

# EARTHKEEPERS

## Bible Stories

The following sessions focus on how Scripture calls us to care for God's creation. Feel free to adapt these instructions as you see fit to best serve your situation.

### Sections

Each session is divided up into multiple sections, which may include:

- Preparations
-  Presentation and discussion
-  Bible story
-  Hands-on or interactive activity
-  Story
-  Song
-  Prayer

### Layout

We have organized the pages in this document so that even when making double-sided copies, you can duplicate and staple each session separately.

### Visuals

We have prepared optional visual aids to use with some of these sessions. They are available as Powerpoint presentations or a simple PDF file that you can print out on a color printer. Within the leader notes, references to each page of the visuals is denoted with a circled number, such as: ①.

### Length

Each session is designed to be about 35 minutes long, but this can vary based on the size of the group, the amount of discussion, and other factors. Feel free to exclude, extend, or supplement sections.

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SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

# The Manna Story

## ☑ Preparations

- Prepare optional visuals.
- Hide eggs for the Manna Egg Hunt (details below).
- Prepare video, audio player, or musician for the song.

## 🗣 Gathering & Introduction

Greet the group, saying:

**Welcome, EarthKeepers! Yesterday, we heard Jesus' story about giving the fig tree another chance, and how we can give things and people a second or third or fourth chance. We shouldn't just throw things away! Today we'll hear a story about Moses, but let's start with a quick game.**

## 👏 Manna Egg Hunt

This exercise will show what can happen when we don't follow God's instructions from the Manna story they will be hearing. This should only take about five minutes.

- Fill plastic Easter eggs with mini crackers (e.g. oyster, bunny, or goldfish crackers). Make sure you have three per child. Don't buy new eggs if at all possible; we're sure you can find families with plenty to loan.
- Before the children enter the space, distribute and/or hide the items in a way that it will take a little time to collect. Don't make them too difficult to find. Set aside some extras for the end just in case you need them.
- Divide the children into three groups and give each of them instructions, without letting the other groups hear.
  - Encourage Group One to gather as many eggs as they can (without worrying about the other kids), and have them start collecting right away.
  - Tell Group Two there are three per child (without saying how many they should collect), and have them start.
  - Tell Group Three the same instructions as Group Two, but tell them they have to wait (you can tell them you know it's not fair). Give the other groups enough of a head start so that many in Group Three won't collect any eggs.
- Gather the children back when all (or most) of the eggs are collected.

Adapt this exercise to your own meeting space and group. For example, you could use non-edible items like dominoes or blocks if you'd like.

## Reflecting on the Hunt

Debrief the hunt (briefly). Ask:

- Who got the most eggs?
- Did everyone get some eggs?
- Did that game seem fair to you? Why or why not?

There will probably be some righteous outrage. Let some kids express their opinions briefly, but don't let this section go on very long. Tell them to hold onto the eggs, and that you'll talk about them more in a bit.

## Manna in the Desert

This story from the Hebrew Scriptures, based on Exodus 16, is a very central one for the whole week.



Say: **Let's see if our Bible story for today can help! I want you to listen carefully for God's three instructions in the story.**

Read them each part of the story, showing them the visuals using the Powerpoint or printed pictures. Stop to ask them to briefly reflect back what they heard or are seeing in each picture.

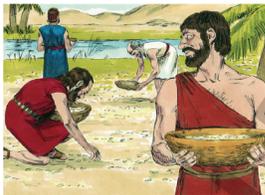
- 1 God's people were traveling a long way through a desert, where they were very hungry and unhappy. God spoke to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven. Each day the people should gather just enough for their families to eat that day. Tell them they must not save it, except on the sixth day, so they can rest every seventh day."

*What do you see in the picture?* (Moses is listening to God, who says to gather bread and don't save it, except on Saturdays.)



- 2 Moses told the people that God would provide for them. The next morning, everyone awoke to a miracle: all around them small, white wafers lay on the ground. These were round and tasted sweet. They called it "manna," which means, "WHAT IS THIS STUFF?"

*What do you see in the picture?* (The people trying the strange manna.)



- 3 "This is the bread God has promised!" Moses said. "Take just what you need for today. Only on the sixth day, take enough for two days so we can have a day of rest on the seventh day."

*What do you see in the picture?* (The people gathering manna.)

- 4 The hungry people began gathering this miraculous bread. Some took large amounts, some small, but they all had the right amount for their families.

*What do you see in the picture?* (Families eating the manna.)



- 5 Some ignored Moses' instructions and saved some of the bread. In the morning, they found this manna was full of worms!

*What do you see in the picture?* (Worms in the bread, because they tried to save it!)

6 Moses was not happy with them. They had not trusted that God would provide for them the next day. But God did send them more bread each day for a long time to come.

*What do you see in the picture?* (Moses is not happy with those who disobeyed God.)



## God's Instructions

Help the children distinguish the three instructions in the story, and write down a phrase for each. Here is one way to list them:

1. **Take only what you need for right now**, leaving some for others. 7 ①
2. **Don't store up and hoard for later**, because God gives for everyone. If you take more than your share, you have taken from what someone else needs. 7 ②
3. **Rest on Sundays**, because that's how God wants us to honor the sabbath. There will be enough bread. 7 ③

## Worms in the Bread

Sing "Worms in the Bread" together as a group. We don't have suggested hand motions for this song, but it's a fun one! We suggest you have them dance out the "wiggly squiggly."

Eggs make good percussion instruments!

## Manna Lessons

Say: **God was trying to teach the people with these rules. Let's see if we can figure them out.**

**In your Manna Egg hunt, we told some of you to take more than your fair share, to see what would happen. How many eggs do you think God would want each of you to have? (Three!) It's not too late... can you kids work out how to make sure everyone has the right amount now?** You can give the children permission to open their eggs and eat their "manna" now.

**Why do you think the people in the story took more manna than they needed?** Let some children respond. (They were worried and didn't trust God would send more.)

Explain that **God wanted to teach them to trust, even if they were worried. Manna lesson one is: trust God.** 8 ①

Say: **In this story, did God send enough for everyone? (Yes!) What would have happened if a lot of people started taking extra? (Some people wouldn't have enough and would be hungry.) God wanted to teach them to share and take only what they needed. That's manna lesson two: share!** 8 ②

Say: **And God gave extra once a week so the people could rest. God wanted to teach them to rest.** 8 ③ We'll talk more about resting, but for today we'll focus on the first two rules: 1) take only what you need for right now and 2) don't store up too much for later.

See if they can coordinate this on their own. If necessary, step in to facilitate the process. You can also use the spare eggs you set aside if there were any miscouints.

## The Our Father

Ask: **Who can think of a prayer we say asking God to give us the bread that we need each day?** Let the children respond until one mentions the Our Father.

Let's say the beginning part of it together:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread...

When Jesus was a child he learned the manna story and he wanted to remind his disciples of it too. He and Moses were both teaching the same thing – that we can trust God will give us what we need every day.

## Closing Prayer

Pray:

Creator God,

you give us enough for everyone:  
enough food, enough water, enough resources.

Help us refuse to take too much,  
so that everyone can have what they need.

Remind us to trust you, to share, and to rest.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.