



# Balaam's Donkey Talks

Numbers 22:1-38

For many kids this age, church seems like a thing that's mostly for adults. Many kids have heard the famous Bible passages so many times that they're no longer amazed by an epic flood, the creation of the world, or even the miracles Jesus did. Regardless of whether they've heard about God using Balaam's donkey to speak, kids are sure to drink up any chance to see God in a new, amazing light. Use this lesson to help kids realize that God's not stuffy and old—he's real and vibrant, and he's more than able to completely capture their attention.



### ► 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 find a unique way to pay attention to God's amazing power.

LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<b>1</b> Getting Started	<b>Amazing Things</b> <i>(about 15 min.)</i> List and then share amazing things they've seen or done.	Bible Buzz, pens	Tear out the Lesson 9 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.
<b>2</b> Bible Exploration	<b>The Talking Donkey</b> <i>(about 30 min.)</i> Discover what happened with Balaam's donkey, and explore the times in their own lives God's wanted them to pay attention.	Bibles, Bible Buzz, pens, paper <b>Teacher Pack:</b> Bible Timeline 	

*Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.*

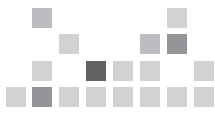




LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<b>3</b> Weaving Faith Into Life	<b>Thanks, God</b> <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Thank and praise God for the amazing things he's doing in and through them.	Bible Buzz	
<b>4</b> Lasting Impressions	<b>Daily Challenges</b> <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Buzz	
	<b>Weaving Faith at Home</b> <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

***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.

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### Amazing Things Supplies

Bible Buzz  
pens

### Amazing Things Easy Prep

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

### The Talking Donkey Supplies

Bibles  
Bible Buzz  
pens  
paper  
**Teacher Pack**  
Bible Timeline

## 1 GETTING STARTED

### Amazing Things

#### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

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

After everyone has arrived, distribute pens and this week's Bible Buzz pages, and have kids find the "Now We're Paying Attention!" section.

Say: **Some of you have seen amazing things, but you don't often get a chance to share them. That's not the case today!** Have kids take five minutes to interview each other and fill out their pages with the most amazing answers in each category.

#### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- What made you pay attention to the stories and things you wrote down more than the rest of the things you heard?
- Tell about the last time you weren't really paying attention when you were supposed to.
- How have you helped yourself when you've had a hard time paying attention but you needed to?

Say: **Sometimes we have to pay attention to things that aren't interesting, but other times amazing things capture our attention. When we really get to know God, we can learn to ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD because he's the most amazing being ever. God made every amazing thing on this earth, and he was there for every amazing thing that's ever happened. Today we're going to learn how God did something amazing to help someone pay attention to him.**

## 2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

### The Talking Donkey

#### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Show kids the "Balaam's Donkey Talks" picture on the Bible Timeline.

Say: **A guy named Balaam in the Bible was just not listening to God. While God will**





sometimes wait for someone to pay attention, this guy was in just the right place to really do a lot of damage to God’s people, the Israelites. So God went to some pretty epic lengths to get Balaam’s attention. He used a donkey.

Have kids form pairs. Allow a minute for each partner to come up with a really exciting story to tell his or her partner. Once kids are ready to tell their stories, say: **All right, get ready to amaze your partner! The only catch is that you have to tell your story without using any words.** Allow a few minutes, and then get kids’ attention.

Say: **We’re going to read about a situation in the Bible in which someone was in danger because of his own stubbornness. The problem is that the only one who could warn him about the danger wasn’t able to speak.**

Ask kids to form trios and find the “Amazing Results” section on their Bible Buzz pages. Provide pens and Bibles, and have kids turn to Numbers 22:1-38.

