



## MIRIAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 12

*Moses mediated on behalf of Miriam.*

# The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses** – In Numbers 11, Moses set apart 70 elders just as God requested. God poured out His Spirit on them and as a result they began to prophesy. Two other men prophesied and a request was given to Moses to stop them for fear that they would undermine his leadership. Instead, Moses rejoiced and declared that it would be good if all of God's people would prophesy. This outpouring of the Spirit upon the leaders (of whom Aaron was most certainly a part) emboldened Miriam and Aaron to criticize Moses, saying, "Has He (God) not spoken through us also?" Instead of being humbled by the gift of God, they became proud.

**God pronounced judgment for their sin** – God humbles Miriam and Aaron in several ways. First, He came down in their midst and called them to the Tent of Meeting. This was a fearful thing indeed. There God corrected them, explaining that Moses was set apart. God told them that He spoke to Moses face to face, not in dreams or visions like the others who prophesy. Foolishly, they thought they were Moses' equal because God had used them to prophesy. As judgment for their sin, God struck Miriam with leprosy. He wanted them to know just how serious it was to grumble against Moses.

Though God met with Moses face to face, Moses never boasted about this privileged position. As a result God could say of Moses that he was the most humble person on the earth! Aaron and Miriam spoke against Moses' wife, but at the heart of their sin was pride.

**Moses mediated on their behalf and God demonstrated mercy** – Miriam and Aaron were Moses' brother and sister. They were jealous of their brother's leadership and angry that he had married a Cushite woman. Even though his sister opposed him, Moses pleaded for mercy for her. God heard Moses' prayer and commanded that she should stay out of the camp for seven days, as required by the Law in Leviticus 13. After that, she returned, healed, to a normal life. Her healing is evident by the fact that she was allowed back into the camp. God's mercy was also shown in that He did not move the people of God for those seven days.

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**WHERE IS JESUS?**

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

Full of pride, Miriam opposed Moses and was struck with leprosy. Aaron appealed to Moses, and Moses in turn cried out to the Lord. As before, the Lord heard the mediation of Moses and offered healing to Miriam after seven days outside the camp. Moses acted as a type of Christ, standing in the gap before God. In addition, Moses modeled a humility more than any other man on earth (see Numbers 12:3). Moses' humility points to the humility of Christ. Moses did not speak out when insulted, but instead interceded for his sister. Jesus did not return insult for insult but instead, interceded for those who spoke against Him.

Moses could offer no payment for Miriam's sin. Instead he appealed to the mercy of God. God's mercy was made possible through the work of the Christ who was yet to come. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross paid for Miriam's sin and made it possible for Miriam to be welcomed back into camp.

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY****BE A DOER OF THE WORD**

*Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.*



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**ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

**Bible Passage: Haggai 2:20-23**

**Jesus is referred to in the restoration of the temple as choosing Israel in the midst of their sin**

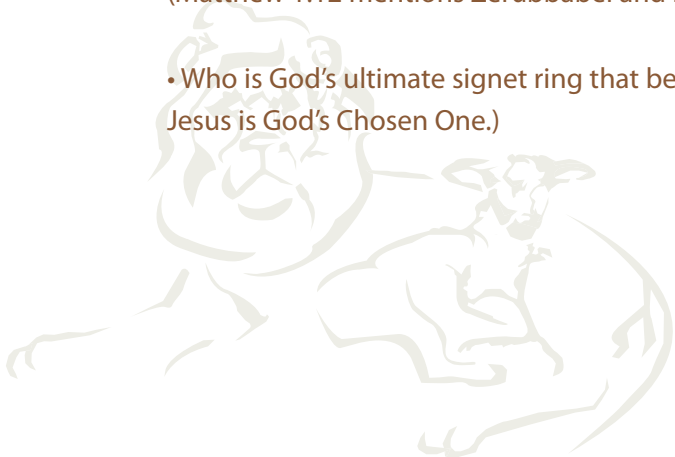
**Connecting the passage to Christ:**

In Haggai, the Lord says that Zerubbabel will be made to be like the signet ring of God, because God has chosen him. Zerubbabel was a ruler in the line of David. In Jeremiah 22:24-26 God used the picture of a signet ring cast to the ground to signify the giving over of His people to captivity. Every time a king in the line of David rules, it points to Christ who would also one day rule in the line of David. In this case the words "On that day" tell us there is a future day in view in this prophetic word. Christ is ultimately the signet ring of God.

