



God Provides Food and Water

(based on Exodus 16:1-8, 13-15; 17:1-7)

With Moses' leadership, God had led the Hebrew people safely out of Egypt. God saved them from Pharaoh and his army. They had escaped from slavery. Now they had a long, long way to go before arriving at their new home, the land God promised them.

Day after day, Moses led the people further away from Egypt. Soon they came to a great desert. There in the wilderness, the people started to grumble. They had left Egypt in such a hurry, they had no more food left.

The people forgot how unhappy they had been as slaves in Egypt. They were hungry now and remembered the food they had in Egypt. They complained to Moses.

"Why did you lead us here to the desert? We are starving and there is no food here. We had plenty of food in Egypt. Oh, why did you bring us here!"

God heard the people's complaints and told Moses that food would be provided for the people. God said there would be small birds called quails for them to catch. There would be bread from heaven each morning for the people to gather. God was taking care of them!

The next morning the people woke up to find the ground covered with thin white flakes that looked like frost on a cold morning.

"What is it?" they asked each other.

"It's the bread God has given you to eat," Moses told them.

They called the bread *manna*, which means "What is it?"

God provided quail and manna each day throughout their journey. God was taking care of them.

But then one day, there was no water to drink. Nowhere. No water.

The people complained to Moses.

"We're thirsty. We need water. Why did you bring us here to die of thirst? We had plenty of water in Egypt. Has God forgotten us?"

Moses went to God for help. He asked God what he should do.

God said, "Go ahead of the people to the big rock. Take your walking stick and strike the rock with your stick."

Moses did what God said to do. Crack! The rock split open and water came gushing out—clean, refreshing water for all the people to drink! It was water from a rock and enough water for everyone!

The people knew that God was with them and God was taking care of them.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- ▾ Recall that the Israelites had left Egypt in a big hurry and did not take a lot with them. Pretend you are Israelite children who have been wandering for days and weeks and even months in the desert. Your supplies have run out. Wonder: What is it like to be wandering in the desert? Do you ever complain? What is your biggest worry?
- ▾ Think about today's story and choose one statement to finish that describes how you feel about the story:
 - ▾ I'm curious about . . .
 - ▾ It puzzles me that . . .
 - ▾ One thing that worries me is . . .
 - ▾ I would like to ask . . .
 - ▾ I think it is important that . . .



Responding to God's Grace

- ▾ Water is a precious gift from God. It reminds us of God's love and care for us. Here are some ways you can protect and not waste water. What are your ideas?
 - Collect water in a rain barrel to use on your garden.
 - Do not waste water when you are washing the car or watering the lawn.
 - Organize groups to help clean up garbage in and around local rivers and streams.
 - Turn the water off while brushing your teeth, then back on to rinse.
- ▾ God sent manna and quail to reassure the people that God was with them on their journey. God nurtured Moses and the Israelites. Explain that to nurture someone is to give that person loving, compassionate care and support so she or he can grow into a healthy, whole person. Plan a project to nurture other children. For example, children might clean up a park or wooded area; work at a food bank; walk younger children home from school; or play with a child who is always left out.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- ▾ Using pita bread or pizza crust, add chopped vegetables, grated cheese, and herbs. Heat in the oven or microwave until the cheese melts. Say grace before you enjoy eating together.
- ▾ Collect canned food to give to people who have food needs. Encourage each child to choose one or two cans of food he or she likes to eat. Deliver the food to the appropriate agency in your area. Ask what foods people like to receive and plan on a future visit with some of these items.
- ▾ Pray this prayer each day this week:
 - God is gracious.*
 - God is good.*
 - Let us thank God for our food. Amen.*