



# TEACHER BOOK

## YEAR 1 • BOOK 3

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Generations of Grace  
13248 Roscoe Blvd.  
Sun Valley, CA 91352

[www.generationsofgrace.com](http://www.generationsofgrace.com)

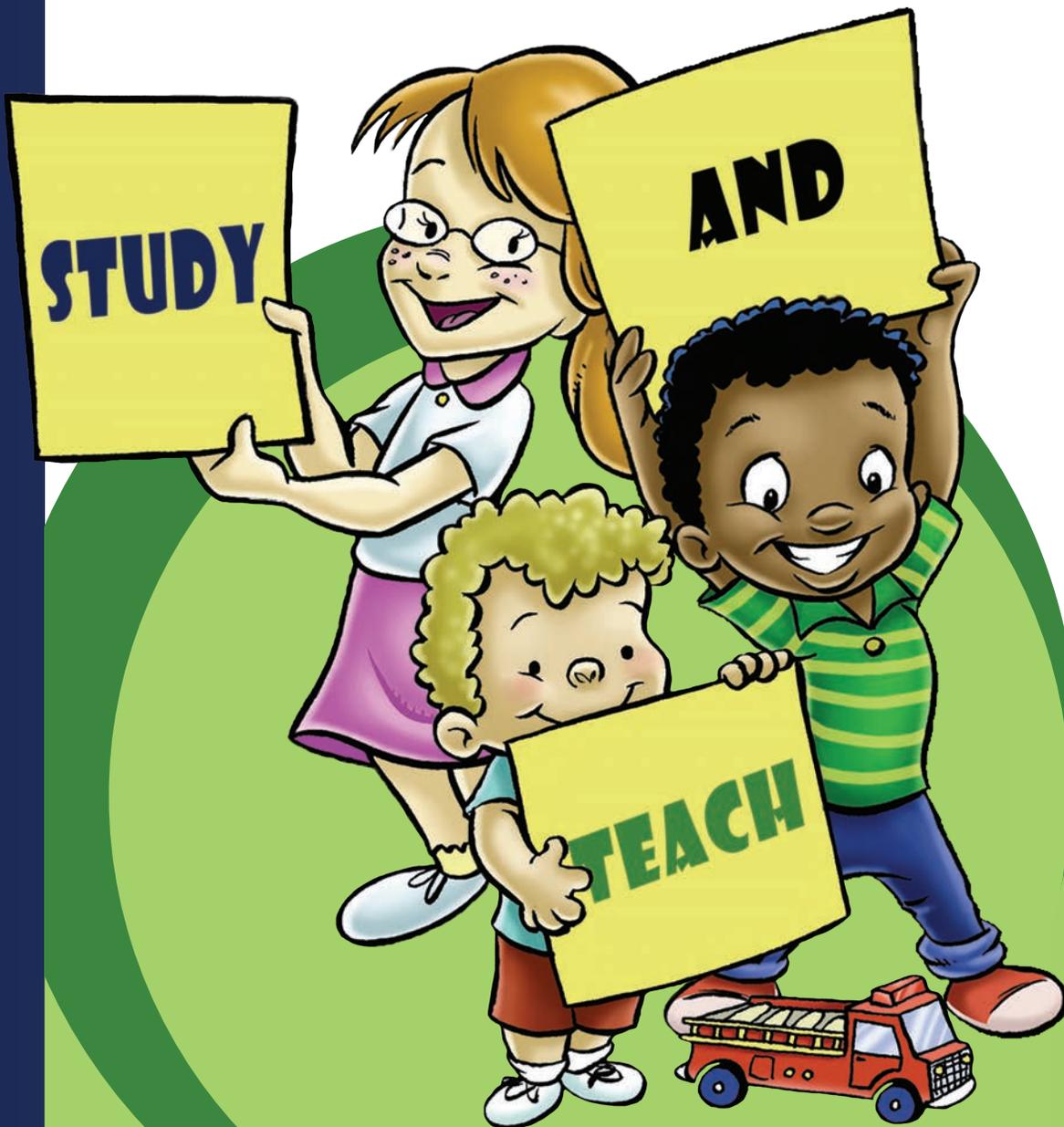
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WELCOME TO  
*Generations of Grace*



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 32

### *Israel rejects God's provisions*

NUMBERS 11:1-12:16



God punishes those who do not trust in Him.



*“And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes, and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled” (Num 11:1a).*

## Supporting Truths

1. Complaining shows that one does not trust in God.
2. God is able to provide for His people.
3. God cares for His people.
4. God is faithful to His promises.
5. God is merciful in His judgment.

## Objectives

1. Describe how Israel sinned by complaining and grumbling.
2. Describe how God demonstrated His power and ability to provide for Israel.
3. List some of the ways God cared for Israel.
4. Explain how God was faithful to His promises by both providing for and punishing Israel.
5. Point out some of the ways God was merciful in His judgments.



## Lesson Summary

The first generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt is remembered for their lack of faith. They quickly forgot God's mighty works and put Him to the test (Ps 106:13–14). God punished them by giving them exactly what they asked for: an abundance of meat. But God also punished their rebellion, sending a severe disease among them (Ps 106:15). Sadly, they did not learn from their punishment and continued in their rebellion.

## Spotlight on the Gospel

The people demonstrated their lack of trust in God by complaining against the LORD and against His servant, Moses. They had returned to Egypt in their hearts (Acts 7:39). But Moses, despite his momentary unfaithfulness (11:10–15), continued to grow in his faith (cf. 12:7). Like Moses we must have faith in God, for without faith it is impossible to please Him (Heb 11:6). Those who reject Jesus through unbelief will receive the severest punishment (Heb 10:26–29).

LAST WEEK



God requires holy living  
*Leviticus 19:1–37*

THIS WEEK



Israel rejects God's provisions  
*Numbers 11:1–12:16*

NEXT WEEK



Israel rejects God's plan  
*Numbers 13:1–14:45*

# Lesson Commentary

## *God punishes those who do not trust in Him.*

The book of Numbers opens with the people of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai less than one year removed from the great Exodus from Egypt. During the previous 11 months at Mount Sinai, Israel had received the Law of the LORD and entered into covenant with Him. There they had seen the LORD's faithfulness to His word and provision for His people as God personally provided for the needs of two million Israelites. Initially, Israel expressed a degree of obedience to the LORD, but this obedience was short-lived. Three days after crossing the Red Sea, Israel complained against God (Exod 15:22–25). Despite the great signs which Yahweh had done in Egypt, His provision between the Red Sea and Mount Sinai, Israel had not changed. Now, three days after leaving Sinai, on the way to Kadesh, they continued their grumbling against the LORD.

### Israel was rebellious so God burned the perimeter of the camp (11:1–3)

At the first sign of trouble and discomfort, Israel was ready to go back to Egypt.

However, to reverse course and return to Egypt would have been to reject the LORD. God had promised goodness and blessing (10:32), but the people responded with rebellion and grumbling. (11:1–3). By grumbling, the nation of Israel gave voice to their own sinful heart. God had graciously led them out of Egypt, but instead of responding with love and obedience, they responded with anger and disobedience. They preferred slavery and the false gods of Egypt to the true God who had freed them by His powerful hand.

Moses immediately interceded for the people through prayer (11:2). Even then God was gracious and burned only the perimeter of the camp, although His punishment could have been much more severe (cf. Nadab and Abihu, Lev 10:1–3). This rebellion marks a shift in the book of Numbers from faithfulness to rebellion. Numbers 11:1–3 marks the first of seven rebellions recorded in the book of Numbers. This

short but dynamic rebellion demonstrates the general pattern of Israel's rebellion: (1) the sin of the people; (2) punishment by God; (3) prayer to God; and (4) salvation.

### Israel was faithless so God killed those who complained (11:4–35)

Even after God demonstrated His

own power and grace by burning the perimeter of the camp, the "rabble" **complained**, expressing their unhappiness with words (11:4; cf. Exod 12:38). Their discontent spread throughout the nation of Israel. They recounted with fondness their former life in Egypt, choosing to remember only the good things and none of the hardships (Num 11:5). They had already forgotten all of God's provisions: the water, manna, and quail God provided on the way to Sinai (Exod 15:22–17:7).

They were not content with God's provision, so the LORD promised to punish them by giving them such an abundance of quail that it would be as if it were coming out their noses. The LORD told Moses why He gave Israel so much meat: it was because the people had rejected the LORD (11:20). They doubted God's power and ability to provide for them (11:23). The LORD promised to show them that He had both the power and ability to provide for the needs of all the Israelites.

Moses himself also demonstrated a lack of trust. First, he complained that the LORD had given him too great a burden (11:10–15). Second, he doubted that the LORD could provide meat for all the Israelites (11:22–23). The LORD responded to his first complaint by pouring out His Spirit on 70 elders of Israel (11:16–17, 24–25). These men would assist Moses, sharing the burden of leadership. The LORD responded to Moses' second complaint by sending an over abundance of quail. Using a wind, the LORD delivered a massive quantity of quail to the areas surrounding Israel's encampment (11:31). The people spent two days collecting the quail before spreading the meat out around the camp to dry after it was cleaned and salted (11:32). But

**THINK ABOUT IT**  
Complaining is very contagious and is the result of a discontented heart.



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
The mouth is a mirror reflecting the heart (Mt 12:34).

# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Israel rejects God's provisions • Numbers 11:1–12:16



before the people even had the chance to enjoy the meat, God struck them with a deadly disease. The anger of the LORD burned against the rebellion of those who had craved the meat (11:33).

## Miriam and Aaron were prideful so God struck Miriam with leprosy (12:1–16)

The next rebellion sprang up from within Moses' own family. Miriam and Aaron, Moses' sister and brother, opposed his leadership on the basis of his wife's ethnicity. After the death of his first wife, Zipporah, a Midianite woman, Moses married a woman from Cush (Ethiopia). Miriam was likely the instigator of this rebellion since her name is mentioned first (12:1). Aaron supported her just as he had supported the people in building the golden calf (Exod 32:1–5, 21–24). Miriam's opposition to Moses on the grounds of his wife was nothing more than a smoke screen to hide her **prideful** heart, she and Aaron were filled with thoughts only about themselves.



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
Pride is the seed of every sin and that seed resides in every single heart.

Miriam and Aaron's pride is revealed in their question (Num 12:2). They were both spokespeople for God: Miriam was called a prophetess (15:20) and Aaron, the high priest, consulted the Urim and **Thummim**

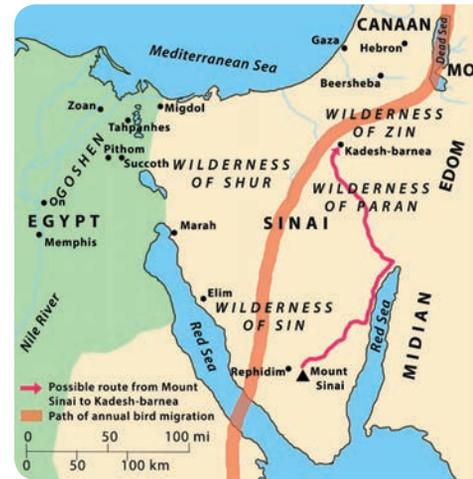
which was a way the LORD communicated with Israel in the early period of Israel's history (Exod 28:30; 1 Sam 14:41–42; Ezra 2:63). But by challenging Moses' unique relationship with the LORD (12:2), Miriam and Aaron revealed the pride and jealousy rooted in their hearts. Moses' response (or lack thereof), reveals his humility (12:3). He didn't respond in fear or jealousy. Moses didn't say anything! It was the LORD who rose to his defense, calling the three out to the tent of meeting (12:4). There, the LORD appeared in a pillar of cloud at the doorway and called Aaron and Miriam over to speak with Him (12:5).

