



UNIT 5 | SESSION 1

## GOD PROVIDED MANNA

EXODUS 16-17

### KEY PASSAGE:

Psalm 95:6-7

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is worship? Worship is celebrating the greatness of God.

### CHRIST CONNECTION:

God provided water and manna for His people's physical hunger. Later, He provided His Son, Jesus, for our spiritual hunger. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). The Israelites needed bread to live for a little while, but whoever has Jesus will live forever.



**PREPARE**

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



**PREPARE**

PREPARE YOUR HEART TO TEACH; PLAN THE SESSION



**WELCOME**

GREET KIDS and OPEN THE SESSION



**LEARN**

TEACH KIDS THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL



**LOVE**

LEAD KIDS TO LOVE THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL



**LIVE**

LEAD KIDS TO LIVE OUT THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

## LEADER Bible Study

The Israelites had personally experienced God’s faithfulness as He directed them out of Egypt, fought for them as He parted the Red Sea, and then delivered them into the wilderness with the promise of a land of their own. What happened next is retold as a cautionary tale in both the Psalms and Book of Hebrews.

The Israelites tasted freedom for the first time in 400 years, but their stomachs still rumbled. Maybe the Israelites had expected to go straight to Canaan. Instead, they were in a dry wilderness without water or food. They began to think of Egypt in a warmer light. Maybe slavery hadn’t been that bad.

Isn’t that the lie that causes us to doubt God’s goodness? God saves us from slavery to sin; is following Jesus worth it? We know the answer is a resounding, “Yes!” But when life is hard and sanctification is trying, we—like the Israelites—sometimes stop trusting God. We grumble and complain.

God, the faithful keeper of promises, did not bring His people out of Egypt to let them die in the wilderness, nor does He abandon His children today. God sent His own Son, who gave up His life to free us from sin. He promises us a new home with Him forever.

If you had been among the Israelites, how do you think you would have responded? Can

you think of a time your own circumstances had you questioning God’s goodness? Let the truth of Psalm 95:7 comfort you: “For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, the sheep under his care.”

Israel’s history is given to us in the Bible because it reflects the Christian experience. We are to learn from it. (See 1 Cor. 10:1-11.) God cares for His people. He is faithful and keeps His promises. Our journey toward our new home of eternity will be challenging and trying, but we can rely on God—trusting His leading and provision.

The Lord is worthy of our trust and worship. The Israelites needed this reminder, and so do we. Trust Him and obey Him because His way is better than any plan you can conceive. He is a providing shepherd who will lead us.

### TERMS TO KNOW

**Massah and Meribah:** names meaning “testing” and “quarreling” that Moses named the place where God provided in Exodus 17. The new names expressed behavior to avoid.

## 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** “ Have you ever eaten a food that you weren’t quite sure what it was? Maybe it was a special dish from a culture that is new to you. Or maybe it was a mystery meat served by your school cafeteria. Today we will learn about a time God’s people named a food ‘What is it?’ because they weren’t quite sure what they were eating! ”

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### OPTION 1: WOULD YOU GATHER

Invite the kids to stand in the center of the room. You may use masking tape to mark a line down the middle of the room. Offer the kids a series of two food options, pointing to either side of the line. Kids will move to the side of the line that corresponds to the food they would prefer to gather and eat.

Suggestions:

- Pizza or tacos
- Hamburgers or macaroni and cheese
- Cookies or cake
- Manna or quail

**SAY** “ Our food preferences are all very different. If you were living in the wilderness though, you would probably have to eat whatever you could find, even if it wasn’t your preference. Today we will learn about what God provided His people. ”

#### OPTION 2: NOT IN MY BASKET



Think of a characteristic or trait that foods could have in common, such as all starting with an M or all being fruit. Instruct the kids to sit in a circle. Select a kid to begin the game by saying “We’re hungry in the wilderness, and I’m going to gather ...” finishing with the name of a food. If the food fits in your category, respond by saying “Yes, gather some ... ” repeating the food. Otherwise, say “Not in my basket!” Then allow the next kid to suggest a food. See how long before the kids are able to figure out the rule.

