



UNIT 6 | SESSION 3

GOD HEALED THE PEOPLE

NUMBERS 21

CHRIST CONNECTION:

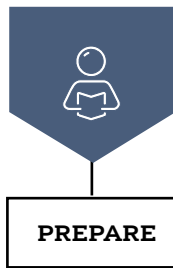
God sent snakes to punish the people, but anyone who was bitten could look at the snake on the pole and live. We can look to Jesus to be saved from our sin.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

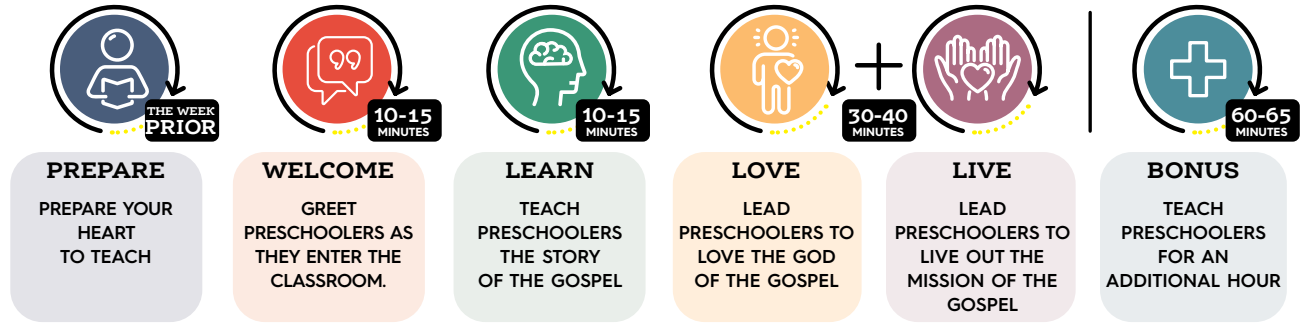
What is God like? There is no one like God. He is perfect, good, and loving.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE:

We praise the one true God. He does wonderful things. Exodus 15:11



YOUR HEART TO TEACH



LEADER Bible Study

If there was one thing the Israelites were good at, it was grumbling. They weren't just good; they were experts: "We have no food. We have no water. Why are we in the wilderness left to die? The land has big people in it." And on and on and on. We have to wonder how Moses put up with it all.

In Numbers 21, we encounter another time when the people grumbled—once again about food and water. Each time they doubted God's goodness and truthfulness, God had shown them mercy and grace. But on this day, He sent serpents into the Israelites' camp to strike them for their unfaithfulness. Many people died.

We might not like to think of it, but this is what the Israelites deserved all along. Their sin earned them judgment and death. God was perfectly just and righteous to give His people what they deserved.

Yet, as we have seen so often in the Old Testament and will continue to see throughout the rest of Scripture, God extends grace and mercy along with judgment. When the people pleaded for Moses to intercede on their behalf, God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it on a pole. Whoever looked upon it would be healed.

Notice two things. First, God's response was not to remove judgment but to provide

salvation through judgment. This is another theme we have seen throughout the Scriptures (e.g. Noah, the plagues).

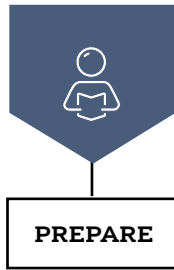
Second, God's instructions made little to no sense. Imagine you are an Israelite and were just bitten by a serpent. Although other serpents are all around still, you are to take your eyes off of that threat and turn them upward to look at a bronze serpent on a pole—an image of the very thing that has brought death to your door?

This detail in the story is a foreshadowing of what God has called us to do in Christ. While our faith is far from blind, it always has an aspect of not making sense, at least to the world around us. But this is how we are saved too: by taking our eyes off of the sin in and around us, and looking upon Christ lifted up on the cross—He who became sin (2 Cor. 5:21). We too are saved through judgment, for our judgment has been placed on Christ.

