cared for Israel.
3. Explain what God expected Israel to do in order to enjoy His covenant.
4. Explain what the two descriptions of Israel meant for them and for all believers.
5. List the ways Israel prepared to meet God.



Lesson Summary

Having proved His power to deliver and to provide, God brought the Israelites to Sinai in order to make His covenant with them. By delivering and providing for them, He had already made them His own special people, and now He called them to obey Him and keep His covenant, so that they would be a royal priesthood and a holy nation. The Israelites answered God's call, and after preparing for three days, they met God as He appeared in thunder and fire and smoke upon the mountain.

Spotlight on the Gospel

At Mt Sinai God once again announced His intention to have a people who would represent Him and be His own people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This remains God's plan today: every person He calls, whether Jew or Gentile, is called to dwell in a relationship with a holy God and to proclaim Him to the world. The law given at Sinai shows God's holiness, and Christ's death on Calvary satisfies His holiness. And now, Christ's risen life is able to turn sinners into a holy nation.

LAST WEEK



God preserves Israel
Exodus 15:22-17:7

THIS WEEK



God prepares Israel for
the covenant
Exodus 19:1-25

NEXT WEEK



God gives the Ten
Commandments
Exodus 20:1-21

Lesson Commentary

The holy LORD chooses a people for Himself.

As Israel gathered at Mt Sinai, they knew their LORD was worthy to be their God. He had proven His might over all other so-called gods and over all the power of Egypt. He had also proven His care by providing food, water, and guidance to Israel as they traveled through the wilderness. Now, the LORD brought Israel to Mt Sinai (19:1–2), fulfilling His promise to Moses that the Israelites would serve Him at this place (3:12). From the beginning His purpose in redeeming Israel was so that they would worship Him as His special people. Having prepared Israel for this moment, the LORD now made a covenant with them to be His own people, a holy people called to have a special relationship with Him and a special mission for His glory.



THINK ABOUT IT

God redeems people so that they might enjoy an eternal relationship with

Him marked by joyful worship and fulfilling service to Him.

The LORD chose Israel to be His holy people (19:1–8)

First, the LORD reminded Israel of what He had done for them. He addressed them as the “house of Jacob,” reminding them of their humble beginnings as just one family (19:3). But He

also called them the “people of Israel,” pointing out the great nation they had become under His care. God’s care for them was powerful: He rescued Israel from Egypt as if He were a mighty eagle carrying His people to safety (19:4). The word for eagle in this verse describes a variety of eagles and vultures found in that area and likely brought to mind a bird like the griffon vulture, a soaring, majestic bird with a wingspan over nine feet long. It is as if God had swooped down, plucked them out of slavery, and soared away with them beyond the reach of their enemies.

But God rescued them for a purpose: to bring them to Himself (19:4). Because He had redeemed them, it was fitting that they should now serve Him. So He called them to obey His voice and keep His covenant (19:5). Although God’s **covenant** is a promise that cannot be broken (Rom 11:29), only those individuals who respond obediently to His covenant will enjoy a part in the covenant (Deut 28:15; Heb 3:7–12). This is because God’s promises must always be received by faith, by believing Him (Gen 15:6). It is not possible to enjoy the blessing of being God’s own possession if a person refuses to obey God. So the Mosaic covenant that begins in this chapter is not a plan of salvation by works, but instruction on just how holy God demands His people to be (Lev 19:2; 1 Pet 1:16). This holiness is finally achieved only through the righteousness of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:21) and through a new heart given by the Holy Spirit (Ezek 36:26).

If the people would obey, they would be God’s own special possession (19:5). Even though all people belong to God, Israel would be His unique treasure. Later, believing Gentiles are also called God’s own possession (Titus 2:14), because they share in the faith of Abraham (Rom 4:16). All those chosen by God are treasured by Him.

What makes Israel, and all believers, so prized by God? First, He has called them to be a kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:9). They were to communicate God’s word to the world (Gen 12:3), since **priests** are those who serve in God’s presence, worshiping God, praying and sacrificing for the people, and teaching God’s way of salvation. Through Israel all nations would be blessed (12:3). Specifically, the blessing that came through Israel was God’s Word (Rom 3:2) and the Messiah (9:5). Similarly, believers today are called to proclaim Christ as revealed through God’s Word (10:14–15).

Second, Israel was also to be a **holy** nation, called by God to be pure and set apart from the world in order to carry out God’s special purpose (Deut 14:21). By their holy living they were to worship God and draw

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God prepares Israel for the covenant • Exodus 19:1–25



THINK ABOUT IT

All believers are called to be a light that points to the glory of God by living holy lives in an unholy world (Matt 5:16).

the nations to God (Isa 2:3). So also believers today are to adorn the gospel by their holy living (Titus 2:10). Because they had seen God's power to rescue and care for them, the Israelites agreed to do all that God had spoken (19:8). The true

test would be whether they would continue to have this heart of obedience (Deut 5:28–29).

Israel prepared to meet with their holy LORD (19:9–15)

After agreeing to listen to the LORD, the people prepared to meet Him. The LORD planned to appear to all the people, instead of just to Moses, so that the people would trust Moses' leadership (19:9). But since the LORD is holy, the Israelites needed to prepare for meeting with Him. They prepared by washing their clothes (19:10, 14), keeping their bodies clean (19:15), and making a boundary around the mountain (19:12–13).

Although such external actions do not make a person holy (Isa 1:16–17), they do show two things. First, they show the seriousness of being in God's presence. When Moses had first met with God on this mountain,

he had removed his sandals and had not approached too near to God's presence in the bush (Exod 3:5). So no one should dare to come into God's presence without first carefully thinking about who God is (Eccl 5:1–2). Second, they show that holiness involves purity (2 Cor 7:1). God is pure and does not tolerate even the smallest amount of sin in His presence.



THINK ABOUT IT

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (John 1:5).

The holy God met with Israel (19:16–25)

God's holiness is pure, but it is also awesome and terrifying. When He appeared, He came with thunder and lightning and with a dark cloud (19:16).

There was a trumpet blast that grew louder and louder, as well as smoke and a violent earthquake (19:18–19). When Moses went up the mountain, he was trembling to be in the presence of such a holy God (Heb 12:21). Anyone who understands God's holiness trembles in His presence and feels overwhelmed by his own sinfulness (Isa 6:3–5).

This passage emphasizes the terrifying power of God's holiness by repeating warnings about coming too close to God. Three times the people were warned not to cross the boundary around the mountain (9:12, 21, 23–24). Not even the priests were allowed to cross since they had not been purified yet (9:22). God's holiness is so fierce that anyone who crossed would be killed; executed with stones or arrows so that no one else would become guilty by touching the sinner (19:13). Even animals were to be killed if they crossed. God's holiness is a matter of life and death (Lev 10:1–3).

Unfortunately, no human is able to live up to God's standard of holiness. All have fallen short of His glory (Rom 3:23). No one is righteous (Ps 14:3). The only way to escape being destroyed by God's awesome holiness is to be saved by the Messiah. Jesus bore God's holy wrath for sinners. He also rose from the dead in order to give new life to all who believe. He is the one who rescued Israel from Egypt, but even more importantly, He is the one who rescues sinners from the kingdom of sin and makes them holy (1 Pet 2:9–10).

THINK ABOUT IT

Believer's are called to offer acceptable worship to God, with reverence and awe, because God is a consuming fire (Heb 12:28–29).



Lesson Outline

The holy LORD chooses a people for Himself.



AGES 3-5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. The LORD chose Israel to be His special treasure (19:1-8).
2. The LORD called Israel to be His holy people (19:5-6, 9-15).
3. The LORD showed Israel His great holiness (19:16-25).



AGES 6-11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The LORD chose Israel to be His holy people (19:1-8).**
 - Israel came to Mt Sinai, just as God had promised Moses (19:1-2).
 - The LORD reminded them of the proof of His power and love (19:3-4).
 - The LORD required obedience according to His covenant (19:5).
 - The LORD promised that they would be His special people (19:5).
 - The LORD promised that they would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (19:6).
 - Israel agreed to do all that the LORD spoke (19:7-8).
2. **Israel prepared to meet with their holy LORD (19:9-15).**
 - They washed their clothes (19:10, 14).
 - They kept their bodies clean (19:15).
 - They made a boundary around the mountain (19:12-13).
3. **The holy God met with Israel (19:16-25).**
 - God came with thunder, lightning, a dark cloud, a loud trumpet blast, fire, smoke, and an earthquake (19:16-19).
 - The people met God at the foot of the mountain (19:17).
 - The LORD warned Moses to keep the people back or they would die (19:20-25).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What animal did God use to show how He rescued Israel?**
An eagle.
- 2. Why did God rescue Israel?**
Because He chose them as His special treasure.
- 3. What did Israel do to prepare to meet with God?**
They kept their clothes and bodies clean, and they made sure not to come too close to God.
- 4. When God appeared, what was it like?**
Thunder, lightning, fire, smoke, an earthquake, and a trumpet that got louder and louder.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Where did God choose to appear to Israel?**
He appeared at Mt Sinai, just as He had promised to Moses.
- 2. Why did God deserve their obedience and worship?**
He had rescued them with power like that of a huge, soaring eagle.
- 3. Why did God rescue Israel?**
He had chosen them to be His own special treasure.
- 4. What does it mean to be a kingdom of priests?**
It means every individual among all Israel was supposed to know God, worship Him, and display Him to the rest of the world.
- 5. What does it mean to be a holy nation? It means Israel was supposed to be pure, devoted to God, and different from all the nations.**
- 6. What did Israel do to prepare to meet with God?**
They kept their clothes and bodies clean, and they made sure not to come too close to God.
- 7. What would happen if someone crossed the boundary?**
They were to be killed by being stoned or shot with arrows.
- 8. How did God display His holiness?**
He appeared with thunder, lightning, fire, smoke, an earthquake, and a trumpet that got louder and louder.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

MEETING GOD AT SINAI

Use rope or string to rope off the part of the classroom. As children enter the classroom, tell them not to cross the rope. Use this activity to talk about God's holiness and why the children of Israel had to cleanse themselves before coming to meet God. Hand out wet wipes and have the children wipe their hands clean before sitting down for the lesson.

LINE LEADER

God redeemed Israel for a special purpose. He selected Israel to be a nation to lead others to God. When you take the children out of the classroom, select one child to be the line leader. Tell the children that the line leader has a special job. That special job is to lead the children where the teacher wants them to go. Israel was a different kind of leader. They were to be good examples for the nations to follow. They were supposed to love God so much that other nations would want to know about this God they served. As a way to emphasize Israel's special job, select a few children to serve in a special way this morning.



ILLUSTRATE

A SPECIAL TREASURE

Bring in a decorative box that contains costume jewelry, plastic gold coins, and pretend money. Tell the children that you have a box with "treasure" inside. Pull out the items one at a time and tell the children why they are valuable. Explain that some people think treasure like this is the most important thing in the world. However, God had made the nation of Israel His special treasure out of all the different nations of the world.

"THIS IS THE WAY WE...ON A SUNDAY MORNING"

Together with the children, sing and act out this song as if getting ready for Sunday School, going through the motions of washing their faces, combing their hair, putting on their clothes, praying for their food, eating their breakfast, brushing their teeth, picking up their Bibles, closing the door, and driving to church. Talk about the Israelites listening to Moses and obeying him while getting ready for something special. They washed their clothes and waited for a special day.

Mt. Sinai Scene
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.



APPLY

MT. SINAI SCENE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Cotton balls, grey construction paper, blue cardstock, white and orange paper, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Pre-cut white lightning bolts, orange flames, and the verse from the craft sheet. Have children tear pieces of grey construction paper and use them to glue into a mountain shape on blue cardstock. Glue on the orange flames to the top of the mountain and cover with cotton balls. Glue on white lightning bolts and the verse as shown below.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God prepares Israel for the covenant • Exodus 19:1–25



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

HOLY BOUNDARY (EXODUS 19:12)

Take the class to a large play area. Use sidewalk chalk or tape to make a large circle around a triangle to represent the boundary around Mount Sinai. Place cones on four corners to establish a square boundary outside the circle inside of which to conduct the game of tag. Explain the regular rules for the game and then add one important rule: Children may not cross the line surrounding Mount Sinai for any reason! If children accidentally cross the boundary, or even touch the circular line, they are permanently out of the game.

HOLY AND POWERFUL

Bring in pictures of lightning storms or of the aftermath of an earthquake. Show them to the children. Ask the children if they have ever felt an earthquake or seen lightning. Have them take turns telling you about it. If you have experienced an earthquake or a terrible thunderstorm, tell the children about it. In today's Bible lesson, we will learn about God causing both earthquakes and thunderstorms on Mount Sinai. That is where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. The people of Israel were told to stay back from the mountain because God's presence would destroy them.



