

The Wilderness Test

BIBLE PASSAGE: Exodus 15:22–17:7

MAIN POINT: God gave His people food and water.

KEY PASSAGE: Hebrews 3:5–6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God's plan? God's plan is to rescue His people.

SMALL GROUP OPENING
(15–20 MINUTES)

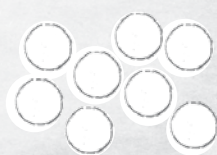
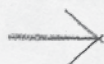
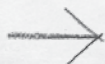
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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY
(10–15 MINUTES)

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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES
(20–25 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

The Israelites' future looked incredibly bright. The Lord, through Moses, had rescued them from slavery in Egypt. He fought for them, displaying His power by parting the Red Sea and subsequently destroying Egypt's army. God was working out His plan to bring the Israelites to the promised land—the land God promised to Abraham's family.

But the journey from Egypt to Canaan was not direct. The Lord led His people into the wilderness. The Israelites' bright future seemed to fade. Their dry mouths and rumbling, empty stomachs produced complaints and accusations. They doubted the Lord's goodness.

The Israelites traveled three days into the wilderness and were unable to find water. When they found water at Marah, they must have rushed to it—only to find the water was too bitter to drink. The people grumbled to Moses. Of course, Moses had no power to change the water. But the Lord did. Moses cried out to the Lord, and He showed Moses a tree. Moses threw the tree into the water, and the water became drinkable.

Then the Israelites moved farther into the wilderness. Their hunger produced despair: “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt ... Instead, you brought us into this wilderness ... to die of hunger!” (Ex. 16:3).

Again, the Lord gave the Israelites what they needed. Moses and Aaron explained the purpose behind the Lord’s provision: “You will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt” (Ex. 16:6). God sent bread from heaven and quail for the Israelites to eat. They ate manna in the wilderness for 40 years.

The Lord is our Provider. Like He provided for the physical needs of His people in the wilderness, He provided for our spiritual needs by sending His Son, Jesus—the Bread of life (John 6:35)—so we can live forever.



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The Wilderness Test

Exodus 15:22–17:7

Moses led the people away from the Red Sea, and they came to the wilderness. When they could not find good water to drink, they complained to Moses. God told the people, “If you obey Me and do what is right, I will not punish you like I punished the Egyptians.” Then the Israelites came to a place called Elim (EE lim) where there was plenty of water, and they camped there.

The Israelites left Elim and went out into the wilderness. **When they got hungry, they complained to Moses.**

“We are starving!” they said. “You brought us out here to die!” But Moses had not brought them out there to die. God knew what He was doing.

God said to Moses, “I heard the Israelites complaining. Tell them that they will eat meat for dinner, and in the morning they will eat bread until they are full. Then they will know that I am their God.”

That evening, quail came into the camp and the people ate meat for dinner. In the morning, fine flakes like frost were on the ground.

“What is it?” the Israelites asked.

“It is bread,” said Moses. “The Lord has given you bread to eat.” The Israelites called the bread manna, which means “what is it?”

God gave the people instructions for eating the bread. He told them to collect only what they needed to eat that day. If they collected too much, the leftovers went bad. On the sixth day, they collected twice as much so they could rest on the seventh day. The seventh day was the Sabbath day, a day to rest.

The Israelites did not always do what God said to do. Sometimes they collected too much manna, and sometimes they tried to collect manna on the Sabbath day. Moses was upset that the Israelites did not obey God.

For many years, the Israelites traveled in the wilderness, going wherever God told them to go. One day, they stopped to camp but they had no water.

“Moses, give us something to drink,” they said. But Moses did not have any water.

“Lord, what should I do?” Moses prayed. God showed Moses a rock and told him to hit the rock with his staff. When he did, water came out of the rock and the people drank the water. God was with His people.

Christ Connection: When God’s people were hungry and thirsty, God gave them food and water. Later, God sent His Son, Jesus. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35). Bread and water gives people life for a little while, but Jesus gives people life forever!



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that God generously gave the people quail in the evening and bread in the morning.

