

# Lesson 11: Bronze Serpent and Christ

**Objectives:** Students will...

- 1) Study Numbers 21 – Israelites complain one more time before entering the Promised Land
- 2) See that God punishes sin
- 3) Learn the importance of faith in Christ as it relates to the bronze serpent

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## Supplies:

### Teacher Materials (provided in classroom)

- Bible(s)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Chart (See Template)
- Stickers for Attendance
- Bronze Serpent Activity Sheet – one per student

### Optional:

#### Cross Pin

- Safety pins (small) – 8 for every student
- Small seed beads - making sure opening is large enough to string onto safety pin – 2 various colors enough for each child to have 15-20 of one color and 40-50 of another color (amounts may vary depending on size of safety pin)

#### Believe in Jesus Now Craft

- Watch Template – one per student printed on white cardstock or construction paper
- Glue stick – to share
- Scissors – to share
- Brass fastener or Brad – one per student
  
- Storybook or visuals of this story to show kids (if available)

#### Snack:

- Pretzel Sticks (pole and/or snake) handful for each child
- Napkins for snack one per child
- Juice or water and cup one per child

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## 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?** Moses and Aaron disobeyed God and hit the rock to make water come out, rather than speak to it as God had commanded. Because of that, they were not allowed to enter into the Promised Land. Aaron and Miriam died and the Edomites (descendants of Esau – Jacob’s twin brother) would not let the Israelites enter their land.

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

**Today we are studying Numbers Chapter 21. We will see that God rescues the Israelites after they complain and how it relates to Jesus Christ today.**

## 2) Numbers 21 – The Bronze Serpent and Jesus

15 minutes

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

Say, **Can I get a volunteer to read Numbers 21:1-4?** Read **Numbers 21:1-4.**

**What is happening here in the first 4 verses?** The Israelites fight successfully against their enemies after asking God for help. And God listens!

**The places the Israelites travelled are unknown stations as the names were given by the Israelites as they travelled through and those places do not exist with those same names today.**

**God provides the Israelites what they asked for – what do they do in verse 4?** Become very discouraged!

**Is that strange to get an answer to prayer and then become discouraged?** Yes. **They should have been happy and trusted that if God helped them against their enemies, He would help them as they travelled.**

**Let's read Numbers 21:5-10**

**Who did the Israelites speak against?** God and Moses

**What was their punishment for complaining?** Fiery serpents!

**What did God do to save them after they had repented of their sin?** Told Moses to make a fiery serpent/bronze snake and set it on a pole and when those who were bitten looked at it, they were saved.

**Do fiery serpents on a pole save us from medical issues now?** No!

**What do you think of God helping the Israelites?** Let students answer.

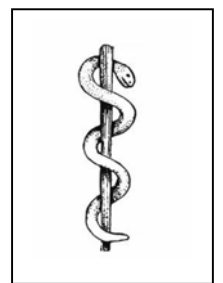
**We are now going to do an activity sheet to help us remember the importance of this event in the Bible and how it relates to Jesus and us today.**

## 3) Bronze Serpent and Jesus

10-20 minutes

Hand out one sheet to each student along with pencils or crayons.

Read each Scripture and then question aloud as you go and do as a class. Allow students who might have trouble writing to discuss the answers rather than write them down. Have them circle the multiple choice as you go through and then discuss answers at the end.



**Answers:**

- 1) How is Jesus like the Bronze Serpent?** Just as the Serpent was lifted up on a pole. Jesus Christ was lifted up on a cross.
- 2) What did the Israelites need to do to be saved?** Look at the bronze snake believing that by doing that, they would be saved.
- 3) What do we need to do to be saved by Jesus?** Look to Him for answers and believe that by doing His will, including obeying His words - He will save us from our sins and give us eternal life.

**When Jesus talks of believing in Him, He doesn't mean without evidence. We don't believe in something without having proof of the facts. Jesus gave us plenty of evidence. Reliable eye witnesses, credible miracles, and accurate fulfillment of prophecies. Jesus did not just claim to be God, He proved it. He fulfilled prophecies precisely and worked miracles supernaturally – including coming back from the dead!**

**How did God give the Israelites plenty of evidence that when they looked to the bronze serpent they would be healed?** He had proven it many times that He was trustworthy by giving them water from the rocks, manna from heaven, safety in travel, and many other miracles along with consistent, loving care for all their needs the entire time they were in the desert wandering.

**Answers to multiple choice:**

- 4) They complained about food
- 5) God and Moses
- 6) They repented
- 7) He prayed for the people
- 8) Bronze/Brass
- 9) Faith by looking at the serpent on the pole
- 10) Christ
- 11) Son of Man

**God was teaching the people something about faith. It is totally illogical to think that looking at an image of a snake could heal anyone from a snakebite, but that is exactly what God told them to do. It took an act of faith by the Israelites to be healed. It wasn't the looking that saved them, it was the belief and faith based on the fact that God had always kept His promises in the past and would do so again now for them!**

**“Tempt/test” when used with reference to God, means to try His patience, to provoke His anger, or to act in such a way as to see how much He will bear, and how long He will endure the wickedness and perverseness of people.**

**The Israelites had, by their longing after the things left behind in Egypt, tested and tried God so that God rightly punished them. Today, Christians must be on their guard not to tempt the Lord by chasing after those worldly and physical pleasures from which He by His death has saved us.**

**4) Optional: Cross Pin Craft**

**15 minutes**

Tell the students that; **to remind us to look to Christ to be saved as the Israelites were saved by having faith and looking at the bronze serpent, we are going to make a cross pin.**

1) Hand out a safety pin to each child. Place two containers of beads in the middle of their table. Two different colors of beads are needed. Show them how to open one end of the pin carefully and put on small beads of one color, then close the safety pin to hold them in place. It will take about 8 beads. Because pins can vary, so will the number of beads needed to fill the pin.

