

GOD PROVIDED FOR HIS PEOPLE

EXODUS 15-17



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 34:17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why does sin separate us from God? Because God is holy, sin has broken our relationship with God.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The people complained against Moses and against God, but God still chose to give them the food and water they needed. We are all sinners and are enemies of God, but Christ still chose to die for us so that we might be saved.

STORY POINT: The Israelites complained to God and Moses, but God still provided exactly what they needed.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

God's miraculous provision for His people revealed His steadfast compassion despite their continual grumbling. In today's passage, we read of God granting the Israelites far more than they deserved, heaping upon them more than they needed as they journeyed with Him to the Promised Land. Today, those who are in Christ receive undeserved grace and provision through His sacrificial love lavished upon us like manna in the wilderness.

What made the Israelites long for their old lives in Egypt? What does the Sabbath teach us about God's provision?

Though not far removed from the miraculous parting of the Red Sea, the Israelites grew desensitized to God's extraordinary power at work in their lives. Not only had He delivered them from slavery, but He kept His presence close, guiding them day and night as they journeyed through the wilderness. Now, after weeks of wandering, their grumbling grew louder. They would have rather died in Egypt than learn to depend on and trust God in a desolate place. They took for granted their freedom to worship God in the wilderness; they longed for their predictable lives in Egypt—forgetting the toils of slavery.

Despite what they deserved, God looked on them with compassion, causing bread to rain on them from heaven and for meat and water to become miraculously within reach. He called for His people to trust in His provision, only gathering what was necessary for the day. He desired them to thrive under obedience to Him. Just as God had fought their battle against Egypt, God called them to be still and rest in His provision. Rest requires the people of God to stop striving and simply trust and receive. God was helping His people learn this truth through the Sabbath.

Sadly, the Israelites turned a blind eye to God's faithfulness in fighting their battles and meeting their needs. We are also prone to overlook God's faithful provision in our own lives and perhaps even downplay the miraculous gift of salvation in Christ. Lead children to see the gift of God's undeserved grace and to hunger and thirst for His gift of salvation.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach;
plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids
and open
the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids
the story of
the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to
love the God of
the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live
out the mission
of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Need or Want?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ uncommon foods such as dragon fruit, pomegranates, turnips, and yucca

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ music



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ bags of cotton balls, 2 or 3
- ☐ timer

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ note cards with envelopes

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "God Provided for His People" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ crackers and water for each kid (optional)

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 4, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Lottie Moon Photos" printable

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "He Rescues Them (Psalm 34:17)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What is the one thing at your house you love to play with? Could you go one day without it? Could you go a week without it? Why or why not?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Need or Want?” activity page.

SAY “We all have certain items we need like water, food, and clothing. We also have things we want like sports equipment or electronics. Today, we’ll see how the Israelites also had needs and wants, but they failed to trust God to provide for their needs.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: WHAT IS IT?



Before the session, gather four or five different foods kids may never have seen or tried before such as dragon fruit, pomegranates, turnips, and yucca. If the foods cannot be purchased, consider printing off pictures of various food.

Hold up each food one at a time and ask the kids “what is it?” Invite kids to raise their hands and offer their responses. After kids have had a turn to reply, tell kids the name of the fruit. Discuss where these foods are usually grown and how people eat them. For example, tell kids that dragon fruit is commonly grown in Asia, Mexico, Central America, South America, and Israel. Tell kids that dragon fruit is eaten when it’s ripe by either slicing the fruit into small pieces or using a spoon to scoop out the fruit.

SAY “You may have never seen or even tasted some of these foods. Today, we’ll learn how God provided His people with food from heaven called manna. The name manna actually means ‘what is it?’ because the Israelites had never seen it or tasted it.”

☐ OPTION 2: STOP THE NOISE!



Play a game where kids learn to stop the noise and be still. Play some music at a low volume. While the music is playing, direct kids to make noise either by clapping, stomping, or shouting. As soon as the music stops, lead them to stop the noise and remain as still as possible. Any kid who makes noise when the music is off is out. Continue to play as time allows. Consider making the “silent time” longer each round.

SAY “Sometimes we whine and complain when things don’t go our way or when we don’t get what we want. When we made lots of noise, we drowned out the beautiful music. This is similar to how it is when we complain. Our complaining ‘drowns out’ the ways we see God’s goodness and how He has given us everything we need. Today, we’ll see how **THE ISRAELITES COMPLAINED TO GOD AND MOSES, BUT GOD STILL PROVIDED EXACTLY WHAT THEY NEEDED.**”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

X Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I am so happy to see you! Today, we will be learning from the book of Exodus. If you have your Bible with you, please take it out. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] As we learn from God’s Word, we will hear about what happened after God parted the Red Sea. We’ll see how the Israelites quickly forgot how great and powerful God is and began to complain about Him. We’ll learn that **THE ISRAELITES COMPLAINED TO GOD AND MOSES, BUT GOD STILL PROVIDED EXACTLY WHAT THEY NEEDED.** [Display the Story Point Poster.]

