

gracious and loving God who created us to be in relationship with Him.

### **Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute pencils and journal pages. Remind kids that God punishes sin but helps people who love Him. At Passover, God spared the Israelites from judgment by requiring the blood of a lamb. God created the way for people to escape the penalty of sin through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Explain that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. People who trust in Jesus escape the penalty of sin and have eternal life.

Prompt kids to imagine how the Israelites felt during the plagues. How did the Egyptians probably feel? Ask kids to write a few sentences describing what they know about God. How do they know that He is the one true God?

As time allows, lead kids to complete “God’s Plan for Rescue” on the activity page. Kids will fill in the letters from the numbered circles to complete the missing words from today’s Bible story main point, **God proved to the Egyptians that He is the one true God.**

**SAY** • Today we learned that God sent a set of plagues to deliver His people from captivity. **God proved to the Egyptians that He is the one true God.**

Make sure you send home the big picture cards to allow families to interact with the Bible content this week.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “God’s Plan for Rescue” activity page, 1 per kid
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Kids

## The Wilderness Test

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Exodus 15:22–17:7

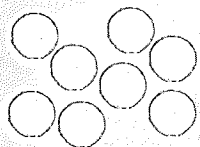
**MAIN POINT:** God provided for the physical needs of His people.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Hebrews 3:5–6

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is God's plan? God's plan is to rescue His people from captivity.

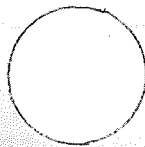
**SMALL GROUP OPENING**  
(10–15 MINUTES)

PAGE 42



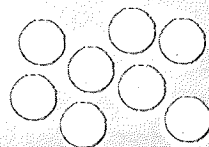
**LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY**  
(25–30 MINUTES)

PAGE 44



**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES**  
(25–30 MINUTES)

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### Leader BIBLE STUDY

The Israelites' future looked incredibly bright. The Lord, through Moses, had rescued them from slavery in Egypt. He fought for them, displaying His power by parting the Red Sea and subsequently destroying Egypt's army. God was working out His plan to bring the Israelites to the promised land—the land God promised to Abraham's family.

But the journey from Egypt to Canaan was not direct. The Lord led His people into the wilderness. The Israelites' bright future seemed to fade. Their dry mouths and rumbling, empty stomachs produced complaints and accusations. They doubted the Lord's goodness.

The Israelites traveled three days into the wilderness and were unable to find water. When they found water at Marah, they must have rushed to it—only to find the water was too bitter to drink. The people grumbled to Moses. Of course, Moses had no power to change the water. But the Lord did. Moses cried out to the Lord, and He showed Moses a tree. Moses threw the tree into the water, and the water became drinkable.

Then the Israelites moved farther into the wilderness. Their hunger produced despair: “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt ... Instead, you brought us into this wilderness ... to die of hunger!” (Ex. 16:3).

Again, the Lord gave the Israelites what they needed. Moses and Aaron explained the purpose behind the Lord’s provision: “You will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt” (Ex. 16:6). God sent bread from heaven and quail for the Israelites to eat. They ate manna in the wilderness for 40 years.

The Lord is our Provider. Like He provided for the physical needs of His people in the wilderness, He provided for our spiritual needs by sending His Son, Jesus—the Bread of life (John 6:35)—so we can live forever.



**MINISTRY GRID**<sup>®</sup>  
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at *[gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com)*. For free training and session-by-session help, visit *[www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject)*.

# The BIBLE STORY

## The Wilderness Test

*Exodus 15:22–17:7*

**Moses led the people** away from the Red Sea, and they came to the wilderness. They could not find good water to drink, and they complained to Moses. God said, “If you obey Me and do what is right and keep My commands, I will not punish you like I punished the Egyptians. I am Yahweh, who heals you.” The Israelites came to a place called Elim (EE lim) where they found plenty of food and water. They camped there.

The Israelites left Elim and journeyed into the wilderness. They were hungry. They complained to Moses. “We wish we had died in Egypt! At least there was food to eat,” they said. “You brought us out here to starve to death!” But Moses had not brought them out there to die. God knew what He was doing.

God said, “I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them: In the evening you will eat meat, and in the morning you will eat bread until you are full. Then you will know that I am Yahweh your God.”

So at evening, quail came into the camp. In the morning, fine flakes like frost were on the ground.

“What is it?” the Israelites asked.

Moses said, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat.”

