



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE

THANKS!

BIG IDEA

We can thank God for providing for us.

THE BIBLE

Manna and Quail in the Desert:
Exodus 16:1-36 (James 1:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:18)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- **ACTIVITY** | Pick Up Sticks
- **ACTIVITY** | Manna Pick-up
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Supernatural Snack
- **QUESTION** | Have you ever been hungry on a trip?
- **THE BIG IDEA** | We can thank God for providing for us.
- **BIBLE STORY** | Exodus 16:1-36
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Lunch Time
- **ACTIVITY** | Draw a Match
- **SCRIPTURE** | James 1:17
- **ACTIVITY** | What is It?
- **VIDEO** | Prayers of Gratitude
- **ACTIVITY** | The ABC Challenge
- **PRAYER** | Thank You Prayer
- **MEMORY VERSES** | Psalm 56:3; Matthew 6:33

SMALL GROUP TIME

- **DISCUSSION**
 - Why were the Israelites complaining?
 - How much food were the Israelites supposed to collect?
 - Have you ever disobeyed something your parents or teacher told you to do? Why did you disobey?
 - Why do you think it can be hard to remember to thank God for the simple things?
 - What would help you remember to thank Him more often?
- **SCRIPTURE** | 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- **ACTIVITY** | Create a Thankful Poster
- **MEMORY VERSES** | Psalm 56:3; Matthew 6:33



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

THANKS!

BIG IDEA

We can thank God for providing for us.

THE BIBLE

Manna and Quail in the Desert:

Exodus 16:1-36 (James 1:17, I Thessalonians 5:18)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Pick Up Sticks

- Welcome! We're starting a new series called, *Thanks!* We'll be talking about what it means to have a grateful heart. Sometimes we forget to be thankful. Let's play the game "Pick up Sticks," but with a twist to see how easy it is for each of you to be grateful. Let's give it a try!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Stack the sticks randomly on top of each other. Allow each kid to take turns pulling a stick from the pile while trying not to move any other sticks or they lose a turn. When a kid picks out a colored stick, they must tell what they are thankful for according to the "Gratitude Color Guide" printable. The kid with the most sticks at the end of the game wins.*

ACTIVITY | Manna Pick-up

- Our last game reminded us of things we can be thankful for. One of those things is food. We're going to hear a story about people who ate some weird food called manna. Let's play a game and pretend to pick up our manna.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give each kid a cup and a spoon or a pair of chopsticks, or you can split the kids into teams and use one cup or container per team. Spread a bunch of pom-poms all over the floor. The pom-poms will be the "manna." Give them two minutes to fill their cups with manna using only the spoon or chopsticks. The kid with the most manna in their cup at the end wins.*
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** *This activity requires students to have hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. See your weekly instructions for modifications to this activity for kids who are physically challenged.*

- Today, we're going to hear about how God provided for the Israelites in a cool way!

OBJECT LESSON | Supernatural Snack

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pass out Peeps and Nilla Wafers cookies and let the kids eat as you talk. If you can't find Peeps, you can use regular animal crackers or bird-shaped cookies. **Note: Please be mindful of any food allergies.***
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** *Check with parents to see if they can have this snack. Many students with special needs follow strict diets and it may be harmful for them to eat certain foods.*
- Today, we're going to hear a story about the Israelites who were hungry after walking in the desert for many days. They didn't have fast food restaurants or grocery stores in the wilderness, so they had to rely on God for food. Thankfully, God provided some bread called manna and meat from birds called quails. This fun snack can remind us how God provided for the Israelites. We can be thankful because God provides for us too.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

QUESTION | Have you ever been hungry on a trip?

- Have you ever been on a long trip and gotten really hungry?
- If you were going on a long car trip, what would be your favorite fast food place to stop and eat?