ILLUSTRATE

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL

In Exodus 19:6 God's people are called "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Utilize the following items to illustrate how Israel was supposed to function among the nations of the world.

Object 1: Mirror—God's children are to reflect His glory.

Object 2: Flashlight—God's children are to be lights in the world shining God's good news.

Object 3: White cloth—God's children are called to be holy.

Object 4: Pencil—Israel wrote down God's Word.

PREPARING THE YOUNG FOR MATURITY

Bring in pictures, books, videos, or articles that show different ways in which parents (animals and humans) prepare their young to go off on their own. Parents, whether they are eagles, grizzly bears, opossums, or humans, all have ways to teach their young how to survive and live on their own. Discuss and show examples of the various ways this is accomplished. In today's Bible lesson, we see how God prepares His people to live as He designed them. They are to be holy and reflect His glory. They are to be set apart as special for all the people of the world to recognize.



APPLY

BUILDING MT. SINAI

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, Styrofoam cup, cotton balls, tan and white cardstock, brown construction paper, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Have children form a cone shape from white cardstock. Tape it together and tape it to the tan cardstock. Tear pieces of brown construction paper and glue it to the cone. Glue cotton to a Styrofoam cup. Cut out white lightening bolts and glue them around the rim of the cup. Put tape on the inside of the cup and place on the top of the cone. Glue the verse to the tan cardstock.

Building Mt. Sinai
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

THE FEAR OF GOD

The fear of God is more than reverence. It is being more afraid of Him than of anything else. Bring pictures of (or simply discuss) various things people are afraid of (spiders, sharks, tigers, fierce dogs, bad people, the dark, etc.). Talk about the things we do to be less afraid (put dogs on leashes, put tigers in cages, have lights to replace darkness, prisons to contain criminals, etc.). We should fear God more than anyone or anything else in the world because He is stronger than any of these things. Fearing God should not make us want to avoid Him but should make us want to obey Him (Ex. 20:20).

A SPECIAL POSSESSION

Ask the children if they have a special possession. Have them share what these are. Bring in some of your own favorite things to show the children. Ask them to imagine that their special possession was lost or stolen or broken or ran away. What would they do? God had a special possession. It was the nation of Israel. We will learn more about this in today's lesson.



ILLUSTRATE

TOILET WATER

God told Israel that they were to be a "holy nation". Bring in two water bottles filled with water and an eye dropper filled with toilet water. In front of the children, drop a few drops of toilet water in one of the bottles. Then ask the children which bottle they would want to drink. Explain that in order to be holy we must be completely separate from sin. Even just a few "drops" of sin makes us unacceptable.

SYMBOLS OF THE COVENANT

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Pass out a copy of the work sheet to each child (located in craft book). As you teach through the passage, write the following phrases by each symbol and encourage the children to do the same:

Treasure Box—God's Possession (Exod 19:5–6) — 1. Kingdom of priests,
2. Holy nation

Scroll—Two conditions to the covenant (19:5) — 1. Obey His voice, 2. Keep His covenant

Mouth—Israel's Response (19:8) "All that the LORD has spoken we will do"

To-Do List—Three-Day Preparation (19:11–15) — 1. Wash clothes, 2. Keep body clean, 3. Prepare hearts

Cloud—Signs of God's presence and awesome power (16:10) — 1. Thunder and lightning (19:16), 2. Thick cloud (19:16), 3. Loud trumpets (19:16), 4. Fire (13:21; 14:24), 5. Smoke (19:18), 6. Quaking (19:16)



APPLY

MOUNT SINAI MAJESTY

Reread the most descriptive part of God's presence being displayed at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:16–20). Work together as a class to list different words on the board that describe the awesome power of the LORD. Discuss how various words vividly picture the mighty power and presence of God. Here are some examples:

Verbs

Heeding, thundering, trembling, descending, warning, fearing, consecrating, obeying, keeping, blasting, sounding, quaking, washing, preparing.

Nouns

Cloud, smoke, fire, trumpet, third day, voice, boundary, Moses, Israel, Aaron, priest, lightning.

Adjectives

Loud, thick, complete, long, fearful, furnace-like, whole.



LESSON 24

God gives the Ten Commandments

EXODUS 20:1-21



God gave the law to show His standard and expose human sin.



“Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin” (Exod 20:20).

Supporting Truths

1. God gave the Ten Commandments.
2. God’s law is holy.
3. God’s law reveals sin.
4. God’s law is good.
5. God’s law shows the need for a Savior.

Objectives

1. State that the Ten Commandments were spoken by God. List them in order.
2. Consider how various commandments protect true worship of God.
3. Compare one’s own life with the Ten Commandments.
4. Consider how various commandments protect God’s people.
5. Explain how a person can escape the law’s condemnation.



Lesson Summary

When God rescued Israel from Egypt, He became their new ruler. He promised to make them His treasured people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, on the condition that they obey His voice and keep His covenant. The people said that they would do this, so God gave them the law, starting with the Ten Commandments. These laws guarded a right relationship with God and with other people, and they showed Israel just what it means to be holy.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God's law was never intended to be a way to earn salvation. The purpose of the law is to reveal sin so that a person will see his need of a Savior. Jesus Christ alone perfectly satisfied God's law, so that by His death He could atone for the sins of all who believe. Those who believe are no longer condemned by the law, but they live in a way that pleases God and gives Him glory.

LAST WEEK



God prepares Israel for
the covenant

Exodus 19:1-25

THIS WEEK



God gives the Ten
Commandments

Exodus 20:1-21

NEXT WEEK



God ordains the
tabernacle

Exodus 25:1-27:19;

30:1-10

Lesson Commentary

God gave the law to show His standard and expose human sin.

The LORD had given Israel a precious promise: if they listened and obeyed, they would become God's special people, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod 19:6). But to be a kingdom of priests serving God, and to be a holy nation, Israel needed a standard of holiness. So God gave them the law, starting with the Ten Commandments (Deut 4:13).



THINK ABOUT IT

God's commands are never burdensome to the person who has experienced God's grace.

The setting of the Ten Commandments (20:1–2, 18–21)

The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, based on His own authority (20:1). Because He had rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt (20:2), He demanded

that the people now serve Him. Pharaoh had been their ruler, but now God was to be their ruler, and they were to follow His commands. All those who are delivered by God, whether from slavery to Pharaoh or from slavery to sin, are required to submit to God as their ruler (Rom 6:22; 2 Cor 5:14–15). To some this sounds harsh, but God's commands come in the context of grace, in the context of God's deliverance of sinners who do not deserve it.



THINK ABOUT IT

The gaze of God is upon the one who is humble and contrite in heart and trembles at His Word (Isa 66:2).

God spoke the Ten Commandments out of the raging storm that covered the mountain, with thunder, lightning, a trumpet blast, and smoke (20:18). The people were so afraid they trembled and begged Moses to speak to them for God

instead of having God speak to them directly (20:19). Moses told them not to be afraid, but He also said God came to test them so that they would fear Him (20:20). How were they not to be afraid but also to

fear? The first kind of fear, the kind that the believer is free from, is fear of power that is cruel or unfair or intends to harm. It is the fear of a slave for a master who may lash out at any time and for any reason (Rom 8:15). But the second kind is how a son **fears** a good father (Rom 8:15). The son loves and respects the strength of his father, and he trembles at the displeasure and discipline of his father when he disobeys (Heb 12:7). So Israel had no reason to fear God in the first sense; God was not cruel or unfair and had no plans to harm them. They were to fear God in the second sense: God displayed His powerful holiness out of love, so that their fear would lead them to keep His commandments and live (Prov 4:4).

Four commandments about man's relationship to God (20:3–11)

The commandments have a logical order to them. The first four focus on man's

relationship with God, which can be summed up by the greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37). The last six focus on man's relationship with others, as summed up by the second greatest commandment: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39). But all ten gradually spread out from the center, beginning with commands describing the worship of God and continuing on to commands describing man's relationship to other men.

The first command was that Israel should have no other gods (Exod 20:3). Other nations worshiped many gods, but Israel was to worship no other god alongside Yahweh (the one true God). Believing in one God includes loving God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, so that nothing distracts the worship of His people (Deut 6:4–6). Not only is this what the one true God deserves, but it also unites God's people. When Israel was faithful to God, they lived

THINK ABOUT IT

A right relationship with God serves as the launching pad for a right relationship with others.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God gives the Ten Commandments • Exodus 20:1–21



in unity with each other (Ps 133:1). But when they were not devoted to God, they fought among themselves (Judges 12:4).

The second commandment says that no image should be made to be worshiped (Exod 20:4–6). It is not wrong to make images, since the tabernacle itself was filled with carved images (25:18). But it is wrong to make an image that represents the true God or of anything else for the purpose of worshiping the image. The reason for this is that God is a jealous God. He is not jealous in the sense of being unloving or rude, like a child upset that someone else got a better snack. He is jealous like a good father who does not allow someone to lead his children astray. **God's jealousy** means that He demands exclusive devotion (34:14), He fiercely opposes those who oppose Him (Deut 29:20), and He fights to protect and prosper His people (Isa 9:7; 37:32). It is good for God to be jealous, because He alone is worthy of worship.

The third commandment is not to take the name of the Lord in vain (20:7). This literally means to speak God's name or to speak of His character in an empty way. This includes falsely taking a promise on God's name, but it also includes any irreverent or thoughtless speech concerning God's name or character.

The last of these four commands was to keep the Sabbath (20:8). **Sabbath** literally means "to cease." It was a day to stop working as a way to remember God's rest after creation (20:9–11) and the coming rest in the day of the Messiah (Jer 50:34; Heb 4:9). It taught them how to worship, and it reminded them that their sustenance depended ultimately upon God rather than on human effort (Exod 16:5). While the principle of resting in the Lord remains (Isa 30:15), the specific Sabbath law has been fulfilled in the Messiah and so is no longer required (Col 2:17).

Six commandments about man's relationships to other men (20:12–17)

The commandments continue to broaden out from God Himself at the center, showing that a right relationship with God requires right relationships with others (1 John 4:20). The link between the first four and the last six commands is the fifth: honor your father and mother (20:12). This shows how critical the family and parental authority is: God designed parents to teach their children about faith in God (12:26–27; Deut 6:7). If children do not honor their parents, then the picture of God as our Father is distorted, the right worship explained by the first four commands is not passed on, and the commands against murder, adultery, theft, deceit, and coveting are sure to be violated as well.

What exactly does the fifth commandment mean? The word "**honor**" means that children are to respect and obey their parents, but also value them highly and care for them with true affection. There is no age limit included in this verse: even though a man and a woman leave their parents' authority when they become married (Gen 2:24), the honor due to a parent remains for life. If parental honor is not upheld, the next generation is not likely to respect any kind of authority, even God's authority.

The sixth commandment forbids **murder** (20:13). This is specifically about killing that results from intentional violence, but even accidental killing required a person to flee to a city of refuge (Deut 19:5). This shows just how precious life is to God. Man is specially made in God's image (Gen 1:27). So it is wrong to take a life because human life belongs not to man but to God (Ezek 18:4). Thus suicide is also forbidden by this command, since not even a person's

THINK ABOUT IT

Every human being bears God's image and thus every human life is precious.



own life is his own. The commandment against murder honors God by honoring life, and it guards the worship of God from being cut short by violence and death.

The seventh commandment forbids adultery (20:14). “**Adultery**” specifically refers to unfaithfulness of married people, although the principle of sexual purity applies to all. Jesus explained that even the lustful thought is already adultery (Matt 5:27–28). Faithfulness in marriage is necessary for true worship because marriage was made by God (Gen 2:21–24), because God ordained marriage as the means of filling the earth (Gen 1:28), and because

marriage is meant to illustrate the loyal love between Christ and His people (Eph 5:22–33). A man cannot be in a right relationship with God if he is not in a right relationship with his wife (1 Pet 3:7).

The eighth commandment forbids **stealing**, or taking what belongs to someone else (20:15). Private property must be respected because ultimately all property belongs to God, who gives it to each person as He pleases (Ps 24:1). So ends do not justify the means: it is still stealing even if property is taken from a rich person to give it to a poor person. Theft must be prohibited in order to honor God’s providence and to allow each person the opportunity to give freely (2 Cor 9:7).

The ninth commandment forbids bearing **false witness** (20:16). This specifically refers to lying in court, but it includes the principle that lying in general is wrong (Hos 4:2). All deceit despises God because God’s character is truth (Deut 32:4; John 14:6). Deceit is so deadly to a society that one ancient law code gave the death penalty for anyone who made a false accusation. The Mosaic Law punished a false witness by giving him the penalty he intended for the person he was accusing (Deut 19:19) Thus the ninth commandment honors God’s character and preserves the community of God’s people.

