

15. Provider



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Exodus 16:1-17:7

God provides food and water for the Israelites as they travel through the wilderness



AIMS

To encourage the children to reflect on what they are thankful for, and to thank God for these things



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Fortunately, Unfortunately Game

Have the children sitting in a circle. One person starts by making up the first sentence of a story. The person next to them continues it with the next sentence but they must begin their sentence with the word "fortunately." Then the next person adds a sentence to the story, beginning, "unfortunately."

Like Moses and the Israelites, we can trust God to provide all our needs. We should be thankful for the things we have, rather than complaining about things we want but don't have.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Why do you think the Israelites were so quick to begin complaining?
- What kind of things are you tempted to complain about?
- Make a list of things you are thankful for. How does that change your perspective?

Take some time to pray for your group.

Continue round the circle alternating fortunately and unfortunately, for example:

- One day I got a new puppy.
- Fortunately he was a lovely, friendly dog.
- Unfortunately he ran away.
- Fortunately someone found him and brought him back the next day.
- Unfortunately they were asking for £1000 reward.

Expect it to get silly fairly quickly! The story is likely to go on without a clear ending so just decide when you think it is time to move on and choose someone to begin a new story.

▶ Picture Hunt

You will need: pictures (from additional document: Picture Hunt)

Before the children arrive, hide sets of pictures around the room. (See additional document: Picture Hunt.) You will need to print enough sets of pictures so that there is

one for roughly every three children. Print each set on a different colour of paper, or put marks with felt pen on each picture (a different colour for each set.) Divide the children into teams of about three and give each team a colour (corresponding to the paper or pen marks you used). They have to try to be the first team to find all the pictures of their colour. Once they have found all the pictures, see if they can spot the common theme. (They are all things we would need for a camping trip.)



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap

Recap the story of Moses.

God chose Moses to lead the Israelites away from Egypt where they were slaves. He had problems when Pharaoh wouldn't let his slaves go and

lots of plagues were sent on the Egyptians but finally the Israelites were free. We heard last time about how God opened up the Red Sea to let the Israelites through and so they were able to keep travelling on their way to the land God had promised them.

▶ Moses' Story

You will need: complaints cards or speech bubbles (see additional documents: Complaints, or Complaints speech bubbles.)

It was a long journey. At first they were just happy to be free from Egypt but then they started to get weary from all the travelling, and sometimes it was hard for them to find food to eat. About a month after they left Egypt the Israelites started to complain.

Get the children to read out the sentences below. There are different options provided for this:

You could get all the children to read the sentences together, or print different sentences on different colours of paper and divide the children into colour-coded groups. (See additional document: Complaints.)

You could give sentences to individual children to read out in turn. (See additional document: Complaint speech bubbles.) Be sensitive to children who may struggle with reading or may not want to read in front of others.

1. We've got no food to eat.
2. We're going to starve out here in the wilderness.
3. I wish we were back in Egypt.
4. Me too. In Egypt we had plenty of food.
5. We had lots of meat and all the bread we wanted.
6. Now we have nothing.
7. We're so hungry.
8. It would have been better if God had just let us die in Egypt.

God told Moses that he was going to give the Israelites food. The next day when the Israelites woke up they saw that strange

flaky things had fallen from the sky during the night. It wasn't snow - this was the food God had given them to eat. They called it manna, which actually means "what is it?" because the Israelites didn't know what it was. It wasn't like any food they had seen before, but they thought it tasted like honey wafers and it was good.

Moses told the people to collect as much food as they needed for themselves and their families for that day. They weren't to take extra to keep for the next day. They had to trust that God would give them what they needed again tomorrow. Some of the Israelites didn't listen and they kept food for the next day but in the morning they found that it had gone all mouldy and bad. Every day as they travelled the Israelites found that God gave them the food they needed. However a little while later they started complaining again about something else:

9. We're really thirsty.
10. We've nothing at all to drink.
11. There's nowhere to find water out here.
12. You're our leader. What are you going to do?
13. We have to get water soon or we'll die.
14. Why did you bring us out of Egypt anyway?
15. At least we had what we needed there.
16. Now we're going to die of thirst out here.

Moses asked God what to do. God told Moses to take his staff - the stick he had used to part the Red Sea - and to hit a rock with it. Moses did, and water came pouring out of the rock for the Israelites to drink.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

The Israelites did a lot of

complaining. How do you think that would have made Moses feel as their leader? How do you think it would have made God feel? The Israelites had just been rescued from slavery. You'd think they would have been thankful for that, but they were even saying they wished they were back in Egypt! We can all be tempted to complain at times if things aren't going as we want them to. What kind of things do you sometimes complain about? Actually we all have a lot to be thankful for and it makes a difference when we stop to appreciate these things instead of taking them for granted.

▶ Prayer Activity

You will need: coloured paper triangles (see additional document: Bunting), pens or pencils, string or wool, stapler or tape and scissors

Ask the children to come up with some examples of things they are thankful for. Point out that, as well as being thankful for the physical things we have, such as food and clothes, and for our family and friends, it is also good to be thankful for what we know of God.

Have some triangles printed out on coloured paper for each child (from the additional document: Bunting). Point out that on one side is a verse from Exodus 15 - these are some of the things Moses and the people were thankful for about God after he had helped them cross the Red Sea. Get the children to read these and then to write or draw something they are thankful for on the other side.

Tape or staple the triangles onto a piece of wool or string to create bunting which can be hung up to remind them of all they have to be thankful for.

You could then pray together, getting the children to pray in turn, "Thank you, God, for..." and say the thing they wrote on their bunting, or if you are pushed for time a leader could pray, using some of the children's suggestions.