



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.

WORD OF WONDER: 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

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What is something you complain about at home?
- Curiosity Questions
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: Ephesians 3:20
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Waterfall Worship



[Unexpected Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

INVITATION

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

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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.

—Christina Embree

Nonprofit Ministry Director and Minister of Generational Discipleship

Contributor to Wonder Ink

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)!

Small Group

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

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Pre-Service (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: [Coloring Page](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

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.

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

Small Group Begins: Welcome Question 2–3 min

SUPPLIES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

As kids arrive, invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question:

“What is something you complain about at home?” Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

Right at your service time, move into Small Group time by sharing your own answers and allowing kids to talk about their answers.

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

Invite kids to grab their Bibles, and help them find Exodus. Remind kids that the large numbers are chapter numbers, and small numbers are verse numbers. Explain to 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.

Read Exodus 17:1–7 aloud.

- **Who was leading the Israelites in today’s part of God’s big story?**
- **Where had God rescued the Israelites from?**
- **What do you think it would have been like to be an Israelite in the desert?**
- **Do you ever complain when you are hungry or thirsty?**
- **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.

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Invite kids to grab their Bibles. Remind kids that the large numbers are chapter numbers, and small numbers are verse numbers. Exodus 17. Explain to them 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.

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.

Turn to Page 3 of this guide and help kids understand the context of this passage.

- What did the Israelites complain about to Moses in today's part of God's big story?
- What do you think it would have been like to be an Israelite in the desert?
- 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 did you notice about what God did in God's big story today?
- 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.

Older Kids – Notes Page

**Complete the Notes Page with kids. Helping them to fill out all of the spaces. This is an important way for parents to see what their kids are learning each way and have meaningful conversations at home!

WORD OF WONDER

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 (NIRV)

Word of Wonder

"The Word of Wonder for the Unexpected series 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 Word of Wonder together!"

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.

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?**

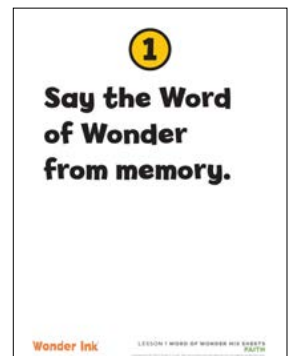
Word of Wonder Activity

SUPPLIES: coin or small stone, blindfold or scarf, masking tape (optional)

RESOURCES: [Word of Wonder Mix Sheets \(1 set per SG\)](#)

Ahead of time, print the Word of Wonder Mix Sheets. Place them on the floor in three rows of three sheets each. Consider taping them to the floor.

Invite a kid to stand by you and give him the coin or stone. Tie the blindfold or scarf around his head so his eyes are covered. Spin him around a time or two and then stop him so he's facing the papers on the floor. Encourage him to toss the coin in front of him and then take his blindfold off. He should follow the instructions on the sheet that his coin landed on or is nearest to. Give each kid a turn to toss the coin and follow the instructions. If you have enough time, give each kid another turn.



Make It Inclusive!

Some kids become anxious or scared when wearing a blindfold. That's OK! Give kids the option of simply closing their eyes rather than being blindfolded.

Large Group!

Responding in Worship: Waterfall Worship

SUPPLIES: black construction paper (1 sheet per kid), multicolored chalk, hairspray (optional), white and light-colored crayons (optional)

RESOURCES: [Unexpected Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Gather kids together. **We saw today how God cared about the needs of the Israelites even when they complained and didn't trust Him. God cares about all of our needs too. He knows everything we are going through, and He cares about us!**

Let's take some time to think how God cares about our needs and to thank Him for always loving us.

Invite the kids to take a sheet of black construction paper and use chalk to create a waterfall scene as a reminder that God provided water for the Israelites and cares about our needs too. (An alternative to drawing with chalk is to use white and other light-colored crayons.) Encourage kids' creativity! As they work, play music from the [Unexpected Elementary Spotify playlist](#), and encourage kids to think about different ways God has cared for them throughout their lives.

Leader Tip: This is a personal project and not about artistic ability. Encourage kids to be as detailed or as abstract as they like. The goal is for kids to think about how God has cared for them.

After they've created their waterfall scenes, kids can use chalk to write around their waterfalls a few words that remind them of how God cares for them. These can either be words about specific provisions (*home, clothes, family, food, etc.*), or they can be words that describe God's character and how it shows them He cares (*faithful, loving, trustworthy, etc.*). When kids have finished, if you have hairspray, you can help them spray it on their papers so the chalk sets and doesn't smudge.

After most kids have finished the activity, invite a few volunteers to share their waterfalls and the ways God has cared for them.