The tenth commandment forbids coveting (20:17). **Coveting** means to have a strong desire for something that belongs to

someone else. This prevented the Israelites from thinking of God’s commands as merely outward. God looks at the heart (1 Sam 16:7), and sin starts with a person’s thoughts and desires (Matt 15:19; Jas 1:13–15). Someone might not give in to murder, adultery, stealing, or lying, but even the desire that led to these crimes was prohibited.

God had at least four purposes in giving the Ten Commandments. The first was to reveal His holiness and the standard of holiness required to be His people (Lev. 19:2). The law is “holy and righteous and good” (Rom 7:12), and all the commandments are commanded again in the New Testament, except for the Sabbath which was fulfilled in Christ. Because sin separates from God (Isa 59:2), and because God’s people were called to bring glory to His name (1 Pet 2:9), God’s people must be holy people (1 Pet 1:16).

Second, the Ten Commandments reveal God’s kingship over Israel, and the repetition of these commands in the New Testament show that God’s right to rule extends over all people (Ps 145:13). God’s people ought to think in terms of obligation, not in terms of rights. They should think in terms of their duty to God and to others, not in terms of what they think they deserve from God or from others (Phil 2:3–4). A community—whether a church or a nation—will begin to crumble when it begins to think in terms of rights rather than in terms of duty.

Third, the Ten Commandments were given to preserve the nation. They promoted unity (20:3–7), humility (20:8–11), family and authority (20:12), life (20:13), marriage (20:14), private property (20:15), justice (20:16), and love for others (20:17). These commands come from love and are necessary for a nation to survive.

THINK ABOUT IT
Right worship
requires a right
heart.



THINK ABOUT IT
The man that says
he loves God but
hates his brother
is liar (1John 4:20).

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God gives the Ten Commandments • Exodus 20:1–21



Fourth, the Ten Commandments reveal sin and show the need for a Savior (Rom 3:20). They were never intended as a way to earn salvation (Gal 3:11). Old Testament believers were justified by faith (Gen 15:6; Hab 2:4), so when the law came, they were to obey the law as an act of faith in God's Word. Through faith they were justified by the blood of Christ, not by the law itself (Rom 3:24–25), for all fall short of God's perfect standard (Rom 3:23; Jas 2:10). Today, Christians are not under the law (Rom 6:14–15), because believers in Jesus are no longer condemned by the law (Rom 8:1). However, Christians do want to please God by the way they live their lives and treat others.

Lesson Outline

God gave the law to show His standard and expose human sin.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Do not have any other gods (20:3). | 4. Keep the Sabbath day holy (20:8–11). | 7. Do not commit adultery (20:14). |
| 2. Do not worship images (20:4–6). | 5. Honor your father and your mother (20:12). | 8. Do not steal (20:15). |
| 3. Do not speak God's name disrespectfully (20:7). | 6. Do not murder (20:13). | 9. Do not lie (20:16). |
| | | 10. Do not covet (20:17). |



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

- The setting of the Ten Commandments (20:1–2, 18–21).**
 - God Himself spoke the Ten Commandments (20:1).
 - The LORD's commands must be obeyed because He is our God and deliverer (20:2).
 - God's voice caused the people to tremble with fear (20:18–19).
 - Moses encourages the right kind of fear of God (20:20–21).
- Four Commandments about man's relationship to God (20:3–11).**
 - Do not have any other gods (20:3).
 - Do not worship images (20:4–6).
 - Do not take the name of the LORD in vain (20:7)
 - Keep the Sabbath day holy (20:8–11).
- Six Commandments about man's relationship to other men (20:12–17).**
 - Honor your father and your mother (20:12).
 - Do not murder (20:13).
 - Do not commit adultery (20:14).
 - Do not steal (20:15).
 - Do not bear false witness (20:16).
 - Do not covet (20:17).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Who spoke the Ten Commandments?**
God did.
2. **Can you list the Ten Commandments?**
See the Ages 3–5 outline.
3. **Why did God give Israel the Ten Commandments?**
To teach them what it means to be His holy people.
4. **Have you kept all the Ten Commandments?**
No. This shows us that we need Jesus to save us.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **Why is it important that God spoke the Ten Commandments?**
This shows that God is the law-giver. He decides what is right and wrong. People do not get to decide this.
2. **Can you list the Ten Commandments?**
See the Ages 3–5 outline.
3. **Why did God give the Ten Commandments?**
To teach Israel and us what it means to be His holy people.
4. **What are the first four commandments about?**
They are about our relationship with God. They show that we must love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength.
5. **What are the last six commandments about?**
They are about our relationship with other people. They show that to be God's people, we must love our neighbor as ourself.
6. **Why is _____ (pick a commandment) so important for being God's holy people?**
See the commentary for the chosen commandment.
7. **Have you kept all the Ten Commandments?**
No. The Ten Commandments show that you are a sinner.
8. **How can you escape condemnation?**
Jesus lived a perfect life and died for sins. If you repent and put your trust in Him, He will rescue you from the condemnation of the law.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3-5



INTRODUCE

NUMBER ACTIVITIES

Bring 10 pieces of cereal, buttons, beans, or coins. Help the children count the items. "God is going to give 10 rules for right living. Listen for this number in the Bible lesson. I wonder what those rules will say. Can you think of what some of them might be?"

OBEY PARENTS

Using a puppet, introduce the fifth commandment: Honor your father and mother. Ask the children if they know what it means to "honor" someone. Explain that "honoring" someone includes obeying them. Ask the children to tell you some of the ways that they can obey their parents. Use the puppet to talk about how obedience is more than just doing the right thing—it also includes have the right attitude.



ILLUSTRATE

TEN-COMMANDMENT TABLETS

Cut out two 9 x 12-inch tablets from large foam sheets. Print out two sheets, with all the commandments on each. Glue one on each tablet. Use these during the lesson to show what God commanded.

TEN COMMANDMENTS IN TWO

The Ten Commandments can be summarized by two commands: 1) Love God (Matt 22:37) and 2) Love others (Matt 22:39). During the lesson, use the following hand motions to help the children learn how each one of the Ten Commandments fits into one of these two categories: Hands folded (like praying) for the first four commandments and hands stretched out away from sides for the last six commandments. Lead the children in these motions as each commandment is introduced. You may also test the children after the lesson by reciting a command and asking them to show you if the command refers to loving God or loving others by giving the correct hand motion.

The Ten Commandments
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



APPLY

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, black construction paper, tan and green cardstock, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Before class, print the template that has the two stone tablets onto tan cardstock and cut them out. Print the list of the Ten Commandments from the craft sheet onto green cardstock and cut them out. During class, have the students glue each command to the tablets as you discuss them. Then glue the tablets to the black construction paper.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God gives the Ten Commandments • Exodus 20:1–21



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

CLASSROOM COMMANDMENTS

Review the rules you have established for the classroom. Ask the children why we need rules such as these? Do the teachers want the children to obey the rules because they want the children's time in class to be miserable or because they love them and want everyone to get along? Ask the children who made the classroom rules? Were they given by the children or the teachers? Did the children get to vote on them? Explain that rules teach us about the person who gave them. We will learn more about this in today's lesson.

THE IMPOSSIBLE JUMP

Form a line with tape. Place a rope parallel to the tape line. Set the lines close enough together so that the children can easily jump across both lines. Then pull the rope back so far that no one can make it. Explain that this is what it is like to try to make it to heaven by perfectly obeying the Ten Commandments. It is impossible. The Ten Commandments are God's holy rules that show us our sinfulness. We are unable to obey them perfectly, and we need a savior. In today's lesson, we will learn about these rules.



ILLUSTRATE

LOVE GOD AND OTHERS

The Ten Commandments can be summed up in two commandments—loving God and loving others. All the rest of the laws in the Pentateuch fit under these two as well. As you teach through the each of the commandments, ask the children to tell you which ones show love directly for God and which ones show love for other people. After the lesson, test the children's knowledge by reading a command (out of order) and asking them if it shows love for God or love for other people.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS REVEAL SIN

The purpose of the Ten Commandments is to reveal sin. Read the following verses to the children: Romans 3:20; 7:7. Explain that the Ten Commandments are not like a set of steps that lead to heaven but are like a measuring tape that shows us that we could never reach heaven on our own.



APPLY

TEN COMMANDMENTS NECKLACE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, multicolor cardstock, white yarn, beads, scissors, and a hole punch.

Directions: Print the Ten Commandment tablets from the craft sheet onto various colors of cardstock (or print it on white and have the children color them various colors in class). Have the children cut out the Ten Commandment tablets and punch holes in the black circles. Thread the yarn through the ten tablets in order with two colored beads in between each one. Tie the two ends of the yarn together to form a necklace.

Ten Commandments Necklace
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

A LAND WITHOUT LAW

In today's Bible lesson, God gives His people the first set of laws. He gave the Israelites these laws for their benefit, not to make their lives miserable. Laws protect our relationships with others. God's laws also protect our relationship with Him. Ask the children to name some laws (city, state, or national). Discuss how these laws protect our relationships with others. What would life be like without any laws or rules?

TEN COMMANDMENTS SOUND-OFF

Write the Ten Commandments on the board. Give 10 children each a slip of paper with one of the Ten Commandments (without the number of the commandment). Have the child with the first commandment stand up and read it out loud. As soon as the first person is done, the person with the second commandment should stand up and read it out loud. Repeat this until all commandments have been read. Erase the board. Do this again and time the children, seeing how quickly they can recite the commandments. Record their time and allow another group of 10 children to try and beat their time (or have the original group try to beat their own time).



ILLUSTRATE

THE HEART OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments cover more than just outward actions. The tenth commandment, which forbids coveting (Exod 20:17), prevented the Israelites from thinking of God's commands as merely addressing outward sinful actions. Use the following sword drills to show the children that God looks at the heart (1 Sam 16:7), and that sin starts with a person's thoughts and desires (Matt 15:19; Jas 1:13–15). Someone might not give in to murder, adultery, stealing, or lying, but even the desire that led to these crimes was prohibited.

THE OUTWARD RIPPLE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

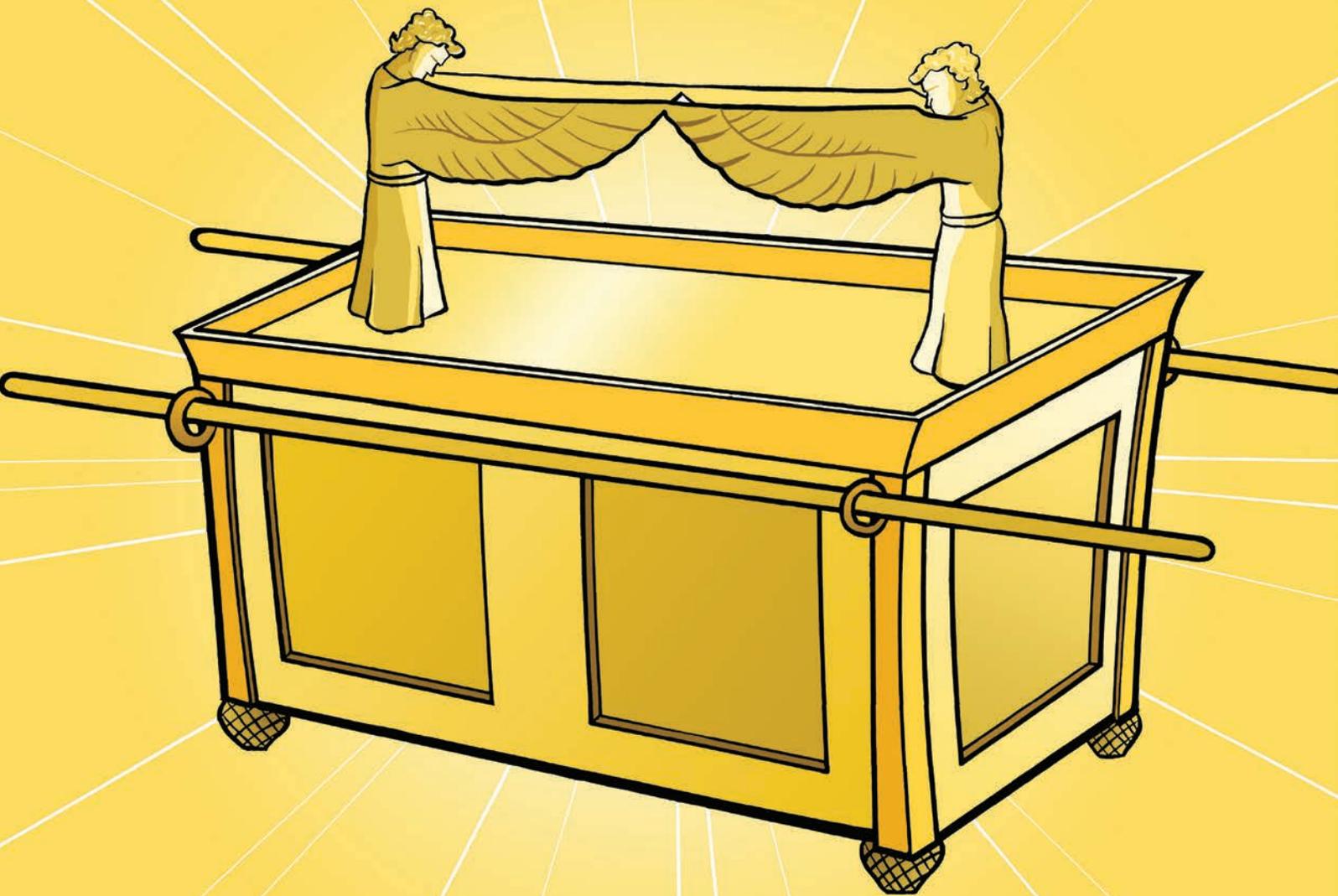
The commandments have a logical order to them. They begin with God and gradually move outward to describe our relationships with other men, showing that a right relationship with God requires right relationships with others (1 John 4:20). Help the children picture this by dropping a rock into a bucket of still water and observing how the waves begin in the center and gradually move outwards. The commands governing our relationships with other men begin with our relationship with God and move out from there like the ripple of waves in water.



