

LESSON 3

GOD PROVIDES IN THE WILDERNESS

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Cares for Us**SCRIPTURE:** [Exodus 14–16](#); [Numbers 11](#)**GOD’S BIG STORY:** With Pharaoh’s army pursuing, God provides an escape route for His people through the Red Sea. Later in the wilderness, God cares for their needs by providing bread, water, and meat.**WORD OF WONDER:** Nothing is too hard for God. —from [Jeremiah 32:17](#)

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

While the exact number of Israelites who left Egypt isn’t known, it is somewhere between 30,000 and over two million. In other words, God showed His care for a lot of people when He freed them from slavery and provided for them in the wilderness!

WHAT?

God’s presence as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night led the Israelites as they traveled. It protected them from the pursuing Egyptians, provided the Israelites with light at night, and gave them shade during the day.

WHERE?

En route from Egypt to Canaan (mostly modern-day Israel), the Israelites ended up in the wilderness, generally defined as an empty region without roads or paths. While in the wilderness, they had to depend on God to provide and care for them daily.

WHEN?

Every morning, God provided manna for the Israelites to eat. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Give us today our daily bread” ([Matthew 6:11](#)). Every day the Israelites had to trust that God would provide what they needed because nothing else was available.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

God promised Abraham the land of Canaan would belong to his family ([Genesis 17:8](#)). Before entering the promised land, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. During this time, God cared for Abraham’s descendants by providing for their needs and teaching them to depend on Him.

Activity: Play Food

Set out some toy food. You can also bring some pictures of food. Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Welcome! I'm so glad you're here. Come see what we have today. We have pretend food. Let's make some meals and pretend to eat! Invite the kids to play with the toy food and pretend to prepare meals. Remind them not to put their mouths on the toy food. You can order food from the kids as if you're at a restaurant and let them bring it to you. Or hold up different foods and ask the kids if they like to eat that food.

You can put the food in the middle of the room and have the kids stand on the sides. Call out one of the foods and encourage them to go to the food you called out and find it. You could also show pictures of food and ask the kids if they would like to eat each food.

Today we're talking about how God provided food for His people in the desert when they were hungry.

We all have different foods we enjoy eating. What is your favorite food? Allow the kids to respond. **We can thank God for providing food for us. God takes care of us. We're going to learn a story from the Bible about how God takes care of His people by providing food for them.**

Activity: Water Walk

Lay on the ground the two blue towels or disposable tablecloths, side by side. **In our story today, we're learning about when God did something amazing and parted some water so His people could walk through a sea on dry land. He showed that He is powerful and that He cares for His people. Let's pretend to walk through this sea on the ground. I'll spread the pretend water apart, and you go through it one at a time.**

Move the towels or tablecloths apart (or invite leaders to help you hold them up to make two "walls" of water) and invite the kids to walk or crawl between them.

We'll learn today about how God cares for His people. Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD CARES FOR US.**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

GOD—*Point up.*

CARES—*Give yourself a hug.*

FOR US—*Point to yourself with two thumbs.*

Prayer and Blessing

Let's pray and talk to God. When I say, "big and powerful," make big muscles with your arms.

God, thank You for being a big and powerful God (*make muscles with arms*). Thank You for how provide for us and give us everything we need. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open.

Blessing: May you notice the amazing ways God cares for you every day, today, and always!

Activity: Gathering Manna

Ahead of time, tear the tan construction paper into medium-sized pieces. Spread the pieces out on the floor. Set out a bowl or bucket nearby.

Gather the kids and have them sit in the middle of the room.

In God's big story today, we learned how God showed He cared for the Israelites by sending food from the sky. God sent food called manna. The Israelites gathered the food each day to eat. Let's pretend to gather food and remember how God cares for us too!

Encourage the kids to gather the pieces of tan paper and put the pieces in the bowl or bucket. To make it more fun, you can toss the pieces up in the air and have the kids gather as you're tossing. You can also have a race to see who can gather the most manna in a set amount of time. Some toddlers may not have the fine motor skills to pick up very small pieces, so you could leave the pieces of paper larger (or use small balls or pom-poms instead).