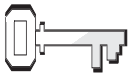


Snake Bite!



References

Numbers 21:4-9;
Patriarchs and Prophets,
pp. 428-432



Memory Verse

“Have faith in God”
(Mark 11:22, NIV).

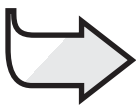


Objectives

The children will:
Know that having
faith in God is
believing and trusting Him.

Feel grateful for the
healing from sin that Jesus
gives us through our faith.

Respond by exercising
our faith by trusting
God in our everyday lives.



The Message

We worship God when
we have faith in Him.

Monthly Theme

We worship God when we obey Him.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Again the Israelites are grumbling. They don't like the desert. They don't like the manna. They don't have enough water. So God withdraws His protection from them. Many snakes live in the desert and many of the Israelites are bitten and die. The people repent from their grumbling about petty things. Following God's instructions, Moses makes a bronze snake, places it on a pole, and raises it in front of the people. Anyone bitten by a snake, who will obey God by looking at the bronze snake, is healed by God. Many look, but some have no faith and don't look.

This is a lesson about worship.

When we believe that God will care for us daily, when we know He has the power and the desire to save us, we are demonstrating our faith. When we show God we have faith in Him, it is a form of worshipping Him.

Teacher Enrichment

There are about 35 kinds of snakes in Palestine, some of which are extremely poisonous. Snakes live among stones and rocks or in the sand of the desert. Some seek out wet areas, such as the area around wells. The snakes were feared for their poison, and were often represented as the tools of God's anger. (For more on this see "Serpent" in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, p. 1007.)

"The poisonous serpents that infested the wilderness were called fiery serpents, on account of the terrible effects produced by their sting, it causing violent inflammation and speedy death. As the protecting hand of God was removed from Israel, great numbers of the people were attacked by these venomous creatures" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 429).

"Many had already died, and when Moses raised the serpent upon the pole, some would not believe that merely gazing upon that metallic image would heal them; these perished in their unbelief. Yet there were many who had faith in the provision which God had made" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 430).

"The lifting up of the brazen serpent was to teach Israel an important lesson. They could not save themselves from the fatal effect of the poison in their wounds. God alone was able to heal them. Yet they were required to show their faith in the provision

which He had made. . . . It was their faith that was acceptable with God, and by looking upon the serpent their faith was shown. They knew that there was no virtue in the serpent itself, but it was a symbol of Christ; and the necessity of faith in His merits was thus presented to their minds" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 430).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 10.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Drawing by Directions</i> B. <i>Crying Coin</i>	paper, pencils, picture of object (see activity) large coin, small wad of tissue, water
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> basket or other container none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	pole, rubber or stuffed toy snake or picture of snake chalkboard or white board, chalk or marker, beanbag Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Scenarios</i>	Bibles
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Lifting Jesus by Witnessing</i> B. <i>Clay Serpents</i>	none craft sticks or tongue depressors, string or chenille wire or bag twists, modeling clay

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been, what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week's memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- paper
- pencils
- picture of object (see activity)

A. Drawing by Directions

Ask the children to follow your directions and draw what you tell them to draw. Hold a picture (don't show the children the picture) of an object (car, house, boat, etc.) and try to describe it. To be deliberately confusing, be as technical as possible in your description.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Do you think you followed my directions? Let's see what you made.** Have the children show their pictures and then show them your picture. **Do your pictures look like the thing I was describing? Do you think you could make it look better by copying the real picture? What if I showed you every step? Would that help you?**

This activity demonstrates what God was doing with the Israelites. God was always trying to give the Israelites pictures of Himself, His love, and His plan to save them from sin. In today's story, He gives them a very unusual picture. They had to have faith to believe and do as God told them. Our memory verse today is: "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22, NIV).

