

The Israelites Grumble

THE BIG YEAR SEASON 1 WEEK 7

1

WHAT YOU NEED

- "Situation Cards" set
- Scissors

2

LET'S READ THE BIBLE

Take turns reading the following passages:

- Exodus 15:22-27
- Exodus 16:1-3
- Exodus 16:11-15
- Exodus 17:1-6

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

After seeing how powerful God was when He defeated the Egyptian Army as they crossed the Red Sea, it is difficult to understand how anyone could doubt God and His plans. But that is exactly what the people did. God's people were on a journey to a land they would call their very own. God promised them that they would have their own land, so this became known as "The Land of Promise" or the "Promised Land".

For 400 years the people were slaves in Egypt, but now they were free and on their way to a new home. God chose Moses to free His people from the Egyptians and lead them to their new home, but to get there the people had to walk many kilometres across a desert. After a few days of travel, the people were very thirsty. The only water they could find was bitter so they couldn't even drink it. The thirsty people began to complain, and they remembered only the good things about Egypt and even said they wished they could go back! So, Moses prayed and asked God to help the people. God answered Moses' prayer and he showed him a piece of wood and told him to touch the bitter water with it. As soon as Moses did this, the water became drinkable, and the people had plenty of water.

After more than a month of travelling, the people made camp in a place called the "Desert of Sin". By now all the food was gone and the people once again began to doubt that God could take care of them. They complained to Moses and even told him that their lives were better back in Egypt where they had been slaves. So, Moses prayed again, and God responded. Every evening a great flock of quail (birds) would fly into the camp and the people would gather them and have meat to eat. And in the morning, little white flakes (like wafers) covered the ground. The people called this "manna". Each day they gathered the manna and took it home to make bread. But God told the people to only gather enough manna to feed their family. God wanted them to do exactly as he said and remember that He would take care of them.

The Israelites were expert complainers. Throughout the story of Moses and the Israelites we see over and over how the people complain over and over about different things even though God had been providing for them:

1. God saved them from the Egyptian army by opening up the Red Sea so they could cross through on dry land.
2. He showed them exactly where to go, leading them with a pillar of cloud at day time and a pillar of fire at night.
3. God provided water for them (He turned the bitter water into drinkable water when Moses touched it with the piece of wood and twice He made water come from a rock)
4. He provided food for them in the form of Manna and Quail – it was free, all they had to do was collect it
5. The clothes and sandals they were wearing didn't wear out.

3

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3

Now, we might think that the Israelites were really silly. How could they not trust God after all that He had done for them? How could they complain and even long to go back to Egypt when God had been providing for them? The Israelites were a truly ungrateful lot, but sometimes, we sound just as bad. Mom and Dad go to all the trouble to plan a fun family trip, and all we do on the way is complain about being hot, hungry, or not getting to listen to our music. And it's not just with Mom and Dad on road trips where we complain. We complain in school, we complain at home, and we even complain to God when things don't go our way.

But God doesn't want this for his followers. He wants us to trust Him and to allow Him to change us and do His work in our lives – just like He was changing and working in the Israelites lives on their journey to the Promised Land. Complaining never made anyone less hungry or thirsty. It never got anyone any closer to their destination. We need to let go of our tendency to complain, be grateful for the things we have, and put our trust in God. He is faithful and He know exactly what He is doing.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

4

- What were the Israelites complaining about in today's Bible reading?
- Why do you think the Israelites were complaining?
- What did the Israelites start saying about the time when they lived in Egypt?
- How did God provide water and food for them?

LET'S GO A BIT DEEPER

5

- Why is it important to remember these stories from the Bible when we want to complain?
- What are some things that you often complain about?
- What does complaining show us about our relationship with God?
- How can we learn to trust God more? *(Read our Bibles - read stories, like the ones we read today, of God providing for His people; Pray and ask God to help us trust Him more; Remember and share stories from our own lives where God has provided for us individually and as a family)*

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

6

Pray together:

- Thank God for all of the good things we do have in our lives.
- Thank god for His faithfulness and that He is trustworthy.
- Pray that God would help your family to trust Him more and complain less.

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN

7

Print out and cut out the situation cards. Place the situation cards face down. Family members will take turns picking up a situation card and reading it out *(please help younger children)*. They then have to come up with the best possible complaint they can. Next, work together as a family. How do you think God would want us to respond to this situation? Come up with the best possible response.

Situation Cards

<p>We're going on a family trip to uShaka's Wet and Wild, but when we arrive there, all the rides are closed because they are busy repairing them, so instead we go to the aquarium</p>	<p>Mom asked everyone what take away food they would like for dinner. You really wanted pizza because it's your favourite, but instead mom got chicken burgers because that's what the rest of the family wanted</p>	<p>Dad promised that he would buy you a new shirt for your friend's party. You had your heart set on getting your favourite character t-shirt, but instead dad bought you a very nice, but plain coloured shirt.</p>
<p>Once a month your family goes out for a family dinner at Spur. You don't want to go to Spur because you are sick and tired of the same playground, but your parents insist on going there because your younger sibling loves it there.</p>	<p>Your granny takes you to McDonald's for a milkshake. You love strawberry but they only have bubble gum and chocolate milkshakes today.</p>	<p>You collect Pokemon cards and have been hoping to get a Pikachu card. You use all your pocket money you've saved up to buy a pack, but the pack only has cards you already have.</p>
<p>Your friend accidentally breaks your favourite toy, even though you warned them to be careful.</p>	<p>You tried out for the cricket team. All your friends got into the A team, while you got into the B team.</p>	<p>You've been working really hard on your art project and you're really happy with the colourful hat you drew. You even finished it a week before you must hand it in. Then you realise you had to draw a cat and not a hat.</p>