

LESSON 42

God Heals Israel with a Bronze Snake

NUMBERS 21:4-9



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD SAVES HIS PEOPLE INDIVIDUALLY

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

SUPPLIES: Animal picture book (optional)

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 42)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is Jesus?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is Jesus?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: Snack food/water

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Page 42

SUPPLIES: markers/crayons

Snakes

SUPPLIES: picture book on venomous snakes

Reenacting the Story

SUPPLIES: snake on staff prop; red yarn

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today’s lesson the children will learn how God showed his mercy to the people of Israel again in the midst of their complaining.

Bring an animal picture book to class. Review a number of animals, large and small. Consider what getting bitten might be like. Getting bitten by your pet rabbit might hurt for a moment and leave a small cut. Getting bitten by a large dog would have a different effect. Then consider animals they will not likely encounter, like a zebra or a lion or a camel.

Tell the children you are going to name an animal, and they are to pretend they were just bitten by that animal. If it is poisonous, they should fall to the ground and pretend to die. If it is not poisonous, they should jump up and down while they say, “Ouch, that hurt!”

<i>Poisonous</i>	<i>Nonpoisonous</i>
rattlesnake	goat
water moccasin	donkey
black widow spider	rabbit
copperhead snake	elephant
cobra	turkey
scorpion	salamander

Tell the children that there is a poisonous snake in today’s story so they should listen carefully.

Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 42, “God Heals Israel with a Bronze Snake,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- How did the Israelites disobey God in this story?
(They complained against God and against God's chosen leader Moses.)

- What was the consequence of their actions?
(God disciplined them for their words and heart attitudes by sending poisonous snakes to bite them causing many to die.)

- How did God show his mercy on the Israelites?
(God delivers Israel from poisonous snakes by providing healing through a bronze snake statue.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking:

- Why do you think God used snakes?
(Many people are afraid of snakes. God wanted to teach Israel to trust in the Lord.)

- How many of you are afraid of snakes?
(Have children give a show of hands.)

- Has anyone ever been bitten by a snake?
(If yes, allow children to tell what happened.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 42—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Why did Moses make a statue of a snake on a pole?
(Moses obeyed God's instructions to make a bronze snake on a pole.)

Where Is Jesus? _____

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Passage: John 3:14–15

The Old Testament is filled with stories that point to Jesus. Here we see sinners healed of the snakebites sent to them as judgment when they look to the upraised snake. It was God who told Moses to put the bronze snake up on a pole.

The snake on the pole pointed forward to Jesus who would one day be lifted up. Because of this, God healed the people and did not count their sins against them. Isn't it interesting that this Old Testament story precedes the most quoted verse of the entire New Testament? When we read of the bronze snake being lifted up we should think of Christ.

- Why are people coming near to look at this snake?
(They are obeying God's directions to look at the snake and be healed from their snakebites.)
- Did the statue heal them?
(No, faith and obedience in God made them well.)
- Have your parents ever asked you to do something that at first you thought was scary? How did God help you to obey?
(Allow one or two children to explain what happened.)

Snakes

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ picture book on venomous snakes

Bring in a picture book on venomous snakes from the library to pass around. Mark a few pages that show photos of open mouths and fangs. Talk about safety around snakes—not to play with them or go up to them without an adult around.

Then spend some time marveling at how God made the snake and how just a little venom can cause such awful problems when bitten.

If the children begin to express fear or disgust with snakes, assure them that there are no real snakes in the room.

Reenacting the Story

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ make a prop of a snake on a staff
- ✓ strands of red yarn

Have one child play the part of Moses; another, the part of the snake; and the rest, the people of Israel.

First, the people grumble. Then have the snake go about while the children close their eyes. Give the snake red yarn to drop onto several of the children. Ask the children to open their eyes. If they find a piece of yarn on them, they should pretend to be sick from the snake's bite.

Have Moses pray to God on their behalf and then hold up the staff with the snake before them. Tell the children to look at the staff and pretend that they are all better again.

Lead the children in a praise song. Explain to them that God did not have to deliver Israel because they deserved the punishment they received. Explain to them that it was God's mercy to heal the Israelites.

PRAY 5 MIN

Take time at the end of class to thank God for all you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as another way for the children to remember what today's lesson was about.

LESSON 42 - GOD HEALS ISRAEL WITH A BRONZE SNAKE

