

**LESSON 1**
**WATER FROM THE ROCK**
**LESSON AT A GLANCE**

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Cares about Our Needs

**SCRIPTURE:** [Exodus 17](#)

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** God has faithfully rescued His people, but they're now thirsty and complaining in the desert. God responds with kindness, providing water for them from a rock because He cares about our needs.

**MEMORY VERSE:** God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. He does everything by his power that is working in us. —[Ephesians 3:20](#)

**CURIOSITY Large Group or Small Group**

An object lesson, experiment, or activity that sparks curiosity, encourages exploration, and gets kids thinking about the wonder of God.

- Welcome Question: What is something you complain about at home?
- Free Play
- Countdown
- Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder


**BELIEF Large Group**

A deep and interactive dive into Scripture that guides kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

- Prayer of Invitation
- God's Big Story: Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Memory Verse: [Ephesians 3:20](#)

**FAITH Small Group**

An intentional conversation that helps kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own, emboldening their faith and fostering a deeper understanding of their place in God's kingdom.

- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Blessing Your Kids

**EXTRA TIME Large Group or Small Group**

An interactive activity to keep kids engaged during pick-up and reinforce the lesson.

- Game: Human Rocks

### INVITATION

*We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...*

I sometimes feel bad for Moses. As someone in ministry, I'm sure you understand why. I mean, this poor guy was just trying to be a shepherd in Midian, and the next thing he knows, he's pastoring thousands of people in the desert with no apparent destination in mind.

I'm quite sure Moses faced a daily onslaught of questions, concerns, ideas, and inquiries, and I'm sure he was exhausted.

I'm sure of that because Moses was human. And so are we. Each one of us. We get tired. We don't always have the answers.

In these situations, what are we to do? I love what Moses did. He went to God. He didn't go in some pious or religious way. He went to God in sheer desperation. Take time to read [Exodus 17:1-7](#).

God did what God does. He showed up in an unexpected way to care for the people's needs. He told Moses to hit a rock and water would gush out. I promise you that was never in Moses' "Next Steps for Israel" plan. And yet, that's exactly where God showed up.

Where is God showing up for you? If you are feeling weary, take a note from Moses' book. Go to God. Cry out to Him. He cares for you, so tell Him about your needs. Be honest. But also, be ready. God may show up in an unexpected way for you too.

**DID YOU KNOW?****FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS****WHO?**

Moses has led the people of Israel away from Egypt and into the desert. He has been serving as the leader of and God's representative to the community of Israel. God speaks directly to Moses in the same way one friend speaks to another.

**WHAT?**

The Israelites find themselves in need of water and, instead of asking God for water, they violently grumble and complain. Moses goes to God with their complaints along with his own. God responds by meeting their need through Moses in a public display of His power.

**WHERE?**

The Israelites are in the Desert of Sin, a geographic area between Elim and Mount Sinai. The place where the rock was struck is called by Moses "Massah and Meribah," which means "testing and quarreling" because "the Israelites quarreled and ... tested the Lord" ([Exodus 17:7, NIV](#)).

**WHEN?**

Scripture indicates the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years ([Exodus 12:40–41](#)) and wandered for 40 years ([Numbers 14:34](#)). This narrative happens after the Red Sea crossing ([Exodus 15](#)), fresh water at Marah ([Exodus 15](#)), and the provision of manna and quail ([Exodus 16](#)).

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

God's provision for Israel, despite their complaints, is a testament to God's patience with all of us. He is, "slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness" ([Exodus 34:6, NIV](#)). Jesus is the greatest expression of God's love and faithfulness ([John 3:16](#))!

Large Group or Small Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

### Welcome Question

The following question will be written on a whiteboard: “What is something you complain about at home?”



### As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome kids by name. Show them the [Welcome Question](#). If you have younger kids, be sure to read the question for them. Invite kids to share their answers with another kid or two—some of them might have the same complaints!

### Free Play

Tables will be set with games, toys, and activities for kids to enjoy until the lesson begins. This is a great opportunity to get to know kids and build relationship with them through conversation and play.

This is also a great time for a bathroom reminder!

### Countdown Video

Play the [countdown video](#) provided and then show it every week 5 minutes before your official start time to signify clean up time.