The LORD's words to Aaron and Miriam affirmed His unique relationship with Moses (12:6–8). First, God called Moses "My servant", giving him a title of the highest honor (Num 12:7; cf. Matt 25:21, 23). Second, God told Aaron and Miriam that He spoke with Moses "mouth to

mouth", not in visions or dreams (12:6, 8). To communicate directly with the LORD was a unique privilege. Exodus 33:11 says that Moses communicated with God "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend". To speak against one who had such a special relationship with the LORD was to speak against God Himself.

Therefore the LORD immediately punished Miriam, striking her with leprosy (12:10). Aaron quickly repented of his sin and begged Moses to not hold Miriam's sin against her (12:11). Moses again demonstrates his humility, asking the LORD to heal his sister (12:13). God graciously provided for her healing, but set a condition on Miriam's cleansing. She would need to go through a period of purification, remaining outside the camp for seven days (12:14). The entire community suffered as a result of her sin, delaying their journey to the Promised Land until Miriam was received back into the camp (12:15).

Sadly, the first generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt is remembered for their unfaithfulness and evil desires. They did not believe in God or trust in His saving power (Ps 78:22). Despite all of His wonders they did not believe in the LORD (78:32). The apostle Paul said that these things were written for our example, so that we might not desire evil as they did (1 Cor 10:1–13). When we reject God's provision for us through His son, Jesus Christ, we are like that generation of Israelites whom He punished for their unbelief (Ps 95:7–11). God will eternally punish all those who do not place their faith in Jesus (Heb 10:29). However, God is faithful, and will save all those who ask God for forgiveness because of Jesus' death on the cross.



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
The negative consequences of just one sin impacts many people (Rom 5:12).



# Lesson Outline

*God punishes those who do not trust in Him.*



## AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Israel was unhappy with God, so God sent fire from heaven (11:1–3).
2. Israel complained about food, so God sent a severe disease (11:4–35).
3. Miriam and Aaron rejected Moses', so God punished Miriam (12:1–16).



## AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Israel was rebellious, so God burned the perimeter of the camp (11:1–3).
  - The people grumbled about their condition (11:1a; cf. 10:32).
  - God punished the people by burning the perimeter of the camp (11:1b).
  - The people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed (11:2).
  - The LORD responded by making the fire die down (11:2).
2. Israel was faithless, so God killed those who complained (11:4–35).
  - Non-Israelites (“rabble”) began to complain about food and some Israelites joined them (11:4–7).
  - The LORD’s anger burned, and Moses demonstrated a lack of faith (11:10–15).
  - The LORD strengthened Moses’ faith (11:16–30).
  - The LORD punished the people, sending an abundance of meat and a severe plague (11:31–35).
3. Miriam and Aaron were prideful, so God struck Miriam with leprosy (12:1–16).
  - Miriam and Aaron rejected Moses as God’s unique servant and leader (12:1–3).
  - The LORD Himself came to Moses’ defense (12:4–8) and punished Miriam for leading the rejection of His servant (12:9–10).
  - Moses prayed for Miriam, and the LORD allowed her to be restored (12:11–16).





## Lesson Questions

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



### Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Did the Israelites have any reason to complain?**  
No. God gave them everything they needed.
- 2. How did the Israelites reject God's provision?**  
The people of Israel were not satisfied with what God had given them; they wanted more.
- 3. What did God give the people because of their complaints about not having meat?**  
God gave Israel more than enough quail and punished the people with a severe disease.
- 4. What did Aaron and Miriam do in Numbers 12, and what was the punishment?**  
They opposed Moses. God punished Miriam for her sin with a terrible skin disease called leprosy.



### Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did the Israelites do in Numbers 11:1?**  
They grumbled about their perceived “misfortunes.”
- 2. What did God do when He heard the grumbling of the people of Israel?**  
When God heard their complaints, His anger was kindled, and He sent fire to consume some of those living near the edges of the camp.
- 3. Did the Israelites and those with them have any reason to complain about food?**  
No. God had provided water, manna, and quail for the people on the way to Sinai (Exod 15:22–17:7). Surely the LORD could provide for the people in the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land.
- 4. What did God give the people because of their complaining about not having meat?**  
God graciously provided quail. He provided more than enough quail and punished the people with a severe plague.
- 5. What did Aaron and Miriam do in Numbers 12:1?**  
They spoke out against Moses. They were not trusting God's decision for Moses to be their leader. They thought they knew what was best for God's people.
- 6. How did God describe Moses?**  
God described Moses as a faithful servant (Num 12:7). Moses was also more humble than anyone else on the earth (Num 12:3).
- 7. What did Moses do when he saw that Miriam had been afflicted with leprosy?**  
He prayed to God on her behalf. He had mercy on Miriam and wanted God to heal her.
- 8. What was God's answer to Moses' prayer?**  
God would heal Miriam, but first she would have to be sent outside the camp for seven days.

# Lesson Activities

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

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

## GOD'S PROMISE IS CLOSE

Remind children about the special promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3. God had given them a great nation (lots of people) and a law to run the country (like classroom rules), and now He was about to give them their own land (place to build a home). This should have been a very exciting time, but it was not exciting for Israel. The moment their lives became just a little difficult, they complained and failed to trust God.

## COMPLAINING PUPPET ROLE-PLAY

Use a puppet to show complaining attitudes. Have the puppet complain about cleaning his room, being kind to his sister, sharing with a friend, or about the food that he has received. What is wrong with having a complaining attitude? In today's lesson, the children will see what happened when Israel complained about their food and their leader.



ILLUSTRATE

## CROWD PARTICIPATION

Tell the children that in today's lesson we will see the nation of Israel sin many times. However, we will also see many times when Israel obeys God or when God is merciful to Israel. Explain that every time we hear the Israelites doing something sinful we're going to say "boo" and give a "thumbs down" sign. Every time we hear the Israelites obeying God or God being merciful we're going to say "yay" and give a "thumbs up" sign. Lead the children in these cheers and signs as you teach through the lesson.

## GATHERING QUAIL

During part of the Bible lesson, have the children pretend to pick up quail and put them in a basket. Emphasize that the quail were piled three feet high. For small children, this could be up to their necks.



APPLY

## GOD SENDS QUAIL

*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.*

**Materials:** Craft sheet, paper bag, black and white construction paper, scissors, and glue.

**Directions:** Pre-cut wings and verse from craft sheet. Pre-cut two beaks, two feet, two eyes, two pupils, and one feather from construction paper as pictured below. During class, instruct students to glue all these items to the bag in their proper place.



*God Sends Quail*  
*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.*

# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Israel rejects God's provisions • Numbers 11:1–12:16



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

Play the game by choosing a child or a teacher to be leader. The children need to do exactly as the leader says (jump on one foot, run in place, remain quiet, etc.). After playing the game ask the children the following questions: (1) Did anyone want to be the leader when it wasn't his turn? (2) Did anyone try to take over as leader when it wasn't his turn? (3) Did anyone refuse to follow the leader? (4) Did anyone think they could do a better job than the leader? Use their answers to discuss how God has chosen leaders for us, including our parents, teachers, pastors, and government officials that we must follow. Tell the children that in today's Bible lesson we will see the Israelites' sinful response to God's chosen leader for them.

## COMPLAINING

Tell the children that in today's lesson, we will learn about the Israelites' complaining attitudes. Ask the children the following questions so they can learn what complaining is and how to stop it. Who complains? What is complaining? When do we complain? How do we complain? Why is it wrong to complain? What should we do instead of complaining?



ILLUSTRATE

## LEPROUS HAND

Create a leprous hand by coating a white glove in glue and covering it with coconut flakes. Allow the glove to dry. Use this during the lesson to help the children picture God's punishment of Miriam (Num 12:10–15).

## QUAIL

Bring in a picture of quail to help the children understand God's provision of meat for the nation of Israel. Talk about how many quail it would take to feed two million people.



APPLY

## ISRAEL COMPLAINS AGAINST GOD.

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

**Materials:** Craft sheets, oatmeal, tan and orange cardstock, crayons, scissors, and glue.

**Directions:** Have children color and cut out the pictures and verse from the craft sheet. Glue the pictures, oatmeal, and verse to the tan cardstock as shown below. Use orange cardstock to create flames. Glue the folded base of the flames onto the back of the scene.



Israel Complains Against God.  
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

### THE ROOT OF SIN

**Materials:** one healthy plant and one dead plant, small tags, bobby pins.

**Directions:** Before class, prepare the plants by labeling the roots. Write “Pride” on a tag, and attach it to the roots of the dead plant with a pin. Repeat with the healthy plant, but write “God” on the tag. Ask the children to identify differences between the two plants. Ask the children what they think caused the differences; lift up the root of the healthy plant and talk about how God is the root of all goodness, beauty, health, and life. Then lift up the root of the dead plant and discuss the fact that pride is the root of many sins. Explain that in today’s lesson, we will learn about how the sinful pride of Israel.

### QUOTATION PREDICTION

Write this quotation from Numbers 11:23 on the board for children to see when they enter the classroom: “The LORD said to Moses ‘Has the LORD’s arm been shortened?’” Ask the children to predict what the Israelites were complaining about when the Lord asked this question. Tell the children that we will find out the answer in today’s lesson.



ILLUSTRATE

### OBEDIENCE LEADS TO BLESSING

Ask for a child volunteer. Tell the child that you are going to send them on a journey around the class and that he needs to be very careful to listen to and obey your instructions. Then take out a blindfold and use it to cover the child’s eyes. Direct the child on a journey through the class using nothing but your words. After the activity ask the class what would have happened if the child hadn’t liked your instructions or chosen not to listen to them? Compare this to Israel’s rejection of what God’s provision.

### “COMPLAIN” ACROSTIC

Use the acrostic “COMPLAIN” to help children remember the sinful complaints of Israel in Numbers 11–12 (Note: The phrases are not in the exact order of the text).

**C**raved food they had in Egypt  
(Num 11:4–6)

**O**ffended God and displeased  
Moses (Num 11:10–15)

**M**anna was not enough for them  
(Num 11:7–9)

**P**eople were weeping at the door  
of their tents (Num 11:10)

**L**eadership of Moses was rejected  
by Aaron and Miriam (Num 12)

**A**roused the Lord’s anger, which  
resulted in punishment  
(Num 11:1–3)

**I**srael rejected God’s provision!

**N**umbers 11–12



APPLY

### FILL A PAIL WITH QUAIL

Place a bucket in the center of the room, and spread objects (paper birds, stuffed animals, feathers, etc.) around the room. Have the children fill the pail with all the objects as quickly as they can. For large groups, have multiple buckets and race. Then talk about how God provided so much quail that the people spent 1½ days gathering it. They each gathered at least 10 homers (one homer = 6½ bushels)—a lot! If possible, bring in enough items and buckets to make that amount.



## LESSON 33

*Israel rejects God's plan*

NUMBERS 13:1-14:45



God judges those who reject Him.



*“And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?” (Num 14:11).*

## Supporting Truths

1. God promised to bring Israel to a land flowing with milk and honey.
2. God promised to defeat Israel’s enemies.
3. God is slow to anger.
4. God punishes sin.
5. God is merciful in His judgment.

## Objectives

1. Describe how Israel should have responded to the spies’ report.
2. Describe how God would have defeated the Canaanites had Israel been faithful.
3. List all the times that Israel rebelled and God demonstrated His long-suffering by not wiping them out.
4. Explain how God punished Israel’s sin.
5. Describe how God demonstrated His mercy by letting the nation live in the wilderness for 40 years.



### Lesson Summary

God promised Israel that He would give them a land flowing with milk and honey. However, the nation, following the evil report of the ten spies (Num 13:32–33), rejected God and His promise (14:1–4). The LORD responded by judging the people, demonstrating both His mercy (14:20) and the severe consequences of sin (14:21–23). He swore in His wrath that the first generation of Israelites out of Egypt would not enter into His promised rest (Ps 95:10–11).

### Spotlight on the Gospel

God promised to give Israel a pleasant land, but the people did not believe in God's word (Ps 106:24). They despised the Promised Land, hardening their hearts in rebellion against the LORD. God judged the people for their unbelief, causing them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years while that entire rebellious generation died off. We must learn from their example and, like Joshua and Caleb, respond to God's promises with belief and obedience (Num 14:6–9). God will judge all those who reject Him (Heb 10:26–31).