**SAY** “ Today we will learn about the food God provided His people while they were in the Wilderness. Even though God provided for them, there were rules about how much they could gather. Why do you think God gave them rules for gathering? We’ll learn more soon. ”

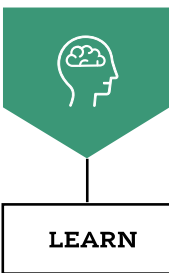
## INTRODUCE the Bible Story

### 1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

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

**SAY** “ Hey there! You know, every week it gives me such joy to see all of you here, ready to learn about God from the Bible. How many of you brought a Bible with you from home? **[Allow responses and distribute a classroom Bible to any kids who need one.]** That’s great. We study the Bible because it is God’s Word to us. He tells us in the Bible everything we need to know about Him and about ourselves in order to live with Him forever.

If this is your first week joining us, we are excited you came. There is a lot to learn about God, and it is always a good time to start learning about Him. ”



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to Exodus 16–17. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Provided Manna.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

#### GOD PROVIDED MANNA

“Moses led God’s people from the Red Sea to the wilderness. They were hungry, so 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!”** But Moses had not brought them out there to die. God was in control.

God’s glory appeared in a cloud and **God said to Moses, “I’ve heard the Israelites’ complaints. 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 the LORD your God.”**

Sure enough, **quail came into the camp in the evening. 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 told the people 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. **God provided for His people, and He wanted them to trust Him and obey Him. The Israelites ate manna for 40 years—the whole time they were in the wilderness.**

**The Israelites** moved about the wilderness as God 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.

**The Israelites had forgotten that God** was with them and **had a plan for them. “You brought us out here to die,”** they said again.

“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: God provided water and manna for His people’s physical hunger. Later, He provided His Son, Jesus, for our spiritual hunger. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35). The Israelites needed bread to live for a little while, but whoever has Jesus will live forever. ”

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

##### Call for active listening:

As you tell the story, direct the kids to listen for times the people of Israel complained. Each time they hear a complaint, instruct them to give you a thumbs down.

**Vary your voice:** Use a dramatic voice as you tell the story. Try to use different voices as you say what the people of Israel said and what Moses said.



### 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** “ Have you ever noticed that people tend to get really cranky when they feel hungry? It also happens when we get thirsty or feel tired. As you can imagine, walking through the wilderness with no access to food or water made the Israelites all three—hungry, thirsty, and tired. They were very unhappy with their situation, and they blamed God. Instead of focusing on all the amazing ways He had rescued them, provided for them, and protected them, they chose to focus only on the things that made them feel uncomfortable. Instead of celebrating God’s greatness, the Israelites were questioning His love for them.

It’s really important to pay attention to how God responded to the Israelites. God didn’t abandon them or destroy them. Instead, God met their needs by sending quail into the camp and covering the ground with manna in the mornings. God gave very specific instructions on how to gather manna. God wanted the people to gather only what they needed for a day, and He wanted them to gather twice as much on the sixth day so they could honor the Sabbath. These in His Word instructions were opportunities for the people to worship God. Gathering just enough for a single day proved that they trusted God to provide more again the next day; it showed they saw Him as great. Keeping the Sabbath allowed them time to rest and focus on God’s greatness, as well as proving they loved Him enough to obey His commands. When the people followed God’s instructions, it showed they worshiped Him. **What is worship? Worship is celebrating the greatness of God.** ”

### 3 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** “ God provided manna for His people’s physical hunger. 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. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

### 2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** “ Why did the extra manna the people collected spoil on the first five days of the week? ”

Help the kids think about who the people should put their trust in. If they could collect and preserve as much manna as they wanted, whenever they wanted, the people would have been tempted to trust in their own abilities to collect and store manna, instead of trusting in God’s provision for them.

| **SAY** “ Why was it wrong for the people to complain? ”

Point out that the people’s complaints were accusations that God led them out of Egypt to kill them. They were ignoring God’s goodness and refusing to worship and honor Him. They weren’t just explaining how they felt, they were saying God was untrustworthy or cruel.

| **SAY** “ Is it sin for us to complain? ”

Guide the kids to think about the difference between respectfully telling God about the things that make you feel frustrated, and angrily accusing God of doing something wrong. Explain that it’s not wrong to express your feelings if you do it in ways that honor God and His commands. Complaining does not honor God or show that we trust Him.