

Emphasize that we know about these two ways that God loves us by reading the Bible. There are many different versions of the Bible. Some are short/long, some are for children/teens/adults, some are in different languages, etc.

Explain that in this series of lessons about Manna and Mercy, we are going to view the Bible through special lenses, our Manna and Mercy glasses. Give out the M & M glasses. The lenses will emphasize how much God loves us by giving us manna and mercy.

LESSON: Bible Notes from God, Prairie dogs (if age appropriate), and M & M Circle Statements

Set-Up: Hide a Bible with a note inside for each child. Scatter these throughout the room or a set of rooms.

Encourage each child to find a Bible. If notes are personally written to the children, then they must do some swapping. When needed, have adults or older children help the children find and read the note inside. Encourage them to notice how their Bible is different from the others by looking inside and comparing.

When all of the children have found a Bible, perused it, and read the note, have a few good readers read their message to the group. After each reading, the group decides if the note is a manna message or a mercy message.

Have them notice what word is in all of the messages (Love). Discuss why this is so? (God's love is the foundation for God's manna and mercy.)

Have a few other children show what their Bible is like. Then explain how Bibles can be look very different, but they all have the same stories, verses, and messages of God's manna and mercy.

Explain that manna and mercy stories are throughout the Bible, human history, and even in our everyday lives. Then tell a quick personal manna or mercy story. After your story is shared, ask which kind of story it was - Manna? or Mercy? or Both?

Introduce Prairie Dogs (if age appropriate): (Such characters are used as commentary in the resource book.)

Explain how prairie dogs are going to visit the children sometimes. They are very shy and only whisper in adult leaders' ears. Explain these facts:

Relevant Facts about Prairie Dogs:

1. They live deep in the ground to keep away from predators like humans.
2. They are very shy but brave.
3. They pop in and out of their holes, carefully watching for predators.

4. They are very social beings who live in community, watching out for one another. They take turns being the **sentinels**, (the watchers).
5. They have amazing ways of talking to each other about **predators** (enemies) that are nearby. Different barks tell about different types of **predators**.
6. They are reminders that God's family and God's future includes all of creation. Isn't it glorious that our future with God includes all creation, not just humans!

Introduce Manna and Mercy to the children. Be silly and fun as the children and prairie dogs interact. The prairie dogs might whisper questions about the children's names, comment on their clothes, or comment on the room/church. Encourage the children to ask questions of the prairie dogs. The prairie dogs should be afraid of humans but reassured these humans are safe.

CLOSING (Worship Area):

Manna and Mercy Circle Handout:

Have everyone get in circles. Several circles are fine if an adult is a part of each circle or able to oversee each circle. Circles of 4 - 6 people work well. Give out the Manna & Mercy Circle Handout. The teacher explains there are 4 messages that are repeated over and over in the Bible. They make a sort of circle. Slowly, while the teacher explains, the children read 1 sentence after another, in order, rotating readers, around the circle, going faster and faster once explanation is no longer needed. Make it fun!

End with a quick **prayer** of thanksgiving.

Pass out the sweet treat and explain the reason for the sweet treat (see next).

SWEET TREAT (Angel Food Cake or M&Ms): Manna was considered the food of angels. Angel food cake has its name because it looks like what manna may have looked like (white and fluffy). If too expensive, white cake or *M&Ms* may be substituted.

ADAPTATIONS: Children's Bibles would be best for younger children. These can often be found in thrift stores. Choose wisely or adapt the Notes from God in the Resources section if the sentences are too difficult to read.

For early-readers: This is a lesson using a great deal of print. When teaching any child who doesn't read well, try these steps:

1. Don't wait for them to try to read. Tell them you are going to read it together.
2. Slowly point to each word while saying each word aloud.
3. Ask them to repeat the phrase/sentence if they can. Saying it with them will help.
4. If it will help, explain what the word means.
5. Apply no pressure or expectation for them to be able to read or understand the words.

6. When they have difficulty, state that the words are hard.
7. For all lessons, repeatedly praise them for effort and success.

SUPPLIES:

- Reminder saying on a poster (for story) - Please consider permanently displaying this.
- Theme page displayed on a clothesline or wall (for story)
- Bible to refer to (for story)
- Large printed versions of important words/phrases (for story - optional)
- M & M glasses (sunglasses with lens removed, attach a letter M at each temple) Use these in later lessons whenever you want to emphasize that God wants us to see with loving eyes, the way God always sees us.
- Various Bibles (1 per child, as many children and adult versions as possible, consider pre-selecting Bibles for each child by putting each name on the front with a sticky note)
- A note from God in each Bible, perhaps with the child's name and adapted for the child's reading level (see Resources section).
- 2 prairie dog plush toys or puppets (available on-line, add scarves to distinguish Manna from Mercy). Use these in later lessons with young children to reinforce concepts or stories.
- Manna & Mercy Circle (1 per child to take home and 1 for each adult) Request image at hannaschock@bellsouth.net .
- Angel food/white cake broken into small pieces or M&Ms
- Take-Away for communicating to parents (Optional – see last section)

RESOURCES:

Permission has been granted from author Daniel Erlander to use any images in the resource book throughout these lessons.

Notes from God to place in Bibles (2 versions): *Format the notes as you see fit and choose notes your children can read independently or with help.*

List for teachers with Manna or Mercy Indications:

You can't be so bad I won't love you. I always **love** you! God (mercy)
 I know when you are afraid and help you be brave. I **love** you! God (manna)
 When you are lost, I help you find your way. I **love** you! God (manna)
 When you are sad, I help you feel better. I **love** you! God (manna)
 No matter where you go, I am with you. I **love** you! God (manna)
 I have made you my good child. I **love** you! God (manna)
 I will help you with big problems. I **love** you! God (manna)
 When you don't love me, I still love you. I always **love** you! God (mercy)
 When you are

not sure, ask me for help. I **love** you! God (manna)
When you mess up, ask me to forgive you. I **love** you! God (mercy)
You are never far from me. I **love** you! God (manna)
No matter what you do, I forgive you. I **love** you! God (mercy)
Even if you do a bad thing, I **love** you and forgive you. God (mercy)
No one **loves** you more than me. God (manna)
This book tells our love story, humans and me. It is for you. I **love** you! God (manna)
If you hurt someone, I still **love** you and forgive you. God (mercy)
You can't leave me. I am always with you and **love** you. God (mercy)
People in this book show you how much I **love** you. God (manna)
People in your life show you how much I **love** you. God (manna)
When you don't love me, I still **love** you. God (mercy)
I made you to do good. If you don't do good, I still **love** you. God (mercy)
You are good inside. I **love** you always. God (manna)