APPLY

THE PURPOSE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

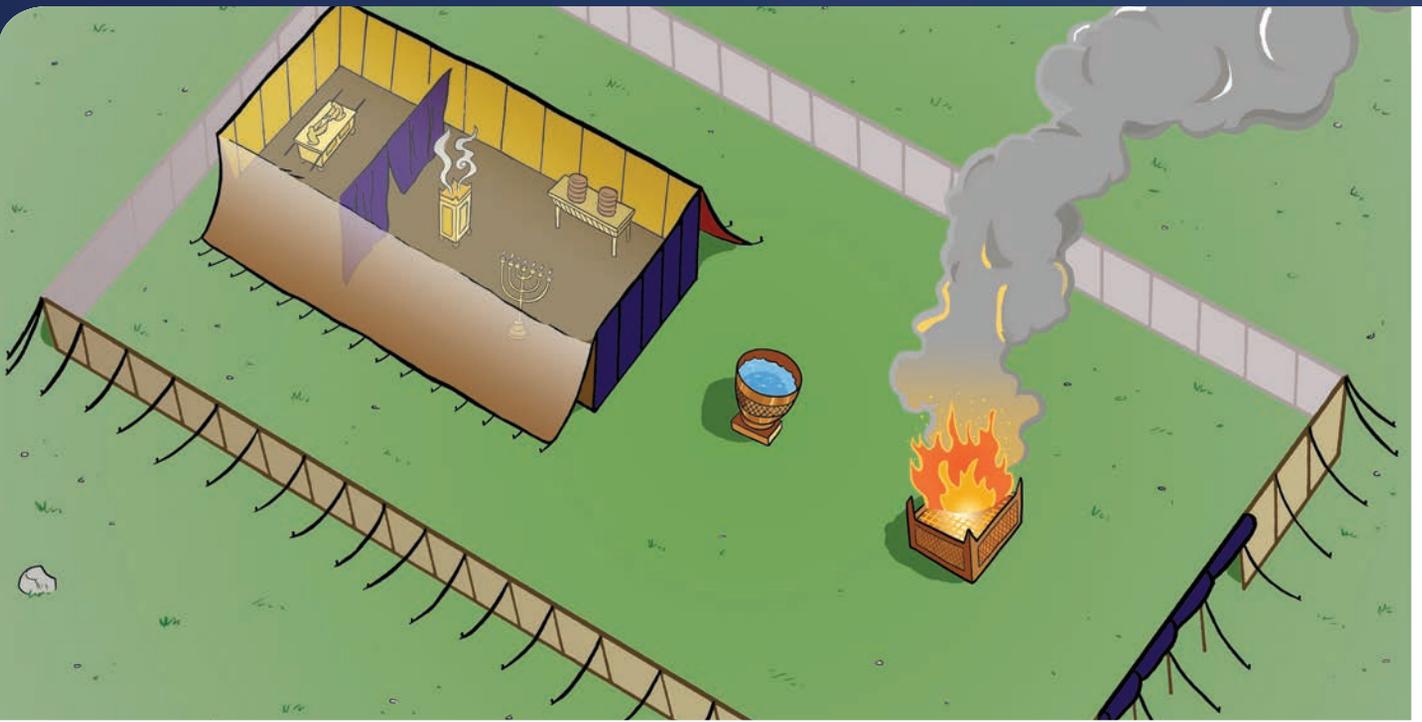
Read the account of the Rich Young Ruler with the class (Matt 19:16–25). This passage reveals the purpose of the Ten Commandments—to reveal the sinfulness of man and the utter impossibility of keeping the law perfectly. The young man asked what he needed to do to obtain eternal life (19:16), but Jesus cited five of the commandments in order to teach the young man both the high standard of God and the absolute impossibility of obtaining salvation by his own effort (19:17–19). Jesus was not teaching salvation by law. He was using the law to show the young man that he was a sinner. However, the young man refused to acknowledge his sin and left Jesus without receiving eternal life (19:22). In contrast, the disciples asked Jesus the right question (19:25). They understood that man was powerless to do anything that merited eternal life. It is only by the power of God that men obtain eternal life.



LESSON 25

God ordains the tabernacle

EXODUS 25:1-27:19; 30:1-10



The holy God dwells among His people.



“And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst”
(Exod 25:8).

Supporting Truths

1. God dwells with His people.
2. God is holy.
3. Man is sinful.
4. God provides atonement so that people can live in His holy presence.
5. Jesus allows sinners to know God.

Objectives

1. Explain what the tabernacle is.
2. Describe aspects of the tabernacle that show God’s separateness and purity.
3. Describe aspects of the tabernacle that show the daily reality of sin.
4. Describe the bronze altar and the blood on the ark of the covenant.
5. Appreciate the access we have to God through Jesus.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God ordains the tabernacle • Exodus 25:1–27:19; 30:1–10



Lesson Summary

God showed Moses the plan for the tabernacle, the holy place where God would meet with His people. The curtains, the gate, the altar for sacrifices, the bronze basin for washing, the lampstand, the table for the bread, the altar of incense, and the ark with its special cover—all these provided a way for God’s presence to dwell among His people. The tabernacle also reminds us of how amazing Christ is, who provides a way for all who believe to access the presence of the holy God.

Spotlight on the Gospel

The tabernacle and constant sacrifices Israel needed in order to have God live among them remind us of the greatness of Christ’s sacrifice that allows believers today to enter God’s presence.

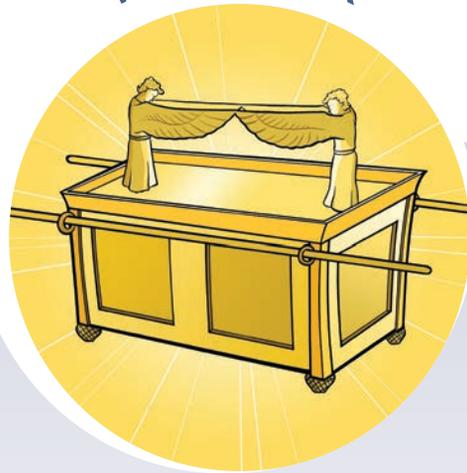
LAST WEEK



God gives the Ten
Commandments

Exodus 20:1–21

THIS WEEK



God ordains the
tabernacle

Exodus 25:1–27:19;
30:1–10

NEXT WEEK



God punishes Israel’s
idolatry

Exodus 32:1–35

DELIVERANCE

Lesson Commentary

The holy God dwells among His people.

The LORD had delivered Israel from Egypt in order to make them His people and to be their God. So at Mount Sinai He made a covenant with Israel, promising that if they obeyed Him and kept His covenant, they would be His treasured people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The people agreed, and the LORD gave them the Ten Commandments and other laws to teach them the standard for living as His holy people. But the laws could not make the people holy, so how could the LORD—who had just displayed His terrifying holiness with thunder, lighting, smoke, and

an earthquake—dwell among them as their God? He would do so by means of the **tabernacle**, a special tent where the holy God dwelt with His people, separate from their sin but accessible to their worship.

When God delivered the plan of the tabernacle to Moses, He made it clear that it was to be built exactly according to the pattern He had given (Exod

25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8). This story demonstrates how serious Israel had to take approaching God, and reminds Christians about how great Christ's sacrifice is that allows us now to come into the presence of God in prayer and to have the Holy Spirit live within us.

The Court of the Tabernacle

Approaching the tabernacle, the first sight would have been a pure white, 7 ½ foot high linen curtain surrounding a courtyard about 150 feet long and 75 feet wide (27:9–19). The white curtain prevented the people from seeing inside, illustrating God's **holiness**, His purity and separation from the world

(1 John 1:5–6). Even above the linen fence the top of the 15 foot high tabernacle would have been visible in the midst of the courtyard, as well as two columns of

smoke, a thin white ribbon of smoke from the altar of incense inside the tabernacle, and a dark plume of smoke from the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard. This constant smoke would have been a steady reminder to all Israel that the holy God could only dwell in their midst so long as innocent animals were sacrificed to atone for sin.

Bronze Altar

Entering the court of the tabernacle, the first thing that would have been seen was the large bronze altar, 7 ½ feet square and about 4 feet tall (Exod 27:1–8). It was made of acacia wood and covered with bronze, with a bronze grate halfway up on the inside. In addition to any sacrifices brought in by individuals or on special days, two lambs were to be offered every day upon the altar, one in the morning and one in the evening (29:38–42). The smell of blood, sweat, smoke, and burned flesh would have clung to the air, with blood smeared on the four horns of the altar. It is a sober reminder that in order to come to God we must have **atonement**. We must have our sins paid for and guilt washed away by the death of an innocent victim (Lev 17:11).

These sacrifices had to be offered each day, because sin is a daily reality. In fact, the animal sacrifices could never take away sin (Heb 10:4). They were signs, pointing forward to the blood of the spotless Lamb, Jesus Christ, who offered Himself as the one great sacrifice to atone for sins once for all (1 Pet 3:18). When Israel sacrificed lambs, they did so by faith that God would atone for their sins so that they could come into the presence of the holy God. Christians no longer offer daily sacrificial lambs, because Jesus, the Lamb of God (John 1:29), completely satisfied God's wrath against sin through His



THINK ABOUT IT
How incredible it is that a perfect God would choose to dwell among a sinful people.



THINK ABOUT IT
God's passion to dwell with His people is seen clearly by the great lengths He went through to make that possible.

THINK ABOUT IT
God's unequalled holiness further highlights man's undeniable sinfulness.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God ordains the tabernacle • Exodus 25:1–27:19; 30:1–10



THINK ABOUT IT

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin and no fellowship with God.

one sacrifice. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin and no fellowship with God.

Bronze Basin

Moving past the altar towards the tabernacle itself would have been a large

bronze basin full of water (Exod 30:17–21). The priests used the basin for washing, and their purity in worship was so important that failure to wash would result in death (30:21). These constant washings revealed man's need for personal holiness and cleansing from sin. What water could never do—cleanse a sin stained heart—Jesus does, through the purifying work of His Spirit (Titus 3:5).

The Tabernacle: The Holy Place

Curtains of Tabernacle

Beyond the basin was the entrance to the tabernacle itself with its four coverings (Exod 26:1–30, 36–37). The tabernacle was 45 feet long, 15 feet wide and 15 feet high. On the outside was a covering of manitee or porpoise skin, a good protection from rain or snow and another sign of God's holiness as being separate from the world. Underneath this cover, was another cover of leathery rams' skin died red. Under the rams' skin was a cover of woven black goat's hair. The innermost of the four coverings, which could only be seen from the inside, was bright white linen, with cherubim woven into it with blue, purple, and scarlet thread. The white again reminds us of the pure splendor of God's holiness (Ps 96:9), and the **cherubim** are angelic beings whose job is to guard God's holiness (Gen 3:24; Ezek 10).