A signet ring bore the mark of the owner. The impression of the ring was like a signature. The mark of the owner's signet ring upon a document meant that the document was as reliable and authentic as if the owner had spoken the words in person. Jesus is the signet ring of the Father. That is why Jesus said, "If you knew me you would know my father also." (John 8:19) and "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30).

**Questions for reflection:**

- Why is the lineage (ancestors) of David important? (The Messiah was prophesied to come from the line of David. If the line of David failed, the promise of the coming King who would reign forever would be broken.)
- Read the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1. What do you see there that is relevant to this passage? (Matthew 1:12 mentions Zerubbabel and his father Shealtiel in the genealogy of Jesus.)
- Who is God's ultimate signet ring that bears the mark of God, the ultimate chosen one? (In Luke 23:35 Jesus is God's Chosen One.)



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# ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

*Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?*

### A THANK YOU CARD

#### Supplies

- blank Thank You cards for the entire class
- colored pencils
- markers or gel pens

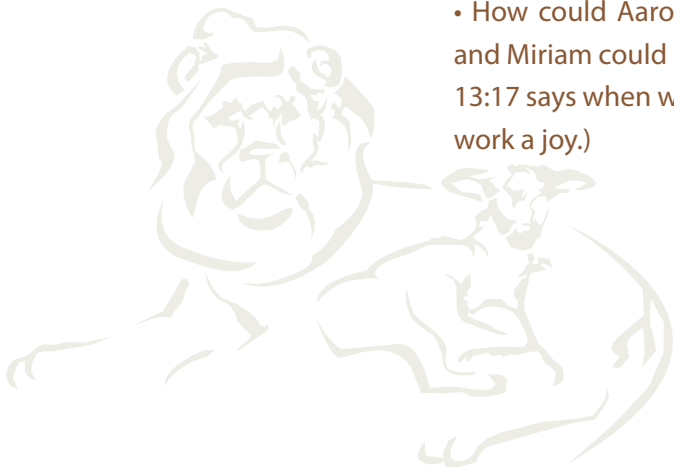
In spite of Moses' complaining, God is kind to overlook his attitude and provide some real help by pouring out His Spirit on seventy elders. All forgiveness and withholding of punishment in the Old Testament is ultimately rooted in what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

Children are frequently disobedient to their parents. They are disrespectful and cause challenges for their parents. In return for these offenses, their parents train them and regularly forgive them. When parents forgive their children and overlook their offenses, they model the same mercy God extended to Moses. In fact, God compares His loving discipline of us to the discipline of earthly fathers (Hebrews 12:10).

Instruct the children to thank their parents in the note card for their loving discipline, forgiveness, and kindness in raising them.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Our parents were provided to us by God to train us and care for us. How can we make their job easier? (Children make their parent's job easier by obeying and not complaining.)
- How could Aaron and Miriam have made Moses' job of leading easier? (Aaron and Miriam could have followed Moses without jealousy or complaining. Hebrews 13:17 says when we obey those God has placed in authority over us, we make their work a joy.)



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### TRANSLATOR

#### Supplies

- two individuals who can speak Spanish or another language (One should be able to translate to and from English)
- a snack
- drinks
- cups
- bags

The object is to demonstrate how a mediator is a critical component of communication.

Have the first guest (not the translator) give the following instructions in a foreign language:

I need three volunteers from the audience. (Do not translate.)

Ask the class if they knew what the guest said. (If by chance you have a bilingual student, prohibit them from participation.) If no one guesses, have the translator tell the class what was said.

Then have the guest speak out the following instructions. Have the interpreter translate each step.

To Volunteer #1: Go to the bag in the back left of the room, take out the snacks and pass them out to the class.

