

SESSION 1: Jesus will never leave us



Camp Warden

1. INTRO

Camp Warden:

Once upon a time, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. And God sent Moses to deliver them. Pharoah didn't want the slaves to leave, but God sent 10 plagues on the Egyptians until he relented. But as the Israelites were leaving Egypt, Pharoah suddenly had a change of heart and sent his armies after them. The Israelites were trapped, with the armies on one side and the Red Sea on the other.

Who knows what happened next?

God parted the Red Sea so the Israelites could cross over!

That's right. I just happened to know a song about that!

SONG: How did Moses cross the Red Sea (with actions)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7ezrtU2MU>

Camp Warden: God did many miracles for the Israelites. And He had prepared a Promised Land for them. So He asked Moses to send 12 men, one from each tribe, to scout out the land of Canaan so they could see what it was like for themselves.

The 12 spies searched the land and returned after 40 days. And they said that the land was GOOD. They told the people that the land flowed with 'milk & honey', and they showed the people the huge grapes they had brought from the Valley of Eshcol. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs.

Doesn't that sound like an amazing place to go to? Wouldn't you like to go there?

Camp Warden is interrupted by an old man with a big beard and rod (Moses) stomping in with a fast-paced, animated rant.

2. SKIT

(Ref: Numbers 13-14)

- Moses:* Yes, of course I would have loved to go there!
- I went back to Egypt for that reason ... to bring God's people into the Promised Land. But nuh uh ... nooo ... those chickens were too afraid!
- You would have thought that after seeing how God opened up the Red Sea and all, the Israelites would have trusted Him, but no!
- They said the walls were very big, the people were very tall. Like giants, they say! [in a whiny voice] "They are stronger. We're like grasshoppers. They will eat us up!"
- And the complaining ... oh my days. "If only we had died in Egypt! Let's go back to Egypt!"
- Only two men, Joshua and Caleb, believed that God will bring us into that land safely because He was with us. But the people didn't listen to them.
- Worse still, they wanted to stone us! Ungrateful ingrates.
- Camp Warden:* Oh, hello ... I'm guessing you must be Moses.
- Moses:* Isn't it obvious?
- Camp Warden:* Well it's a pleasure to meet you. These are my young friends from tNCC. We're starting off on an adventure with Jesus. And I was going to tell them about the adventures you had with the people of Israel on the way to the Promised Land.
- Moses:* Oh yes, we had quite an adventure. Because those good-for-nothing Israelites didn't trust God and believe His word, we ALL had to spend 40 years walking about in the desert. I mean, I could be popping grapes under the palm trees instead. But no, we walked and we walked and we walked.
- But do you know something ... even though the Israelites were an ungrateful, forgetful and stubborn lot, God was always with us. We messed up over and over again. I can't tell you how many "We should go back to Egypt!" I've heard. I would have ditched them all if I could. But God never left us. And He was with us every step of the way, every day of those long 40 years, until we entered the Promised Land.
- Camp Warden:* Yes, that's right, children. That's how good our Lord is! Even though we mess up big time, He is always with us, helping and protecting us. He never leaves us. Amen!

2. LESSON

Like the people of Israel, we too mess up from time to time. Sometimes we fight with our brothers/sisters, or are rude, or break mummy's vase, or not pay attention in class and disturb our friends when the teacher is teaching, or spend so much time playing online games ...

But just as God never left the people of Israel even when they didn't listen to Him, Jesus never leaves us. In **Hebrews 13:5**, He promised *"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

God is not like any other person — people will let you down. Even your parents can't be with you all the time — they have to go to work or you have to go to school. There is only one person who can be with you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, when you sleep, when you get up, when you go to toilet, wherever you go — that is Jesus.

We have to remember this. So that when we face big walls or tall giants in life, we can fix our eyes on Jesus ... we can trust Him, we can remember all He has done for us, and we do not have to be afraid ... we can be bold and courageous.

3. MEMORY VERSE

Psalms 118:6-7

"The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid ...

The Lord is with me; He is my helper."

4 groups to memorise a phrase each. To recite it when pointed at.

4. CLOSING

Camp Warden: Oh wow. What an exciting night we've had so far. All the talk about grapes have made me hungry. I'm ready for supper. But I think we need to thank Jesus for always being with us and being sooo good to us. Let's pray.



