

The Bronze Snake

BIBLE PASSAGE: Numbers 20:1-20; 21:4-9

MAIN POINT: God told His people to look at the bronze snake.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

2

SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15–20 MINUTES)

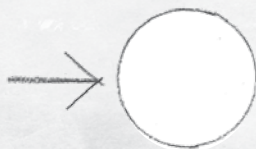
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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10–15 MINUTES)

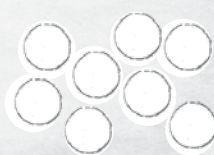
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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(20–25 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

The Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness when they started to complain to Moses and to God. God had done some pretty amazing things for the Israelites—He rescued them from the hand of Pharaoh, He parted the Red Sea so they could safely cross, and He provided manna for them to eat. But to the Israelites, it wasn't enough.

God punished them because He knew their dissatisfaction was a sign of a bigger issue: a heart problem, a sin problem. They stopped believing that God is good. In their hearts, the Israelites believed the same lie that rattled Eve in the garden. Maybe God isn't interested in giving us what is best. Maybe He is holding out on us.

God sent poisonous snakes that bit the people and killed many of them. The Israelites repented. They wanted Moses to ask God to take away the snakes.

God provided a solution. He told Moses, “Make a snake image out of bronze and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover.”

In John 3:14, Jesus said, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up.” What was Jesus talking about? Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” So Jesus invites us, “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am God, and there is no other” (Isa. 45:22).

As you teach preschoolers, emphasize the problem that all of us face: we aren’t just sick; because of our sin, we deserve death. Then rejoice with them over the cure: Jesus, the sinless Savior, became sin for us and was lifted up on the cross in our place. We must do nothing but look to Him to be saved.



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training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

The Bronze Snake

Numbers 20:1-20; 21:4-9

The Israelites refused to go into the promised land, so God punished them and made them wander in the wilderness. They set up camp in the wilderness, but they did not have any water to drink. **The Israelites grumbled and complained, and they argued with Moses. “Why did you lead us out of Egypt? There is no good food, and there is no water!” they said.**

God told Moses and Aaron to take the staff from the tent and stand in front of all the people. He **told Moses and Aaron to speak to a rock, and water would come out.** So Moses took the staff. He told all the people to watch. Then Moses used the staff to hit the rock two times. Water rushed out of the rock, and the people and animals drank.

But Moses and Aaron had disobeyed God by hitting the rock instead of speaking to it. God said because they disobeyed, they could not go into the promised land.

Then Moses sent messengers to ask the king of Edom if the Israelites could travel through his land. The people of Edom said, “No! Do not come to our land, or we will fight you.” So the Israelites had to travel around the land of Edom.

The journey was long, and **the Israelites grumbled and complained. They said, “Why have you led us out here from Egypt to die in the wilderness? We have no bread or water! The food we have is not good!”**

God sent poisonous snakes that bit the Israelites. The people realized they had sinned by complaining to God. The Israelites told Moses, “We know we have sinned.

Please ask God to take the snakes away.”

So Moses spoke to God for the Israelites. God said, “Make a snake image and put it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will get better.” Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Whenever someone was bitten, that person looked at the bronze snake, and he got better.

Christ Connection: The Israelites sinned, and God sent snakes to punish them. Anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the snake on the pole and live. We sin, too. Our sin separates us from God. We can look to Jesus to save us and give us life forever with God.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover the bronze snake points to Jesus' being lifted onto a cross to take away our sin. Jesus calls us, as believers, to pick up our cross and follow Him. (See Luke 9:23.) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: The Bronze Snake

BIBLE PASSAGE: Numbers 20:1-20; 21:4-9

MAIN POINT: God told His people to look at the bronze snake.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

Welcome time

- “A Mighty Fortress (Our God Is Faithful)” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “I’m Thirsty!” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to use a marker or crayon to fill the glasses with something to drink.

