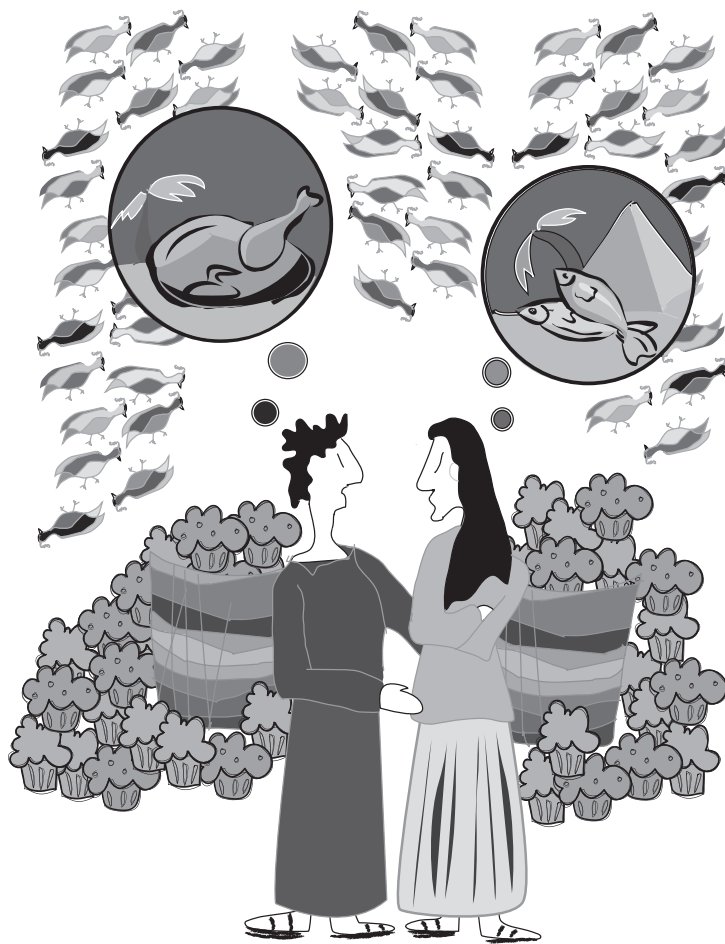


LESSON 38

# The People of Israel Complain

NUMBERS 11



**BIBLE TRUTH**

GOD'S MERCY SPARES ISRAEL AGAIN, DESPITE THEIR REJECTION OF GOD

LESSON SNAPSHOT

**1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN**

**SUPPLIES:** Crackers or cookies

**2. BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

**SUPPLIES:** *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 38)

**3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION . . . . . 5 MIN**

**Where Is Jesus?**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is Jesus?” to prepare

**4. SNACK QUESTIONS . . . . . 10 MIN**

**SUPPLIES:** Snack food/water

**5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5–10 MIN**

**6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN**

**Coloring Page 38**

**SUPPLIES:** markers/crayons

**Remembering Egypt**

**SUPPLIES:** some of the foods the Israelites remembered from Egypt like onions, cucumbers, leeks, and garlic; a knife; a cutting board

**Complaint or Thanks**

**SUPPLIES:** hole punch catch tray contents (optional)

**7. CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

**TOTAL 60–75 MIN**

THE LESSON

**OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN**

In today’s lesson the children will learn how quickly we can turn away from God and complain when we don’t get what we want.

Randomly distribute two cookies to some children and one cookie to others. Wait to see if the children who only received one cookie complain. As soon as you hear a complaint, use the complaint as an opportunity to talk about complaining.

Ask the following questions:

- **What is complaining?**  
*(Complaining is saying you don’t like something.)*
- **Can you remember a time when you complained?**  
*(Draw the children out.)*
- **Does anyone know what the Bible says about complaining?**  
*(“Do everything without complaining or arguing” [Philippians 2:14 NIV].)*

Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

**BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read story 38, “The People of Israel Complain,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION . . . . . 5 MIN**

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **What was Israel’s sin in this story?**  
*(They complained and rejected the Lord by saying they wanted to go back to Egypt.)*
- **What was Israel’s complaint in this story?**  
*(They didn’t like only eating manna. They wanted meat.)*

**SNACK QUESTIONS . . . . . 10 MIN**

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking:

- Did you ever eat a lot of something and start not to like it?  
*(Accept any answer.)*
- Can anyone remember the kinds of foods the Israelites wanted from Egypt?  
*(onions, cucumbers, leeks, and garlic)*
- Why was it sinful for Israel to want to go back to Egypt?  
*(Egypt was a place of slavery. To say they wanted Egypt more than God's plan for them was to suggest God's plan was worse than the torture of Egypt.)*

**Where Is Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_**

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Passage: Colossians 1:10–14

Paul encourages us in these verses to have endurance, patience, and joy as we serve God. He wants us to give thanks to God, who has given us redemption and forgiveness through Jesus.

Just like the Israelites, we are tempted to grumble and complain against God when we do not like his plan for us. Just like the Israelites, we deserve death, but instead we can receive rescue through Jesus.

Whenever the Israelites sinned and God had mercy on them, he gave them mercy because he knew that a Savior was coming. Anytime God has ever had mercy on anyone, it was because of Jesus.

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5-10 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. . . . . 20-30 MIN**

**Coloring Activity**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page 38—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Can you think of a time when you complained? What did you complain about?  
*(Accept any answer.)*
- What was Israel complaining about?  
*(manna to eat day after day)*
- What do you think the people of Israel should have done instead of complaining?  
*(They should have been grateful for all that God had provided, and they should have prayed to God for anything they needed.)*

**Remembering Egypt**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ onions, cucumbers, leeks, and/or garlic (some of the foods the Israelites remembered from Egypt)
- ✓ a knife
- ✓ a cutting board

Cut the different foods in half and have the children smell them. Explain that the people desired these flavorful foods more than they desired the Lord.

Teach them that Jesus said, “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4 NIV).

### Complaint or Thanks

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ hole punch catch tray contents

Reenact the complaining of the Israelites who grew tired of manna. Have the children go around pretending to pick up small pieces of manna and putting them in baskets to collect them. (If you have a hole punch, sprinkle the contents of the catch tray on the floor to use as manna.) Then have the children repeat the following poem while they pick up the manna:

Manna, manna, all we have is manna. I wish we'd get some meat to eat.  
Manna, manna, all we have is manna. A fish for dinner would be a treat.  
Manna, manna, all we see is manna. No fruits or spices can we see.

Ask the class what God, who gave them the manna, thought about their complaining. Help them to see how ungrateful the people of Israel were. Then teach them a new poem to go with picking up the manna.

Manna, manna, bread from heaven. A gift from God for us to eat.  
Manna, manna, God's provision. Points us to the bread of life.  
Manna, manna, Jesus is our manna. Food for all eternity.

**PRAY** ..... **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for all you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as another way for the children to remember what today's lesson was about.

