

October 6, 2013

Lesson 5: Manna



Exodus 16:1-18

The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim; and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.' So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?' And Moses said, 'When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord.'

Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining." ' And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God." '

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: "Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents." ' The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.

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Manna

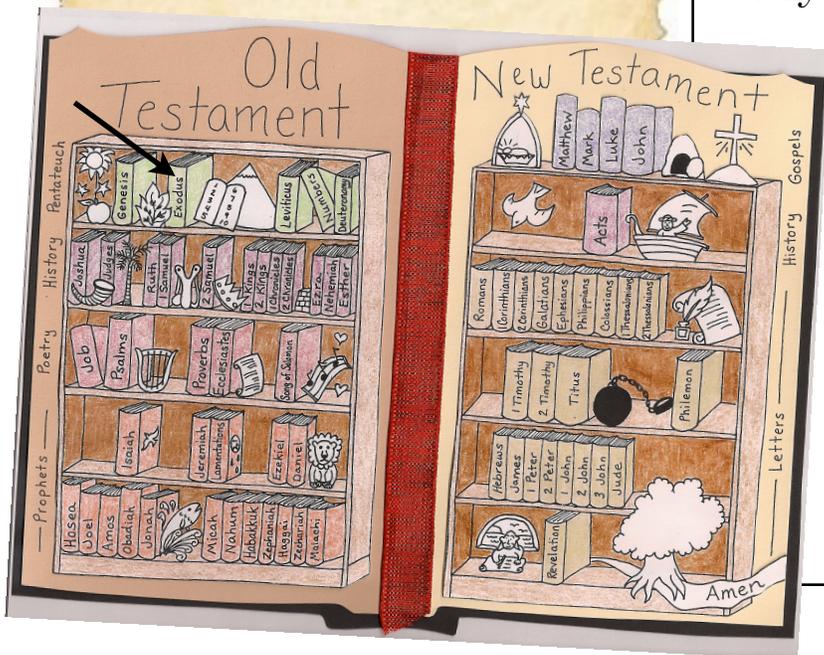
Exodus 16:1-18

“At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord Your God.”

The Big Story Truth: God hears the cries of the people and provides food. God gives all that they need from day to day.

About This Scripture Passage: Oh for the good old days! This story takes place after God (through Moses’ leadership) has freed the people from slavery in Egypt as they are on their way to the good land that God has promised to give them. The collective memory, though, of how the people cried out under the oppression of slavery is short lived. The travelers get hungry and suddenly in their minds Egypt is rosy place of abundance.

What’s interesting about this passage is what they do and they don’t do and what God’s response is. First of all, the people are hungry. But rather than addressing the God of miracles who brought them out of Egypt with this legitimate need for God to do something about it, they complain and curse the day of their liberation. But although God could curse them back as an ungrateful mess of a people not worthy of the promises he has given them, God doesn’t. God instead gives food. The food that God gives though also comes as a “test.” The food will not be able to be hoarded from day to day. The people will only be able to collect and store enough for one day’s use at a time. It won’t save from one day to the next. So the people must daily trust God. The whole journey is by the grace and provision of God, so must be the strength and resources to continue on.



