

Unit 5 • Session 2  
**Jethro Helped Moses**

**Bible Passage:**  
Exodus 18

**Story Point:** Moses needed help to lead God's people.

**Key Passage:**  
Matthew 22:37-39

**Big Picture Question:**  
What is God like?  
God is holy, good, and loving.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
(10–15 minutes)

**TEACH THE STORY**  
(25–30 minutes)

**APPLY THE STORY**  
(25–30 minutes)

February 3rd

3rd-5th

**Kids Tip:** As kids get older, especially as they enter their preteen years, many begin to wrestle with their identity and wonder where they fit in with others. Socially, this can be a challenging time. This week you have the opportunity to life up the beauty of gospel community—how God designed it for all of us, that we are all welcome and are part because we share the same thing in common: Jesus. Celebrate the gift of community and encourage your kids to take full advantage of it.

## The BIBLE Story

### Jethro Helped Moses

*Exodus 18*

Moses and the Israelites were camping in the wilderness near the mountain of God, the same place where God had spoken to Moses through the burning bush. **Moses' father-in-law, Jethro**, lived nearby in the land of Midian. He **had heard about the Israelites' escape from Egypt. Moses' wife and sons were staying with Jethro, and they all came to the wilderness to see Moses.**

When Jethro was on his way, he sent a message to Moses. "I'm coming to see you," he said, "and your wife and sons are with me."

**Moses hurried out to meet them.** He greeted Jethro and invited him into his tent. **Moses told Jethro about everything God had done for the Israelites**—how God had punished the Egyptians and stopped Pharaoh, and how God provided for His people and protected them. **Jethro praised God for all the good things He had done.**

**The next day, Moses sat down to judge the people. The people stood around all day and waited for Moses to listen to their case.** Jethro asked Moses, "Why are you the only one judging the people? They have to stand around you all day."

Moses said, "The people want answers. Whenever they have a disagreement, I listen to their problems and tell them what God's laws are."

**"This is not good," Jethro said. "This job is too big for one person."**

Then **Jethro gave Moses some advice: "You can be the person who speaks to God for the Israelites. Teach the people God's laws.** Show them how to live. Tell them what God wants them to do. **But choose trustworthy men from all the people to lead smaller groups of people. They can judge the people's less important cases and bring the most important ones to you.** This way, you won't get worn out from doing everything by yourself, and the people will be happy because they don't have to stand around all day to get an answer."

So **Moses took Jethro's advice.** He chose men from all of Israel and made them leaders over the people. They judged the smaller cases and brought the big cases to Moses. **Then Jethro returned to his own land.**

*Christ Connection: Moses needed others to help him lead God's people and teach them God's laws. God does not want believers to follow Jesus alone. He gives us brothers and sisters of faith who can help us love God, obey God, and tell others about Him.*

## **Introduce the Story**

Session Title: Jethro Helped Moses

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### **Welcome time**

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to think of things that are easier to do with other people instead of alone.

#### **Activity page (5 minutes)**

Invite kids to complete "The Best Helpers" on the activity page. Guide kids to draw pictures of people they know who could help them do the tasks listed.

Say • In the Bible story we will hear today, Moses had a big job to do and he needed some helpers. Listen carefully when you hear the Bible story to find out what kind of people were right for the job.

## **Worship**

At 10:35 lead the kids into the sanctuary for worship. You will return to the classroom for teaching before the sermon begins.

### **Transition to teach the story**

## Teach the Story

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## Countdown

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

### Big picture question (1 minute)

Leader • The Bible is awesome because it is the Word of God. Every word in the Bible is true, and the Bible tells us what is true about God. It helps us answer our big picture question, *What is God like?* The answer is, *God is holy, good, and loving.* As you listen to the Bible story today, think about what it teaches us about God and about ourselves.

### Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

Leader • The Old Testament tells us about God and His people, the nation of Israel. God worked out His plan to send His Son, Jesus, into the world through them.

With Moses as their leader, God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and they set out across the wilderness toward the land God promised to give them. They weren't out there long before they started to complain. There wasn't any food to eat or water to drink. In fact, the people wanted to turn around and go back to Egypt! But **God provided for the physical needs of His people.** He sent manna and quail, and He provided water from a rock.

Leading the Israelites was hard work for Moses. As we'll hear in our Bible story today, it wasn't good for Moses to lead alone. Check this out.

### Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Exodus 18. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jethro Helped Moses."

