## **Sunday school lesson - Upper Primary**

<b>BIG IDEA</b>	God is better than anything else
Bible Reading	Numbers 11
Preparation	Read Numbers 11 This chapter follows on from 10 chapters describing how the Lord would be present with his people, and the importance and significance of this. The immediate response of his people is to complain and wail over a lack of cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic! They despise the Lord's provision of manna, and once again express their preference to have remained in slavery in Egypt, where they could eat fish "at no cost"! God recognises that the root of this complaint is that they have rejected him (v.20). They failed to recognise the immense blessing of having God himself dwell among them, and instead wanted to return to slavery. Dwelling on the nature and character of our God, and the blessings we have as believers, both now and in the future, will help to put our present difficulties into perspective. It is the antidote to complaining about the circumstances that God has placed us in and saves us from believing the lie that life without God is better.  Take home message: What God offers is much better than anything else. Recognising
	this will help us be content with whatever situation we are in.
	<b>Prepare</b> for "Getting Started": Either use the activity suggested for "Lower Primary", or just discuss the question below.
Getting Started	Q: Do you sometimes think life is easier for people who aren't Christians? What sorts of things can happen that make you think this? Today we are going to see the truth about the choice of living with God or without God.
Finding Out	Read Exodus 3:16-17
1. Complaining	Q: What had God promised the Israelites while they were still in Egypt?
despite God's	Q: What had God done for his people since they were in Egypt?
presence and provision	God had rescued them from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and provided food (manna) and water for them in the desert.
	Q: In what ways did God show that he was with his people in the desert?
	Read Numbers 11:4-6
	<ul> <li>Q: What is so shocking about the Israelites' behaviour?</li> <li>God had done amazing things for his people and promised that he would be with them and take them to their new home. Instead of being thankful and in awe of God, they complained that they didn't have any cucumber!</li> <li>Not only that, instead of rejoicing in the freedom God had miraculously gained</li> </ul>
	for them, they wanted to go back to Egypt – to the place of slavery.
	Q: How do you think God felt about this?
2. Rejecting God in	Read Numbers 11:10
favour of slavery	Q: How did God react to the people's complaining?
	God thinks it's a big deal when we take his blessings for granted, and don't respond the way we should.

	Read Numbers 11:11-14
	Q: How did Moses respond to the people's complaining?
	> It was too much for Moses to keep loving and caring for people that only
	complain and wail. Yet this is exactly what God does! God also graciously
	provided for Moses, by setting apart 70 people to help him look after the people.
	Read Numbers 11:18-20
	➤ God heard his people, just as he did when they were in Egypt. But this time, it has
	an ominous rather than comforting implication!
	• Q: What does God say is the reason the people are complaining (v.20)?
	➤ God himself is among them (they just had to look up to see) but they rejected
	him and wanted something that they thought was better instead – meat!
3. Mercy and	Read Numbers 11:21-23
judgement	Q: What did Moses see as a big problem?
	<ul> <li>Even after seeing everything God had done for them, Moses still couldn't quite</li> </ul>
	believe that God could feed 600,000 men (and families) meat in the desert.
	> Sometimes we see God provide for us in one situation, but then straight away
	doubt that he could provide in a different situation!
	Read Numbers 11:31-34
	• Q: What is the answer to God's question in v.23?
	➤ God clearly showed he was well able to provide. Imagine being there and seeing
	piles of birds 90cm deep as far as the eye could see (you had to walk for a whole
	day to get beyond the birds!)
	➤ And yet the people wanted to go back to slavery and eat cucumbers and garlic!
	➤ They were offered the opportunity to have God himself (who could rain down
	mountains of meat) living with them, leading and guiding them. Their response
	was to say, "Why would we want that, when we could have cucumbers?"
	Q: Why do you think the people chose slavery and cucumbers over living with God
	in the desert?
	> Living with God involved hardship (they were in a desert). They had to follow him
	into the unknown. They needed to live his way.
	> But if they had recognised what God had in store for them, and the privilege they
	had at the time by having God living amongst them, then they would have
	realised the hardship was a small thing in comparison.
So What?	Q: What do you sometimes find hard when trying to live as a Christian?
	Q: How can remembering what God is like and what he promises you help?
	> If you are not a Christian, you are choosing slavery and cucumbers over what God
	offers. They might seem great, but they are nothing compared to living with him.
Memory Verse	Matthew 28:20b
	Surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