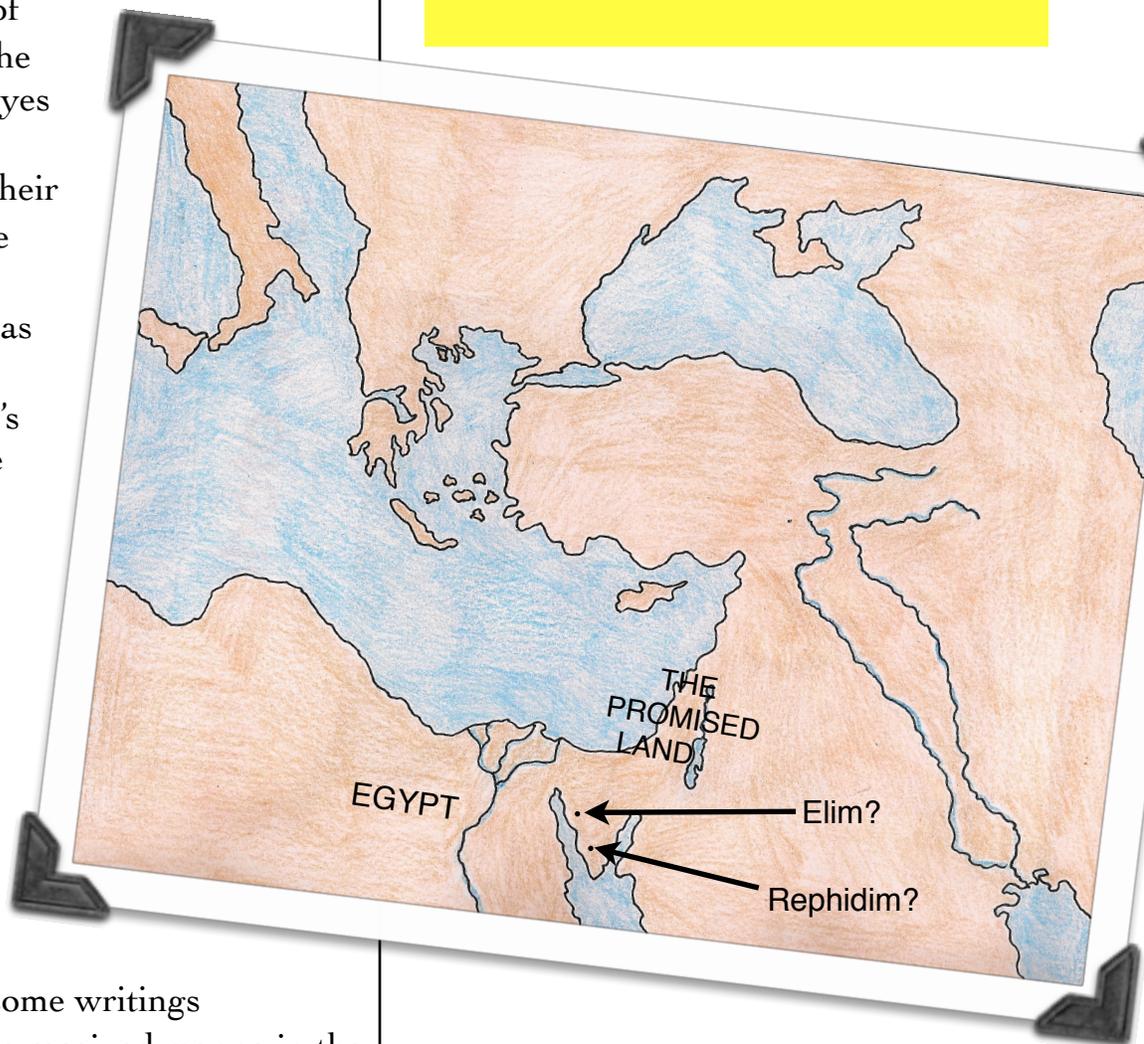
Making the Connection: We pray in the Lord's prayer for "daily bread." We talk in Luther's meanings to the Apostles' Creed about God providing "all we need from day to day." It is so easy to go through life and point only to the hardships or the good that used to be, without seeing what God is providing in this moment. One of the best gifts that we can give our children is to help them recognize the good things in their lives as being gifts from God. For them to know that God is providing for them, caring for them, giving them what they need, sets the stage for them to experience the joy of living in trust of God's provision. When the Holy Spirit opens their eyes to this way that God is present and working in their lives, it also inspires a life lived in thankfulness in response for what God has done. This is more than about learning a story. It's about learning to live the whole of their lives in joyful trust and grateful response.