Leader • The Israelites had come a long way from Egypt. They traveled from place to place and camped each night. They faced hunger, thirst, and enemy armies. When the Israelites left Egypt, they numbered about six hundred thousand men, plus women and children. As you can imagine, that many people traveling together sometimes caused conflict. The people had to learn how to live together and work together for their own good.

As their leader, one of Moses' jobs was to judge the people. If there was a disagreement or argument between two people, they came to Moses. He listened to them, and then he decided what they should do. As we saw in our Bible story today, it was a lot of work! People stood in line all day to see Moses, and sometimes there wasn't even time for everyone to talk to him. **Moses needed help to lead God's people.**

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, saw everything Moses was trying to do and said, "What you're doing is not good. You will wear yourself out. You can't do this alone." So Moses took Jethro's advice and chose trustworthy men to take on some of the work. They listened to the smaller problems, and they brought the big problems to Moses.

### Christ connection

Leader • Moses needed others to help him lead God's people and teach them God's laws. God does not want believers to follow Jesus alone. He gives us brothers and sisters of faith who can help us love God, obey God, and tell others about Him. Let's say our big picture question and answer together: *What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.*

**Questions from kids video (3 minutes)**

Show the “Unit 5, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think when we should ask for help. Guide them to discuss whom God might have put in their life to help them in different situations.

**Key passage (5 minutes)**

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Matthew 22:37-39.

Leader • These words are from the New Testament. Does anyone remember who spoke these words? (*Jesus*) Jesus was teaching people about what is most important.

**Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

Leader • Lord God, thank You for Your Word. We see in Exodus 18 how You didn't just deliver Israel from Egypt and leave them alone; You were with them and had a plan for them. You were patient like a loving father is with his children.

God, we confess that we need You. We need one another as we follow You. Thank You for friends, for brothers and sisters in Christ. Give us humility to ask for and accept help. Amen.

**Dismiss to apply the story**

## **The Gospel: God's Plan for Me**

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

## Apply the Story

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### Key passage activity (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster and invite kids to read Matthew 22:37-39 aloud. Then lead them to make up motions for some of the key words in the passage.

Allow kids to suggest motions, or practice the following: cross hands over chest (*love*), point upward (*Lord*), point to chest (*heart*), open arms wide (*soul*), point to head (*mind*), hold up one finger (*greatest*), hold up two fingers (*second*), gesture toward others (*neighbor*), hold two thumbs toward your body (*yourself*).

Say • Jesus said these words to remind the people of two commands from the Old Testament.

Keep working to memorize our key passage. All of the commands God gives in the Bible have to do with loving God or loving others. He wants His people to be like Him. ***What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.***

### Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Exodus 18. Remind kids that the Book of Exodus is the second book of Old Testament Law. Show the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Identify Egypt (H8) and then point out Midian (I10), where Jethro and Moses met. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Exodus 18:17-18.

Say • Moses did not realize it, but Jethro pointed out that **Moses needed help to lead God's people**. By assigning men to help lead God's people and teach them the law, the Israelites' problems were solved more quickly. Moses did not need to wear himself out trying to do everything alone.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why was it good for Moses to get help? *Lead kids to recall that the Israelites numbered more than 600,000. When Moses was the only judge, he worked all day and the people waited a long time to talk to him. When he divided the work, Moses' load was lightened and the people were satisfied.*  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eccl. 4:9.)
2. Why do we sometimes resist getting help from others? *Guide kids to consider how admitting we need help requires a level of humility. We must acknowledge that we are not God and we cannot do everything alone.*  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Gal. 6:2.)
3. What are some ways you can help others? *Invite kids to share needs they could meet. Encourage them to reach out to someone else this week to help "lighten the load."*  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 2:4.)

**Activity choice (10 minutes)**

Option 1: Who's your neighbor?

Write the following questions on a poster board or dry erase board: *Where were you born? Do you have brothers or sisters? Do you have any pets? What is your favorite food? What is one interesting fact about you?*

Give each kid a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Explain that you will give kids time to interview others in the group using the questions you've written on the board. Kids should make notes on things they learn about one another. Give kids enough time to talk to three or four others and then spend time sharing some of what they discovered with the interviews.

Ask kids to think of the people living in their neighborhood. Challenge them to get to know and share the gospel with someone who lives nearby.

Say • The best way we can love our neighbors is to tell them about Jesus.

**Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

What does the story teach me about myself?

Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?

Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for His gracious gift of fellow believers who help us follow Him. Pray kids would humbly acknowledge their weaknesses and live by God's strength.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Exodus 18 Crossword" on the activity page. Kids should use the clues to complete the crossword. Encourage them to look up the Scripture references to check their answers.