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# LEADER

# GUIDE



# 2020 BIBLE STUDY LEADER GUIDE

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# INTRODUCTION

**Hello, leaders.**

No doubt, this summer probably isn't what you and your students expected. 2020 has been an unprecedented time of challenge and change. Life as we knew it before is now different. Words such as quarantine, shelter-at-home and social distancing have become part of our everyday conversations. Much uncertainty, sickness and loss has become the norm.

In the midst of these difficult times, God has not left us. He is faithful and remains active in our lives. None of this caught Him by surprise. He has a purpose and a plan for everything. In Bible study, you will discover God's faithfulness to His chosen people, the Israelites, as He takes Moses on a faith journey of his own. You will learn how faith requires trust, risk, and dependence on God.

This Leader Guide provides you a detailed plan for teaching Bible study. Each day provides a teaching plan and commentary on the Scripture passage. The outline for each day is as follows:

**Overview**

This provides a daily overview with life questions, Scripture passages and truths and key verse.

**Gather These Supplies**

This is the list of supplies you need each day.

**Prepare Ahead of Time**

These are preparations to make before the session.

**Motivation**

The motivation section includes learning activities designed to introduce the concept for the day and to create interest in the following Bible study material.

**Examination**

The Scripture study includes learning activities to encounter the meaning and truth of each Bible passage, and it's broken down into teachable sections.

**Application**

The application section allows you as the leader a time to sum up the lesson in a personal way, and it allows the students to put into words what they have learned.

**Key Verse**

This activity will drive home the importance of the day's Key Verse; it is intended to aid in memorization.



**Prayer**

This provides guidance on how to pray with your students to close the session.

**Commentary**

This section provides commentary from the Holman Old Testament Commentary series and will provide you background and helpful information on the Scripture passages.

We are praying for you as you stand before students and share the truths of Scripture! You have an incredible opportunity to help shape the lives of students by pointing them to Christ! While this is a huge responsibility, it will be one of the most rewarding experiences you have ever had. Thank you for investing in and ministering to students!

**The FUGE Camps Team**



# SESSION 1: FAITH TO LET GO

## Overview

**Teaching Aim:** Students will learn how faith requires trust and willingness on our part. When God calls, we must respond with action.

**Study Passage:** Burning Bush  
Background: Exodus 2:23-4:20  
Focal: Exodus 3:1-6, 10-17; 4:10-17

**Key Verse:** "Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say" (Ex. 4:12).

### Life Questions:

- Have you trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life?
- What evidence exists in your life of your trust or lack of trust in God for direction in life?
- What is God calling you to do?
- What is keeping you from action? What do you need to let go of in order to trust God?
- What action can and will you take?

### Scripture Truths:

- God is always the initiator. He pursues us and meets us in unique and personal ways.
- God is at work around us. We are to be aware of what He is doing, trust Him, and join Him.
- Following God requires willingness and action on our part. We must let go of who we think we are and what we think we can do.
- God desires to use His followers and He works despite any limitations on our part.

## Teaching Plan

### Gather These Supplies

- Small objects such as a ball, cell phone, earbuds, book, and so forth
- Pens
- Index cards-enough for 2 per student

### Prepare Ahead of Time

- Write each of the "God-Sized Assignments" on a separate index card.
  - Serve as a summer missionary
  - Go on a short-term mission trip with your church
  - Lead a weekly prayer group at school
  - Share Christ with neighbors
  - Sponsor a child through Compassion International or World Vision
  - Surrender your life to ministry



- Make a weekly visit to a local nursing home
- Be a part of a church plant in an inner-city neighborhood
- Teach children with special needs at church
- Become a regular worker on Habitat for Humanity houses
- Print each of these actions on a separate index card.
  - Clean your room
  - Make an "A" on a test
  - Help your younger sibling with homework
  - Drive the speed limit
  - Attend college
  - Be home by 11:00 p.m.
- Print each of these truths on a separate strip of paper.
  - God is always the initiator. He pursues us and meets us in unique and personal ways.
  - God is at work around us. We are to be aware of what He is doing, trust Him, and join Him.
  - Following God requires willingness and action on our part. We must let go of who we think we are and what we think we can do.
  - God desires to use His followers and He works despite any limitations on our part.
- Write each word of the Key Verse twice on two separate index cards and sort into two sets.

**MOTIVATION**

Instruct students to partner with two others and discuss these questions. Ask questions one at a time, allowing time for groups to discuss.

- How has your life changed over the past several months?
- What are some of the new 'norms' in your life now?
- How has your dependence on God changed?
- Has your faith walk grown closer to God or become more distant from God? Why?

Say: **"Our Bible study theme is 'In The Midst,' a study on faithfulness. In the midst of these recent difficult times, God has not left us. He is faithful and remains active in our lives. Trust is an essential part of our faith journey."**

**Trust Falls**

Say: **"We are about to participate in trust falls."** Lead students to find a partner. Note: This should be challenge by choice. If a student is not comfortable, do not force them to participate, but rather allow them to observe.

Give these instructions:

**Bumpers Up**

- The person falling must have bumpers up.
  - Extend both hands/arms directly in front of you with palms out and thumbs pointing the ground.
  - Cross your hands so that they are palm to palm.
  - Interlock your fingers.
  - Move your hands down and into your chest.
  - Your hands should be in the middle of your chest with your elbows pointing to the ground.
  - Do this to prevent your hands hitting someone in a sensitive area.

Invite all students to practice bumpers up.