Holy Place

Entering through a veil of the same colorful linen was the Holy Place. The frame of the tabernacle, made out of acacia wood, could have been seen through a cloud

of incense smoke. But no wood would have been visible, because all was covered with gold. The result would have been stunning, as the colorful cherubim woven into the white linen were set in frames of gold

Table for Bread

Inside the Holy Place to the right was a table made of acacia wood and covered with gold, approximately 1½ feet wide, 3 feet long, and a little over 2 feet high (Exod 25:23–30). Twelve loaves of bread would have sat on the table. The bread was called the Bread of His Presence, or the showbread, and it represented the twelve tribes of Israel being continually in God's presence, a picture of God's fellowship with Israel. The priests ate and replaced the bread on the Sabbath (Lev 24:8–9).

Gold Lampstand

Opposite the table was the gold lampstand (Exod 25:31–40). The lampstand had seven lamps, one coming from the center and three on each side. The lampstand was pure gold and resembled a blossoming almond tree, with buds and blossoms decorating it all over. The seven lamps were never to be extinguished all at the same time, so that the lampstand would give light continually, supplied with pure olive oil morning and evening (Exod 27:20–21). There was no window in the tabernacle, so this lampstand was the only source of light.

Altar of Incense

Finally, the altar of incense would have been at the far end of the Holy Place, standing just in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (30:1–6).

It was a small altar, only 3 feet high and 1½ feet square. Like everything else inside the tabernacle, it was covered with gold (30:2–3). This was the source of the incense smoke that filled

THINK ABOUT IT

Because God is willing to dwell among His people they can have sweet communion and interaction with Him.



the tabernacle. The incense, which was replaced every morning and evening (30:7–8), was specially designed by God (30:34–38). It was forbidden to use the same kind of incense for any other purpose, illustrating again that holy God is distinct from the world. Throughout scripture incense represents the prayers of God’s people rising up to heaven (Ps 141:2; Luke 1:10; Rev 5:8).

The Tabernacle: The Holy of Holies

Veil

Just past the altar of incense was the white veil embroidered with cherubim, which was the entrance into the Holy of Holies. “Holy of Holies” is a Hebrew way of saying “the Most Holy Place,” the place of God’s own presence. While other priests could enter the Holy Place to burn incense, replace the bread, or fill the lamps with oil, only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and he could only do so once a year, on the Day of Atonement. On this special day, the high priest would represent all Israel, since he wore on his clothing twelve stones with the names of the twelve tribes engraved on them. When Jesus died, the veil in the temple was torn (Mark 15:38), opening the way for any to enter God’s holy presence, if they enter by faith in the great High Priest, Jesus (Heb 10:19–22).

Ark of the Covenant

Entering the Holy of Holies, little would have been seen. There was just one piece of furniture, the ark of the testimony (Exod 25:10–16). The word for “ark” simply means “box” or “chest.” It was not large—just a little over 2 feet high, 2 feet wide, and almost 4 feet long. Like most of the other furniture, it was made of acacia wood and covered with gold, both inside and out. Inside the box were the tablets of stone given to Moses during the trip up Mount Sinai when he received these instructions (25:16).

Lid of the Ark of the Covenant

But the lid of the ark would have captured attention (25:17–22). The lid is often described as the “mercy seat,” but it was not a seat. The name for the lid actually means “place of **atonement**”, a place of ransom or

deliverance by offering a substitute. It was made of solid gold, with two gold cherubim rising up from each end of the lid, facing the center with their wings stretched

out over the lid. Like the cherubim woven into the linen curtains, these cherubim remind us of the sacred holiness of God. But there was something on the lid—blood, sprinkled on it by the high priest once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16). Inside the ark was the law, which reveals sin and condemns all people for failing to live by God’s perfect standard. But on the lid was the sacrificial blood, covering over the law which man had broken. And above the cherubim the LORD Himself promised to meet with His people (Exod 25:22), letting the sacrificial blood cover the judgment due to humans for breaking His law.

The tabernacle explains how the holy God can dwell with a sinful people, and how a sinful people can dwell with the holy God. This can happen in only one way, because God is supremely holy, as all the curtains, veils, cherubim, and blood show. It is through faith in Jesus’ work that we can dwell with God. For New Testament believers, the tabernacle is a vivid picture of the holiness of God, the seriousness of sin, and the amazing provision of salvation secured by Jesus, who, through His one sacrifice for sin, provides continued access to God.

THINK ABOUT IT
Believers enter
God’s presence
with confidence
because they are
in Christ.



Lesson Outline

The holy God dwells among His people.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God is holy, but He chose to live with sinful people (29:45).
2. The tabernacle was the tent where God met with His people (25:22).
3. The curtains of the tabernacle protected the people from God's holiness (26:1–37; 27:9–19).
4. The sacrifices in the tabernacle allowed the people to come to God (27:1–8).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. The Court of the Tabernacle.

- The curtain around the court separated God's holiness from uncleanness (27:9–19).
- The gate in the curtain allowed just one way to enter (27:16).
- The bronze altar provided blood sacrifices to atone for sin (27:1–8).
- The bronze basin was for washing and purity (30:17–21).

2. The Tabernacle: The Holy Place.

- The curtains of the tabernacle guarded and glorified God's holiness (26:1–30, 36–37).
- The table for bread confirmed God's provision and presence (25:23–30).
- The gold lampstand gave light to come into God's presence (25:31–40).
- The altar of incense burned as a continual reminder of prayerful worship (30:1–10).

3. The Tabernacle: The Holy of Holies.

- The veil separated the Most Holy Place from the rest of the tabernacle (26:31–35).
- The ark of the covenant contained the Ten Commandments (25:10–16).
- The ark's lid was the place of atonement, and above it the holy God met with His people (25:17–22).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What is the tabernacle?**
The tabernacle was a special tent where God chose to live among His people Israel.
- 2. In the tabernacle court there was a bronze altar. What did they do on the altar?**
They offered sacrifices to God, and they brought the blood into the Holy of Holies.
- 3. Why did they offer sacrifices to God?**
The sacrifices showed that the people were sinful and needed to have their sins paid for.
- 4. Do we still need to make animal sacrifices today?**
No. Jesus was the perfect and complete sacrifice for sin. We must trust in Him.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What is the tabernacle?**
The tabernacle was a special tent where the holy God dwelt with His people.
- 2. Why was the tabernacle needed?**
It kept sinful people separate from God so that they would not be destroyed, but it also gave the people a way to come to God and worship.
- 3. Was the tabernacle just designed for Israel's benefit?**
No. It was meant to be a picture for all believers of how to live with the holy God.
- 4. What was in the court of the tabernacle?**
There was a linen fence around it, a gate in the fence, and a bronze altar and a bronze basin inside.
- 5. What three things were in the Holy Place inside the tabernacle?**
The table of the bread of God's presence, the golden lampstand, and the altar of incense.
- 6. What one thing was in the Holy of Holies?**
The ark of the covenant, with its lid called the mercy seat.
- 7. What does _____ (pick an item of the tabernacle) show us about how to dwell with the Holy God?**
See the commentary for the chosen item.
- 8. How can we live with the Holy God today?**
Jesus is our tabernacle. He accomplishes in Himself everything that each part of the tabernacle represented.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

SIMON SAYS

This game can be used to demonstrate how God wanted Israel to follow (obey) His directions exactly. Compare not following Simon's directions to sin.

SET UP A TABERNACLE

As children arrive, tell them that today they will pretend that the classroom is a tabernacle. Explain that the tabernacle was the place where God met with the Israelites. Familiarize the children with the words tabernacle, Holy of Holies, ark, altar for sacrifice, altar for incense, and lampstand. Drape sheets (curtains) over coat racks or a table to make the Holy of Holies. No one but Aaron the priest could go into the Holy of Holies. Make an ark (a gold-painted box), put the two tablets in it, and place it reverently in the Holy of Holies. Outside the Holy Place, designate a table for the gold bowls, dishes, and 12 rolls (loaves of bread). You may cover plates with gold foil or simply ask the children to pretend that the dishes are gold. Place incense on another table and light a candelabra. Of course, this must be carefully supervised.



ILLUSTRATE

PRIEST DRESS-UP

During the teaching time, dress up a couple of the boys like Aaron's sons and one like Aaron, the high priest. Talk about how different they look from everyone else and indicate that God wanted Aaron and his sons to be different. For Aaron's sons: large man's T-shirt for tunic; colorful scarves for sashes and turbans. To make Aaron's clothes: ephod—two pieces of colorful (blue, purple, and scarlet) cloth for front and back, joined at the shoulders by gold chains (wide gold ribbon with six black stones glued on as onyx), and a sash of same material. Add a breastplate of the same material with gold cord at each corner (to attach to shoulder and belt/sash). On the breastplate, glue four rows of three precious stones.

TABERNACLE TOUR

Utilize the tabernacle set up when the children arrived (see "Set up a Tabernacle")



APPLY

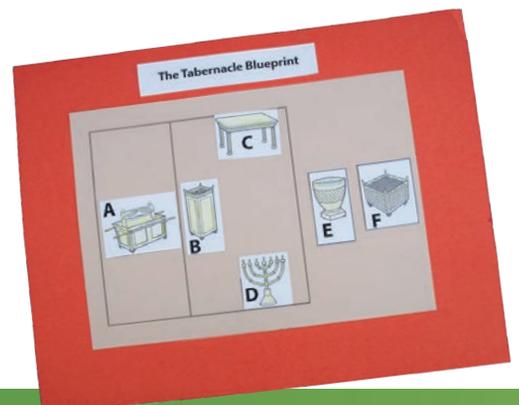
THE TABERNACLE BLUEPRINT

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheets, orange construction paper, tan paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Prior to class, print the tabernacle template onto tan paper and cut it out. Pre-cut the pictures on the craft sheet. In class, have children color the pictures and glue them to the corresponding locations on the template. Glue the template and the title of the craft to orange construction paper.

The Tabernacle Blueprint
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God ordains the tabernacle • Exodus 25:1–27:19; 30:1–10



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

GOD THE ARCHITECT

Materials: a variety of tools or a tool belt and hard hat.

Directions: While wearing the tool belt, hard hat, etc., tell the children that today they are going to enter a construction zone. Ask the children whether they ever have built anything. Explain that it takes a lot of work and planning to build something properly and that in today's lesson, they will learn about God's plan for His tabernacle.

BY DESIGN

Select a variety of clean, empty containers (perhaps from yogurt or oatmeal) to bring to class. Draw a blueprint of a simple project that can be built with the containers. Help the children build the project according to the blueprint. Tell them that God had a master plan that gave specific directions for building the tabernacle. For older children, instead of making a blueprint, write out various directions on single pieces of paper. Be specific. For example, "Place the yogurt containers two inches apart, then..." At the beginning of class, have the children select a piece of paper and build the project according to the directions. Be sure to have enough containers to build all the projects.



ILLUSTRATE

MATERIALS OF THE TABERNACLE

Bring in samples of materials discussed in the building of the tabernacle to show the class. Some examples may include gold; silver; bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen; goats' hair; rams' skins dyed red; badger skins; acacia wood; oil; spices; incense; and onyx stones. Some of these materials may be hard to come by; if so, bring in pictures or similar objects to represent what you cannot find.

TABERNACLE BLUEPRINT

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: copies of "The Tabernacle Blueprint" work sheet in craft book, scissors and glue.

Pass out a work sheet to each child, and direct him to cut out the six pieces of furniture for the tabernacle and place them in a pile on top of his work sheet until later. As you teach on each section of the tabernacle, direct the children to paste the furniture in the correct locations on the tabernacle floor plan.

The Tabernacle Floor Plan
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.



APPLY

THE TABERNACLE FLOOR PLAN

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, brown and tan construction paper, white cardstock, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Print tabernacle template on tan paper and pictures on white cardstock. Have children cut out tabernacle template and pictures from craft sheet. Color the pictures and glue them to the correct locations on the template. Glue template onto brown construction paper. Have children design the tabernacle and the tabernacle walls from tan construction paper, as shown below. Cut into the roof of the tabernacle to see inside and cut a door in the front wall of the tabernacle. Glue on the title of the craft.



AGES 9–11



BUILT WITH CARE

Materials: pictures of various types of houses from different cultures (an igloo, a mud hut, a house, etc.) and of the tabernacle.

Directions: Discuss how each of the buildings is built and what materials are used. Ask the children what type of houses they live in. Once you arrive at the picture of the tabernacle, talk about the materials and procedures by which God commanded the tabernacle to be built.

BLUEPRINTS

Bring in blueprints of various common structures such as a house, an office building, or a car. Have the children guess what each blueprint is for. Invite an architect or contractor to talk to the children about how to read and follow a blueprint and what happens when the plan is not followed.