LAST WEEK



Israel rejects God's provisions  
Numbers 11:1–12:16

THIS WEEK



Israel rejects God's plan  
Numbers 13:1–14:45

NEXT WEEK



Israel rejects God's prophet and priest  
Numbers 16:1–17:11

# Lesson Commentary

## *God judges those who reject Him.*

As Israel traveled toward the Promised Land, they were marked by discord, rebellion, and dissatisfaction. They forgot God's mighty works and put Him to the test (Ps 106:13–14). So in response, God punished them by sending a disease among them (106:15). They should have learned from their punishment, but they did not. The people continued in their rebellion against the LORD, rejecting His promise to give them the Promised Land.



### THINK ABOUT IT

The faithfulness of God is the only sure foundation to a living and lasting faith.

### Ten spies gave an evil report about the Promised Land (13:1–33)

The LORD commanded the Israelites to send spies to spy out the land of Canaan

(13:1). Deuteronomy 1:20–22 indicates that the people desired to spy out the land because they were afraid. Yet God was gracious and allowed the Israelites to send spies into the land. The spies were sent to evaluate the land and the strength of those living in the land (Num 13:17–20). But more importantly they were sent so that they might be witnesses who could give testimony to how great the land was that God was going to give to the people.

God had promised Israel a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev 20:24), and the spies were to give testimony that God's promise about the land was true. They were to testify that God was leading them to a land that was exceptionally productive. Their testimony to God's faithfulness in regard to the abundant produce of the land would be proof that God would be faithful in regard to driving out the people of the land. Through the testimony of the spies, Israel should have realized that God is faithful and that they could trust Him to fight for them. The LORD would be faithful to drive out the Canaanites just like He promised He would do (Exod 23:28–31; 33:2; 34:11).

The spies affirmed that the land did indeed flow with milk and honey (Num 13:27), but they were afraid of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. Giant humans

lived in the land (Deut 1:28–33; Josh 14:12–15; 15:13–19; cf. 1 Sam 17). Their fear demonstrated their rejection of God. They were afraid because they did not believe that God would be faithful to drive out the Canaanites. Therefore Caleb stood up and urged the people to trust God (Num 13:30). He understood that since God's word was true concerning the nature of land, surely God's word was true concerning their victory in taking the land. Caleb believed that God's angel would go before them and drive out the Canaanites (Exod 33:2). But Israel desired to go back to Egypt (Acts 7:39) and back to their false gods (Ps 78:58). Ten of the spies rejected the LORD by spreading an evil report (13:32–33 ; cf. Exod 23:1), and the people followed them in their rebellion.

### The nation of Israel rejected God (14:1–10a)

Israel had no faith in the LORD's promise (Ps 106:24). Instead, they trusted in the ten spies' exaggerated report. As a result, they became afraid, believing that they were like insects among men (Num 13:32–33).

The Israelites' fear resulted in sadness. The spies were practically saying, "You will die if you go to Canaan." Therefore the people cried and wept (14:1). The Israelites' sadness resulted in grumbling. First, they began to grumble against Moses and Aaron, saying that they should appoint a new leader to bring them back to Egypt (14:2–4). To reject God's leader is ultimately a rejection of God Himself (1 Sam 8:7). Second, they grumbled against the LORD, accusing Him of bringing them out of Egypt only to abandon them to die in Canaan (14:3). Such an accusation was an assault on both God's character and God's actions.

Moses and Aaron immediately humbled themselves and **interceded** for the people (14:5), praying to God on their behalf. Joseph and Caleb also humbled themselves and urged the people not to rebel. They believed that if they were faithful to the LORD and He delighted in them, that He Himself would fight their battles (Exod 23:28–31; cf. Exod 14:14, 25; Ps 35:1).

### THINK ABOUT IT

Faith apart from God is worthless! Your faith is only as strong as the object to which it is directed.



# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

## Israel rejects God's plan • Numbers 13:1–14:45



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
True faith trusts in God no matter how tough it may seem.

They understood that if the LORD was with them that no one could possibly stand against them (Ps 118:5–7). Therefore they urged the people not to rebel against the LORD nor fear the people of the land (Num 14:9).

The Israelites' rebellion against God was seen in their rejection of Joshua and Caleb. They desired to kill those who were faithful to the LORD (14:10a). Their rebellion was now complete. They had completely rejected God and His chosen leaders.

### The LORD judged the nation of Israel (14:10b–45)

The LORD intervened to stop the murder of Israel's leaders (14:10b). He questioned Moses concerning the people, giving Moses the opportunity to intercede for the people (14:11). Yet the LORD also threatened to destroy the people, demonstrating the seriousness of their sin (14:12; cf. Exod 32:10). Moses' intercession for the people was grounded in the glory of God (14:13–16), the character of God (14:17–19a), and the past actions of God (14:19b). Moses' prayer is an example of how we ought to remember God's glory and character when we pray.

First, Moses interceded for the people by appealing to God's glory (14:13–16). Moses emphasized God's action in saving Israel: You are in the midst of Israel, You are seen face to face; You go before them. If God annihilated the Israelites after all that He had done to redeem them (14:14), then the Egyptians and other nations would think that God makes mistakes (14:16). God had saved Israel for His own glory (Ps 106:8), and God's glory would have been diminished before the nations if He destroyed Israel in the wilderness.

Second, Moses interceded for the people by appealing to God's character (14:17–19). After the incident with the golden calf, the LORD described Himself as a gracious, compassionate, loving, and long suffering God who is slow

to anger, forgiving, but also just (Exod 34:6–7). Based on this, Moses appealed to God's great love, long-suffering, and forgiving character.

Third, Moses prayed that God would forgive the rebellious Israelites just as He had done in the past. They had rebelled at Rephidim (Exod 17:1–7), with the golden calf (32:1–35), by grumbling (Num 11:1–3), by complaining (11:4–35), and by rejecting the LORD's leader (12:1–16). In each rebellion God demonstrated His merciful judgment, displaying His loving character. God's character is unchanging. Moses emphasized that the LORD is loving and forgives yet does not leave the guilty unpunished (Num 14:18; Exod 34:6–7).

The LORD responded by judging the people and demonstrating the full array of His character. He forgave the people (14:20), disciplined the people (14:21–23; 26–29; 30–35), blessed the faithful (14:24–25), and killed the spies who began the rebellion (14:36–38). The LORD forgave the people but there were still consequences for their sin. They would not see the land because they rejected God and His promise (Ps 106:24). The entire generation of rebellious Israelites would die in the wilderness (14:29). God swore in His wrath that they would not enter His promised rest because they had rebelled and rejected Him (95:10–11).

Despite the LORD's merciful judgment, Israel continued in their rebellion. The people were sorry over God's judgment and their sin (14:39), even recognizing that they had sinned (14:40), but they did not truly repent. They refused to obey the LORD and went into battle without the LORD's presence among them and were easily defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites (14:42–45). We must not follow the example of the rebellious Israelites who rejected the LORD and His promise. Rather, we must be like Joshua and Caleb who believed in God's word and obeyed His commandments (14:6–9).

**THINK ABOUT IT**  
The deadly results of sin should serve as a strong deterrent against sin (1 Cor 10:6–12).



# Lesson Outline

*God judges those who reject Him.*



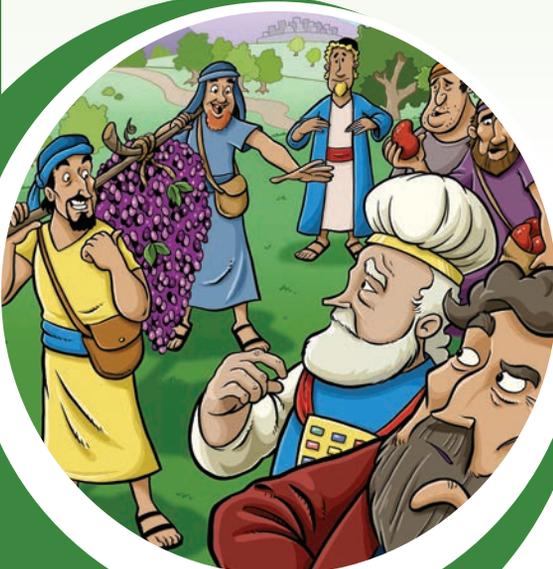
## AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Ten spies gave a bad report about the Promised Land (13:1–33).
2. The nation of Israel rejected God’s plan and His promises (14:1–10a).
3. As a result, Israel had to wait forty years to enter the Promised Land (14:10b–45).



## AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Ten spies gave an evil report about the Promised Land (13:1–33).
  - God commanded that Israel send out 12 spies to confirm His promise (13:1–24).
  - The spies confirmed the land was good (13:25–27).
  - 10 of the 12 spies rejected God by not believing God’s promise to drive out the Canaanites and by giving an evil report of the land to the people (13:28–29, 31–33).
  - Caleb affirmed his faith in God (13:30).
2. The nation of Israel rejected God (14:1–10a).
  - The nation wept, grumbled, talked about returning to Egypt, and discussed appointing a new leader to replace Moses (14:1–4).
  - While Moses and Aaron prayed for the people, Caleb and Joshua pleaded with the people to be faithful to God and the covenant (14:5–9).
  - The people decided to kill Moses, Aaron, Caleb, and Joshua (14:10a).
3. The LORD judged the nation of Israel (14:10b–45).
  - God allowed Moses to pray for the people (14:10b–12).
  - Moses prayed for the people based on the LORD’s glory, character, and past forgiveness (14:13–19).
  - The LORD forgave the people, but He also judged the people (14:20–45).





## Lesson Questions

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



### Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did God command Moses to do?**  
God told Moses to send spies into the Promised Land.
- 2. What did the spies report when they came back from their 40 day journey?**  
The spies said that the land was very good but that the people were huge.
- 3. Did God allow the Israelites to kill Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb?**  
No. God stopped them.
- 4. How did God punish the Israelites?**  
They would have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.



### Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did God command Moses to do?**  
God told Moses to choose a man from each tribe of Israel to spy out the land of Canaan.
- 2. What kind of report did the spies bring back?**  
They reported that the land was rich and good. However, the men thought that the people who lived in the land were too strong to be conquered.
- 3. Was this the right attitude for the men to have?**  
No. The men showed a lack of faith when they failed to believe that God would give them the land He had promised.
- 4. What was the response of the Israelites to the negative report?**  
They were afraid. They wept. They questioned why God had brought them out of Egypt. They desired a new leader to take them back to Egypt. They rejected God.
- 5. How did Moses and Aaron react when they saw the sinful response of the Israelites?**  
They fell on their faces before the people, preparing to pray to God on their behalf.
- 6. What stopped the Israelites from stoning the four men?**  
The Lord stopped them. He appeared in the tabernacle before the Israelites.
- 7. Did the Lord forgive Israel?**  
The Lord forgave Israel, but He still punished their sin. The entire rebellious generation would have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before the younger generation could enter the Promised Land.
- 8. Did the people repent and accept the punishment God gave them?**  
No. They tried to conquer the land even though the Lord was not with them and they were defeated (Num 14:44–45).

# Lesson Activities

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

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

## REFUSING GOOD

In our lesson today, the Israelites refused to enter the good land that God had given them. Provide a child with something good (a dollar bill, candy, a Bible, etc.) and tell them to give it to you. When it comes time to receive the good thing, refuse to take it from the child. Tell the class that we will learn how the Israelites refused to enter the good land that God had given them.

## SEEING AS GOD SEES

Bring two pairs of play eyeglasses into class. Select one child to put on “man’s” glasses. Before you put the glasses on the child, have the child close his eyes. Have a teacher stand on a chair and pretend to be a giant, mean Canaanite. Put the glasses on the child, and then have the child open his eyes. Have the child close his eyes again and give him “God’s” glasses. While his eyes are closed, have the Canaanite sit on the floor. Have the child open his eyes and look now. Tell them that in today’s lesson we’ll find out whether the Israelites chose to see the Canaanites as man sees them or God sees them.



