



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Exodus 17:1-7

Philippians 2:12-18

Session Theme:

Providence

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: From this Rock?

Bring a rock to use as an object lesson. Hold it up so all kids can see what you have in your hand. Ask why a rock might be useful in daily life, and how they might use this one. (It could be used to grind grain or spices; as a paperweight or a door stop; painted to be a pet rock, etc.)

We have thought of many uses for this rock. But could you imagine using it, or a much larger rock, as a water fountain? Why or why not? In today's story, that's exactly what happens. How? Let's begin our lesson and find out more!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, thank you for all that you have given us. May we remember our blessings, and not grumble over small things. Please help those who are struggling right now, especially those who lack food or clean water. Inspire good people to reach out and do what they can to make a difference. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Deep and Wide" (children's song)
- "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Wilderness

After God freed the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt, Moses led God's people through the desert wilderness to Mount Sinai, where God gave them the Ten Commandments written in stone.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format



Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Exodus 17:1-17

1. Count how many times in this lesson you find forms of the words *quarrel*, *grumble*, or *test*. With whom were the Israelites quarreling? Was it true that God wasn't taking care of them?

These words appear eight times in the ESV (other versions may vary). These words in Hebrew came to be used as the name for that place (see question 4 below). The people were quarreling with Moses and complaining to him. They acted as though God had done nothing for them, even though God had provided for them all along (parting the sea, sending manna/quail, etc).

2. The people expressed anger toward Moses, but in what way were they really angry with God? Do you ever take out your everyday frustrations on people who don't deserve it? How might you change this bad habit for the better?

It was God who had led the people out of slavery in Egypt to save them, but the people imply in verse 3 that Moses did it to kill them. They were ungrateful for all God had done for them. Sometimes when we are angry, we take it out on the people near us — even when they are not the cause of our problems. If we can remind ourselves to be less critical and negative, and instead be more thankful, we can train ourselves to focus on the positive things in our lives.

3. In response to his prayer, what did God tell Moses to do? What "tool" did Moses use? How might you say that God used Moses himself as a "tool" to get his job done? By whose power was the water provided?

God told Moses to strike the rock at Horeb with his staff (the same staff he used at the Nile, when God turned it to blood). This was not because the staff itself was magical, it was just an ordinary earthly instrument. In the same way, Moses was not the source of this miraculous power, but he simply served as God's instrument. God was the one who made the miracle happen.

4. What do the names Massah and Meribah mean? Why did Moses want the people to remember what happened in this place? Why is it a good thing to remember past mistakes we have made?

Massah means testing; Meribah means quarreling. When we remember the times we have sinned and fallen short, it helps us to recognize that we are no better than anyone else; we all need God to save us. Recognizing and confessing our sin also reminds us of how important God's forgiveness really is in our lives, and why we need his grace and mercy.

5. Jesus alluded to this story in John 4:14 (or at least, he used the same imagery). What do you think he meant here? How does this "living water" relate in our lives to God's Word and to faith?

We all know what it means to be thirsty and to need water. In talking to the woman at the well in Samaria, Jesus told her that he could provide something even more important than literal water: the "living water" that could meet her spiritual needs. We get to experience Jesus' love and mercy through his promise of forgiveness. We trust in his Word of grace; that's what it means to have faith in Jesus.

6. The Apostle Paul also makes reference to this story in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 as an allegory for Christ. In what sense does the story of Moses serve as a warning to us as Christians? How does it also show us the same basis we have for confidence in faith?

An allegory is when a story has symbolic meaning, where pieces of the story represent or stand in for something with a deeper meaning. Paul compares our Christian lives to the Jewish people wandering in the wilderness. We too face struggles and hardship, but Jesus is the Rock — the stable foundation that provides us with the faith we need to live each day.

7. Read Philippians 2:12-18. What sort of attitude does the Apostle Paul tell us we should have? In what way does this advice assume we still have a way to go in our journey of faith?

Paul tells us to "do all things without grumbling or disputing," recognizing that God works through us. We are still in the midst of our journey through life, and we need to know that God will continue to be with us.