## Sunday school lesson - Lower Primary

<b>BIG IDEA</b>	God is better than anything else
Bible Reading	Numbers 11
Preparation	Read Numbers 11 This chapter follows on from 10 chapters describing how the Lord would be present with his people, and the importance and significance of this. The immediate response of his people is to complain and wail over a lack of cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic! They despise the Lord's provision of manna, and once again express their preference to have remained in slavery in Egypt, where they could eat fish "at no cost"! God recognises that the root of this complaint is that they have rejected him (v.20). They failed to recognise the immense blessing of having God himself dwell among them, and instead wanted to return to slavery. Dwelling on the nature and character of our God, and the blessings we have as believers, both now and in the future, will help to put our present difficulties into perspective. It is the antidote to complaining about the circumstances that God has placed us in and saves us from believing the lie that life without God is better.  Take home message: What God offers is much better than anything else. Recognising this will help us be content with whatever situation we are in.  Prepare for "Getting Started": Have pictures to compare (e.g. ice-cream and dirt; chocolate and worms; teddy and rocks). Have a cucumber or picture of one for use
Getting Started	during the story.  Play "Which is better" – show pairs of pictures and get the children to tell you which
Setting Started	thing they would rather have. Talk about the fact that its very clear sometimes which thing is better to have if you are given a choice. In the story from the bible today, some people made a very foolish choice.
Finding Out	Q: What had God done for his people since they were in Egypt?
1. Complaining despite God's	God had rescued them from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and provided food (manna) and water for them in the desert.
presence and provision	<ul> <li>Q: How did God show that he was with his people in the desert? (the cloud)</li> <li>God had rescued his people. He promised to always be with them and take them to a new home. And he made sure they had plenty of food to eat.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Q: What do you think the people said to God for doing all these things for them?</li> <li>You would think they would say "Thank you, God", but this is what they said.</li> <li>Read Numbers 11:4-6</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Q: What did the people say to God?</li> <li>Instead of being thankful, they complained that they didn't have any meat or cucumber to eat! What a terrible way to treat God!</li> </ul>
2. Rejecting God in favour of slavery	<ul> <li>Q: How do you think God felt about this?</li> <li>Read Numbers 11:10</li> <li>God was very angry with his people. He was angry that his people weren't</li> </ul>
	thankful for everything he had done for them.

	<ul> <li>Act out a scenario – one person says to the other person that they have a choice between being friends or having a cucumber (show actual or picture of a cucumber). If they choose friendship, then the first person will take care of them, and be kind to them. If they choose the cucumber, then they can't be friends. The 2<sup>nd</sup> person then says, "I don't want to be friends, I want the cucumber". How would that make the first person feel?</li> <li>That is exactly what God's people were saying to God. "I don't care about being friends with you God, I just want cucumbers"!</li> <li>How foolish, to choose cucumbers over friendship with God. God is the best possible friend in all the world!</li> </ul>
3. Mercy and	Q: What do you think God said to his people when they treated him so badly?
judgement	<ul> <li>God punished them for what they did. He sent a plague so lots of people got sick</li> </ul>
	and some even died.
	> But as well as punishing his people, God also gave them what they asked for!
	Read Numbers 11:31-32
	> He made a big wind, which blew over to them lots and lots and lots of birds.
	There were so many birds that if you stood up, the pile of birds would be above
	your head! (Get them to stand up to demonstrate a pile 1½ meters high)
	As far as could see, there were piles and piles of birds. If you walked all day, you would still be passing piles of birds.
	God's people had asked for meat – so God gave them meat! So much meat that they couldn't eat it all!
	Q: Why did God give his people meet even though they had behaved so badly?
	> It was only because God is kind and merciful. Even though his people had treated
	him very, very badly, and said they would prefer cucumbers to being friends with
	God, he still was kind to them and gave them lots of food to eat!
So What?	Q: What are some things that you really wish you could have?
	> Having God as your friend is better than any of those things! It is better than
	anything else you can ever think of.
	God promises to always be with us and care for us, and to get us safely to heaven
	<ul><li>one day if we are trusting him. Nothing is better than that!</li><li>Pray that the children would see how great it is to have God as their friend and to</li></ul>
	want that more than anything else.
Memory Verse	Matthew 28:20b
	Surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

