



Balaam and Balak

Numbers 22-24

BALAAM & BALAK

Bible Passage: Numbers 22-24

Story Point:

God commanded Balaam to bless his people.

Key Passage: Proverbs 3:5

Big Picture Question: What does it mean to sin?

To sin is to go against God and his commands.

Catechism: Q: *What sort of Redeemer is needed to bring us back to God?* A: *One who is truly human and also truly God.*

Introduce the Story with activities

Teach the Story then Watch the Story (Bible Story Video)

Apply the Story (Optional Activities)

LINKS TO ACTIVITY PAGES

- [Forest Activity Page \(pages 7-8\)](#)
- [Treehouse Activity Page \(pages 7-8\)](#)
- [Canopy Activity Page \(pages 7-8\)](#)

KEY PASSAGE and BIBLE STORY PICTURE

- [Key passage poster \(Proverbs 3:5-6\)](#)
- [Bible Story Picture \(page 3\)](#)

BIBLE STORY VIDEOS

- [Preschool Bible story video](#)
- [Elementary Bible story video](#)

CHILDREN'S BULLETINS

- [Preschool Bulletin](#)
- [Elementary Bulletin](#)

OPENING QUESTION & BIG PICTURE

Prompt kids to tell about what animals they like best. After they speak for a bit about their favorite animals, ask if any of them like donkeys best.

Say · You may not think donkeys are the best animal, but they can be very useful as a work animal to pull things. Today we will hear about a time God used a donkey in a very different way. God gave the donkey the ability to speak! What would your pets say if they could speak?

BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Say · Remember our big picture question? I'll say it once, then you say it with me. Ready? ***What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God or His commands.*** Now you say it with me: ***What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God or His commands.*** Great job. That means that sin is more than just what we do. Sin affects every part of our lives and makes it impossible for us to please God on our own.

OPENING ACTIVITY

OBSTACLE COURSE

Create an obstacle course using existing items in the house. At the end of the course, open a Bible, point to the key passage, and read it aloud. Have each child run the obstacle course and help children with the key passage if they are too young to read.

Say · In today's story, the main character faces a serious obstacle—the angel of the Lord! What do you do when you face obstacles? An obstacle is something that stands in the way of you and something you want or somewhere you want to go. Does it make you stop and freeze? How do you feel when there is something in your way of doing something? Like if someone is standing in the way of you watching TV or you can't get up from the table if you don't eat your vegetables. Or even worse, what if your big obstacle is getting over a fear you have of the dark or a bully at school?

ACTIVITY PAGE

Invite kids to complete their age appropriate activity page (see page 1).

Say · Have you ever heard the name Balaam (BAY luhm) before? Have you ever met someone named Balak (BAY lak)? Today you'll hear about two people who lived more than three thousand years ago. As you might have guessed, their names were Balaam and Balak.

TRANSITION TO BIBLE STUDY

To gain the attention of all the kids and invite them to Bible study, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. **Invite kids to make donkey noises as they gather together for the Bible story.**

SET EXPECTATIONS for Group Time

Before beginning the lesson briefly set expectations and go over our 5 up Rules. Model 5 up rules (What does it NOT look like and what DOES it look like). Model "Be Kind" and "Be safe" (What does it NOT look like and what DOES it look like)

Sit UP

Zip UP

Listen UP

Look UP

Hand UP

TELL THE BIBLE STORY (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Numbers 22-24. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story. Use the **bolded words** for preschoolers. Show the Bible story video later to remind the kids what they learned.

