

Lesson 10: Moses and the Rock

Objectives: Students will...

- 1) See briefly Numbers 19 – the introduction to the Day of Atonement and the water of purification
- 2) Study Numbers 20 – Moses disobeys God’s commands
- 3) Look at the Edomites and study their history with Israel
- 4) Learn that Miriam and Aaron die before entering the Promised Land

Supplies:

Teacher Materials (provided in classroom)

- Bible(s)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Chart (See Template)
- Stickers for Attendance
- Color Page – one per student who would rather color than do crossword
- Moses Questions and Crossword – one per student

Optional:

- Small Rock
- Piece of Paper
- Pair of Scissors

Water from the Rock God’s Power Demonstration Activity Supplies

- Three rocks – one of each small, medium and large
- Wooden stick – either a real wooden stick like a rod or a popsicle stick for example
- Bag to place rocks in

List of Sins Activity

- Easel, Whiteboard or large piece of paper and a writing
- Visual Aid of Moses Striking the Rock
- Storybook or visuals of this story to show kids (if available)

Snack:

- Pretzel Sticks (to mimic rod or staff) handful for each child
- Napkins for snack one per child
- Juice or water and cup one per child

Lesson:

1) Introduction to Lesson

2-5 minutes

As students enter, welcome them and help find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming. Take attendance (using attendance chart supplied).

Say to students: **Can anyone remember what we studied last week?** We saw that God stood up for Moses and Aaron again and put a stop to the Israelites rebellion by making Aaron’s rod not only bud and blossom but produce almonds!

How many of you have ever played the game Rock, Paper, Scissors? People all over the world play that game. Did you know that there is an international tournament each year and players from all over the world come together to compete in Rock, Paper, Scissors?

As you probably know, each player holds one fist in front of him and hits it with his other fist three times. Then, on the fourth time, the player's top hand forms either a rock, paper, or scissors symbol. (Demonstrate each as you say the words.) This is how you know who wins: a rock smashes scissors, paper covers a rock, and scissors cut paper.

Let's play! You can all play against me and you can keep track of how many times you win. Ready? One, two, three, go. Okay, I made a rock. If you made paper, you win. If you made scissors, I win. If you made a rock, we tied. (Play the Rock, Paper, Scissors for a few minutes.)

The great thing about Rock, Paper, and Scissors is that any one of those can be a winner. I have a real rock, paper, and scissors this morning. If you are going to write a letter, a rock or scissors wouldn't be much help, but a piece of paper would, wouldn't it? Show the piece of paper if you have one. If you wanted to cut a piece of paper, a rock or paper wouldn't help, but a pair of scissors would. Show a pair of scissors if you have a pair. If you were really thirsty and needed a drink of water, a piece of paper or a pair of scissors wouldn't be much help, but a rock might be exactly what you need. Show the rock if you brought one.

What? Some of you are looking at me like you think I'm being silly! Don't you think a rock would help you if you needed a drink of water? Well, in our Bible story today, that is exactly what happened.

If you have your Bibles let's find Numbers and turn there now. Help as needed.

Today we are studying Numbers Chapter 20. We will see that Moses and Aaron disobey God.

2) Numbers 20 – Moses and the Rock

15 minutes

Optional: Storybook or visuals of this story to show kids (if available)

*Use visual aid while reading the event in chapter 20 of Numbers.

Say, we are not going to read Chapter 19, but to quickly summarize it, God gives the Israelites the commands for the Day of Atonement and the water of purification to use during cleansing of people who had become unclean.

Can I get a volunteer to read Numbers 20:1-8? Read Numbers 20:1-8.

Tell the students to listen as you give them some specific instructions for different tasks. Tell them to do the following (list all four slowly, one after the other and see if they can do and remember all four):

- 1) Touch your foot
- 2) Shake hands with the person on your right
- 3) Pat your head three times
- 4) Say, "Jesus loves me,"

Now you try!

For those who did exactly as you said tell them they did well.

Explain that, Even though God gave specific instructions to Moses, Moses did not obey exactly and missed out on an important blessing—something he had been looking forward to his entire life.

Read Numbers 20:7-13

Discussion Questions:

What happened to Miriam? She died and was buried

Who was Miriam again? Moses sister.