THE BIG IDEA | We can thank God for providing for us.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Each week, do a big reveal (and make it fun) when you announce the Big Idea, like:*
- *Ask the kids to give you a drumroll by stomping their feet or patting their laps.*
- *Shout the Big Idea, then point to the kids and have them shout it back (Change it up by using funny voices, different volumes, or inflections).*
- *Have a character (either recurring or rotating) come out every week to reveal the Big Idea.*
- *Write it on a piece of paper and hide it somewhere in the room. Have the kids go on a "hunt" for it. When it's found, ask someone to come up and read it.*
- This week's Big Idea: **We can thank God for providing for us.**

BIBLE STORY | Exodus 16:1-36

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look up the story in your Bible and encourage the kids to do the same. Read it!*
- **FOR PRETEENS:** *Instead of reading the story, enlist preteens to be actors who read their parts and do actions for their characters. Have them perform "Readers Theater" style. This will take a little longer than just reading the text, but should be worth it as it increases retention when students see and/or participate in the telling of the story. See your weekly instructions for details.*
- **Can you imagine how tired and hungry the Israelites were as they were walking around in the desert?**
- I'm sure they wondered where they were going to find food. Thankfully, God provided for them in a unique way.
- **How do you think they felt the first time they found the manna and quail that God provided?**
- **If God were to send you food that fell from the sky, what would you hope it would be? Could you imagine ice cream cones falling down from the sky?** God provided exactly what the Israelites

needed. In fact, He knew how much they needed for each day and told them to get what they needed for that day.

- **What are ways God has provided for you?** God gives us everything we need! It might not be exactly what we *want*, but He knows exactly what we need.
- **Did the Israelites have a good attitude and thankful hearts?** Not exactly. They grumbled and complained. God helped them out of Egypt and did miracles to keep them safe. But they didn't seem to be thankful. **Do we ever complain and get grumpy?** The next time you complain about not having something you want, stop and think about all the good things God has given you, and thank Him. We can have a thankful heart and a good attitude.
- We can thank God for providing for us.

OBJECT LESSON | Lunch Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the kids a lunchbox.*
- **FOR PRETEENS:** *Give them lunchboxes and fun or crazy lunch items, and see how fast they can pack their lunchboxes. See your weekly instructions for details.*
- **How many of you have packed your lunch for school or had someone pack a lunch for you? Did you pack your lunch for one day or for the whole week? Why do you only pack one day at a time?**
- God told the Israelites to only gather enough food for one day, except the day before the Sabbath. On that day, they were told to gather enough for two days. God wanted the Israelites to know they could always trust God to provide for them.
- **Have you ever had to trust God to provide for you?** God loves us and provides so many things for us. We can thank God for providing for us!

ACTIVITY | Draw a Match

- God gave the Israelites specific instructions on how much manna and quail to gather. Some of the Israelites trusted God and followed the instructions and others did not.
- God showed the Israelites they would be taken care of. We're going to play a game that will help us practice trusting each other.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Put kids in pairs, and give them paper and crayons. Have the partners sit back-to-back. Tell one person to draw a picture of a house, dog, boat, etc., but whisper the object so the other partner can't hear (or have all the drawing partners face you while the others face the other way and show them the picture). Give them one minute to make their drawing. After partner one finishes the drawing, they will give partner two instructions in order to make the exact drawing. They should give step-by-step instructions, but they cannot tell partner two what the object is. When they are finished, have the two partners turn around and face each other to see how closely their pictures match. If time allows, have partner two draw a picture and give steps to partner one to recreate it.*
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** *Let them do this activity one-on-one with a buddy, and make sure the instructions are easy to understand.*
- You had to listen and trust your partner would give you everything you needed to make the exact drawing they did. The Israelites learned they needed to listen and obey God because God would provide for their needs.

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

SCRIPTURE | James 1:17

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look up the verse and read it!*
- **What does this verse tell us about God?** This verse tells us everything good comes from God. Just as God did for the Israelites, God will provide for us.
- **What are some good things have you been given, either from God or from family members?**
- Saying “thank you” to God is one of the ways we show gratitude and a good attitude.
- Try it when you go home. Look for something to be thankful for and thank God. Instead of complaining about what you *don’t* have, remind yourself to have a thankful heart.