SAY -*That brings us to the people of Israel. Two weeks ago, we learned that 12 scouts were sent to examine the promised land. Ten did not trust God and led the people away from Him, but Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give His people the promised land. Last week we learned that the people sinned again, this time by believing that God would not provide for them and by saying ungrateful things about the food He had already provided. When dangerous snakes came as punishment for their sin, God told His people to look at the bronze snake to be healed. This week, we will learn about a man who was hired to curse God's people. Our story is called "Balaam and Balak."*

Remind children that all the stories in the Bible are telling an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

*Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story. Use the **bolded words** for preschoolers. Show the Bible story video later to remind the kids what they learned.*

SAY -How would you react if your pet started talking to you? Isn't it strange that Balaam didn't say "Whoa, you can talk!" or anything like that? He was so focused on how angry he felt, he did not even stop to wonder how the donkey spoke. God was using the donkey to get Balaam's attention and change Balaam's plans. Balaam was traveling to see Balak, an enemy of God's people. Balak hired Balaam to curse God's people, but God had a very different plan.

You see, even though Balak sinned by going against God and His people, **God commanded Balaam to bless His people.** That's exactly what Balaam did. Balaam proclaimed a blessing over God's people, and God revealed some things about the coming Rescuer. Balaam's message meant that the Rescuer was coming from Jacob's family and that He would be a King. We know that Jesus is the Rescuer from Jacob's family, and He is the King of kings.

Even in the middle of our sinful choices, God is still in control. Balaam encountered God, and it drastically changed his plans. When we encounter Jesus, it changes our whole lives.

Christ connection

SAY · Balaam could not curse God's people. God had blessed the Israelites, so Balaam blessed them too. Fourteen hundred years after Balaam announced God's promise, Jesus was born. God sent Jesus to bless the whole world by rescuing people from sin.

BIBLE STORY

Balaam and Balak | *Numbers 22-24*

God's people were finally at the edge of the promised land. They **camped** near the river **in** the plains of a land called **Moab** (MOH ab).

Now **Balak** (BAY lak), **the king of Moab**, saw the Israelites, and he **was afraid**. **If the Israelites moved into Moab, they would take over!** So **King Balak sent messengers to a man named Balaam**. The messengers said, **"Come and curse the Israelites so that I might be able to win against them."**

As Balaam traveled, the angel of the LORD came to stop him. Balaam could not see the angel, but his donkey could.

Three times the angel stood in the way, and three times the donkey stopped. First the donkey went off the road. Then she ran into a wall and hurt Balaam's foot. Finally, she crouched down on the ground. **Balaam** didn't know why the donkey was stopping. He **hit the donkey with his stick, so God made the donkey able to talk.**

"What have I done to you that you have hit me three times?" the donkey asked.

"You made me look like a fool!" Balaam said.

Then God allowed Balaam to see the angel. Balaam bowed in worship and said, "I have sinned! I will go back if you want me to." The angel said, "Go with these men. But only say what I tell you to say."

When Balaam reached Balak, the king, he said, "I can only say what God tells me to say."

God had blessed the Israelites, so Balaam could not curse them. Instead, **Balaam blessed the Israelites three times.**

King Balak said, “I brought you here to curse the Israelites, but you have blessed them! Go home!”

Before he left, Balaam gave the king a special message. He said that one day a mighty king would be born to the people of Israel. The message was a special promise: “I see him, but not now ... a star will come from Jacob, and a scepter will come out of Israel.” Then Balaam went home.

Christ Connection: *Balaam could not curse God’s people. God had blessed the Israelites, so Balaam blessed them too. Long after Balaam announced the coming king, Jesus was born. God sent Jesus to bless the world. Jesus rescues people from sin.*

CATECHISM QUESTION

Say: We have a new catechism question this week.

Q: [Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?](#)

A: [Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God.](#)



If you are able, please consider downloading the **New City Catechism app** on either the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

There are short, simple songs that correspond to some of the catechism questions. To play the song, click the play button in the bottom right corner.

This is a great way for kids to memorize and internalize foundations of the Christian faith.

WATCH THE STORY (10 minutes)

[Click below to show the Bible story video “BALAAM & BALAK”](#)

- [Preschool Bible story video](#)
- [Elementary Bible story video](#)

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

Ask kids if they have questions about the story. What didn't make sense? What was weird? What made you scratch your head? How did it make you feel? What pictures are stuck in your head from the story?

Prompt kids to think about who or what angels are. Guide them to discuss what angels do. How can we serve God each day?

