



LESSON 4

THE BRONZE SNAKE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Only God Saves

SCRIPTURE: Numbers 21

GOD'S BIG STORY: Even after God provides for His people in the wilderness, they complain and are struck by venomous snakes. To save the people, God instructs Moses to put a bronze snake on a pole; anyone who looks at the snake will live.

WORD OF WONDER: God is faithful. That's who He is. —from 2 Timothy 2:13

- Play Stations:
 - Sand Sensory Bin
 - Play Dough Snakes
 - The Bronze Snake Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: Wiggling Snakes
- Word of Wonder: From 2 Timothy 2:13
- God's Big Story Video / Snack
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: House of the Lord, All of Me
- God's Big Story Script
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing
- Circle Time: Hide and Seek Review
- Craft: Chalk and Water Painting
- Responding in Worship: Wandering Worship
- Game: The Floor Is Snakes!



SCAN FOR THIS
WEEK'S VIDEO!



LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Only God Saves

SCRIPTURE: Numbers 21

WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Timothy 2:13

I find that reading the chapter leading up to Numbers 21 helps establish the context for the story of the venomous serpents and Moses' bronze snake. I encourage you to do the same now: Read Numbers 20 and 21:1–9.

How does it change your perspective to know the Israelites were encountering repeated setbacks in their wilderness journey? God provided for their needs, but still they seemed frustrated and unhappy living in the limbo of delay—and somehow, that comforts me. Admittedly, I don't always handle it well when I feel my destination is just out of reach and there's little that I can do about it. How do you react when it feels as though you will never reach your goal?

When you read this story, what stands out to you? Why were the people encouraged to look upon an image of the snake? Why were they saved when they contemplated the cause of their pain? Theologians and Christians of all kinds have pondered this question for ages. Now read Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:1–21. Why do you think Jesus draws a parallel between this Old Testament event and His crucifixion? How are we changed by what we behold?

Only God could save the Israelites from the venomous serpents, and only Jesus can save humanity from sin and death. Join me in pondering this great mystery: The Son of Man was lifted up, and when we look to Him, we are healed.

—**Nancy Wood Clark**

Children's Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The Israelites were wandering in the wilderness because of their unfaithfulness. In Numbers 14, the people refused to trust that God would give them victory in the new land He promised them. As a result, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.

WHAT?

The people were bitten by venomous snakes as again they refused to trust God, complained against Moses, and complained against God. Their mistrust of God, despite experiencing His goodness firsthand, was a constant issue.

WHERE?

The king of Edom would not let the wandering Israelites pass through his land, so they had to take the long way around his kingdom. During this long journey, the people again got impatient and began to grumble against God.

WHEN?

God made the people wander in the desert for 40 years, until everyone from the generation that left Egypt had died. They would not get to enter the promised land for themselves because they had been so unfaithful to the God who had rescued them.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

God used a snake—the very thing that hurt the Israelites—to heal them, showing that He has power over all. Jesus later referenced this story (John 3), saying that He would be lifted up and that whoever looks to Him will be saved.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 4 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Only God Saves

SCRIPTURE: Numbers 21

WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Timothy 2:13

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: shallow bin, sand, digging toys, small people figures, play dough, coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [The Bronze Snake Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

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

Play Station: Sand Sensory Bin

Set up: Fill a shallow bin with sand and digging toys and set out small people figures.

Play: Invite the kids to play in the sand. Tell the kids they'll hear about some people wandering in the desert, which is filled with sand. Invite them to draw wandering paths in the sand with their fingers and use the small people figures to travel the paths in the sand.

Play Station: Play Dough Snakes

Set up: Set out play dough.

Play: Show the kids how they can roll the play dough between their hands to create snakes. Older kids could even create a pole and wrap a snake around it to help them think about what happens in God's big story.

Play Station: The Bronze Snake Coloring Sheet

Set up: Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of what they think the desert looks like.

Curiosity Activity: Wiggling Snakes

SUPPLIES: gummy worms or snakes, scissors (prep only), baking soda ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup), glass of warm water (8–12 ounces), large clear jar, vinegar (8–12 ounces), spoon or stirring stick (prep only)

Before the kids arrive, cut the gummy worm or gummy snake into about four segments. Add about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of baking soda to a glass of warm water and stir until it's mostly dissolved. Drop the snake pieces into the baking soda mixture and set aside. The gummy snakes need to sit in the mixture for about 20 minutes, then they need to sit out and dry for 5–15 minutes. Fill a jar with vinegar and set aside.