Where in the World Are We? The Israelites have left Egypt and are on their way to the promised land. While we don't know exactly where they were when this incident happened, some writings indicate that the Israelites received manna in the area between Elim and Rephidim, perhaps along the west side of the Sinai Peninsula.

For Your Reflection:

How do you see God providing for you today? How might you share that with your kids?

How are you responding gratefully for what God has given you? How might you involve your kids in that thankful response?



Large Group Gathering

Welcome kids and parents who are able to attend for Family Faith 5. Ask for a volunteer to help remind everyone what happened at Sunday School last week. (We watched the movie “The Prince of Egypt”) Ask: **In the movie last week, God freed his people from slavery. God came to Moses in the burning bush and told him what to do in order to get the people away from Egypt. How do you think everyone felt when they were finally free?** (Wait for responses.) I imagine that they were probably very happy. **But do you know what? After a while something happened. The people got worried because they were way out in the dessert and they didn’t see any food close by. The people started to worry that God would let them starve in the desert. What do you think? Does that sound like something God would do to his people?** (Wait for responses) **NO!** Today in our classes we are going to hear about how God provided for his people food in the desert. **But before we do that, we need to do our Family Faith 5. So get together in your family groups please. If your parents or grandparents weren’t able to make it today, you can come and gather with the teachers that are here.**

Give each group 5 minutes to do their Family Faith 5. After the time is up, call everyone back together. Parents and adults who will be going to the adult class can be dismissed. Say to the kids: **Before you go and hear the story in your classes, let’s sing again about how God provides. Do you remember that song we’ve been learning that has the Hebrew words for God provides? Right! It’s Jehovah Jireh. Let’s sing that one together!**

Sing Jehovah Jireh. If you have time, say: **The story about God providing that we are going hear today comes from the second book in the Bible. Remember the first was the book of Genesis. Who knows what the second book is?** (Exodus. Get out the Bible Bookshelf and point it out.) **To help us remember the books of the Bible, let’s sing our books of the Bible song!** Sing the Old Testament books of the Bible.

An additional song option that would fit well for this week is “Everything We Need.” Sing this and/or additional songs as time allows and then dismiss students to their classes.

Family Faith 5

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1. Each person shares their high and low (the best and worst things that happened this week.)
2. Read together this Bible Verse:
“At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord Your God.”
3. Talk about how the Bible verse relates to your highs and lows.
4. Pray aloud for one another’s highs and lows.
5. Bless one another. Make the sign of the cross on each other’s heads and say these words: _____, God will provide for you!

Preschool

Materials Needed:

- Spark Story Bible
- Clean blanket or tarp (as big as possible!)
- Popped popcorn
- Small paper or snack sized ziplock bags
- Several colors of prepared Manna Paint (see recipe below)
- Small disposable plastic bowls (1 per color of paint plus 2 or 3 for glue)
- White school glue
- Several foam brushes

Before the Children Arrive:

Prepare several colors of manna paint and place each color into a small bowl. Pour white glue into a couple of disposable plastic bowls. Set these aside until activity time. Spread a large clean blanket out on the floor. Set popcorn close by but out of the view of children if possible.

Experiencing the Story:

Gather all the children around you on the floor on the blanket or tarp. Ask kids to take their shoes off before coming to sit with you on the blanket. Say: **Before we read the story for this morning. I have a question for you. We talked in opening about how it must have felt to the people to leave Egypt and to finally be free. Can you show me with your faces how it would feel to be so happy about that! Great faces! Now I'm wondering if you can show me a face that is a hungry face. How do you feel when you are hungry? Wow! Those are good hungry faces! I can see how sad you look and how it looks like your tummy hurts! Well, the people in our story today were starting to feel like that. They needed food! Let's read the story about how God provided what they needed.**

Read "Manna, Quail, and Water" from the Spark Story Bible (pages 90-93).

After finishing the story, say: **Now, I have another question for you. Can you show me with your faces what you think the people felt like after God provided the food and water that they needed? Look at all those happy faces!**

I think the people must have been very happy to know that God had provided everything that they needed!