SAY • What is your favorite drink? In today’s Bible story, the Israelites were thirsty for water. They complained because they were hungry and thirsty. God told Moses and Aaron to speak to a rock, and water would come out. Moses and Aaron did not obey God’s instructions. God said that because Moses and Aaron disobeyed, they could not go into the promised land. Let’s find out how they disobeyed.

Look for colors

Explain to preschoolers that you will call out a color and they must look around the room for something of that color. When they find an item of the correct color, they must quietly raise their hand. Call on individual children to tell what item they see. For younger preschoolers, invite them to stand beside the item they see. Play as time allows.

SAY • You had to look around the room until you saw something that had the color I called out. In our Bible story today, the Israelites had to look at something that was bronze. Bronze is a shiny brown color. Let's find out what the something bronze was they had to look at.



Sort adhesive bandages

Set out an assortment of adhesive bandages. Invite preschoolers to sort the adhesive bandages according to shape, size, or color.

SAY • Do you put on an adhesive bandage when you get hurt? In today's Bible story, many of the Israelites got hurt, but they didn't have adhesive bandages to help them. An adhesive bandage wouldn't have worked anyway. God had a special plan to heal His people. Let's find out what His plan was.

- adhesive bandages, different shapes and sizes

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to move to Bible study while making slithering sounds like snakes.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: The Bronze Snake

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Introduce the Bible story

SAY • What happens when you get hurt or sick? Do you take medicine? Do you go to the doctor? In today's Bible story, many of the Israelite people were very sick, but God had a special plan to make them better.

Watch or tell the Bible story

Open your Bible to Numbers 20.

SAY • The Bible is a great gift. God gives us His true words in it. The Bible tells us everything we need to know about God. Today's story is from the Book of Joshua. Show the Bible story video "The Bronze Snake" or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

- Bible
- "The Bronze Snake" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Talk about the Bible story

SAY • God sent snakes to punish His people for their sin, but He also made a way for them to be healed. **God told His people to look at the bronze snake** and they would live. We sin, too. Our sin separates us from God, but God made a way for our sin to be forgiven. We can look to Jesus to save us and give us

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

life forever with God.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. What did the Israelites complain about in the wilderness? (*They were tired of manna and no water.*)
2. How did Moses disobey God? (*Moses hit the rock instead of speaking to it.*)
3. What did God send to punish the Israelites for their sin of complaining? (*poisonous snakes*)
4. How could a person be healed from a snakebite?
(**God told His people to look at the bronze snake.**)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Do you remember the answer to our big picture question? ***Whom can we trust? We can trust God.***
The Israelites complained because they did not trust God. They forgot that God always gives His people what is best. ***We can trust God.*** He is good and always gives us what is best.

• Big Picture Question
Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Joshua 1:9. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, “Wherever You Go.”

• Key Passage Poster
• “Wherever You Go”
song

SAY • The Israelites were tired of being in the wilderness. They were discouraged and complained, but God was still with them. Sometimes we look around us and don’t like what we see, but we can remember that God is with us wherever we go. We don’t have to be afraid or discouraged.

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

SESSION TITLE: The Bronze Snake

BIBLE PASSAGE: Numbers 20:1-20; 21:4-9

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KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.



• Bible Story Picture
Poster

Play snakebite tag

Select a preschooler to be the *snake*. The *snake* will chase the other children, trying to tag as many as he can. When the *snake* tags someone, that child must sit on the floor. When you call out “Look at the Bronze Snake!” while holding up the Bible Story picture, the “bitten” children are healed (unfrozen). Continue playing as time allows.

SAY • God told His people to look at the bronze snake.

The Israelites sinned, and God sent snakes to punish them. Anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the snake on the pole and live. We sin, too. Our sin separates us from God. We can look to Jesus to save us and give us life forever with God.