List for children with no Manna or Mercy Indications:

You can't be so bad I won't love you. I always **love** you! God
I know when you are afraid and help you be brave. I **love** you! God
When you are lost, I help you find your way. I **love** you! God
When you are sad, I help you feel better. I **love** you! God
No matter where you go, I am with you. I **love** you! God
I have made you my good child. I **love** you! God
I will help you with big problems. I **love** you! God
When you don't love me, I still love you. I always **love** you! God
When you are not sure, ask me for help. I **love** you! God
When you mess up, ask me to forgive you. I **love** you! God
You are never far from me. I **love** you! God
No matter what you do, I forgive you. I **love** you! God
Even if you do a bad thing, I **love** you and forgive you. God
No one **loves** you more than me. God
This book tells our love story, humans and me. It is for you. I **love** you! God
If you hurt someone, I still **love** you and forgive you. God
You can't leave me. I am always with you and **love** you. God
People in this book show you how much I **love** you. God
People in your life show you how much I **love** you. God
When you don't love me, I still **love** you. God
I made you to do good. If you don't do good, I still **love** you. God
You are good inside. I **love** you always. God

Examples of Bible Stories representing Manna: (God loves us by providing):

David and Goliath	Good Samaritan
Hannah	5 loaves and fishes
Wine at the Wedding	Woman Who Touched Jesus' Robe

Examples of Bible Stories representing Mercy: (God loves us by mending):

Joseph and his brothers	Prodigal Son
Peter denying Jesus	Zacchaeus
Woman caught in adultery	Paul

Examples of Bible Stories representing both Manna and Mercy:

Noah	Moses
Woman at the Well	Joseph and His Brothers

Manna and Mercy Circle Statements: (duplicate & cut into squares for children to hold)

MANNA & MERCY CIRCLE

1. God provides – MANNA!
2. Humans decide to become BIG DEALS!
3. Humans learn WE NEED GOD!
4. God forgives – MERCY!

Back to # 1

MANNA & MERCY CIRCLE

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2. Humans decide to become BIG DEALS!
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Back to # 1



MANNA AND MERCY

Lesson 1 - Theme: Intro to Manna and Mercy

Key Words from the Lesson:

Manna - God's Provision or God's Gifts

Mercy - mending; forgiveness; kindness

Manna and Mercy: An Elementary Curriculum

LESSON 8 THEME: The Wilderness School Part 1

CORE IDEAS: After leaving slavery in Egypt, God had a lot to teach the partner people (Israelites). Most of these lessons were taught through God's gift of manna.

*Note: Difficult but key words are **highlighted** and may need to be explained repeatedly. Underlined words/phrases are crucial to the connections across lessons. Consider offering large printed versions of key words to refer to during the story and keep for later reference. Note: Sin has been defined as people trying to become BIG DEALS.*

PRIMARY RESOURCE: *Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe* by Daniel Erlander pgs. 7-9

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: primarily Exodus 16

Review your last lesson's teachings and theme particularly how God freed the partner people (Israelites) from slavery in Egypt, **parted the sea** for them to cross, and sent them into the **wilderness**. Refer to theme pages. Introduce today's theme: **The Wilderness School** and pick up the Bible on the altar table while explaining that the story can be found in the 16th part of the book of Exodus, the 2nd book in the Bible. Remind them that Exodus means exit.

Begin by talking about what it would be like to live in a wilderness. Emphasize that eventually the food and water would run out. It would be uncomfortable and scary. Even after all that God had done, some of the partner people wanted to go back to being slaves in Egypt because of their fears.

God led the partner people into the wilderness to teach them how to live in partnership with God. The wilderness would become God's classroom, the place where the people would learn lessons about how to live as partners. Then other nations would learn from them and become partners with God.

God, the teacher, waited for **teachable moments** to arrive, perfect moments when God's partners were ready to listen and learn.

The first moment came when God's partners grumbled to Moses, their leader, about not having water. They complained that they should have just stayed in slavery in Egypt. Moses took these complaints to God. God showed Moses how to get water from a rock and then from a piece of wood. Later God gave them manna in the morning and **quail** (bird) at night. But gathering the manna was tricky. Through manna living, they learned a lot more lessons about being in partnership with God.

First they had to learn that the manna was God's to give, not theirs to own. God wanted them to see manna as a symbol of everything in creation, the water, the land, everything. Everything

is a gift from God. **Lesson 1: God gives Manna. We own nothing. All is God's. All is gift. All is manna.**

Next, they had to learn that the manna had to be gathered early every morning, well almost every morning – (more about that later). **Lesson 2: Work is dignified (important). Work helps God distribute (give out evenly) manna.**

God taught them that everyone needed a fair amount even those who were small and weak. When they gathered more than they needed, the extra would disappear. When little was left for someone, they would gather what was there and then later measure and find that they had more. They learned that large families should gather more than small families. No one should try to be a BIG DEAL and get more than they need because God would give just enough for everyone. **Lesson 3: God gives enough for all to be shared by all.**

Some people hid extra manna away for later so that they could be BIG DEALS and have more. This is called hoarding. When they hoarded the manna, it got maggots and smelled nasty! It was embarrassing to fail at this lesson. **Lesson 4: Hoarding causes rot. Hoarding stinks!**

Finally, the partner people learned that God wanted them to set aside one day, Saturday, to rest and enjoy their life with God. BUT HOW COULD THEY REST IF THEY HAD TO GATHER MANNA? God showed them by giving them twice as much manna to gather Friday morning. When Friday's manna was set aside, it did not stink! **Lesson 5: Sabbath God gives rest so humans can have extra time to enjoy friendship with God, other humans, and creation.**

God poured out manna day after day for the many years that it took for the partner people to learn these lessons in the wilderness. Even though God had many teachable moments, the partner people were slow to learn manna living/manna way and forgot or ignored many of their lessons.