8. Do you believe that trusting in Jesus gives us a better attitude in dealing with others? Why or why not?

Trust and thankfulness to God give us confidence that we will be okay. We don't have to lash out in anger and doubt, because we know we have a Savior who provides and cares for us.

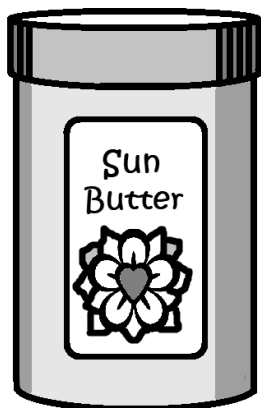
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Edible Rock Treats

Materials Needed:

- Large bowl
- Wax paper
- Heavy wooden spoon
- Cup measure
- Peanut butter or sunflower seed butter (ask about peanut allergies)
- Confectioner's sugar



Instructions:

Before starting this activity, have everyone wash their hands. Next, give each person a large piece of wax paper to use as a clean work surface.

In the bowl, mix 1 cup of peanut butter or sunflower seed butter and 2½ cups of confectioner's sugar. If you have a large class, you may want to double or even triple this recipe. Otherwise, you can use the recipe as is and just have the kids make smaller rocks.

Invite kids to take turns stirring the mixture with a heavy duty wooden spoon. Add more sugar if dough is too sticky. When the ingredients seem well combined, divide the dough so there is a little bit for everyone.

Give everyone a dollop of dough on their piece of wax paper, and invite kids to form their dough into an interesting shaped rock.

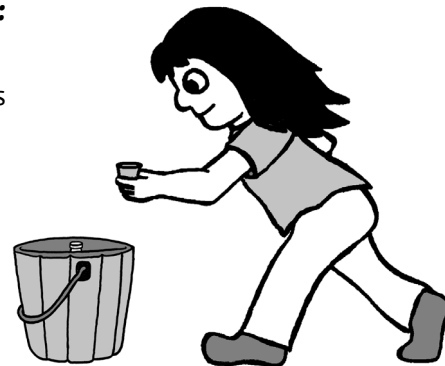
When they are finished, kids can eat their rocks if they want. If you have extra supplies left over, give everyone more dough and allow them to make other things from the story out of the dough (a staff, a bowl, etc.).

We made small rocks today, but in the Bible story, the rock that Moses struck would have been quite large. Nonetheless, the important part of the story is that God intervened and provided for his people in a miraculous way. It can be easy to forget about all the ways that God cares for us and to get into a grumbling mindset as the Israelites did. But even a simple thing like a glass of clean water is a miracle and a reason for us to be grateful!

Activity 2: Streams of Water Race

Materials Needed:

- Two empty 20-ounce bottles
- Two small cups
- Four basins or buckets
- Permanent markers



Instructions:

Before class: Think about the abilities of the children involved in the game and using permanent marker, draw an appropriate fill line on both bottles. Measure to make sure the lines are in the same place on each bottle.

Place two basins a few feet apart at one end of the room, and place an empty 20-ounce bottle upright in each basin. (*The basin will catch spills that might occur during the game.*) At the other end of the classroom, place two basins filled with water and two small cups.

To play: Have the children count off (one-two-one-two) to form two teams.

The first person on each team will pick up a small cup, dip it in the basin of water, race to their team's empty bottle, pour the water into the bottle, then race back and hand the empty cup to the next person in line. Do this until one of the bottles is filled past the fill line. Whichever team reaches this point first wins the game.

When Moses struck the rock and water poured from it, the thirsty Israelites rejoiced! Imagine the rush to the cool water that must have ensued. People may have taken cups and buckets with them to carry some water back to their camp.

