

Wandering In The Wilderness

Numbers 14:11-38

MEMORY VERSE

NUMBERS 14:18

“The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Several 5” x 8” index cards and a marker.

Artwork (included) for puppet, brads, string, red, orange, yellow and blue construction paper, dog or “monster” puppet and a large toy truck.

Twelve balloons, marker, string and clothespins.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Pick Out The Truth

Make two sets of cards with 5” x 8” index cards. Write each word of the main theme of our lesson “**God will discipline those whom He loves.**” Add some extra word cards and mix with the other cards. You could use words such as “not,” “never,” “sometimes” or “hardly ever.” You should write these words in large print.

Divide the class into two groups, mix up the words and let each group put together a sentence that is true about God. Help them at the end to come up with the main point.

Use this game to introduce the main theme of the lesson at the beginning of your class session.

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever been around someone that has a bad attitude? You may even try to tell them that it is wrong to have that attitude, but they just won't listen to you. In today's passage we will see that the same thing happened to Moses. The children of Israel rebelled against Moses and against God. They even wanted to kill Joshua and Caleb. But we will see that their rebellion lead to Moses' intercession for them. And we will also see what happened to the Israelites because of their unbelief. **God will discipline those whom He loves.**

We will also learn that God loves each one of us very much. But when we do things wrong or sin against the Lord, He will discipline or correct us. He disciplines us because of His love for us. The Bible says that if God didn't discipline us then it would show He didn't love us. Our earthly parents discipline us when we do things wrong. We may feel like it isn't very much fun when we are disciplined, but our parents correct us because they do love us and want what is best for us. It is the same with the Lord.

NUMBERS 14:11,12

Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?"

"I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

Here we see the Lord saying that the people had provoked Him. It means that they rejected or despised God because they refused to believe God's promises. It's called unbelief, and in Hebrews 3:12 we are told to "take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." They did not believe

Him, even after all of the wonderful miracles He had done for them.

God had just commanded Moses to send 12 spies into the land that God wanted to give to His people. When they returned, all the spies (except Joshua and Caleb) gave a bad report. They told about all the giants and all the reasons that they couldn't do what God promised He would provide for them. They were filled with unbelief and led the people into unbelief. Then all of the people rebelled against God and Moses. They even wanted to kill the leaders He had appointed and head back into bondage in Egypt.

Pretty amazing, but sometimes we are filled with unbelief concerning God's promises. God's word tells us not to be afraid, but to trust in Him, but sometimes we are still afraid. We need to learn to trust in the Lord and His promises.

The problem for the Israelites was that they completely turned away from God. God then says that He would destroy the nation and make Moses the founder of a "nation greater and mightier than they."

Now that could have been a strong temptation for Moses, for the people had complained and murmured all of the time since they had left Egypt. What would you do if you had been Moses? Would you say, "Yes Lord, wipe them all out and give me a better people"? Or would your heart break for the people because of the difficulties they would endure? Let's take a look and find out what Moses heart was like. **God will discipline those whom He loves.**

NUMBERS 14:13-16

And Moses said to the LORD: "Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them,

"and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among these people; that You, LORD, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night.

"Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying,

'Because the LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.'

Moses does not think about himself, or his own glory, but he is concerned fully with God's glory, and wanted nothing to tarnish that glory. Moses said that the Egyptians would see the destruction of Israel by the Lord as failure on the part of God to keep His promise to redeem the Israelites and to give them the land that He had promised to them. Then the Egyptians would tell the Canaanites and other nations and they would think that God could not keep His promises.

NUMBERS 14:17-19

"And now, I pray, let the power of my LORD be great, just as You have spoken, saying,

'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.'

"Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

Now we begin to see the heart of Moses as he asks God to forgive and to pardon the Israelites for their sin. He prays for the people with all of his heart. So great was Moses' love and care for the people, that he interceded for them before God. Intercede means to stand up on their behalf. He said, "Let the power of my Lord be great."

Was the power of God to destroy the people? No, it was the power of God in longsuffering and in mercy, in forgiveness. Longsuffering is, "bearing injuries or provocation for a long time; patient; long endurance." Mercy is, "kindness of heart or disposition which causes a person to overlook injuries, or to treat an offender with greater forbearance and clemency than he deserves." Forgiveness is, "the act of forgiving, the pardon of an offender, by which he is considered and treated as not guilty."

This is our God! One who has more longsuffering, mercy and forgiveness than we can ever understand. Moses knew that about God, because Moses had an intimate relationship with God. He spent a lot of time with God, and knew His heart. When we spend time with people, we really get to know them.

How well do you know God? How much time do you spend with Him? Do you know Him well enough to know that He loves you and sent His Son, Jesus to die for your sins so that you could live with Him forever (John 3:16,17)? Do you know that He "stands at the door and knocks" on your heart, just waiting for you to open the door and ask Him to come into your heart (Rev. 3:20)? If you don't, just take some time and get to know the Creator of the universe. He loves you!