Today's message is:



WE WORSHIP GOD WHEN WE HAVE FAITH IN HIM.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- large coin
- small wad of tissue
- water

B. Crying Coin

In advance, fold the small tissue piece small enough to hide behind the coin as you hold it up in front of you. To do the trick, wet the tissue enough so that it isn't dripping wet, but so you can gently squeeze the tissue behind the coin to make it look as though the coin is "crying." Allow response time as you ask: **Do you think I can make this coin cry? Why?** Now demonstrate the trick by squeezing the wet tissue so a drop of water falls from the coin.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Hold up your hand if you doubted that I could make the coin cry. Why did you doubt me? Why didn't you have faith in me? Our Bible story today is about the Israelites having to have faith in God. They only had to do one simple thing and they would be healed from something painful. But some didn't have enough faith to do it. Today's memory verse is: "Have faith**

in God' " (Mark 11:22, NIV).

Our message for today is:



WE WORSHIP GOD WHEN WE HAVE FAITH IN HIM.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Father, I Adore You" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 21)
- "Holy, Holy" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 6)
- "Bless His Holy Name" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 9)
- "Trust and Obey" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 113)
- "Philippians 4:4" ("Rejoice in the Lord") (*Sing for Joy*, No. 23)
- "Come Into His Presence" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 14)



Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize faith in God as told in the story.



Offering

Emphasize how mission offerings help missionaries as they teach children around the world the joy of worshiping God.



Prayer

Ask children for requests, list them, and mention each one as you pray.

You Need:

- basket or other container

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- pole
- rubber or stuffed toy snake, or picture of a snake

Experiencing the Story

Setting the scene:

Say: **There's a wiggling, writhing creature that many people don't like. It lives in the desert. Can you guess what it is?** Hold up rubber snake or stuffed toy snake or picture. **It's this. And every time I say the word *snake* today, I want you to make a fist, wiggle your arm like a snake, and hiss.** Have the children practice a few times.

Read or tell the story.

How many of you know someone who is 40 years old? Forty years! That's a long time! Imagine that the person was a baby when the Israelites first went into the desert. Now that person is 40 years old. That means that all their lives they have lived in a tent in the desert! And during that time, their shoes didn't wear out; clothes didn't get torn or old; there was plenty of food to eat, and they were protected from the sun during the day and the cold desert during the night. And they never saw any poisonous animals in that desert. Do you know why? Because of God's protection!

Still, the Israelites began to complain. They said, "Take us back to Egypt" in a chant. Can you chant like that? *[Direct the children to say it together over and over.]*

Many of them didn't know anything about Egypt! Maybe the Israelite parents hadn't told their children how hard it was to be slaves in Egypt. Maybe their parents only told them good things about life in Egypt. Whatever the reason, these complainers thought living in Egypt would be better than wandering in the desert.

Moses didn't know what to do.

Let's pretend we're Israelite children playing in our tent. *[Have the children do a high-five with a partner. When the children are involved, go on suddenly.]* Look! Over there! *[Point to a corner.]* What is it? *[Make snake noise and/or motions.]* Something is slithering into our camp. What is it? "**Snakes!**" your mother says. "Get up! They'll bite and their poison will kill you!" *[Make snake noise and/or motions.]*

"But we've never seen **snakes**," you say. *[Make snake noise and/or motions.]* "It's been 40 years and we have never seen a **snake** in our camp. *[Make snake noise and/or motions.]* The **snake** is biting your mother. She cries and falls to the floor. You wonder if she's going to die. Now the **snake** *[make snake noise and/or motions]* is biting your friend! Now the **snake** *[make snake noise and/or motions]* is coming after you!

What has happened? God has lifted His protection to remind us how wonderful His care has been.

Close your eyes and imagine **snakes** *[make snake noise and/or motions]* slithering all around your tent and inside your tent—in your bed. You can't get away from them! They're poisonous. People are dying. What shall we do?

Let's find Moses. Let's say that together. "Find Moses" *[like a chant]*.

