



God Provides Water

Exodus 17:1-7

You can't overestimate the power of peer pressure for preteens. Some of the more common forms of peer pressure exist in temptation to gossip about others and the tendency to complain. The Israelites had a complaining problem, too, and God was patient with them. Use this lesson to help your kids see that they can appreciate God's patience with them and not misuse it by complaining all the time.



► Bible Point

God is patient with us.

Key Verse

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters" (Psalm 23:1-2).


Weaving Faith Into Life

Children will turn to God when they're tempted to complain.

LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Family Vacation <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Hear a complaining family, and consider how they've been with complainers and been complainers themselves.	Bible Buzz, CD player, pens Teacher Pack: CD	Tear out the Lesson 3 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.
2 Bible Exploration	How Thirsty Are You? <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Participate in an instant drama, and then discuss the people who complained.	CD player, pencil, salty crackers, cups of water Teacher Pack: CD	
	Complainers Hall of Shame <i>(about 20 min.)</i> Examine three people in the Bible who complained.	Bibles, Bible Buzz, pens, paper, index cards, tape	

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	No-Complaint Zone <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Play a game of finding alternatives to complaining.	index cards, pens Teacher Pack: mini groan tubes	
4 Lasting Impressions	Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Buzz	
	Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





Family Vacation Supplies

Bible Buzz
CD player
pens
Teacher Pack
CD: "The Whiners"
(track 7)

Family Vacation Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 3
pages from each Bible
Buzz student book.

1 GETTING STARTED

Family Vacation

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

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

Say: **There's nothing more fun than everyone in the family piling into the car for a carefree two-week drive across the country—unless there's a whiner in the car.**

Distribute pens and this week's Bible Buzz pages, and have kids find the "Bugs Me!" section.

Say: **Take 60 seconds to write down three things that absolutely bug you when you're on a long car trip. Maybe it bugs you that your car doesn't have air conditioning, or maybe wearing a seat belt for hours drives you crazy. Write down three things quickly. Go!**

When 60 seconds have passed, take a poll to see which things were most common. Find a willing preteen to offer up an idea from his or her list. Say: **If you have the same thing as [name of preteen saying the idea], whine "Me, too."** When this person's item has been polled, continue asking for willing kids to share their ideas as kids respond.

Say: **We're going to listen in on an entire family of whiners as they head off to Grandma's for a vacation. They've been in the car exactly 10 minutes when we hear them say this:**

Play "The Whiners" (track 7 on the CD).

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Tell about a time you were on a trip with someone who was a whiner.
- What about a time *you* were the whiner?
- How do people react to you when you're whining and complaining?

Say: **If we're honest, we all have to admit that sometimes we can be whiners and complainers. Today we'll explore a whole nation of complainers. And we'll discover what it means that ► GOD IS PATIENT WITH US. Let's remember to be grateful for God's patience and try not to misuse it with complaining.**



2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

How Thirsty Are You?

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **To help us think about our Bible passage today, let's experience what it's like to be thirsty.** Give each preteen a couple of salty crackers. Have kids eat the crackers. Don't allow anyone to get anything to drink.

Have kids form groups of about four and come up with some ideas of ways to obtain water. Say: **I bet you're pretty thirsty after those crackers, so take some time to think up ways to get water. You might design a covert operation, an argument for why you need water, or a scientific experiment that might produce water. It's your choice.** Allow time.

When kids have come up with their ideas, have them present them to the entire group.

Say: **You're going to act out the parts described on a track we'll listen to on the CD.** There are no lines or actions to learn—kids have to make up their parts as they go.

Ask for willing kids for these roles: Bernie, Moses, Man, Woman, and Elders. The rest of the kids can be the Israelites. Give Moses the sole prop you'll need: a pencil to serve as his staff. If you have a large group, you might break kids into groups of 8 to 10 and have them follow along. This way, each person will have an active role.

Play "Complaints, Complaints" (track 8 on the CD).

Say: **The Bible says the Israelites "put the Lord to the test." Their whining and complaining wasn't pretty to listen to, that's for sure.** Ask kids how thirsty they are at this point, and then give them cups of water.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Explain what it was like to be thirsty but not be given any water to drink.
- How did being thirsty test your patience?
- What do you think it means that the Israelites "put the Lord to the test"?
- Tell about a time you've been concerned about whether you have the things you need.
- What does God's response to the Israelites' complaining show us?

Say: **The Israelites were learning about God's care for them. They were learning that he was going to take care of them. When they put him to the test, they found that he was there caring for them, even though he didn't enjoy all that complaining.**



How Thirsty Are You? Supplies

- CD player
- pencil
- salty crackers
- cups of water
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "Complaints, Complaints" (track 8)

! ALLERGY ALERT





Complainers Hall of Shame Supplies

Bibles
Bible Buzz
pens
paper
index cards
tape

God can hear us and take care of us even if we don't complain. ► **GOD IS PATIENT WITH US**, and we can learn from his patience how to trust him and be patient for him to respond to us.

