



Balaam's Donkey Talks

Numbers 22:1-38

First- and second-graders still face each day with a hefty dose of wonder. They're not old enough yet to be worried about what their peers might think when they express open appreciation for the things in God's amazing world. Use this lesson to nurture this wonder in your children by encouraging them to pay attention to God.



► Bible Point



Pay attention to God.

Key Verse

"Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man's behalf!" (Psalm 66:5).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Kids will pay attention to God.

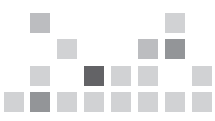
LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>1</p> <p>Getting Started</p>	<p>Amazing Stories <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Tell each other about amazing things they've seen or experienced.</p>		
	<p>An Amazing Surprise <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Play a game, and learn about Balaam and his donkey.</p>	<p>Bible Teacher Pack: Bible Timeline</p> 	
	<p>2</p> <p>Bible Exploration</p> <p>Donkey Puppets <i>(about 25 min.)</i> Create donkey puppets to hear how God made the donkey talk.</p>	<p>Bible, 1 small paper bag per child, pink and gray construction paper, pencils, scissors, glue, yarn Teacher Pack: "Donkey Stencils," "Balaam's Donkey Talks" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)</p> 	<p>Punch out the shapes on the "Donkey Stencils" page.</p>
<p>Come and See! <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Talk about some amazing things God has done, and learn the Key Verse.</p>	<p>Bible, donkey puppets from the "Donkey Puppets" activity</p>		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Thank-You Cards <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Create thank-you cards to thank God for the amazing things he does.	My Bible Fun, CD player, crayons, pencils Teacher Pack: CD	Tear out the Lesson 9 pages from each My Bible Fun student book.
4 Lasting Impressions	Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	My Bible Fun, pens	
	Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.	My Bible Fun	

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



Balaam's Donkey Talks

Numbers 22:1-38

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

The Fortuneteller

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This event takes place near the end of the Israelites' time of wandering in the desert. They had defeated a few adversaries in their travels and were approaching the Promised Land again. The leader of Moab was afraid of what Israel might do to his land, so he sought the help of Balaam.

Apparently Balaam was a widely known fortuneteller, or diviner, who made his living through his divination. He probably believed in many gods and would consult anyone, including the Lord, who could help him earn his fees.

A Wrong Motive

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Even though Balaam called upon the Lord and spoke God's words to the people sent by Balak, Balaam's underlying motive was for selfish gain.

When God had told Balaam "no" the first time, Balaam should have taken that as a final answer. But when Balaam came back to God a second time, it was clear that Balaam's desire for financial gain was greater than his desire to do what God told him. In letting Balaam go but not letting him do anything that would please Balak, God was showing how he disliked Balaam's money-hungry attitude.

God let Balaam go with Balak's men, but God was angry because he knew that Balaam was acting from self-interest and greed.

A Talking Donkey?

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Not being able to see the angel his donkey saw must have been a huge insult to Balaam, who prided himself on knowing and seeing spiritual things. Certainly Balaam was humiliated when the donkey

had to speak in order to get him to see reality. Balaam had been blinded by his desire for riches. God finally opened his eyes to the angel standing in the path and to the evil of what Balaam had been doing.

Speaking God's Words

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After getting Balaam's attention through the donkey and the angel, God let Balaam know that he wanted Balaam to go through with his trip but to speak only what God said. This whole event was intended to help Balaam think clearly and to know that he had to do what God told him.

The Jesus Connection

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God is always doing things in us and through us, but we can sometimes forget that and stop paying attention to him. When we let our focus stay on God, we can be used more easily by him. Write the most recent thing you can remember that helped you see God at work. Ask God to help you pay attention to him in the big and small things in your life. You can write your prayer on the lines below.





1 GETTING STARTED

Amazing Stories

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Gather everyone together.

Ask kids to form small groups of three or four. Say: **Take turns telling the other people in your group about something amazing you've seen or experienced. Maybe you've seen an amazing wild animal, or maybe you won a game you didn't think you could win.**

As children are sharing, circulate among the groups, helping them stay on task, listen to one another, and keep their stories concise.

