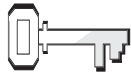


Bitter Waters Made Sweet



References

Exodus 15:22–27;
Patriarchs and Prophets,
pp. 291–294



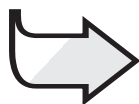
Memory Verse

“I will praise you,
O Lord, with
all my heart”
(Psalm 138:1, NIV).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that we
worship God when
we praise Him.
Feel joyful when
they praise God.
Respond by joy-
fully praising God.



The Message

We worship God
with joyful praise.

Monthly Theme

We worship the Creator.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

From the Red Sea the pillar of cloud leads the Israelites into the desert. Their water supply exhausted, they rejoice when they arrive at the springs of Marah. Finding the water bitter, they complain to Moses, who cries to God for help. God instructs Moses to throw a piece of wood into the water, and the water is made sweet.

This is a lesson about worship.

The Israelites could not live without water, so it can be said that the sweet water was their “salvation.” Jesus is our salvation. He brings us joy, just as the water brought joy in the desert. We worship and praise Him for bringing us the joy of being saved.

Teacher Enrichment

Marah was three days’ journey from the Red Sea and they had traveled without water—a perilous experience, especially in the desert. About 600,000 men (on foot), besides women and children, left Egypt (see *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 281). If we consider an equal number of women and slightly more children, it could have been that about two million people left Egypt. The cry for water must have been loud. Marah still means “bitter” today, because of this experience.

Room Decorations

See Lesson 5.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>How Dry I Am</i> B. <i>Make Me Laugh</i>	variety of dry things—such as sandpaper, cotton, sand, uncooked rice, popped popcorn; brown paper bags salty snack, such as pretzels, crackers, popcorn, Bible
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> water container water cup cutout for each child (see p. 144) pencils and markers
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes, jug of salt water, small paper cups, large container filled with fresh drinking water, cloud cutout attached to a paint stirrer or stick, empty bowl or bucket, sterilized popsicle stick in a clean plastic bag, Bible Bible Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Happy Things</i>	Bible
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Have a Praise Party for God</i> B. <i>Joyful Praises</i>	none none

***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. Give directions for the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- dry things such as sandpaper, cotton, sand, uncooked rice, popped popcorn
- brown paper bags

A. How Dry I Am

Bring in a variety of dry things in brown paper bags so the children can't see what's inside (suggestions: sandpaper, cotton, sand, uncooked rice, popped popcorn). Allow them to stick their hands in the different bags and try to guess what they're feeling.

Debriefing

Ask: **What do those things have in common?** (All are dry.) **Our story today is about a dry, dry place and something that happened to God's people there that made them very happy. What do you think they did to show God how happy they were?** Affirm their responses. **One way was to praise God. Our message for today is:**



WE WORSHIP GOD WITH JOYFUL PRAISE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- salty snacks such as pretzels, crackers, popcorn
- Bible

B. Make Me Laugh

(One important purpose of this activity is to get the children thirsty so they will more fully appreciate the Bible story.)

Divide the children into pairs. One person in each pair is to try to make the other laugh. When he succeeds, he gets to eat a salty snack such as pretzels, crackers, popcorn, etc. Repeat with the other child. Do this activity several times so each child gets several of the salty treats. (You want them to be very thirsty.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when you laughed? Do you like that feeling? What word do we use to describe that feeling?** (joy) Read aloud Psalm 138:1. **How does it feel to praise God?** Allow response time. **That reminds me of our message for today:**



WE WORSHIP GOD WITH JOYFUL PRAISE.

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). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Give a special warm greeting to visitors and introduce each by name. Acknowledge any birthdays or special events.



Suggested Songs

- "Alleluia" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 16)
- "Sing Praises to the Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 2)
- "Philippians 4:4" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 23)
- "Praise Him, Praise Him" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 12)
- "I Have the Joy" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 109)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Help the children identify something that caused joy or joyful praise in the story.



Offering

Say: **The Israelites praised God for making some bitter waters good for drinking. We can praise God for the blessings He has given us and share those blessings so others can learn about Him, too.**

You Need:

- water container



Prayer

Give each child a cutout. Form a circle.