Hold up one of the whole gummy snakes. **Do you know what this is?** Allow kids to respond. **Our story today has snakes in it. Let's do an experiment with gummy snakes!**

How do snakes move? Allow kids to respond. **Yes, snakes slither and wiggle! We know gummy snakes can't wiggle like real snakes, but we're going to do an experiment to see if we can get these snakes to wiggle without touching them.**

Hold up the cup you prepared earlier with the baking soda gummy snakes. **Earlier I put the snakes in some baking soda water. Let's see what happens when we drop the snakes into this jar with some vinegar in it.**

Drop the snakes into the jar with the vinegar, one at a time. They'll wiggle and move in the jar. Once one snake stops moving, add another. Repeat as time allows or until you run out of snake pieces.

Leader Tip: Consider allowing each child to drop a snake into the jar so they can see the process up close!

Wow! Those snakes wiggled and slithered all over the place in the jar. The baking soda and vinegar create carbon dioxide, and carbon dioxide creates bubbles that make the snakes wiggle.

In today's part of God's big story, we're going to hear about some snakes that wiggled and slithered all over the place. God's people forgot how good God had been to them and started to complain, and then God used the snakes to remind them of something very important—that only He can save! Today's Wonder Truth is **ONLY GOD SAVES!**

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, scissors (prep only)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Word of Wonder Sheet 1/SG](#)

WORD OF WONDER
God is faithful. That's who He is.

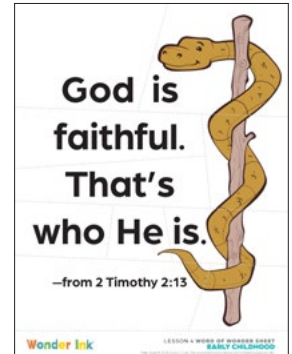
—from 2 Timothy 2:13

Ahead of time, print one copy of the Word of Wonder Sheet and cut the pieces apart. Hide the pieces around the room.

Our Word of Wonder for the Think Again series is from 2 Timothy 2:13.

Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together. Open a Bible to 2 Timothy 2:13 and practice the verse with the kids.

Our Word of Wonder is from 2 Timothy 2:13. We're learning that only God saves. We can trust that God will save us because He is faithful. Our Word of Wonder reminds us God is faithful—that's who He is!



In today's story, God told Moses to make a bronze snake to save the Israelites from the real snakes that were hurting them. I've hidden several papers around the room that each have a word and a part of a puzzle on them. When I tell you to start, go look for a piece of paper, and once you find one, bring it back and sit down. Once we have all the pieces of paper, we'll put the pieces together to see the picture, and I'll read what the words say.

Allow time for kids to find the pieces of paper. Once all pieces have been found, allow the kids to help you put them together in order. **Wow! It's a snake on a pole. In God's big story, God gave the people a way to be saved—by having Moses create a bronze snake on a pole. God gives us Jesus so we can be saved. God is faithful! The words in the picture are our Word of Wonder. Let's say our Word of Wonder together.** Say the verse several times together.

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

- **GOD**—Point up.
- **IS FAITHFUL**—Give two thumbs-up (one on each word).
- **THAT'S WHO**—Put your arms out in front of you, palms up (one on each word).
- **HE IS**—Point up (once on each word).
- **FROM 2 TIMOTHY 2:13**—Hold your hands open in front of you, as if holding a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **Who is the only One who can save us?** (God)
- **Why can we trust that God will save us?** (The Bible tells us; God is faithful and keeps His promises.)

**VIEW THE GOD'S BIG STORY
VIDEO**

**Watch the God's Big Story Video
as kids eat their snacks!**



Declaring God's Wonder

Show the Early Childhood Declaration Slide and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

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

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

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 words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

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

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

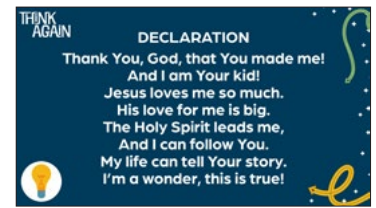
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

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

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



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, You are so good! Help us listen to Your Word today and understand that only You can save us. Help us remember how much You love us and want to save us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn that only God saves. Let's sing and worship God together as we remember that only He can save!

Play House of the Lord, All of Me and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

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 start by reading part of God's big story from the book of Numbers in the Bible.

Read the God's Big Story Script provided.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: tape (prep only)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: God's Big Story Pictures (1 set/LG)

Leader Tip: This story can be deep for preschoolers. The main point for them to take away is that only God has the power to save. He saved the Israelites, and He saves us today!