Sometimes we see people who have rebelled against God and refuse to serve Him and we would like to see God's judgment come upon them; but we need to remember to pray for people who do not know Jesus. We need to intercede for them like Moses did for His people. Do you know people who don't know Jesus? Have you lifted them up to the Father in prayer?

NUMBERS 14:20-25

Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word;

"but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD;

"because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice,

"they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.

"But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.

"Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea."

Here we have God's answer to Moses' prayer. We have God's pardon for the people, and we have God's judgment also. God's immediate answer was to pardon the people. His answer was sure

and true. In 1 John 1:9, He tells us that He forgives us our sin when we confess our sins.

We also see that the earth shall be filled with God's glory. What a wonderful thing, that all the earth would shine forth God's glory.

Yet, sadly enough, God still had to deal with the people's unbelief. For you see, if God's glory is to fill the whole earth, His justice cannot be held back. Because of their unbelief, God now tells Moses that the unbelievers would not get to possess Canaan. Caleb and his children would be allowed to enter, for he followed the Lord "fully" (14:24). **God will discipline those whom He loves.**

We see here that the people of Israel were forgiven, but they still had to suffer the consequences of their sin. Just like if we sin, God will forgive us when we come to Him in repentance, but we may still suffer because of the bad choices that we make. Here is an example that may help us to understand.

Let's say a person robs a bank. Then he gets caught and goes to jail. While in jail he hears about Jesus and gives his life to Him. Jesus will forgive him of the sin that he has done, but he will still have to stay in prison until his jail sentence is over. That is a consequence or result of his sin. When we come to Jesus He will erase all of our sins and we can receive eternal life. However, he doesn't always take away the bad things that happen as a result of our disobedience.

Be a Parent

Cut out the puppet (artwork included) and assemble with brads so he will be jointed. Do this before the class session. Connect strings to his arms and legs to "walk" him through the different "dangers."

For the dangers, you will have fire, water, a dog, or lion, and a big truck. You can make fire by cutting out and using red, yellow and

orange construction paper. For the water you can use 2 sheets of blue construction paper cut in scallops along one side. You should make these before class and then give each of them to a child. Give another child a dog or lion type puppet. Give another child a big toy truck. The remainder of the children will be the “parents.”

Line up the “dangerous” kids along the front of the room and “walk” the little man through the dangers. As you approach each danger ask the “parents” to speak up if the puppet gets too near the dangers. As the children “warn” the man about getting too close to the danger have the puppet continue to get closer to the danger. Ask the children what will happen if he continues to disobey? Are parents loving or unloving who discipline their children? Sometimes they see dangers ahead that their children cannot see. Just as God sees dangers in our lives and will discipline those whom He loves.

Now, as to where Moses should now lead the people, was answered by the Lord; the people were to be brought into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea. Since they chose not to believe God’s promises, they would now live in the wilderness for 40 years. How sad!

There is always a cost to our disobedience. God loves us and wants us to do what He asks us to do. But that is because He loves us very much and only wants what is best for us.

NUMBERS 14:26-35

And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

"How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me.

"Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you:

'The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.

'Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.

'But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised.

'But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.

'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness.

'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection.

'I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'

Here again is the fruit of unbelief, and the just dealings of God with a people that provoked Him by their murmuring and hardness of heart. God told Moses that everyone of the original census (twenty years old and older) who murmured against Him would die in the

wilderness in the course of forty years (each year representing a day the spies were spying out the land). Caleb and Joshua, as well as the children of the people, would enter Canaan at the end of the forty years. **God will discipline those whom He loves.**

We must remember that what kept the people out of the land was their unbelief. In Hebrews 3:7-19, God speaks of this incident. Verse 19 tells us that “they could not enter in because of unbelief.” Now, they should have gone into the land, God told them to go, but they were not obeying Him, because of unbelief.

We, as Christians must never let the things that are seen rob us of the joy of the things that are not seen. Pray for a stronger faith, so that we can take possession of all that God has freely given to us in His Son, Jesus!

Balloon Surprise

Before class obtain 12 balloons and blow each of them up and write one word from the memory verse on each balloon. “The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression.” NUMBERS 14:8. Quote the verse to the children before you begin the activity.

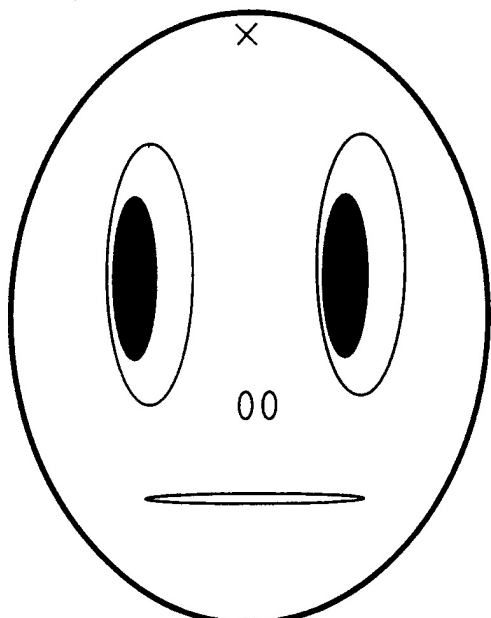
Blow up one balloon at a time and see if the class can quote the verse after each time. As you blow up each verse attach them to an 8” piece of string or yarn attached to the bulletin board. You can attach them with clothespins.

