

GOD KEEPS HIS PEOPLE ALIVE

FOUNDATION: GOD IS KEEPER - GOD GIVES SECURITY

BIG TRUTH: GOD KEEPS HIS PEOPLE ALIVE

Matthew 6:30-33; John 3:14-16, 10:27-29, 17:1-3; Acts 17:24-28; Ephesians 2:1-6; 1 John 5:11-12

BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 17:25

nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

BIG IDEAS

- God gives healing and eternal life to His people.
- We are saved through faith, by the grace of God.
- We can trust God with our lives.

BIBLE STORY: NUMBERS 21:4-9

When the people of Israel were wandering in the desert, they again complained about the Lord's provision. God punished them by causing poisonous snakes to bite them, making them very sick and killing many. This story is one that points to the redemptive work of Christ. The antidote for the poisonous snakes was a bronze or copper snake lifted on a staff. Anyone who looked at the bronze snake was healed. Christ also was lifted up and those who believe in Him are healed for all of eternity. God gives His people healing, on this earth, but even more so for all of eternity.

FOUNDATION: GOD IS KEEPER—GOD GIVES SECURITY

God is keeper over all His creation. That means that God is not only greater than creation, but He is present in it. Everything in creation is held together by God Himself. Not only is God keeper of His creation, but He also keeps His promises. We can live confidently and securely knowing that He is in control and holds all things together for His glory. He has promised to redeem a people to himself, to finish the work He starts in believers, and to make all things new. When God starts something, we can rest securely in the fact that He will bring it to completion.

BIG AIMS



Every child should know that:

- God keeps all of creation alive



Every child should be able to:

- Recognize ways that God keeps them, and the world, alive



Every child should feel:

- Aware that they cannot control things
- Awe that God does keep all things alive



Every child should want to:

- Show appreciation for God who daily keeps them alive

FAMILY DEVOTION: OUR LIVES ARE SAFE WITH GOD

God gave the Israelites healing from the poisonous snakes, but even more so He gives healing for the sinful souls of all mankind. God heals His children. He takes care of His children; therefore, our lives are safe with Him. We can trust Him to always care for us.

BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 17:25

nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

God is above all creation.

- God is not a created being; rather He is the Creator of the whole world.
- God is sufficient within Himself.
- He does not need anything from outside of Himself.
- Humans need lots of things outside of themselves: they need air to breathe, food to eat, clothes to keep them safe, but God does not need anything.
- God is not dependent on anything like we are.

God gives life to all creation.

- God is the author of all life.
- Everything that has life gets this life from God.
- Every person that is alive is alive because of God.

God continues to give life to His creation.

- God does not just give us life and then leave us alone. He is actively involved in His creation.
- Not only does he initiate life in a person, but he also continually sustains that life.
- We continue breathing because God is keeping us alive.
- He provides everything that we need to stay alive.
- God keeps, guards, and protects His people and their lives.

BIBLE STORY: NUMBERS 21*The Fiery Serpent*

Supporting Scripture: 1 John 5:11; Ephesians 2:8; Matthew 6:25.

Teacher Introduction:

God kept His people alive as they wandered in the desert. Even though they disobeyed Him and complained against Him, He still provided a way for them to live. When they turned their hearts from Him and complained about His provisions for them, their punishment was the curse of poisonous snakes. These snakes caused many to die from their bites. Many were left sick and hurting. God had mercy on His people and provided a way for them to be healed. Moses created a bronze serpent and placed it on a staff. Those who looked at the serpent lifted upon the staff would receive healing. This fiery serpent pointed toward the coming eternal healing that God was going to give His people through His Son. Jesus would one day be lifted up like the bronze serpent and those who repented and believed would receive eternal healing and life forever.

Teaching Guide:

The guide below is provided to help you teach the narrative: *The Fiery Serpent*. The three points are the Big Ideas that should guide your lesson as you share from Numbers 21 and teach the narrative: *The Fiery Serpent*. Footnotes are provided for further study of the text and God's interaction with His people. Throughout the lesson, questions are placed to help you guide the preschoolers to think about and process the narrative: *The Fiery Serpent*.

Opening Illustration:

Give each child a paper plate that you have drawn the outline of a snake on. Allow the children to color their snake red or orange to represent the bronze snake. Help the children cut their snakes out and then help them glue eyes on the snake and a tongue using ribbon.

- These snakes are like the bronze snake that Moses lifted up on a pole.
- God provided earthly healing for the Israelites when they looked at the bronze snake.
- God provides eternal life and healing to anyone who places saving faith in Jesus.

BIG IDEA: GOD GIVES HEALING AND ETERNAL LIFE TO HIS PEOPLE.¹**God gives healing to His people.**

- God provided a way for His people to be healed.
- When the Israelites were bitten by the snakes, they became very sick and died.
- God heard the cries of His people to save them, to help them.
- When He heard their cries, He made a way for them to be healed and for their lives to be saved.
- God gives healing to those who have faith in Him.

Those who believe receive healing and eternal life.

- God healed those who were bitten by the snakes.
- He saved the lives of those who had faith in Him.
- Those who believed in Him and looked at the bronze serpent lifted up on the staff were healed.
- God gives eternal life to those who believe in His Son.
- The Israelites were healed when they trusted God by looking at the fiery serpent on the staff.
- Man is given eternal life when he believes in the work of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

God saves those who receive His healing.²

- Those who repented of their sin and looked at the bronze serpent received healing and were saved.
- Those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ receive eternal healing and life.

