

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 can do more than we could ever imagine. —from [Ephesians 3:20](#)

CURIOSITY

Four options for interactive hands-on activities to help kids begin thinking about the wonder of God.

- Free Play
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Curiosity Activity: Journey around the Room



BELIEF

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

- Worship
- Prayer of Invitation
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Memory Verse: [From Ephesians 3:20](#)

FAITH

An intentional interactive discussion that helps kids discover the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own.

- Circle Time: Discussion and Prayer
- Blessing your Kids

EXTRA TIME

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

- Closing Game: Water and Rock Hunt or Water March

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 Israel and God's representative to the community of Israel. God speaks directly to Moses like a person speaks to a friend.

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](#))!

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

Play Stations

As kids arrive...

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?

Worship Playlist

During free play...

Play one of the Spotify playlists for background music while kids play.

Clean Up

At the end of free play...

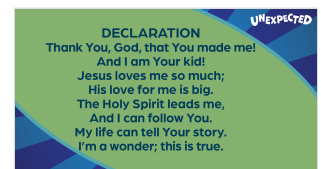
Play the Clean Up video to signify time to clean up toys and activities. Then, gather kids on sit spots, chairs, or benches to begin the lesson.

Declaring God's Wonder

SUPPLIES: Early Childhood Declaration [Slide](#)

Display the [Declaration Slide](#) if you choose, and encourage the kids to say it with you and do the motions.

Hello, friends! I am so glad to be here with you at church today. Let's get started by saying our declaration. These are the words we always start with and they remind us what God says is TRUE about me and you. Repeat after me!



Thank You, God, that You made me! *(Kids repeat.)*

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

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

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; *(Kids repeat.)*

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. *(Kids repeat.)*

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, *(Kids repeat.)*

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. *(Kids repeat.)*

March like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story, *(Kids repeat.)*

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. *(Kids repeat.)*

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").

Curiosity Activity: Journey around the Room

SUPPLIES: rock

Have the kids line up in a single-file line and show them a rock. **We're going to do an activity called "Journey Around the Room" to help us think about today's story. We'll learn about a way God provided unexpectedly using a rock, kind of like this!** Show the rock. **We'll also hear about a time when God's people whined and complained. You've probably never done that, have you?** Allow the kids to respond. **They were complaining about being thirsty. Have you ever complained about being thirsty?** Allow the kids to respond.

In today's story, God's people were on a journey, so let's go on a journey around the room. You'll follow me. When I shout, "Freeze!" and hold the rock up, you'll stop walking and say, "I'm thirsty!" When I start walking again and put the rock down, you start walking behind me again. Got it? Let's walk!

Lead the kids around the room, periodically holding up the rock and shouting "Freeze," encouraging the kids to stop walking and say, "I'm thirsty." Then put the rock down and lead them around the room again. Continue several times. After having kids freeze several times, have the kids sit down.

In today's story, the Israelites complained. They forgot that God was always with them and always helped them! God showed them He cared for them in an unexpected way. We'll learn more about that in our story today!

Leader Tip: Before playing the game, ask the kids to share examples of a time they complained about something.



Belief

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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: From Ephesians 3:20

Worship

SUPPLIES: Worship Music videos

Today, we'll learn how God cares for our needs! Let's sing together and thank God for caring for us and providing for us!

Play songs and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

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: **God, thank You for giving us everything we need—the Bible, family, friends, food, water, and a home. Help us hear from You today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of Exodus in the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.

God's Big STORY SCRIPT: WATER FROM THE ROCK

SUPPLIES: Filled spray bottle or squirt gun, [God's Big Story Video](#), [God's Big Story Pictures](#)

Ahead of time, print the [God's Big Story Pictures](#) front and back.

Let's sit down. Gather kids together. Make sure everyone can see the pictures you'll use to tell God's big story. **Today in God's big story, we'll learn how the Israelites complained, and God still cared for them!**

Hold up first God's big story picture and read the corresponding text on the back. The God's big story script is provided below as well.



Hold up Picture 1—a desert. **A long time ago, God's special people—the Israelites—were held captive in the land of Egypt. God sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt. They looked for a new place to live and wandered in the wilderness. They got tired and hungry and thirsty.** Encourage kids to show what they look like when they're tired and hungry and thirsty.

Hold up Picture 2—a tent in the wilderness. **They camped in the wilderness, but there was no water to drink. The Israelites complained to Moses, asking why he brought them there (Exodus 17:3).**

Hold up Picture 3—praying hands. **Moses could hardly believe what he was hearing! God had saved His people from being held captive in Egypt. But they were still unhappy! Moses asked God what to do (Exodus 17:4). Did God get angry and tell the people to go back to Egypt? No!** Shake your head no and encourage kids to do the same.

Hold up Picture 4—a heart. **God cared for them and loved them even though they grumbled. God could see they needed water. He helped the Israelites even though they were not thankful for what He had already done for them. God told the Israelites He would take care of them, and He did! God always does what He says.**

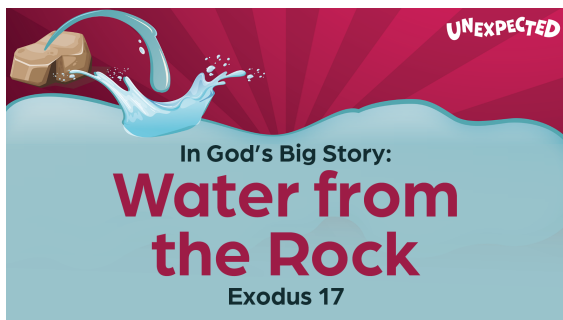
Hold up Picture 5—a large rock. **God told Moses to stand in front of a rock with his walking stick. Then God told Moses to hit the rock with his stick and water would come out of the rock for the people to drink (Exodus 17:5-6). Does that sound impossible? Water from a rock? Would you hit the rock with a big stick?** Let kids respond briefly.

