

LESSON



Bitter Water to Better Water

WORSHIP

We thank God for being with us.

References

Exodus 15:22-25; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 291-294.

Memory Verse

"He will lead them to springs of living water" (Revelation 7:17, NIV).

Objectives

The children will:

Know that God wants them to have good, clean water to drink.

Feel confident that God cares for their needs.

Respond by thanking God for water.

The Message



We thank God for giving us water.

Getting Ready to Teach

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

One of the Israelites' most important needs is drinking water, but the only water available is bitter. Moses tells God about it. God listens and tells Moses to throw a stick in the water. Moses does as God says, and the water becomes good water, not bitter. The people and animals drink all they want. The people worship God and thank Him for taking care of their needs.

This is a lesson about worship.

Our prayers should be overflowing with thanks to God for providing our

basic needs such as food and water.

When we thank Him for these, we are truly worshipping Him, for we give Him the credit we often take for ourselves. Praising God for caring for all our needs is a part of worshipping Him.

Teacher Enrichment

"Many look back to the Israelites, and marvel at their unbelief and murmuring, feeling that they themselves would not have been so ungrateful; but when their faith is tested, even by little trials, they manifest no more faith or patience than did ancient Israel"

ELEVEN

Program Outline			
LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>How Much Water?</i> B. <i>Mystery Box</i>	disposable cups, pitcher of water dead plant, healthy plant, box or paper bag
* Prayer and Praise *	up to 10	See page 113. *Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story	adult-size Bible-times costume, pitcher of salted water, pitcher of fresh water, disposable cups or spoons, stick, adult to be Moses, "cloud" on a stick from Lesson 10
		Bible Study	Bible
		Memory Verse	Bible
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>What I Need</i>	<i>Little Voices Praise Him</i> songbook
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Share the Salt</i> B. <i>Body of Water</i>	bowl of salt, sandwich-size plastic bags, ribbon or yarn, scissors, tablespoon Body of Water pattern (see p. 117), white paper, blue crayons

(*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293).

"In view of all that God has wrought for us, our faith should be strong, active, and enduring. Instead of murmuring and complaining, the language of our hearts should be, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.' Psalm 103:1, 2" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 294).

"Our God has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need. . . . Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things

are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 272, 273).

What do you do when you experience hardships and trials? Is there anything God cannot help you with?

Room Decorations

See Lesson 10. The sheet or blanket of "water" can now be the stream at Marah. Have a long stick or staff to use as Moses' rod.

Teaching the Lesson

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. How Much Water?

You Need:

- ☐ disposable cups
- ☐ pitcher of water

Ask: **How many cups of water do you need every day?** Fill up one cup and ask: **Just this much?** (no) Fill another one and ask: **This much?** (no) Keep asking and filling until you reach six. Then say: **This is about how much water someone your age should drink every day. But what else do we use water for?** (washing clothes, bathing, cleaning dishes, cooking, watering plants, etc.) Ask: **How much more water would that be?** Allow guesses.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Is water important to us? Yes. Water is very important. What would happen if we didn't have any water? God gives us the water we need. Our Bible story today is about an unusual way God provided water for the Israelites as they traveled in the dry desert. Today's message is:**



We thank God for giving us water.

Say that with me.

B. Mystery Box

You Need:

- ☐ dead plant
- ☐ healthy plant
- ☐ box or paper bag

In advance, put a dead plant in a box (or paper bag) and seal it. Say: **We're going to pass around this box, and you're going to try to guess what's in it—without looking. You can hold it and gently shake it, but don't peek inside.** Accept the children's guesses. When everyone has had a chance to hold the box/paper bag, choose one of the children to open it and hold up the dead plant.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Did you think it was a dead plant? Did you hear the dry leaves scraping the box? Why do you think this**

plant died? (You didn't give it any water; you kept it in a box, etc.) **Yes, it died because it didn't get enough water.** Now show the healthy plant.
Ask: **How is this plant different from the dead one?** (It's alive; it's green; you gave it water.)

Is water important to us? Yes. Water is very important. It keeps us healthy. What do we do with water? (bathe, drink, wash clothes, cook, water plants, etc.) **Today's Bible story is about an unusual way God provided water for the Israelites as they traveled in the dry desert. Today's message is:**



We thank God for giving us water.

Say that with me.

PRAYER AND PRAISE



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"All Our Needs" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 85)

"God Cares for Me" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 86)

"God Is So Good" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 88)

"The Raindrops Fall" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 94)

"Praise Him, Praise Him" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 221)

Mission

Say: **We worship God when we thank Him for giving us water in all the different countries of the world. Our mission story today is about _____.** Use a story from *Children's Mission*.