BIBLICAL THEME

Salvation through judgment: Throughout the Old Testament, God judged and saved for His glory. Examples:

- the Fall (Gen. 3)
- the Flood (Gen. 6-9)
- the Exodus (Ex. 5-12)
- the battle of Jericho (Josh. 6)



YOUR HEART TO TEACH

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Find toy snakes

- Big Picture Question Poster
- “Snakes” printable, 2 copies
- toy plastic snakes
- sand table or large plastic under the bed container (used in session 1-2; keep to use in session 4)
- sand, rice, or shredded paper (if container from session 1-2 is unavailable)



LEARN

Move to music

- praise music

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture
- toy plastic snake or one snake cut from the “Snakes” printable
- dowel or ruler

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker
- snake on a pole used in “Review the Bible story”



LOVE

Make play dough snakes

- Bible story picture

Look at books with pictures of snakes

- “Snakes” printable
- books with pictures of snakes or pictures printed from the Internet



LIVE

Pretend to camp

- bedsheet
- flashlights
- sleeping bags
- toy dishes and food
- backpacks
- other camping supplies

Take a prayer walk

- “Prayer Walk” printable

Snack and transition

- snacks
- Activity Page, 1 per child



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

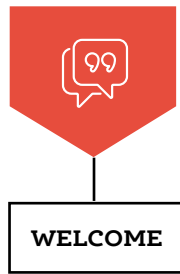
- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Play a pass the Bible game

- music
- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Play with a medical kit

- adhesive bandages
- play medical kit



Provide as many learning activities as possible from the *Love* and *Live* sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ connection, and key passage phrase in your conversation as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

WELCOME

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the *Love* and *Live* sections of the leader guide.

FIND TOY SNAKES

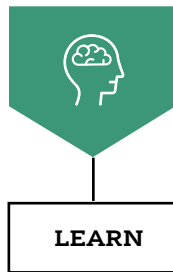
Gather the plastic container with sand, rice, or shredded paper used in previous sessions. If one needs to be prepared, fill a sand table or a large plastic container with sand, rice, or shredded paper. Post an allergy alert if sand or rice is used.

Add several plastic toy snakes to the sand table or large plastic container. If plastic snakes are not available, print the “Snakes” printable and cut out the snakes. Hide them in the container. Greet each child at the classroom door and show him the big picture question poster and talk about the big picture question and answer. Guide children to work together to find the snakes hidden in the container. Count the snakes and compare their lengths.

Keep the container of sand, rice, or shredded paper to be used in the following session in this unit.

SAY “ There are pretend snakes hidden in the sand. Do you like snakes? The snakes in the sand are toys (or paper). They will not hurt us. But some real snakes can hurt people. What should you do if you see a real snake? Yes, tell an adult. Do not try to catch it or pick it up. In our Bible story we learn that God sent snakes to punish His people. The people knew that they had sinned. They asked God to take away the snakes. The people believed that God would care for them if they obeyed Him. ”





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 MOVE TO MUSIC

Greet children as they join group time. Play a song and encourage them to put their hands together and move them as if they were the head of a snake, slithering around in front of them.

SAY “Some snakes help us by eating mice and other small animals that we do not want in our houses. Some snakes are venomous and will make us sick if they bite us. In our Bible story, God sent snakes that were biting the people and making them sick. He sent the snakes to punish His people for complaining and not trusting Him. Let’s listen to our story and find out what happened.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Numbers 21 and tell the following Bible story.

GOD HEALED THE PEOPLE

SAY “God’s people were on a long journey through the wilderness. They complained and said, “Why did you lead us out of Egypt? There is no bread or water. We do not like our food!”

God sent snakes that bit the people. Then the people talked to Moses. “We were wrong to complain. We have sinned and made a wrong choice,” they said. “Please ask God to take away the snakes.”

So Moses talked with God. God said, “Make something that looks like a snake. Put it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will get better.”

Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Whenever someone was bitten, all that person had to do was look at the snake, and he got better.”

Christ Connection: God sent snakes to punish the people, but anyone who was bitten could look at the snake on the pole and live. We can look to Jesus to be saved from our sin.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Show the Bible story picture. Tape a plastic snake or one cut from the “Snakes” printable onto a dowel or ruler. Pass the snake on the pole to a child. Ask a review question. After each child answers, instruct him to pass the snake on the pole to another child to answer another question. Continue reviewing the story until each child has had an opportunity to hold the pole and answer a question. Questions can include: What did the snakes do to the people? What did the people want Moses to ask God? What did God tell Moses to do? When someone was bitten by a snake, what did they do to get better?

SAY “ God sent snakes to punish the people, but God told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. When anyone who was bitten looked at it, he got better and lived. We can look to Jesus to be saved from our sin. ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.”