Complainers Hall of Shame

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **God has had plenty of opportunities to deal with complainers just like the Israelites and us, and we can learn something about him by seeing how he responded to the Israelites.**

Ask kids to form pairs, and give each pair a Bible, paper, and two pens. Have kids find the "Grievance Cards" on their Bible Buzz pages and follow the instructions found there.

Say: **A *grievance* is when someone does something wrong and you write a report of what happened. You'll have 10 minutes to fill out the "Grievance Cards."** Allow time.

Say: **We all complain from time to time. But God wants us to be content, not complaining. Let's explore a verse that helps us have an attitude like this.**

Have kids find and read the Key Verse, Psalm 23:1-2, on their Bible Buzz pages: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters."

Distribute three index cards to each preteen. Say: **Now reevaluate the Grievance Cards you wrote earlier. Look at each one with the Key Verse in mind. On your index card, write a new way to look at that situation.** When kids have finished all three of their index cards, have them tape these over the Grievance Cards on their Bible Buzz pages.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead pairs in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Why would it matter to a sheep to be in green pastures? to be led beside quiet waters?**

Ask pairs to report their insights to the larger group.

Say: **Sheep trust the shepherds to provide the care they need. God cares for us, his sheep, and as we allow him to do this, we will complain less.**



Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Do you typically think of complaining as something that's wrong or as something that you are justified in doing? Why?
- What's one area of life in which you think you might complain more than you'd like to?
- How does the Key Verse help you change your thoughts about complaining?
- What can you do to change your attitude the next time you feel like complaining?

Say: There are probably lots of things we do that test God's patience, as the Israelites did. We can refocus our minds, as our Key Verse does, to help us avoid complaining. If we think of God as our good shepherd leading us through obstacles in life, we can talk to him and follow him without complaining. ► **GOD IS PATIENT WITH US**, and we can show him love by avoiding complaining.

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

No-Complaint Zone

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **We usually complain because it's easier to complain than to think of an alternative. So to help you think of ways to not complain, we're going to play the "No-Complaint" game!**

Provide four index cards and a pen to each preteen.

Say: **On your index cards, write four complaints you regularly have, writing one complaint on each card.** If kids need help, you might offer suggestions of complaints they have. Kids might complain about their sisters taking too long in the bathroom, the amount of homework they have, or an older brother taking their stuff without asking.

Give kids a few minutes to write one complaint per card. Say: **Our complaining is not a pleasant sound to hear. It can get overwhelming, kind of like these groan tubes.** Shake a mini groan tube for kids to hear.

Then have kids form two teams and line up at one end of the room with their cards. Give each team a mini groan tube. Say: **The first person on each team will take the mini groan tube as she or he walks heel to toe to the other end of the room and then skips back to the relay line. The first person will read the complaint on one of his or her cards to the next person in line in the whiniest, most annoying voice possible. The second person in line will come up with a non-complaining alternative to the**



No-Complaint Zone Supplies

- index cards
- pens
- Teacher Pack**
- mini groan tubes





complaint and then take the groan tube and repeat the process as the first person goes to the back of the line.

Run the relay several times so kids can use different complaint cards. When kids have finished the relay, congratulate everyone for finding alternatives to complaining.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Was it easy or hard to come up with non-complaining responses in this game? Why?
- How is that like stopping yourself from complaining in real life?
- How can you let God help you not complain?

Say: **Complaining is a useless thing. It wastes our time, focuses us on negative things, and distracts us from God. There's no place for complaining in our lives. The Israelites put God's patience to the test, and because of that, we can see how ► GOD IS PATIENT WITH US. Find alternatives to complaining like you did in our game. Try to find ways to focus on God rather than on complaints.**

.....

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■

Say: **Let's think this week about how we can respect the fact that ► GOD IS PATIENT WITH US.**

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

- **Catch yourself in a complaint, or if that's not something you tend to notice, ask someone you trust to help you notice when you are complaining. Stop in the middle of the complaint, or before you begin it, and turn it around into a comment about how God is patient with you. Notice any effect this has on your attitude.**
- **Create your own psalm in the form of a song to praise God for his patience, provision, and love.**
- **Think of five things you often complain about. Then think of three reasons to be thankful for each of those things.**

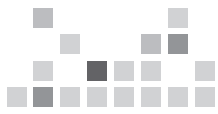
Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Daily Challenges
Supplies

.....

Bible Buzz





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, place, and other ideas.**

Say: **The Israelites helped us learn that even when we complain, ► GOD IS PATIENT WITH US. Let's focus ourselves on praising God instead of complaining by following through with our Daily Challenges this week.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about God's patience. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Buzz pages with their families.

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

Have kids find a place in the room by themselves. Invite them to spend one minute just listening to God. Remind them beforehand that if God is patient with them, they can patiently listen for anything he might have to say to them.

After a minute, have kids pray to God about anything that's on their minds, and then close the prayer time.