Say: **You each have a cutout of a cup. This reminds you of the blessing of sweet water that God gave to the Israelites in the desert. This blessing brought them much joy. Think of something in your life that brings you joy.** (pets, family, friends, material blessings, etc.) **Write it or draw a picture of it on your cup cutout. Go around the circle and thank God for what is on your cup cutout.** Have a teacher close the prayer session when everyone who wants to has prayed.

You Need:

- cutout in the shape of a cup for each child (see p. 144)
- pencils or markers

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- jug of salt water
- small paper cups
- large container filled with fresh drinking water
- cloud cutout attached to a stick
- empty bowl or bucket
- sterilized popsicle stick in a clean plastic bag
- Bible

Experiencing the Story

Dress the children as Israelites.

Characters: Teacher dressed as Moses, fathers, mothers, children

Special Effects: Have someone pour the salt water into small paper cups and set them in front of the bowl of fresh water while the group is out of the room.

Props: A cloud cutout attached to a stick that Moses holds, a jug of salt water, small paper cups, a large container filled with fresh drinking water, an empty bowl or bucket for throwing out water, Bible-times costumes (over-sized T-shirts and bathrobes, etc.) for "Moses" and the children, a sterilized popsicle stick in a clean plastic bag.

Storyteller: Adult male dressed as Moses.

Read or tell the story.

Hello, people. My name is Moses. Thank you for joining us on our journey to the Promised Land. *(Raise the cloud you are holding.)* The cloud of God's presence is moving. *(Move a couple steps.)* Come along with us; God's cloud will show the way. *(Walk around the room; check to be sure the children are following you.)*

(Continue walking around your room or walk around the church or the parking lot. Pretend to see desert plants and animals, pointing them out, describing them as if they are real. Mention the desert sand. On the way back talk about how thirsty you feel and how much you need water after three days in the desert. Ask if anyone has any water left. Make the walk last long enough so that the children are getting thirsty. When you are within sight of your

room again, gather the children around and continue the story.)

Look across the desert there. *(Point toward your room.)* That is Marah. See it way in the distance? I heard that there is a spring of water at Marah. So keep up your courage, we will soon have water to drink. I herded sheep here in the wilderness for 40 years when I was a young man. I remember Marah.

(As you enter the room say:) There, just as I expected, the pool of Marah. Water! (Encourage the children to come over and get a drink. Give out the cups with only a mouthful of very salty water in them. The children will soon sputter and complain.)

What's the matter? You want water; well here it is. Drink up. *(Encourage everyone to get their water. Then take some yourself.)*

Oh, wait a minute! I can't drink that! What is the matter with the water? *(Taste the water again.)* It's bitter. Was your water bitter? Is that why you cannot drink it? Some of you are getting angry, I see. Don't be mad at me. Trust God.

Remember just three days ago the Lord worked a miracle at the Red Sea. What happened? *(He made a path through the sea.)* So don't you think He can find some good water in the dry desert?

Listen, when you are in need, don't grumble. Go to the Lord. Tell Him the problem and see what He will do. *(Pause and close your eyes. Nod your head a couple of times.)* Amen.

God says to throw a stick into the water. Do you see any wood around here? *(Let the children find the popsicle stick. Place it in the bowl. Stir the water and begin filling the children's cups. They can empty the salt water into the empty bucket or bowl. When everyone is served, fill your own cup and walk among the children.)*

Remember always what happened here today. In just a short time God turned our sadness and thirst and tiredness into joy. When we think we might die of thirst, God gives us water to drink. He saves us and makes us happy again. He is always giving us new reasons to praise Him. What a wonderful God!

Debriefing

Have the children sit down.

As the children drink their water, ask: **How did you feel when you saw the water when we came in?** (happy, relieved, excited) **What did you think when you took a taste of it?** (disappointed, upset) **Then how did you feel when you got the fresh water?** (happier than the first time, joyful) Read aloud Isaiah 12:3. **How does God give you joy?** (when He meets our needs, by saving us from sin, when He solves our problems, when we go out in nature and learn about His creatures, etc.) **Have you praised God today for all the joy He brings into your life? Let's say our message together.**



WE WORSHIP GOD WITH JOYFUL PRAISE.

Memory Verse

Read aloud Psalm 138:1 and encourage the children to repeat it using the following actions. Repeat until the children know the verse.