After they are all up let the children take turns popping the balloons and see if they can still quote the verse after each balloon is popped. (Be sure to pick up all of the pieces of the popped balloons.)

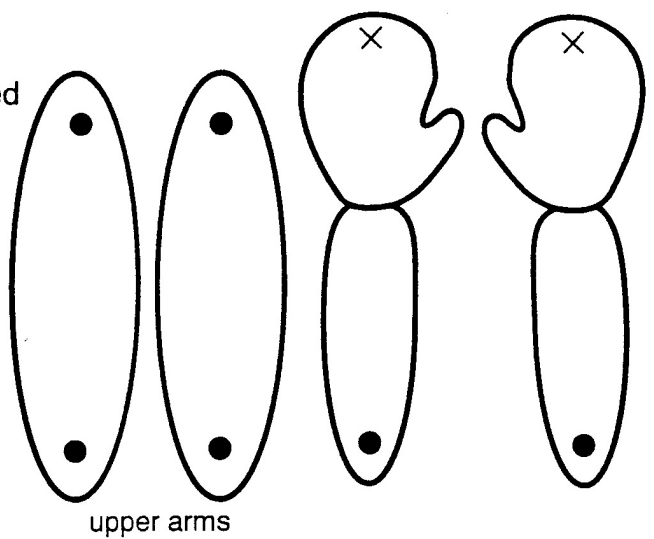
PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord and to obey Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

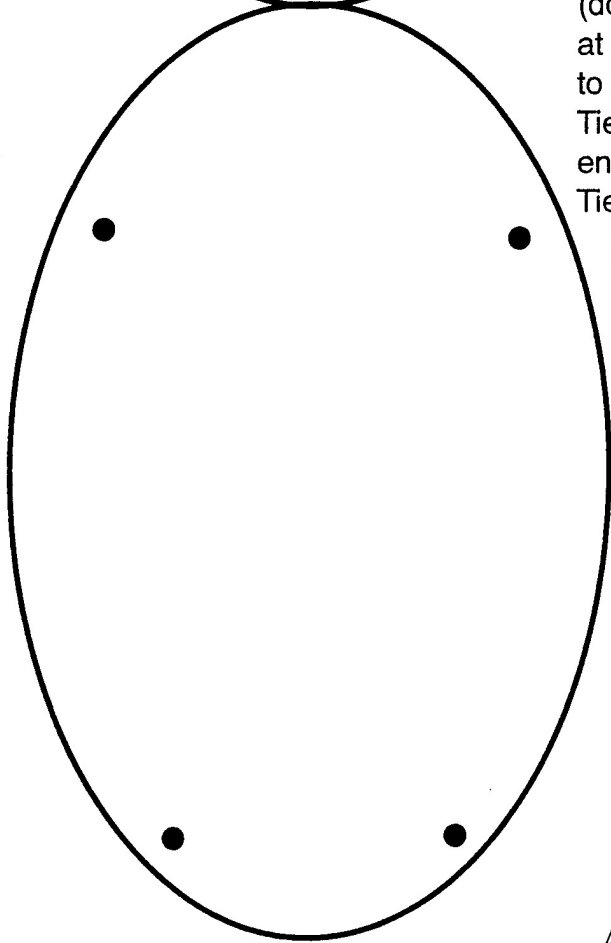
Template - Be A Parent



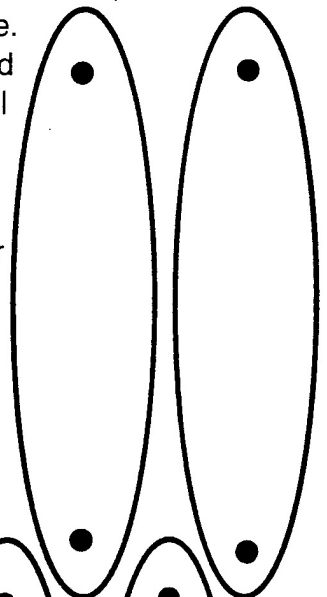
You will need eight brads and 2 1/2 yards of yarn to assemble the puppet.



Cut out all pieces, you should have a total of nine pieces (do not cut the head and body apart). Punch holes at all the black dots and connect leg and arm joints, attach to body with brads. Punch small holes at the "x"s. Tie one end of a 36" piece of yarn to a foot, and the other end to a hand, repeat for other side. Tie an 18" piece of yarn to the head and use the extra length to tie all the yarn together at the top at a place where the puppet is balanced.



upper legs



lower legs