SHOEBOX TABERNACLE

Construct a mini tabernacle using a shoebox. Use this as a visual aid during your lesson. Make sure to include the court of the tabernacle, holy place, most holy place, altar of burnt offering, bronze laver, gold lampstand, table of showbread, altar of incense, curtain separating holy place from most holy place, and ark of the covenant.

WASHING AWAY SIN

Start with two buckets containing water and soap. Take a dirty cloth and explain that it represents our sinful nature. As you attempt to clean the garment, dip it in and out of the first bucket, struggle, scrub, and add more soap. Give examples of how we might try to clean up our lives. Now take the same dirty cloth, which obviously has not become clean in the first bucket, and dip it into the “Jesus” bucket. Only Christ can truly wash away our sins, cleansing us of all unrighteousness in the eyes of the Father. He can do this because He became the required sacrifice for the atonement of sin. Now, bring out a sparkling clean white cloth (placed into the bucket before class) as a representation of a person whose sin has been washed away.



TABERNACLE REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How would you feel if you were the high priest who had to enter the Holy of Holies to offer the sacrifice before the Lord? (Note: When the high priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, the only day of the year in which he would enter that place, he would tie a rope around him in case he died in the presence of the Lord. The priest’s clothing also had little bells tied to it so that the people could hear him moving around.)
2. What elements of the tabernacle do you see in the death of Jesus Christ?
3. Read Hebrews 9:11–15. What do these verses tell us about the difference between Jesus’ death on the cross and the sacrifices made in the tabernacle? Can you note all the differences? Discuss all the differences.



LESSON 26

God punishes Israel's idolatry

EXODUS 32:1-35



God responds to idolatry with punishment and mercy.



“The LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people” (Exod 32:14).

Supporting Truths

1. Idolatry is sin.
2. God is a just judge.
3. God is merciful.
4. God hates false worship.
5. A godly leader honors God’s glory and character.

Objectives

1. Describe Israel’s idolatry and explain what else is counted as idolatry.
2. Describe how God punished Israel’s sin.
3. Explain God’s two reasons for being merciful.
4. Consider why God’s wrath against idolatry is fitting.
5. Contrast Moses’ and Aaron’s responses.



Lesson Summary

God had shown Israel how to worship Him by giving them His law and the plans for the tabernacle. Together, these explained how Israel was to worship God rightly. But only a few weeks after hearing the Ten Commandments, and before Moses could come down the mountain with the plans for the tabernacle, the people turned to idolatry. Their sin led to the death of 3,000 men, but through Moses' intercession, God spared the rest of the people on the basis of His glory and promises.

Spotlight on the Gospel

At the heart of all sin is a refusal to worship God rightly. But thankfully, there is one who intercedes for Christians, Jesus Christ. Just as Moses interceded for Israel and even offered his own life for atonement, so Jesus does for those who have faith in Him. But Jesus, as the Son of God, made atonement acceptable to God. By His death, we receive God's mercy. By His death, God can punish sin and yet forgive the sinner.

LAST WEEK



God ordains the
tabernacle

Exodus 25:1-27:19;
30:1-10

THIS WEEK



God punishes Israel's
idolatry

Exodus 32:1-35

NEXT WEEK



God's presence fills the
tabernacle

Exodus 33:1-34:35;
40:1-38

Lesson Commentary

God responds to idolatry with punishment and mercy.

When God spoke the Ten Commandments, the people were terrified by His holy presence and asked if God could speak only to Moses (Exod 20:18–19). So Moses went up into the thick cloud where God was, while the people waited at the foot of the mountain (20:21). During these 40 days the people became restless. Though they had seen God’s holy power with their own eyes, they quickly sought an idol to lead them. In response, God proved that He is both just and merciful, punishing sin but sparing His people for the sake of His glory and covenant promises.

Israel committed idolatry (32:1–6)

When Moses did not immediately return from the mountain, the people quickly turned to **idolatry**: they worshiped something else in the place of God. The problem started when they allowed themselves to lose sight of the true God. They forgot that it was God who had led them out of Egypt, and they gave credit for their deliverance to a man, Moses (32:1). Confidence in a man, even a worthy man like Moses, should never replace confidence in God. Men come and go, but God is forever.

It seems that Aaron opposed their plan but lacked the courage to confront them. Perhaps he thought having to tear their gold earrings off would make the people stop, but it did not (32:2–3). So Aaron did what the people wanted and made them a golden calf (32:4). The calf was probably carved out of wood and plated with gold (so that later Moses burned the wood and ground up the gold). Calves were a symbol of strength, commonly worshiped by the Egyptians and Philistines. Aaron foolishly thought he could still turn the Israelites’ worship back to the true God by claiming that the calf was Yahweh. He built an altar in front of the calf and declared a festival to Yahweh (32:5). But the people’s **worship**, the special honor they were supposed to give to God alone, was out of control, proving that they were not serving the true God at all (32:6).

When Israel worshiped the golden calf, they broke the first three commandments. They violated the first commandment, worshiping a god other than the true God. They violated the second commandment because not even the true God was supposed to be worshiped in the form of any image. They violated the

third commandment by applying the name of God to an image that was not God. Like them, we commit idolatry whenever we claim to worship God but instead worship our own version of God. We also commit idolatry by our greed, whenever we want something more than God Himself (Col 3:5), since we worship whatever controls our desires.

Moses interceded for Israel (32:7–14)

The LORD knew what Israel was doing, and He responded with appropriate wrath. He told Moses that Israel had “corrupted” themselves (Exod 32:7), just like the people before the flood (Gen 6:12). “Corrupted” means rotten and useless, like Jeremiah’s rotten belt (Jer 13:7). So the LORD refused to call Israel “my people” as He had before (Exod 32:7). He called them Moses’ people. They were “stiff-necked,” willing to bow before a cow but unwilling to bow before their LORD (32:9). So the LORD told Moses to “let me alone” in order to destroy Israel completely (32:10). The LORD’s response shows just how terrible idolatry is. Idolatry is sin, and God hates sin (Ps 5:5).

God threatened to destroy the people, even suggesting that He would make a new nation out of Moses, but Moses wisely said no (Exod 32:10–11). Moses had good reason to get rid of these stubborn people who had already complained so often about his leadership. But Moses passed the test; after all, if Moses accepted God’s offer, then he would be agreeing that God’s people should be rejected when they sin. If he agreed to that, then what hope could Moses have when he or his children sinned?

So Moses **interceded**; he prayed for the sake of the people. He declared that Israel was God’s people, not his own (32:11). He appealed to God’s glory (32:12). He appealed to God’s faithfulness (32:13). So God relented (32:14). The word used here for “relent” usually speaks of God showing compassion and relenting of punishment (cf. Joel 2:13). There is a different word most often used for humans repenting—a word that means “turn”. So it was

THINK ABOUT IT
Wrong thinking about God leads to the wrong worship of God.



THINK ABOUT IT
God’s character should direct both the believer’s prayers and his praise



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God punishes Israel's idolatry • Exodus 32:1–35



not as if Moses had caused God to change His plan. Rather, God had tested Moses, and Moses had prayed according to what God already desired. God is one who shows mercy for the sake of His glory (Isa 48:11) and in order to be faithful to His promises (Deut 7:7–8; Rom 11:28–29). So God was pleased with Moses, and He is pleased with all who pray according to His character and for the sake of His glory (John 14:13).

Through Moses the LORD severely punished the people's sin (32:15–29)

After God relented, Moses went down to the people. He was carrying the two tablets with the law written on them, but when he saw the idol worship, he threw the tablets

down in anger (32:19). They shattered, illustrating how Israel had broken the commandments they had just heard from the LORD 40 days earlier.

Moses, zealous for God's holiness, put an end to the idolatry. He burned the calf, then he ground up the gold from the calf into powder (32:20). Next he sprinkled the powder into the drinking water and made the people drink. This illustrated the stupidity of worshiping a man-made idol. What they were worshiping as their god one moment became something to drink the next.

Moses then turned to Aaron (32:21), but Aaron refused to take responsibility. Instead, he blamed the people, and just in case that wasn't enough, he claimed that the calf miraculously formed itself (32:22–24). But Aaron was to blame because he had let the people get out of control (32:25). In fact, God would have killed Aaron on the spot if Moses had not prayed for God to spare Him (Deut 9:20).

Finally, to put an end to the riotous idolatry, Moses called to himself whoever was for the LORD (Exod 32:26). Only the Levites came to him. Moses then ordered them to go through the people, killing them with their swords (32:27). Three thousand men were killed (32:28). This sounds harsh, especially since they were killing their own relatives. But it illustrates the severity of sin, especially of

idolatry. We must love God more than anyone or anything, even more than our closest family members (Matt 10:37).

The LORD confirmed both His justice and His mercy (32:30–35)

After the slaughter, Moses returned to the LORD to make atonement for Israel's sin (32:30). Moses pleaded that if God would not forgive Israel, then He should kill Moses instead (32:32). However, Moses could not offer his life for theirs. No mere man can atone for, or ransom, the life of another (Ps 49:7–9).

God rejected Moses' request but answered his heart's desire. God refused to turn away from His **justice**. He would do what is right and fair, promising that those who sinned would die for their own sin (32:33). God may have sent an additional plague (32:35), but this is likely a summary of the punishment already inflicted. Either way, God struck them justly.

On the other hand, God also promised that His angel would go with Moses to lead the people (32:34), showing that God had not forsaken His people. He showed **mercy** by not giving the punishment that was deserved. Although individuals who reject God will perish, God's covenant to the people of Israel, and to all who believe, remains.

Several times the idolatry of Israel is called a great sin (32:21, 30, 31). It was very serious, and it was not limited to the worship of a physical image (Col 3:5). Whenever we desire anyone or anything in the place of God, we provoke God's wrath (Exod 32:10; Col 3:6). We may even commit idolatry while claiming to worship God, if we are actually worshiping our own idea of God. The sin of the calf reminds us that Israel was unable to be holy before God. Thankfully, God is merciful. He would graciously give them a tabernacle, sacrifices, and priest as a way for this sinful people to dwell with God. For us, He has now provided Jesus Christ to forgive and cleanse all who humbly pray for mercy.



THINK ABOUT IT

Breaking just one of God's Laws is like hitting a window in one place with a hammer: the whole thing shatters.

THINK ABOUT IT

It is because of God's mercy that man is not instantly consumed by God's wrath.



Lesson Outline

God responds to idolatry with punishment and mercy.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Israel worshiped an idol (32:1–6).
2. Moses prayed for God not to kill all of Israel (32:7–14).
3. God punished Israel by killing 3,000 men (32:15–29).
4. God was kind and did not kill all of Israel (32:14, 30–35).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Israel sinned by committing idolatry (32:1–6).**
 - After waiting for Moses for 40 days, the people wanted an idol to lead them (32:1).
 - Aaron made a golden calf out of their earrings (32:2–4).
 - Israel sinned and worshiped the golden calf as if it were Yahweh (32:4–6).
2. **Through Moses God chose to show mercy (32:7–14).**
 - The LORD tested Moses by offering to make Moses into His chosen nation (32:7–10).
 - Moses appealed to the LORD's glory (32:11–12).
 - Moses appealed to the LORD's faithfulness to His promise (32:13–14).
 - The LORD relented (32:14).
3. **Through Moses God severely punished the people's sin (32:15–29).**
 - Moses threw down the tablets of the Ten Commandments (32:15–19).
 - Moses ground the calf into powder and made the people drink it in the water (32:20).
 - Aaron refused to take responsibility (32:22–24).
 - Moses led the Levites to kill 3,000 men of Israel (32:25–29).
4. **God confirmed both His justice and His mercy (32:30–35).**
 - Moses prayed that the LORD would forgive their serious sin (32:30–31).
 - Moses prayed that he would die if God would not forgive them (32:32).
 - The LORD said only those who participated in the sin would die (32:33).
 - The LORD promised that His angel would go with Moses to lead Israel (32:34).