When the Israelites became thirsty, to whom did they complain? Moses and Aaron
What did the Lord instruct Moses to do to make water come out of the rock? Speak to the rock
Instead of showing God honor by obeying Him, what did Moses do to the rock? He hit it—twice.
What was Moses' and Aaron's consequence for hitting the rock instead of speaking to it as God had commanded? They would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land.

Read **1 Corinthians 10:1-6** out loud to the class

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ²They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

Read **1 Corinthians 10:11-12**

11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

Ask the class the following questions:

Why did God record the stories of the mistakes of the people in the Old Testament? As an example for us.

What does Paul mean when he says, "If you think you are standing firm be careful?"

Paul is telling us that we are a lot like the Israelites. We often repeat our sins. But God helps us to put away more and more sin. We sin, we do the same sin again and again – so we should not think we are better than anyone else. But, we should come to God more and more and allow Him to work in us, so that with God we can overcome our sins.

Read **Psalm 106:32-33**

By the waters of Meribah they angered the Lord, and trouble came to Moses because of them; 33 for they rebelled against the Spirit of God, and rash words came from Moses' lips.

And **1 Samuel 15:22**

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice."

God gives Moses a very specific set of instructions with a limited number of steps. These were not complicated steps, but Moses did not do what God said to do. Let's examine carefully the specific set of instructions that God gave:

- 1. Take Your Rod.**
- 2. Get Your Brother Aaron.**
- 3. Gather the People before the Rock.**
- 4. Speak to the Rock.**
- 5. Give Everyone a Drink.**

Five little things God told Moses to do. There were five little specific steps of instructions from God. Was this complicated? No! Was this different? Yes!

Moses makes a great start to obeying God, but then goes his own way. Let's examine what Moses did:

1. Moses Took the Rod.
2. Moses Met with His Brother Aaron.
3. Moses and Aaron Gathered the People Together Before the Rock.

We are good so far, but then....

4. Moses Then Said to the People.....

The first 3 steps seem to be perfect matches to the instructions that God gave to Moses. So when did God ever tell Moses to say anything to the people? I know that you have to say something to them to gather them or assemble them before the rock, but when did God tell Moses to speak to the people after they were all gathered together? Did God tell Moses to preach to the congregation? Did God say to tell the congregation anything at all? This represents the beginning of the downfall of Moses. As soon as you start deviating from the plan of God, you begin to miss it and you fall into disobedience and there is the root of the problem. If we continue reading in the next verse we will see what Moses did next:

Num 20:11 - And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts

Did you see what happened next? Let's continue our list of what Moses did and analyze them to see what they say to us. We are now on step 5 of what Moses did. Let's count on our fingers the rest of what Moses did - God gave 5 steps - how many steps did Moses take?

5. Moses Lifted His Hand.
6. Moses Smote the Rock.
7. Moses Smote the Rock Again.
8. Moses Gave Everyone a Drink.

You can see that Moses did eight things to God's 5 step plan of instructions. How many things is that, too many? Of course, that is 3 things too many. God never told Moses to raise his hand. God never told Moses to strike the Rock twice.

Moses and Aaron's failure were two-fold. In scolding the people, they asked if they (Moses and Aaron) had to bring forth water. They did not give God the credit as they should have. Secondly, they did not do what God commanded. Let's remember - we need to follow God - all his steps - no more - no less!

3) Moses Questions / Crossword and/or Color Page

10-20 minutes

*Let students choose either to color the page or do the crossword. Read the crossword aloud as you go so students can follow along. Help them as needed find the right verses. Then as a group go through the questions on the first page. Help them circle the correct answers:



Answers: True False Die Speak Rock
 Struck Hallow/Honor Contended

Crossword Down: Rock Miriam Water Speak Give
 Across: Struck Hallow Contended Die

4) Optional: List of Sins Activity

5 minutes

*Students will see that they are more like Israel than they realize.

Ask the students to: **Think of a sin that you commit most often?** (use a whiteboard/easel or large piece of paper to list some of the common sins). Example might be: disrespecting their parents, getting angry with their siblings, etc.

Ask them to think for a minute and tell you

How many times have you done this sin?

Has anyone else repeated this sin more than a few times?