Hold up Picture 6—water. **Moses obeyed God. He hit the rock with his walking stick. Hit the ground with your hand. And guess what? Water gushed from the rock—enough water for everyone to drink!** Have kids clap. **God loved the Israelites and took care of them in ways they thought were impossible. Even when things seem impossible, God shows up in unexpected ways. God loves us and always keeps His promises. Just like God cared about the Israelites and their needs, God also cares about our needs.**

Leader Tip: If you have space (or a waterproof tarp), to make the story even more fun, you could have a kid hit a rock with a small stick and then have a volunteer squirt water from a spray bottle or squirt gun.

Watch God's Big Story

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



Connecting the Wonder Truth

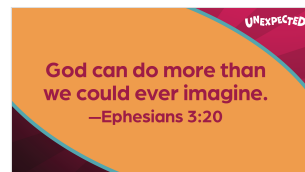
Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD CARES ABOUT OUR NEEDS.**

God's provided water for the Israelites even when they complained. Many years later, He sent the living water—Jesus—for all of us, which is the greatest way He shows His love and care for us!

Memory Verse

SUPPLIES: [Memory Verse Slide](#), small rock

Display the Memory Verse slide.



Today, we're playing a game called "Rock Pass" to learn our new Memory Verse. Let's get into a circle so we can play it. Gather kids in a circle.

I'll say one word at a time from our Memory Verse. Then you repeat it. Each time we all say a word, pass the rock to the next person in the circle. Pass the rock to the person on your right. Ready?

Say one word of the Memory Verse at a time—"God can do more than we could ever imagine"—including the Scripture reference, "From [Ephesians 3:20](#)." Have kids repeat the word back. Each time a word from the Memory Verse is spoken, the kids pass the rock to the right. Go around the circle until the entire Memory Verse is completed. Vary the pace from slower to faster as the kids become more familiar with the Memory Verse.

Great job learning the Memory Verse! Now let's learn the motions to remember it.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **GOD**—Point up.
- **CAN DO MORE THAN**—Spread your arms wide.
- **WE COULD EVER IMAGINE.**—Point to your head.
- **FROM EPHESIANS 3:20**—Hold your hands together in front, then open your palms, as if opening a book.

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

Divide kids into smaller groups for discussion and prayer.

Circle Time: Rock Bowling

Today, we learned that God cares about our needs. We can be thankful for everything God provides for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Who was leading the Israelites in today's part of God's big story?** (*Moses*)
- **Where had God rescued the Israelites from?** (*Egypt*)
- **Why were the Israelites complaining?** (*They were thirsty.*)
- **How did God care about the needs of the Israelites?** (*He gave them water from a rock*)
- **God loved His people even though they complained. What does this show us about God?** (*He cares about our needs.*)
- **What are some ways God shows He cares about your needs?**

God cared for the Israelites when they were thirsty in the desert. God cares about our needs too. Let's ask God to provide for our needs. Let's talk to God now in prayer!

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and to thank God for caring about our needs.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their discussion, pray with them, thanking God for caring about our needs.

God, thank You for always knowing what we need. You never forget us. Thank You for Your love. Help us trust You and to be thankful this week for how You provide and care for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

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

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

Game Option 1: Water and Rock Hunt

SUPPLIES: gray construction paper rocks (20), blue construction paper water (20 sheet)

Ahead of time, crumple the gray construction paper into six balls. These balls will be “rocks.” Place the rocks around the room. The blue paper drops will be your pretend “water.”

When the kids aren’t watching, hide all the rocks around the room and hide a water drop behind or under each rock.

In God’s big story today, God provided water for the Israelites even though they complained. Instead of complaining like the Israelites did, let’s think about and be thankful for what God has already done for us. Encourage the kids to share things God has done for them that they can thank God for.

Now let’s play Water and Rock Hunt. Have kids sit down in a group. **Several water drops are hidden behind “rocks” around the room. When I say, “Go,” you’ll try to find one. When you find one, bring it back here and sit down.**

Are you ready to play? Go! Allow the kids to hunt for the waters.

Leader Tip: You can play a few rounds to give more kids a chance to find a hidden water bottle. Have the kids who found a water bottle in the last round help move the rock and water bottles to a new spot.

Great job looking for the water! The waters can be a reminder that God cares for us every day. We can thank Him for this!

Game Option 2: Water March

SUPPLIES: small disposable cups (1 per kid), water (enough to fill all the cups halfway), marker

Before starting the activity, fill one small cup of water half full for each kid. Make sure each kid has a water cup. Write the kids’ names or initials on the cups so they don’t get mixed up. Place the cups on a table or countertop so water doesn’t spill.

In God's big story today, the Israelites grumbled when they were thirsty. They didn't trust God to give them water. God still cared about them and provided for them. God always cares about us too and gives us what we need. We're going to play a game called Water March.

Let's form a line to get started! Have kids stand in line. **We'll march around the room five times. Then when I say, "water from the rock," take a sip from your water cup.** Point to water cups around the room. Make sure all kids know which cup belongs to them. **After we take a sip, we'll say, "God cares about our needs!" Let's say that together first. Repeat after me: "God cares about our needs!"** Let kids say the Wonder Truth back to you. **Good job! Now we're ready to play the game!**

Have kids help count their laps as they walk around the room five times. After the fifth time, call out, **"water from the rock!"** Have kids take a sip from their water. After each kid takes a sip, have kids say together, **"God cares about our needs!"** Have kids line up again and resume marching.

Leader Tip: Have kids hold up fingers to show many times the group has marched around the room.