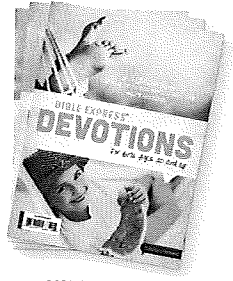
The Israelites called the bread *manna*, which means “what is it?” God gave the people instructions. He told them to collect just enough to eat for the day. If they collected too much, the leftovers went bad. He told them to collect twice as much on the sixth day, because the seventh day was the Sabbath, a day to rest.

The Israelites did not always follow God's instructions. Sometimes they collected too much manna, and sometimes they tried to collect manna on the Sabbath day. Moses was angry that the people refused to obey God. **The Israelites ate manna for 40 years while they were in the wilderness.**

**The Israelites moved about the wilderness as the Lord told them to do. One day, they came to a camp with no water. "Give us something to drink," they told Moses. "Why are you complaining to me?" Moses asked. "You brought us out here to die" the Israelites said. They forgot that the Lord had a plan for them.**

**"Lord, what should I do?" Moses cried out. God showed Moses a rock and instructed him to hit it with his staff. Water came out of it, and the people drank. It was a sign that the Lord was with them.**

*Christ Connection: In the New Testament, Jesus said that He is the Bread of life. (John 6:31-35) God provided manna from heaven for His people's physical hunger, and later He provided His Son, Jesus, for our spiritual hunger. The Israelites needed bread to live for a little while, but whoever has Jesus will live forever!*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD'S WORD?  
GET  
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that God generously gave the people quail in the evening and bread in the morning.

(Ex. 16:8) God wanted His people to rely on Him for their daily needs. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Small Group OPENING

**SESSION TITLE:** The Wilderness Test

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Exodus 15:22–17:7

**MAIN POINT:** God provided for the physical needs of His people.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Hebrews 3:5-6

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is God’s plan? God’s plan is to rescue His people from captivity.

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## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask for volunteers to think about a time that they were hungry or thirsty. What was the situation, and how did you feel? Did you complain?

## Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Search for Water” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Search for Water” maze on the activity page. Tell kids to help Moses lead the Israelites through the wilderness to a place called Elim, where there was plenty of food and water.

Then direct kids to write the letters along the path in order from start to finish to reveal a special message. (*God provides.*)

**SAY** • In our last Bible story, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and God provided a way for them to escape through the Red Sea. In today’s Bible story, Moses led the Israelites away from the Red Sea and into the wilderness. They could not find food or good water to drink there. Let’s learn how God provided for the physical needs of His people.

## Session starter (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Tissue game

Invite kids to sit in a circle. Pass around a stack of napkins or a roll of paper towels. Instruct kids to take just enough to use during one messy meal.

After all kids collect their napkins, explain that for each napkin they have, kids will share one thing God has provided for them (family, a home, clothes, and so on).

**SAY** • God is so good. He provides exactly what we need!

Long ago, the Israelites were in the wilderness, but they did not have enough food or water. The Israelites complained that they were hungry. Do you think God provided for their needs? Let's listen to the Bible story to find out.



• stack of napkins or roll of paper towels

### OPTION 2: Hidden messages

Before the session, cut rock shapes from white paper. Use white crayon to write *God provides* on the rock shapes.

Distribute a rocks, paint, and paintbrushes. Demonstrate how to brush paint over the rock to reveal the hidden message.

**SAY** • God provides! Our Bible story today is about how God used a rock to provide for the Israelites in the wilderness. The Israelites were hungry and thirsty. But you can't eat a rock, and you can't drink a rock! I wonder how God used a rock to provide. Today we will find out the wonderful way God provided for His people.

- white paper
- white crayon
- scissors
- paintbrushes
- blue watercolor paint
- cups of water

## Transition to large group

# Large Group LEADER

**SESSION TITLE:** The Wilderness Test

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Exodus 15:22–17:7

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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- "Great Race Clue Card" printable
- Bible
- map of Egypt
- swimming props
- index cards
- marker

*[Large Group Leader enters wearing damp athletic attire with a solid color T-shirt and life preserver, holding a Great Race clue card and the Bible. Add swimming props such as goggles, flippers, and so forth. A map of Egypt is secured to the wall.]*

**LEADER** • Hi, everyone! I'm [your name], and this week on the Great Race, I swam across the Red Sea! And let me tell you, it would have been so much easier to cross if God had parted the Red Sea for me like He did for the Israelites! Let's read the next Great Race clue card! *[Open the clue card.]*

*Roadblock in the wilderness: To continue the Great Race, rearrange these letters to decode a very important truth:*

O G D R I V E P S O D

I'm so tired from my swim; will you all please help me complete this roadblock? Great!