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What sin did the people commit?**
Idolatry. They worshiped a golden calf in place of God.
- 2. Did God hate their sin?**
Yes. He even told Moses to let him kill all of Israel.
- 3. What did Moses say to God?**
Moses asked God to forgive Israel.
- 4. Did God punish Israel?**
Yes. Three thousand men died.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did the people commit idolatry?**
They stopped remembering the true God who had rescued them from Egypt.
- 2. What was their idolatry?**
They worshiped a golden calf. Even though they called it Yahweh, it was not Yahweh.
- 3. What did God tell Moses to let Him do?**
God told Moses to let Him destroy all of Israel and make a new nation out of Moses instead.
- 4. What reasons did Moses give for God to forgive Israel?**
Moses prayed on the basis of God's glory and promises.
- 5. What did Moses do with the Ten Commandments when he saw the people's sin?**
He shattered them on the ground in anger. This showed how Israel had broken God's commands.
- 6. What did Moses do to the calf?**
He burned it, ground it into powder, and made the people drink it in the water.
- 7. What was Israel's punishment?**
3,000 men were killed.
- 8. Was God merciful?**
Yes. Even though all Israel deserved to be destroyed, only 3,000 died. God planned to continue bringing Israel to the promised land.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

THE SERIOUSNESS OF SIN

To help communicate the seriousness of sin, review stories that dealt with God's acts of judgment. Talk about when Adam and Eve sinned, and how God expelled them from the garden. There was a time when people were so sinful that God destroyed everyone in a flood. At Babel, God scattered the people and confused their languages because of their pride. God burned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the people's wickedness.

GOLDEN CALF

Bring a golden calf to class. You could build one using gold foil or bring in a cow stuffed animal or figurine from home. Tell the children that the Israelites disobeyed God's second command when they made an idol and worshiped it, and that we're going to learn more about their sin, and God's punishment and mercy in today's lesson.



ILLUSTRATE

WRONG WORSHIP

Use the golden calf (referenced in the above activity) as a visual aid during the lesson. Ask the children if the calf has any power to do anything on its own. Can it move? Can it eat? Can it help others? No. The calf is powerless to do anything. Tell the children that the Israelites broke God's command when they worshiped the calf. Ask the children who we are to worship. Explain that we are only to worship the one, true God.

SERIOUS SIN

Bring a sword to class (real or pretend). Use this during the lesson to illustrate God's punishment of the Israelites. Tell the children that idol worship is a serious sin. Explain that since the Israelites worshiped the calf, God commanded the Levites to go through the camp and kill those who worshiped the idol with their swords (Exod 32:27). That day about 3,000 men died because of their sin. However, God was merciful and not all of the people died (32:14, 30–35). Explain that mercy is not getting the punishment that we deserve.



APPLY

BROKEN COMMANDMENTS, BROKEN HEART

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, green construction paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Cut out the two templates from the craft sheets. Cut tablets and heart from craft sheet and cut them along the solid lines to separate the pieces. Have the children glue the pieces of the tablets and the pieces of the heart on the proper template. Glue the templates to opposite sides of a sheet of green construction paper.

*Broken Commandments,
Broken Heart
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.*



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God punishes Israel's idolatry • Exodus 32:1–35



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

IDLE IDOLS

Show the children pictures of idols from various world religions. Talk about what the idols do and what power they have (do nothing, do not move, could fall over and break, have no power). Then compare all this to the God of the Bible. God created everything, including the materials people use to make idols! We did not make God. He made us! Tell the children that it is a sin to worship idols. Explain that it is also a sin to worship other forms of idols—not just statues, but anything that we put above God (such as money, fame, and beauty).

OBEDIENCE TRIALS

On pieces of paper, write several things you want the children to do. Make the requests simple so they can be done quickly. Place the papers in a basket and let the children pick a paper and do what it says. Talk about the Ten Commandments and how God's Word has things written for the children to obey just as they have obeyed you today. Tell the children that in today's lesson we will see that the Israelites broke the first three of God's commandments when they worshiped the golden calf.



ILLUSTRATE

REACTION CHARADES

Before teaching on the three responses of Moses to Israel's idolatry (32:11–20), ask three children to come up and act out Moses' reactions in front of the class. Have the responses written on index cards to show to each child actor. Allow the class to shout out guesses during the game until someone gives the correct answer.

Three Responses of Moses:

1. Prayed (32:1–14)
2. Broke the tablet containing the Ten Commandments (32:15–19)
3. Burned and ground the golden calf into fine dust (32:20)

PURE WORSHIP

God deserves and demands pure worship. We cannot worship God and idols at the same time. This is what the Israelites attempted to do (32:4–6). Illustrate this by dropping a few drops of food coloring into a glass of water. Just a few drops pollutes the entire glass. Explain that in a similar way even the smallest amount of false worship pollutes any true worship offered with it.



APPLY

RESPONDING TO A MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS GOD

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, red and white cardstock, red yarn, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Cut out a heart from a half-sheet of red construction paper. Paste the title on the front of the heart and the reference and verse text on the back. Cut out another, smaller heart from a quarter-sheet of white construction paper. Paste the "Love and Obey Him" text on one side and the Deuteronomy 6:4–5 reference on the back. Punch small holes at the top and bottom of the red heart, and another hole in the top of the smaller white heart. Thread yarn through these, linking them together and providing you with a piece to hang it with from the top.

Responding to a Merciful and Gracious God
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

TEN COMMANDMENTS, PART 1

Make two stone tablets out of clay. Allow it to dry so that the clay hardens. Tell the children that in today's lesson the Israelites broke each of the first three commandments when they worshiped the golden calf. Ask the children if they can name any of these commandments.

HOW TO PRAY

Tell the children that in today's lesson we are going to read a prayer of Moses (Exod 32:11–13). Explain that this prayer is a model for us to follow. First, Moses prayed about God's past blessings to His people (brought them out of Egypt). Then Moses made a specific request (do not destroy them). Finally, Moses remembered God's promises that were applicable (Abrahamic Covenant). We can pray in the same way. First, remember God's blessings and thank Him for them. (Dear God, thank you for...) Then make requests. (Tell the children about how God is all-powerful and can do anything. However, He will answer prayer according to His will.) Finally, pray to God about His promises to us in the Bible. (Since God does not lie, if He promises something to us, He will provide it!).



ILLUSTRATE

TEN COMMANDMENTS, PART 2

Use the clay tablets from the activity above for this illustration. For a visual example at the beginning of the lesson, drop the tablets on a table and let them shatter. In today's lesson, Moses shatters the Ten Commandments because of Israel's sin. He did this to illustrate how Israel had broken God's commandments.

GRUMBLING

The Israelites became impatient as they waited for Moses to return from the mountain. Their impatience turned to grumbling. This grumbling weakened Aaron's ability to make wise decisions. He must have been tired of hearing all their complaining, so he finally gave in to them. Ask the children the following questions about grumbling: Do your grumbles and complaints wear down your parents? Do you ever keep whining until they finally give in to your desires? Can these grumbings cause your parents to give in and allow you to make poor choices? What should your response be when your parents take a long time to respond to your questions? Have you ever pushed your parents into a decision that you wanted them to make which turned out to be the wrong choice?



APPLY

RIGHT WORSHIP OF GOD

This week's lesson provides the opportunity to teach the children about true worship. True worship begins with a right view of God. Ask the children some of or all the following questions:

- Is there more than one God? (Deut 6:4)
- Can God lie? (Num 23:19)
- Does God know the future? (Ps 139:1–6, 15–16)
- Does anything happen that God does not know about? (Heb 4:13; 1 John 3:20)
- Is there anything that God cannot do? (Jer 32:17, 27)
- Is God everywhere at the same time? (Ps 139:7–12)
- Does God hear our prayers? (Prov 15:29)
- Does God ever break a promise? (Num 23:19)
- Did God die for us? (Rom 5:8)
- Is God love? (1 John 4:8)
- Is God sinless? (Heb 4:15; 1 John 1:5)
- Is anything more powerful than God? (Jer 32:17, 27)
- Can anyone live independently of God? (John 15:5)
- Does God's love ever change? (Lam 3:22–23)
- Does God get impatient or get angry quickly? (Exod 34:6–7)
- Is God ever unfair? (Dan 4:37)
- Is God totally in control over all people and circumstances? (Ps 33:8–11)
- Will God ever die? (Isa 57:15)
- Is God's Word true? (Ps 19:7–1)



LESSON 27

God's presence fills the tabernacle

EXODUS 33:1-34:35; 40:1-38



God dwells among His people with great glory.



"The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.'" (Exod 34:6-7).

Supporting Truths Objectives

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God dwells among His people. 2. God's glory is shining. 3. God's glory is kind. 4. God's glory is holy. 5. God shows His glory to the humble. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how God first stayed away from the people, but then came into the tabernacle. 2. Describe Moses' face and the fiery cloud over the tabernacle. 3. List the words God used that describe His kindness, and describe His kindness to Moses and Israel. 4. List the words God used that describe His holiness, and explain how God showed Himself holy to Israel. 5. Describe how God showed His glory to Moses, and how He returned to Israel after they repented and obeyed. |
|--|---|



Lesson Summary

After Israel's idolatry, God said that the people would still enter the land of Canaan, but He said that He would no longer go with them Himself. The people were very sad, and Moses knew that without God's presence Israel would be no different than the other nations. So Moses prayed, and God answered with kindness: He showed Moses His glory, and then He came with glory into the tabernacle. God displayed His glory through His holiness, kindness, and bright splendor.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God revealed His glory to Moses as an act of grace, and God continues to reveal His glory through Christ to those He has chosen by grace. As God came near to the humble Moses and to repentant Israel, so also He draws near to all those who repent and humble themselves, depending on Christ alone. In Christ, God displays how great He is by His kindness and justice by saving sinners, and by providing a just sacrifice for sins.

LAST WEEK



God punishes Israel's
idolatry

Exodus 32:1–35

THIS WEEK



God's presence fills the
tabernacle

Exodus 33:1–34:35;
40:1–38

NEXT WEEK



God ordains the
sacrificial system

Leviticus 1:1–7:38

Lesson Commentary

God dwells among His people with great glory.

After worshipping the golden calf the people deserved to be completely destroyed. In response to their great sin, God, for a time, pulled back His glorious presence from among the Israelites. But Moses prayed to God on the people's behalf, and God heard Moses' prayer and returned, demonstrating his gracious forgiveness. After the completion of the tabernacle, God's presence descended on it, filling it with His **glory**—the display of how great He is. God dwelt in the midst of His people, just as He had promised.

The LORD kept His glory away from the sinful people (33:1–6)

Although God was gracious to Israel after their idolatry, their sin still separated them from God. God showed His grace by staying faithful to His promise to Abraham to give Israel the land of Canaan (Exod 33:1–2; Neh 9:17). He would even send an angel with them to drive out their enemies. But because of their sin, God Himself would not go with them (Exod 33:3). God's presence is so **holy**, so pure and opposed to sin that He might destroy the people in a single moment because of their sin (33:5; Ps 1:5).

The people responded in the right way. They mourned (Exod 33:4). They removed all their jewelry as a sign of their grief (33:6). They grieved because they saw that their sin had separated them from

God (Isa 59:2). This separation is illustrated by the tent of meeting (a temporary place used by Moses to talk to God before the tabernacle) being set up far away from the camp (Exod 33:7). God's glory and man's sin do not mix.

Moses prayed on the basis of God's favor and glory (33:7–23)

God did not completely remove His presence from Israel. Moses habitually went into the tent of meeting

to pray, and the pillar of cloud would come down on the tent (33:9). God was showing favor to Moses by meeting with Moses in a very real and direct way in the tent of meeting (33:11). When it says that God spoke to Moses "face to face," it does not mean that Moses saw God, since later it is clear that no one can see God's face—the fullness of His glory—and live (33:20). Saying that God spoke to Moses face to face is an expression meaning that God spoke to him clearly, without hiding anything in mystery (Num 12:8). God spoke to Moses openly, as one friend speaks to another. This is the way God relates to those who are humble (Num 12:3; Isa 65:2; Jas 4:6–10).

Through Moses' prayers God would restore His presence to Israel. Moses came to God on the basis of God's grace. God had said that Moses found favor in God's sight (Exod 33:12), like Noah had (Gen 6:8) and like Mary would (Luke 1:30). God showed grace to all three individuals and used them to bring about His plan of deliverance. Even as Moses prayed, God was accomplishing Israel's deliverance through Moses' prayer. Moses' prayer for Israel's deliverance reminds us of Jesus who is greater than Moses and intercedes now for His children.

Moses appealed for God's glory to remain with Israel. He knew that unless God went with Israel, they would not be any different than the other nations (33:16). Only God's gracious presence with them could set them apart. God again granted Moses' requests as a demonstration of His grace (33:17).

Moses prayed because He loved God's glory, and his final request reflected his love. He asked to see God's glory (33:18). The LORD agreed, but He would not

THINK ABOUT IT
The holy God of all the earth desires personal interaction with His people.



THINK ABOUT IT
Sin always separates and divides man from God.

THINK ABOUT IT
Moses understood that God's purpose for Israel could not be fulfilled without God's presence with Israel.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God's presence fills the tabernacle • Exodus 33:1–34:35; 40:1–38



show Moses His face—His full glory—because this would be too much for any man (33:19–20). No one can see God and live (John 1:18). Even a glimpse of God's glory is overwhelming (Matt 17:6). So God would only show Moses His back (Exod 33:23). This does not literally refer to God's back, since God is spirit (John 4:24). Instead, it means that Moses would see the fading glory that remained after God's full glory had passed by.

