

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

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 minutes)

Activities that encourage preschoolers to enter the classroom and begin engaging with peers and Small Group Leaders by providing age appropriate and hands on fun while introducing new concepts they will hear in the day's Bible story.

Prepare to offer the following activities to 3-, 4-, 5- year olds as they arrive.

Relay Stones

What you Need: 4 foam bowls, 2 plastic spoons, 24 "rocks"

What You Do:

- Form 2 teams.
- Line up teams at one end of the room.
- Place an empty bowl in front of each team.
- Place 2 bowls, each filled with 12 "Stones" at the other end of the room.
- Give the first child in each line a spoon.
- When you say go, direct her to walk to her team's bowl at the other end of the room, put a stone on her spoon, walk the stone on the spoon, back to her team's empty bowl, and drop it in.
- Then give the spoon to the next child in line.
- Guide preschoolers to continue until all 12 of their team's stones are in their bowl.

- The team that moves all their stones first wins.
- Encourage preschoolers to cheer on their team as they wait for their turn.
- If teams doesn't work best, you could just have one long line of kids.

What You Say:

"God used to stones to help His people remember Him and all that He did to get them to the promised land. We will spend the next weeks learning about this journey to the promised land. I pray that we all see God's power and learn to trust and obey Him more everyday.

Worship 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."

Story Time: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

Bible Story

What You Need: Bible

What You Do: Place a bookmark at Numbers 20-21 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it.

What You Say: " No book is like the Bible. Only the Bible has God's words in it. All of God's words are true. Today's Bible story comes from Numbers."

PLAY BIBLE STORY VIDEO

Talk about the Bible 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.

Learn the Big Picture Question

What You Say: Just like Moses and the Israelites sin, our sin keeps us from God. **What does it mean to sin? To sin is to go against God and His commands.** Moses

disobeyed God when he hit the rock. The people complained against God. The good news is that when we sin, we can look to Jesus and trust that He saved us."

Practice the Memory Verse

Open your Bible to Proverbs 3:5-6. Read the memory verse aloud several times.

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."

Transition to small group.

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect through activities that are written to reach every learning style while reinforcing the Main Point that was introduced during the Bible Story and applying it to real life experiences. In addition, these activities provide preschoolers with an opportunity to build relationships with their Small Group Leader.

1. What Would You Say?

What You Need: "What Would You Say" printable (1 set per group), basket

What You Do:

- Place the cards in a basket or bag.
- Invite kids to take turns choosing a question.
- Read it aloud.
- Invite the kid who chose the question to say how she would respond in that situation.
- Continue to select questions, and talk about children's responses to difficult situations.
- Guide kids to God-honoring responses when necessary.

What You Say "Complaining is never the right thing to do. Instead of complaining about hard situation, we should ask God to help us. God's people should have asked God and trusted Him to give them the food and water they needed. **What does it mean to sin? To sin is to go against God and His commands.** We sin like the Israelites. Our sin keeps us from God, but anyone who believes in Jesus for life is saved and has life forever with 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.