(Ex. 16:8) God wanted His people to rely on Him for their daily needs. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: The Wilderness Test

BIBLE PASSAGE: Exodus 15:22–17:7

MAIN POINT: God gave His people food and water.

KEY PASSAGE: Hebrews 3:5–6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God's plan? God's plan is to rescue His people.

Welcome time

- “God Gives Us Everything We Need” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “What Does Not Belong?” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to look at the wilderness scene. Guide them to draw an *X* over items that would not have been with the Israelites in the wilderness. (*Answers: airplane, car, television, lamp*)

SAY • Last time, we heard how God rescued His people from the Egyptians in an amazing way. God sent plagues on Egypt, and then parted the Red Sea so the Israelites could cross over it on dry land. God's people were free to worship Him, but the Israelites complained when Moses led them into the wilderness. Let's hear what the Israelites complained about in our Bible story today.

Play out a picnic

Spread out a blanket and invite the preschoolers to sit on the blanket for a picnic. Provide plastic plates and utensils for the children to play out the picnic. Ask preschoolers what is missing. Then provide plastic food.

SAY • What do you do when you get hungry or thirsty?

[*Invite preschoolers to answer.*] Today we're going to hear about a time when the Israelites needed food and water, but they were in the wilderness! There was no food or water around. We'll find out how God provided food and water for the Israelites in our Bible story.



- blanket
- toy food and dishes

Sing about God's love

Provide rhythm instruments for preschoolers to play as you sing "Jesus Loves Me." If you do not have rhythm instruments available, demonstrate simple hand motions for children to do with you as you sing. If you are unfamiliar with the tune or hand motions, check out a video online before class.

SAY • Jesus loves us, and so does God the Father! We know God loves us because the Bible tells us about His love. Today we're going to learn about how God showed love to His people by taking care of them in the wilderness.

- rhythm instruments (optional)

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to play out being hungry and thirsty as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: The Wilderness Test

BIBLE PASSAGE: Exodus 15:22–17:7

MAIN POINT: God gave His people food and water.

KEY PASSAGE: Hebrews 3:5-6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God's plan? God's plan is to rescue His people.

Introduce the Bible story

As preschoolers gather in the Bible story area, hold your stomach and pretend that you are very hungry.

SAY • I am so hungry! Have you ever been so hungry that your tummy made growling noises? Your tummy hurts when you are hungry because we need food to live. What do you like to eat when you are hungry? *[Invite preschoolers to raise their hand to answer.]* God brought His people out of Egypt, and they were on their way to the promised land. But they had to go through the wilderness first. The wilderness did not have much food or water. Let's see what happened!

Watch or tell the Bible story

Open your Bible to Exodus 15.

SAY • The Bible is God's words. These Bible stories really happened, and they show us that God is powerful and good. There is no book like the Bible! Today's story comes from the second book of the Bible, Exodus.

Show the Bible story video "The Wilderness Test" or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided.

Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

- Bible
- "The Wilderness Test" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Talk about the Bible story

SAY • God gave His people food and water. God gave them manna, quail, and water from a rock! Later, God sent His Son, Jesus. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35). Bread and water gives people life for a little while, but Jesus gives people life forever!

Point to today’s Bible story on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Why did the Israelites complain? (*They were hungry and thirsty.*)
2. How did God take care of His people? (**God gave His people food and water.**)
3. What did the Israelites eat? (*manna and quail*)
4. How did God give them water in the wilderness? (*God told Moses to hit a rock and water came out!*)

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Learn the big picture question

SAY • What is God’s plan? God’s plan is to rescue His people. God rescued His people and took care of them in the wilderness. God always gives us what we need. God gave us what we needed most when He sent Jesus to rescue us from sin.

- Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Hebrews 3:5-6. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, “Confidence of Our Hope.”

SAY • Moses was God’s servant, or helper, but Jesus is God’s Son! Jesus is better than Moses!

- Key Passage Poster
- “Confidence of Our Hope” song

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

SESSION TITLE: The Wilderness Test

BIBLE PASSAGE: Exodus 15:22–17:7

MAIN POINT: God gave His people food and water.