SESSION 2: Jesus is our provider

1. STORY

Because the people of Israel did not trust God to bring them into the Promise Land, they had to wander in the desert for 40 years! (1 year for each day the spies were in the Promised Land)

The people of Israel were camping in the middle of the desert for 40 years. There were about 2 million of them. What are some of the biggest challenges do you think they had to face?

What would they eat? Where would they get water? Can you imagine trying to feed 2 million people (and animals) in the middle of a desert?

Well ... God delivered the Israelites from slavery. He brought them through the Red Sea and destroyed Pharaoh's armies. And despite all the Israelites' whining and complaining, their stubbornness and lack of faith, He did not bring them all the way out to die. Every step of the way, every day of those 40 years (about 14,610 days!), He provided for them!

Water (Exodus 15, 17)

[Act it out: hide a hose among some "rocks", and spray the hose when Moses hits the "rock" with a staff]

What's the 1 thing you cannot live without for long? *Water*

Well, where were the Israelites? *Desert.*

Is there a lot of water there? *No.*

After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they went into the Desert of Shur. For 3 days, they couldn't find any water to drink! When they came to a place called Marah, they found some water. They were so happy ... but when they took some water, they discovered that it was very bitter! (That's why they place was called Marah, which means bitter).

So the people grumbled, "What are we to drink?"

Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink! Isn't that amazing?

Then the people went to Elim and camped there. There were 12 springs and 70 palm trees, so they had plenty of water.

But eventually the Israelites moved on, traveling from place to place, as God led them.

They camped at Rephidim, but once again, there was no water to drink. They got angry again and almost stoned Moses.

Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord answered him,

“Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” (Exodus 17:5-6)

And that was what happened. Moses struck the rock, and water came out of it for the whole camp to drink!

Food (Exodus 16, Numbers 11)

How many of you eat bread everyday? How about rice? What food do you think the Israelites ate? That’s right. They ate manna.

What is manna? Well that’s the thing ... nobody really knew what it was. It was like nothing they have eaten before. The word “manna” literally means *“What is it?”*

It was a special substance that God rained down from heaven with the dew every day (except on the Sabbath). All we are told is that *“it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey”* (Exodus 16:31) and it looked like a kind of resin (Numbers 11:7). The psalmist refers to manna as “grain from heaven” and “bread of angels” (Psalm 78:24-25)

God gave specific instruction to the Israelites on what they could/could not do with the manna. Every day, except on the Sabbath day, the people could pick the manna and eat it. They had to collect it before it melted in the sun. They could grind it and pound it into cakes and bake it. But they could not store the manna overnight — stored manna would breed worms and have a bad smell. However, on Friday, God allowed them to store the manna overnight as the next day was the Sabbath (rest day); the manna stored for the Sabbath did not stink or have worms!

So every day in the desert, the Israelites ate this special manna that God provided. The manna only stopped appearing after the Israelites entered the Promised Land! (Joshua 5:12) Isn’t that amazing? God showed the Israelites that He was always with them.

But the people were still not satisfied. They were like ungrateful little kids. They started wailing, *“If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost — also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!”*

Got manna to eat ... not enough. They forgot all the hardships they endured as slaves in Egypt, but only think about the food there. They forget the times they were starved and beaten and cried out to God to save them.

To show them that He was always with them, God sent a wind in the evening, which carried quail in from the sea. There was quail everywhere, as far as the eye could see. The Israelites had Kentucky Fried Quail!

2. ACTIVITIES

- **Manna challenge:** Scatter small bits of white cotton balls representing manna. Children split in teams to pick up manna. The team with the most wins. To make it more challenging, can get kids to scoop the manna using a fly swatter or spatula, or chopsticks, or do it hungry hippo style (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38dUI-iuzeU>).

3. LESSON

PICTURES OF JESUS IN THE DESERT

God told Moses to go to the rock and strike it, and when he did, water came flowing out. In the same way, when Jesus, our spiritual rock came, He was struck and nailed to a cross; as a result, we can now have another kind of water — **living water**.

Jesus talked about that when chatting with a woman in John 4. He said, *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water ... Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* (John 4:10,13-14).

Later, Jesus was in Jerusalem, and He cried out to the people, *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. **Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.**"* (John 7:37-38)

John then explains what Jesus meant. This living water is God's Spirit coming to live inside of us. Without God's Spirit inside of us, we'll always feel an emptiness inside. And we'll always be seeking desperately to fill it with something. Some try to fill it with money, things, success, power, sex, or whatever. The "water" of this world will fill us for a while, but it will never really satisfy. It will always leave us thirsty again. There's a part of us that only God can fill, and when we come to Jesus and put our faith in him, only then will that emptiness be filled.

