



UNIT 6 | SESSION 2

## MOSES DISOBEYED GOD

NUMBERS 20

### KEY PASSAGE:

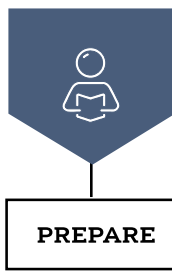
Exodus 15:11

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

### CHRIST CONNECTION:

Moses disobeyed God and did not enter the promised land. We all have disobeyed God by sinning. But God gave us His Son, Jesus. Jesus always obeyed God. When we trust in Him, Jesus brings us into God's kingdom forever.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



## LEADER Bible Study

Many of us categorize sins, whether we intend to or not. There are the major sins—the really bad ones like murder that are clearly wrong. Thankfully, few of us are prone to commit these sins, so we are pretty safe from them.

Then there are the significant sins, like getting angry or lying. We know these are harmful, but we don't see them on the same level as the major ones. These are the sins that trip us up. If it weren't for these sins, we would be such good people. Then there are the little sins, like jaywalking or taking some paper clips from work. We know these are wrong, but they are so innocent and do so little harm that we tend to excuse them. In fact, we often live as if these sins are not really sins—they don't feel wrong to us.

Sound familiar? There's a big problem with this though. While sins might have different consequences, the Bible teaches that all sins are serious because they are rebellion against a holy God. Even if all we ever did was jaywalk, God would be just to pour out His wrath on us.

If we approach Numbers 20 with a flawed categorization of sin, we will likely walk away from this passage confused. What did Moses do that was so wrong? All he did was hit a rock instead of speaking what God said,

right? And for that, God would not allow Moses to enter the promised land. After all that Moses had been through, this was how his story would end?

But we must remember that all sin is rebellion against God and is therefore serious. Moses' rebellion here is quite serious. Notice what Moses, with Aaron standing next to him, said just before striking the rock: "Must we bring water out of this rock for you?" Who was Moses crediting for the miracle that would transpire? Surely not God.

That water flowed from the rock even in Moses' disobedience shows once more that God is a God of mercy and grace. But there is another way we see God's mercy and grace in this account, only we need to turn to the Gospels to see it. God graciously allowed Moses to enter the land long after this generation had died off. At the Transfiguration (Matt. 17), Moses stood in the land—along with Elijah—and Jesus, the One who had come to provide living water to God's people.

### GOD'S PROVISION FOR ISRAEL

**Exodus 15:25; 16:12-15:** food and water

**Exodus 25-40:** the tabernacle

**Deut. 5:6-21:** the Law

**Exodus 17:8-13:** protection from their enemies

## 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** “ Think about a time you disobeyed someone. Were there consequences? What were they? ”

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### OPTION 1: HAVE YOU EVER?



Instruct kids to stand. Ask them, “Have you ever ... ” and read one of the prompts. Kids who can answer yes should sit down. Continue until all kids are seated. Prompts:

- ... left your room a mess after your mom told you to pick up?
- ... played ball indoors when you know you shouldn't?
- ... pushed a kid when you were angry?
- ... spoken disrespectfully to an adult?
- ... refused to share a toy or video game?
- ... taken something an adult said you weren't allowed to have?
- ... jumped on the bed after your dad told you to stop?
- ... stayed up after your grandma sent you to bed?

**SAY** “ We've all disobeyed. Why do you think we disobey our parents or teachers? Why do we disobey God? In today's Bible story, we will hear about a time Moses disobeyed God. What do you think happened? Let's find out. ”

#### OPTION 2: HIDDEN MESSAGES

Before the session, cut rock shapes from white paper. Use white crayon to write God provides on some of the rock shapes and Obey God on others.

Distribute rock shapes, watercolor paints, and paintbrushes. Explain how to brush paint over the rock to reveal the hidden message.

**SAY** “ God provides! What are some things God has provided for you? [Pause for kids to respond.] Today we are going to hear about a time God provided water for His people in the wilderness. God told Moses to speak to a rock. Sounds simple, right? But this story doesn't exactly have a happy ending. Let's find out what went wrong. ”

## INTRODUCE the Bible Story

### 1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (2 minutes)

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

**SAY** “ Welcome! I'm [your name]. I am so glad you are here. Now, please follow my instructions. Ready? Stand up. [Allow kids to stand and as soon as they stand, ask them to jump. As soon as they jump, ask them to sit. Once they sit, ask them to stand again.]