We are still learning these lessons. God hopes that someday humans will learn manna living and practice it every day. Then we would have a world where everyone:

receives from God, thanks God, and shares with others,

where there are no BIG DEALS and everyone gets their fair share,

and where humans live in harmony with all of creation.

This kind of life God is called Shalom, meaning a whole and healthy world.

ACTIVITY: Floor Map Journey

Directions for outside the closed door: All take off shoes! There will be a clipboard with instructions (See Resource section) for the lead teacher. Set some behavior ground rules before entering will be on your directions. Adapt them to your needs.

Tell them: On the floor in each classroom will be a map of Eastern Egypt, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Promised Land. There are 9 stations labeled by number and key words. We will stop at each over 2 sessions.

Each station will have props, some in a bag. You simply have them stand with you, listen, and follow your directions. Because of varying group size and time limits, you decide which kids will do what you direct them to do. Others just watch at times. Spread the responsibilities evenly or use as a reward for good behavior. Sometimes you will choose only one child, sometimes a pair or small group, sometimes all. Encourage them to be as silly and dramatic while keeping their bodies under control (i.e. they must stay with you, no running or jumping, etc.).

These activities will need to be quick, but make sure they understand. Aim for getting through Station 5 in the first session. Don't go beyond 5. When your time is about up, finish a station and then do the Closing. For your next lesson, you will begin at the this station, have a quick review, and then resume the journey. The directions for the closings are listed next (for Lesson 8), at the end of this document just after Station 9 (for Lesson 9), and at the end of Lesson 9.

CLOSING LESSON 8: Stay at the station you just completed. Close with a prayer, not in character, thanking God for these stories and asking forgiveness because we are still having to learn these lessons of how to rely on God. Give out Take-Away for parents (optional).

OVERVIEW OF STATIONS AND PROPS:

Stations:

1: Where are we?

2. Slavery in Egypt

Rod of Aaron, 10 Plagues

Passover, Commandment to Remember

3. Back to Goshen

4: Sea is parted

Celebrating and Entering the Wilderness

Objects to use or find and take:

Globe

3-D pyramid, bricks

stick, plastic snake, plastic frogs

a few cut ribbons

“Home Sweet Home” sign,
bag of plastic food, tent in bag,
“Promised Land This Way” sign,
water bottle, cotton cloud on a stick,
electric lantern

huge plastic comb

tambourines

- | | |
|---|--|
| 5. Out of water | “whiner” sign, big rock |
| 6. God gives manna | “whiner” sign, white cake, birds, lessons 1-4 in envelopes, bag of hoarded manna (ammonia on cotton balls in an open baggie) |
| 7. Mt. Sinai (2 chairs with a label) | lightning bolt (cut yellow poster), 2 sets of tablets (painted & cut Styrofoam – 1 flimsy to break easily), golden calf (painted toy), lesson 5 in an envelope |
| 8. Kadesh Barnea | 5 pairs of M and M sunglasses |
| 9. Back into the wilderness (middle of map) | |

ADAPTATIONS: Use your judgment to vary your words and the rate of movement through the lesson activities based on their understanding and attention. Note that much of the manna way is like the culture of an early elementary classroom i.e. sharing – not hoarding, following the rules (law) etc. This will help younger children understand manna living throughout the curriculum.

SUPPLIES:

- Reminder saying on a poster (for story)
- Theme page displayed on a clothesline or wall (for story)
- Bible to refer to (for story)
- Large printed versions of important words/phrases (for story - optional)
- Clipboard with instructions outside each group’s room
- Floor map, made with blue butcher paper (the bodies of water) and painter’s or masking tape (the borders/coasts), the uncovered floor serves as the land, (photos available)
- Labels and Signs (See Resource section)
- Paper grocery bags to hold the props, folded closed with station labels on them
- (See **Objects to Use or Find** in list above) Note the tablets are used in lessons 14 & 15.
- Take-Away for communicating to parents (Optional – see last section)

Note: Because of the high price of eggs, angel food cake is now quite expensive to make. White cake has been substituted.

RESOURCES: Contact Hanna Schock at hannaschock@bellsouth.net for photos or questions.

Labels/Signs for the floor map: (These are taped to the floor or the chairs in the case of Mt. Sinai. Use an actual map to place them correctly.) Stations 1-9, Egypt, Red Sea, Goshen, Home Sweet Home (at Goshen), This Way to the Promised Land (with an arrow pointing to the right), Mt. Sinai (taped up high on chairs), Kadesh Barnea, Promised Land, The Wilderness (place in the middle of the Sinai Peninsula).

5 Lessons: (Print and place in 5 marked envelopes)

Lesson 1: God gives Manna. We own nothing. All is God's. All is gift. All is manna.

Lesson 2: Work is **dignified** (important). Work helps God **distribute** (give out evenly) manna.

Lesson 3: God gives enough for all to be shared by all.

Lesson 4: **Hoarding** causes rot. Hoarding stinks!

Lesson 5: Sabbath God gives rest so humans can have extra time to enjoy friendship with God, other humans, and creation.

Instructions for the Teacher to the Israelites (children):

For role-playing, you decide who is who depending on the circumstances: # of children, # of props, & their behavior. Don't worry about gender. Roles may be swapped, shared, and changed as you see fit. They can take turns carrying things. Try to pretend as much as possible emphasizing the experience of the Israelites. Be dramatic and have fun being silly while teaching. Keep in mind some children have never heard these stories. Keep them in control, in a group. Tell them:

- Stay in a tight group or you might get lost in the wilderness☺.
- Pick-up items or open bags only when I tell you to do so. It might be dangerous since we are in the wilderness☺.
- No running.
- Use your acting skills. BE DRAMATIC!

Text changes that will help you know what to do:

ACT = All or those you choose get in character & act out what you are describing.

