

These types of phrases are called complaining. Complaining is when you let others know that you are not happy or satisfied with what you have. Some of us are quick to complain; especially when things don't go the way we want them to. The people of Israel had just seen God do many miracles including rescuing them from the Egyptians by parting the sea! Surely, they could follow God without complaining, knowing He was already taking such good care of them and had saved them? Let's see how they treated God for all that He had just done for them.

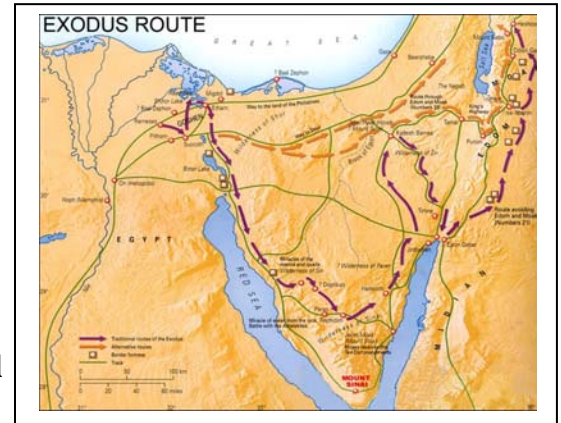
2) The Exodus

5-10 minutes

Optional: if you have a storybook or visuals of this story to show kids (if available)

Ask children to get their Bibles and turn to Exodus 15:22-27. Ask for a volunteer to read from Exodus 15:22-27 or read yourself. Say:

God has provided everything you need in life; maybe not everything you want, but everything you need. Complaining is sin. It is like saying to God, "What You have given me isn't good enough!" When you complain, you are saying that He does not know how to care for you or meet your needs. But, you please God when you show contentment in your life. His word says in the New Testament that we are to "do all things without complaining" (Philippians 2:14). God wants you to be satisfied with His care for you.



From their complaining it was clear that the Israelites were not content with how God was taking care of them. So, Moses cried out to the Lord. Moses was right, instead of complaining he went and talked to God and asked for help instead.

What happened after Moses prayed to God? God showed him a tree to throw in the water.
What happened when Moses obeyed God? The water turned sweet and became drinkable.
Why didn't God just fix the water in the first place so the Israelites had good water right from the beginning? He was maybe teaching them to trust in Him and ask Him for help. He knows our hearts and He knew their hearts. He knew they were going to complain because they had already complained when they came out of Egypt and were afraid when they learned Pharaoh was coming after them. He was willing to keep showing them His power and might that He could provide.

**The water at the beginning was just like the people's hearts – BITTER!
But with God's help, He can make our hearts and lives sweet, just like the water!**

What does the New Testament say about complaining? Let's turn to:
Hebrews 13:5 and see what God thinks of complaining. Read the verse

What does it say we should do? Be content or pleased with what we have!
What if you want more? Ask God if it is needed and be content while you wait. If you need it you will get it when God knows the time is right, if you don't need it, be content and do not worry that you didn't get it.

Have students turn to Exodus Chapter 16 and take turns reading the entire Chapter.

Questions:

First they complained about the water, what did they complain about next? Not having food to eat.

Did God provide? Yes, He provided bread or manna from heaven every day in the morning for them and gave them quail to eat as meat at night.

Did they need to complain and make God upset or could they have just prayed to God? Prayed
When they complained to Moses and Aaron – who did Moses say they were really complaining to in verse 8? God!

Moses told the Israelites not to keep any of the bread till morning, but some disobeyed. What happened to their bread in the morning? It was full of maggots (worms) and it began to smell!
They should have listened to Moses.

God told them that the seventh day - Saturday's were to be a day of rest for them, He called it the Sabbath. Did they all rest, or did some disobey? Some disobeyed and went looking for manna.

Was God happy with them? No, He asked Moses in verse 28 – How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions?

Will God provide for us? Yes – if we obey Him, He will take care of us! But, we need to do what He says, and He will never make us do something bad – always good. So it is easy to obey Him because what He asks us to do makes us feel happy, content and gives us a great relationship with God and Jesus His Son!

Show children the map of where the Israelites travelled. Ask the students if they have any questions before moving onto the next activity.

3) Thankful Quail Craft

10 minutes

So to make sure we remember to be thankful and not complainers. Let's do a craft that helps us remember all the good things that are going on in our lives, thanks to God!

Hand out one sheet of quails to each child and let them think of all the ways and things they are thankful to God for. Ideas include: health, family, pets, good marks in school, friends, toys, food, home, etc.

Have them write or draw what they are thankful for on each quail and then have them cut out the quails. Hand out one lunch bag to each child and fold it over on each side as shown on the page of the quails until it is sitting like a nest. Place the quails in the nest to help them remember that they should be thankful not ungrateful.



While students work, ask them:

What they liked most about today's Bible account?

What did they learn today?

How can they apply what they learned from the Israelites in their own lives today?

4) Learn What God Says About Complaining Activity Sheet

10 minutes

Hand out one sheet to each child with pencils. Read the directions aloud, remembering that the two words they are looking for each go DOWN the page not across.

When they finish the verse read **Philippians 2:14** – Do everything without complaining or arguing.

ANSWER: without complaining

What does it mean to do EVERYTHING without – is there anything you can complain about according to this verse? No!

What are some things you do in your life everyday? Go to school, sleep, read, eat, play, hang out with friends, spend time with family, go shopping, pray, go to church, or study

Should you complain while doing any of these things? No!

What is the difference between complaining and explaining a problem? Complaining means saying you don't want to do something or be like something. Explaining a problem means you have a real problem and you need help from someone and God to get you through it.

Example: Someone is bullying you – it is not complaining to go get help including pray to God and asking people for help, there is a big difference. So it is ok and important to ask for help – just like Moses did when he went to God, it is not ok to complain about things you don't have. Are we clear?

What are some things we argue about with our siblings or parents? Sharing toys, staying up later, going to church, wanting something we have been told we can't have.

Should we argue? No!

If your parents want you to do something and it would make God happy then you need to do it! You shouldn't argue about it or argue with friends, if by doing that thing God would be happy then you should do it without arguing – even doing the dishes!

Have everyone turn to Philippians 2:14 and read it aloud. Ask the kids to think about and try to memorize this verse this week.

5) Optional – Learn the Verse Hot Potato Game

5-10 minutes

Have the students stand in a circle and pass a beanbag from person to person while you sing a song – example choose one from the songs in your binder. When you stop the song, the child holding the bag must say the Bible verse we just looked at “Do everything without complaining or arguing, Philippians 2:14” You can keep playing this way until most of the children have had a turn and can say the verse.

6) Optional – Snack: Cornflakes or Bread without yeast

5 minutes

Hand out snack to each child along with a glass of water or juice to each child. Explain that, **“Today we continued to learn that God provided for the Israelites. We learned that He gave them sweet water, shade, protection, quail, and manna (which was a special type of bread right from heaven). To help us remember we are going to eat corn flakes or flat bread that sort of represents what the manna might have been like.** Hand out a few pieces for each child. Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands. Discuss any questions while snacking. *For bread without yeast – ask the person who prepares the communion to share some of the bread or ask for the recipe to make your own for the students.

7) Optional – Songs

5 minutes

Have children sing songs with you. Choose from the songs from the front of your binder.

8) 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.

Remember to also ask God for help in studying the Old Testament and to realize that complaining doesn't work and in fact displeases God and those around us. Thank God that He took care of the Israelites and thank God that He will take care of us too, in His perfect love!

Thank you for serving Christ in this way!