Before kids arrive, print and tape the God's Big Story Pictures in order around the room. Gather the kids together at the first picture and have them sit down.

The pictures will help us understand the story today. We'll travel from picture to picture, kind of like how God's people traveled in the story.

A long time ago, God's people, the Israelites, were slaves in Egypt. God rescued them. He led the Israelites through the big, dusty desert. God gave them rules to help them live in a good way. God promised to bring them to a beautiful, new home. It was going to be a land just for them.

Guide the kids to Picture #1 and have them sit down.

But the people sinned and disobeyed God. They did not listen to God. They forgot how good God had been. The Israelites walked in the wilderness for 40 years.

When they were traveling, sometimes the people obeyed God. Sometimes they did not. They complained to Moses, their leader. The Israelites got tired. They asked for food. God sent them food, called manna, every day. But they wanted different food. They complained about the food! God did so much for the Israelites. But they forgot everything God did for them.

Let's wander around the room and then go to Picture #2 and sit down. Have kids follow you as you "wander" around the classroom before sitting down at Picture #2.

Because they disobeyed and complained, God sent snakes into their camp. The snakes bit some of the people, and they got very sick. Then the people realized they had done wrong. They went to Moses and said, "We're sorry! Please ask God to help us!" So Moses prayed for the people.

God told Moses what to do. God said, "Make a snake out of bronze and put it high up on a pole. If anyone gets bitten, they can look at the bronze snake—and they'll live." Let's wander around the room and then go to Picture #3 and sit down. Have kids follow you as you "wander" around the classroom before sitting down at Picture #3.

Moses did what God said. When people looked up at the bronze snake, God made them better!

God wanted His people to know that He is powerful and kind. God is the one who saves!

The people who were bitten lived when they looked up at the snake Moses had made. God showed mercy. Mercy means being kind and forgiving, even when someone doesn't deserve it. God saved His people from the snake bites. A long time later, Jesus told a man named Nicodemus something special. Jesus said that just as the Israelites looked up at the snake and were saved, anyone who believes in Him will be saved too.

Let's wander around the room and then go to Picture #4 and sit down. Have kids follow you as you "wander" around the classroom before sitting down at Picture #4.



This picture shows us that Jesus died on the cross. Jesus died to save us. God forgave His people and saved them, even when they sinned and complained. Even when they forgot about Him, God still loved them and took care of them. God loves us, forgives us, and helps us too. God saves us through Jesus. We can follow Him, worship Him, and trust Him because only God saves!

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is ONLY GOD SAVES. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

In today's story, God saved people from the venom (that's the poison stuff) of snakes, but God also saves people from sins—the wrong things we say and do. A long time later, Jesus said He is like the bronze snake that saved in this story. Jesus was lifted up on a cross, and anyone who believes in Him will be saved and get to live forever!

Prayer and Blessing

Close in prayer together. Encourage the kids to clap and cheer as you tell God, "Thank You."

God, thank You (clap and cheer) for saving us. Help us always remember that only You can save us. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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

Blessing: May you remember that just as God saved the Israelites, He has the power to save you as well! Always remember that Jesus is the only way to eternal life. May you remember that only God saves!

Circle Time: Hide and Seek Review

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Hide and Seek Review Sheet](#) 1/SG

Before kids arrive, print the Hide and Seek Review Sheet and cut apart the cards. Gather the kids in a circle and lay the six picture cards out on the floor in the middle of the circle.

We learned today that God forgave His people and saved them, even when they sinned and complained. Even when they forgot about God, He still loved them and took care of them. Do you remember what God told Moses to hold up to save the people? Hold up the picture of the snake and allow the kids to respond.

God had Moses hold up a pole with a bronze snake on it. I have a picture of a snake that is going to help us review our lesson. Everyone, close your eyes, and I'm going to hide the snake under one of the pictures.



Encourage kids to close their eyes or turn around so they can't see as you hide the snake picture under one of the picture cards. Have the kids say the following with you: **"Snake, snake hiding from me. Under which picture will you be?"** Then allow one kid to pick up a picture card and see if the snake is underneath it. If he finds the snake, he can answer one of the discussion questions. If he doesn't guess correctly, another kid can guess where the snake is hiding. Repeat until all questions have been answered

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Have you ever seen a snake? Would you be scared if you did see one?**
- **Where were the Israelites wandering?** *(the desert)*
- **How did the Israelites react to having to wander in the desert?** *(They complained.)*
- **Who did God tell to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole?** *(Moses)*
- **What did the Israelites forget that God could do?** *(save them)*
- **How do you think the Israelites felt when they realized God saved them?**
- **Who is the only one who has the power to save us?** *(God)*

In our game, the snake was hiding behind different pictures. In today's story, the snakes came right where the Israelites lived and hung out. Do you think the Israelites were scared? Allow the kids to respond. **God wanted His people to remember that only God saves. Let's talk to God now in prayer and thank Him for saving us.**

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 thank God for loving us so much that He sent His Son to earth to save us.

