



GOD HEALED ISRAEL WITH A BRONZE SNAKE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 21

Commentators believe the snake being lifted up before the people foreshadows when Christ would be lifted up on the cross for our sins so that we might be forgiven and healed. Look for opportunities to make the connection with the children and to celebrate all that Jesus did. The following are some ideas for creative ways that you can present this material.

LESSON IDEAS

UNDERSTAND THE DANGER

Supplies:

- research how poisonous snakes bite
- a picture book on venomous snakes

Bring in a picture book on venomous snakes from the library to pass around. Mark a few pages that show photos of the snake's open mouths and fangs.

REENACTING THE STORY

Supplies:

- make a prop of a snake on a staff
 - strands of red yarn
- Note: Quantity of consumable supplies should be adjusted for the number of sessions you will be teaching

This is a good story to get the whole class involved. Have one child act as Moses, one act as the snake and the rest play the parts of the people of Israel.

First the people grumble. Then have the snake go about while the children close their eyes. Give the snake red yarn to drop onto several of the children. Ask the children to open their eyes. If they find a piece of yarn on them, they should pretend to be sick from a snake's bite.

Have Moses pray to God on their behalf and then hold up the staff with the snake before them. Tell the children to look toward the staff and pretend that they are all better again.

Lead the children in a praise song. Explain to them that God did not have to deliver Israel because they deserved the punishment they received. Explain to them that it was God's mercy to heal the Israelites.

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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.

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. (John 3:14-15)

The Old Testament is filled with stories that point to Jesus. Here we see sinners healed of the snakebites sent to them as judgment when they look to the upraised snake. It was God who told Moses to put the bronze snake up on a pole.

This reminded God the Father of Jesus, who would one day, be lifted up. Because of this, God healed the people and did not count their sins against them. Isn't it interesting that this Old Testament story precedes the most quoted verse of the entire New Testament? When we read of the bronze snake being lifted up we should think of Christ, who is the ultimate healer.