Make bronze snakes

Provide a clean tissue roll for each preschooler. Assist preschoolers in pulling the roll apart along the spiraled seams to create a snake body. Encourage preschoolers to color the snake’s body with bronze crayons. Glue two googly eyes to one end of the snake body. Use glue to attach a 12-inch dowel rod to the inside of the snake body, so the snake curls around the dowel rod.

- clean tissue rolls,
- googly eyes
- 12-inch dowel rod
- bronze crayons
- glue

SAY • God sent snakes to punish the Israelites sin, but He provided a way for them to be healed. **God told His people to look at the bronze snake.** Anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the snake on the pole and be healed. We sin, too. Our sin separates us from God. We can look to Jesus to save us and give us life forever with God.

Look at water reflections

Place several non-breaking mirrors faceup in a plastic tub. Provide a cup or bottle of water for each child. Allow preschoolers to take turns leaning over and pouring their water in the tub while looking at their distorted reflection in the mirror. Encourage preschoolers to aggravate the water with their fingers as they continue to view their reflections.

SAY • Moses and Aaron disobeyed God by hitting the rock to bring water instead of speaking to it. God said because they disobeyed, they could not go into the promised land. We sin, too. Our sin separates us from God. We can look to Jesus to save us and give us life forever with God.

- plastic tub
- non-breakable mirrors
- cups or bottles of water
- towels

Play out being sick or injured

Set out toy doctor kits and other first aid items. Invite preschoolers to play out caring for one another while sick or injured.

SAY • The Israelites sinned, and God sent snakes to punish them. When God's people were hurt, God did not send a doctor or a first aid kit. **God told His people to look at the bronze snake.** Anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the snake on the pole and live. We sin, too. Our sin separates us from God. We

- toy doctor kits
- adhesive bandages
- gauze
- elastic bandages

can look to Jesus to save us and give us life forever with God.

Play with “I Spy” bags

- ziplock bags
- duct tape
- clear body wash
- small plastic reptiles including a snake

Before the session, assemble “I Spy” bags based on the size of your group. Place a few plastic reptiles in each ziplock bag. Make sure each bag contains a snake. Add clear body wash to each bag. Close each bag and seal it with duct tape. Invite preschoolers to handle the bags and look for the snake.

SAY • You had to look hard to find the snake in the bag.

God told His people to look at the bronze snake.

The Israelites didn’t have to look hard for the bronze snake. The bronze snake was in plain sight. They just had to trust what God said and look up to be healed. We sin like the Israelites, too. Our sin separates us from God. All we have to do is look to Jesus to save us and give us life forever with God.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve pretzel sticks and gummy worms for snack. Encourage preschoolers to twist the gummy worm around the pretzel stick like the bronze snake on the pole. Remind preschoolers that even though God punished the Israelites sin by sending snakes, He also sent a way for them to be healed. They just had to look at the snake.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of a snake on a pole. Remind preschoolers that **God told His people to look at the bronze snake.** We can look to Jesus to save us and give us life forever with God. Pray for the preschoolers.

SAY • God, You love Your people too much to let them go on sinning. Thank You that You punish sin, but thank You even more that You forgive sin. Forgive us when we do not trust You. Help us to trust You to give us what we need. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschool

Journal Page

God the Savior

Key Passage: Joshua 1:9

Big Picture Questions: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

Session 1: Joshua and Caleb

Numbers 13:1–14:38

Caleb and Joshua trusted God.

Session 2: The Bronze Snake

Numbers 20:1-20; 21:4-9

God told His people to look at the bronze snake.

Session 3: The Promised Land and Jericho

Joshua 2–4; 6

God led His people into the promised land.

Session 4: Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai

Joshua 7–8

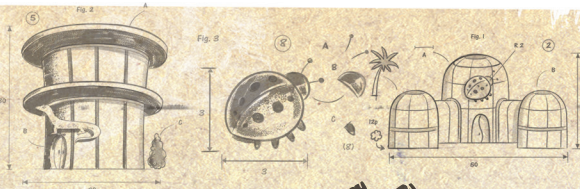
God punished Achan for his sin.