Bold = stations and props

Green highlighted statements are said aloud dramatically.

Green text lists what you take with you to the next station.

Station 1: Where are we? Gather the kids around the **globe**.

1. Explain that it's a modern day globe so names may be different from long ago
2. Find and show your home then drag your finger to Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula.
3. Explain that a peninsula is a piece of land that sticks out into water; refer to floor map.
4. Have them look at the floor map, point to places on the globe, name them, and find them on the map. Search for station 2, Egypt. Go to station 2.

Station 2: Slavery in Egypt Gather kids around this station. Point out

1. Tell them, "You are now Partner People."
2. **There are the Pyramid** (square bottom, 4 triangle sides)
3. You are slaves & are forced to build the pyramids.
4. You have to make the bricks by stomping straw into mud with their bare feet and then building buildings, like pyramids. **ACT**
5. **ACT** Move the **bricks** from here to here where they are building a new pyramid. *Talk about how their hands, feet and whole bodies must have hurt.* Cry out, "Help us! Lord have mercy!"
6. **Rod of Aaron (long stick)**. God gave this to Aaron, Moses' brother, to use in front of Pharaoh to show God's power. Choose an Aaron.
7. One time he threw the stick down and it turned into a **snake**. Then he picked it back up again and it was a rod. **ACT**
8. Explain the 10 plagues briefly. One plague was that the Nile River water turned to blood. Aaron began this change by placing the stick in the Nile. **ACT**
9. Another plague was that many frogs came. Scatter the **frogs** and talk about how horrible it would be to have frogs everywhere. **ACT**
10. Passover: Israelites suffered through plagues too except for the 10th, the last plague. It was the worst. The first born son of Egyptian families died during the night, but this plague "passed over" the Israelites. They called it the Passover from then on.
11. Commandment to Remember: When pharaoh said they could leave Egypt, God told Moses to tell them to remember Passover every year. At the last supper, Jesus was having the Passover meal. Jews still celebrate Passover. One of the ways people remember things is to tie a string around their finger. Tie **ribbons** around a finger of one or more kids. Warn them that later you will ask the kids what the string is for.
Go to station 3.

Take: **STICK**

Station 3: Back Home to Goshen When Israelites first settled in Egypt, they lived here.

1. Point out **signs: Home Sweet Home, This Way to the Promised Land, & Promised Land.** Goshen was near the land God had promised them. It was the land that God gave to Father Abraham and Mother Sarah so long ago. (Point to it.) But God knew they weren't ready to go there yet. They had to take the long way. They went into the wilderness to learn some of God's important lessons at God's wilderness school.
2. Gather their things (**tent, bag of food, water bottle**). Talk about how the Israelites had to take everything they could carry.
3. Direction? The Lord went in front of them in a cloud by day and a fire by night. From here on, have a child lead the group from station to station, holding up high either the **cloud** or the **lantern**. **ACT** Go to station 4.

Take: **STICK, TENT, BAG OF FOOD, WATER BOTTLE, CLOUD, and LANTERN**

CLOUD OR LANTERN LEADS What are the ribbons for? (To remember the Passover)

4: Sea is parted At the Red Sea, they stopped and panicked.

1. They were being chased! Choose a Moses. Moses - **ACTS**. Moses asked God what to do. God told Moses to stretch out the rod of Aaron over the water and God's breath parted the Red Sea. Explain what the word *parted* means and show them the joke (**big comb** that can part the sea). Did God really use a big comb? No!
2. To protect them, God moved between the Israelites and Pharaoh's soldiers (in the cloud at day and in the fire at night). Have the 2 children holding these props go to the back of the group, holding their objects high. Have all of them cross the sea looking from side to side at the amazing walls of water **ACT**. Tell them of the soldiers' fate. (When they crossed the sea the waters came down and drowned them.)
3. **Celebrating and Entering the Wilderness** Once safe and settled, Miriam, Moses' sister, led them in celebrating and dancing with **tambourines**. Choose a Miriam. Miriam **ACTS** Have her say **"The Lord has triumphed!"** while dancing. All repeat and dance. Go to station 5.

Take: **STICK, TENT, BAG OF FOOD, WATER BOTTLE, CLOUD, and LANTERN**

CLOUD OR LANTERN LEADS

Station 5: Out of Water

1. Say you're thirsty and ask the child holding the water bottle for water. There is none. Then you place a **whiner sign** on one of the kids and s/he whines loudly, **"Oh no! We're out of water. We're going to die! It was better in Egypt!"**

2. God heard their cry and told Moses to touch the Rod of Aaron to a big **rock** and the water poured out. Moses **ACTS** Moses and kid with the water bottle pretend to fill it up. Go to Station 6.

Take: **STICK, CLOUD, LANTERN, TENT, BAG OF FOOD, WATER BOTTLE, AND WHINER SIGN ON A CHILD** CLOUD OR LANTERN LEADS What are the ribbons for? (To remember the Passover)

Station 6: God gives Manna and Lessons

1. Pretend to eat the food then set it aside. Choose who will wear 2nd whiner sign; **ACT** "Oh no! We're out of food. We're going to die! It was better in Egypt!"
2. God heard their cries and gave them bread from heaven each morning. They found it on the ground (Manna = **Angel Food cake crumbs**) and **birds** (quail) at night for meat.
3. Then God taught them their first lesson about how God gives manna. Open **Lesson One envelope** and read to them. Discuss.
4. In order for them to be fed, they had to work for it. They would gather the manna in the morning and at night kill, clean, and cook quail to eat. They did this every morning and night but Saturday (their Sabbath). Direct them to pick up and/or eat all of the angel food cake crumbs. God's second lesson was about how important work is. Open **Lesson 2 envelope**. Read. Discuss.
5. Is all cake gone? If not, direct them to get it all, everyone together. The Israelites had to gather all of the manna that was given because there was just the right amount for everyone. This was God's third lesson. Open the **Lesson 3 envelope**. Read. Discuss.
6. Some Israelites wanted to be BIG DEALS and wanted more food for themselves and their families. So they hid it away to be eaten later. This is **hoarding**. But God showed them! Manna that had been hoarded would quickly rot and stink. **Bag of hoarded manna**. Have them smell the manna (ammonia). Don't let them look inside. God's fourth lesson was about stinky manna. Open the **Lesson 4 envelope**. Discuss. Go to Station 7.