“We praise the one true God,
We praise the one true God.
He’s perfect, good, and loving.
We praise the one true God.”

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the key passage phrase marker in your Bible at Exodus 15:11. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage phrase. Say the key passage phrase together. Show the snake on the pole and ask children to say the key passage phrase when you hold up the snake, but to stop when you lower it. Raise and lower it several times so the children practice the key passage phrase.

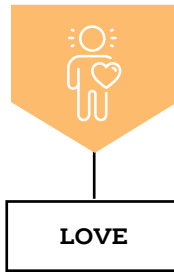
SAY “ We praise the one true God. He does wonderful things. God wants His people to trust Him and obey Him. The people complained because they did not believe that God was taking care of them. When the people realized they were wrong and had sinned, God provided a way for the people to get better after they were bitten. God sent Jesus so we could be forgiven for our sins. ”

6 PRAY

Thank God for providing a way for us to be forgiven when we sin. Thank Him that we can read the Bible and learn that God is perfect, good, and loving, and that He does wonderful things.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 PLAY SNAKE IN THE CORNER

Cut four large snakes from four different colored sheets of construction paper, one snake from each color. Put a paper snake in each of the four corners of a game area. Select a preschooler to stand in the center of the game area. Lead her to close her eyes and say the key passage phrase twice, while the other children move to one of the four paper snakes. Then, without looking, the child will name one of the four colors. Guide preschoolers near the named colored snake to say the key passage phrase as a group. Repeat the game, choosing a different child each time to be in the middle and choose a color.

SAY “God’s people complained, so God sent snakes to punish them. The people realized they had sinned and asked Moses to ask God to take away the snakes. God provided a way that people who were bitten could be healed. Our key passage phrase reminds us to praise God because He does wonderful things. God had done many things to care for His people, and they kept forgetting those things and complaining about the things they did not like.”

2 MAKE PLAY DOUGH SNAKES

Encourage children to roll play dough between their hands to create snakes. Review the Bible story and look at the Bible story picture together. Some children may want to make food and other wonderful things God gives us instead of snakes. Remind children that God cared for His people in the wilderness, and He cares for us today.

SAY “God loved His people. He wanted to help them as they traveled in the wilderness toward the land He had promised them. The people did not trust God or obey Him. When they did not like the things around them, they complained. God sent snakes to punish them. The snakes bit the people. The people realized they had sinned. God sent snakes to punish the people, but anyone who was bitten could look at the snake on the pole and live. We can look to Jesus to be saved from our sin.”

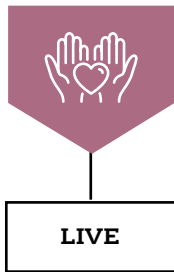
3 LOOK AT BOOKS WITH PICTURES OF SNAKES

Gather several books with pictures of snakes. Be careful not to show scary pictures of snakes to preschoolers. Use the snakes cut from the “Snakes” printable as bookmarks so children can mark pages with snake pictures. Talk about the colors of the snakes, where they live, and the different types. Tell preschoolers if each type of snake is venomous or not. If books are not available, print several photos of snakes from the Internet prior to the session.

SAY “Snakes live in many places. God’s people were traveling through the wilderness, and they complained about the food and water there. God wanted to punish the people and show them that He would take care of them. He sent snakes to bite them. After the people realized that they were sinning, God made a way for them to be healed.”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 **PRETEND TO CAMP**

Drape a bedsheet over a table. Provide camping items such as flashlights, sleeping bags, toy dishes and food, and backpacks. Encourage children to share about times they have been camping or what they think it would be like to camp. Ask what they liked and did not like about camping. Comment that God's people moved through the wilderness for many years staying in tents.

SAY “ God helped His people escape from Egypt. He provided for them as they moved. Did the people remember that God took care of them? No. They complained. They forgot that they had been so unhappy in Egypt. They chose to sin and disobey God. In our Bible story, we learn that God punished the people, but He continued to care for them. God provided a way for them to be saved. God provides a way for us to be saved through Jesus. ”

2 **TAKE A PRAYER WALK**



Before the session, print the “Prayer Walk” printable on paper and post the prayer walk footprints in different places around the building. Tell preschoolers that today we will take a walk around the building and pray for the Muslim people. Explain to preschoolers that prayer walking can be a good way to remind us of people and things we need to pray for. Follow your church's safety and security procedures as you go on the prayer walk. Lead preschoolers to the different footprints, and lead the group in a simple prayer at each stop.