## Sunday school lesson - Pre-School

BIG IDEA	God is better than anything else
Bible Reading	Numbers 11
Preparation	Read Numbers 11 This chapter follows on from 10 chapters describing how the Lord would be present with his people, and the importance and significance of this. The immediate response of his people is to complain and wail over a lack of cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic! They despise the Lord's provision of manna, and once again express their preference to have remained in slavery in Egypt, where they could eat fish "at no cost"! God recognises that the root of this complaint is that they have rejected him (v.20). They failed to recognise the immense blessing of having God himself dwell among them, and instead wanted to return to slavery. Dwelling on the nature and character of our God, and the blessings we have as believers, both now and in the future, will help to put our present difficulties into perspective. It is the antidote to complaining about the circumstances that God has placed us in and saves us from believing the lie that life without God is better.  Take home message: What God offers is much better than anything else. Recognising this will help us be content with whatever situation we are in.  Prepare for "Getting Started": Have pictures to compare (e.g. ice-cream and dirt; chocolate and worms; teddy and rocks). Have a cucumber or picture of one for use during the story.
Getting Started	Play "Which is better" – show pairs of pictures and get the children to tell you which thing they would rather have. Talk about the fact that its very clear sometimes which thing is better to have if you are given a choice. In the story from the bible today, some people made a very foolish choice.
Finding Out  1. Complaining despite God's presence and provision	<ul> <li>Remember that God had rescued his people and freed them from being slaves. He had promised to be with them and take them to a new home.</li> <li>Q: How did God show that he was with his people?</li> <li>God had also provided food for them. Every day, he rained down special bread so that every day they could just pick it up off the ground and eat it. The special bread was call manna.</li> <li>God had rescued his people. He promised to always be with them and take them to a new home. And he made sure they had plenty of food to eat.</li> <li>Q: What do you think the people said to God for doing all these things for them?</li> <li>You would think they would say "Thank you, God", but this is what they said.</li> <li>Read Numbers 11:4-6</li> <li>Instead of being thankful, they complained that they didn't have any meat or cucumber to eat! What a terrible way to treat God!</li> </ul>
2. Rejecting God in favour of slavery	<ul> <li>Q: How do you think God felt about this?</li> <li>God was very angry with his people. He was angry that his people weren't thankful for everything he had done for them.</li> </ul>

	<ul> <li>Act out a scenario – one person says to the other person that they have a choice between being friends or having a cucumber (show actual or picture of a cucumber). If they choose friendship, then the first person will take care of them, and be kind to them. If they choose the cucumber, then they can't be friends. The 2<sup>nd</sup> person then says, "I don't want to be friends, I want the cucumber". How would that make the first person feel?</li> <li>That is exactly what God's people were saying to God. "I don't care about being friends with you God, I just want cucumbers"! (relate back to "Getting Started" activity).</li> <li>How foolish, to choose cucumbers over friendship with God. God is the best possible friend in all the world!</li> </ul>
3. Mercy and judgement	<ul> <li>Q: What do you think God said to his people when they treated him so badly?</li> <li>God punished them for what they did. Lots of people got sick and some even died.</li> <li>But as well as punishing his people, God also gave them what they asked for!</li> <li>He made a big wind, which blew over to them lots and lots and lots of birds. There were so many birds that if you stood up, the pile of birds would be above your head! (Get them to stand up to demonstrate a pile 1½ meters high)</li> <li>As far as could see, there were piles and piles of birds (demonstrate looking all around an only seeing birds)</li> <li>God's people had asked for meat – so God gave them meat! So much meat that they couldn't eat it all!</li> <li>How kind God is! Even though his people had treated him very, very badly, and said they would prefer cucumbers to being friends with God, he still was kind to them and gave them lots of food to eat!</li> </ul>
So What?	<ul> <li>Q: Who do you think is best possible person to be friends with?</li> <li>Having God as your friend is better than anything else. He tells us we can be friends with him, if we say sorry and trust him to forgive us.</li> <li>Pray that the children would realise that having God as their friend is better than anything else, and so choose him over everything else.</li> </ul>
Memory Verse	Matthew 28:20b Surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.