Take: **STICK, CLOUD, LANTERN, TENT, BAG OF FOOD, WATER BOTTLE, WHINER SIGNS on 2 kids** CLOUD OR LANTERN LEADS Ask about the ribbons. Have whiners do some whining because they are soooo tired!

Station 7: Mt. Sinai They reach large Mount Sinai. God told them to camp there.

1. God showed might by creating a lightning storm, blowing harsh winds, and making trumpet sounds. All **ACT**. Pick up a **lightning bolt**, shake it, lean in the wind, and make trumpet sounds.

2. God asked Moses and Joshua, a young leader, to come to the top of the mountain **ACT** (stand on the chairs) while the people waited. God gave Moses the law written on **tablets of stone** (give the flimsy set only to Moses), written with the finger of God.
3. The Israelites below became impatient and whined. Choose an Aaron. 2 whiners to say to him, **"It's taking too long! We need another God. Aaron, make us a golden cow to worship."** And Aaron melted their jewelry **ACT** and made a **golden cow** for them to worship, an **idol** (anything we worship other than God) that was not the one true God. Talk briefly about idols, defining them and giving examples.
4. Moses and Joshua came down from the mountain carrying the tablets, Moses got so angry about the idol that he threw the tablets and they shattered **ACT may need to break them over knee**. Then he threw the golden cow and jewelry into a fire **ACT**. Next he went back up the mountain to ask the Lord to forgive the people **ACT**.
5. The Lord agreed. The Lord created **another set of tablets** with the law written on it. Give 2nd set to Moses. These tablets then traveled with them wherever they went. Have someone carry them.
6. An important part of God's law was the 10 Commandments. One of these commandments was God's 5th lesson. It is all about the importance of Sabbath. Open **Lesson 5 envelope**, read, and discuss. Go to Station 8.

Take: **STICK, CLOUD, LANTERN, TENT, BAG OF FOOD, WATER BOTTLE, WHINER SIGNS ON 2 KIDS, and 1 SET OF TABLETS**

CLOUD OR LANTERN LEADS Ask about the ribbons. Have whiners do some whining because they are want to go back to Egypt!

8: Kadesh Barnea

After many months of traveling, God led them close to The Promised Land to a place called Kadesh Barnea. They decided to check out The Promised Land before trying to enter so they sent 12 spies to check out the land and the people while everyone else waited for the spies. **ACT** 5 kids put on **sunglasses** and sneak over to Kadesh Barnea. Decide which ones are Joshua and Caleb.

1. Spies returned, but only Joshua and Caleb, his friend, wanted to go into The Promised Land. They believed God would protect them. The other spies were too scared. Have all but 2 kids say: **"No way should we go into the Promised Land. There are giants!"**. Then have Joshua & Caleb say, **"God will protect us even if there are giants."** Let them continue the argument for a moment then vote.
2. The cowards won the argument so they Partner People didn't go into The Promised Land at this time. God led them back out into the wilderness. It was obvious to God that the Israelites had not learned to trust God. The lessons on manna living had to continue

so they wandered in the wilderness for more 40 years! (You might want to explain about the symbolism of the number 40.) Go to Station 9.

Take: **STICK, CLOUD, LANTERN, TENT, BAG OF FOOD, WATER BOTTLE, WHINER SIGNS ON 2 KIDS, and SET OF TABLETS**

CLOUD OR LANTERN LEADS Ask about the ribbons. Have whiners do some whining.

Station 9: Back into The Wilderness (the center of the Sinai Peninsula) Have them all sit and begin the closing. If there's little time, simply do a thanksgiving prayer, but not in character.

CLOSING Lesson 9: Stay at Station 9. Talk about a time when they felt lost and tired and discouraged. What helped them? Connect their comments to what the Israelites must have felt and then had to do to survive in the wilderness (i.e. rely on God, family, friends & survival skills that God gives humans, maps, don't panic, learn to solve problems, rest and try again...). Point out that one of our God's gifts is the Bible and then explain how it is like a map that guides us.

End with a prayer that connects their comments to the Israelites and give out Take-Away for parents (optional).



MANNA AND MERCY

Lesson 8 - THEME: The Wilderness School Part 1

Resource Book - Pgs. 7 - 9 - *Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe* by Daniel Erlander

Key Words from the Lesson:

Wilderness - a large area of land, such as forest or desert, uninhabited or inhabited only by wild animals

Hoarding - to gather money, food, etc., in a hidden place for future use

Manna and Mercy: An Elementary Curriculum

Lesson 28 Theme: A Wild Preacher and Jesus at Wilderness School

CORE IDEA: John the Baptist was the expected prophet that would introduce Jesus as the Messiah. John was honored to baptize Jesus. Like John and the Partner People had before him, Jesus spent time in the wilderness learning and discerning his mission.

*Note: Difficult but key words are **highlighted** and may need to be explained repeatedly. Underlined words/phrases are crucial to the connections across lessons. Consider offering large printed versions of key words to refer to during the story and keep for later reference. Note: Sin has been defined as people trying to become BIG DEALS.*

PRIMARY RESOURCE: *Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe* by Daniel Erlander, pgs. 41-42

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1; Luke 1:76, 2:52, 3:4,10-14, 22, 4: 1-13

STORY: Say reminder saying: (Displayed where all can read it.)

(All say together) God loves us (hand on heart)
by providing manna (arms out)
and mending us with mercy (hug self)
no matter what we do (head back and forth).

Review overall theme (Manna and Mercy) and the last lesson's teachings, particularly those about Jesus' birth and the hope that he was the Messiah despite his being a poor outsider. Refer to the theme pages. Introduce today's theme: **A Wild Preacher and Jesus at Wilderness School**. Pick up a Bible and explain that today's story is mainly found in Matthew and Luke, 2 of the gospels. We are now in the New Testament of the Bible.

