

The Bronze Snake

Bible Passage: Numbers 20-21

Key Passage: ⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Bottom Line: I can believe in Christ and be saved from my sin and have a relationship with God.

Big Picture Question: What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands.

Christ Connection: *The Israelites faced a huge problem because of their sin. God sent snakes to punish Israel, but anyone who was bitten could look at the bronze snake on the pole and live. Because of our sin, we face a huge problem: we are separated from God. We deserve to die, but anyone who looks to Jesus on the cross and trusts in Him will live forever with God.*

LEADERNOTES:

CONTEXT

The Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness when they complained to Moses and to God. God had done some pretty amazing things for the Israelites—He rescued them from the hand of Pharaoh, He parted the Red Sea so they could safely cross, and He provided manna for them to eat. But to the Israelites, this wasn't enough.

God disciplined them because He knew their dissatisfaction was a sign of a bigger issue: a heart problem, a sin problem. They stopped believing that God is good. In their hearts, the Israelites believed the same lie that rattled Eve in the garden. Maybe God isn't interested in giving us what is best. Maybe He is holding out on us.

God sent venomous snakes that bit the people and killed many of them. The Israelites repented. They wanted Moses to ask God to take away the snakes. God provided a solution. He told Moses, "Make a snake image out of bronze and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover." In John 3:14, Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up." What was Jesus talking about? Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." So Jesus invites us, "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am God, and there is no other" (Isa. 45:22).

As you lead your kids this week, help them understand the problem: we all have sinned and deserve death. Then lead them to rejoice because Jesus, the sinless Savior, became sin for us and was lifted up on the cross in our place. We must only look to and believe in Him to be saved.

TEACHING FOCUS (Numbers 20-21)

The Israelites, who refused to enter the good land God promised, were blaming God and Moses for leading them aimlessly through the wilderness. The people had a chance to move out of the wilderness and into the land with good food to eat, but they were too afraid! Their wandering in the wilderness was their own fault—a direct result of their previous sin.

It was wrong for them to say and think the things they did. Accusing God of giving them bad food or of trying to get them killed in the wilderness is a form of blasphemy. Blasphemy is saying or believing untrue and dishonoring things about God. As you might have guessed, blasphemy is sin. What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God or His commands.

God disciplined His people for their sin by sending snakes into the camp to bite them. But God didn't just discipline them, He also provided a way for them to be saved. God told His people to look at the bronze snake to be healed. Even when giving them the hard consequences they deserved, God also showed them mercy by giving them a way to be healed. This story is a clear reminder of the way God showed us mercy through Jesus.

TODAY'S TAKEAWAYS

- The Israelites faced a huge problem because of their sin.
- God sent snakes to punish Israel, but anyone who was bitten could look at the bronze snake on the pole and live.
- Because of our sin, we face a huge problem: we are separated from God. We deserve to die.
- Just like God showed His mercy with the bronze snake, He shows us His mercy through His son Jesus Christ.

BL: I can believe in Christ and be saved from my sin and have a relationship with God

Worship & Story Time

Gather children on a rug or in a specific area of the classroom to tell the story. Some kids (especially the younger ones) may wander. That's okay. They're still listening and learning!

Play the DVD of All Star Kids worship (choose 1 song for today)

What You Say: "Way to go! You are such amazing singers. Now let's sit down to learn from the Bible today."

What You Do: Introduce the story

God's people walked in the desert for 40 years. They grumbled because they had no water. God told Moses and Aaron to talk to a rock to make water come out. Moses hit the rock with his staff instead. The water came out of the rock, but God said Moses and Aaron could not enter the promised land. Then the people grumbled about food! God sent snakes to the people. God told Moses to make a snake out of bronze and put it on a pole. Whenever the people looked at the bronze snake, God healed them. Many years later, Jesus said that He would be lifted up like the bronze snake on the pole. All people who look to Jesus to rescue them will be saved.

PLAY BIBLE STORY VIDEO

Check diapers and serve snack.

Activities

Depending on the size of your group, you may lead each activity two or three times. Not every child may want to participate in the activities. That's okay.

1. Play pick up snakes

What you Need: fake snakes (or pipe cleaners bent to look like snakes, tape ends that have exposed wire)

What You Do:

- Mix up the "snakes" into a large pile.
- One at a time, kids will try to grab a snake from the pile without hooking another snake.
- Continue until you untangle all the snakes.

What You Say: "God did not leave His people when they complained. God healed His people when they looked at the bronze snake. **WE CAN TRUST GOD.**

2. Practice signing the Memory Verse

What you need: Memory Verse Poster

What You Do:

- Show the poster to the kids
- As you say the words point to them on the poster
- Create simple hand motions to teach toddlers the memory verse. Sample hand motions include "**Trust in the Lord** (ASL sign – like pulling a rope) **with all your heart** (point to heart) **and lean not on your own understanding** (point to head); **in all your ways submit to him** (ASL sign for all- draw a circle around your hand), **and he will make your paths straight** (hold hands up like making a road). **Proverbs 3:5-6**

What You Say: The Israelites did not trust God to provide for them in the wilderness, so they complained. Our memory verse reminds us that we should not trust ourselves and what we think will happen, we should trust God.

Pray and Dismiss:

What You need: coloring page

What You Do:

- Pray- " Lord you are good and you are merciful to us. We know that we deserve punishment for sin, but You sent Jesus to make a way for us to be forgiven. Thank you for sending Jesus to die for us. Help us trust You and lovingly obey Your good commands. Amen.

What You Say: Tell parents something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Send home the coloring sheet and tell families, we are talking about sin and that we can trust and obey God.