You Need:

- Bible

"I will" Point to self.
"praise" Raise hands, palms up, elbows by your side.
"You, O Lord" Raise hands upward.
"with" Hands down.
"all" Right hand cupped, thumb 2" from chest.
"my heart." Right hand over heart.

Optional: Sing the memory verse to the tune of "Grant Us Your Peace" (Dona Nobis Pacem) (*Sing for Joy*, No. 103, or *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, No. 471).

Bible Study

Say: **Let's read from the Bible the story of bitter waters being made sweet. This story is a good example of God's goodness to people.** (Adult helpers assist as needed.) Have the children find Exodus 15:22–27. Ask four children to read one verse each of this passage. Then say: **The Bible has many praise verses that talk about all the good things that God does for us. We will read three of them.** Help the children find and read the following verses:

Psalm 106:1, 2

Psalm 117:1, 2

Isaiah 12:2, 3

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **For what can we praise God today? How do you feel when you praise God?** (happy, joyful, glad) **When we think about the good things God has given us, it makes us feel good and happy. Praising God is one way that all of us can worship Him. Let's say our message together:**



WE WORSHIP GOD WITH JOYFUL PRAISE.

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- Bible

Happy Things

This is a clapping rhyme that gives children a chance to name things that bring joy into their everyday lives. The group will sit in a circle, learn the rhyme, and continue clapping it throughout the exercise as each child names a happy food, place, and day.

Begin by naming the category (food, place, day). Pat thighs twice (xx) and then clap hands twice (xx) as you chant “I praise God for happy things. Happy (choose one: food, places, days) make us sing.”

Continue the clapping rhyme as you go around the circle and allow the next person to fill in the name of something in that category. (Example: First time through—everyone says, “I praise God for

happy things” and the teacher continues, “Happy foods make us sing.” Then everyone—“I praise God for happy things.” The next child—“Juicy berries make me sing.”) Continue around the circle until each child has had a chance to name a happy food, place, and day.

Debriefing

Ask: **Do we show as much joy and enthusiasm for God as we do for our favorite foods or favorite places or favorite days? What can you do with your body to express praises to God?** Read aloud Proverbs 15:13 and Proverbs 17:22. **Every day in every way we can praise God with joy. Say today’s message with me:**



WE WORSHIP GOD WITH JOYFUL PRAISE.

Sharing the Lesson

A. Have a Praise Party for God

Ask the children to plan a "Praise Party for God." This would be something they can do during the week, perhaps during family worship, where they would praise God joyfully.

Debriefing

Ask the children: **Where and when will your praise party take place? Who will attend? What supplies will you need? Who will you invite to help you praise God? For what will you praise Him?**

What will you do at the party?

Read aloud Psalm 149:1–5. Be sure the children understand the meaning of this portion of the Psalm. **Let's repeat the message together:**



WE WORSHIP GOD WITH JOYFUL PRAISE.

B. Joyful Praises

In advance, arrange for the children to visit another children's Sabbath School group or the adult Sabbath School to sing a favorite praise song.

Before the children go to sing, say: **When we praise God, we make Him happy, we feel happy, and we make others happy as well. Today we have an opportunity to share the happiness God has given to us with [name of group].**

After you have sung, return to your classroom for debriefing.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How do you think God feels when He hears us sing praises to Him? What do you think about sharing praises to God with others? Can you share some praise songs with someone at home this week?**

Think of someone who will enjoy joining you in praising God. Share a song with them this week.

Remember, God is always happy when we praise Him. He is especially happy when children praise Him. Let's say today's message together:



WE WORSHIP GOD WITH JOYFUL PRAISE.

Closing

Invite the children to stand in a circle. Close with prayer. Ask God to help them to look for new ways to praise Him during the coming week.

Bitter Waters Made Sweet

References

Exodus 15:22–27;
Patriarchs and Prophets,
pp. 291–294

Memory Verse

“I will praise
you, O Lord,
with all my heart”
(Psalm 138:1, NIV).

The Message

We worship God
with joyful praise.

The Jones family was on a hike in unknown woods. They walked for a long time. Soon they knew that they were lost. Their water bottles were empty, and they were very hot and thirsty. “Let’s stop here,” said Mother, “and ask God to help us.”