Offering

Say: **We worship God when we thank Him for giving us water. We also worship God when we give Him our offerings. Today our offering is for _____ mission.**

Prayer

Say: **Let's pray together. Children, please repeat after me. Thank You, Jesus, that You give us the water we need. Amen.**

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

You Need:

- ☐ adult-size Bible-times costume
- ☐ pitcher of salted water
- ☐ pitcher of fresh water
- ☐ disposable cups or spoons
- ☐ stick
- ☐ adult to be Moses
- ☐ "cloud" on a stick from Lesson 10

Say: **Today we're all going to have a part in the story. _____ will be Moses, and you will all be Israelites. When you hear me say the word "happy" or "happiness," I want you to smile really big. When you hear me say the word "sad" or "disappointed," I want you to frown. And I want you to do what I do during the story, so watch me carefully.**

Read or tell the story.

The Israelites were **happy** [smile] as the great pillar of cloud [hold up cloud] led them out of Egypt and out into the wilderness. [Moses, carrying the stick, starts walking slowly, children following, pretending to be very hot and pretending to drink often.] But soon the water they had with them was gone, and they had not found any more. Everyone in the whole camp of Israel was very, very thirsty and **sad**. [Frown, tongues hanging out.]

The cloud led them toward a place called Marah. [Moses leads the children to the "stream."] Moses knew there was water at Marah, but he also knew it tasted so bad that the people wouldn't be able to drink it. In fact, the word *Marah* meant "bitter." Something bitter tastes bad.

As soon as the Israelites saw the water, they became **happy** [smile] and excited. "Water! Water! There's water up ahead!" they may have shouted.

Some of the people ran forward to the water [give the children about a drop or two of the salty water on a spoon or in a small cup to taste (each child should

be given a different spoon or cup)], but as soon as they tasted it, their **happiness** [smile] turned to **disappointment** [frown]. They began to grumble and complain to Moses.

Moses knew that God had not left His people. He knew God would take care of their needs. So Moses prayed to God and asked for help [hands folded]. God told Moses to find a piece of wood and throw it into the water. Moses did this [throw stick] and the water turned sweet.

Once again the people rushed forward to the water. [Give the children cups of the good water.] This time they were **happy** [smile], and they drank all they wanted of the cool sweet water.

God had worked a miracle to care for their needs, including their great need for water in the desert. They thanked and praised God for caring for them. Let's thank Him right now for the good water He provides for us. [Fold hands and close eyes, and pray a simple prayer.]

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:
What did the Israelites need? Why didn't they have water? What did the people do when they were sad? (They grumbled and complained.) **What did the people do when they had water?** (They praised God.)

Say: **We worship God when we thank Him for our water. Do you remember our message? Let's say it together:**



We thank God for giving us water.

Bible Study

You Need:

☐ Bible

Open your Bible to Exodus 15:22-25. Point to the text and say: **This is where today's story is found in God's Word, the Bible.** Read the verses aloud, paraphrasing as necessary.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How many days were the Israelites traveling in the desert before they found water?** (three) **Where did they find water?** (at Marah) **What kind of water was it?** (bitter) **What did God tell Moses to do?** (Throw a piece of wood into the water.) **Then what happened to the water?** (It became sweet.)

If I put some wood into water, will it make the water better? (no) **Who is the only one who can do that?** (God) **Does God still care about people's needs? Let's remember today's message:**



We thank God for giving us water.

Say that with me.

Memory Verse

Turn to Revelation 7:17 and say: **This is where we find our memory verse in God's Word, the Bible.** Read the verse aloud. **"He will lead them to springs of living water."** Be sure the children understand the verse. Then proceed to teach the memory verse as outlined below.

Teach the children the following actions for the words in their memory verse:

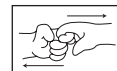
He

Point upward.



will lead

Lock fingers. Right hand pulls left hand to the right.



them

Point to others and then self.



to springs of living water.

Pretend to drink from cup.



Revelation 7:17

Palms together; then open as if opening a book.



You Need:

☐ Bible

3 Applying the Lesson

What I Need

You Need:

- ☐ *Little Voices Praise Him* songbook

Allow response time as you ask:
Do you really need water? (yes)
What would happen if you didn't have it? (We would die.)
Do you know what other things you really need? There

are many things we would like to have, but we really don't need many of them. We need air to breathe, water to drink, food to eat, a place to sleep, and so forth.

Say: I'm going to name some things, and you can tell me if it's something you *really* need.

1. A new toy
2. Shoes
3. Clean water
4. A long vacation
5. Someone to love and care for you
6. A big house

7. Healthy food
8. Lots of new clothes
9. Friends
10. Candy
11. Safe place to sleep
12. Jesus

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say:
Sometimes we are given things we really like but don't really need. And that's OK. We can trust God to give us what we really need, such as water. Let's thank Him for doing that by singing "All Our Needs" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 85, first verse). **Let's say our message together again:**



We thank God for giving us water.