When everyone has had the opportunity to share, ask a few willing children to share short versions of what they talked about. Then ask everyone to come together as a large group.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What was it like to see or experience these amazing things?
- What were you thinking or feeling as you told each other about these amazing things?
- What did you learn from hearing other people's experiences?
- What kinds of amazing things does God do?

Say: **We had some pretty great experiences to share in our group. When amazing things happen, they really do stay with us for a long time. Today we're learning that when we ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD, we see that God does really amazing things! We'll hear about some amazing things God's people saw when they paid attention to God.**

2 BIBLE
EXPLORATION



An Amazing Surprise
Supplies

Bible
Teacher Pack
Bible Timeline

An Amazing Surprise

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Numbers 22, and show kids the passage. Say: **Today we'll learn that the Bible tells us to ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD. Let's hear what happened with God's people, the Israelites, when they learned just that!**

Show the Bible Timeline, and point out the "Balaam's Donkey Talks" section.

Say: **While the Israelites were traveling to the Promised Land, they stopped near a place called Moab. The people who lived in Moab were afraid when they saw all the Israelites because there were so many! They were afraid the Israelites would take everything they had. So the leader of Moab asked a man named Balaam to come to Moab and say bad things about the Israelites so the Israelites would go away.** Pause and encourage the kids to share what they think about the Moabites' plan so far.

Say: **Remember, the Israelites were God's people, and God had told them to travel in that direction. So God told Balaam not to say bad things about the Israelites because God had blessed them.** Pause and encourage kids to discuss Balaam's choices in this situation and decide what choice seems like the best idea.

Say: **Balaam told the leaders of Moab to leave him alone. They kept asking him, though, so finally God told Balaam, "Go to Moab, but only do what I tell you to do." So Balaam rode his donkey to Moab.**

Let's quietly and slowly travel back and forth across this room just as Balaam traveled to Moab. While you're traveling, be sure to keep listening. Lead children in walking quietly and slowly back and forth across the room as you continue telling what happened.

Say: **God knew that if Balaam saw God's power, it would remind Balaam to obey God. So he sent an angel to stand in Balaam's way as he was traveling to Moab. At first Balaam didn't see the angel standing in the middle of the road in front of him, but his donkey saw the angel. The donkey was surprised, so she turned off the road to avoid the angel.** Instruct children to stop "traveling" and stand in one place.

Say: **This made Balaam angry, so he hit the donkey and kept going.** Instruct children to begin traveling again.

Say: **Again the angel stood in the way, and again the donkey turned to avoid the angel. This time, there was a wall next to the path, so when the donkey turned, she crushed Balaam's foot against the wall.** Instruct children to stop traveling and stand in one place.





Say: **Balaam was really mad this time, and he hit his donkey again and kept going.** Instruct children to begin traveling again.

Say: **Again the angel stood in the way, but this time there was nowhere for the donkey to go because the path was very narrow. So the donkey lay down!** Instruct children to stop traveling and sit on the floor.

Say: **Well, this made Balaam very angry, and he hit his donkey again.**

Now let's play a game to think about what happened to the donkey. We'll take turns traveling across the room like we were before, but this time everyone else will surprise you and try to stop you from traveling, just as the angel did.

Have each child take a turn traveling across the room while the rest of the group tries to stop him or her with surprises. Be sure kids don't touch each other or intimidate one another. Allow each child to make one trip across the room before someone else takes a turn.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What do you think about how God stopped Balaam?**
- **What was it like to be surprised and stopped on your journey?**
- **Tell about a time you or someone you know stopped doing something because of God.**
- **Why is it important to pay attention to God?**

Say: **Like it was for Balaam, it's really important that we ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD. God does amazing things to show his power, but sometimes if we're not paying attention, we can miss it at first, or maybe all together. Or God might get us to pay attention kind of like we experienced in our game. God has a plan and purpose for each of us, so we want to listen to him and do what he tells us to do.**

Donkey Puppets

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **We're learning to ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD today. So far we've heard how God got Balaam's attention by putting an angel in the road. But God did something even more amazing than that. He made the donkey talk! Before we hear exactly what happened, let's make donkey puppets to use as we listen.**

Show the "Balaam's Donkey Talks" poster.