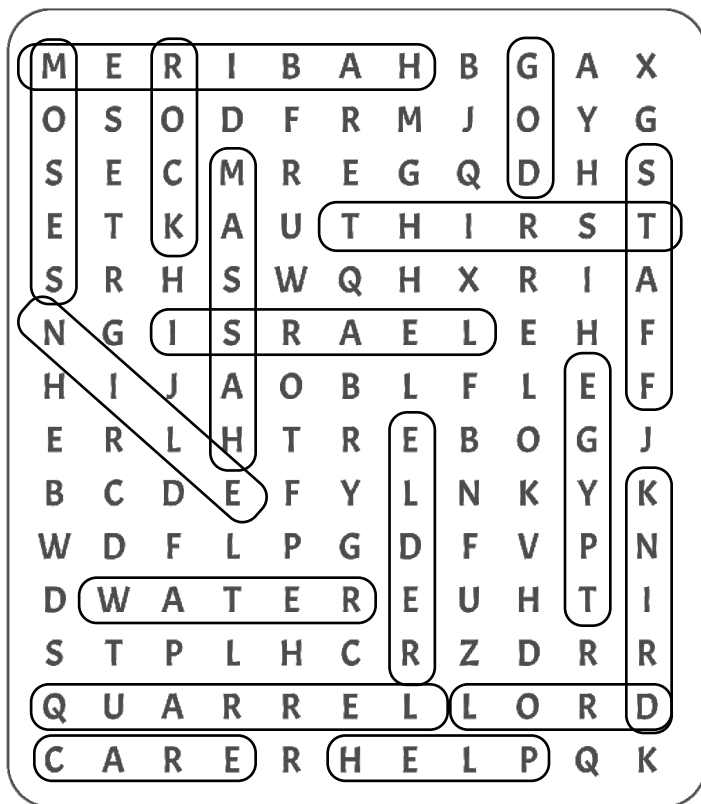
Water is something that is easy to take for granted — until it is in short supply. If we have access to clean water, we have every reason for gratitude.

Maybe we want to consider supporting those ministries that provide clean water to those who don't have it, themselves. God provides for his people's needs, and sometimes he uses people like us as part of that process!

Worksheet Answer Key

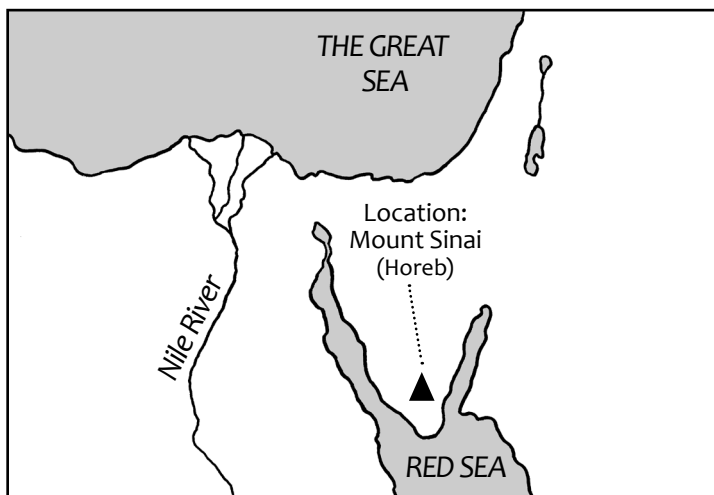
Shown below are the answers to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

Word Search Answers:



According to 1 Corinthians 10:4,
the rock in this story symbolizes: CHRIST

Map Answers:



Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Providence

God's care and guidance
making sure we have what we need

*God led the Israelites to freedom,
and provided for them in the wilderness.*

Reflection for the Week Ahead

When things don't happen the way we expect them to, it can be very disappointing. Sometimes we can get so focused on all that is going wrong that we completely forget everything that is going right!

This is what happened with the Israelites in today's story. God had saved them from slavery and brought them into a new land. Yet when they ran into trouble and couldn't find water to drink, they thought God had forgotten them. He hadn't. In fact, he even brought water from a rock in order to quench their thirst.

Has there ever been a time in your life when you wondered if God had forgotten you? If so, you would not be the first to struggle with that question. Take comfort in today's story. God knows our needs, and he provides for us — sometimes in very unexpected ways.

When have you been surprised by something wonderful and unexpected? What was it? Share that story!



The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer praising God for his patience and the ways in which he takes good care of us. Ask the Holy Spirit to refresh your heart and give you a positive outlook on your life.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.