You may be wondering why I asked you to stand, jump, and sit. Well, today our Bible story is about obeying God and following His instructions. Today, we will see if Moses followed God's instructions. [Instruct kids to sit.] Do you think Moses obeyed or disobeyed God? ”

### 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

**SAY** “ Last week, we learned a new big picture question: **What is God like?** Does anyone remember the answer? [Allow kids to respond.] The answer is, **God is holy, good, and loving.** What are some ways we know this is true? How has God demonstrated his holiness, goodness, and love? [Invite kids to share their thoughts.] As you hear today's Bible story, listen for ways God showed He is holy, good, and loving. ”



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to Numbers 20. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Moses Disobeyed God.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

#### MOSES DISOBEYED GOD

“ The Israelites did not trust God to lead them into the promised land, so God made them wander in the wilderness for 40 years. **God’s people set up camp, but there was no water to drink. The people complained and argued with Moses.**

“Why did you bring us here?” they asked. **“We will die here, and so will our animals.” The people wished they had never left Egypt.** The wilderness had no grain, no fruit, and no water.

Moses and Aaron went to the tabernacle to meet with God. **God told Moses and Aaron to stand in front of all the people and speak to a rock. God said water would come out of the rock.** Then the people and animals would have water to drink.

So **Moses called the people together** and stood in front of the rock. **But instead of talking to the rock, he** told the group, “Listen up! Do we have to bring water out of this rock for you?” Then Moses **hit the rock twice with his staff.** Water poured out, and the people and animals drank.

But **God was angry that Moses and Aaron did** not obey His instructions. They did not **honor Him as holy by trusting in His power. So God said Moses and Aaron would not lead the Israelites into the promised land.** Instead, God would give His people a new leader.

Christ Connection: Moses disobeyed God and did not enter the promised land. We all have disobeyed God by sinning. But God gave us His Son, Jesus. Jesus always obeyed God. When we trust in Him, Jesus brings us into God’s kingdom forever. ”

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Use props:** Bring an empty cup and an empty water jug to help illustrate the thirst God’s people experienced in the story.

**Make eye contact:** Draw kids into the Bible story by making eye contact as you speak.

### 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** 🗨️ Open your Bible to Numbers 20. Why did the Israelites complain to Moses? Look at verses 2-5. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Num. 20:2-5.] The Israelites were thirsty and needed water for their animals too.

The wilderness was a dry and desolate place, similar to a desert. The Israelites couldn't just go to the store to buy supplies; they needed to find a water source. But there was no good water anywhere close. They were desperate. The Israelites began arguing, complaining, and doubting God's faithfulness to provide.

Moses and Aaron knelt down in the tabernacle and prayed for God to provide. God gave Moses two specific instructions. Let's look at verses 7-8 and read the instructions God gave Moses. [Choose a volunteer to read the verses aloud.]

Moses obeyed the first instruction, but the second instruction is where he disobeyed. Why do you think Moses decided to strike the rock instead of speaking to it?

Moses' disobedience made God angry. What was Moses' consequence for not obeying God's instruction to speak to the rock? Moses would not be allowed to enter the promised land. It wasn't just that Moses did not do what God asked; his actions revealed that He did not trust God. God wanted to show His holiness, but Moses had claimed he and Aaron would bring water from the rock.

God is serious about sin. Like Moses, we too have consequences for our disobedience. But the good news is God gave us His Son, Jesus, to take our sin upon Himself on the cross. When we trust in Him, our sins are forgiven and we can enter the promised land of eternity. 🗨️

### 3 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** 🗨️ Moses disobeyed God and did not enter the promised land. We all have disobeyed God by sinning. But God gave us His Son, Jesus. Jesus always obeys God. When we trust Him, He brings us into God's kingdom 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 was God angry that Moses disobeyed? 🗨️

God was angry that Moses disobeyed because Moses didn't trust God. When we disobey God, it's because we choose to do things our way, instead of God's way. Disobedience comes from our lack of trust in God. God's way is always best, even if we think we have a better way.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Gen. 3:6-7.)

| **SAY** 🗨️ What can we do to help us obey when obeying is hard? 🗨️

Guide kids to remember that God's Word can help us when we doubt. Remind kids that God's Word points to God's faithfulness, love, and goodness.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 28:7.)

| **SAY** 🗨️ What can we learn from Jesus about obeying? 🗨️

Lead kids to discuss how Jesus is the perfect example of obedience. Jesus obeyed the Father to the point of death on the cross for the sin of the world. Emphasize that because of what Jesus faced on the cross, we should strive to obey with joy.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 2:8.)