*During the story you will choose one child to be John the Baptist and one to be Jesus. To help all the children connect these men to the lesson afterwards, **ask John to stand to the audience's left. This side corresponds to John's side on the clothespin board used later in this lesson.** Further directions about where the 2 volunteers and you stand are provided below. The movement will increase attention and the orientation will be parallel to the lesson activity.*

*When referring to the desert, use the term **wilderness school** because it connects with earlier lessons in which the Partner People were in the Wilderness School in Sinai and Babylon.*

Many of these bulleted points are key concepts for the game played during the lesson so make sure you cover all those points which are listed in the Resource section.

John the Baptist: (choose a volunteer - a boy or girl - to be John, both of you stand to the audience's left, give John a name to hold or wear)

- Born to Elizabeth and Zachariah, aunt and uncle to Jesus. John was Jesus' cousin.
- Mary visited them when she was pregnant with Jesus.
- The prophet Isaiah foretold that someone in the wilderness would proclaim (meaning to say loudly for all to hear) that the Messiah (their savior) was coming.
- John lived in the Wilderness School like the Partner People before him, eating locusts (grasshoppers) and honey, a sort of wild man, learning about what he was to do for God and Jesus, the Messiah.
- Preached, "Repent and be baptized! The Kingdom of God is coming." Explain each of the 3 sections of this message according to your tradition. Repent is defined in the Take-Away at the end of this lesson so tell them that repent means "to confess & change your bad ways."
- Proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah and told the Jews to prepare for him.
- When they asked what they should do, John told them to stop hoarding food and clothes. They should share with those who don't have enough. This is Manna Living that God had already taught them many times in the Wilderness School.
- To soldiers and tax collectors he said to be happy with the money you have. Don't keep more than you are owed.
- Baptized Jesus and many others at the Jordan River in Israel

Jesus: (leave John at the audience's left, move to middle, choose a volunteer - a boy or girl – to be Jesus and stand with you in the middle, give that person Jesus' name to hold or wear, point to the name tag and say "Christ" means Messiah, Savior)

- Born a few months after John to Mary and Joseph
- The Messiah the Jews had been waiting for.
- Prophets told the Jews to expect the Messiah to save them

(ask John to join you and Jesus in the middle)

- Baptized by John at the Jordan River
- At Jesus' baptism The Holy Spirit (God's Spirit come to Earth) in the form of a dove. Then a voice was heard, "This is my son. I am well pleased with him."

Jesus in the Wilderness School (move Jesus to the audience's right, leave John in the middle)

- Like the Jews in the Sinai Peninsula and Babylon, Jesus went to the Wilderness School for 40 days

- Was tempted by **Satan** (the source of evil in the world), but did not give in to Satan's temptations
- Learned in the Wilderness School what kind of Messiah he was to be

Ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus (you and Jesus move to the middle & join John)

- Jesus came out of the Wilderness School ready to do God's work
- Both suffered because their messages were bad news for the BIG DEALS
- Both preached about mercy for all
- Jesus healed many with just a touch
- Both preached at the same time in different places with different followers
- Their messages supported one another
- Some thought John was the Messiah but they were wrong. It was Jesus.

John the Baptist: (take John back to the left side, leave Jesus in the middle)

- Was arrested and then killed by King Herod's son who was a ruler

Jesus's death and resurrection (Jesus is already in the middle)

- **Crucified** on a cross because of his preaching and teaching
- **Resurrected** (lived again) after 3 days in the tomb
- Said, "I am with you always."

LESSON: JB & JC Clothespin Board

In this lesson, the children attach 30 clothespins with words/phrases on them to the correct place on a foam board. The foam board will have 2 cartoon figures: John the Baptist (JB) on the left and Jesus (JC) on the right. Their figures are tilted so that there is obvious space in the middle for those characteristics that apply to both (i.e. the clothespin that says "cousin"). There are 3 places to put clothespins: left by John the Baptist, right by Jesus, and the middle.

You decide how you want the activity to be played depending your children's typical behavior and level of understanding. The clothespin board can be held by 1 child easily. Where will the clothespins be? If so, hide them ahead of time. Do you want the kids moving around the room, searching for the clothespins? You decide given the options. You may need a tray or opaque container for the clothespins and/or a timer depending on how you play. For some methods of play, the clothespins will be carefully arranged beforehand. Repeating rounds for maximum learning would be best. Here are several possibilities:

EASY: You offer the clothespins in chronological order according to the story or in order of complexity. Explain the concept, and then have the whole group decide where it should go. Have the children take turns placing the clothespin. OR

HARDER: Divide into 2 teams and have each team take turns deciding together where to put clothespins one at a time. Decide where you want the clothespins (scattered on a table or arranged on a tray or pulled out of a container). OR

MORE CHAOTIC BUT FUN: Have teams take turns or race placing all of the clothespins at once. You could deduct points for each mistake. If you do this, you would need to go over all the correct answers first or have one team wait outside so that the second team doesn't have an unfair advantage. If they race, you will need a timer to keep track of how long each team takes. Having 2 boards in each room would mean no need for a preview, timer, or sending a group out. OR

EVEN HARDER: You can put all the clothespins scattered on the table with their words shown. Have the kids pass the foam board around and choose a clothespin to place by themselves. You have the entire group then decide if they are correct. This will start out easy but get harder. OR

HARDEST: Play as above, but the clothespins are pulled out of an opaque container without being viewed.

CLOSING: (Worship area) Talk about how important Jesus and John were to each other and how sad and afraid Jesus must have been when John was killed. Then talk about important friendships that we have our whole lives especially when they are family members. Consider how these relationships please God.

Pray with gratitude for these two men and important, life-long friendships that we all have.

ADAPTATIONS: The teacher will design how the lesson happens. Several options are given above. Also, for younger children or non-readers, have them pick a random clothespin and read the label for them. Abstract terms should be used, but their concepts should be communicated in concrete terms as much as possible. You may choose to leave out some of the historical details and abstract concepts for younger children. You may choose to use only the simplest clothespins.