ACTIVITY | What is It?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Call three kids up to the front and have them sit at a table and put on a blindfold. Set a variety of foods in front of them (see your weekly instructions for details) and tell them to figure out what the foods are without tasting them. They can use their nose or hands, but can’t put it in their mouth. Then, play another round where a leader feeds them a bite and they have to guess what the food is just by taste. **Note: Be mindful of food allergies.***
- The Hebrew word “manna” means “What is it?” **Why do you think the Israelites called the bread from heaven “manna?”** Because they didn’t know what it was! **Have you ever sat down to eat something for dinner and you had no idea what it was?**
- **Do you like eating something if you’ve never had it before? How do you think the Israelites felt when the strange food fell from heaven?**

VIDEO | Prayers of Gratitude

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the kids [this](#) short YouTube clip.*
- One of the ways we can thank God for always taking care of us is by talking to God. We can pray any time. One of the times we can talk to God is before we eat, thanking God for our food.
- **Does anyone have a specific prayer you say before you eat?**
- Whether we say the same prayer every time or we make up a new one each time, we can thank God for providing for us by saying a quick prayer of thanks. It could even be as simple as this: “Dear God, thanks!”

ACTIVITY | The ABC Challenge

- Let’s see if we can come up with one thing God provides for us starting with each letter of the alphabet.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have the kids sit in a circle. Choose someone to go first and say something God provides that starts with the letter ‘A.’ Have the next person come up with something God provides that starts with the letter ‘B.’ Keep going around the circle going through the alphabet. If a kid struggles, let the other kids help out.*
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** *Some kids with special needs may not have proficient literacy or language skills to participate in this activity. Prepare a visual list of pictures and/or written words for each letter. Encourage them to share regardless of the accuracy of alphabetical requirement. Make sure students know they can choose to “pass” their turns to ease potential anxiety.*

PRAYER | Thank You Prayer

- We're going to pray and thank God for providing for us. Before we pray, think of one thing God has given you. When we pray, you can tell God "Thank you" for the things God gave you.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Help the kids talk to God by inviting them to say the words out loud. God, thanks for _____!" You can point to each kid or have them sit in a circle and go around the circle.*

MEMORY VERSES | Psalm 56:3; Matthew 6:33

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give every kid memory verse magnets or stickers. Then, work on the memory verse together. For ideas on how to do this well, check out the Memory Verse Guide in your Programming folder and give them to your small group leaders, if you'd like.*

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **Why were the Israelites complaining?** *(They were hungry and tired.)*
- **How much food was each Israelite supposed to collect?** *(Enough for each day.)*
- **Why do you think the Israelites gathered more food than what God told them to gather?**
- **Have you ever disobeyed something your parents or teacher told you to do? Why did you disobey?**
- **Why is it hard to remember to be thankful for things God gives us?**
- **What would help you remember to thank God more often?**

SCRIPTURE | 1 Thessalonians 5:18

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look up the verse in your Bible and encourage the kids to do the same. Read it!*
- **When should we give thanks?**
- **Is it easy to give thanks in all circumstances? What about during hard times?**
- How would your life be different if you did what this verse said?

ACTIVITY | Create a Thankful Poster

- **INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOU:** *Before the service, write "THANK YOU" at the top of a poster board. Give your small group the poster board, markers, crayons, and other art supplies. You can also get family magazines, scissors, and glue. Let the kids cut out pictures of things they are thankful for and put them on the poster.*
- **INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR LEADERS:** *Give the kids the poster and decorating supplies and have them write or draw things they're thankful for on the poster.*
- **FOR PRETEENS:** *Give them each an index card and specific categories of people they might be thankful for, such as: Your Family, Your Neighborhood, Your Community, Our Country, Our Church, People from History. Have them write the name of someone in each category they are thankful for.*
- Let's decorate this poster with words and pictures of things we're thankful for. Think about things we normally forget about, like the air we breathe, the stars in the sky, and the grocery stores where we can buy food instead of having to grow it all from a garden.
- God has given us so much! It's good to take time to remember all of that we have and all God gives!

MEMORY VERSES | Psalm 56:3; Matthew 6:33

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