Let's pretend like we are God's people waiting for food. Can you show me those sad faces again. Great! Ok. So the people went to bed with sad faces. Let's lay down on our blanket and pretend like we are going to sleep. Close your eyes.

While the children's eyes are closed, you or a classroom helper should sprinkle popcorn around the children. After the popcorn has been sprinkled, stretch and say: Oh my! It's morning time. Look! God provided food for us! God has given us manna! Here... each of you take one of these containers and gather enough manna for today. Make sure you don't take too much! You'll know you have too much if your bag starts to overflow! Take just enough.

Wow! Look at our faces now! We are all happy, aren't we! Knowing that God is providing for us makes us very happy just like it did Moses and his friends!

You may go ahead and eat your manna. Well, its really popcorn isn't it, but we'll call it manna since that's what God gave to the people in our story for today. While you're eating, I'm going to set a few things out for our project... because today we are going to paint pictures about the manna God gave!

Activity:

3-D Manna (a.k.a. Popcorn) Paint

Ingredients:

1 cup popped popcorn
2 tbs. water
5-7 drops food coloring
large ziplock bag
white school glue

Directions:

Pour popcorn into a large ziplock bag. Mix food coloring and water and then pour the mixture on top of the popcorn. Seal the ziplock bag and shake until the popcorn changes color. Pour the popcorn out onto a paper towel to dry.

Set several different colors of Manna Paint out on the table in bowls. Show children how to use paint brushes to spread some glue on their papers and then cover the glue with the popcorn mixture.

Give each student their own coloring page to “paint” with the Manna Paint.



Additional Activity Options:

1. **God is So Good-** Teach children the song “God is So Good” The words are:

God is so good.

God is so good.

God is so good.

He’s so good to me.

Make up additional verses to the song, such as:

God gives us food or God answers prayer.

2. **Caring for Others-** God provided food and water for his people wandering in the desert. Ask kids to think about what people need today. How can they help provide something that someone needs? Brainstorm ideas as a class and pick one to work on. (For example, maybe they can help hold the door for people coming into church this morning. Or maybe they can share some of their popcorn snack with someone who didn’t have a chance to eat breakfast before coming to church this morning, etc.) One of the ways that God provides for other people is through us!

Early Elementary

Materials Needed:

- Popped popcorn sprinkled with sugar
- Bowls/napkins
- Cups for water
- Spark Story Bible
- Unflavored gelatin
- Hot water
- Cookie Cutters
- Twine
- Drinking straw or stick
- Cooking spray
- Birdseed
- Aluminum foil

Before the Students Arrive:

Prepare a bowl of popcorn sprinkled with sugar. Set out bowls/napkins and cups for water at each place at the table so that each child can have their own snack.

Experiencing the Story:

Welcome students into the room and help kids dish up their sweet treat. Say: **Can you imagine walking and walking and walking out in the hot sun and not having any food or water? It would not be fun, would it? People need food and water in order to keep going. Our bodies need food and water for energy and to live. After God's people left Egypt, they had a long way to walk. God knew that they needed food.... but they were way out in the middle of nowhere! Where would they get food? Let's read the story and find out what happened.**

Read "Manna, Quail, and Water" from the Spark Story Bible (pages 90-93). Ask students the question on page 93: **What are some things you need that God provides for you?**

Activity:

Say: **God provided manna from heaven for the people in the desert. God provides food and clothes for us through families and people who love us.**

The Bible even tells us that God provides for plants and animals too! That's what we've been studying about when we've been learning about the Apostles' Creed. We've been learning about how God made the whole world and takes care of us all!

God provides in many different ways. God can even use us to help provide for others. Today we are going to celebrate the good things that God provides by helping to provide for someone else. Today we are going to provide food for the birds that live outside our church.

Use the recipe below to make bird cookies with the class.

