



## Family Sunday School

### Lesson 4 - Covenant of the Bronze Serpent

#### Introduction:

God's chosen people, the Israelites, received another covenant from God after they grew impatient near the end of their journey to the Promised Land. After dealing with social distancing and mask-wearing for about a year now, we may also be feeling impatient. It is good to know God is with us, caring for us, even though we may be feeling ungrateful and even angry.

#### **Start the Fun!**

##### **Game Time**

Do your kids struggle with contentment? Are your children never happy with what they have, but always wanting something bigger or better? One more toy, one more video game, one more piece of cake. Do you wish that your kids could learn to be content? Do you want to raise kids who are grateful, and not entitled? Then these two activities are for you!

#### *REMEMBER TO BE THANKFUL ACTIVITY*

You'll need a bowl full of small items for this activity... they could be edible or non-edible. (You could use oyster crackers and pretend they are manna if you want). Other ideas: jelly beans, goldfish, animal crackers, legos, dominoes, etc.

Ask each child to take a handful of objects out of the bowl (but don't tell them what they will have to do for them!) For each piece they have taken, kids have to share one thing they are thankful for, or something God has done. (This could be something God has done for them personally, or something that God has done in the past, in the Bible).

Encourage your kids to begin their sentence with, "I'm thankful for..." or "I'm thankful that God..."

## CONTENTMENT GAME

You'll need 5 clothespins or paper clips for each child. (Hair-bands could work too). Give each child a set of 5 clothespins to clip onto his clothing. Every time you hear someone complaining or grumbling, they have to give you a clothespin! At the end of the day, whoever still has 5 (or 4) clothespins left gets a special treat.

### *Variations:*

Set the time limit for just one or two hours, to give kids a better chance of making it through with all their clothespins.

Give kids a second chance! If you ask your daughter to help with chores and she complains about it, say: "Would you like a chance to do this job cheerfully, or would you like to give up one of your clothespins?"

## **Read together**

### **Numbers 21:4-9, NIV**

#### *The Bronze Snake*

They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea,[a] to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.



## **Discuss**

*Ask:* The Israelites were not content with the manna and quail that God was giving them to eat. They did not think they had enough water provided for them. What does it mean to be content? What makes you feel discontented? Is there anything wrong with feeling this way?

*Discussion points:* To be content is to be happy with the things you have or the way your life is without being unhappy and thinking you should have more. The Israelites had everything they needed to survive, and you probably do, too. But seeing things that you don't have on commercials can make you feel discontented. The last of the ten commandments says we are not to want what others have. Not being happy with our own possessions can lead to sins like stealing and cheating. The story of the bronze snake encourages us to be grateful for what we have.

*Ask:* See the images above. The American Medical Association has the staff of Aesculapius as its symbol. How is this symbol related to our story?

*Discussion points:* Moses used the bronze serpent erected on the pole to cure the people who were bitten by snakes. Hence, the snake on a pole is a powerful symbol of healing.

## **John 3: 14-15 NIV**

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.

## **Discuss**

*Ask:* Jesus on the cross is seen as a symbol of healing, just like the snake which was held up before the Israelites. Jesus doesn't just heal us from illness, though. What does believing in him heal us from?

*Discussion points:* Believing in Jesus heals us from our sin. 1 Peter 2:24, NIV: He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

*Ask:* What is different about the way God treated the Israelites in the Old Testament and the way God treats believers in the New Testament?

*Discussion points:* When the Israelites were impatient and unappreciative, God punished them. This happened many times on their exodus (leaving) from Egypt. God then forgave them and helped them. But once God sent Jesus to be a sacrifice for our sins, our salvation was never taken away. We have already been given eternal life and a relationship with God that no amount of sinning or ingratitude can ruin.

## **Pray**

Thank God for giving us Jesus, to heal us from our sins. Ask God to help you hold Jesus up for others to see, so that they may be saved, too. Also, ask God to help you be content with what you have.

## **Participate**

### **Moving Paper Snakes!**

#### *Materials*

- 2 sheets of construction paper in different colors
- 1 small piece of paper for snake's head and one for tongue
- googly eyes
- glue
- scissors
- black marker.

#### *Directions*

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ws6BR741ios>)

Start by cutting the paper into even strips. I recommend using two colors as the end project will look fun. Naturally you can just use one color. Fold the paper (letter size in half the long way; fold that half into half again... And again. Unfold and cut along the folds

Glue two strips together at a 90° angle. Fold the bottom strip over the top one (keeping the 90° angle) and crease the fold. Again take the bottom strip and fold it over the top one. Continue until you can't fold any more, then glue another strip at the end of each one.

Once you have folded three or four strips and your snake is as long as you want, add a dash of glue on the last fold.

Cut a snake shaped head and tongue from the paper and glue it onto the last fold. Decorate with googly eyes and black marker for nostrils.

Your accordion paper snake craft is finished and you can stretch, pull and wiggle it as much as you like!



## **Wrap Up**

God is there for us, even in the moments where we get angry or turn against God. When we mess up and when we sin, there are often consequences. God is there with us as well, helping us to take responsibility and to ask for forgiveness, giving us the courage to say we are sorry. God is always ready for you.

## **Take a Moment to Breathe**

### **“Courageous and Strong” Breathing Exercise**

Find a comfortable seated position and bring relaxation to your body. Rest your hands in your lap and close your eyes or soften your gaze. Focus on breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Taking each breath as slowly as possible.

*Inhale:* Say to yourself, I am courageous

*Exhale:* Breath out any worries on your mind

*Inhale:* Say to yourself, I am strong

*Exhale:* Release any nervousness you feel

*Inhale:* Say to yourself, I am enough

*Exhale:* Let go of your doubts