What was making the Israelites sick? (The snakes were making the Israelites sick.)

How were the Israelites saved from the snakes? (If they looked at the bronze snake on the staff, they would be saved.)

How does God give eternal healing? (He gives healing through His Son, Jesus Christ.)

1. 1 John 5:11: God provides eternal life through His Son for those who repent and believe.

2. John 3:36: Those who believe in the Son have eternal life. Their repentance and faith in Christ give them eternal healing.

BIG IDEA: WE ARE SAVED THROUGH FAITH, BY THE GRACE OF GOD.**God's people are saved through faith.³**

- It is because of God's grace on our lives that we have faith in Him.
- The Israelites experienced God's grace when He helped them have faith in Him by looking at the bronze snake on the staff.
- Man is saved through his faith in God, which is God's grace on his life.
- Without faith, man cannot be saved. We must believe in the work of Jesus Christ to receive eternal life.



Take turns blindfolding the children and leading them through a maze you create in the room. You can use chairs, desks, and other objects to create different obstacles. Remind the children that they have to trust you to lead them in the right direction and having faith is trusting in God to do what He says He's going to do.

It is God's grace that people have faith in Him.

- God showed the Israelites grace and mercy by giving them faith to believe He would save them if they looked at the bronze snake.
- People are shown grace and mercy by receiving faith to believe they will be saved by the work of Jesus Christ.
- This is God's mercy on people's lives. He gives the gift of faith to His people.

Jesus is lifted up like the bronze snake.

- Just as the Israelites found healing in the bronze snake, man finds healing in Jesus.
- Jesus was lifted up on the cross for all mankind.⁴
- The world is sick and in need of healing because of sinful natures.
- God gives faith to His people and it is their faith in Jesus that brings healing and eternal life.

*What brought healing to the Israelites? (Believing that looking at the bronze snake would bring healing through God.)
Who else was lifted up like the bronze snake? (Jesus was lifted up on the cross like the bronze snake and He brings eternal healing.)*

3. Ephesians 2:8: It is by our faith that we are saved, but this is a gift of God's grace on our lives.

4. John 3:14: Even as Moses lifted up the bronze snake, Jesus was lifted up on the cross for the sins of the world.

BIG IDEA: WE CAN TRUST GOD WITH OUR LIVES.⁵**God sustains all life according to His purposes and in His will.**

- The Israelites were sick and dying from the snakebites. They were in need of someone to keep them alive.
- God is the one who keeps all things alive. He is the ruler over all things and He determines the beginning and end of all life.
- God kept His people alive by providing something to rescue them.
- They could trust that God would heal them because God always does what He says He's going to do.



Spend a few minutes asking the children what some of their favorites are? For example, ask them what is their favorite food to eat or what is their favorite color. Remind them that everything we have is from God. He provides for us and takes care of us just as He promised to do in His Word.

God keeps His people alive and gives them eternal life.

- God kept the Israelites alive and He keeps all of mankind alive according to His great purposes.
- God provides healing to His people and cleanses them from their sins.
- God faithfully gives earthly healing to the Israelites who trust in Him just as He faithfully gives eternal life to those who trust in His Son.

We can rest in God because He is trustworthy.

- God always keeps His promises. He never promises to do anything that He does not do.
- The Israelites could trust that God would heal them if they looked at the bronze snake because He told them He would.
- God always does what He says He's going to do.
- Because God is trustworthy, we can rest in Him and know that He will care for us according to His will.

Why could the Israelites trust that God would heal them if they looked at the bronze snake? (He always keeps His promises and He had proven Himself faithful to them before.)

Why can we trust God with our lives? (He is faithful and is more powerful than any other being.)

5. Matthew 6:25: We do not have to consider where our daily needs will come from. We can trust that God will provide for us and give us everything that we need. We can trust Him with every part of our lives.

HOOKS

**We Are Saved Through Faith**

Bring in a live plant. Show it to the children.



- What do we need in order to live on earth? (We need oxygen or air.)
- How do we get oxygen to breathe? (Their answers will vary, but tell them that God designed plants on land and in the ocean to produce oxygen for us.)
- Can we see this plant producing oxygen for us? (No, we can't.)
- How do we know the plant is producing oxygen? (We know we have air to breathe. We must trust that it is.)
- Having faith in God means trusting when we can't see. We must have faith in God and believe in the work of Jesus Christ to be saved. This requires great faith.

**We Can Trust God With Our Lives**

Make a list of all the things God provides for us every day, such as air to breathe, water to drink, food to eat. Help the children think of things that God has provided for them, such as a home to live in, clothes to wear, friends to play with.



- Who takes care of all of our needs? (God takes care of all of our needs.)
- Who can we trust with our lives? (We can trust God to take care of us because He is faithful.)

God Provides Healing To His People

Make your own bronze serpent on a pole, by cutting a snake out of paper and gluing or taping it to a yardstick. Play a game with the children where you reenact the Israelites being bitten by the serpents and receiving healing by looking at the bronze serpent on the pole.

- The Israelites were in need of healing because they were getting sick and dying.
- God provided a way for them to be healed.
- All they had to do was look at the bronze serpent on the pole and they would be healed from the snakebites.
- God provides healing for His people.