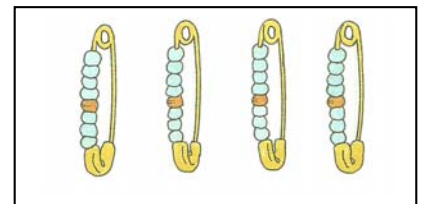
2) Hand out another pin and do the same thing with the second pin.

3) Hand out remaining pins. On the next four safety pins – put on four beads of the same color as the first two safety pins, then one bead of the second color. Then, three more beads of the first color. Close each pin to hold beads in place. (See picture.)

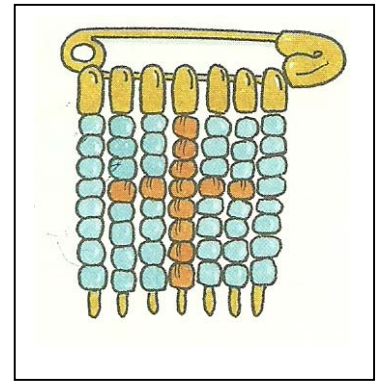
4) On the next safety pin put all beads of the **second** color, then close the safety pin.

5) Now open the last safety pin. You are now going to thread each safety pin onto the open part of the pin under the head of each closed pin (see picture below). Then slide them around to the back bar of the pin.

You need to end up with the beads facing outward when handing down from the back bar of the main holder safety pin. The beaded pins must be put on in the following order:



- 1 – Safety pin with all first colored beads
- 2 – Safety pins with seven first color and one second color beads
- 3 - Safety pins with seven first color and one second color beads
- 4 – Pin with all second colored beads
- 5 – Pin with seven first color and one second color beads
- 6 – Pin with seven first color and one second color beads
- 7 – Pin with all first colored beads.



When all the beaded safety pins hang down together, they should form a cross!

While students are finishing up ask them why we made this cross pin today? What is it to remind us of?

### 5) Numbers 21 – Sihon and Og

10 minutes

Can I get a volunteer to read Numbers 21:21-24? Read Numbers 21:21-24

What did the Israelites ask King Sihon?

What was his response?

Who won the battle?

Can I get a volunteer to read Numbers 21:31-35? Read Numbers 21:31-35

What king wanted to fight Israel now?

What did God say?

What was the result?

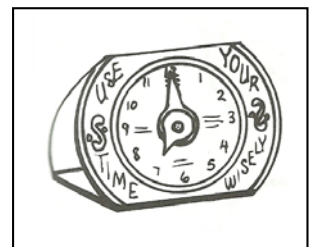
**Notice when the people obey God and do what He desires – they have success! Even when people are against them. But when the people disobey God and complain and test Him as they did about the complaining of food – they fail! They face punishment and need to ask God to forgive them of their sins. Don't you think we too would be better off if we were more thankful and grateful and stopped complaining?**

If time, discuss ways that you and the students can show gratitude for things that people give you (food our moms cooking, clothes our parents buy, birthday gifts, etc.) Role-play opening gifts at a birthday party and talk about how to show thanks for the thoughtfulness and not complain if we get something we don't want.

### 6) Optional: Believe in Jesus Now Watch Craft

10-15 minutes

Say, **the Israelites had very little time after they disobeyed to look at the bronze serpent to be saved. We are going to do a craft to remind us that we too don't have much time – we need to believe and follow Jesus now! By doing so we will have a blessed life serving God and Jesus!**



Hand out one template sheet to each student along with scissors and have them cut out the watch and the two hands at the bottom. Then have them color the watch and then glue the tab and place it on the other spot marked with a \* to form a stand. Finally, have the students insert a brass fastener in the hands and then in the center dot in the clock. Read the words on the clock aloud for all students and discuss how each point is important in having belief and faith in Christ.

## 7) Optional – Snack: Pretzel Sticks

Hand out snack to each child along with a glass of water. Explain that: **As we studied today, Moses had to erect a bronze serpent for the people of Israel to look at in order to be saved from the fiery snakes. Jesus tells us "that the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." Just as the bronze serpent was lifted up and those who looked at it in faith were saved – so are we when we look to Jesus in faith and obey Him through baptism. To remind us, we are going to eat pretzel sticks to remind us not only of the snakes but the pole the serpent was to be placed on.** 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:

### My God is So Big

My God is so big! So strong and so mighty.  
There's nothing my God cannot do.

My God is so big! So strong and so mighty.  
There's nothing my God cannot do.

The mountains are his and the valleys are his  
and the trees are his handiwork too.

My God is so big! So strong and so mighty.  
There's nothing my God cannot do for you.

### Read Your Bible and Pray Everyday

(Sung to tune: Love is something if you give it away)

Read your Bible.

Pray every day (repeat 3 times).

Read your Bible.

Pray every day.

And you'll grow, grow, grow (repeat 3 times).

Read your Bible.

Pray every day.

And you'll grow, grow, grow.

Don't read your Bible.

Forget to pray (repeat 3 times).

Don't read your Bible.

Forget to pray.

And you'll shrink, shrink, shrink (repeat 3 times).

Don't read your Bible.

Forget to pray.

And you'll shrink, shrink, shrink.

Repeat 1st verse.

## 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, help us to trust You, obey You and speak only the Words You want us to. Help us to believe in Jesus Christ, knowing it is through Him that we can be saved through baptism.

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 remember 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!