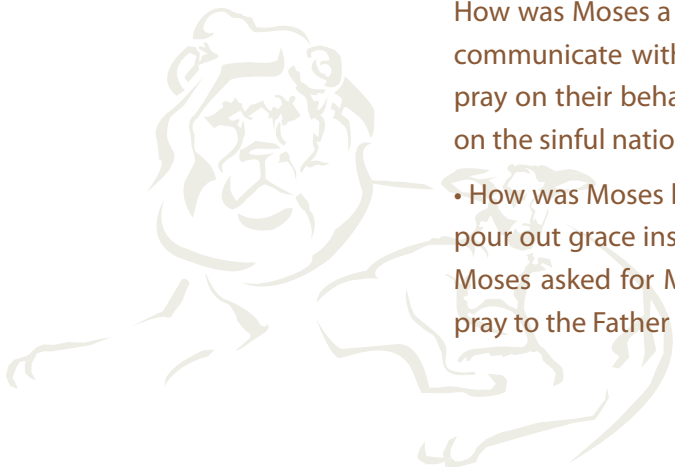
To Volunteer #2: Go to the bag in the back right of the room, take out the drinks and cups. Bring them back to the front of the room and begin to pour a drink for every student.

To Volunteer #3: Pass out the cups to your classmates.

After the instructions are completed, thank the guests and volunteers and dismiss them.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Why did we need the interpreter in the middle? (The interpreter helped us by translating what the guest said to us.)
- When a person communicates between two others, we call them a mediator. How was Moses a mediator between God and the people of Israel? (Moses would communicate with God and then tell the people what God said. He would also pray on their behalf so that God would pour out His mercy rather than judgment on the sinful nation of Israel.)
- How was Moses like Jesus? (Jesus is now in heaven praying for us. God is able to pour out grace instead of punishment because of Jesus' death on the cross. When Moses asked for Miriam's healing, he was a picture of Jesus who would one day pray to the Father on our behalf.)



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### OPPOSING THE PLAN

#### Supplies

- several sets of dominoes
- one dozen ping pong balls

Aaron and Miriam rose up in opposition against Moses and spoke against him. When they spoke against Moses they were not just speaking against an ordinary man, they were ultimately speaking against God. Moses was God's choice to lead the people, and a part of God's plan of redemption. To speak against Moses was ultimately speaking against God's plan to redeem men through Jesus.

The object of this lesson is to show how just two people trying to tear down what is being built can cause damage.

Appoint two classmates to be the opposition (they have the ping pong balls). A team of five students tries to set up the dominoes in a line that can later be knocked down. While the five are setting up the dominoes, the two use the ping pong balls to hinder the building progress.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- How did the two classmates with the ping pong balls hinder your plan to set up the dominoes? (Their ball would knock down the dominoes. Or, we needed to reserve some of our team to defend against the attacks, thereby slowing our building.)
- Why do you think God corrected Aaron and Miriam's opposition so severely? (To allow them to continue complaining would undermine Moses' leadership. Moses was part of God's plan of redemption through Jesus. God was not going to allow His plan to be opposed.)

## PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

## IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw Moses, Miriam, and Aaron standing at the Tent of Meeting with God next to them as the pillar of cloud.

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### FOR OLDER GRADES

Aaron and Miriam spoke against Moses for marrying a Cushite woman. This may have been a new wife; Zipporah may have died, or this could be an additional wife. In any case, Moses was being criticized because of her race. There is no indication she was a pagan. She was likely a convert among the Israelites. God clearly rebukes Aaron and Miriam for their criticism.

Read Revelation 7:9-10. What is God's plan with regard to the peoples of the earth? (God is going to bring together all the different peoples of the earth in heaven.)

- Is any race, tribe, color, or language of people going to be excluded? Are some superior to the others? (No ethnic group of people will be excluded and none are superior to others. God loves all people no matter their tribe or language.)

God is about the work of restoring to Himself one people who had been separated at the Tower of Babel. They will be reunited in Christ, to worship Him.

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Mediator** – 1 Timothy 2:5 tells us that there is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ. A mediator is a person in the middle who communicates from one person in one place to another person in another place in order to resolve a problem or conflict. Jesus is the mediator between us and God the Father.

Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and Moses was a foreshadow of Jesus Christ. A mediator needs to be a representative for both sides. In Jesus we have both God and man. Jesus represents man to God as the last Adam who took the punishment we deserve.

Jesus also represents God to man. Jesus came to reveal His Father in heaven to us here on earth. Jesus is God and therefore could represent God fully to us.