ILLUSTRATE

## GOING ON A TRIP

Pretend to be some of the 12 spies preparing to go into the Promised Land. As you fill a backpack with supplies (water, food, map, notebook and pencil, etc.), talk about what you might expect to see, hear, smell, and taste in the land.

## MEGA GRAPES

Blow up purple balloons and string them over a broom handle like a cluster of grapes. Have two teachers carry the balloons, talking about what happened to them as they spied out the land.



APPLY

## GOOD REPORT, BAD REPORT

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

**Materials:** Craft sheet, purple paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

**Directions:** Pre-cut the pictures and titles from the craft sheet. Pre-cut purple ovals that will serve as grapes. Have students color the pictures and glue them to the page as shown below. Glue purple ovals onto the picture as demonstrated below.



*Good Report, Bad Report*  
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Israel rejects God's plan • Numbers 13:1–14:45



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

## GOD'S COMMANDS ARE GOOD

Sometimes God asks us to do things that seem hard. God commands us to ask for forgiveness if we've hurt someone and to be kind to people who are unkind to us. God's commands don't always feel good, but they are good. In today's lesson, the Israelites are asked to do something very hard. God promised them a special land to live in, and they were commanded to go take it. Let's see if they obey God's Word and trust His good promise.

## IN GOD'S TIME

**Materials:** stopwatch with alarm

**Directions:** At the beginning of the lesson, tell the children that you are going to test how quickly they can obey. Ask them to stand up, then turn on the stopwatch and ask them to sit down. Tell the children how long they took to obey. Challenge them to try to obey instantly, and then time them sitting down and standing up a few times. Explain to the children that God desires instant obedience. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about Israel, who tried to obey God in their own time and their own way, not in God's time and God's way.



ILLUSTRATE

## WRONG-WAY BINOCULARS

Give children a turn looking at you through a pair of binoculars from only a few feet away. Explain that if you look through a pair of binoculars from one side, it makes things look bigger. But if you look at things from the other side, they seem very small. In today's lesson, God asked the Israelites to spy out the land. They were afraid because they were looking at things from man's perspective and not God's. The people living in the Promised Land seemed bigger than they really were.

## FOOD OF THE LAND

Bring in different edible treats the spies would have brought back from their journey through the Promised Land (figs, dates, grapes, garbanzo beans, olives, pomegranates, and honey). Allow the children to taste the different foods.



APPLY

## SPYING OUT THE LAND BINOCULARS

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

**Materials:** Yellow cardstock, orange paper, yarn, foam decorations, crayons, scissors, and glue.

**Directions:** Instruct the children to fold and cut a sheet of yellow cardstock in half widthwise. Roll each strip and tape together to form two cylinders. Connect the cylinders by gluing one strip of orange paper onto them and place the verse from the craft sheet on this strip of paper as shown below. Punch two holes in the end of each cylinder and tie one piece of yarn through them to create a neck strap for the binoculars. Decorate the binoculars with foam shapes or markers.



*Spying Out the Land Binoculars*  
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

### REVIEW PAST PROMISES: ABRAHAM TO MOSES

Ask the children what promises God had given to His people in the past. Review the promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 and 22:18–19; to Isaac in 26:2–4; to Jacob in 28:13–14; and to Moses in Exodus 3:8–10. You may wish to use these as sword drills. In today’s lesson, we will see whether the Israelites believed God’s promise.

### HOW DO YOU VIEW?

Have a teacher enter the room as if to teach the lesson. This teacher should complain about the number of children in the class, the difficulty in teaching multiple age levels, the lack of supplies, the quality of room furnishings, and the amount of preparation required to teach. The next teacher should enter the room and talk about exactly the same things—children, supplies, furnishings, and preparation—but giving an entirely different and much more positive perspective. When both teachers are finished, discuss with the children how these two people could have completely different outlooks on the very same things. Discuss what made Joshua and Caleb’s report different from that of the other spies.



ILLUSTRATE

### PROMISED LAND REPORT CARD

Using a piece of poster board, create a giant report card and give grades to different aspects of the land (produce, natural resources, people, cities, etc.). Use this during the lesson when talking about the spies’ report.

### GOD’S MERCY IN JUDGMENT

God punished the rebellious Israelites by preventing them from entering the Promised Land and causing them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. However, God was merciful in His judgment. He allowed the Israelites to live and sustained them for 40 years during their wanderings in the wilderness. Read Deuteronomy 8:1–5 as a class, pointing out how God provided for the Israelites



APPLY

### RACE TO OBEDIENCE

Coordinate a brief “obedience race,” such as walking across the room while balancing a golf ball on a spoon. Divide the children in teams, and see who races to obedience the fastest. Each time the golf ball falls to the ground that child must stop, go back to the beginning, and start over.



## LESSON 34

*Israel rejects God's prophet and priest*

NUMBERS 16:1-17:11



We must worship God His way.



*“And he said to Korah and all his company, “In the morning the LORD will show who is his, and who is holy, and will bring him near to him. The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him.” (Num 16:5).*

## Supporting Truths

1. God hates false worship.
2. God has prescribed how man ought to approach Him.
3. Rejecting God’s Word is rebellion against Him.
4. God punishes those who rebel against Him.
5. God is merciful in His judgment.

## Objectives

1. Name the sin of Korah.
2. Describe what Korah’s role in the tabernacle was.
3. Explain how Korah overstepped the limits God had established for his service in the tabernacle.
4. Describe God’s punishment of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and the 250 leaders.
5. Describe how God revealed his mercy in the midst of his judgment.



## Lesson Summary

Korah led a massive rebellion against Moses and Aaron because he wanted to be priest. But God defended Moses and Aaron, demonstrating His choice of Aaron by judging the rebels, accepting Aaron's prayers on behalf of the people, and sending a divine sign vindicating Aaron as His choice for priest. Through all this, God demonstrated that He is serious about worship. Man can only approach God in the way that He has prescribed, which is through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

## Spotlight on the Gospel

In Numbers 16:1–17:11, God defended Aaron's authority to serve as high priest. Today, the only high priest is Jesus, who continues as high priest forever (Heb 7:24). He was appointed by God (5:5–7), and functions as the perfect high priest who offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin once for all (7:27). Jesus is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), and He alone is able to save all those who draw near to God through Him (Heb 7:25).

LAST WEEK



**Israel rejects God's plan**  
*Numbers 13:1–14:45*

THIS WEEK



**Israel rejects God's prophet and priest**  
*Numbers 16:1–17:11*

NEXT WEEK



**God offers Israel healing from sin**  
*Numbers 20:2–13;  
21:4–9*

# Lesson Commentary

## *We must worship God His way.*

The nation of Israel continually rejected the LORD. They rebelled against the LORD by grumbling against His goodness (11:1–3), by complaining about His provision (11:4–35), by challenging Moses’s leadership (12:1–16), and by rejecting His promises (13:1–14:45). Their constant rejection demonstrated their sin and revealed their need for a **mediator, someone to represent them before a holy God and to make peace with God concerning their sin**. But the people rejected the LORD’s mediator, Aaron and his family, insisting that any Israelite could serve as priest. Therefore, the LORD confirmed the priesthood of Aaron, as well as Moses’ right to lead the people once and for all.

### **Korah and many others questioned the leadership of Moses and Aaron (16:1–40)**

Korah challenged Aaron and his family’s God given right to serve as priests (16:3). Korah claimed that all of Israel was **holy, set apart and separate from sin**, and therefore the entire nation should be allowed to be priests (cf. Exod 19:6). Korah himself was a Levite, but he was not a priest; rather, he was a Kohathite. The Kohathites were Levites who were instructed to carry the holy objects used in the tent of meeting when the Israelite camp was on the move (Num 4:1–20), but they were not to touch the holy things or even look at them, lest they die (4:15, 20). Korah had been given a very important job, but he was jealous of his cousins who had been made priests by the LORD. Korah accused Aaron of having acted selfishly by keeping the priesthood to himself, but in reality it was Korah who was disobeying God’s law (16: 3, 7).

Dathan, Abiram, and On, who were Reubenites, also joined Korah in his rebellion against God’s appointed leaders. They too were attempting to gain authority they thought was rightfully theirs (cf. Gen 49:3–4). They accused Moses

of putting out the eyes of the men, an idiom similar to “pulling the wool over their eyes.” They clearly rejected God’s promises, referring to Egypt as a land flowing with milk and honey (Num 16:13–14). Their rebellion was ultimately against God, not Moses and Aaron.

Moses told Korah that in the morning God Himself would show the one whom He had chosen to be His priest (16:5–7). Korah and all his company were to put fire on their censers and offer incense to the LORD (16:16–18). But their offering, like that of Nadab and Abihu, was not accepted by God (Lev 10:1–3). Therefore, the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron to distance themselves from the congregation before He destroyed the people (16:21). Moses and Aaron interceded for the people, praying that God would only judge those who had rebelled (16:22). They appealed to God as the creator, sustainer, and sovereign Lord of all flesh. Their appeal was to God’s **mercy, the kindness God shows to people who do not deserve it** (cf. Num 14:17–20). God was gracious and warned the people to move away from those who rebelled (16:23–30).

But God was also **just, fair and right**. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, along with all their households, were swallowed up by the earth while the 250 men who offered incense were destroyed by fire (16:31–35; cf. 26:9–10). But even

in the midst of judgment, God was merciful. Numbers 26:11 indicates that the sons of Korah were spared from God’s judgment, having separated themselves from their father’s house. To remind the Israelites that only Aaron’s descendants were allowed to burn incense before the LORD, the LORD had Eleazer hammer the censers of those who had sinned into a cover for the altar (Num 16:36–40).

In one sense, Korah was correct. Those who trust in the LORD are a holy people (Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:9). But the rebels twisted God’s truth and used it as cover for their own rebellion. They perverted God’s word like all false teachers do (Jude 4–11). Therefore, God was just in judging these rebels. Yet in the sons of Korah we also see God’s grace (26:11). Some of Korah’s descendants would author psalms. Eleven psalms are attributed to the sons of Korah (Pss 42, 44–49, 84, 85, 87, 88). Psalm 46 even became the text from which Martin Luther wrote the hymn “A Mighty Fortress” which has blessed the Church for centuries.



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
All sin is ultimately rebellion against God and a rejection of His Word.

**THINK ABOUT IT**  
Failure to follow God’s ways is an invitation to experience God’s wrath.



# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Israel rejects God's prophet and priest • Numbers 16:1–17:11



## The people rebelled against Moses and Aaron, but Moses and Aaron interceded for them (16:41–50)

Even though the people had seen the ground split open and fire flash forth from the LORD, they grumbled against Moses and Aaron the next day (16:41). They should have acted as a priestly people by repenting, mourning, and confessing sin (Exod 19:6), but instead they rebelled against the LORD. They accused Moses and Aaron of being responsible for the death of the 250 men who defiantly burned incense. (Num 16:41). They demonstrated that even though they were called to be holy nation they were far from holy.

God affirmed His choice of Aaron and Moses when the ground opened up and fire consumed those who had disregarded God's instructions. By rebelling against Aaron and Moses the people demonstrated their rejection of God's chosen leaders and His law. God again came to the defense of His chosen leaders (Num 16:45; cf. 12:4; 14:10b), threatening to annihilate the people (16:45; cf. Exod 32:10; Num 14:11–12; 16:21). But again Moses interceded for the people (Exod 32:11–14; Num 14:13–19; 16:45). He told Aaron to take up his censer, put fire in it from the altar, and offer incense on it to make **atonement** for the people, to repair their relationship with God (16:46). Burning incense was symbolic of prayer (Ps 141:2; Rev 5:8; 8:3–4).