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Safety Commands

- The person falling is to follow these safety commands.
  - Person about to fall asks, "Spotter ready?"
  - Spotter responds, "Ready."
  - "Falling."
  - Spotter responds, "Fall on."

Practice these commands with students.

Instruct pairs to stand a little less than an arms length apart with one partner facing the other partner's back. Ask the students in the position to fall if they trust their partner to catch them. Then, instruct them to let go and put that belief into action by leaning back and falling toward their partner to be caught. Once this has been successfully completed, lead pairs to switch roles. When the second round is done, debrief by asking students to share how it felt to trust their partner enough to fall backward. Then, apply this activity to trusting God.

Say: **"Let's take a look at one experience in Moses' life where he had to trust God's calling on his life."**

**EXAMINATION**

Say: **"At this time, we will dive into the Word of God. It is important that we ask Him to help us focus on Bible study and keep away any distractions."**

Lead the following prayer: **"God, keep our minds alert, our hearts receptive, and our ears open to You and Your Word. Teach us Your truths that will change our lives forever."**

**Exodus 3:1-6**

Explain that this Bible study is from the Old Testament Book of Exodus, and it's about a man named Moses.

Tell students that as you share the following statements, they should give a thumbs up if they believe the statement is true about Moses, and they should give a thumbs down if they believe it is false. For each false statement, ask students to share what they think makes it false.

- 1. He was saved from death as a baby by his mom who placed him in a basket that floated downstream. (T)**
- 2. He was a Levite by birth. (T)**
- 3. He was found by Pharaoh's daughter and raised as her child. (T)**
- 4. He killed a Hebrew. (F-Egyptian)**
- 5. He fled to Midian. (T)**
- 6. He married a lady named Zipporah. (T)**
- 7. He was a tentmaker by trade. (F-shepherd)**
- 8. He accepted his call from God immediately. (F)**
- 9. He had a speech problem. (T)**
- 10. He died at the age of 80. (F-120)**











with pitch, put Moses in the basket, placed it in the river, and posted Moses' sister in the bushes to watch over her brother.

When Pharaoh's daughter came to the river to bathe, she opened the tiny basket of safety and her tender instincts took over. Her pity was in direct disobedience to her father's orders. However, God had turned her heart to accomplish His purposes and protect the one who would lead in God's deliverance.

She probably knew the baby was Hebrew because he had been abandoned. Though he most likely was circumcised, this was not an indication of his identity since circumcision was also an Egyptian custom.

God had everything in place--He had Moses' sister standing by in a position to accomplish His purposes. Moses' real mother was able to nurse him.

After the baby was weaned (probably around age two), he was taken to Pharaoh's daughter and formally became a member of the royal household. Pharaoh's daughter actually gave him the name "Moses," which means "one who draws out." This name was a reminder of how she drew the baby out of the water.

Moses grew up in the home of the king, receiving the best of everything; however, Moses was a Hebrew and because of his concern for the mistreatment of a fellow Hebrew, Moses committed murder. Moses became a fugitive and fled to Midian where he married Zipporah, who bore a son named Gershom.

The end of Exodus 2 notes that God's people continued to cry for deliverance and that God was aware of the plight of His people. While in the desert tending his father-in-law's sheep, Moses encountered the Angel of the Lord in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush. In the Old Testament, "the Angel of the Lord" always indicates a visible manifestation of God Himself.

God sometimes uses unusual circumstances to get a person's attention. In the burning bush, God used an unusual phenomenon through which to speak to Moses. The burning bush achieved its purpose, because Moses approached it curiously. When God had Moses' attention, He first called Moses by name. This is a reassurance that God knows His people and deals with them as individuals.

Moses' response to God's call was simply, "Here I am," a Hebrew term meaning literally behold me. Moses was ready to listen to anything God had to say. God had prepared Moses, through his experience of tending sheep in the wilderness for 40 years, to maintain a readiness to respond to God's call.

Exodus 3:5 indicates the holiness of the presence of God. Sandals were considered the humblest articles of clothing. They were removed at the doorway of the tent or house or during a period of mourning. They were also removed as evidence of humility in the presence of kings.

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When Moses became aware of God's presence, he removed his sandals as an act of humility.

The ground was not holy in itself--it was made holy by the presence of God. Any place where we encounter the presence of God is a special and honored place.

In Egypt there were many gods with various names. When God identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He was emphasizing His distinctiveness in relation to any other so-called gods. He was also reminding Moses of his heritage, as a descendant of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When Moses realized to whom he was talking, he became afraid. To experience God is to begin to become aware of His absolute holiness. Such an experience also makes persons aware of their unholiness, so Moses hid his face.

God declared that He was aware of the suffering and oppression of His people. God declared that He was going to deliver His people from their Egyptian slavery and lead them into a land of abundance.

God wanted Moses to serve as His instrument in leading His people out of Egypt. The Israelites were God's people by virtue of His choice of them. God had promised Abraham that his descendants through Isaac were going to possess the land (Gen. 15:1-21), have a special relationship to Him (Gen. 17:19-21), and be used to bless all the nations of the earth (Gen. 22:18). Thus God's call to Moses was in keeping with His promise to Abraham.

**Moses Responds to God's Call: Exodus 3:11-22**

In responding to God's call, Moses asked, in essence, "Who am I to take on such an enormous task?" Moses was probably genuine in questioning his ability for such an awesome assignment; however, Moses tried five times to get out of what God wanted him to do (Ex. 3:11,13; 4:1,10,13). God had an answer for every excuse Moses offered. God always has an answer for our excuses. He will always give us the assurance that He can and will accomplish His purposes if we are available to Him.