STORY REVIEW

Display the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell portions of the Bible story as needed.

- 1. Why did Balak want Balaam to curse the Israelites?** (Balak was afraid the Israelites would move into the land and take over, Num. 22:4-5)
- 2. Who came to stop Balaam?** (an angel of the Lord, Num. 22:22)
- 3. Why did Balaam hit his donkey?** (Balaam could not see why the donkey kept stopping, and he was angry; Num. 22:31-33)
- 4. How did God use Balak's sin to bless His people?** Guide kids to discuss that Balak sinned by planning to have Balaam curse the Israelites, but God turned the situation around so that Balaam would bless them instead. God shows His great power when He changes difficult situations into blessings.
- 5. When might we miss what God is doing around us, like Balaam did?** Guide kids to see that we often desire sinful things. We often think that our plans will be better than God's plans for us. When we chase after sinful things, we can miss out on being a part of God's good plans.
- 6. How does God show grace to sinners?** Help kids see that God's sending the angel to stop Balaam was gracious. Instead of letting Balak continue with his sinful plan, God changed those plans to fit His own good plans. God shows us grace through Jesus, who died to save us from sin so that we can be part of God's plan to rescue sinners all over the world.

Say • God commanded Balaam to bless His people. Balaam spoke about Jesus. God sent Jesus to save us. When we have faith, He transforms us and the plans we have for our lives so that they match God's plans.

PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE

Roll a dice. Depending on what number is face up when it stops, read the [key passage](#) using different voices. If you do not have a giant inflatable game cube, you can use any large six-sided box, writing or painting numbers on the different faces. You may also use a standard six-sided numbered cube.

Suggested voices for each side of the cube:

1. Robot voice
2. Small mouse voice
3. Deep giant's voice
4. "Slow motion" voice
5. Fast voice
6. Kids pick their favorite voice

Say • Great job! Keep working on that key passage. We have one more week to memorize it.

SING A SONG

SAY: God is good and he is good to us. He is a gracious and compassionate God. He provided the Israelites with a way to deal with their sin, and then He sent Jesus to be the perfect and final sacrifice for sin. Let's sing a song that will help us remember our memory verse.

Sing "Proverbs 3:5-6" with [this music video](#).

PRAY WITH THE KIDS

Invite kids to pray before applying the story.

Say · God, thank You for protecting Your people. Balaam planned to curse them, but Your power and plans are good and cannot be stopped. Help us trust You each day. We know we need You to lead us and we want You to help us lovingly obey You. Amen.

EXPERIENCE & APPLY THE STORY

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITY: CREATE A DONKEY (brown or white paper bag, markers or crayons, googly eyes)

Print the “[Donkey Puppet](#)” onto heavyweight paper for each preschooler. Invite children to use crayons, markers, yarn, and googly eyes to decorate their puppets. Cut along the dotted lines and assemble the puppets as directed. Demonstrate how to hold the puppet and pretend to talk like Balaam’s donkey did. Have fun playing out the Bible story.

Say · Balaam was angry with his donkey, and he hit her with his stick when she stopped walking down the path. Then God made the donkey able to talk, and Balaam saw the angel in the path. The angel told Balaam that he could only say what God told him to, so **Balaam blessed God’s people**, the Israelites. Balaam also told the king that a mighty King would be born to the people of Israel; that King would be Jesus. Jesus would bless the world and rescue people from sin.

ELEMENTARY ACTIVITY: Pin the mouth on the donkey

What you need: [donkey printable](#), blindfold, tape)

Print the “Donkey” printable and cut out the mouth shape. Tape the donkey to a focal wall in your room. Invite the kids to line up. Blindfold the first kid in line. Give the kid the mouth-shaped cutout with a small bit of tape or mounting putty on the back. Instruct her to feel for the wall and try to stick the mouth-shape onto the donkey’s face. Remove the cutout and let the next kid try.

Say · What a fun game! Today we heard about a time God gave a donkey the ability to speak! The donkey told a man something very important from God. Why do you think God would use a donkey to deliver a message?