Aaron demonstrated his zeal for the LORD by making atonement for the people. He ran into the midst of the people and stood between the dead and the living to intercede for the people. The high priest would typically

avoid all possible contact with the dead (Lev 21:11), but Aaron humbled himself, risking his own life for the sake of the people. Aaron's priestly work is a picture of Christ's priestly work when He would offer up His own life for the sake of the people (Heb 7:27).

## The LORD affirmed Aaron's role as priest (17:1–11)

God commanded Moses to get twelve staffs, one from each tribe, and to write the names of each leader on his respective staff, and to place all of them inside the Holy of Holies (17:1–4). In this way the LORD would provide a divine sign, showing everyone the tribe whom He had chosen (17:5). The LORD promised that He would cause a staff, a dead piece of wood, to sprout. Aaron's staff not only sprouted but also budded, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds (17:8). God had vindicated Aaron and commanded Moses to place the staff before the Ark of the Covenant. The staff, like the manna (Exod 16:33–35), was to serve as a reminder to the people (Num 17:10–11).

Finally, the people recognized their sin in challenging Aaron's special role as priest and feared for their lives (17:12–13). But God graciously gave them laws for the priests and the people to prevent approaching God in an unworthy manner (18:1–19:22). Approaching God was not to be taken lightly. Aaron did not exalt himself to the priesthood. God chose him to occupy this special role (Num 16:1–40; c.f. Heb 5:4), and God vindicated him when his authority was challenged by the people (Num 17:1–11).

Like Aaron before Him, Jesus did not exalt Himself to the position of great high priest (Heb 5:5); He was appointed as such by God (5:5–7). He functions as the perfect high priest who offered Himself for the sins of the people once for all (7:27). Presently, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God, waiting for His enemies to be made a footstool under His feet (10:13). He is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), and He alone is able to save all those who draw near to God through Him (Heb 7:25). For if those who rejected Moses and Aaron in the wilderness received a just punishment how will you escape God's judgment if you reject Christ?



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
The true servant of God is marked by sacrificial service for the people of God.

**THINK ABOUT IT**  
The heart of true worship is a submissive and humble heart.



# Lesson Outline

*We must worship God His way.*



## AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Korah was disobedient and argued with Moses and Aaron (16:1–40).
2. The nation of Israel rebelled against God, but Moses and Aaron prayed for the people (16:41–50).
3. God let everyone know that He chose Aaron to be the priest (17:1–11).



## AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Korah and many others questioned the leadership of Moses and Aaron (16:1–40).
  - Korah led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron (16:1–19).
  - The LORD announced His judgment on the people, but Moses and Aaron prayed for the people (16:20–22).
  - God graciously warned the people to move away from the rebels (16:23–30).
  - The LORD judged the people and gave them a sign to prevent further rebellion (16:31–40).
2. The people rebelled against Moses and Aaron, but Moses and Aaron interceded for them (16:41–50).
  - The day after Korah’s rebellion, the people grumbled against Moses and Aaron (16:41).
  - God sent a plague among the Israelites (16:42–46).
  - Aaron took fire from the altar and offered incense to make atonement for the people (16:46–48).
  - The plague killed 14,700 people before it was stopped (16:49–50).
3. The LORD affirmed Aaron’s role as priest (17:1–11).
  - God commanded Moses to place one staff from each tribe inside the Holy of Holies (17:1–4).
  - The LORD would provide a divine sign showing the tribe whom He had chosen (17:5).
  - The LORD made Aaron’s staff sprout, bud, blossom, and produce ripe almonds (17:8).





## Lesson Questions

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



### Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram complain?**  
They did not want Moses and Aaron to be their leaders
- 2. How did God punish the rebellious people?**  
The earth opened up to consume them, and God sent fire to destroy them.
- 3. How was the plague stopped?**  
Aaron took a censer and incense and stood between the living and the dead, making atonement for the people.
- 4. How did God show the Israelites that Aaron was His chosen priest?**  
Aaron's rod not only sprouted the next morning, it had also produced ripe almonds. God had clearly chosen Aaron as high priest.



### Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who rebelled against Moses?**  
The families of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On, along with 250 leaders.
- 2. What was the reason they rebelled against Moses as their leader?**  
They accused Moses and Aaron of exalting themselves over the congregation.
- 3. What was the consequence of Korah's rebellion?**  
The ground split and swallowed the families of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, along with all their possessions. Then fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering incense to the LORD.
- 4. What was the reaction of the people the next day?**  
They were angry with Moses and Aaron and blamed them for killing the people.
- 5. What did God want to do about their rebellion?**  
God wanted to destroy the people.
- 6. What was Moses and Aaron's reaction to God's judgment on the people?**  
Moses told Aaron to put fire from the altar in a censer and put incense on it. Aaron then ran among the people, between the living and the dead, to make atonement for their sin.
- 7. What did God tell Moses to do so that He could vindicate His leaders?**  
God commanded Moses to get twelve staffs, one from each tribe, and to write the name of each leader on his respective staff, and to place them inside the Holy of Holies.
- 8. How did God show the Israelites that Aaron was His chosen priest?**  
Aaron's rod not only had sprouted the next morning, it had also produced ripe almonds. God had clearly chosen Aaron as high priest.

# Lesson Activities

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

AGES 3-5



INTRODUCE

## SHOE PRINTS

Before class, trace your shoes onto cardstock. Cut these out and use them as a pattern to create multiple pairs of shoe prints on construction paper. Tape these shoe prints to the classroom floor to create a path for children to follow. When children arrive for class, ask them to follow the path you've created being careful to step only on the shoe prints. Tell the children that in today's lesson we will learn about the Israelites failure to follow the leader that God had given them.

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

Line up the children and tell them to copy everything the line leader does (marching, bunny hopping, slow walking, etc.). Tell them how important it is to follow Jesus' lead and try to copy His life with our own.



ILLUSTRATE

## AM I A LEADER?

**Materials:** a large covered basket or box filled with a variety of pictures of leaders

**Directions:** Pull out different pictures of leaders, one at a time, and ask the children whether they think they are a leader or not. Some examples of leaders include: Sunday school teacher, pastor, parents, police chief, and fire chief. Ask the children whom God sent to be their leaders (parents, grandparents, teachers, pastor, etc.). Explain that in today's lesson, the children will learn more about God's chosen leaders for Israel.

## EARTHQUAKE TABLE

Before reading Numbers 16:15-40, push two tables together and set "tents" (half sheets of cardstock folded down the center) all over the tables. Be sure to put some tents on the line between the two tables. As you read the passage, have two helpers shake the tables and then spread them apart so that some of the tents fall into the crack. Then have them push the tables back together.



APPLY

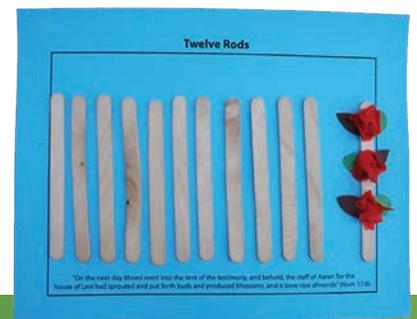
## TWELVE RODS

**See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.**

**Materials:** Craft sheet, craft sticks, brown and green construction paper, red tissue paper, and glue.

**Directions:** Print off a craft sheet for each student. Pre-cut almond shapes from brown construction paper and bud shapes from green construction paper. Give each child 12 craft sticks. Have the children glue 11 craft sticks to the craft sheet close together. Help the children to decorate the 12<sup>th</sup> craft stick with almond and bud pieces, as well as red tissue paper to show the flowers that bloomed. Glue this final craft stick onto the page separated from the other 11.

*Twelve Rods*  
*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*



# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Israel rejects God's prophet and priest • Numbers 16:1–17:11



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

## REBELLION

What is rebellion? It is more than just disobeying or refusing to obey. Rebellion includes rejecting the authority of the one in leadership. Have you ever rebelled against anyone? In today's lesson, we will hear what happens when a group of men rebel against the leadership of Moses and Aaron, God's chosen leaders.

## TABLE LEADERS

Divide the class into groups and provide an activity for each group. Ideas include: putting together a puzzle, assembling a LEGO model, or designing a group mural. Designate one child as the leader. All the other children at the table must take directions from this child. Watch to see how they do. Some will be good leaders, and some will not do well at all. Similarly, some will be good followers, and some will not. God wants us all to follow the directions of the leaders whom He has placed in authority over us (president, teachers, parents, etc.). God put Moses and Aaron in charge of the Israelites. We will hear this morning that some others resented having to be under their authority.



ILLUSTRATE

## ROD THAT BUDS

Bring in a wood staff to use as an illustration during your lesson. Ask the children why it was a miracle that Aaron's staff budded and produced ripe almonds. Show the children some almonds. Point out that God not only caused a dead piece of wood to produce fruit; He did it in an extremely short amount of time (it takes about 8 months after flowering for almonds to ripen). Tell the children that God used this miracle to confirm His choice of Aaron as priest.

## I WANT MORE!

Choose a child at random to come up to the front of the class and award this child a prize. Tell the class that this child did nothing to earn this, but that you want him to have this special reward. Then, ask the class what they would think if this child rejected your gift, insisting that they deserve to be given something better? This is what Korah and his followers did when they challenged Aaron's authority as priest. God had given Korah and his family a very special role in the service of the tabernacle (see Num 4:1–20), but they weren't satisfied—they wanted more!



APPLY

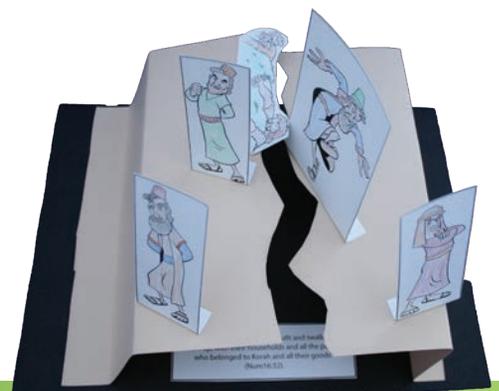
## KORAH'S REBELLION PUNISHED

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

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

**Directions:** Have the children color and cut out pictures from the craft sheet. Create an elevated stage from tan cardstock for the pictures to be glued on. Glue the bases of the stage to the black construction paper. Cut through the middle of the stage and make jagged edges to show the earth splitting apart. Glue the pictures to the stage and the verse underneath the stage as shown below.

*Korah's Rebellion Punished*  
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

### SUBMITTING TO LEADERS

Ask children what a leader is. Explain that a leader is a person who guides and directs others, either by going before them to show the way, or by giving commands or instructions. Ask the children why we need leaders. What happens without leaders? How should we respond to leaders when they give instructions or correction? In today's lesson, we will hear about Moses and Aaron, the two leaders whom God appointed over Israel to guide them to the Promised Land and give God's laws. We will hear what happened when Israel rebelled against God's leaders and even God's authority.

### NOT SATISFIED

Before the lesson, read Numbers 4:1–20 together as a class. This passage reveals the special job that God had given to Korah and his family. He had already been given significant duties at the tabernacle, but he wanted more. He wasn't satisfied with God's provision—he was discontent.



ILLUSTRATE

### “JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE”

John Davison Rockefeller, Sr (July 8, 1839 – May 23, 1937) was an American businessman and philanthropist. He revolutionized the petroleum industry, co-founding Standard Oil Company in 1870. At one time he was the world's richest man. Adjusting for inflation, his fortune is valued at \$336 billion. He is one of the richest men in history. However, when he was once asked, “How much money is enough money?” He famously replied, “Just a little bit more.” No amount of money could satisfy his desire for more. So too with Korah and those who followed him in rebellion. Korah had been given significant duties in the tabernacle, but he wanted more—he wanted the priesthood, too.

### SWALLOWED ALIVE

The families of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were swallowed alive by the ground in punishment for their rebellion against Moses and Aaron. Utilize the following short video to help the children picture this miraculous punishment God inflicted upon the rebellious people: <https://goo.gl/jV5cwh>



APPLY

### COMPASSION

In Numbers 16:41–50, the people of Israel again complained against the leaders God had placed over them. But what was Moses and Aaron's response? Did they get angry and desire revenge? No. Moses and Aaron responded with compassion. They desired good for the Israelites, rather than wanting to hurt them in revenge. How does God want us to respond when someone sins against us or attacks us? Read Romans 12:21 together as a class and discuss how Moses and Aaron responded to the people's rebellion.