God's answer to Moses should be sufficient for all who would question God's call. In Exodus 3:12 God said, "I will certainly be with you." This was an assurance to Moses that God would accompany him and would provide all his needs.

God then told Moses that He would reconfirm His call after the completion of the first part of the assignment. God promised to accomplish everything that He had planned, and He gave Moses a pledge of the absolute success of the mission. However, the pledge God made required a certain amount of faith on Moses' part.

The questions Moses proposed about God's name were not simply for identification purposes. To the Hebrews, a name was more than just a way to identify one person from another. A person's name was an indication of that person's character and often, what he or she would become. God had previously revealed Himself to the patriarchs by the Hebrew name El Shaddai, or God Almighty (Ex. 6:3). "I AM WHO I AM" both revealed and concealed the nature of God.

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This name indicates God as the ever-living One, the only-living God, the self-existent One, and the One who is dependent on no one or nothing outside Himself.

God again declared Himself to be the God of the patriarchs, who were highly revered by the Hebrews. The Hebrew people had apparently forgotten about the God of their ancestors, (see Josh. 24:14) but God had not forgotten about His people.

God always has a purpose for His actions and His calling of others, and the purpose is always rooted in His concern for His people. God was concerned about the slavery of His people. In verses 17-22, God emphasized that His people would dwell in the abundant land of promise. This was in keeping with His promise to the patriarchs. God then gave Moses a glimpse of His power and a preview of how He would deliver His people.

**Moses Accepts His Calling: Exodus 4:1-20**

Another one of Moses' reasons why he should not lead God's people was that they would not believe God had sent him. In response, God gave Moses three miraculous signs, which should have been enough to convince anyone. Another reason that Moses gave was that he was not eloquent. God answered that He would give Moses the words he needed to say. Still Moses was unwilling. He said, in effect: "Send anyone you want to send, but not me." That answer was not a reason but an excuse. God did not accept the excuse but commanded Moses to go. God responded to Moses' excuse by graciously allowing his brother Aaron to be his spokesman.

Moses went back to his father-in-law and received permission to take his family and return to Egypt, as God had directed him. God instructed Moses with regard to the miracles He would bring about. God also informed Moses that Pharaoh would not respond positively, and God told Moses how to respond to Pharaoh.



# SESSION 2: FAITH TO GO INTO THE UNKNOWN

## Overview

- Teaching Aim:** Students will learn how faith sometimes requires going into the unknown. We are to take a risk for Christ and allow Him to work through us so His power will be displayed and He will get the credit.
- Study Passage:** Red Sea  
Background: Exodus 13:17-14:31  
Focal: Exodus 13:17-22; 14:10-18,21-28
- Key Verse:** "But Moses said to the people, 'Don't be afraid. Stand firm and see the Lord's salvation He will provide for you today'" (Ex. 14:13a).

### Life Questions:

- When have you taken a risk for Christ?
- To what or whom do you look when faced with the unknown?
- How are you allowing God to lead you and work through you?

### Scripture Truths:

- We must trust God with the present and future.
- God wants to show Himself to us and do God-sized tasks in our lives.
- When God calls us out of our comfort zones, we must respond by taking action and allowing God to work through us.
- We are to be willing to take risks for God.

## Teaching Plan

### Gather These Supplies

- Butcher paper or poster boards
- Markers
- Index cards
- Pens
- White paper
- Clay, straws, blocks, etc

### Prepare Ahead of Time

- Print these questions on four sheets of paper for each group.
  - What gets you excited about this activity?
  - What fears or anxieties do you have surrounding doing this?
  - What risks are involved in this activity?
  - What/who might you consult to find information about this activity?

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- What preparations do you need to make?
- Print these questions on a poster board and display.
  - List ways God has been moving you this week. What may God be calling you to do?
  - What obstacles are in your way of doing this?
  - What steps must you take to overcome your fears of this and be willing to move out of your comfort zone?
  - Note lessons you have learned from the past that you can apply to the future.
- Write each of these truths on a strip of paper.
  - We must trust God with the present and future.
  - God wants to show Himself to us and do God-sized tasks in our lives.
  - When God calls us out of our comfort zones, we must respond by taking action and allowing God to work through us.
  - We are to be willing to take risks for God.
- Write today's Key Verse on a piece of poster board and attach to the wall.

**MOTIVATION**

Designate each of the four corners of the room as one of the following: Drawing, acting, singing, and building. Instruct students to move to the corner that best identifies their interest. If groups are disproportionate in number, move students around to get even-sized groups.

Provide each group with a piece of butcher paper and marker. Instruct each group to decide on an adventure for all of them to participate in that no one has done before. One example might be jumping from an airplane. Once they have made this decision, lead them to discuss the following:

- **What gets you excited about this activity?**
- **What fears or anxieties do you have surrounding doing this?**
- **What risks are involved in this activity?**
- **What/who might you consult to find information about this activity?**
- **What preparations do you need to make?**

Invite each group to share their adventure and some of their discussion.

Lead a discussion on these topics: **"Compare the fears, risks, and unknowns of participating in a new adventure to our faith journeys. Discuss how participating in a new adventure and living out our faith call us out of our comfort zones."**

Say: **"Over the past several months with the onset of COVID-19, we have experienced many uncertainties and unknowns and have had to consider the risks associated with what was once everyday life activities. Today, we will take a look at the Israelites' journey out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. This journey was into the unknown and was full of risks. God led the people by working in and through Moses, who moved them out of bondage in Egypt."**



**EXAMINATION**

As a review from the last session’s study, invite a few students to share something they learned.