Give each child a small paper bag. Place a bag on your hand and demonstrate for kids where to put the eyes, noses, mouths, and ears of their donkeys. Show kids how to trace two donkey-ear stencils on gray construction paper and one donkey tongue on pink construction paper. Let kids embellish their puppets with yarn "hair," too.

Donkey Puppets Supplies

Bible
1 small paper bag per
child
pink and gray
construction paper
pencils
scissors
glue
yarn

Teacher Pack

"Donkey Stencils"
"Balaam's Donkey
Talks" poster (from the
Big Bible Poster Pack)

Donkey Puppets Easy Prep

Punch out the shapes
on the "Donkey
Stencils" page.



After kids finish making their donkeys, gather everyone in a semicircle.

Say: **Every time you hear me say, “And then the donkey said...” have your donkey say, “Heehaw! Heehaw!” Let’s practice.** Lead kids in practicing the response a few times.

Say: **After the third time Balaam hit his donkey, the donkey turned around to look at Balaam. And then the donkey said...Pause for kids to respond. “Why did you hit me? What did I do to you?”**

Balaam said to his donkey, “You made a fool of me! If I had a sword, I’d kill you!”

The donkey thought about that for a second or two. And then the donkey said... Pause for kids to respond. “Am I not your very own donkey?”

Balaam, who was still very mad, said, “Yes! Of course you’re my very own donkey! What does that have to do with anything?”

And then the donkey said...Pause for kids to respond. “Well, since I’m your very own donkey, that means that I’m the donkey you’ve always ridden, right? Right up to this very day?”

And Balaam answered, “Yes! You’re my very own donkey, and you’re the donkey I’ve always ridden. Right up until today. So what?”

And then the donkey said...Pause for kids to respond. “Think about it, Balaam. I’m your very own donkey, the one that you’ve always ridden. Let me ask you one very important question: Have I done this to you before?”

Balaam thought for a minute and then said, “Well, no.” Then, all of a sudden, Balaam was able to see the angel standing in the road. The angel was holding a sword and blocking the road. Balaam bowed down before the angel.

The angel asked Balaam, “Why did you hit your donkey? I’ve come here to show you that you should take God seriously. The donkey saw me three times and turned away.”

Say: **Then the donkey said...Pause for kids to respond. “That’s right, I did!”**





The angel continued. “Now go on your journey, but make sure you only say what God tells you to say.”

So Balaam went to Moab, realizing that he could do only what God told him to do. When he got there, he didn’t curse the Israelites.

Have kids remove their puppets from their hands.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What do you think about the talking donkey and the angel?
- Tell about a way you think God gets your attention or that of someone else you know.

Say: When God made Balaam’s donkey talk, he showed Balaam his power. And God does amazing things to show his power to us, too. When we see God do amazing things, let’s stop what we’re doing right away and ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD.

Come and See!

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Say: Today we’re learning to ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD. We heard how God did amazing things to get Balaam’s attention, and he’ll do amazing things in our lives, too.

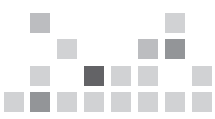
The Bible tells us all kinds of amazing things Jesus did, like healing sick people, bringing people back to life, and feeding thousands of people on a small amount of bread and fish. When Jesus did these things, people paid attention. Let kids talk about other amazing things Jesus did or things Jesus has done in their lives.

Open your Bible to Psalm 66:5, and show it to kids. Say: **Our Key Verse today is about the amazing things God does. Listen while I read what it says: “Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf!” That means God wants us to pay attention to how he does awesome things to take care of us and lead us.** Have the children repeat the verse with you several times: **“Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf!” (Psalm 66:5).**

Then have kids form pairs, and let them practice saying the verse using the donkey puppets. After a minute, let them show the rest of the group what they came up with.

Come and See! Supplies

Bible
donkey puppets from
the “Donkey Puppets”
activity



Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What do you think or feel about God doing amazing things?
- What can you do this week to pay attention to God?