## LESSON 35

*God offers Israel healing from sin*

NUMBERS 20:2-13; 21:4-9



God mercifully provides salvation.



*“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.’” (Num 21:8).*

## Supporting Truths

1. God provides a way of salvation for sinners.
2. God is just to punish sin.
3. God is merciful to provide salvation.
4. God is holy.
5. Salvation is by faith alone.

## Objectives

1. Describe how God provided healing for the Israelites.
2. Explain how God was just in punishing Moses and Aaron.
3. Explain why God was merciful in providing healing for the people.
4. Explain how Moses failed to treat God as holy before the people.
5. Describe how this passage is used in John 3:13-17.

# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God offers Israel healing from sin • Numbers 20:2–13; 21:4–9



## Lesson Summary

After forty years of wandering the wilderness, the Israelites had not learned from their parents' faithlessness. They angered the LORD at Meribah, and they made Moses's spirit bitter to the point that Moses sinned and spoke rashly to them (Ps 106:33). Only a few months later, they rebelled again. God sent serpents to punish the rebellion, but He also provided a way of salvation. The people had only to look to the bronze serpent and they were healed.

## Spotlight on the Gospel

Just as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so too was the Son of Man lifted up on the cross (John 3:14–15). Like the bronze serpent, anyone who looks to Jesus in faith will be saved and live. Those who looked to serpent were given physical life, but those who look to Jesus are given eternal life (3:16). Everyone who looked at the serpent was healed, just as everyone who looks to Jesus is saved through Him (3:17).

LAST WEEK



Israel rejects God's prophet and priest  
Numbers 16:1–17:11

THIS WEEK



God offers Israel healing from sin  
Numbers 20:2–13; 21:4–9

NEXT WEEK



God blesses Israel through Balaam  
Numbers 22:1–24:25

REBELLION

# Lesson Commentary

## *God mercifully provides salvation.*

The first generation of Israelites had all but died out, and the second generation was coming of age as Israel again looked to the Promised Land. However, the passing of time had done nothing to remove the rebellion stirring in the people's hearts. Israel's return to Kadesh, almost 40 years later, was accompanied by another rebellion—this time prompted by a lack of water (Num 20:2; c.f. 10:12; 11:1). God faithfully provided for the people, supplying water from a rock (20:11). However, the people were not alone in their rebellion. Moses and Aaron, in the midst of satisfying the people's thirst, ignored God's word.

### God punished Moses and Aaron for their rebellion (20:2–13)

The book of Numbers records five instances when the first generation of Israelites after the Exodus rebelled against the LORD: 1) grumbling against the LORD's goodness (11:1–3), 2) complaining about the LORD's provision (11:4–35), 3) challenging Moses' leadership (12:1–16), 4) rejecting God's promises (13:1–14:45), and 5) rejecting the mediator that the LORD had appointed (16:1–17:11). The second generation was not unlike their parents. They complained against Moses for bringing them into the wilderness to die, and for failing to give them figs, vines, or pomegranates (20:2–5)—the very fruit the previous generation had rejected when they failed to enter the Promised Land.

For forty years, Moses had faithfully led the people. Although there were times his faith was weak (11:11–15; 21–22), he had obediently led God's people. He saw how God, time and time again, graciously provided for His people. One such time, in Exodus 17, the people were so upset concerning their lack of water that they were on the verge of stoning Moses (Exod 17:4). But God provided, instructing Moses to strike the rock with his staff (17:5–6).

In Numbers 20, the children of Israel were again without water—their greatest physical need throughout all their wilderness wanderings. So this generation, just like their parents, gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron to argue with them (Num 20:2–3). Beginning at Horeb (Exod 17:1–7) the LORD had continually provided water for the people, but the situation seemed so desperate to the people that they told Moses that they wished they had died along with Korah and those who followed him in his rebellion (Num 20:3; 16:41–50).

As they had done many times before, Moses and Aaron responded to the people's complaints by seeking the LORD's presence (20:6; c.f. 14:5; 16:4). The LORD spoke to Moses, commanding him to take the staff, assemble the people, and speak to the rock with his brother, Aaron (20:7–8). Like He had done before at Horeb (Exod 17:1–7), God was going to provide water from a rock.

Moses began by faithfully obeying God's word (Num 20:9). But instead of speaking to the rock, Moses spoke harshly to the people, accusing them of being “rebels” against God (20:10). He struck the rock twice with his rod, and God graciously provided water for the people and their animals (20:11). Moses had failed to follow God's command; he struck the rock instead of speaking to the rock. While decades earlier at Horeb God had commanded Moses to strike the rock (Exod 17:5–6), here at Kadesh, God's instructions were clear: Moses was to speak to the rock (Num 17:8).

The LORD's evaluation of Moses and Aaron's actions reveals the severity of their disobedience. They had failed to believe the LORD and to treat Him as **holy**, set apart and separate from sin, in the sight of the people. Moses' words demonstrate his

#### THINK ABOUT IT

Man's faithfulness in the past never removes his ongoing obligation to continual obedience in the present.



# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God offers Israel healing from sin • Numbers 20:2–13; 21:4–9



self-centeredness, and his actions demonstrate his anger and frustration. As a result, Moses and Aaron would not be allowed to bring the people into the Promised Land (20:12). A few months later, Aaron would die on Mount Hor (20:22). Moses would be allowed to view the land, seeing it from a distance (Deut 34:1–6). They both died in the wilderness, just like the first generation.

## God saved those who believed His word (21:4–9)

Witnessing Moses and Aaron's disobedience and punishment did nothing to stop the people's rebellion against God. Instead of entering the Promised Land from the south, which would have been the most direct route from Kadesh, Israel was forced to enter from the east. The king of Edom refused them passage along the King's Highway (Num 20:14–21). The refusal would mean that Israel would have to travel an additional 200 miles. As a result, the people became impatient (21:4). However, the extended journey was no excuse for Israel's impatience.

Their impatience resulted in their complaint (21:5). They accused God and Moses of bringing them out of Egypt only to kill them in the wilderness. The people were questioning God's faithfulness to His promise.

They did not consider the reality that God's promises may come through difficulty and suffering. God often uses suffering to produce holiness in the lives of His children (Jas 1:2–4; cf. Phil 1:29; Rom 8:28–30).

In response to their lack of faith, God sent "fiery serpents" among the people (Num 21:6). These serpents were venomous and many of the people died after being bitten. But this time, in response to God's judgment, Israel responded with repentance (21:7). They confessed their sin against the LORD, and asked Moses to intercede on their behalf. Moses, no longer angry with the people,

responded with humility and prayed for the people (21:7).

God mercifully, showing kindness to people who do not deserve it, provided a means of forgiveness. The LORD instructed Moses to create a bronze serpent and to mount it on a signal pole for the healing of those who were bitten (20:8). If anyone was bitten, he needed only to look at the serpent in order to live (20:9). This incident emphasizes the vital role of faith, or trust in God, in salvation. Those Israelites who had been bitten simply had to look to the serpent in order to be saved. They were healed by faith. By fixing their gaze upon the snake, the people demonstrated that they believed God's word.

The bronze serpent illustrates that salvation is by faith alone. Just as the serpent was lifted up, so also was the Son of Man lifted up (John 3:14–15). While the serpent was lifted up to provide physical life, the Son of Man was lifted up to provide spiritual life (3:16). As God raised up the serpent so that anyone could be healed, God raised up Jesus so that anyone could be saved through Him (3:17). We must, like the Israelites, demonstrate that we believe God's word by looking to His Son for healing from sin.

**THINK ABOUT IT**  
Salvation is always by grace through faith alone (Gen 15:6; Eph 2:8–9).



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
God cares more about man's holiness than He does about man's happiness.

# Lesson Outline

*God mercifully provides salvation.*



## AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God punished Moses and Aaron for their rebellion (20:2–13).
2. God saved those who believed His word (21:4–9).



## AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **God punished Moses and Aaron for their rebellion (20:2–13).**
  - The people gathered and grumbled against Moses (20:2–5).
  - Moses and Aaron went to the entrance of the tent of meeting and the LORD appeared to them (20:6–7).
  - The LORD told Moses to take his staff, assemble the people, and speak to the rock (20:8).
  - Moses and Aaron did not obey the LORD (20:9–11).
  - God punished Moses and Aaron but graciously provided water for the people (20:12–13).
2. **God saved those who believed His word (21:4–9).**
  - The people were impatient and complained against God and against Moses on the way around Edom (21:4–5).
  - The LORD sent poisonous serpents to judge the Israelites (21:6).
  - The people repented and asked Moses to pray for them (21:7).
  - The LORD was merciful and provided a way for the Israelites to be saved (21:8–9).





## Lesson Questions

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



### Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. When the people complained, what did God tell Moses to do?**  
God told Moses to get his rod, assemble the people, and speak the rock. Then God would provide water from the rock.
- 2. Did Moses obey God?**  
No. Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it. As a result, Moses could not enter the Promised Land.
- 3. What did God do to Israel because of their grumbling?**  
God sent snakes into the camp to bite the people.
- 4. How were the people saved?**  
God told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Anyone who was bitten by a snake and looked at the snake on the pole would live.



### Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did the Israelites complain about?**  
They complained that there was no food and water and said that God had brought them into the wilderness to die.
- 2. How should the Israelites have responded when they became frustrated?**  
They should have trusted God's Word and remembered the promises He had made to them in the past.
- 3. What did Moses do?**  
He disobeyed God. He spoke harshly to the people and struck the rock instead of speaking to the rock.
- 4. How did God punish Moses and Aaron?**  
He told them that they would not enter into the Promised Land.
- 5. What was God's response to Israel's impatience and grumbling?**  
He punished them by sending venomous snakes. Many of those who had been bitten died.
- 6. What did the Israelites do when they saw people dying from the snakebites?**  
They went to Moses and confessed their sin and asked Moses to pray to God on their behalf.
- 7. What did God tell Moses to do?**  
God told Moses to make a serpent out of bronze. Moses was to set this serpent up on a pole so the Israelites could see it and be healed.
- 8. What did the Israelites need in order to be saved?**  
God said that those who looked at the serpent would live. They needed to have faith in God and look up at the serpent.

# Lesson Activities

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

AGES 3-5



INTRODUCE

## FALL OF TRUST

In today's lesson, the children will hear about Israel's need to trust God to save them. Choose one child to stand in front of the class. Stand 2-3 feet behind the child, and tell him to fall straight back into your arms. Talk about the risk of falling and how the child will have to trust you to catch him.

## SNAKES

Bring in pictures of various kinds of snakes. Talk about how some are poisonous and some are not. Ask the children if they have ever seen a poisonous snake. In today's lesson, God judges the Israelites sin by sending fiery snakes to bite them.



ILLUSTRATE

## SNAKE ON A POLE

Attach a bronze serpent to the top of a pole to use as a visual aid during the lesson.

## WATER FROM A ROCK

Bring a large rock to class. Tell the children that you're going to get water from this rock. Take out a cup, and try to pour water into it from the rock. Next, take out a large water jug, put the rock inside, and see if any water comes out the nozzle. Finally, take out a straw and try to suck water out of the rock. Ask the children why you couldn't get any water from the rock. Then ask them who is able to make water come out of a rock? Explain that only God can make water come out of a rock.



APPLY

## THE BRONZE SERPENT

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

**Materials:** Craft sheet, paper plate, brown pipe cleaners, craft sticks, crayons, scissors, and glue.

**Directions:** Pre-cut the picture from the craft sheet. Have children color the picture and glue it to the back of a paper plate. Help them tape two craft sticks together. Form a "bronze serpent" by coiling two brown pipe cleaners around each other, forming a triangular shaped head on one end. Wrap the coiled pipe cleaner around the craft sticks and tape to secure. Tape the bottom craft stick to the paper plate as shown below.