The manna that God provided the Israelites in the desert was a picture of **Jesus — the Bread of Life**.

After Jesus miraculously fed the 5,000, the people wanted Him to *“give us this bread always”* (John 6:34). Jesus told them: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world ... **I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**”* (John 6:32-35). Sadly, the people then were more concerned about their stomachs that they could not understand what Jesus was telling them.

Just as God provided manna to the Israelites to save them from starvation, He provided Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls. The manna temporarily saved the Israelites from physical death, but the spiritual manna saves us from eternal death. *“Your fathers ate the manna in **the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die**”* (John 6:49-50).

JESUS PROVIDES

So we’ve seen how God used a log to turn bitter water into sweet. We’ve seen God rain down bread, manna, from Heaven. We just learned about God giving the Israelites water from a rock. All 3 of these things aren’t ‘normal’.

We don’t usually get water from a rock; we get it from rivers, and lakes, and from rain. We don’t usually get our bread from the sky; we get bread from wheat that grows out of the ground.

So why did God pick these crazy ways to give water and bread to the children of Israel? Why didn’t God just let some wheat grow up from the ground? Why didn’t God just let rain come out of the sky and let the people get water that way?

For one reason... Because over and over again God wanted to prove to the children of Israel that it was HIM that was providing for them. God wanted to leave no doubt that the manna and the water were coming from the all-mighty all-powerful God. God wanted us to know, without a doubt, that He was taking care of His people. God wanted Israel to know it was Him and to trust Him. God wanted Israel’s trust. And he wants yours.

Just like the children of Israel needed to rely on God for food and water, God wants us to trust Him, completely. Whether it’s for food and water, or for something far less important, God wants us to put all our trust in Him.

What do you need help with today? Jesus is able and willing to provide everything you need. He provides for you food, clothes and shelter through your parents and provides jobs for your parents to earn money to afford these things.

Maybe your problem is not food and water. Maybe you have problems with your school work, or dealing with your friends, or fierce teachers, or mean classmates. Ask Jesus to help you — He will provide you with the wisdom to deal with all these problems. There is nothing too difficult for him. He can change people's minds and give you favour with people. Even if you think there is no way out of your problem, He can open a way for you. He opened the Red Sea for the people of Israel to cross over when they were stuck and there was no way for them to escape from the Egyptians. He is still the same powerful God today.

4. MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

Psalm 118:6-7 *"The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid ... The Lord is with me; He is my helper."*

5. TEAM ACTIVITY

Rock Art

Prepare bright coloured markers and smooth garden stones. Kids to gather in teams and decorate the stones with the words from the memory verse. E.g. "Jesus is with me", "Jesus provides", "Jesus is my helper".

A taste of "manna"

Prepare some popcorn, representing manna, to remind the kids of what the people of Israel ate. Or roti canai (unleavened bread).

Sharing & Prayer

Get kids to share ways that God has provided for them or what they need Him to provide. Pray together.