Before we open God’s Word, let’s prepare our hearts and minds for what He wants to teach us today. Pray with me: ‘Dear God, thank You that we can gather together to hear from Your Word. Help our hearts trust You and believe that You provide our every need. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Worship → **There's nothing that our God can't do. * offering*
** way maker*
X Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Let’s review our big picture question: Why does sin separate us from God? What is the answer we’ve been learning? [Allow responses.] **Because God is holy, our sin has broken our relationship with God.**

God doesn’t want people to be separated from Him. In our story today, we will see how the people sinned. They complained against God and Moses. But God wanted them to trust in Him. He provided them with what they needed to demonstrate His love for them. Our sin separates us from God, but He provided they way back to Him through His Son, Jesus. God showed His love to us and provided us with Jesus so that anyone who trusts in Him will be with God forever. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “God remembered His promises to Abraham and rescued His people from Egypt. Last week, we learned how God displayed His power and made a way for Israel to escape the Egyptians by parting the Red Sea. Today, we’ll see how the Israelites came to the wilderness and how God provided for their needs. ”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story



1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Exodus 15:22–17:7. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Provided for His People.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

GOD PROVIDED FOR HIS PEOPLE

“After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, **God led the people on a journey through the wilderness. The people traveled for three days with nothing to drink. Then they found water but could not drink it because it was bitter. The people grumbled and complained to Moses. Moses asked the Lord for help, and the Lord showed him a tree. Moses threw the tree in the water, and the water miraculously became clean and good to drink.**

A few weeks later, God’s people were grumbling again. They said, “If only we had died in Egypt! We had all the meat and bread we wanted there, but you brought us out here where we have nothing to eat! We will die of hunger!”

Moses and Aaron gathered all the people and said, “Tonight you will know that the LORD saved you from Egypt, and in the morning you will see the LORD’s glory. Tonight the LORD will give you meat to eat, and in the morning you will eat bread until you are full because He has heard your complaints.”

That night, quail covered the whole camp, and the Israelites were able to eat meat. In the morning, bread covered the ground like frost and each person gathered as much as he needed for that day. Moses commanded them to gather as much as each person needed to eat and not to save any of it until the next day. Some people did not listen and tried to keep some bread for the next morning, but the bread spoiled. It smelled bad and had worms in it.

God wanted His people to rest on the seventh day of every week, called the Sabbath. The people were told to gather twice as much bread on the sixth day of each week, and no bread was on the ground on the Sabbath. This was the only day of the week that leftover bread did not go bad. God provided exactly what His people needed to eat each day.

Christ Connection: The people complained against Moses and against God, but God still chose to give them the food and water they needed. We are all sinners and are enemies of God, but Christ still chose to die for us so that we might be saved.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Eat a snack: Provide water and crackers for kids to snack on while you share how God provided for the Israelites’ needs. Be sure to display an Allergy Alert Poster.

Active listening: Invite kids to hold a finger over their mouth any time they hear the Israelites complain.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY Shortly after God rescued His people at the Red Sea, they began to complain about Him and Moses. What were some reasons the Israelites complained? **[Allow responses.]** They didn't have water to drink, and they wanted food to eat. Rather than trust God to give them what they needed, they chose to complain and believe wrongly about God.

Do you think God knew what they needed? Why? **[Allow responses.]** God knew exactly what His people needed. He didn't forget about them. In fact, He was leading them to a good land where they would have plenty of water and food. God knows what we need as well (Matthew 6:32). We can trust God to provide for our needs and care for us.

THE ISRAELITES COMPLAINED TO GOD AND MOSES, BUT GOD STILL PROVIDED EXACTLY WHAT THEY NEEDED. How did God provide for His people? **[Allow responses.]** God performed a miracle to change the bitter water into good water for them to drink. Then He gave them food from heaven called manna, and He gave them quail to eat. Each day God made sure they had food. He even gave them a day of rest, called the Sabbath, where they could remember how He provided for them and use it as a day to worship Him. We all need to remember that God provides for our every need and that everything we have comes from Him. We worship God as the only One who can give us what we truly need—Jesus!

The people complained against Moses and against God, but God still chose to give them the food and water they needed. We are all sinners and are enemies of God, but Christ still chose to die for us so that we might be saved.

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY We all have needs, and we can trust God to meet our needs. But our greatest need is to be saved from our sins. We cannot do this on our own. Just like the manna was a free gift from heaven, Jesus came down from heaven to give us the free gift of salvation. When we confess our sins and trust in Jesus, we are saved. Have you trusted in Jesus?

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 4, Session 4" Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Is it okay to be mad at God? Why?
2. Why is thankfulness the right attitude toward God?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the "Lottie Moon Photos" as you tell kids about her.