The Bronze Serpent  
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.



# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God offers Israel healing from sin • Numbers 20:2–13; 21:4–9



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

## EMERGENCY

Ask the children whether any of them have experienced a real emergency. Whom do we call for help when we have an emergency? We call firefighters, police officers, etc. Why should we trust these people? Who are other people we trust? In today's lesson, God judges the Israelites with fiery snakes, and they called out to God for help. They learned to trust Him in order to be saved.

## REMAINING THANKFUL

God wants us to be thankful in all situations. When we grumble, we are being disobedient, and our hearts are no longer thankful. Sometimes counting our blessings helps remove those tendencies to grumble. Put a large piece of butcher paper up on the wall, and give each child a marker. Instruct the children to fill the entire paper with things they are thankful for. In today's lesson, the children will hear what happened when the Israelites were ungrateful for what God had given them.



ILLUSTRATE

## WORLD'S MOST VENOMOUS SNAKE

Use this illustration to communicate the severity of some snake bites. The African Black mamba, native to much of Sub-Saharan Africa, is one of the most feared and dangerous snakes in the world. Their strikes are very quick, extremely accurate, and their venom is the most rapid-acting venom of any snake species. If bitten, symptoms quickly begin to develop, usually within less than ten minutes. The venom has been known to cause permanent paralysis in some cases, and untreated black mamba bites have a mortality rate of 100%. There is an antivenom that can, in some cases, prevent death, but it must be administered quickly and in large doses.

## ABUNDANT WATER FROM A ROCK

Use this illustration to help the children understand the enormity of God's miraculous provision. It would have taken 187,500 gallons of water just to give every Israelite a 12 ounce drink of water (2 million Israelites). This is over 1/4<sup>th</sup> the volume of an Olympic sized swimming pool (660,000 gallons of water). And this doesn't even include the animals that drank from the rock too! (Num 20:11)



APPLY

## SERPENT POP-UP BOOK

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

**Materials:** Craft sheet, yarn, cardstock, crayons, scissors, glue, and hole punch.

**Directions:** Have children fold a piece of cardstock in half width-wise to form a book. Insert a half sheet of cardstock into the book. Punch two holes through all pages in the binding. Tie yarn through the holes to hold book together. Color and cut out pictures and verses from craft sheet. Create two pop-up serpents by folded strips of green cardstock like an accordion. Glue picture of Israel complaining and Num 21:5 to front of book. Glue two pictures of people with serpents, the paper serpents, and Num 21:6 to page 2. Glue pictures of Moses and man seeking healing and Num 21:8 to page 3.

*Serpent Pop-Up Book*  
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

### DISCOURAGING DETOUR

Show the class a map of the Middle East during the time of Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. On the map, outline the detour the Israelites had to take from Kadesh to get to the Promised Land because the king of Edom refused their passage in Numbers 20:14–21. Draw the straight route on the map as well so the children can compare the two distances. Explain that the detour added 200 miles to the people's journey on foot. Lead the children in a discussion of this new challenge faced by the Israelites by asking some of the following questions:

1. What is the longest distance you ever have walked?
2. What do you think the temperature was like during Israel's journey?
3. Have you ever driven 200 miles in a car? How long did it take?
4. How long do you think it would take to walk 200 miles?
5. Should the Israelites have complained?

### RESPONDING TO DIFFICULT TRIALS

Use these sword drills to discuss what the Bible tells us to do when we face a difficult trial: James 1:2–8; 2 Corinthians 12:7–10; and 1 Peter 3:13–17; 4:12–19; 5:6–11.



ILLUSTRATE

### LIFE WITHOUT WATER

We cannot live long without water. In severe heat with no water, dehydration can occur within an hour (adults can lose as much as 1.5 liters of water through sweat alone). Someone performing intense activity in the heat without replacing fluids can actually die within a period of several hours. We lose water through sweat, urine, feces, and breathing, and this water must be replenished in order for our organs to continue functioning properly. How long can we survive without water? Anywhere from 3 to 5 days under ideal circumstances. In less than ideal circumstances the time can be much shorter.

### TRUST EXERCISE

Ask a volunteer to hold his breath for a short time. We need oxygen to breathe, and we trust that the air we breathe is good. We trust in it even though we do not see it. Ultimately, we trust in God to give us our next breath!



APPLY

### LOOKING TO THE SON OF MAN

Read Numbers 21:6–9 and John 3:14–15 together as a class, noting the similarities and difference between these passages.



## LESSON 36

*God blesses Israel through Balaam*

NUMBERS 22:1-24:25



Evil men cannot stop God's plans.



*"If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of my own will. What the LORD speaks, that will I speak?" (Num 24:13).*

## Supporting Truths

1. God is faithful to His promises.
2. God can use evil people to accomplish His purposes.
3. God punishes the evil people He uses to accomplish His purposes.
4. God does not change His mind like man does.
5. Jesus will establish His kingdom when He comes.

## Objectives

1. Explain how God used Balaam to reaffirm His promises.
2. Describe how God used Balaam, a pagan prophet, to accomplish His purposes.
3. Discuss how God was merciful to Balaam in Numbers 22 but also judged Balaam in Numbers 31.
4. Describe how Balak attempted to make God change His mind.
5. Identify the elements of Balaam's prophecies that relate to Jesus.



## Lesson Summary

When Balak urged Balaam to curse Israel so that he could destroy them, God used Balaam to reaffirm His promises to His people. Balaam was a false prophet, but God used him to reaffirm His election of Israel and His promise to bless Israel. He promised to make Israel a strong nation, to give Israel prosperity and victory, and to raise up the Messiah from Israel. One day this King will establish His kingdom and rule over the nations.

## Spotlight on the Gospel

Through Balaam's prophecies, God reaffirmed His election of Israel and His promises to bless Israel. However, the greatest blessing is the provision of the Savior, Jesus Christ. In view of God's faithfulness and His unchanging nature, it is certain that Jesus will come again, establish His kingdom, and reign over all the nations. When Christ comes to reign will you be one of His followers?

TWO WEEKS AGO



Israel rejects God's prophet and priest  
*Numbers 16:1–17:11*

LAST WEEK



God offers Israel healing from sin  
*Numbers 20:2–13; 21:4–9*

THIS WEEK



God blesses Israel through Balaam  
*Numbers 22:1–24:25*

# Lesson Commentary

## *Evil men cannot stop God's plans.*

After God punished Israel's unfaithfulness with fiery serpents, Israel continued on their detour around Edom (Num 20:14–21). The nations around them saw Israel as a threat. Two Amorite kings launched campaigns against the Israelites, but the LORD was faithful and gave Israel victory over these kings (21:21–35). Fearing an attack from Israel, the king of Moab hired Baalam to curse God's people. But the LORD used Baalam, a pagan prophet, to reaffirm His faithfulness to Israel. God is **sovereign** over, or in control of, evil men.

### Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel (22:1–40)

Balak, the king of Moab, was concerned that Israel would conquer Moab (22:4). Not knowing that Israel was forbidden by God to attack Moab (Deut 2:9), he sent messengers to the false prophet Balaam, asking him to curse the Israelites (Num 22:5–6). When the messengers arrived, Balaam told them that he would speak with the LORD before giving them an answer (22:8). Although Balaam used the covenant name “Yahweh” for God (LORD or Jehovah in most English translations), Scripture makes it clear that he did not worship the LORD (2 Pet 2:15–16; Jude 11; Rev 2:14).

However, that night the true God of Israel spoke to Balaam. God told Balaam not to go with Balak's messengers and not to curse Israel because God had determined to bless them (Num 22:12). So Balaam sent Balak's men away (22:13). The messengers returned to Balak, delivering Balaam's response (22:14). But Balak didn't accept

Balaam's answer. He sent additional messengers with the promise of honor and whatever else Balaam wanted (22:15–17). However, Balaam knew that he could not go beyond the LORD's word (22:18). That night, God gave permission for Balaam to go, but He did not give permission to curse the people. Balaam could speak only what God revealed.

Even though God had told Balaam to go, He became angry with Balaam as he went on his journey (22:22). When the angel of the LORD came to confront Balaam, only Balaam's donkey was aware that the angel was there. Three times the angel of the LORD appeared to his donkey, and each time Balaam beat his donkey, not knowing that the donkey had rescued his life (22:23–27). Even after God miraculously allowed the donkey to talk to Balaam, Balaam did not realize that the angel was there (22:28–32). When Balaam finally saw the angel, the angel told him that the donkey had saved his life by turning aside (22:33).

The angel repeated God's command to go to Moab and told Balaam to speak only what God commanded (22:35). When he arrived in Moab and spoke to Balak, Balaam confessed, “Have I now any power of my own to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak” (Num 22:38).

### God used Balaam to communicate four promised blessings for Israel (22:41–24:25)

*First, God elected Israel and promised to bless Israel (22:41–23:12).*

At the beginning of the next day, Balaam and Balak went to a high place of Baal, a center of pagan worship. From here Balaam could observe all the people of Israel (22:41). Balaam had Balak sacrifice seven bulls and seven rams, a pair of animals on each of the seven altars (23:1). Afterward, Balaam went alone to wait for God's word (23:3). God met Balaam and “put a word in Balaam's mouth” (22:5). Balaam returned to Balak and spoke exactly what God had given him.

Balaam could not curse Israel because they were God's **elect**, His chosen people (Exod 19:5–6). Numbers 23:7–10 echoes God's election and blessing for Israel repeated elsewhere in Scripture (Gen 12:2; 28:14). Balaam's oracle blessed Israel by reaffirming God's choice. Israel was without equal among the nations (Num 23:9).

*Second, God would make Israel to be a strong nation (23:13–26).*

Balak asked Balaam to try and curse Israel again, but this time from a different location. Again, Balak offered the sacrifices, and Balaam waited alone for God (23:15–16). Balaam returned after God had told him what to speak and again blessed the people. Although



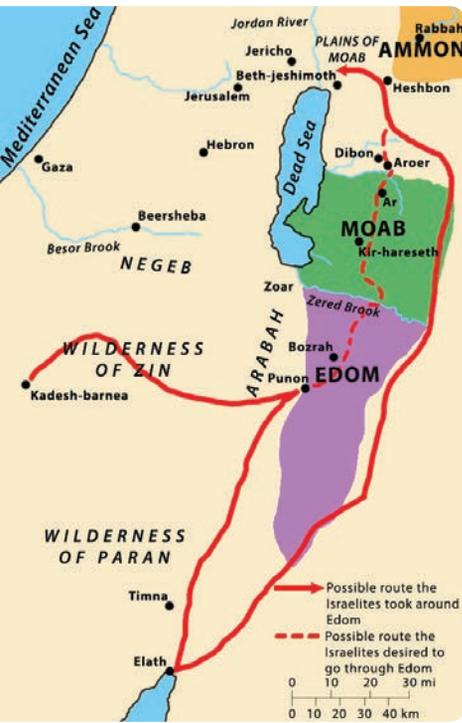
#### THINK ABOUT IT

God is in complete control of everything all the time. Therefore, nothing can stop His plan to bless His people.

# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON



## God blesses Israel through Balaam • Numbers 22:1–24:25



Balak had been trying to persuade God to change His mind concerning Israel, Balaam said, “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent” (23:19). God’s blessing of Israel was irrevocable.

There was nothing Balaam could do to reverse God’s blessing; Balaam’s sorcery and divination were of no help against the true God (23:20, 23). The LORD was with Israel as her king (23:21b). Anyone opposed to Israel would be as helpless as a lion’s prey

because the LORD Himself was with Israel, strengthening the nation (23:24). After Balaam blessed Israel for the second time, Balak was infuriated (23:25).

### **Third, God would give Israel both prosperity and victory (23:27–24:14).**

Balak stubbornly clung to the hope that God would change His mind, urging Balaam to try to curse Israel again (23:27). Sacrifices

were again offered, but this time Balaam did not go to seek omens against Israel (24:1). After Balaam looked up and saw Israel, the Spirit of God came upon him (24:2). Revealing the extent of His power, the Spirit of God actually spoke through the false prophet (24:3–9).