Who are we most like in the Bible story? We are most like Israel who kept on sinning by not trusting God.

Why did God give Israel water even though they complained and even though their leader, Moses, disobeyed? The answer is grace! God was merciful to give them what they did not deserve. God loved them just as He loves us!

Let's turn to **Psalm 103:10, I will read it aloud.**

He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

So Psalms tells us that God does not treat us as our sins deserve. So even though the Israelites along with us deserve punishment when we sin, God is willing to forgive and help us, if we ask for forgiveness and try not to repeat that sin again! Isn't God wonderful!?

5) Numbers 20 - The Edomites and Aaron

10 minutes

Can I get volunteers to read Numbers 20:14-21? Read Numbers 20:14-21

What did Moses ask the Edomites? If the Israelites could pass through their land.

Did the Edomites agree? No.

Does anyone remember who the Edomites are? Look up the following two verses:

Genesis 25:30 - He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

Genesis 36:9 - This is the account of the family line of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau - Jacob's twin brother and they would not help their relatives pass through!

Now read **Numbers 20:22-29**

What happened to Aaron? He died and afterward his son Eleazer was made High Priest.

6) Optional: Water from the Rock - God's Power Demonstration

2-5 minutes

Pretend that you are getting thirsty, very thirsty. Act this up and look around for a glass of water. When you find none, pretend to come up with an idea. Turn to the bag with the rocks inside and pick out the smallest one. Set it on a table and speak to it and say, "**Water come out of the rock.**" Then stand back and wait. When nothing happens, reason out loud to yourself saying, "**I can't understand, it was supposed to work for Moses. Maybe I need a bigger rock.**"

Take out the medium rock and repeat the exercise; do it one more time with the largest rock.

Then say, "**Oh, I remember now, Moses disobeyed God. He didn't speak to the rock; he struck the rock with a staff.**" Go and retrieve your "staff" and raise it above your head like you are going to smash

the largest rock with all your might. But then stop and reason out loud, **“If I strike the rock I won’t be able to go into the Promised Land. Wait a minute! I don’t need to get into the Promised Land.”**

Then strike the rock (not too hard).

When nothing happens, ask the students:

Why couldn’t I bring water from the rock?

The answer is that it was God and his power who brought forth the water. Neither Moses nor his staff had any power. God told Moses that He was going to do something amazing and bring water from the rock for his people. You, on the other hand, came up with the idea yourself.

We have to remember to do what God says and give glory to Him for all He does for us.

7) Optional – Snack: Pretzel Sticks

Hand out snack to each child along with a glass of water or juice. Explain that: **As we studied today, Moses instead of speaking to the rock, struck it instead with his rod or staff. To help us remember this we will eat pretzel sticks to represent the rod. As we eat the “rods” remember – God wanted Moses to use his mouth (us eating) not the rod (the pretzels).** Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands. Discuss any questions while snacking.

8) Optional – Songs

5 minutes

Have children sing songs with you. An example:

We will Listen and Obey

(to the tune of Old MacDonald had a Farm)

We will Listen and Obey,

Yes Lord, yes we will.

We will Listen and Obey,

Yes Lord, yes we will.

With a Yes Lord here and a Yes Lord there

Here a Yes, There a Yes, Everywhere a Yes! Yes!

We will Listen and Obey,

Yes Lord, yes we will.

9) Close in prayer

*If desired, ask the children if they have any prayer requests and write them down to help you remember. Then ask all children to bow their heads and fold their hands to pray.

Dear God, thank you for the events in the Bible that help us learn how we should be. Thank you for giving us the Old Testament so we can learn from the Israelites and see what You do and do not want us to do. Help us to trust You, obey You and speak only the Words You want us to.

We pray that we will remember to do what is right and to remember to thank you for all the blessings you give us. We ask for forgiveness Father for our sins and we pray that you will help us to forgive those who sin against us. We thank You for Jesus, who came and died for our sins and who teaches us how to live in accordance with Your good will. Help us this week as we go to school and home. Help us to remember to pray and to study Your Word this week. Help us to fill in our prayer journals from last time and to use them to pray for those in need. We pray for the leaders of our church and our country. We pray for those who are sick or traveling that they will return to us soon. Comfort and guide those in need. And it is in Jesus’ name we pray, Amen!