KEY PASSAGE: Hebrews 3:5-6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God's plan? God's plan is to rescue His people.

Gather manna

Before class, tear several sheets of white paper into small pieces and spread them around the room. Invite the preschoolers to pick up the “manna” like the Israelites gathered manna every morning.

SAY • God gave His people food and water. Every morning as the people walked through the wilderness, they would pick up manna. They could make bread or little wafers out of manna, and it tasted like honey. God knew His people needed food to eat. Bread and water gives people life for a little while, but Jesus gives people life forever!

Catch quail

Before class, gather clean beige, tan, or brown socks and roll them into balls to serve as simple quail. Consider adding googly eyes and artificial feathers to enhance the look. Provide baskets or buckets for the preschoolers and invite them to spread out in the room. Gently toss all of the quail and invite children to catch them in the air or scoop them off the ground into their baskets. Play again as time allows.

SAY • A quail is a type of bird. God sent quail to the camp in the evening so His people could have quail for



• white paper

- clean socks (beige, tan, or brown)
- googly eyes (optional)
- artificial feather (optional)
- tape
- baskets or buckets

dinner. **God gave His people food and water** in the wilderness. Bread and water gives people life for a little while, but Jesus gives people life forever!

Explore rocks

Provide smooth rocks of various shapes and sizes for the preschoolers to handle, but make sure the rocks are not small enough for preschoolers to ingest. If possible, walk outside to find rocks and bring them back to class. Allow the children to examine the rocks with magnifying glasses. You may also provide water and washcloths for children to scrub the rocks.

- smooth, hand-size stones
- magnifying glasses
- small tub of water (optional)
- washcloths (optional)

SAY • God gave His people food and water in the wilderness. Do you remember how God gave His people water? [*Invite a child to answer.*] That's right! God told Moses to hit a rock with his stick and water came out. People need food and water to live. God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us. Bread and water gives people life for a little while, but Jesus gives people life forever!

Decorate water bottles for a food pantry

Prior to class cut paper into strips to cover the water bottle labels. Explain to preschoolers that some people do not have enough food or water and that these bottles will help those people. Provide a paper strip for each preschooler. Write *God loves you!* on each strip. Guide a preschooler to use markers and stickers to decorate her paper strip. Then show her how to wrap the strip around the water bottle and attach it with tape. Deliver the water bottles to a local food pantry, soup kitchen, or homeless shelter.

- unopened bottles of water
- paper
- scissors
- markers
- stickers
- tape

SAY • God gave His people food and water. Some people

do not have enough food to eat or water to drink. Because God gives us what we need, we can help other people with what they need. Many times God uses His people to meet the needs of others. Let's pray for the people who will receive these water bottles. Let's pray that God will show them that Jesus is "the bread of life" (John 6:35). Bread and water gives people life for a little while, but Jesus gives people life forever!

Watercolor paintings

- absorbent paper, 1 per preschooler
- watercolor paints
- paintbrushes
- small cups of water
- painting smocks
- hand wipes (for cleanup)

Set out watercolor paints, paintbrushes, and cups of water. Provide each preschooler with a piece of absorbent watercolor paper. Demonstrate to the children how to use the watercolors: wet the brush before dipping it in the paint and rinse the brush with water before you use a new color. As the preschoolers work, remind them that God provided His people with water.

SAY • God has power over all of creation! God has power over rocks, and only God has the power to make water come out of a rock! **God gave His people food and water** to show them they could trust Him to take care of them. We can trust God to take care of us because He loves us so much, He sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from sin.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Consider serving water to drink with round wafer cookies and fruit-flavored chewy worms to eat. Remind preschoolers that God told each family to gather enough manna to eat for that day. If they tried to save any manna for the next day (except for Sabbath), it smelled yucky and it grew worms. God wanted His people to trust Him to give them food every day. God knows what we need and He takes care of His people.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of Moses getting water from a rock or the Israelites gathering manna. Invite preschoolers to tell you about their drawing. Pray for the children.

SAY • Dear God, thank You for giving Your people food and water in a wilderness. Thank You for knowing just what we need. Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us from sin. We love You! Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschool

Journal Page

God the Redeemer

Key Passage: Hebrews 3:5-6

Big Picture Questions: What is God's plan?
God's plan is to rescue His people.