Session 5: Joshua's Final Encouragement

Joshua 23:1–24:28

Joshua told the people to worship God.

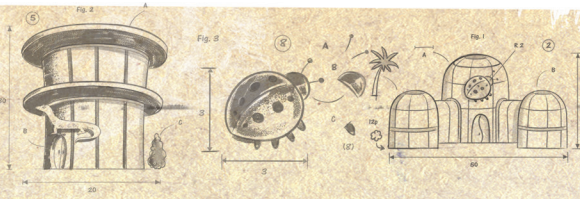




**“Do not be
afraid; do not be
discouraged, for
the LORD your God
will be with you
wherever you go.”**

Joshua 1:9

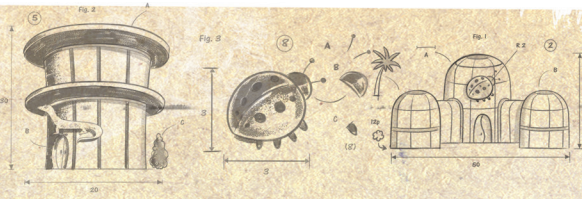




**Be not afraid, neither
be thou dismayed:
for the LORD thy
God is with thee
whithersoever
thou goest.**

Joshua 1:9

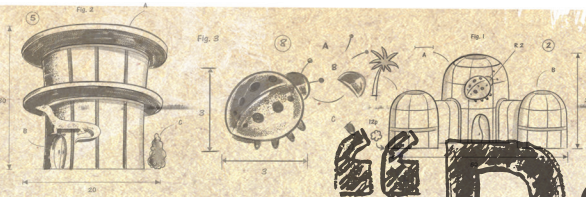




**“Do not be afraid
or discouraged,
for the LORD your
God is with you
wherever you go.”**

Joshua 1:9





**“Do not be
frightened,
and do not be
dismayed, for the
LORD your God is
with you wherever
you go.”**

Joshua 1:9



God told His
people to look
at the bronze
snake.





I'm Thirsty!

INSTRUCTIONS: Use a crayon to fill the glasses with a drink. Color to the line.

DOWNLOAD THE
TGP FAMILY APP

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

BIBLE STORY:

THE BRONZE SNAKE

- God provided water for Israel from a rock.
- Moses and Aaron disobeyed God and would not be able to go into the promised land.
- The Israelites complained. God sent poisonous snakes that bit the Israelites.
- God told Moses to put a bronze snake on a pole. When anyone looked at the bronze snake, he was healed.