## Curiosity Questions

### At your start time ...

Call everyone together and let them know you're glad they're here today. Invite kids to share their answers to the Welcome Question with everyone: **What is something you complain about at home?**

**Sometimes it's easy for us to complain, and today we're going to learn about how the Israelites complained to God. But, first, it's time to be curious.**

Pose the following "I'm curious" questions. Say "I'm curious ..." before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

### I'm curious ...

- **Do you ever complain to God?**
- **When is a time God took care of you, even when you complained? Tell us about it.**

## Declaring God's Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Water Declaration Slide

Display the [Water Declaration Slide](#). Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

**Thank You, God, that You are good!** *(Kids repeat.)*

**You made me on purpose, for a purpose.** *(Kids repeat.)*

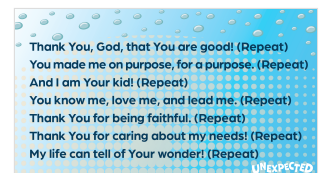
**And I am Your kid!** *(Kids repeat.)*

**You know me, love me, and lead me.** *(Kids repeat.)*

**Thank You for being faithful.** *(Kids repeat.)*

**Thank You for caring about my needs!** *(Kids repeat.)*

**My life can tell of Your wonder!** *(Kids repeat.)*



#### Large Group

Guide kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Cares about Our Needs

**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 17

**MEMORY VERSE:** Ephesians 3:20

#### Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **Father, thank You for bringing each of us here to learn more about You today. We pray that Your Holy Spirit will help us hear what You have for us today as we remember that You care about our needs. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

#### God's Big Story Intro

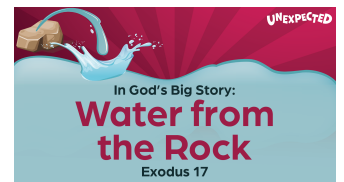
**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid), [Water Title Slide](#), [Water from the Rock God's Big Story Video](#)

Display the [Water Title Slide](#). Open a Bible to Exodus 17. Remind kids that Exodus is the second book of the Bible, and the first 14 chapters are all about how God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt.

Then do one or both of the following:

- View [Water from the Rock God's Big Story Video](#)
- Use the following Water from the Rock Experience It! Script

**FOR OLDER KIDS:** Invite the kids to open their own Bibles to [Exodus 17](#). **Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we will watch and experience more of the story!** Ahead of time, invite two older kids to read [Exodus 17:1–7](#). Explain that one will read the first three verses and the other will read [verses 4–7](#). Allow them time to look over their verses before reading them out loud

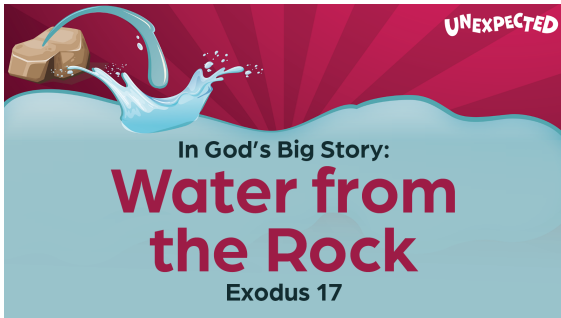


to the group. Encourage the other kids to follow along as the volunteers read. Then do one or both of the following:

- View [Water from the Rock God's Big Story Video](#)
- Use the following Water from the Rock Experience It! Script

## Watch God's Big Story

Watch the [Water from the Rock God's Big Story!](#)



### LESSON 1 WATER FROM THE ROCK

#### EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

**SUPPLIES:** box (prop to use as a rock), stick, blue crepe paper, tape, robes for Israelites and Moses (optional), [Cue Cards 1–6 Sheets](#), [Egypt Sheet](#), [Rephidim Sheet](#), [Experience It! Script](#) (optional, 1 copy)

Ahead of time, print the [Cue Cards 1–6 Sheets](#), [Egypt Sheet](#), and [Rephidim Sheet](#). If using a separate narrator, print a copy of the [Experience It! Script](#) for him. Consider providing robes for five volunteers to wear. Ensure the [Cue Cards 1–6 Sheets](#) are in numerical order. Designate one area of the room to be “Egypt” and tape the [Egypt Sheet](#) nearby. Choose another area of the room to be “Rephidim” and tape the [Rephidim Sheet](#) nearby. Place the rock prop and the stick at Rephidim. Hide the blue crepe paper behind the rock.

Ask for volunteers for the following roles: Moses, Israelite 1, Israelite 2, Israelite 3, and Israelite 4. Explain that they will read from their cue cards when you point to them, and they should pantomime the actions you (or the narrator) describe in the story. Practice some of the motions, such as working as slaves. Help them understand the emotions they can convey during the different scenes, such as tiredness, anger, and frustration.