Session 1: Moses Was Born and Called
Exodus 1:8-2:10, 23-25; 3:1-4:20
God rescued Moses to save His people.

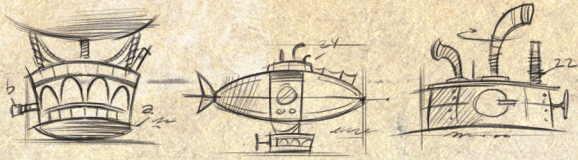
Session 2: The Plagues, the Passover, and the
Crossing of the Red Sea
Exodus 5-14
God showed Egypt that only He is
God.

Session 3: The Wilderness Test
Exodus 15:22-17:7
God gave His people food and water.

Session 4: The Golden Calf
Exodus 32:1-35; 34:1-9
God's people worshiped a golden calf.

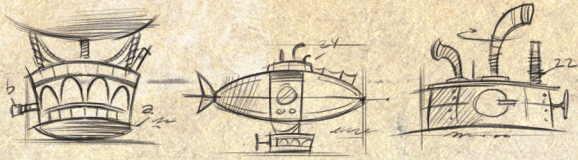
Session 5: The Ten Commandments: Love God
Exodus 19:1-20:11; 31:18
God gave us rules to show that He is
holy.





**Moses was
faithful as a
servant ... But
Christ is faithful
as the Son.
Hebrews 3:5-6**

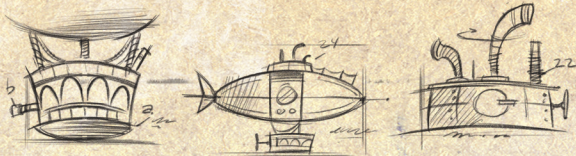




Moses verily was
faithful ... as a
servant, ... But
Christ as a son.

Hebrews 3:5-6



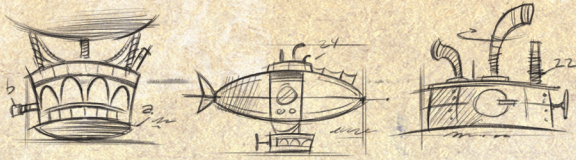


Moses was
faithful as a
servant ...

But Christ was
faithful as a Son.

Hebrews 3:5-6





Now Moses was
faithful ... as a
servant ... but
Christ is faithful
... as a son.

Hebrews 3:5-6



God gave His
people food and
water.