Say: **“We are about to dive into the Word of God, so it is important that we ask Him to help us focus on Bible study and keep away any distractions.”**

Lead the following prayer: **“God, keep our minds alert, our hearts receptive, and our ears open to You and Your Word. Teach us Your truths that will change our lives forever.”** Invite students to join you by reciting these words from memory.

Share with groups that they will be depicting today’s passage using the following:

**Drawing group:** Storyboard the events of the passage using poster board, markers, and pens.

**Acting group:** Share the events of the passage as a news reporter on a local television news show using any props they choose from the classroom.

**Singing group:** Tell the story of the passage through writing lyrics to the tune of a kid’s song such as “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” a T.V. show theme song, or a hymn. (Note: You will need a song with three verses.)

**Building:** Demonstrate the events of the passage by building something symbolic of the Scripture using items such as clay, straws, poster board, blocks, and markers.

**Exodus 13:17-22**

Lead groups to read aloud this passage and discuss. Then, give them time to depict this passage as assigned. After several minutes, allow each group to share. Make sure each student in each group is contributing to the assignment. Provide an overview of the passage based on today’s commentary.

Use the following for discussion:

- “Who led the Israelites out of Egypt?” (God through Moses)
- “Why did God lead the Israelites on the long way to Canaan?” (God knew the people better than they knew themselves. He knew they would want to change their minds and go back to Egypt if faced with war from the people of the land or the Egyptians.)

Discuss this statement: **“God’s way is always the best, even if it is not the nearest route.”**

Ask:

- **“What was the significance of Moses taking the bones of Joseph with him?”** (God fulfills His promises.)
- **“How does the fact that God fulfills His promises affect the way you live?”**
- **“How did God lead the Israelites?”** (Pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night)
- **“What is the importance of the word ‘never’ in verse 22?”** (Just as God did not leave the Israelites, He will never leave us.)
- **“How does God make Himself known and lead us today?”** (Scripture, prayer, other believers)

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**Exodus 14:10-18**

Lead groups to read aloud this passage and discuss. Then, give them time to continue their assignments according to the interest groups they chose earlier. After several minutes, allow each group to share. Provide an overview of the passage based on the commentary.

Use the following for discussion:

- **“What was the response of the Israelites when they saw the Egyptians coming after them?”** (They were terrified and cried out to God. They told Moses they would have been better staying in Egypt than to die in the wilderness. They were ungrateful and lacking trust.)
- **“Describe a time when seeing the big picture made the events/circumstances make so much more sense.”**
- **“What words of wisdom did Moses impart to the people?”** (They were not to be afraid but rather to stand firm because God was going to fight for them.)
- **“How might taking those words to heart help us today?”**
- **“What plans did God have for the Israelites?”** (They would cross the Red Sea on dry ground.) **“The Egyptians?”** (Their hearts would be hardened so that they would go in after the Israelites. God planned to get the glory.)
- **“Describe a time when God helped you through a seemingly impossible situation.”**

**Exodus 14:21-28**

Lead groups to read aloud this passage and discuss. Then, give them time to continue their assignment according to their interest groups they chose earlier. After several minutes, allow each group to share. Provide an overview of the passage based on today’s commentary.

Use the following for discussion:

- **“How did God provide for the Israelites?”** (He imparted His wonderful favor by parting the waters and allowing the people to cross over. He also caused the Egyptians to drown in the water.)
- **“What favor might God be wanting to do for you? How did God demonstrate His wrath on the Egyptians?”** (He confused them, made their drive difficult, and caused the waters to overcome them.)
- **“How do you think God shows His wrath today?”**
- **“How long did it take for the Israelites to cross over?”** (Overnight)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each group and instruct them to write the five senses listed below. Lead them to use all of today’s Scripture as they put themselves in the place of the Israelites and list possible things they experienced. Examples are provided below. Share at least one from each sense. Discuss as a large group.

**Smell:** sea, dead fish, sweat

**Taste:** salty sea water, sand, fish

**Hear:** wind, water, approaching Egyptians, cries, screams, people walking, waves

**See:** Red Sea, Moses, staff, fellow Israelites, Egyptians, sea creatures

**Feel:** sand, wind, sun

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**APPLICATION**

With any adventure activity, whether it be jumping out of a plane, riding in a hot air balloon, rock climbing, white water rafting, etc, the guide is so important. Ask students to share why. Compare the guide to God and His direction, protection, etc for our lives.

Give each student an index card and pen. Instruct them to respond to the following questions.

- **List ways God has been moving you this week. What may God be calling you to do?**
- **What obstacles are in your way of doing this?**
- **What steps must you take to overcome your fears of this and be willing to move out of your comfort zone?**
- **Note lessons you have learned from the past that you can apply to the future.**

Ask for four volunteers. Give each one of the truth strips with the truths below written on them and invite volunteers to take turns reading aloud their truth.

- We must trust God with the present and future.
- God wants to show Himself to us and do God-sized tasks in our lives.
- When God calls us out of our comfort zones, we must respond by taking action and allowing God to work through us.
- We are to be willing to take risks for God.

**KEY VERSE**

Point to the Key Verse poster you posted on the wall for today, and instruct students to recite the verse together in unison. Repeat this several times, directing different groups to recite it in unison. For example, all guys, all girls, those wearing eyeglasses, those with blond hair, etc. End with something that everyone has in common so all students are reciting it together. Remove the poster before this last time so students are doing this from memory.

**PRAYER**

Instruct students to stand in a circle and keep their eyes open. Lead a prayer asking God to help students be willing to take a risk for Him in their present situation. Then, ask students to turn, face out of the circle and close their eyes. Lead a prayer asking God to help them trust Him for their future and to know how to respond when the unknown and unexpected times of life come up.