Say: **There are lots of people in this passage—and they all seem to want something. Look at the “Amazing Results” section. You’ll see there’s a roster of the people in this passage. As a trio, use the column on the left to dig into this passage and decide what each of these people wanted. Jot that down in the appropriate column. Then decide if they were amazed at the results they saw. Make a mark to also indicate whether you’re amazed.**

**Ready? You have 15 minutes. Begin now.**

After 15 minutes, ask trios to report their insights back to the larger group.

With their trios, have kids tell a true amazing story from their lives. Say: **When you tell your story this time, you can use words, just like Balaam’s donkey was able to tell what was going on using words.** Allow a few minutes. Then have kids talk about a time in their lives they needed to pay attention to God. Allow a couple of minutes.

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- God put this information in the Bible for us. Why do you think it’s so important that we know what happened with Balaam and his donkey?
- Explain what you expect when you tell someone an amazing story.
- What’s the difference between telling someone something when they’re paying attention to you and when they’re not?
- What about this experience makes you want to pay closer attention to God?

Say: **An amazing thing happened when God caused Balaam’s donkey to speak—and it was impressive. Balaam was stunned. God sometimes does amazing things to get the attention of people who aren’t listening (like Balaam). If God did something that amazing when someone wasn’t paying attention, just imagine the**





Thanks, God  
Supplies

Bible Buzz

things he can do with us when we *are* paying attention. Let's think more about ways we can ► **PAY ATTENTION TO GOD.**

### 3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

## Thanks, God

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **God wants us to give him all of our time and attention. When we focus on God, we're able to hear him and follow him more completely.**

Have kids find the Key Verse, Psalm 66:5, on their Bible Buzz pages: "Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man's behalf!" Ask a willing preteen to read the verse aloud while kids follow along.

Say: **Right where you're seated, please join me in offering one-sentence prayers to ask God to take all of our distractions and help us pay attention to him today.**

Allow kids who want to pray with you time to do so.

Say: **Tell a partner about someone you pay attention to. This could be someone at school who you admire or an older sibling or friend. Tell your partner why you pay attention to that person.**

After kids have shared with a partner, ask them to find another partner. Say: **Share with your new partner one way you think you could pay attention to God the same way you pay attention to people you admire.** Allow time.

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's different or the same about paying attention to God and paying attention to people you admire?**
- **What things most often distract you from paying attention to God?**
- **What's one way you want to make the time to focus on the amazing things God's doing?**

Say: **God did something as outrageous as making a donkey speak just to get Balaam's attention. Once God had Balaam's attention, he used him to bless the entire nation of Israel. We can give all of our attention to God. When we let him have all of our attention, we can find out what amazing things he'll do in our lives. We can ► **PAY ATTENTION TO GOD** when we get rid of other distractions.**



## 4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

### Daily Challenges

#### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

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

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:

- **In the morning, pay attention to all of the things you can think of that God did just to make the day start. Recognize him for everything from bringing the sun up to helping you sleep at night. Keep focusing on him until you run out of things to thank him for.**
- **The next time something amazing happens, pay attention to that amazing thing. Tell as many people as you can about what God did. Pay attention to him and make him famous for the amazing things he does.**
- **Create a commitment bracelet or another thing to wear on your hand or arm so you remember to think about God when you see that item. Commit to give your attention and focus to God all the time. Ask God to help you make each day an ongoing conversation with him, and then talk to him as often as he comes to mind.**

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.

#### 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: **We can give our focus and attention to God all the time. He's done amazing things like causing Balaam's donkey to talk. He's famous all over the world. Let's ► PAY ATTENTION TO GOD 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 paying attention to God. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Buzz pages with their families.



#### Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Buzz





Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families! Available at [group.com/digital](http://group.com/digital).

Say: **Let's pay attention to the amazing things God has done, the amazing things he's doing, and the amazing things he will do through us as we give him our hearts. Please join me in giving our attention to God right now.**

After the kids who want to pray have completed their prayers, position yourself at the door as kids prepare to leave. Ask kids to line up single file. As they leave, look at each person individually, and share the following verse with him or her, making eye contact as you recite it. Use their names in the appropriate place:

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