Again Balaam blessed Israel. He proclaimed the beauty of Israel, likening Israel to valleys, gardens, cedars and aloes planted by the Lord (24:5–6). Balaam also prophesied about Israel’s future king, whose “kingdom shall be exalted” (24:7). God had already promised Israel a king (Gen 17:6–8; 35:11; 49:10), and Balaam affirmed these

promises, which ultimately are fulfilled in Jesus. Balaam also affirmed God’s promise that whoever blessed Israel would be blessed and whoever cursed Israel would be cursed (Num 24:9; cf. Gen 12:3).

Balak understood that Balaam had just pronounced God’s curse on him since he was one of those who was seeking to curse Israel. He warned Balaam to flee since Balaam had “bountifully blessed [Israel] these three times” (Num 24:10). However, before he left, Balaam had three more prophecies to utter from the LORD (24:20–24).

### **Fourth, God would raise up the Messiah from Israel and He would rule the nations (24:15–25).**

Balaam had prophesied of the coming king in his third prophecy, and he returned to that theme in his last prophecy (24:17). Although the king was not yet present, Balaam looked to the king’s arrival in the future (24:17a). He referred to the king by two metaphors, the “star” and the “scepter.” God already had promised that “the scepter shall not depart from Judah” (Gen 49:10).

Like the scepter, the star was a symbol of royalty. The future king would have dominion over Moab, Edom, and Seir (Num 24:19). Balaam was ultimately looking forward to Jesus, “the bright morning star” (Rev 22:16; cf. 2:28; 2 Pet 1:19). Jesus will fulfill this prophecy when He returns and establishes His millennial kingdom (Rev 19:11–20:6).

Balaam also prophesied the defeat of the surrounding nations (Num 24:20–25). While it is difficult to pinpoint when these defeats happened, it is clear that the nations who opposed Israel and Israel’s God ultimately would be defeated by the coming king. The ever faithful God would not withhold His blessing from Israel; likewise, just as God promised, those who cursed Israel would be cursed themselves.

God used a pagan prophet to pronounce numerous blessings upon His people. Through Balaam’s prophecies, God reaffirmed His election of Israel and His promises to bless Israel. But the greatest blessing is the provision of the Savior, Jesus Christ.



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
Balaam was like a puppet in the hand of God as he did what God directed.

# Lesson Outline

*Evil men cannot stop God's plans.*



## AGES 3-5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel (22:1-40).
1. God reaffirmed His promise to bless Israel (22:41-24:25).



## AGES 6-11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel (22:1-40).**
  - Balak, the king of Moab, was concerned that Israel would conquer Moab (Num 22:4).
  - Balak sent messengers to the false prophet Balaam (22:5-20).
  - Balaam told Balak that he could only say the words God gave him (22:18).
  - An angel would have killed Balaam if it weren't for his donkey (22:23-32).
  - Balaam went to Balak and told him he could only say the words God gave Him (22:38).
2. **God used Balaam to communicate four promised blessings for Israel (22:41-24:25).**
  - God elected Israel and promised to bless Israel (22:41-23:13).
  - God would make Israel to be strong nation (23:14-26).
  - God would give Israel both prosperity and victory (23:27-24:14).
  - God would raise up the Messiah from Israel and He would rule the nations (24:15-25).





## Lesson Questions

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



### Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did Balak want Balaam to do?**  
Curse Israel.
- 2. What do you think would have happened if the donkey had not turned from the angel?**  
The angel would have killed Balaam.
- 3. What did Balaam's oracles teach about God's relationship with Israel?**  
God elected Israel and promised to bless Israel.
- 4. What did God promise in Balaam's oracles?**  
God promised that Israel would be victorious and prosperous. He promised the Savior, who would rule the nations, would come through Israel.



### Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why was the king of Moab afraid of Israel?**  
The king of Moab, Balak, had seen how Israel had destroyed the Amorites in Numbers 21:21–35.
- 2. What did Balak want Balaam to do?**  
Curse the people of Israel.
- 3. What do you think would have happened if the donkey had not turned or avoided the angel of the LORD?**  
The angel would have killed Balaam. God had mercy on Balaam by allowing the donkey to see the angel and turn away from Him. God used the donkey to rebuke Balaam and to save him from being killed.
- 4. Do you think Balaam could curse Israel?**  
No. What God has blessed, no man can curse. God used Balaam to bless Israel.
- 5. What did Balaam's first oracle teach Balak about God?**  
God elected Israel and promised to bless Israel (22:41–23:13).
- 6. What did God teach Balak and Balaam through Balaam's second oracle?**  
God would not change His mind. He would make Israel to be a strong nation (23:14–26).
- 7. What did God promise through Balaam's third oracle?**  
God would bless Israel with prosperity and victory (23:27–24:14).
- 8. What did God promise through Balaam's fourth oracle?**  
God would raise up the Messiah from Israel, and He would rule the nations (24:15–25).

# Lesson Activities

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

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

## TALK TO THE ANIMALS

Show the children pictures of donkeys and ask what donkeys sound like. Ask the children whether they have any pets and what they sound like. Ask those who have pets if they have ever heard their pets speaking English. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about a donkey that spoke like a person.

## TAG THE DONKEY

The goal of this game is for Balaam to tag the donkey. It is similar to the game Marco Polo. Choose one child to be the donkey and one child to be Balaam. Balaam must close his eyes and say, "Come here, donkey—I'll get you!" and the donkey must reply "Stop or you'll be cut in two!" While Balaam is trying to find the donkey, the rest of the children can make various animal sounds to distract him.



ILLUSTRATE

## MARIONETTE MASTER

Bring a marionette to class. Use this puppet controlled from above by wires or strings to illustrate God's sovereign control over evil men. Explain that God is in control of everything, everywhere, all the time.

## BROOMSTICK DONKEY

Use a broomstick donkey (or utilize a broomstick horse) during the lesson to help the children picture Balaam riding his donkey. You might "ride" on the broomstick donkey yourself during this portion of the lesson, describing how Balaam's donkey protected him from the angel.



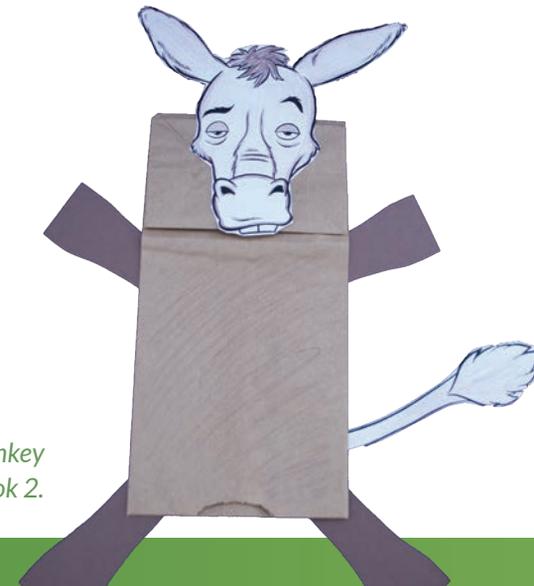
APPLY

## TALKING DONKEY

*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.*

**Materials:** Craft sheet, paper bag, brown construction paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

**Directions:** Pre-cut the donkey head and tail from craft sheet. Pre-cut the donkey legs from brown construction paper. Have children color the donkey head and paper bag. Glue the donkey head, tail, and legs to the paper bag.



*Talking Donkey*  
*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.*

# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God blesses Israel through Balaam • Numbers 22:1–24:25



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

## WHAT'S YOUR PRICE?

Would you do something wrong for a dollar? How about for \$100? How about for a house full of gold and silver? Today in our lesson, we will learn about a man named Balaam who tried to curse God's people for a house full of gold and silver.

## WORD BY WORD

Use this activity to help children learn the key verse. Have the children sit in a circle. Children will take turns bouncing a ball to a person on the opposite side of the circle. Each person who catches the ball will say the next word of the verse. The last person says the reference. It may be helpful to have the verse on a piece of poster board so that the children can check it if they are uncertain of the words. The verse game can lead into a discussion about God's merciful kindness and how His truth will endure forever.



ILLUSTRATE

## PROMISE RING

Bring a wedding ring to class. Show the ring to the children during the lesson, and tell the children that it is a picture of a promise made between two people. However, we know that people do not always keep their promises. Unfortunately, some people break their promises through divorce. Explain that God is not like man; he always keeps his promises (Num 23:19). Every time we see a rainbow in the sky we should be reminded that God always keeps His promises.

## CONFINED TO GOD'S WORDS

Balaam could only speak the words that God had given him concerning Israel (Num 22:38). Illustrate this by having a child come up to the front of class and speak only the words that you give him. Before class, write out a funny statement and put it in an envelope. Give the envelope to the child during class and tell him to say only the words on the page inside of the envelope.



APPLY

## BALAAM MARIONETTE

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

**Materials:** Craft sheet, white yarn, brads, crazy eyes, crayons, scissors, glue, and hole punch.

**Directions:** Have children color and cut out the pieces to the marionette from the craft sheet. Connect all pieces to the torso with brads. Glue on crazy eyes. Punch holes on head, hands, and feet. Tie a 2ft yarn piece through each foot, a 1.5ft piece through each hand, and a 1ft piece through the head. Tape four craft sticks together to form an X. Tape the strings that are attached to the hands to opposite ends of one crosspiece of craft stick X. Tape the strings attached to the feet to the other two ends of the X. Tape the string attached to the head to the middle of the X.

*Balaam Marionette*  
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.



AGES 9-11



INTRODUCE

### FAITHFULNESS

God is faithful even when we are not. Are there times when people you know have not been faithful? For example, your siblings said they would do something but didn't. Or a friend said one thing but did another. Can you list any examples of God being unfaithful? No; we can't because God is always faithful. In today's lesson, God demonstrates His faithfulness to Israel when they are blessed rather than cursed by Balaam.

### FAITHFULNESS SWORD DRILL

Have children race to look up the following verses. The first one to find the verse gets to read it to the class. Lamentations 3:23; 2 Timothy 2:13; Psalm 36:5; Psalm 119:90; 1 Kings 8:20, Jeremiah 23:20; 1 Timothy 3:11; Colossians 1:2; Jeremiah 23:28; Luke 16:10-1



ILLUSTRATE

### PROPHETIC PASSAGES

*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.*

**Materials:** One copy of "Prophetic Passages" chart on paper for each child.

**Directions:** Pass out a writing utensil and a copy of the "Prophetic Passages" chart to each child. Fill in the boxes as you teach through the four prophecies of Balaam. After the entire chart is filled in, point out to the class that it did not matter whether Balak took Balaam to a different location or made great sacrifices to his false idols. The result was always the same. Israel was blessed bountifully by God because God is faithful to His promises, regardless of how sinful we are.

### LEGAL CONTRACT

Bring a legal contract to class and show it to the children during the lesson. Explain that contracts are necessary in this world because people often break their promises. However, God never breaks His promises; He is always faithful (Num 23:19).



APPLY

### GOD'S WISDOM ON WORDS

Divide the class into groups and read the following verses together: Numbers 22:18, 35, 38; 23:5, 12, 16, 19, 26; 24:13. After all the verses have been read, ask each group to answer the following questions. Answers are written in italics.

1. How was Balaam restricted in what he could speak or do? (Numbers 22:18, 35; 23:12, 26; 24:13) *Balaam could not speak or do less or more than God told him. He could speak only the words that God spoke to him. He had to do ALL that the Lord spoke. He could not do good or bad on his own will.*
2. Who put a word in Balaam's mouth? (Numbers 22:38; 23:5, 12, 16) *The Lord.*
3. In what three ways is God different from man, according to Numbers 23:19? 1) *God does not lie,* 2) *God does not have any need to repent and* 3) *God is completely faithful to His promises.*