**Commentary**

**Led out of Egypt: Exodus 13:17-22**

From Succoth, God did not lead the Israelites by the most direct route to Canaan along the highway that followed the Mediterranean coast. This verse refers to that route as the way of the land of the Philistines. One reason God did not lead the Israelites to Canaan along the coastal highway was that the people might change their minds when they saw war and want to return to Egypt. The reference to war may not necessarily indicate fighting with the Philistines. Egyptian fortifications lay along this route and Egyptian troops defended the highway. If the Israelites had

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approached one of the forts, the Egyptian soldiers occupying it surely would have attacked them. The Israelites greatly feared their Egyptian oppressors.

God's people dreaded war with the Egyptians although they left Egypt "in battle formation" (Ex. 13:18). Whether Egyptians or Philistines, God knew that Israel would encounter warlike enemies along that easier, shorter route that followed the Mediterranean Sea. Either enemy easily might frighten them to the extent that they would return and submit to the Egyptians.

Instead of guiding them along the coastal highway, God led His people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea. This region was largely unpopulated. The Israelites would not encounter the opposition along these caravan routes into the wilderness that they would have encountered had they traveled "along the road to the land of the Philistines" (Ex. 13:17). The Israelites perhaps did not know why God led them the way He did, but they followed obediently. They marched in martial array, or in fighting formation, like an army. They left Egypt equipped for battle. God's people followed faithfully without knowing exactly where they were going.

God almost always leads His people in a similar manner. He generally does not tell them in advance exactly where they are going or what they will do. He simply asks them to follow where He leads. When God calls people to serve Him, He does not immediately provide all the details concerning where they will serve or what they will accomplish. When people respond to God's call, He does not tell them what the end result of their service will be. Each believer must confidently follow God in faith. As long as they follow Him, they will not get lost even if they do not know where they are going.

We learn in Exodus 13:19 that Moses took the bones of Joseph with him. Moses honored the request Joseph made shortly before he died (Gen. 50:24-25). Joseph's body had been embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt (Gen. 50:26). The Israelites took His remains with them when they departed from Egypt. In making his request years earlier, Joseph had demonstrated his faith that God would take care of the Israelites and eventually take them back to their land. Moses' action calls to mind the reality that God fulfills His promises. God who has faithfully fulfilled His promises in the past can be counted on to keep His promises to His people today. He is always the same. (See Heb. 13:8.)

Today we should honor the commitment of pioneers of faith in our land. These seekers of religious freedom sought a place where they could live out their faith in freedom and without fear. God has honored their pioneering faith and given us a land committed to the right of religious liberty. We honor those who led the way when we preserve the freedom they fought for and take advantage of it to worship and serve God faithfully.

From Succoth, God led the Israelites to Etham, where they camped (Ex. 13:20). Etham is described as located on the edge of the wilderness. We do not know the exact location of Etham, which means "fort." At Etham the Israelites stood on the border of the frightful

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wilderness where water was scarce. It was a dangerous place for God to lead them, but He knew that the people would more easily remain faithful if they faced the wilderness rather than the warlike enemies on the coastal route to Canaan.

Exodus 13:21 describes the method God used to lead the Israelites through the wilderness. He accompanied them in a pillar of fire and cloud to lead the way. In the daytime, the column appeared as clouds. At night, it looked like fire. The fire might remind us of God's previous appearance to Moses at the burning bush. These visible elements enabled Israel to travel by day and night whenever God chose to lead them onward.

According to Exodus 13:21, the Lord was going before them in a pillar. The column was a visible sign of God's presence. God Himself was leading Israel on their journeys by making His presence visible in the column of cloud and fire.

God appears as a great, dark mystery when we look at Him with human insight alone. He seems aloof and hidden. He is beyond our understanding; however, when we trust our lives to Him, He reveals Himself to us. He sends a flood of light to fill our lives, not only enabling us to understand something of His nature, but also showing us the way to move forward in His service.

As long as the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness, God never removed from them the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire (Ex. 13:22). These two elements were constant because God was always with His people. He did not desert them or leave them to their own devices. The whole time they journeyed in that inhospitable country, He went with them and ahead of them to show them the way.

We can have assurance that God will lead His people today. He most likely will not reveal Himself to us in a cloud or in fire, but He will reveal His presence to us if we let Him. No matter how dangerous our surroundings, He will lead us through them. We do not need to know what lies ahead. We only need to know that He is leading us, and we can march forward without fear.

**The Egyptian Pursuit: Exodus 14:1-12**

As Pharaoh's expedition approached the Israelite camp, the Israelites were trapped between the army and the sea. Pharaoh revealed his insecurity in calling out these forces against a group of slaves. The details about the size and organization of Pharaoh's army further emphasize not only Israel's plight but also the glory of the victory the Lord would win for His people. Israel was unprepared for war, especially a war with the mighty forces of Egypt.

The Egyptian army came within sight of the Israelite camp (Ex. 14:10). Perhaps they paused to arrange their units for attack, or perhaps Pharaoh wanted to demand that the Israelites surrender before he attacked. When the Israelites saw the great army Pharaoh had assembled, they became dreadfully afraid. They felt paralyzed by fear. Their fear caused them to recognize their helplessness, and they cried out to the Lord for help.