Ask volunteers to hold index cards with the letters of the clue, one letter per card. Challenge kids to rearrange



themselves to solve the Great Race clue card roadblock.  
(*GOD PROVIDES*)

**LEADER** • Awesome job! Let's find out what God provided for His people in today's Bible story.

### **Giant timeline (1 minute)**

**LEADER** • Now, where are we? Last week, God showed the Egyptians His power in a mighty way through the plagues, the Passover, and the crossing of the Red Sea. [*Point to last week's Bible story.*] God rescued His people from physical captivity in Egypt.

Our timeline says that today's story is called "The Wilderness Test." Oh, wow! I do not like tests. I wonder what kind of test God gave them. I sure hope they had their #2 pencils with them!

• Giant Timeline

### **Big picture question (1 minute)**

**LEADER** • Now, does anyone remember our big picture question? *What is God's plan? God's plan is to rescue His people from captivity.* In today's Bible story, the Israelites forgot that the Lord had a plan for them. They complained to Moses. Let's find out why. Listen carefully!

### **Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)**

Open your Bible to Exodus 15:22–17:7. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video.

**LEADER** • Moses led the Israelites from the Red Sea into the wilderness. There God tested them, saying, "If you obey Me and do what is right and keep My commands, I will not punish you like I punished

- Bibles
- "The Wilderness Test" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

the Egyptians. I am Yahweh, who heals you.” [See Ex. 15:25-26.] Now I’m about to give you a different kind of test: a true-false test!

Challenge kids to determine if the statement is true or false.

1. The Israelites found plenty of food and water at Elim. (*true, Ex. 15:27*)
2. The Israelites were hungry, but they did not complain to Moses. (*False, the Israelites complained to Moses; Ex. 16:2-3*)
3. Moses brought the Israelites into the wilderness to die. God did not know what He was doing. (*False, God wanted to see if they would trust Him; Ex. 16:4*)
4. God provided food so the Israelites would know He is Yahweh. (*true, Ex. 16:12*)
5. The Israelites called the bread *manna*, which means “What is it?” (*true, Exodus 16:15*)
6. God told the Israelites to collect twice as much food on the sixth day, because the seventh day was the Sabbath, a day to rest. (*true, Exodus 16:22-23*)
7. The Israelites always followed God’s instructions. (*False, sometimes they collected too much manna and sometimes they tried to collect manna on the Sabbath; Ex. 16:20,27*)
8. Israel ate manna for 40 years. (*true, Ex. 16:35*)
9. God gave the people water from a rock. It was a sign that the Lord was with them. (*true, Ex. 17:5-6*)

**LEADER • God provided for the physical needs of His people.** God provided manna from heaven for His people’s physical hunger, and He provided His Son, Jesus, for our spiritual hunger. The Israelites needed bread to live for a little while, but whoever has Jesus will live forever!

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Tip: Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

### Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Hebrews 3:5-6.

**LEADER** • We learned that **God provided for the physical**

**needs of His people.** We have a greater need—a need to be forgiven for our sin. God provided His Son, Jesus, so we can be forgiven. [See *John 3:16*.] Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, so we are no longer captives to sin. [See *Rom. 6:6-11*.]

***What is God's plan? God's plan is to rescue His people from captivity.***

Review the hand motions from the previous session.

Then demonstrate hand motions to help boys and girls memorize the last part of the verse. Tell kids to repeat the hand motions from the previous session for the key word *household*, which occurs twice in the last part of the verse.

- **Christ**—Make a *C* with your right hand, touch your left shoulder, and then bring it across your body to your right hip.
- **we**—Point to yourself and then to others.
- **hold**—Hold hands in front of body with palms up and elbows bent.
- **courage/confidence**—Similar to the sign for strong; start with loose hands and change to fists.

- Key Passage Poster
- "Confidence of Our Hope" song

- **Our hope**—Touch your index finger to your brow and then hold up both hands with fingers bent at a right angle.

• “Unit 4, Session 3”  
discussion starter  
video

### **Discussion starter video (4 minutes)**

Show the “Unit 4, Session 3” discussion starter video.

**LEADER** • Have any of you ever been camping? Did you forget any supplies? Sometimes when we make our own plans, we forget things we need and we let down ourselves or other people.

*God’s plan is to rescue His people from captivity,* and He will never let us down. God provides everything we need for salvation.

Lead kids to discuss ways God has provided for them. Point out that sometimes a blessing may seem coincidental, but every good gift comes from God. (See James 1:17.)

• “Freedom” song

### **Sing (4 minutes)**

**LEADER** • God rescued the Israelites from slavery, and He sets us free from sin when we trust in Jesus. That’s true freedom! Let’s sing.

