



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 can do more than we could ever imagine. —from Ephesians 3:20

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Play Stations:
  - Play Dough Rock Creations
  - Pouring Station
  - Water from the Rock Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: Journey around the Room
- God's Big Story / Snack
- Word of Wonder: From Ephesians 3:20
- Circle Time: Rock Bowling
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Waterfall Worship
- Craft: God Cares about My Needs
- Closing Game: Water March



Unexpected Preschool Spotify playlist



## LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

### INVITATION

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

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE

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

**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 17

**WORD OF WONDER:** From Ephesians 3:20

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

Founder and Director of ReFocus Ministry 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 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)!



## LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

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

**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 17

**WORD OF WONDER:** From Ephesians 3:20

### Play Stations

**SUPPLIES:** play dough (various colors); large, shallow container (1); tarp (optional); different sizes of containers and measuring cups (10); coloring utensils; spoons (optional); small stamps without inkpads (optional); craft sticks (optional); small toy animals (optional); chopsticks (optional)

**RESOURCES:** [Water from the Rock Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. 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?"**

#### Play Station: Play Dough Rock Creations

**Set-up:** Place different colors of play dough on a table. Set out tools such as spoons, stamps without inkpads, craft sticks, small toy animals, and chopsticks.

**Play:** Allow kids to make their own play dough rock creations. Kids can use the different objects and tools to decorate and create their rocks.

#### Play Station: Pouring Station

**Set-up:** Spread a tarp on the designated play station area to limit messes. Put a large, shallow container on top of the tarp. Place 10 containers of various sizes and shapes (e.g., cups, pitchers, measuring cups, small food storage containers) inside the large container. Fill up five of the containers with water.

**Play:** Allow kids to practice pouring water from one container to another. Kids can pour the water back and forth into the various containers.

#### Play Station: Water from the Rock Coloring Sheet

**Set-up:** Print one copy per kid of the Coloring Sheet. Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

**Play:** Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of their favorite body of water, such as a river, pool, lake, or ocean.

## 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.

## Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, rock

**"Today, we're playing a game called "Rock Pass" to learn our Word of Wonder. 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 Word of Wonder. 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 Word of Wonder 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 Word of Wonder is spoken, the kids pass the rock to the right. Go around the circle until the entire Word of Wonder is completed. Vary the pace from slower to faster as the kids become more familiar with the Word of Wonder.

### WORD OF WONDER

**God can do more than we could ever imagine.**

—from Ephesians 3:20

## Great job learning the Word of Wonder! 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.*

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What does it mean that God can do more than we imagine?**
- **Why can God do such great and powerful things?**

## 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.

### Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

**I open my Bible and what do I see?** (*Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*)

**God's big story, waiting for me!** (*Point to yourself.*)

**Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Exodus in the Bible.**

**Read Exodus 17:1–7 from an NIV Bible.**

## Circle Time: Rock Bowling

**SUPPLIES:** disposable filled water bottles (6), medium-sized ball, permanent marker

Ahead of time, number the water bottles 1–6. Write the number on the top or side of the water bottle. Set up the water bottles like bowling pins in the middle of the room. Place three water bottles in the back row, two water bottles in the middle row, and one water bottle in the front row. Spread apart the bottles so it's easier for a child to knock down only one bottle at a time.

Gather the kids in a circle around the numbered "bowling pins."

**"In the middle of the circle are six bowling pins.** Point to the water bottles. **You'll take turns trying to knock down a bowling pin with the pretend rock.** Hold up the ball. **When you knock down a pin, we'll see what number it is. Then I'll ask a question from our lesson. Ready?**

Have the kids line up a few feet away from the bottles. Choose the first kid to bowl and say the number on the bottle that gets knocked down. Ask the corresponding discussion question listed below (or just go down the list and ask each of the questions). If multiple pins are knocked down, choose the one closest to the ball or the child. Then go around in a circle letting kids have a turn, until all the bowling pins are knocked down and all six discussion questions have been asked.

## 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.

## Head to Large Group!

### Responding in Worship: Waterfall Worship

**SUPPLIES:** black construction paper (1 sheet per kid), white or other light-colored crayons, small cups of water (1 per kid, optional)

**RESOURCES:** music from the [Unexpected Early Childhood 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 our needs too. He knows everything we go through. He cares about us!**

**Let's take some time to think about how God cares about our needs. Let's thank Him for always helping and loving us.** Use the white crayons to draw a waterfall scene on your paper.

Invite the kids to take a sheet of black construction paper and white or light-colored crayons to create a waterfall scene on their papers as a reminder that God provided water for the Israelites and cares about our needs too.

As they work, play music from the [Unexpected Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#).

After they've created their waterfall scenes, ask kids to draw the following around their waterfall:

- a heart to remind them of God's love
- a person they're thankful for (mom, dad, sibling, friend, grandparent, teacher)
- a favorite toy or book they're thankful for

After most kids have finished the activity, invite a few kids to share their waterfalls and the person and toy or book they're thankful for.

## Craft: God Cares about My Needs

**SUPPLIES:** plastic sandwich bags (1 per kid), glue sticks, coloring utensils, scissors

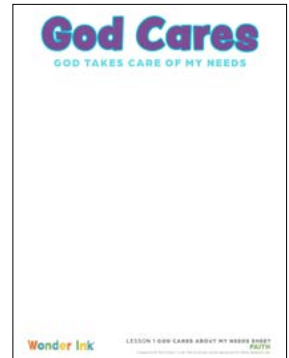
**RESOURCES:** *God Cares about Sheet* (1 per kid: back of coloring sheet); *My Needs Sheet* (1 per kid)

Ahead of time, print enough copies of the God Cares about My Needs Sheet for each kid to have one set. Cut out the pictures on the Needs Sheet and add one set per kid to a sandwich bag to keep them together.

Set out kid-safe scissors, coloring utensils, and glue sticks. Give each kid a God Cares Sheet and a baggie of Needs cut-outs. Write kids' names on their papers.

Let the kids color, cut out, and glue pictures from the My Needs page onto the God Cares page.

**"Today, we learned that God cares about our needs. We can be thankful for everything God provides for us. Now we'll make a craft to remind us to thank God for how He meets all our needs! On this paper** (hold up the God Cares part), **glue pictures from here** (hold up the My Needs part). **Color and cut out the pictures of things we can thank God for. Your pictures can help you remember all the things that God provides that you are thankful for. Then remember to pray, thanking God for how He cares!"**



## Closing Game: Water March

**SUPPLIES:** small disposable cups (1 per kid), marker

Pass out cups so each kid has a cup. Write the kids' names or initials on the cups so they don't get mixed up. Tell kid to pretend there is water in their cup.

**"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. 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.