How do you respond to overwhelming situations? Do you collapse in despair? Do you panic? Do you cry out to the Lord for help? God wants us to learn to trust Him confidently and to wait on His timing as we face seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

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The Israelites responded as people are prone to respond when faced with situations that seem hopeless (Ex. 14:11). They began to fix the blame. They complained to Moses that their predicament was his fault. They acted as if they had not cooperated at all with him in the campaign to set them free. They spoke as if Moses had forced them to leave Egypt. They complained as though they had not rejoiced when Pharaoh commanded them to leave his land. They assumed none of the responsibility. They blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt into the wilderness. People in biblical times feared the wilderness due to its beasts of prey, snakes, scorpions, and lack of water. As God’s people journeyed in the wilderness, they forgot the negative aspects of their lives in Egypt and remembered that they had bread and meat to eat there. (See Ex. 16:3.)

Moses’ critics assumed they were going to die. They asked in verse 11, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you took us to die in the wilderness?” These words may be viewed as sarcasm. The Egyptians gave major attention to tombs and funeral practices. They built great pyramids to entomb and enshrine their rulers. By these words the Israelites might have been saying that they would rather have died of old age in Egypt. These words also evidently indicate the Israelites’ despair. They felt they had no hope of defending themselves against the Egyptians.

Complaining and fixing blame are easy actions. Such actions, however, provide no solutions. At some point in our lives, we all face crises where we can see no way out. At such times, blaming someone else is a foolish reaction. Wiser responses are to pray and to work to find an answer. Often when families face difficulties, husbands and wives blame each other. Children blame parents, and sometimes parents blame children. The conflict can become intense enough to break the family apart. Christian families and churches should model the right kind of response in such crises. Family members should draw closer together, forgive one another, wait on the Lord in faith, and share responsibility for finding an answer. If they do, relationships can grow sweeter and stronger.

Moses’ critics continued in Exodus 14:12 with another common response. They said, “Isn’t this what we told you?” They reminded Moses that they had told him in Egypt to leave them alone and let them continue to serve Pharaoh. They declared that they would have been better off if Moses had done so. They said that serving as Pharaoh’s slaves was better than dying in the wilderness. As the Israelites faced a new crisis, they forgot the joy they previously had experienced when God showed His favor toward them by delivering them from Egypt. They went back to their faithless complaining. They acted as though God could not deliver them in the wilderness as He had delivered them from Egypt.

Saying “I told you so” is always a useless exercise. Such a statement arouses resentment and demonstrates a shirking of responsibility. When we are tempted to speak those words, we should bite our tongues and remain silent. We should strive to speak words that heal rather than words that destroy.

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**The Escape Through the Red Sea: Exodus 14:13-28**

Moses did not permit the critics to discourage him. He encouraged the people not to be afraid. He called on them to wait and watch the deliverance God would accomplish for them that day. Moses assured the people the Egyptians would be defeated. He exhorted the people to have faith.

Moses promised the Israelites in Ex. 14:14 that God would fight for them while they kept quiet. The verb translated “keep quiet” basically means “to be silent or speechless.” Keep quiet surely included ceasing to complain and criticize. We should all want to contribute to the solution in a crisis, not add to the problem. Ceasing to be a grumbler or complainer will go a long way toward helping find an answer. Let us pray that God will turn us away from offering criticisms and help us offer solutions. If we cannot offer solutions, we can at least keep quiet.

Keeping quiet also must have included the Israelites ceasing their own efforts to solve the problem and instead turning to God for the answer. Recognizing our own weakness and turning quietly to God in faith and hope is still the surest pathway to deliverance and victory.

The Lord challenged the Israelites to both faith and action (Ex. 14:15-16). He told Moses to tell the Israelites to go forward. Forward meant toward the sea. The action seemed pointless, but God knew what He was doing. God had provided a way of deliverance, but His people had to move forward and claim it. God’s commands sometimes seem purposeless from our perspective, but He always has a purpose and He knows how to turn seemingly hopeless situations into victories.

We never know what way God will choose to deliver us on any given occasion. We need to remain close enough to Him to hear His commands and obey. Deliverance will come as we obey Him.

God gave Israel victory that day by opening the sea so they could walk through it. The cloud that had been leading them moved behind them until it stood between them and the Egyptians. The “Angel of God” also moved from before them and went behind them (Ex. 14:19). Moses stretched out his hand over the water, and “the Lord drove the sea back with a powerful east wind” (Ex. 14:21). A path opened through the sea and the Israelites walked across on dry ground between two walls of water standing up on either side of them (Ex. 14:22).

The Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the sea. The Lord caused the Egyptians to become confused (Ex. 14:24). Their chariots became difficult to control, and fear began to overtake them (Ex. 14:25). The Lord commanded Moses to stretch out his hand toward the sea again. When he did so, the waters returned and drowned the Egyptian army (Ex. 14:26-28).

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# SESSION 3: FAITH TO WAIT

## Overview

- Teaching Aim:** Students will learn how faith sometimes requires waiting. During this time, we are not to complain but depend on God to deliver.
- Study Passage:** Manna and Quail  
Background: Exodus 16:1-36  
Focal: Exodus 16:1-5,13-15,20-26
- Key Verse:** "I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them: At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will eat bread until you are full. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God" (Ex. 16:12).

### Life Questions:

- When have you waited on God?
- What did you do during your wait?
- When has your faith been tested? How did you respond? Was complaining or whining a part of it?
- Do you depend on and trust God to deliver you?

### Scripture Truths:

- God provides and delivers but not always in our time.
- We must depend on God during these times of waiting.
- God often takes opportunities to test our faith.
- We must trust that God knows what's best for us and has a plan and purpose for us.