**Leader Tip:** The Experience It! narrator can be the lesson leader or another dynamic adult or youth volunteer who prepared by reading the script ahead of time.

Gather kids together. **Today we're going to hear about a time God showed His people that He cared for their needs. I have asked some friends to help us tell this story from the Bible. Friends, will you come on up?** *Volunteers should stand in the area marked Egypt.*

NARRATOR: **A long time ago, God’s special people—the Israelites—had lived in the land of Egypt as slaves. Every day they had to work in the sun and the dirt, building monuments and temples for the Egyptians. Day and night they asked God to take them away from Egypt and set them free.**

Hold up [Sheet 1](#).



**Leader Tip:** For Younger Kids. Younger volunteers or nonreaders can participate as well. Simply stand near them and whisper their lines to them or practice their lines with them ahead of time.

ISRAELITE 1: **Get us out of here!**

NARRATOR: **God was faithful to them. He heard their prayers and sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt and find a new life together as a big family. Instruct Moses to lead the Israelites across the room to the Rephidim sign. But as they journeyed looking for a new place to live, they started to get tired and hungry and thirsty. When they camped at Rephidim, there was no water to drink. They complained to Moses, saying:**

Hold up [Sheets 2–4](#), one after the other in order.

ISRAELITE 2: **We’re so thirsty!**

ISRAELITE 3: **Why’d you make us leave Egypt?**

ISRAELITE 4: **We’re all going to die of thirst!**

NARRATOR: **Moses could not believe what he was hearing!**

Hold up [Sheet 5](#).

MOSES: **I cannot believe what I’m hearing!**

NARRATOR: **God had saved His people from slavery in Egypt, and they were still unhappy. So Moses cried out to God:**

Hold up [Sheet 6](#).

MOSES: **What am I going to do with them? I think they want to hurt me!**

NARRATOR: **How did God respond? Did He get angry and tell the people just to go back to Egypt? No! God cared for them even though they were grumbling. God could see they needed water, and He decided to help the people, even though they were not being grateful for all God had already done. Even though they were faithless, God was faithful. God had told the Israelites that He would take care of them, and He did, because God always does what He says He will do.**

**God told Moses, “Go out in front of the people and take some of the [leaders] with you. Take in your hand the walking stick you used when you struck the Nile River. Go. Instruct Moses to hold the stick and stand by the prop serving as a rock. I will stand there in front of you by the rock at Mount Horeb. Hit the rock. Then water will come out of it for the people to drink” (Exodus 17:5–6).**

**Leader Tip:** Ahead of time, prepare your Moses volunteer to know his actions and when he should perform them.

Have Moses hit the rock. You or another volunteer should then throw blue crepe paper from behind the rock to look like water.

**That sounds impossible, doesn’t it? But Moses obeyed God. Moses was faithful to God, and God was faithful to him. Moses went in front of the people and took a few leaders up to the rock with**



him and, just like God told him to, he hit the rock with his walking stick. And guess what? Water came gushing out of the rock, enough water for all the people to drink!

God loved the Israelites and took care of them in ways they thought were impossible. Here's the really cool part: God loves us too! Even when things seem impossible, God shows up in unexpected ways because He loves us and keeps His promises. Just as He cared about the Israelites and their needs, God cares about our needs.

Thank your volunteers and invite them to return to their seats.

## Connecting the Wonder Truth

**SUPPLIES:** Water Wonder Truth Slide

Display the Water Wonder Truth Slide.



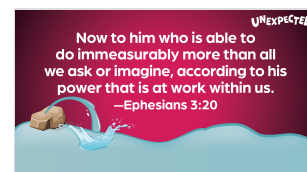
Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD CARES ABOUT OUR NEEDS**.

God provided for the Israelites even when they complained in the desert. Just as He was patient with them, God is patient with us. Later in the book of Exodus, God describes Himself to Moses: "I am the Lord. ... I am slow to get angry. I am faithful and full of love" (Exodus 34:6). God's greatest expression of His love, patience, and faithfulness is Jesus! God sent Jesus to save us because He loves us (John 3:16).

## Memory Verse

**SUPPLIES:** Memory Verse slide

Our new Memory Verse is **Ephesians 3:20**. This verse reminds us that God is powerful and cares about our needs more than we can even imagine. Let's read the verse together!



Put the Memory Verse Slide on the screen or invite your kids to open their Bibles to **Ephesians 3:20**. Read the verse aloud to the kids. Then invite a couple volunteers to read it aloud. Encourage everyone to read the verse aloud together in their strongest voices.