4 Sharing the Lesson

A. Share the Salt

You Need:

- ☐ salt
- ☐ sandwich-size plastic bags
- ☐ ribbon or yarn
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ tablespoon

In advance, cut a piece of ribbon or yarn about six inches (15 centimeters) long for each child. Give each child a plastic bag and let them pour a tablespoon of salt into it. Help them tie it with the ribbon or yarn.

Debriefing

Ask: **What did you fill your bags with?** (salt) **Take your salt bag home and share it with someone as you tell them**

how God provided water for the Israelites as they traveled in the desert.

Tell them that God also gives us the water we need. Give them some good, clean water to drink.

Remind them that God gives us good water to drink, and we should thank Him for that. **Let's say our message together one last time:**



We thank God for giving us water.

B. Body of Water

You Need:

- ☐ Body of Water pattern
- ☐ white paper
- ☐ blue crayons

In advance, prepare for each child a copy of the Body of Water pattern on white paper. Point out the water line on the pattern and explain that our bodies need lots of water.

Say: **About 60 percent of what you weigh (that's just a little more than half) is water. So if you could see how much your body weighs in water, it would come up to about here** (point to line), **although we really aren't empty inside and filled up about to our neck with just water.**

This shows how important water is to our bodies. Color up to the water line at the neck with a blue crayon.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Did you know you had that much water in your body? Why is it important to drink lots of water every day?**

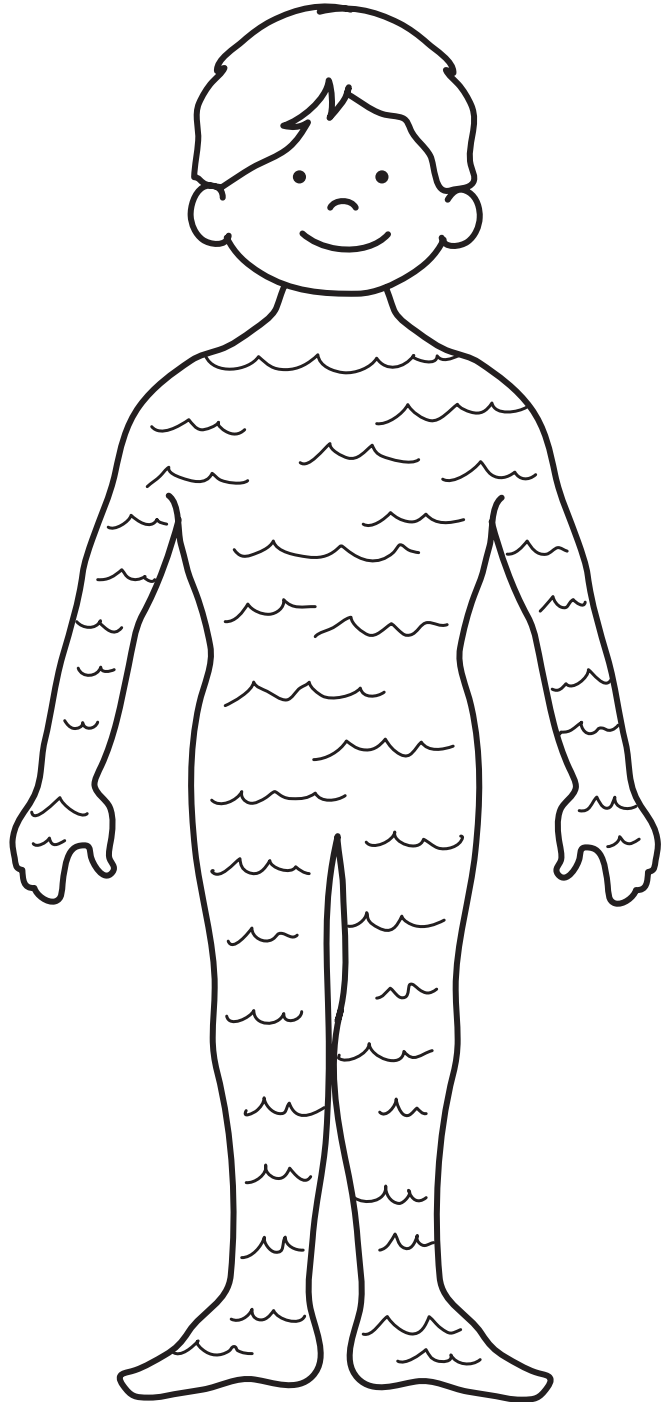
Say: **Take this home with you and share it with someone as you tell them how God gave water to the Israelites in the desert. Remind them that God gives us good water to drink, and we should thank Him for that. Let's say our message again:**



We thank God for giving us water.