Moses, tell God we're sorry we weren't thankful. Pray, Moses! Ask God to protect us again from these **snakes!** *[Make snake noise and/or motions.]*

So Moses prayed. And God said, "Make a metal **snake** *[make snake motions]* and put it on a pole. Tell the people that anyone who has been bitten can look on the metal **snake** *[make snake motions and hiss]* and live."

Mother is moaning and groaning. Let's help Moses with the **snake** *[make snake noise and/or motions]* before

Mother dies—shall we? Let's take Moses' **snake** [make snake noise and/or motions] and fasten it to a pole. [Do so, with the materials.] Now, Moses will put the pole in the sand.

Hurry to get Mother outside. If she believes in God's power, and looks on the metal **snake** Moses made [make snake noise and/or motions], God will heal her and she will live.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

What did the Israelites say against God and Moses? Why did they say those things? Why did God let the snakes bite the Israelites? How did the Israelites confess their sins? What did God tell Moses to do?

What happened if someone who had been bitten looked at the metal snake on a pole?

Imagine that you have been bitten. How do you feel when you look at the snake on the pole? What would happen to you? Would that change your attitude toward God forever?

Was it the snake on the pole that saved the people? (no) What did save them? (Their faith in God saved them. They believed they would be healed, and God healed them.)

What did the people learn from this? (That if they had faith in God, God would take care of them; God had the power to heal them, but they must have faith in Him; that He had kept the snakes away for a long time.)

The people had to show their faith in God by obeying His directions. They had to believe that God could heal them. Let's say our message together:



WE WORSHIP GOD WHEN WE HAVE FAITH IN HIM.

Memory Verse

Write the memory verse where all may see it. Then read the verse aloud. " **'Have faith in God'** " (Mark 11:22, NIV).

Have the children read the verse with you, then erase it. Toss the beanbag to a child and have them say the first word of the verse. That child then tosses it to another child who says the next word, and so on. Try to keep the beanbag going without missing a beat. Continue until all know the verse, then say it together.

You Need:

- chalkboard or white board
- chalk or marker
- beanbag

Bible Study

Say: **Did you know that the snake on a pole represented something? Let's see what the Bible says about it.**

Have the children find John 3:14, 15 and John 12:32, 33. Select two children to read the texts aloud. (Adults assist as needed.) Discuss the meaning of the texts. Be sure the children understand the meaning before going on.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

Now do you know what the snake and pole represented? (a time in the future when Jesus would die on the cross) **Yes, Jesus applied this incident to His own death. Jesus "lifted up" on the cross heals us from our sin.**

Lifting up Jesus in everything we do means living as He did, and it is surely a part of worshiping Him.

Why do you think God chose that symbol? (Lifting up Jesus, like the snake was lifted up, heals us.) **How does that heal us?** (When we have faith in Jesus, look up to Him, and live as He wants us to, He heals us of our sins.) **So we have to look up to Him. That reminds me of our message:**

You Need:

- Bibles



WE WORSHIP GOD WHEN WE HAVE FAITH IN HIM.

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- Bibles

Scenarios

After reading each scenario, ask the children how that person is showing faith in God in their life.

1. Thomas's parents don't want him to have toys that people say have "magical powers" or toys that look violent. Thomas's friends are allowed to play with these toys. Thomas doesn't see what's wrong with them. But he chooses to obey his parents. So he doesn't buy any of these toys with his allowance money.

2. Sabrina's class is going on a field trip to the zoo. It's supposed to be a warm and sunny day, but it is cool this morning. Sabrina's mom suggests she wear a sweater. Sabrina doesn't want to because she'll have to carry it later. Sabrina's mom asks her to wear one anyway. Sabrina puts on a sweater as she walks out the door.

3. Callie is afraid of going to sleep at night in the dark. When she is afraid, she will often get out of bed and go to find one of her parents. She has been told not to do this. Her dad prays with her before going to sleep. He helps her say her favorite Bible text about God being with her. Her Dad leaves her room and reminds her to stay in bed. Within a few minutes Callie is tempted to get out of bed again, but instead she repeats the Bible text over and over. Soon she falls asleep.