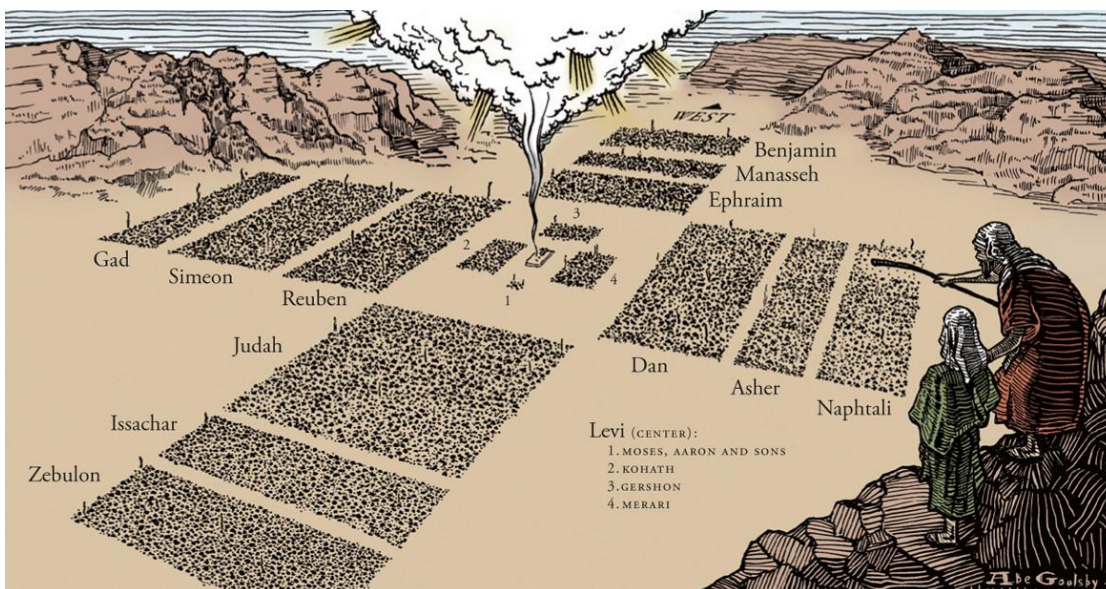


6. CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, I thank You that You are the Bread from heaven that gives me eternal life. I thank You that You are the rock that provides living water in my life. I pray that everyday, You would fill me with your Spirit. Fill me up with more of you. And let Your water flow from me and touch the people around me that they may know your living water too. In Jesus' name, amen.

SESSION 3: Jesus is our protector

Wilderness Camp of the Israelites



1. GAME: 12 TRIBES FLAG GAME

2. STORY

Show some pix of what the Israelites's campsite in the desert might have been like.

For 40 years, the Israelites, numbering about 2 million people, would live in tents in the desert. They would stay in one spot according to God's arrangement and move around when God asked them to.

How do you think they knew where to go? The desert was unfamiliar territory, and there were no landmarks or big buildings for them to look out for.

The wilderness is a tough and dangerous place. Can you imagine how it is like for the people of Israel in the very hot desert, with no air-con or electric fan? Am sure the desert is very much hotter than Malaysia. But do you know that at night, the desert can get very, very cold (can be below 0 degrees Celsius) and dark. There were also dangerous animals/bugs in the desert, e.g. rattlesnakes, poisonous spiders, mountain lions etc.

But God thought of everything. He was always with them. He guided and protected them.

Exodus 13:21 says *"By day the LORD went ahead of them in **a pillar of cloud** to guide them on their way and by night in **a pillar of fire** to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night"*.

Pillar of Cloud

God protected Israelites by the pillar of cloud so that they could survive in the scorching desert heat. When God's cloud stopped above the tent, Israelites also stopped and pitched a tent. When the cloud moved again, they also moved following the cloud. Because the pillar of cloud was together with the Israelites, they did not get lost. That cloud was their GPS in the desert.

The pillar of cloud also provided a shade for them to stay cool.

Pillar of Fire

At night time, it was dark. The Israelites didn't need a cloud. They needed light and warmth. And that was when the huge cloud became a pillar of fire. The fire gave them light at night. It helped to keep them warm in the cold desert. And it probably scared away any wild animals.

Day or night, the Israelites could always see that God was leading them and keeping them safe. They knew He was protecting them, and they praised Him for His care.

During the night, they saw the pillar of fire and it kept them safe and warm even in the cold. Just like this, God loved his people and protected them with a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night.

Despite all their stubbornness and whininess, God took such good care of the Israelites out there in the desert. *"Indeed, forty years You provided for them in the wilderness and they were not in want; Their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell."* (Nehemiah 9:21)

3. LESSON

The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire are physical representations of God's presence to the people of Israel. When they saw the pillars of cloud and fire, they knew that God was with them. Today, we may not see pillars of cloud and fire, but we know that Jesus is with us — His Holy Spirit lives in us.

JESUS GUIDES US

Just as God guided the Israelites with the pillar of cloud, Jesus guides us every day. We can all have our internal GPS in Jesus.

Jesus calls Himself **the Good Shepherd**. And we are His sheep (John 10:11). As a good shepherd knows his sheep, Jesus knows us and how to guide us where we are. Therefore, we need to follow the guidance of our Good Shepherd Jesus, listen to His voice and follow His Word. He will lead you, like he led the people of Israel.

When we face challenges or don't know what to do, remember that Jesus is the **Light of the World**. He shines His light into the darkness and leads us to the right path.