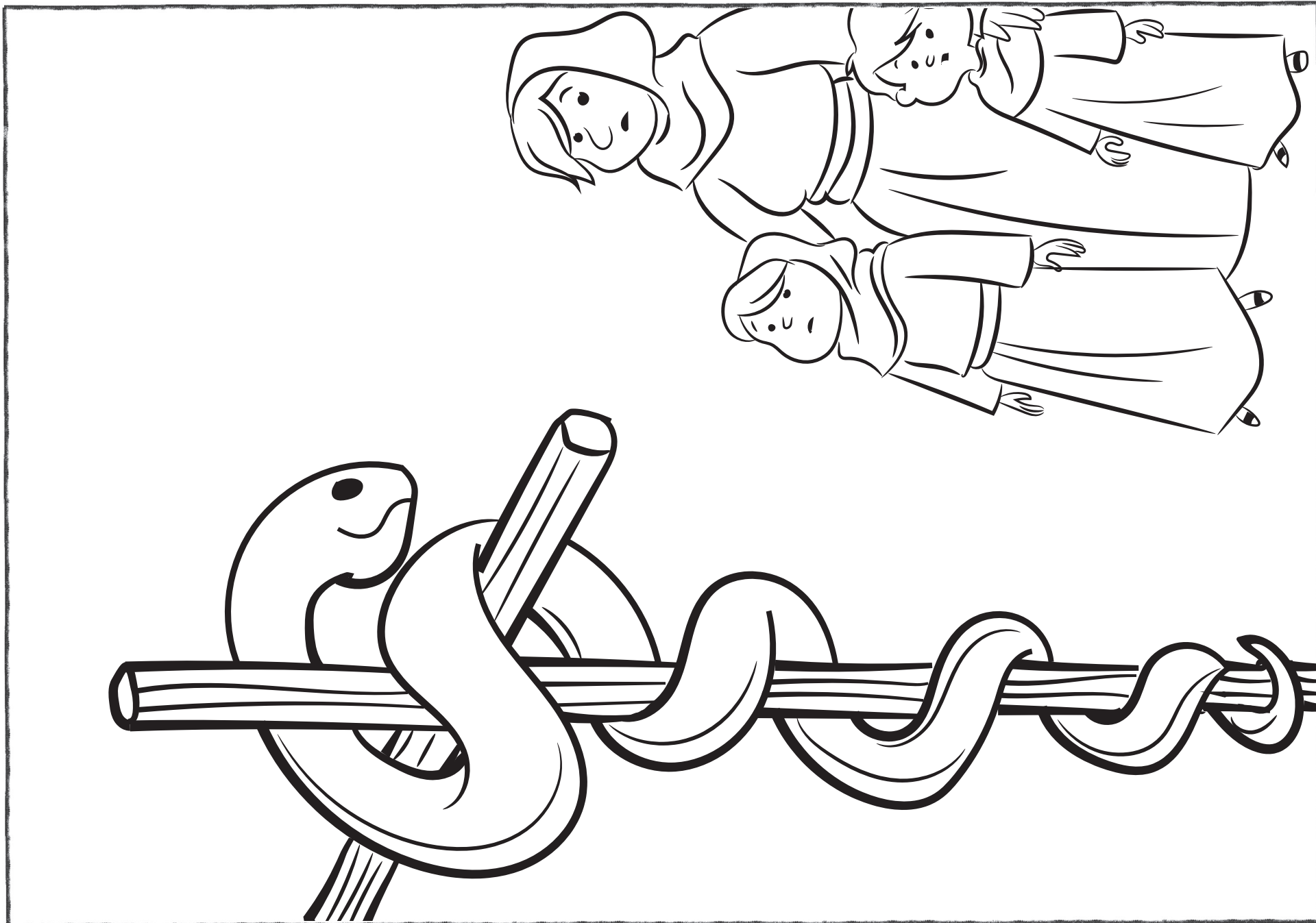
FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What are some things we tend to complain about? Ask God to help you be thankful.
- How can we point someone to Jesus this week?

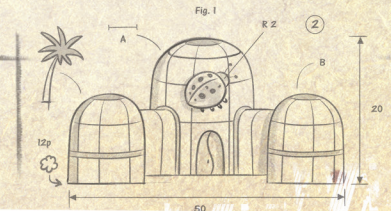
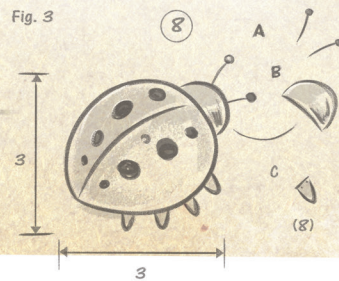
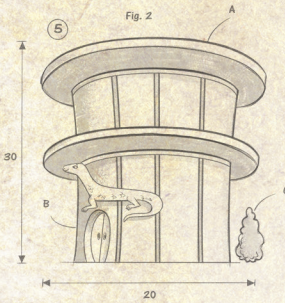
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Learn about snakes online.
- Go further: Research an unreached people group, pray for them, and consider how you can help take the gospel to them.

Preschool Activity Pages
Unit 7, Session 2



Whom can we trust?



Whom can we trust?

We can trust God.