4. Reuben is sick. His mom has given

him some medicine that he doesn't like. He thinks it tastes terrible. His mother explains that he needs to take it to get well. When it is time for another dose of the medicine, he swallows the medicine without complaining.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

What did all the children in the scenarios do that was the same? (They obeyed even though they didn't want to or didn't understand why they had to.)

When we obey, we are exercising our faith. If we never learn to obey our parents, even though we don't always understand why they ask us to do things, we will have a hard time obeying God.

We need to choose to obey our parents. And we must choose to obey God, to have faith even when we can't see or understand what will happen.

What else can you do to strengthen your faith? What helps you strengthen your faith?

Let's read Hebrews 11:1 together. "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (NIV). When we have faith in God, we are showing that we trust Him and believe He can help us, even when things may not turn out to be what we want them to be. By having faith, we are pleasing God and showing Him our love. We are worshiping Him. That takes us to our message:



WE WORSHIP GOD WHEN WE HAVE FAITH IN HIM.

Sharing the Lesson

A. Lifting Jesus by Witnessing

Say: **Some Israelites probably had to convince their friends and family to look at the snake. They probably said, "Do what God and Moses told you to do. I did it and I'm well. Please obey. I want you to live." That was the way they witnessed about what God did for them.**

Take a piece of paper and write or draw about something wonderful God has done for you. Help the children think of things. Adults assist as needed.

Debriefing

Say: **Fold your paper so no one can see your work. Quietly, inside your head, ask God to help you think of the person He wants to know what you wrote or drew. When a name comes to your mind, write it on the paper.**

Now put the paper inside your Bible or in a pocket. Raise your hand to promise to show that paper to that person this week.

Remember, telling what God has done for you is a way to lift Jesus to the people around you. As our message says:



WE WORSHIP GOD WHEN WE HAVE FAITH IN HIM.

B. Clay Serpents

Say: **Let's make a serpent on a pole like Moses did.** Show the children how to tie their sticks together to form a simple cross. Then have them make a serpent out of clay and twist it onto the cross they've made.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Have you ever seen a symbol of a snake on a pole before? Perhaps on an ambulance or hospital or other medical place?**

Did you ever wonder about it? Now you know where that symbol comes from.

Take your snake home with you and share it with someone as you tell them about the Israelites and the snake on a pole. You can also tell them about your faith in Jesus.

Now, let's say our message together one more time:



WE WORSHIP GOD WHEN WE HAVE FAITH IN HIM.

Closing

Ask God to help each child in your Sabbath School have faith in Him to care for them in all things, and to help them live as He wants them to live.

You Need:

- craft sticks or tongue depressors
- string or chenille wire or bag twists
- modeling clay

Snake Bite!

References

Numbers 21:4-9;
Patriarchs and
Prophets,
pp. 428-432

Memory Verse

“Have faith in
God” (Mark
11:22, NIV).

The Message

We worship God
when we have
faith in Him.

Have your parents ever asked you to do something that you didn't want to do? Maybe you couldn't understand why they wanted you to do it. But you obeyed them because you have faith in them. You believe they want what's best for you.

Something like that happened to the Israelites. Let's read more.

God's people had been wandering in the desert for forty years. The Israelites had once been on the edge of the Promised Land. But God sent them back into the desert because of their unbelief and disobedience. But He didn't abandon them. Every day of those forty years they had manna to eat. They had water to drink. Their shoes and clothes didn't wear out. Their feet didn't get sore or swollen. And the diseases, scorpions, and snakes of the desert didn't bother them.

Now, once again, the Israelites were

near the Promised Land. So near that they could see the cool valleys and green fields. And they thought it unfair that they had spent forty years in the desert. They grumbled to one another. Then they began to grumble to Moses.

“Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this wilderness?” they complained. “There's no water! There's no bread! And we're tired of eating manna!”