JESUS PROTECTS US

Just as God protected the Israelites in the dark, giving them warmth and security, today, we have Jesus with us. He protects us from harm. We may not be in the desert but there are other dangers (e.g. careless drivers or motorcycle riders, trees falling, sickness and diseases etc). The devil also tries to attack us in other ways (e.g. by tricking us to pick up bad habits from TV or movies that are not good for us, using #@% words, playing too much video games, looking at pictures of people with no clothes, smoking etc).

But Jesus has defeated the devil, and He has given us the power to say no to those things. Although your friends think those things are cool or fun, but inside of you, you know you should not do it and it's bad for you — that's Jesus telling you to say no. Follow Jesus. He loves you and wants the best for you and to protect you from all harm and dangers.

4. MEMORY VERSE

Let's revise Psalm 118:6-7 again.

"The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid ... The Lord is with me; He is my helper."

5. ALTAR CALL & MINISTRY TIME

Jesus wants to be with you, to provide for you, to guide you and protect you. Do you want to allow Him to do all that?

Invite kids to accept Jesus. Pray for them.

6. CRAFT & SNACK IDEAS



SESSION 4: Jesus gives us so much more

1. REVIEW

Wow kids, we've been on quite an adventure so far these two days, following the Israelites through the desert. What are some of the things we've learnt so far?

- Although the Israelites disobeyed God and did not want to trust Him to bring them into the Promised Land, **God was still always with them** all the way.
- Even in the middle of the desert, and with 2 million hungry mouths to feed, **God always provided for them** (with manna, quails, water from rock etc)
- And at a time with no GPS or Waze, **God always protected and guided them** (with pillar of fire and cloud)

2. LESSON

God did all these for the people of Israel. Wouldn't it be great if we could see all these miracles and amazing works today too?

But I have great news for you today, children.

During the time of the Israelites, God only met with Moses and spoke through Moses. There was always a gap between God and the people. This is because sin was separating the people from God. But God did not want to be far away from His people. So that's why He sent Jesus to take all our sins and the punishment of our sins.

And because Jesus came to die for us on the Cross, we can now have a close and direct relationship with God. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, He gives us His Holy Spirit, who lives in our hearts forever. *"He lives with you and will be in you."* (John 14:17)

Today, we may not have a pillar of cloud or fire to guide us, but we have the Holy Spirit living in us, protecting us, guiding us ... and so much more! We can talk to Him anytime, anywhere, about anything.

So whatever desert we may be walking in today, whatever challenges or problems we may face, know that Jesus is with us, His Holy Spirit is in us. Remember our memory verse? *"The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid ... The Lord is with me; He is my helper."* (Psalm 118:6-7)

GOD'S SPECIAL GIFT

Today, I also want to tell you about a special present we have as God's children. It is called the gift of tongues. This is a gift that is given to us as God's children. And anyone who wants it can ask for it and receive it.

After Jesus died on the Cross and rose again, He went back to heaven. But He did not leave us alone. Soon after, He sent His Holy Spirit to His disciples. On that day called Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came like a mighty wind and landed on the disciples like little flames of fire above their heads. [can demonstrate using a battery candle]

The disciples also receive the gift of tongues and started speaking in a special language, a language that humans may not understand. But God understands. This special language is a language we can use when we talk to God, especially when we do not know what to say or what to pray for. When we pray in tongues, it is the Holy Spirit helping us pray the perfect prayer because we don't use our human thinking to pray.

So whether we are facing giants, or walking in the desert, or entering the Promised Land, we do not have to be afraid because we have the Holy Spirit in us, and we can speak directly to God with His special language.

Would you like to have this special language? The gift of tongues? If you do, please stand up and one of the teachers or uncles and aunties here will come and pray for you.

4. MINISTRY TIME

Session of prayer and for children to receive the gift of tongues

Need to see how to handle this appropriately as there are children who may feel uncomfortable (their parents may not have exposed them to speaking in tongues), and some who may not have received tongues despite being prayed for more than once (to assure them that there's nothing wrong with them if they don't receive the gift of tongues yet). In my experience, some children are too shy/timid to open up their mouths and let the spirit lead them so if they can be encouraged to do that.

5. CANDLELIGHT CLOSING

Tonight, children, as we hold this candle, it reminds us of:

- The fun times we had around the campfire
- God leading and protecting His people in the desert

And most importantly ...

- His Holy Spirit living in us forever!

Let's bring the light of Jesus with us wherever we go and share it with all who need to be reminded that Jesus is always with us!

Closing song: *Light/Candle related*