The LORD showed Moses His glory (34:1–35)

The next morning, Moses saw God's glory. He took two tablets for the law as God had instructed him and climbed Mt Sinai alone (Exod 34:1–4). The LORD came in a cloud and proclaimed His name: Yahweh (34:5–6). The LORD's name is not just a word. It represents His nature. As the LORD passed by, He proclaimed what He is like: His grace, patience, love, truth, holiness, and justice (Exod 34:6–7; Ps 103:8). God's glory is thus kind and just at the same time.

Moses responded in the only appropriate way: he bowed all the way down to the ground and worshiped (34:8). When He realized just how great God was, He again pleaded for God to forgive Israel (34:9). He was urgent because He had seen the holiness and justice of God's glory. If God did not forgive, His glory in the midst of Israel would destroy them. But Moses was also bold because he had seen the grace and patience and love of God. Only through forgiveness can stiff-necked people be God's own possession.

The LORD again granted Moses' request. He made a covenant to protect Israel from the false worship they had so recently performed. They were to destroy everything in Canaan associated with idolatry (34:11–17), and they were to keep three feasts each year in order to remember the true God (34:18–27).

Finally, after forty days without food or water (34:28; Matt 4:2), Moses came down with the new set of Ten

Commandments. His face shone bright because he had seen God's glory (Exod 34:29). Moses' shining face reminds us how all believers are called to reflect God's glory to the world (Matt 5:16). To calm the people's fear, Moses wore a veil from then on (Exod 34:33). But he would take the veil off when he went to speak with God, and he would keep it off while he spoke God's word to the people (34:34–35). By seeing the brightness of God's glory on Moses' face, the people would learn to fear the word of God that Moses spoke to them.

The LORD's glory came to Israel (40:1–38)

After Moses' vision of God's glory, the LORD told him to begin building the tabernacle. Moses and the people obeyed perfectly, as the passage emphasizes five times (40:19, 21, 25, 29, 32). When the tabernacle was finished, the cloud came over the tabernacle and God's glory filled the tabernacle to such an extent that Moses could not even enter it (34:34–35). God's glory was too much even for Moses to endure. Eventually Moses would be allowed to enter, and God's presence remained among Israel for the rest of their wanderings, fulfilling His promise to dwell among them and be their God.

The glory that Moses saw and that shined on his face was just a glimpse of the glory of God revealed through Jesus Christ (2 Cor 3:16–4:6). Even we do not see God's glory yet in its fullness (1 Cor 13:12), but one day we will. This hope is not for those who continue in unrepentance, because God's glory destroys sinners. This hope is only for those who humbly depend upon the glorious mercy and grace of God available because of Jesus Christ.

THINK ABOUT IT

Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun to the world, believers are to reflect the light of the Son of God to a lost and dying world.



Lesson Outline

God dwells among His people with great glory.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. The people were sad because the LORD said He would not live with the people (33:1–6).
2. Moses prayed for the LORD to come live with the people (33:7–23).
3. Moses saw how glorious the LORD is (34:1–35).
4. The LORD came to live in the tabernacle, and it was full of His glory (40:1–38).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. The LORD kept His glory away from the sinful people (33:1–6).
 - His presence would not go up with the people (33:1–3).
 - The people mourned and took off their ornaments (31:4–6).
 - Moses prayed on the basis of God’s favor, promises, and glory (33:7–23).
 - Moses regularly met with God, and God spoke with him clearly (33:7–11).
 - Moses asked for God’s guidance (33:12–13).
 - Moses asked for God’s presence (33:14–16).
 - Moses asked to see God’s glory (33:17–23).
2. The LORD showed Moses His glory (34:1–35).
 - The LORD proclaimed His compassion, grace, patience, love, truth, holiness, and justice (34:1–7).
 - Moses bowed low and worshiped (34:8).
 - Moses prayed that God would forgive Israel’s sins and make Israel His own (34:9).
 - The LORD made a covenant to protect Israel’s true worship from idolatry (34:10–27).
 - Moses’ face shone because of God’s glory (34:28–35).
3. The LORD’s glory came to Israel (40:1–38).
 - Moses and the people built the tabernacle just as God had commanded (40:1–33).
 - A cloud came over the tabernacle (40:34–38).
 - The glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle (40:34–35).

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God's presence fills the tabernacle • Exodus 33:1–34:35; 40:1–38



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why were the people sad?**
God did not stay with them because of their sin. The tent of meeting was moved far away from the people.
- 2. What did Moses ask for?**
Moses asked for God to come and stay with Israel and lead them. He also asked to see God's glory.
- 3. After Moses saw God's glory, what was Moses' face like?**
It was shining.
- 4. After the people built the tabernacle just like God said, what did God do?**
He came into the tabernacle and filled it with His glory. He stayed among the people.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did God choose not to stay among the people?**
He said that He is so holy He might completely destroy them because of their sin.
- 2. Where did Moses pitch the tent of meeting?**
He put it far outside the camp, showing that God would not stay close to sinful people.
- 3. What did Moses ask God for?**
Moses asked for God to help him lead Israel, to come stay with Israel, and to show him His glory.
- 4. What three reasons did Moses give for God to do these things?**
Moses prayed for these things because of God's promises, grace, and glory. God had promised that Israel was His people, God had chosen to show favor to Moses, and God's glory would not be displayed if Israel moved on without God.
- 5. How did God describe His glory to Moses?**
He described Himself as "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."
- 6. What did Moses do when he saw a glimpse of God's glory?**
He bowed down to the ground and worshiped, and he prayed that God would forgive Israel's sin.
- 7. When Moses and the people built the tabernacle, did they do it the way God said?**
Yes, they obeyed God exactly, showing that Israel had repented.
- 8. What did God do after the tabernacle was finished?**
He came into the tabernacle with great glory. He came to live among the people.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3-5



INTRODUCE

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

God's goodness and His name signify who He is. Help the children write and decorate their own names. Here are some ideas:

1. Before class, print each child's name in block letters so that he can color and decorate inside each letter.
2. Bring parchment paper and markers. Let the children practice, and then write out their full names.
3. Bring in a book that gives the origin and definition of names. Look up children's names and write out their meanings. This would be a good opportunity to discuss God's characteristics, which make up who He is.

BUILD THE TABERNACLE

This is the place where God sent His special presence. It needs to be very, very beautiful. Bring in three or four 12-foot sheets of butcher paper. Lay them on the floor and ask the children to make their prettiest pictures of angels on them. Once the sheets of paper are decorated, drape the pieces facedown over a rectangular table, and tape them to the floor. The beautiful pictures of the angels were on the inside of the tabernacle. This was where God was going to be. Use the tabernacle as you tell the story.



ILLUSTRATE

GLOWING ITEM

Bring a toy, shirt, or any item you have that will glow in the dark after being exposed to light. Show the children how the item works by exposing it to bright light and then taking it to an area where there is as little light as possible. Tell the children that after Moses spent 40 days on the mountain talking with God his face was glowing with the glory of God, and the people were afraid to come near him.

HIDDEN IN A ROCK

Bring in a large rock to class and tell the children that God hid Moses in a rock to protect him from God's glory. Explain that Moses wanted to see God's glory, but God told Moses that no man could see His face and live (Exod 33:20). But God did let Moses see the back of His glory. However, before showing Moses His glory, God placed Moses in the cleft of a rock to protect him from His glory. Use this as an opportunity to talk about God's holiness and man's sinfulness.



APPLY

GOD APPEARS IN THE CLOUD AND FIRE

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, cotton balls, red tissue paper, black and blue construction paper, white and yellow paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Pre-cut two pictures of the tabernacle and two verses from the craft sheet. Pre-cut a moon and a sun. Have students glue a sheet of black construction paper to a sheet of blue construction paper. On the black side glue the tabernacle picture and verse along with the moon and a pillar of fire made from pieces of red tissue paper that are twisted with the eraser end of a pencil. On the blue side glue the other tabernacle picture and verse along with the sun and a pillar of cloud made of cotton balls.

God Appears in the Cloud and Fire
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God's presence fills the tabernacle • Exodus 33:1–34:35; 40:1–38



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

THE BRIGHTNESS OF GOD'S GLORY

To help the children understand the intensity of God's glory, give them the example of the sun. We cannot (and should not) look into the sun without it hurting our eyes. Have the children brainstorm for some objects that they need to protect them from the sun. Tell the children that God's glory is much more intense, more consuming, and even brighter than the sun! Ultimately, we are protected from God's holiness and can only behold His glory by being in Christ.

SHATTERED TEN COMMANDMENTS PUZZLE, PART 1

Before class, draw two tablets on butcher paper and write the Ten Commandments on them. Cut the tablets into puzzle pieces. Before the lesson, hand out the puzzle pieces to various children. In the previous lesson Moses broke the Ten Commandments after he learned of Israel's idolatry. Ask the children to piece the tablets of the Ten Commandments back together. Tape the reassembled tablets to the board, and use them to review the ten instructions God had given Israel. Explain that in today's lesson God instructs Moses to cut two more tablets of stone like the first ones so he could rewrite the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:28).



ILLUSTRATE

OIL (HOLINESS) AND WATER (SIN)

Bring to class a clear container, vegetable oil, water, and stirring spoon. Tell the children that God's holiness cannot mix with sin. Demonstrate this by pouring the oil into the water. Point out that the oil and water do not mix together. Emphasize this by trying to mix the oil and water together with a spoon (the oil separates from the water after being stirred). Tell the children that just like the oil and water, God's holiness cannot be combined with sin. But unlike the oil and water, God's holiness cannot even be near sin. In fact, God is so opposed to sin that it is dangerous for sinners to be near Him (Exod 33:3).

SHATTERED TEN COMMANDMENTS PUZZLE, PART 2

Use the Ten Commandments tablets (used in "Shattered Ten Commandments Puzzle") as a visual aid in your lesson to illustrate Moses coming down the mountain with a new set of commandments to replace the ones he shattered after seeing Israel's idolatry with the golden calf.



APPLY

TWO-SIDED TABERNACLE

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, red tissue paper, cotton balls, tan and brown construction paper, white cardstock.

Directions: Pre-cut verses from craft sheet. Have children form a tabernacle by folding a brown sheet of construction paper as shown below. Cut to fit and glue the bases of the tabernacle to the tan construction paper. Roll a half sheet of cardstock into a cylinder and tape it together. Glue cotton on one side to represent the pillar of cloud and glue red tissue paper (twisted with the eraser end of a pencil) on the other side to represent the pillar of fire. Glue the cylinder to the tan construction paper. Glue the verse to the tabernacle as pictured below.



Two-Sided Tabernacle
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

AGES 9–11



DESCRIBING GOD

In order for Moses to know who God was, God described His characteristics. Describe a few simple objects to the children, and have them guess what they are. For example: “I am round, you can kick or throw me, and I am about the size of your head. What am I?” A soccer ball. Show them a soccer ball and explain that they knew what it was from your description of its characteristics. In the same way, although we cannot see God, we can know who God is by how He described Himself. Other ideas include a blanket, an apple, and a bicycle.

PITCH A TENT, PART 1

Bring a camping tent to class. Ask child volunteers to help you follow the directions to set up the tent properly in preparation for the coming of the Lord. Tell the children that after Moses’ vision of God’s glory, the LORD told him to begin building the tabernacle. Moses and the people obeyed perfectly, as the passage emphasizes five times (40:19, 21, 25, 29, 32).



INTENSITY OF THE SUN (MADE BY GOD)

Tell the children that even though it takes about 8 minutes for the sun’s heat and light to travel to the earth (the sun is about 93 million miles from Earth), we still must take precautions to protect us from the sun’s rays (hats, sunscreen, sun glasses, etc.). Yet, God’s glory is much more intense, more consuming, and even brighter than the sun! Ultimately, we are protected from God’s holiness and can only behold His glory by being in Christ.

PITCH A TENT, PART 2

Use the tent (mentioned in “Pitch a Tent, Part 1”) when teaching about Moses’ encounter with God outside the camp in Exodus 33:7–11. Cover your face with a veil when you come out of the tent to demonstrate how the face of Moses shone because of God’s glory in Exodus 34:29–35.



THE COMMANDMENT RACE

Give each child copies of the Ten Commandments that have been cut into strips and held together with a paper clip (this activity could also be done in groups). These should not be in order. When you say “go,” the children can remove the paper clip and race to put their commandments in order. The first to arrange them correctly is the winner.