Closing

Sing "Good-bye Prayer" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 44). Say a prayer something like this: **Thank You, Jesus, for giving us clean water to drink. We love You. Amen.**



Permission to photocopy is granted for local church use only.
Copyright © 2003 General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists®.

STUDENT LESSON

Bitter Water to Better Water

References

Exodus 15:22-25;
Patriarchs and
Prophets, pp. 291-
294

Memory Verse

"He will lead
them to springs
of living water"
(Revelation 7:17,
NIV).

The Message

We thank God
for giving us
water.

Have you ever been thirsty? Really, really thirsty? The children of Israel thought they might die of thirst.

The Israelites rejoiced as the great pillar of cloud led them out of Egypt and away from their lives of slavery. They followed as it led them across the Red Sea and out into the wilderness. But after three days of walking in the desert, the Israelites had used up all the water they brought with them from Egypt, and they hadn't found any more. The children were thirsty. The grown-ups were thirsty. The animals were thirsty. Everyone in the whole camp of Israel was very, very thirsty.

The cloud led them toward a place called Marah. Moses had been a shepherd in the wilderness for 40 years, and he knew the area well. Moses knew there was water at Marah, but he also knew it tasted so bad that the people wouldn't be able to drink it. In fact, the word *Marah* meant "bitter." Something bitter tastes very bad.

But the people didn't know that, and as soon as they saw the water, they likely grew excited. "Water! Water! There's water up ahead!" they may have shouted.

Some of the people ran forward to the water, but when they tasted it, their happiness turned to disappointment. Now the people felt even thirstier than

they had before they saw the bitter water. They began to grumble and complain to Moses.

Moses knew that God had not left His people. He knew that God would take care of their needs. So Moses prayed to God and asked for help, and God told Moses what to do. He told Moses to find a piece of wood and throw the wood into the water. Moses did as God said, and the water turned sweet.

Once again the people rushed forward to the water. This time they were not disappointed. They drank all they wanted of the cool sweet water. Children, grown-

ups, and animals drank all the water they wanted. God had worked a miracle to care for their needs, including their great need for water in the desert. They thanked and praised God for caring for them.

God cares for our needs, just as He did for the Israelites. God has given us clean water, good food, and air to breathe. He has given us families and friends to care for us. We may not always get everything we want, but God provides the things we need to be healthy and strong. Let's thank God for taking care of our needs.



Do and Say

Sabbath

Each day this week, read the lesson story together and review the memory verse.

- He** Point upward.
will lead Lock fingers. Right hand pulls left hand to the right.
them Point to others and then self.
to springs of living water Pretend to drink from cup.
Revelation 7:17 Palms together; then open as if opening a book.

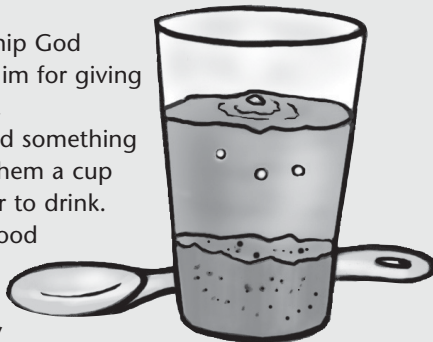
Sunday

Encourage your child to share their bag of salt or Body of Water picture they made in Sabbath School with someone and tell them of the Israelites' need for water. Tell them that their body weight is a little more than half water. Give your child two plants and let them water one of them. Ask your child what will happen to the plant that will not get water. Continue watering that one plant until Wednesday.

Monday

Say: We worship God when we thank Him for giving us what we need.

Feed your child something salty. Then give them a cup good, clean water to drink. Thank Jesus for good water. Continue the activity begun on Sunday by watering one of the two plants.



Tuesday

Read together Exodus 15:22-25. Ask: Why did the

people grumble and complain? What did the people do when God gave them sweet-tasting water? Let's thank God right now for our good water.

Continue the activity begun on Sunday by watering one of the two plants.



Wednesday

When you give your child a drink of water, have them say their memory verse again. Ask: How much water does your body need every day? (six cups) Have your child fill a cup with water. Ask: Just this much? Have them fill six cups of water and count them. Say: Let's take a look at the two plants. What's happened? (One has started to wither; the other one is OK.) What does the withered one need? Allow your child to water both plants.

Thursday

List and count ways you use water at your house. Allow your child to play in some water (in the bathtub, at the kitchen sink).

Tell about a time God supplied a need of yours, then thank Him for doing so.

Friday

Act out the Bible story with your family. (Make water bitter by adding salt. Give **a drop or two of the salty water on a spoon or in a small cup to everyone to taste.**) Have each person tell what their favorite beverage is; then thank God for giving us good things to drink.

Sing "God Is So Good" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 88).