For the older children, it is important to keep in mind that some of them will still be concrete thinkers so relating abstract terms to behavior is still very important, but encourage abstract thinking. Give examples when applicable to help with understanding.

SUPPLIES:

- Reminder saying on a poster (for story)
- Theme page displayed on a clothesline or wall (for story)
- Bible to refer to (for story)
- Large printed versions of important words/phrases (for story - optional)

- 2 Signs for volunteers to hold or wear saying: “John the Baptist” & “Jesus the Christ” (for story)
- 1 Wide piece of foam board with 2 enlarged cartoon figures on it - figures found in resource book on pgs. 41 & 47 (photos available)
- 30 clothespins with phrases attached (see list of phrases in Resources section)
- Tray for clothespins (optional depending on how game is played)
- Opaque container to pull out single clothespins (optional depending on how game is played)
- Timer (optional depending on how game is played)
- Take-Away for communicating to parents (Optional – see last section)

RESOURCES: Contact Hanna Schock at hannaschock@bellsouth.net to request photos of the game board.

Phrases/words to be attached to clothespins and where they should be placed on the board:

Left Side	Middle	Right Side
John the Baptist (JB):	Both:	Jesus Christ (JC):
Dipped people into a river	Cousin	Born in Bethlehem
Prophet	Outsider	Poor
Lived in the wilderness	Preacher	In the wilderness for 40 days
Proclaimed Jesus as Messiah	Jew	Holy Spirit said to him, “I am well pleased.”
Baptized Jesus		Savior of the world
Preached, “Repent!”		Said, “I am with you always.”
A sort of wild man		Parents: Mary and Joseph
Ate locusts (grasshoppers) and honey		Was tempted by Satan in the wilderness
Killed by King Herod’s son		Did not give in to Satan’s temptations
Parents: Elizabeth & Zachariah		Crucified on a cross
Some thought wrongly that he was the Messiah		Preached about mercy for all
		Left the wilderness ready to be the Messiah
		Healed many with just a touch
	Preached about mercy for all	
	Preached about manna living	



MANNA AND MERCY

Lesson 28 - Theme: A Wild Preacher and Jesus at Wilderness School

Resource Book Pgs. 41-42 *Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe* by Daniel Erlander

Key Words from the Lesson:

John the Baptist - a preacher who was Jesus' cousin; he had followers too but he wasn't the Messiah; he baptized Jesus

Proclaim - to say loudly for all to hear

Repent - confess sin & change your bad ways

The Holy Spirit - God's Spirit come to Earth

Manna and Mercy: An Elementary Curriculum

LESSON 43 **Theme: Fruit of the Spirit**

CORE IDEA: Like the partner people before them, the early Christians struggled to live The Manna Way as Jesus and God had taught them. Paul gave them a new way to think of manna living – the fruit of the Spirit.

*Note: Difficult but key words are **highlighted** and may need to be explained repeatedly. Underlined words/phrases are crucial to the connections across lessons. Consider offering large printed versions of key words to refer to during the story and keep for later reference. Note: Sin has been defined as people trying to become BIG DEALS.*

PRIMARY RESOURCE: *Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe* by Daniel Erlander, pg.67 (Paul is mentioned) & pg. 70 (indirectly relates to the fruit of the Spirit)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Galatians 1:11-24, 5:22

STORY: Say reminder saying: (Displayed where all can read it.)

(All say together) God loves us (hand on heart)
by providing manna (arms out)
and mending us with mercy (hug self)
no matter what we do (head back and forth).

Review the teachings from the last lesson and overall theme (see squares on clothesline) particularly what was learned about the early Christians (a peculiar people who were sometimes killed because of their belief in Jesus as the Christ). Refer to the Bible and say that today's story is found in the book of Galatians. Introduce today's theme: **Fruit of the Spirit.**

Paul and the Galatians: *(Be prepared to say as many of the key points below as you choose. Use labeled large popsicle sticks -See Supplies list- to show the Fruit of the Spirit. Do emphasize the concept of "temptation" because it is an important aspect of the game the children will play during the lesson.)*

- Remind the children about Paul and the letter he sent to the Galatians.
- This letter's purpose was to remind them that God wanted to guide Christians.
- God gave the Holy Spirit to help Christians live The Manna Way, not the Roman way.
- The Holy Spirit is God inside us urging us to live The Manna Way, the way God has been trying to teach people to live all along, the way Jesus lived.
- Paul warned the Galatians about being fake/part-time Christians who only act like Christians when around other Christians. When alone or with non-Christians, they don't do the right things (pray & serve others) or feel the right way (compassion & love).
- Praying, serving, compassion & love help you grow in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit teaches you so that you can become more like Jesus and live The Manna Way.
- Paul calls this living by the Spirit so that we can be guided by the Spirit.
- When we do let the Holy Spirit guide us there are results. Paul calls these results fruit of the Spirit. *Pull out the large popsicle sticks and explain them, defining the concepts they might not know.*
- Paul calls them fruit because, like a fruit tree, we can give the world wonderful gifts such as our kindness or joy. *Hold up those 2 sticks.*
- The fruit from fruit trees are a delight. *Ask about some of their favorite fruits.* It is also delightful when we experience gentleness & love & peace. *Hold up these 3 sticks.*
- A tree has to have water, sunshine, good soil, good weather, & fertilizer to give fruit.

- The Fruit of the Spirit help us live The Manna Way, the way that God has been trying to teach the Partner People all along and the way that Jesus lived.
- There are things we must do in order to grow as Christians such as
 - truly worshipping God, not just going through the motions
 - praying in a way that is real & heartfelt, not just for show
 - singing to God when we worship
 - sincerely confessing sins during communion & knowing our sins are wiped away
 - having Christian friends and Christian community to teach us
- All these help us grow in the Spirit to be more like Jesus. Then we will also have the Fruit of the Spirit and notice when others have the Fruit of the Spirit.
- In The Wilderness School, God taught the Partner People not to hoard the manna that they were given to eat. But this was hard. It required them to have self-control. *Show the self-control stick.* Sometimes they were tempted to get more manna than they needed even if his would mean that someone else would not have enough to eat. When they were tempted, they lost their self-control and they suffered for it with stinky, rotten manna. If they had shown self-control, they would not have suffered so.
- The early Christians struggled with temptation and so do we. The Holy Spirit urges us to do more than just what we want to do. The Holy Spirit urges us to avoid temptation and have self-control so that we can experience the delight of the Fruit of the Spirit in ourselves and in others.
- As we learn self-control, the Spirit grows inside us and we offer more and more Fruit of the Spirit that others can see.