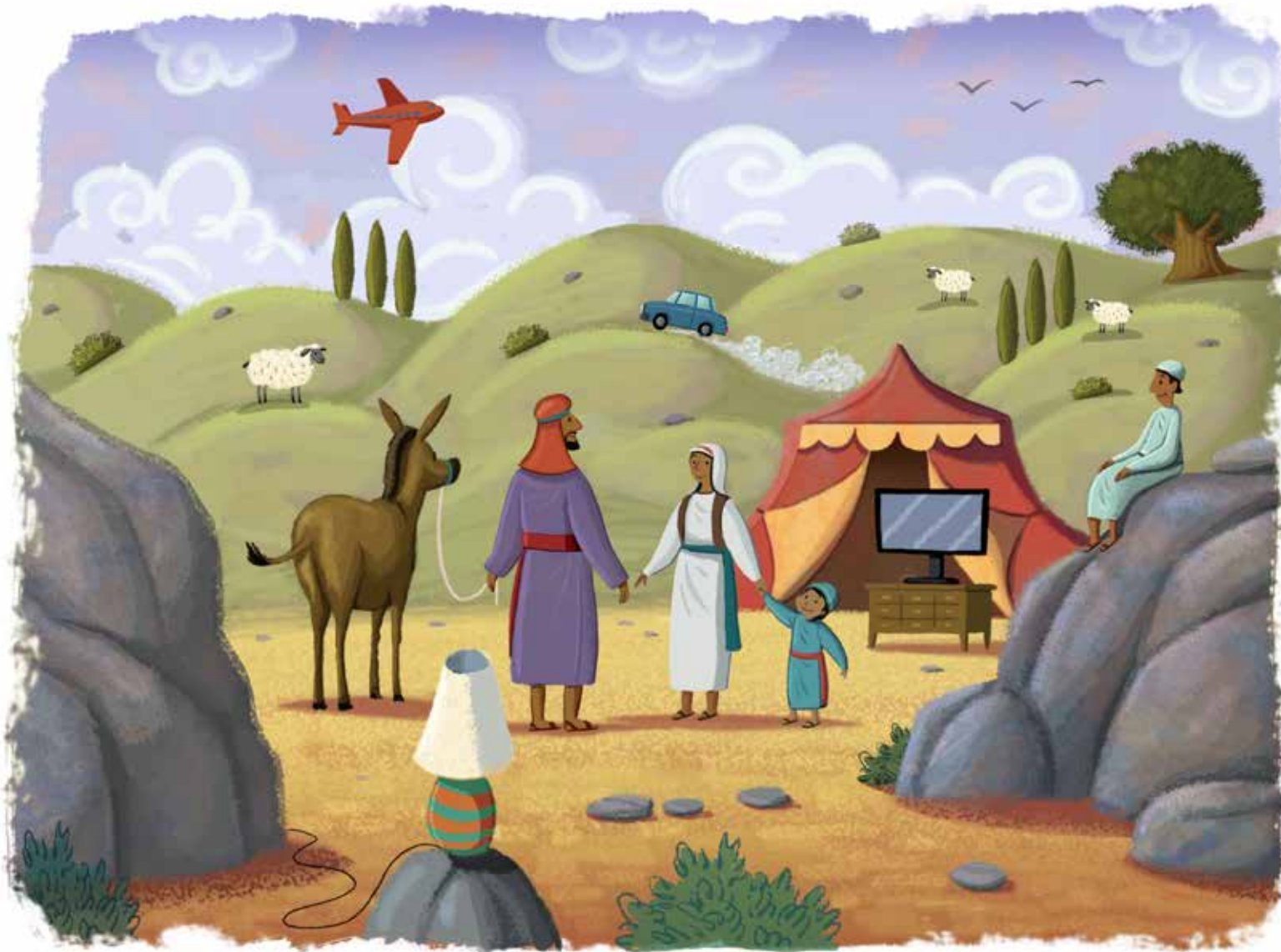




What Does Not Belong?

DOWNLOAD THE
TGP FAMILY APP

Instructions: Draw an X over the four things that would not have been with the Israelites in the wilderness.



KEY PASSAGE: Hebrews 3:5-6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What is God's plan? God's plan is to rescue His people.

BIBLE STORY:

THE WILDERNESS TEST

- God's people complained in the wilderness.
- God gave the people manna, quail, and water from a rock.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What is your favorite food?
- What is your least favorite food?
- When are you tempted to complain?
- What are ways God provides for our family?

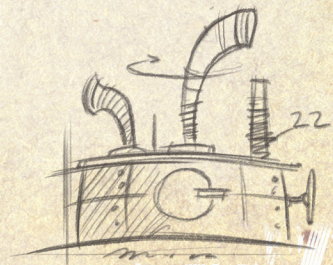
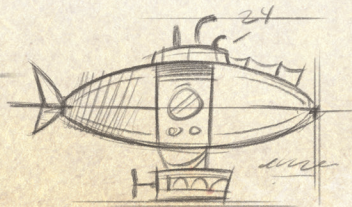
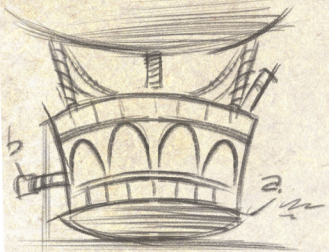
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Make a list of things you need to live, and then make a list of blessings God has provided above your needs. Thank God for His care.
- Take it further: Consider serving a meal or donating food to a homeless shelter or food bank.

Preschool Activity Pages
Unit 4, Session 3



What is God's plan?



What is God's plan?

God's plan is to
rescue His people.