For an optional discussion, gather kids to talk about these questions:

- **What does it mean that God can do more than we can imagine?**
- **How does God use His power to show that He cares about our needs?**

#### Small Group

**Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.**

Divide your group into smaller groups based on age. If your group is already small, stay together for this time.

#### MEMORY VERSE

**Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.**

—Ephesians 3:20 (NIV)

#### Questions: Younger Kids

- **Who was leading the Israelites in today's part of God's big story?**
- **Where had God rescued the Israelites from?**
- **Why did the Israelites complain?**
- **How did God care about the needs of the Israelites?**
- **God loved His people even though they complained. What does this show us about God?**
- **What are some ways God cares about your needs?**

**God cared for the Israelites when they were thirsty in the desert. God cares about our needs too. Let's take some time to pray and ask God to provide for our needs.**

#### Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite kids to share some of their prayer requests with the group. Take time to pray together, allowing kids to pray aloud for one another. Close in prayer by thanking God for caring about our needs.

**Leader Tip:** *For Younger Kids.* Younger children might have a harder time expressing their feelings and needs. Help them think through this prayer time by providing some of your own examples of simple needs in your life that God cares about.

## Questions: Older Kids

- What did the Israelites complain about to Moses in today's part of God's big story?
- How did Moses feel when the Israelites complained?
- What did God do to provide water for the Israelites?
- God wasn't angry with the Israelites when they complained. Why do you think that might be? What does this show us about God?
- The Israelites had seen God do miracles, like dividing the Red Sea! Why do you think they still struggled to trust that God cared about their needs?
- What are some ways God cares about your needs?

The Israelites struggled to trust that God cared about their needs, even though they had seen Him do amazing things. Sometimes we feel the same way. Let's pray together, asking God to help us trust that He cares about all our needs.

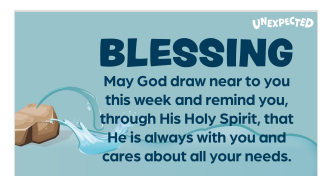
## Prayer Time: Older Kids

Allow kids to partner up and share prayer requests with one another. Then encourage them to take turns praying for each other. Close the prayer time by praying aloud for everyone, asking God for His help to have faith in Him and to trust that He cares about our needs.

## Blessing Your Kids

Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each name into the blessing.

**Blessing:** May God draw near to you this week and remind you, through His Holy Spirit, that He is always with you and cares about all your needs.



#### Large Group or Small Group

Use the following activity to keep kids engaged during pick-up time and to reinforce the lesson.

## GAME 1: HUMAN ROCKS

**SUPPLIES:** mini bottled water (8 ounce), pool noodle (optional), water and disposable cups or mini bottled waters (1 per kid, optional)

This game works great with the Water from the Rock lesson!

**Today we're going to pretend to be rocks. Let's all crouch down like rocks!** Encourage kids to crouch down into balls like rocks. Then let them sit back up as you explain the rest of the game. **You all make amazing rocks! Now, here's how we play the game. One of you will play Moses and will stand in the corner with your eyes closed while everyone else spreads throughout the room and crouches down, pretending to be rocks.**

**I will quietly hand this small water bottle to one "rock." That person will tuck the water under her so no one can see it.** If you are able, demonstrate this by crouching down and hiding the water bottle under your arms and body. Or ask another leader to demonstrate this for the kids. **Once everyone is crouching down and the water is hidden under one of the human "rocks," I will call Moses over. Moses will gently tap three "rocks." If one of the people he taps is holding the water bottle, that person will jump up and give the water to Moses. Then I will choose a new Moses and secretly give the water to another person. If Moses doesn't tap the "rock" with water, the person holding the water gets to be the next Moses.** If you have a pool noodle, Moses can use it to gently tap the "rocks." Otherwise, he can use his hand. Play multiple rounds as time allows.

**Leader Tip:** *For Older Kids.* Consider designating two teams. Alternate who is playing Moses so that one round Moses comes from one team and the next round he comes from the other team. Each time Moses successfully finds the rock with the water, his team earns a point. Play several rounds and see which team earns the most points.

At the end of the game, consider serving each kid a cup of fresh water or giving each kid a small bottle of water as you discuss the game with them. The sensory experience of drinking water will help them connect with the story.

**In God's big story today, the Israelites were thirsty, but there wasn't any water in sight. That was no problem for God! He told Moses to hit a rock with his walking stick, and miraculously, water came gushing out. God cared about Israel's needs, and He cares about our needs as well!**