LESSON: Fruit of the Spirit Stick Drop

Demonstration and Materials: (Request handout & photos via email) Give each child a handout, and say the handout is like their individual game board. Then demonstrate the game (See Game Directions below). Give each child 2 sets of popsicle sticks: 4 design sticks & 9 word sticks. Distinguish these 2 types of popsicle sticks.

- 4 design sticks - These have dots or stripes on both sides or they will be blank on 1 side.
- 9 word sticks – These have a Fruit of the Spirit word written on them.

Game play will be much easier if sticks are placed in this way:

- design sticks on the table at the top of everyone's handout
- word sticks laid to the right of the handout in the order and orientation shown on the handout

The handout shows the combination of 4 sticks that represent each Fruit of the Spirit. For instance, **love** is represented by 3 sticks (sides) with dots on them and 1 stick (side) that's blank.

Game Directions:

1. Grab all 4 design sticks in one hand and hold them in the air upright, away from the handout. Release them so that the sticks fall in a combination of designs, like *Pickup Sticks*.
2. Above your handout, straighten and group the thrown sticks (pairs & triplets). This will help you find the matching design combination on your handout.
3. Once you find the matching design combination, place that word stick on your sheet in the place provided. If this word stick has already been placed, toss the sticks again.
4. If you get the design combination for TEMPTATION, then you lose your SELF-CONTROL stick if you have already placed it. Take that stick off the handout and try for it again. If you haven't placed the SELF-CONTROL stick yet, drop the sticks again.
5. When all 9 sticks are placed on the handout, you are finished and can help another who is having difficulty by using your own set of sticks.

Discussion: Once they catch on, engage them in conversation about what the words mean. Focus on the more obscure concepts such as "faithfulness." Talk about what it looks like when you have a particular Fruit of the Spirit. Whenever a child gets a TEMPTATION combination, explain the connection between TEMPTATION and SELF-CONTROL and why that stick is taken away. You could say something like "Maybe you were tempted by some candy, lost your self-control, and ate so much candy you got a stomach ache." Then explain that because of God's mercy, we always have the chance to try again and gain more self-control.

CLOSING: (Worship Area) Discuss which Fruit of the Spirit are easiest and hardest for them at school, home, and church. Ask about when they are tempted the most. Share your own struggles with these issues.

Close with prayer, being thankful for the Holy Spirit in us, the Fruit of the Spirit in others, and the mercy we receive after we have been tempted and failed to show one of the Fruit of the Spirit.

SWEET TREAT: (Optional) Pass out Fruit candy such as Runtts, sugar Fruit slices, or Fruit chews either during the closing or as children exit.

ADAPTATIONS: For younger children, play the game in the same way but as a group on the large (poster) version of the handout. Divide the children into groups of 3-5 and have each group gather around a table that has the posters lying on it. Use the larger popsicle sticks for the word sticks. Play the game slowly with explanation and conversation about the concepts in

real life. Emphasize what each fruit looks like in our behavior. Allow the children to help by dropping the sticks, grouping the sticks, and placing the sticks.

If there is a child or a pair of children who seem to understand and want to play on their own, allow this by giving them their own handout and sets of regular sized popsicle sticks.

There is a wonderful children's song that involves a lot of movement. It will teach your children The Fruit of the Spirit. Here's a demo on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e47FnjKaT3Q>

SUPPLIES:

- Reminder saying on a poster (for story)
- Theme page displayed on a clothesline or wall (for story)
- Bible to refer to (for story)
- Large printed versions of important words/phrases (for story - optional)
- Handout (used as a game board) with design combinations and places for the 9 word sticks, 1 per older child and a few for younger children once they learn the larger version (request via email)
- 1 Set of 9 large word sticks, large popsicle sticks with a Fruit of the Spirit word labeled on each (for story & lesson demo), wrapped in a rubber band, 1 set per large version of the handout (See Resource Section for details.)
- 1 Set of 9 word sticks, regular-sized popsicle sticks with a Fruit of the Spirit labeled on each, wrapped in a rubber band, 1 set per older child, a few for younger children who learn the larger version and want to play on their own (See Resource Section for details.)
- 1 Set of 4 design sticks, regular-sized popsicle sticks with designs on them - dots, stripes, or blank, wrapped in a rubber band, 1 set per older child, a few for younger children who learn the larger version and want to play on their own (See Resource Section for details.)
- Large version of the handout, glue the various combos of design sticks on posters, I used 3 poster pieces for all 9 Fruits of the Spirit and Temptation. You could use a small poster for each stick combination. Below each combination, trace & label a place for each large word stick (for lesson, Request photos via email.)
- Fruit candy (optional)
- Take-Away for communicating to parents (Optional – see last section)

RESOURCES: Contact Hanna Schock at hannaschock@bellsouth.net to request photos and handout.

List of Fruit of the Spirit to use for Labels

love joy peace patience kindness
goodness faithfulness gentleness self-control

Details for Preparing Design Stick Sets: 1 Set = 4 Regular-Sized Popsicle Sticks

Which combination is paired with which word is evident on the handout.

	Side 1	Side 2
Stick 1	dots	blank
Stick 2	dots	blank
Stick 3	stripes	blank
Stick 4	dots	stripes



MANNA AND MERCY

Lesson 43 - Theme: Fruit of the Spirit

Resource Book Pgs. 67 & 70 *Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe* by Daniel Erlander

Key Words from the Lesson:

The Fruit of the Spirit - the missionary Paul wrote that these would be seen in Christians when they let The Holy Spirit guide them; they are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control

Temptation - when we want to do wrong; self-control helps us with temptation