SAY “ Last week we learned about Samuel Zwemer, one of the very first missionaries to Muslim people. The name of the Muslim religion is Islam. Muslims believe in another god. This week we are going to pray for missionaries and Muslim people. ”

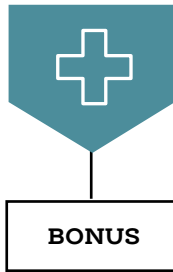
3 **SNACK AND TRANSITION**



Post an allergy alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ connection.

SAY “ God sent snakes to punish the people, but anyone who was bitten could look at the snake on the pole and live. We can look to Jesus to be saved from our sin. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute the big picture cards for families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 LOOK HAPPY AND SAD

Ask preschoolers to show you how they look when they are happy. Encourage them to show you how they look when they are mad, afraid, sad, tired, excited, bored, and nervous. Ask them to think about how God's people felt while they listen to the Bible story.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Numbers 21 and tell the following Bible story

GOD HEALED THE PEOPLE

- God's people were on a long journey through the wilderness.
- They complained. There was no bread or water. God sent snakes that bit the people.
- Then the people talked to Moses. "We were wrong to complain. We have sinned and made a wrong choice," they said. "Please ask God to take away the snakes."
- So Moses talked with God. God said, "Make something that looks like a snake. Put it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will get better."
- Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Whenever someone was bitten, all that person had to do was look at the snake, and he got better.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song below to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell."

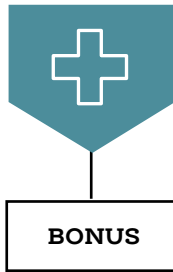
"We praise the one true God,
We praise the one true God.
He's perfect, good, and loving.
We praise the one true God."

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the key passage phrase marker at Exodus 15:11. Open your Bible to the marker. Say the phrase. Encourage children to look at the floor. Move around and tap a few children on one of their shoulders. Ask children tapped to look up and say the key passage phrase. Repeat, tapping more children on the shoulder. Remind children that when people were bitten by a snake, they could look at the pole to get better. God is perfect, good, and loving. He had a plan to care for the people.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for taking care of His people. Ask God to help us remember that He has a plan to care for us.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 DRAW SNAKES

Give each child a piece of paper. Suggest preschoolers draw snakes on their papers with markers or crayons. Talk about the colors of snakes and where they live. Remind children if they see a snake they should tell an adult, not try to catch it. Let preschoolers share about snakes they may have seen.

SAY “ God’s people were living in the wilderness, camping, and they did not have houses to go into to get away from the snakes. They must have been worried when they saw people bitten by the snakes. They asked Moses to talk to God about the snakes. God provided a way for them to be safe. God knows that we make wrong choices. He sent Jesus, who never sinned, to provide us a way to be forgiven from our sins. ”

7 PLAY A PASS THE BIBLE GAME

Place the key passage phrase marker in the Bible at Exodus 15:11. Invite children to sit in a circle and carefully pass the Bible around the circle as music plays. When the music stops, ask the child holding the Bible to open the Bible to the key passage phrase marker. Lead the child holding the Bible to say the key passage phrase. Help as needed. Continue to play music and pass the Bible. Stop the music frequently to let a child say the key passage phrase. After playing the game repeating the key passage phrase several times, suggest the child holding the Bible when the music stops, tell you something wonderful God has done.

SAY “ God is the one true God. We can praise Him when we come to church and when we learn more about Him in the Bible. We can thank Him for the wonderful things He has done! ”

8 PLAY WITH A MEDICAL KIT

Provide dolls, adhesive bandages, and a toy medical kit. Guide preschoolers to take turns being a doctor and caring for the doll patients. Comment that the people in the Bible story were sick after they were bitten by snakes. Ask what the people did to get help. Ask what God did to help the people.

SAY “ Sometimes a doctor or even our families can take care of us when we are sick. Even when a doctor is taking care of us, we can ask God to help us get better. God’s people asked God to take away the snakes. God’s plan was to provide a way that they could be healed after they were bitten by the snakes. ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.