After praying together, they began walking again. Before long they found the right trail. And soon they were back at their campsite.

At their campfire that night they worshiped God with joyful praise. Then Mother told the story about a time when the Israelites had water problems too.

The joyful celebration on the banks of the Red Sea was over. The pillar of cloud began to move again. The Israelites knew it was time to move on. So they followed the cloud into the desert. For three days they traveled without finding water. The water they had brought with them was gone. They had to find more if they were to stay alive.

The cloud led them toward Marah, where they expected to find a spring. Moses had herded sheep in the wilderness for 40 years. He knew the place well. He knew the water at Marah was bitter and not fit to drink. But God had led them to this place.

Just as Moses expected, at the first sight of water the joyful cry went up. “Water! Water!” Men, women, and children rushed to the spring. But as soon as the first of them tasted it, their joy turned to disappointment.

It had been just three days since the Lord had worked the miracle at the Red Sea. Just three days since He had destroyed the entire Egyptian army. It had been only a few days since they had left Egypt and their lives of slavery. God Himself, in the pillar of cloud, had led them to Marah. But they forgot all that. “What are we going to drink?” they grumbled to Moses.

Moses did what the Israelites did not do. He turned to the Lord for help. The Lord showed Moses a piece of wood and told him to throw it into the water. Moses did, and the water became sweet. And then, imagine how the people rushed forward to the water. They had gone from joy at finding water to disappointment after tasting it. Now they were back to joy after God worked the miracle. They were no longer in danger of dying of thirst. They had been saved!

And then God gave them a promise through Moses. “Listen carefully to the voice of the Lord and do what is right in His eyes. If you do what He asks you to do, He will keep you from the diseases of the Egyptians.” God would keep them from much of what troubled Egypt. Would they worship God with their lives? Would they honor Him with their obedience? If they did, God would give them happy lives.



God gives you the joy of salvation. Just as the Israelites were saved by the sweet water at Marah, you are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. That is a reason for joy.

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3, NIV). That promise is as true for us today as it was for the Israelites. Praise God with joyful praise!

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- With your family, take a long nature walk. When you stop for rest and water, read the lesson story together. Take a big drink of water and thank God that He provides for all your needs. Find and read Psalm 138:1 together. How many ways can you praise Him?

Sunday

- During family worship play “Sing a Scripture.” Give each family member a Bible verse to “sing.” Each person (or two) makes up their own tune and practices it. Some suggested verses are: Psalm 59:16 or 17; Psalm 66:1, 2; Psalm 66:5; Psalm 67:1; Psalm 121:7, 8; Psalm 138:1 (your memory verse). Use the whole Bible verse, or just part of it and repeat it several times.

- Read Proverbs 15:13, first part. Practice smiling in front of the mirror. Does it make you happier?

Monday

- For family worship, read Exodus 15:22–27. How many days did the Israelites survive without water? (Exodus 15:22).

- Look in books for information about deserts. Draw a picture based on what you learn.

- Sing or say your memory verse.

Tuesday

- With your family, make some popcorn (or enjoy another salty treat). How did it smell? How did it look? How did it taste? Did it make you thirsty? How would you have felt if you had been at Marah when God made the water sweet? Thank God for good water.

- Read Exodus 15:25 and Isaiah 12:3.

- Say the memory verse several times, each time a little louder.

Wednesday

- In worship today, read Exodus 15:24 together.

- Draw what you think a grumbler looks like. Pray with your family that you will praise God instead of grumbling about life. Should you praise God when bad things happen to you? Talk about it with your family. Then sing a “happy” song together.

- Find out where your water comes from. Thank God for it.

Thursday

- During family worship, read Psalm 77:14 together. Think of something amazing that God has done for your family. Then make plans to tell it to someone who is not in your family. Read Exodus 15:26 together.

- Sing a song of praise to God for taking such good care of you. (For example, “God Is So Good” [*Sing for Joy*, No 13].) Then say your memory verse together.

Friday

- Repeat your memory verse while you help your family prepare for Sabbath.

- During family worship tell the Bible lesson story in your own words. Ask your family members to help you act it out.

- Praise God with a “singing relay.” One person sings the first line of a familiar praise song, then points to somebody else. That person must sing the second line and then point to another singer, and so on.

- Thank God for His loving care this week.