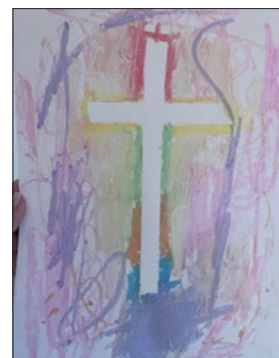
Craft: Chalk and Water Painting

SUPPLIES: thick paper (1 sheet per kid), painter's tape, several bowls, water, sidewalk chalk, coloring utensils (optional), markers (optional)

Ahead of time, use painter's tape to make a cross on each sheet of thick paper. Fill several bowls full of water.

In today's story, God told the Israelites to look up at the snake on the pole to be saved. God also gives us a way to be saved. God sent Jesus to die on a cross so we can be forgiven. Anyone who trusts in Jesus as their Savior will have eternal life! God saves us through Jesus. We can follow Him, worship Him, and trust Him because only God saves! Let's make a cross picture to remind us that, through the cross, God can—and only He can—save us.

Give each kid a sheet of paper and show them how to dip their piece of sidewalk chalk in a bowl of water and then use it to "paint" on their paper. The chalk should slide smoothly across the paper like paint. Encourage kids to cover the entire paper with different colors of chalk. Once the papers have dried, remove the pieces of tape to see the cross shape. You can also use coloring utensils or markers instead of chalk and water.



Responding in Worship: Wandering Worship

SUPPLIES: painter's tape

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: music from the [Think Again Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Before kids arrive, use painter's tape to create a path on the floor that kids can walk through. Make sure it's wide enough for all kids to be in it together. The path should be continuous across the room.

In God's big story today, we heard about how the Israelites had to wander in the desert for a long time. While they were walking around in the desert, they forgot that God could save them, and they started to complain. We can remember that God can save us! Instead of wandering around and complaining, let's wander along this path and spend time thanking God for everything He does for us, and most importantly, for saving us.

Give kids time to respond in worship by playing music from the [Think Again Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) as they walk the path. Guide kids to walk slowly along the path while talking to God and thanking Him for saving us. You can stop them at various points in the wandering and give them prompts to thank God for specific things as you read verses.

We can thank God for saving us! Listen to these verses as you're wandering and praise God as you're listening.

- **Psalm 107:1:** "Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good. His faithful love continues forever."
Prayer prompt: **Thank God for His goodness and His never-ending love.**
- **1 Thessalonians 5:18:** "Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus."
Prayer prompt: **Thank God for His presence and faithfulness in everything.**
- **Psalm 118:24:** "The LORD has done it today. Let us be joyful today and be glad." Prayer prompt: **Thank God for today—the good and happy things and the things you're excited about.**
- **James 1:17a:** "Every good and perfect gift is from God. This kind of gift comes down from the Father who created the heavenly lights."
Prayer prompt: **Thank God for the good things He has given you. People, things, memories, gifts, food, abilities—anything!**
- **Colossians 3:15:** "Let the peace that Christ gives rule in your hearts ... And be thankful."
Prayer prompt: **Thank God for the peace He gives you.**
- **Ephesians 2:8–9:** "God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It's not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it."
Prayer prompt: **Thank God for the gift of salvation that we don't earn, and for the grace that saves you.**

Leader Tip: To encourage kids to walk slowly, you can have them tiptoe like a mouse as they walk around the path.

Game: The Floor Is Snakes!

SUPPLIES: places for kids to stand so their feet aren't touching the floor (such as mats, climbing toys, stepping stones, floor dots, etc.)

This game is similar to The Floor Is Lava. Have the kids spread out around the room.

Leader Tip: If your room does not have a lot of places for kids to safely get off the floor, consider placing sheets of paper around the room for kids to stand on when you shout "snakes."

The Israelites wandered around the desert for many years. We're going to pretend we're the Israelites wandering in the desert. When I say, "Go," you can wander all around the room. But, just like the Israelites, you must avoid the pretend snakes. When I shout, "snakes!" you have 10 seconds to get to a place where no part of your body is touching the ground. Are you ready to play?

Allow kids to walk around the room while you periodically call out "snakes!" Play as many times as time permits.