Sing together “Freedom.”

### **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

**LEADER** • Lord God, thank You for being our Provider! And we rejoice in the provision of Your Son, Jesus. Help us trust that through Jesus, we are rescued from spiritual captivity. We love You. Amen.

### **Dismiss to small groups**

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:19.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

# Small Group LEADER

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## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- numbered cube

Instruct kids to sit in a circle. Display the key passage poster. Lead the kids to read it aloud together. Then choose a volunteer to roll a numbered cube. If she rolls a 2, kids should take turns saying the key passage, two words at a time. If she rolls a 4, kids should say four words at a time, and so on.

Encourage kids to say the key passage from memory. If a kid does not know a word, invite the rest of the group to help him. Then allow another kid to roll the cube and play again. As kids begin to master the passage, cover the key passage poster.

## Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- index cards
- pencils or markers
- Small Group Timeline (optional)

Invite kids to sit in a circle. Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Exodus 15. Ask for volunteers to recall what happened in Exodus 1–14. (*Moses Was Born and Called; The Plagues, the Passover and the Crossing of the Red Sea*)

Remind kids that in today's Bible story, God tested the Israelites in the wilderness. There He said, "If you obey Me and do what is right and keep My commands, I will not punish you like I punished the Egyptians. I am Yahweh,

who heals you” (See Ex. 15:25-26).

Form two groups. Provide pencils or markers and five index cards to each group. Challenge groups to test each other with five questions about today’s Bible story. The groups will compete to earn points for each correct answer. Help the groups formulate questions if needed.

Sample questions:

- What food did God provide in the morning? (*bread, manna*)
- What food did God provide in the evening? (*quail*)
- How much bread did the Israelites gather on the sixth day? (*twice as much, enough for two days*)

**SAY** • Awesome job! Do you remember the main point of today’s Bible story? **God provided for the physical needs of His people.** That’s right!

In today’s Bible story, the Israelites complained to Moses of their thirst and hunger; they forgot that God had a plan for them. For 40 years, Moses and the Israelites ate food and drank water that God provided. [See Ex. 16:35; 1 Cor. 10:3-4.] For those 40 years, the food and water that God gave each day was a reminder to the Israelites that He is Yahweh, the Lord our God. [See Ex. 16:12.]

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** What is it?

Scatter an assortment of construction items on a table.

Guide kids to form pairs or groups of three. Give groups a couple of minutes to create. Then ask, “What is it?” Invite kids to share their creations.

**SAY** • In today’s Bible story, the Lord gave His people bread from heaven to eat. This bread didn’t look like the

LOW PREP

- various construction items (craft sticks, construction blocks, straws, craft feathers, play dough, tape, glue, paper, scissors)

bread you use to make a sandwich. The Bible says it was fine flakes on the ground. The Israelites weren't even sure what it was! They called the bread *manna*, which means, "What is it?"

Who provided food and water for the Israelites?  
**God provided for the physical needs of His people.**

**OPTION 2:** Manna in a jar

Invite kids to sit in a circle. Read Exodus 16:31-35.

**SAY** • God commanded the Israelites to keep a portion of manna for the future generations—for their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Then the future generations would see the bread that God provided for the Israelites in the desert. The manna in a jar was a reminder to the Israelites that **God provided for the physical needs of His people.**

Give each kid a clear jar or cup, a few index cards, and a pencil or marker. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Exodus 16:13-15. Point out that the bread looked like fine flakes.

Demonstrate how to carefully tear the edges of the index card so the cards look like fine flakes. Then invite kids to write on each flake something God has provided for them. (Examples: family, a home, clothing, and so on)

Instruct kids to put the fine flakes in their jars or cups. Encourage them to keep them at home as a reminder that **God provided for the physical needs of His people**, and He provides for our needs too.

**SAY** • In the New Testament, Jesus said that He is the Bread of life. [See *John 6:31-35*.] God provided manna from heaven for His people's physical hunger, and

- clear jars or cups,  
1 per kid
- index cards
- pencils or markers

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.



He provided His Son, Jesus, for our spiritual hunger. The Israelites needed bread to live for little while, but whoever has Jesus will live forever!

### **Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute pencils and journal pages. Remind kids that God provided for the physical needs of His people. Prompt kids to write a short prayer thanking God for His provision in a time of need.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “Food for Life” on the activity page. Kids should cross out every third letter from left to right, starting on the top row and working down. Kids will fill in the blanks to reveal the answer to, *Who does Jesus say He is? (Jesus is the Bread of life.)* Guide kids to refer to John 6:31-35 to confirm the answer.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “Food for Life” activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.