## TEACHING PLAN

### Gather These Supplies

- Small box
- Index cards
- Pens
- White paper
- Small ball

### Prepare Ahead of Time

- Cover a small box, such as a shoe box, in butcher paper and write the word "complaints" on it.
- On a piece of poster board, write the words, "Please take a card, list any complaints about life, and then drop the card in the box."
- Write each of these truth statements on a separate index card:
  - God provides and delivers but not always in our time.
  - We must depend on God during these times of waiting.
  - God often takes opportunities to test our faith.
  - We must trust that God knows what's best for us and has a plan and purpose for us.

### MOTIVATION

Display the following for students to complete as they enter the classroom: the "complaints" box and poster you created before the session, a stack of index cards, and pens.

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Ask: **"What reason does verse 4 cite for God's stipulation on the food provision?"** (This was to test them to see if they would follow His instruction and obey Him.)

Say: **"God often takes opportunities to test our faith."** Share a time in your life when this was the case. Explain how these past several months of COVID-19 may have been a test of faith for some of us. Allow students to share, if they want.

**Exodus 16:13-15**

Ask a volunteer to read aloud Exodus 16:13-15.

Ask: **"How did God provide for the Israelites?"** (He provided quail and manna to eat.) **"What was manna?"**

Share the following details about manna and any insights from the commentary.

**Manna:** Grain-like substance, considered to be food from heaven, which sustained the Israelites in the wilderness and foreshadowed Christ, the true Bread from heaven.

**Old Testament** (Ex. 16): The small, round grains or flakes, which appeared around the Israelites' camp each morning with the dew, were ground and baked into cakes or boiled. Their name may have come from the question the Israelites asked when they first saw them: "What is it (man hu)?" The Bible emphasizes that God caused manna to appear at the right time and place to meet His people's needs.

**New Testament** (John 6): Jesus assured the Jews that He, and not the wilderness food, was the true Bread from heaven, which conferred eternal life on those who partook of it. (Source: Holman Dictionary online)

Compare plain corn flakes to manna. Instruct students to imagine walking out of their homes every morning to a front lawn covered in flakes similar to corn flakes. Guide them to think about collecting these flakes in baskets in order to have the food they need to eat for the day. Instruct students to share the benefits of having their food rained from heaven. (Not having to go buy groceries, not having to think about what to eat, etc.) Then, lead students to share negatives about this. (No variety, having to do it every day instead of once a week, etc.) Ask: **"If God rained food out of the sky today, what would you want it to be?"**

Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen to each student. Instruct students to fold the paper in half and then to fold it in half again. Lead them to open the sheet of paper and label each of the four sections as: physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational. Guide students to list needs in each category. Allow time for sharing. Ask the rhetorical questions: **"Do you trust God enough to believe He will meet your needs? Is there a difference in basic needs and other needs? If so, what is it? Which will God meet?"**

Say: **"God often uses other people to meet our needs. In turn, we should be eager to meet others' needs."** Ask: **"How has God provided for you and your family these past several months? How can we help meet others' needs? Be specific."**

Exodus 16:20-26

Lead students to turn in their Bibles and read silently Exodus 16:20-26. Refer to the commentary for today to gain insights to share with students.

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Encourage students to give examples of situations where there are consequences for being late to something. (Examples: You get detention when you're late for school. When you're late to the movies, you might have to see a different one than what you came for if they're sold out of tickets.)

Explain that there was a time limit imposed on the Israelites when it came to collecting manna. Ask: **"What happened when the sun grew hot?"** (The manna melted.) **"What happened when they did not make it out to collect the food?"** (It bred worms and smelled.) Compare this to the time factor for accepting Christ—if we postpone the decision, it could be too late.

Ask: **"What instructions were given for the sixth day? Why?"** (They were to gather twice as much food so they could rest on the Sabbath.) Explain that God wanted the Israelites to honor Him by keeping one day a week holy and restful. Back in Moses' day, the people were basically not allowed to do anything on the Sabbath. Ask: **"When is the Sabbath for us? How can we keep it holy? Why is rest so important?"**

Say: **"God did not ignore His people, even though they might have thought that way for a time. He responded by providing for their needs."** Ask these questions for students to think about: **"Have you ever found yourself to be in a place similar to that of the Israelites? Based on this study, in the future when these times come, how will you respond?"**

**APPLICATION**

Ask for four volunteers to stand before the class. Lead each one to pull one of the truth cards you created before the session and speak for one minute about that statement.

- God provides and delivers but not always in our time.
- We must depend on God during these times of waiting.
- God often takes opportunities to test our faith.
- We must trust that God knows what's best for us and has a plan and purpose for us.

Give each student an index card. Share the following steps to active waiting, one at a time, leading students to write them on their card as you share them.

Believe that God hears you.  
Watch and expect God to move but be prepared for the unexpected.  
Trust God and not your own understanding.  
Resist complaining and choose to be patient.  
Wait on God and do not go your own way.

Encourage students to keep this card handy for the next time they find themselves waiting on God.

**KEY VERSE**

Instruct students to stand in a circle. Recite the Key Verse several times as a group. Then, pass a ball to someone in the circle and say the first word of the verse. The person who receives the ball must pass it to another person and say the second word. Continue this until you make your way through all words. Do this several times.

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**PRAYER**

Lead students to find a partner. Instruct them to share prayer requests and pray together. Agree as a group that at a specific time each day, everyone will pray together even though you will not physically be in the same place. Encourage students with watches to set their timers.