Bird Cookies

Ingredients:

*unflavored gelatin
cookie cutters
twine
drinking straw or stick
cooking spray
aluminum foil
birdseed*

Directions:

Mix gelatin with hot water according to the package directions. Add birdseed. Let it sit until it starts to form clumps. While it is cooling, spray the cookie cutters with cooking spray and place on a sheet of aluminum foil. Fill cookie cutters with birdseed mixture. Use a straw or stick to poke a whole through the center of the cookie. Allow the cookie to harden. (Putting it in the freezer for a few minutes will speed this up.) Then add string and hang it from a tree branch. Watch the birds rejoice in the food that's been provided!

As the cookies are cooling, engage the kids in conversation. You might use questions like these: **What are some other ways that God can use you to provide for others? How do you thank God for all that he has provided for you? Let's say a thank you prayer together.** Write the word "THANKS" or "THANK YOU" on the board. For each letter of the word, have kids think of one thing that God has provided them that starts with that same letter. For example "Thanks God for Teeth! Thanks God for Homes!" etc.

Upper Elementary/ Middle School & High School

Materials Needed:

- Spark NRSV Bibles
- Access to the church kitchen (ovens)
- Flour
- Wheat flour
- Baking soda
- Salt
- Shortening
- Honey
- Water
- Mixing bowl
- Cookie Sheet

Before the Students Arrive:

Confirm your plans to bake the communion bread with your pastor and/or the altar guild. They can also give instructions on where the bread should be taken after class so that it can be used during the service.

Experiencing the Story:

Greet the students as they come in. For the sake of time, try to get them settled into their seats as quickly as possible today. Say: **Ok, well its no secret that God didn't let his people starve out in the desert. So let's read together about just what God provided for them way out there.**

Ask students to take turns reading Exodus 16:1-18. Have kids write in the margins of their Bibles, "God provides manna!"

Say: **In the reading for today, God provided miraculously food for the people in the dessert. Now, we don't know exactly how God did it. We don't have a description of what recipe God used for manna or even whether there might have been a natural explanation for the food. (Some scientists think it might have been that there was a certain type of insect that produced a kind of**

honeydew that was the manna that the Israelites found.) What we do know is that the people needed food, and God provided it.

Sometimes God provides miraculously. Sometimes God provides through natural means, through creation. Other times, God provides through people. Think for a second about some of the things that you have needed as you grew up. Food, clothing, home, family, those kinds of things. How were those provided to you?

Many times the way that God provides is through other people. When you were a baby (and even still now probably) God provides some of the things you need through your families. Your food, your house, your clothes. All those things are gifts from God. God enables your parents or other caring adults in your life to give you those things.

So sometimes God works through miracles. And sometimes God works through people. We have a phrase to describe that in our church. The motto of the ELCA is "God's work. Our hands." God enables us to care for one another and God can use us to provide what someone else needs.

Activity:

Say: Today we have a service project opportunity. God gave manna to save the people wandering in the desert. In our worship service, God gives himself in bread and wine to God's people today. Today we are going to be making the bread for the worship service. This is one way God can use you to provide for others!

Take kids to the church kitchen and follow the recipe below to make the communion bread.

Communion Bread Recipe

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup wheat flour
3/4 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
3 tbsp. shortening
3 tbsp honey
3/4 cup water

Directions:

Mix dry ingredients. Cut in shortening. Add honey, then water. Mix by hand. Turn onto a floured surface and knead for a bit. Divide and shape into 4 balls. Roll or press to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut a shallow cross through the top. Bake for 10 minutes at 350 degrees on a cookie sheet.

While the bread is baking, visit with the students about other ways that God might provide for others through them. What gifts has God given them to share? Tell the class that we will talk more about that next week.

After the bread is done, before dismissing your class, gather around the bread you have made. Ask for a volunteer to pray for all of you as you go to worship and head into the week.

* **IMPORTANT NOTE**- Ask kids if they have access to a phone with internet capabilities that they can bring with them to class next week. If they do, ask them to bring it!