

**Bible Passage:** 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.**Key Passage:** We praise God; He does wonderful things. Exodus 15:11

### LEADER DEVOTIONAL

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)

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## WELCOME

Play music in the background as you greet preschoolers and welcome them to class. Help children transition in and feel welcome.

\*\*\* Please remember to reference the class schedules posted in your room for the timing of your class's various activities.

## 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.*

## ACTIVITY

Show the Bible story picture. Use the provided "Snake" on a stick. Pass the snake to a child. Review the Bible story. 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 "snake" 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.

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## ACTIVITY

### 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.

## SNACK AND PRAYER

Take a restroom break and wash hands or use hand sanitizer. Choose volunteers to help set up for the snack. (Crackers and cups for water located in the cabinet above the sink.) Pray and thank God for the snack.

## CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Before doing closing activities, please have the children help you clean up the toys and materials that have been used today. After the room is cleaned up, set out markers or crayons and let kids work on today's **Bible Story Coloring Page** until their parents arrive. You can also choose a book to read to the children as they color or for those who don't want to color. Please make the effort to have the children quietly engaged when parents arrive.

When parents arrive to pick up their children, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well today.

## BEFORE YOU GO...

Please clean up by doing the following:

- 1) Clean toys with provided alcohol wipes.
- 2) Use sanitizing spray to wipe down tables.
- 3) Sweep up any cracker crumbs or dirt.
- 4) Please return your bin, binder, and sign-in clipboard to the resource room across from Toddler A.