**Commentary**

**God Hears the Complaints: Exodus 16:1-12**

The Israelites took about one month’s provisions with them when they left Egypt, which by the fifteenth day of the second month, was all spent. The entire Israelite community grumbled and murmured in discontent, questioning why God had led them to the wilderness to die of hunger. At this point, to the Israelites, their time in Egypt did not seem so bad. They had all the bread they wanted and plenty of meat to eat. They had forgotten about the oppression that took place while in Egypt.

The Lord spoke to Moses and told him what to say to the Israelites. In Exodus 16:12 the Lord instructed Moses to tell the Israelites that He had heard their complaints. The Israelites had grumbled against Moses and Aaron (Ex. 16:2), but God had heard. How often we forget that God is listening when we criticize and complain! If we will remind ourselves that He hears everything we say, we probably will be more careful about what we say.

The Lord answered the people of Israel’s complaints, not by punishing them, but by showing them His power and His willingness to meet their needs. By providing for their needs, He wanted them to learn that they could depend on Him. He would not desert them. He wanted them to trust Him and let Him work in His own way each time they encountered a need. God promised to give them meat at twilight and bread in the morning. He was not going to give them just a little. He was going to fill them with bread.

As the Lord met their physical needs, they would know that He was the Lord their God. The Hebrew word translated “know” refers to far more than mental knowledge. It indicates intimate, personal relationship and experiential knowledge. As the people of Israel experienced God’s provisions in the wilderness, they would know that the Lord is God by firsthand experience. The Hebrew word translated “Lord” is the word Yahweh, the personal name for God whose meaning was revealed more fully to Moses at the burning bush (see Ex. 3:13-15).

**God Provides Food: Exodus 16:13-36**

As God provides for us, let us learn that we can trust God to meet our most desperate needs. When trouble comes again, we should neither fear nor complain. We should wait in confident trust for Him to supply just what we need at just the right time.

God kept His promise to Moses (Ex. 16:13). At evening or “twilight” (Ex. 16:12) quail flew into the camp and fell all around the people in such great numbers that they covered the ground. The Hebrew word translated “quail” is found in the Old Testament only in conjunction with God’s provision of food for His people in the wilderness. (See also Num. 11:31-32; Ps. 105:40.) Large flocks of quail still migrate north during the spring in that part of the world. They possess weak powers of flight. When the exhausted birds stop to rest, they can be caught easily. God directed these quail to fly over the Israelite camp and to fall in exhaustion. The Israelites then could gather them and prepare them for eating.

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In the morning God covered the ground around the camp with a heavy layer of dew. He chose this means to give the Israelites the bread He had promised.

When the dew evaporated, a fine, flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground, remained (Ex. 16:14). The ground appeared covered with frost, but it was not frost. The Israelites never had seen anything like it; they could only ask, "What is it?" (Ex. 16:15). The name given to the bread God provided was manna (Ex. 16:31), a name most likely derived from the question the Israelites asked when they first saw God's provision. Moses simply explained that manna was the bread the Lord had given them to eat (Ex. 16:15). The manna was a special provision God made for the Israelites in the wilderness.

Sometimes God meets our needs by using regular processes of nature as He did with the migration of the quail. The miraculous is still present because God chooses the exact time and place necessary to meet the need. Sometimes He works a wonder that cannot be as easily explained as His work with the manna. In any case we can trust God to keep His promises and to supply all our needs. His timing is perfect. His provision is comprehensive.

God gave stipulations to the food supply. Each person was to gather as much as he or she needed, not to exceed two quarts, each day. They were to live on daily provision. Day-to-day living is often difficult for us. We want to look back to the "good old days" and look forward to a grand thing when we should be living for the present. We are also a people of excess. God was trying to teach the Israelites contentment and satisfaction with sufficiency.

So, how did the Israelites know how much to gather? Some gathered a lot and others a little; however, when the food was measured, the person who gathered a lot had no surplus, and the person who gathered a little had no shortage.

The Israelites gathered the food every morning. When the sun grew hot, it melted like the dew. So, the people had to make sure they were out to collect the food in time or they would be left without any. Just as the Israelites had a time factor with collecting their bread, we also have one in deciding to follow the Bread of life, Jesus. If we wait too long, we may not have another chance.

They were instructed not to leave any gathered from one day over until morning. If they did, it would get maggots and smell. When kept in opposition to a command, the provision stank. When they kept it in obedience to a command, it was sweet like honey and satisfying to the taste.

On the sixth day, the Israelites gathered twice as much food so they would have something to eat on the Sabbath. They were not allowed to work on Sunday and manna did not fall from the sky on that day. They were to collect and prepare their food for the Sabbath on the sixth day. They were to keep the Sabbath a holy day by resting and focusing on God.

Some of the people went out on the seventh day to collect food, but they did not find any there. They did not keep His commands and directions. He reminded them of His provision for the sixth day, and the people rested on the seventh.

The people called the food manna. It was a white, grain-like substance that was shaped into flakes, and it had the sweet taste of honey. Moses had the people preserve two quarts, or an omer, of the manna to show to future generations as a reminder of the provision God had given the Israelites in the wilderness. This was placed in a golden pot with the ark of the covenant.

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The Israelites ate manna for the 40 years they wandered in the desert. This was their food supply until they stepped into Canaan, the promised land.

The Word of God is the manna by which our souls are nourished. This is our support and comfort while we are in the wilderness of this world. Christ in the Word is to be applied to the soul. Each one must gather this for himself. We must by faith live upon Him as the Israelites lived by the provision of manna. In Christ, there is complete sufficiency. Those who refused to eat of the manna died. Those who feed on Christ by faith will never hunger and they will have eternal life.