They didn't appreciate what God had done to keep them safe. They didn't care that He had kept their clothes from wearing out. They weren't happy about spending all that time in the hot, dusty desert. And they accused God of causing their hardships.

Poor Moses. He had heard it all before. He tried to point out God's leading. He tried to show them the many ways God had cared for them. But they wouldn't listen. It seemed that all they could do was complain. Finally, God decided to take away His protection and let them see what happened.

The poisonous snakes that lived in the desert soon overran the camp. And many of the Israelites were bitten. In almost every tent someone was dead or dying. No one was safe from the fiery snake venom. Once bitten, they soon died.

It didn't take the people long to see how wrong they had been. “We sinned when we grumbled about you and God,” they told Moses. “Please,” they begged, “pray that God will take away the snakes.”

Moses prayed, and the Lord heard him. God told him to make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. If those who had been bitten would look at the bronze snake, they would live. Moses made the snake just as he was told. And the people who looked at it were healed by God.

But some people couldn't believe that



looking at a snake on a pole would heal them. They didn't have faith in God. They chose not to follow His directions, not to look at the pole. Because they had no faith, because they didn't trust God, He could not heal them, so they died.

The snake in the desert was a symbol of Jesus dying for our sins. The metal snake itself had no power to heal. It was faith in God that led Him to heal them.

Years later Jesus referred to His death. The Bible tells us what He said. "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man [Jesus] must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life" (John 3:14, NIV). Our faith in Jesus lifted up on the cross helps us know that Jesus died so we can live with Him forever. So, have faith in God. And believe what the Bible says.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- With your family, read this week's lesson story. Why did God tell the people to look at the serpent? Did looking at the snake heal the people? How do you know?
- Teach your memory verse to your family. Ask them what it means to them.
- Sing some praise songs before prayer. Thank God for His healing power.

Sunday

- If possible, go with your family to visit a zoo or other place to see snakes. Or look in books to learn more about them. How do you feel about snakes? Why?
- Draw a picture of Moses putting up the snake on a pole for the people to look at. Include some people who have been bitten.
- Look for ways to obey your parents quickly this week, even if you don't understand why they ask you to do something.

Monday

- With your family, read and discuss Numbers 21:4-9. Why did the Israelites grumble? What happened because they grumbled so much? What did God tell them to do to be healed? How did they show their faith? How do you know if you have faith in God?
- Review the memory verse together. Ask your family members to tell about a time their faith was strengthened. Pray that you and your family will always have faith in God.

Tuesday

- During family worship read and discuss John 3:14, 15 and John 12:32, 33. Who did the metal serpent on the pole represent? What is

Jesus called in verse 14? Why was Jesus lifted up on a cross? If you love Jesus for dying on the cross to save you from sin, write your name here. _____

- Thank Jesus for dying to save you.

Wednesday

- Have your own quiet time with Jesus. Find a place where you can be alone. Thank Jesus for three things and sing your favorite song for Him. Tell Him why you believe in Him.
- Show your family the snake on the cross that you made in Sabbath School. Tell them what it teaches about Jesus. Ask Jesus to help you tell others about Him.

Thursday

- Ask your family to help you look for the medical symbol with a snake on a pole. Where will you look? (Hint: medical book or magazine, on an ambulance, at a hospital, doctor's office, pharmacy, etc.) Tell someone about it. Ask your family: Why is it a symbol for healing today?
- Pray for God's blessing on someone who is sick.

Friday

- For worship tonight act out the Bible story with your family. Who will be Moses? Who will be the voice of God? Who will be bitten by snakes?
- Read John 3:14, 15 together again. When was Jesus lifted up while on this earth? What does it mean to lift up Jesus today? How can you and your family lift Him up?
- Before prayer, sing "Trust and Obey" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 113) or "Philippians 4:4" ("Rejoice in the Lord") (*Sing for Joy*, No. 23). Thank Jesus for dying on the cross for you and your family. Pray that your faith will always be strong.