



The Bronze Snake

Bible Passage: Numbers 20-21

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

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**

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.*

10 Minutes SOCIAL: SETTING THE TONE OF THE EXPERIENCE

Freeze Dance

What You Need: music played on your phone

What You Do:

- Sing a song or play music.
- Instruct kids that they can dance and move to the music while it plays, but they must freeze in place when the music stops.
- Every so often, pause the music.
- Kids who keep dancing will sit down but may continue dancing in their seats when the music plays.
- The last kid dancing while standing up wins.

What You Say "When I paused the music, you had to stop dancing. In this series we are going to hear many stories about God's chosen people and how they make choices about following God. We are going to have fun learning about how God is always there for us and we can trust Him with our whole being because of it.

10 Minutes Worship: CELEBRATING WHAT GOD IS DOING

SONGS, OFFERING AND PRAYER

15 Minutes LARGE GROUP: COMMUNICATING GOD'S TRUTH IN ENGAGING WAYS

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.

25 Minutes SMALL GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Discussion Questions:

1. What were the Israelites complaining about? (the food that God had provided them, Num. 21:5)
2. What did God do to punish His people for their sin? (sent snakes to bite them, Num. 21:6)
3. What did God tell Moses to do when the people repented of their sin? (Make a bronze snake and put it on a pole, Num. 21:8-9)
4. Why was it sin to complain against God? Guide the kids to discuss the fact that God had proven Himself faithful time and time again. God had promised good things to His people and met all their physical needs. Complaining against God was the same as accusing Him of being unfaithful or uncaring.
5. When do we grumble or complain against God? Guide kids to see that there are many ways we express ungratefulness toward God or distrust of God. Whenever we grumble or complain, it's like saying "God isn't doing the right things in my life" or "I know what is best for me better than God does."
6. How is the bronze snake a picture of God's mercy? Guide the kids to see that people bit by the venomous snakes did not have to do anything to be saved; when they looked at the bronze snake, it showed they trusted God to save them. In a way that points us to Jesus, who was hung on a cross to take the punishment we deserved. When we trust in Him, God saves us.

Activity: Look and be Saved

What You Need: pool noodle



What You Do:

- Play a variation of freeze tag.
- In the first round, explain that any kid who is frozen must remain frozen for the rest of the game.
- After playing for a few minutes, play a second round where one kid holds up a pool noodle.
- Any kid who is tagged can look to the pool noodle and rejoin the game.

What You Say God told His people to look at the bronze snake to be healed. They did not have to earn the healing God offered, they only had to trust in God that He would heal them when they looked at the bronze snake. In a way, that's like salvation through Jesus. We are sinners in need of salvation. The Bible teaches us we cannot earn salvation! Instead, when we trust in the salvation God provides through Jesus, He saves us from sin.

Activity: Memory Verse Activity

What You Need: Memory Verse Poster, Memory Verse Puzzle (printed and cut apart- 1 set per group)

What You Do:

- Review the Memory Verse as a group together out loud a few times.
- Lay the Memory Verse Puzzle on the floor/table face down.
- Take turns picking up a card at a time and putting the puzzle together.
- Keep going until all of the puzzle is together.
- Read the verse together one more time.

What You Say "Our memory verse reminds us that we need to trust God. He knows better than we do about everything! This passage warns us against trusting our own understanding. God leads us to righteousness in Jesus. Trusting in ourselves for righteousness is sin. God provided a way out of that sin, it is through believing in His Son, Jesus.

Pray and Dismiss:

What You Need: no supplies needed

What You Say:

"God, thank You for the Bible. In it, we see that we are sinners like the Israelites. We deserve to die for our sin, but we see that You love us and provided the way for us to be healed. You sent Your Son, Jesus, to be lifted up on a cross. We look to Him by faith for our healing and salvation. Thank You. Amen.

5 Minutes HOME: PROMPTING ACTION BEYOND THE EXPERIENCE

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage your kids to tell their parents about our Big Picture Questions. What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands. BL- **I can believe in Christ and be saved from my sin and have a relationship with God.**