Say: **We ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD** because God loves us. We know that he does amazing things, just like he did with Balaam, and we want to pay attention so we can know how God wants us to respond right away.

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Thank-You Cards

What You'll Do

Say: **God does amazing things to get our attention and to take care of us. Let's make thank-you cards for God to let him know we're paying attention and we want to thank him for how he leads us.**

Give each child a pencil, some crayons, and a Lesson 9 My Bible Fun page. Point out the "Thank-You Card" section.

Say: **Think about some amazing things God has done in your life. Maybe he healed a sick relative or helped you make a new friend when you moved to a new place. Write or draw those amazing things on your thank-you card as a way to tell God how much you appreciate what he's done.**

Encourage kids to have fun filling their thank-you cards with pictures or descriptions of amazing things God has done to show his power in their lives. As kids are working, play "Psalm 23" (track 2 on the CD). See the end of this lesson for a copy of the lyrics.

When kids finish drawing or writing, gather everyone in a circle. Invite children to briefly display their cards.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What's helpful about knowing that God is powerful?
- How will you thank God for the amazing things he does?



Thank-You Cards Supplies

- My Bible Fun
- CD player
- crayons
- pencils
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "Psalm 23" (track 2)

Thank-You Cards Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 9 pages from each My Bible Fun student book.





Daily Challenges Supplies

My Bible Fun
pens

Say: **God did amazing things to protect the Israelites, and God does amazing things to protect, take care of, and lead us. When we ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD, we see these things, and it helps us move ahead in our lives. This week, let's do our best to pay close attention to God and all he's telling us.**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Let's think about how we ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges in their My Bible Fun pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **When you're in the car, instead of listening to the radio, listen for God. Remember that God speaks to us no matter where we are.**
- **Use a megaphone or microphone to tell your family members about God's amazing power and how we can follow God when we pay attention to him.**
- **With a parent, read about some of the amazing things Jesus did in Luke 9. Then ask your parent to tell about something amazing God's done in his or her life.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.**

Say: **God spoke to Balaam through an angel after his donkey noticed the angel. God speaks to us, too. Let's remember to ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD as we follow through on our Daily Challenges.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about how we pay attention to God. Kids can also do the activities in the “HomeConnect” section of their My Bible Fun pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church’s families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids. Have them hold their thank-you cards on the My Bible Fun pages in their laps or their hands as you pray, offering them to God. Thank God that he cares so much about us that he’ll do amazing things to get our attention. Then have kids hold up their cards, and give them a chance to thank God and tell him they’ll pay attention to him this week. Then pray: **God, help us know right away when you’re trying to get our attention. Help us listen and do what you ask. In Jesus’ name, amen.**



Weaving Faith at Home Supplies

My Bible Fun



Lyrics ■■■■

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd. (*point up, and then pretend to hold a staff*)
(Repeat 4x.)

The Lord is my shepherd; (*point up, and then pretend to hold a staff*)
I shall not be in want. (*shake head no*)
He makes me lie down in green pastures. (*stretch arms out to sides*)
He leads me beside quiet waters. (*wiggle arms*)
He restores my soul. (*touch heart*)
He restores my soul. (*touch heart*)

He guides me in paths of righteousness (*put hand above eyes*)
For his name's sake. (*point up*)
Even though I walk through the valley (*walk in place*)
Of the shadow of death, (*point down*)
I will fear no evil, for you are with me; (*wave hands over and across each other*)
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me! (*put hands on hips and nod*)

You prepare a table before me (*move hand across in front of body with palm up*)
In the presence of my enemies. (*stomp foot*)
You anoint my head with oil; (*touch head*)
My cup overflows. (*lean to the side*)
My cup overflows. (*lean to the side*)

Surely goodness and love will follow me (*touch heart*)
All the days of my life, (*move hand across in front of body with palm up*)
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord (*touch hands above head like a roof*)
Forever, forever! (*shake hands above head*)

The Lord is my shepherd. (*point up, and then pretend to hold a staff*)
(Repeat 4x.)

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