SAY Lottie Moon was only around four feet tall, but her small size didn't stop her from boldly



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

sharing the gospel. When God called Lottie to mission work in China, she was prepared to go and do whatever it took to help the people learn about Jesus. Lottie wrote many letters to a mission organization and to individuals. In her letters, she pleaded for more money to help missions, more missionaries to come serve in China, and more prayer. ”

Tell kids that Lottie persuaded women to take an annual missions offering to fully support missionaries serving around the world. Explain that the offering continues to this day, and it is named after her—the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. Close in prayer, thanking God for Lottie's important role as she served as a missionary in China. Pray that God would continue to provide for the needs of missionaries serving around the world.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 34:17 together.

SAY ” God knows that our greatest need is to be saved from sin. When we cry out to Him to save us from our sins, He hears us. Trusting in His Son, Jesus, is the only way to be saved. ”

Invite kids to “cry out” the key passage in different voices. Lead kids to say the key passage aloud like a robot, in a high-pitched voice, a low voice, and so on. Repeat as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “He Rescues Them (Psalm 34:17).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY ” Dear God, we praise You for being a good God who knows exactly what we need. Thank You for providing for our greatest need through Your Son, Jesus. Help us trust You to care for us and know what is best for our lives. In Jesus' name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Exodus 15. Tell kids that Moses acted as God's prophet. Explain that a prophet is someone who hears from God and tells the people what God said. God spoke to Moses, and then Moses told God's words to the people. Share how the Bible has many other prophets such as Samuel, Isaiah, Jonah, and Jeremiah. Consider pointing out these Bible books.

Consider pointing out the area between Egypt (H7) and Mount Sinai (I9) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Exodus 15:24-25 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY 🗨️ God chose Moses to be the leader of the Israelites. God spoke through Moses and helped Moses lead the people. When Israel cried out to Moses because they were thirsty, God told Moses what to do so they could have water to drink. Moses threw a tree in the water, and the water became good to drink.

Jesus is God's Son who always obeyed God. Jesus died on the cross, which the Bible sometimes calls a tree because it was made out of wood. Similar to how the tree Moses threw in the water healed the water and made it good, Jesus' death on the cross heals us from sin and makes us right before God. We can trust in Jesus and be saved from our sin. 🙏

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY 🗨️ Do you ever complain or whine? Why? 🙏

Answers will vary. Tell kids that we usually complain when we don't get our way. Share how complaining reveals a heart that does not trust God. Discuss how the Bible teaches us to do all things without complaining, trusting that God loves us and is working for our good.

SAY 🗨️ God gave the people enough food for each day. How does God provide for you each day? 🙏

Answers will vary. Remind kids that God sees our needs and knows exactly what we need each day. Encourage kids to trust that God cares for them and loves them. Discuss the difference between needs and wants. Remind kids that God provided for our greatest need through His Son, Jesus.

SAY 🗨️ God's people rested on the Sabbath day. How do you rest and trust God? 🙏

Answers will vary. Discuss how we all need physical rest because we are limited. Tell kids that when we rest, we are showing that we are not in control. We can trust that even when we rest, God is in control and will provide for us. Share how Jesus gives us eternal rest when we trust in Him because He takes away our sins. We can rest in knowing we never have to try to earn our forgiveness, and we will never be separated from God.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: PICK UP MANNA

Form kids into two groups. Provide each kid in one group with a handful of cotton balls or “manna.” Provide each kid in the second group with a plastic bag. Start a timer and invite the kids in the first group to toss their cotton balls in the air. When the “manna” lands on the floor, challenge the second group to collect the “manna” in their bags as quickly as they can. Stop the timer when all the “manna” has been collected. Repeat the activity, allowing groups to switch roles. The team with the fastest time wins.

Then read John 6:31-40. Help kids understand how Jesus is the Bread of Life who gives us eternal life.

SAY “God provided manna that fell from heaven. This bread pointed to the true bread from heaven—Jesus Christ. Jesus left heaven to provide us with the only way to be forgiven of our sins. Unlike the Israelites who complained, Jesus never complained. He obeyed God perfectly. He gave His life so that anyone who trusts in Him will be forgiven and have eternal life.”

☐ OPTION 2: REMEMBRANCE CARDS



Provide each kid with a note card, an envelope, and markers. Invite kids to write ways or draw pictures of how God has provided for them such as answering a specific prayer, giving them something they needed, helping them with a problem, or sending Jesus to die for their sins. Direct each kid to place his note card in an envelope. Tell kids they can take their cards home and when they struggle to complain or doubt God’s provision, they can open their cards and be reminded of how God has provided for them in the past and will be faithful to provide for them in the future.

SAY “THE ISRAELITES COMPLAINED TO GOD AND MOSES, BUT GOD STILL PROVIDED EXACTLY WHAT THEY NEEDED. We may struggle to complain or forget the ways God cares for us, but we can always look to Jesus as the perfect reminder of God’s love for us. If God didn’t keep Jesus from us, we can trust that He will always provide for our needs.”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.