

# Bible Point ► God guides his people.

## Bible Verse

“He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name” (Psalm 23:3).

## Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will ■ experience being without a guide,  
■ guide each other through a maze, and  
■ learn how God guides us today.



## Teacher Enrichment

### Bible Basis

■ God leads the people with pillars of cloud and fire.

**Exodus**  
**13:17-22;**  
**40:36-38**



The Israelites had been living in the area of Goshen, which was located near the Nile delta, many miles north of the Red Sea area. By far, the simplest route to Canaan was directly northeast along the Mediterranean coast via a major road heading toward Philistine country (modern Gaza and north). This was known as the Great Trunk road. It ran through the Fertile Crescent, connecting Egypt ultimately with Babylonia in the east. Because of its strategic military and commercial importance, it was guarded heavily by the Egyptians, who controlled the area during this time. Were the Israelites to travel that route, they would face a demoralizing disadvantage trying to run the gauntlet of Egyptian defenses.

God led the Israelites south instead—a route that would prove harrowing in its own right. God showed his presence in a dramatic way, however, so that the Israelites would take comfort in his guidance and protection. At important times, God had revealed his presence with fire and smoke. When God called Moses, he appeared in a burning bush (Exodus 3:2); when God gave the Ten Commandments, he descended on the mountain in smoke and fire (Exodus 19:16-19). The pillar of smoke and fire would have been not only a comfort to the Israelites but a warning to any potential foes that these wandering people were accompanied by a powerful, present deity. Because God graciously decided to use a “visual aid” to guide the people as they fled Egypt, Moses was able to describe things as they appeared to him and the rest of the Israelites, rather than in abstract theological terms.








### Prayer

- Read Psalm 139:3, 7-12.
- Think of a time you felt God’s presence in a special way or you felt him guide you in the way you should go. What happened?
- Pray: Help me remember that although my students and I can’t see a pillar of fire or a column of smoke, you are with us nonetheless, guiding us by...

## Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

## This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
<b>Welcome</b>	<b>Welcome!</b> —Receive a warm welcome from the teacher, and make name tags.	“Israelites Name Tags” (p. 74), scissors, markers or crayons, tape or safety pins	
	<b>Module Review</b> —Discuss how this module’s Bible Points apply to their lives.		
<b>Attention Grabber</b>	<b>Destination Unknown</b> —Follow a <i>twirlybird ring</i> , and discover that they need a guide in certain situations.		
<b>Bible Exploration &amp; Application</b>	<b>Clouds and Fire</b> —Follow a pillar of cloud and fire, talk about trusting God to guide them, and hear Exodus 40:38 and Psalm 23:3.	Bible, tape	
	<b>Silent Guiding</b> —Be silently guided through an obstacle course by partners, hear Isaiah 42:16, and talk about God’s quiet guidance.	Bible, scissors, blindfold	
	<b>Guiding Places</b> —Act out ways God can guide them in familiar places, and then discuss Psalm 32:8.	Bible, scissors, tape	
	<b>Who to Believe</b> —Guide a classmate toward one of two objects, hear Isaiah 30:21, and talk about how to listen for God.	Bible	
<b>Closing</b> 	<b>Class Conductor</b> —Sing a song conducted by a classmate, and talk about the importance of a good guide.	CD player	

## Welcome

**SUPPLIES:** “Israelites Name Tags” (p. 74), scissors, markers or crayons, tape or safety pins

- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Growing Together” discussion. Use questions such as “What were some of the family rules you thought of?” and “What did the muddy water represent in your two-bowl experiment? the clear water?”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► God guides his people.**
- Hand out the name tags children made during Lesson 6, and help kids attach them to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged, or if children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout.
- Tell the children that you’ll raise your hand to get their attention. They should respond by raising their hands and focusing their attention on you. Rehearse this signal, and encourage the children to respond quickly so you’ll have time for all the fun activities.



**BIBLE POINT**

## Module Review

Use the casual interaction time at the beginning of class to ask children the following module-review questions:

- **Describe something a friend has that makes you a little bit jealous. How has knowing God’s commandment about being content helped you?** (My friend got a new video game, but I know I can have fun without that game.)
- **How have God’s rules protected you this week?** (I almost lied to my mom, but I remembered it’s one of the Ten Commandments; it felt better to tell the truth.)
- **How does knowing that Jesus will forgive you make you feel about God’s rules?** (I still don’t want to break God’s rules, but now I know that if I do, I can talk to Jesus because he still loves me.)
- **How is your life different as a result of what we’ve learned in class this month?** (I pray more; I’m happier with what I have; I get along with my dad better.)



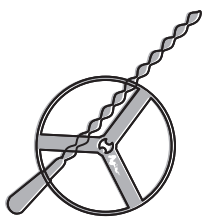
**teacher tips**

It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over will help children remember it and apply it to their lives.

## Attention Grabber

### Destination Unknown

**SUPPLIES:** none



If possible, do this activity outdoors or in a large, open area of your church such as a community hall so the children will have lots of room to launch the *twirlybird rings*. Keep people out of the direct path of the *twirlybird launchers* when in operation.

Have children form two groups, and give each group a *twirlybird* and *launcher*. Let the kids in each group take turns launching the *twirlybird rings*. Have each group run to where their ring lands, retrieve it, and hand it off to another group member. Continue until each child has had at least one turn.



**teacher tips**

To launch a *twirlybird ring*, place the small post, platform portion facing up, on the *launcher*. Then place the ring on the *launcher*, and quickly push the post up.

Then sit down and ask:

- **Where were you going in this game?** (Nowhere; all around; wherever the *twirlybird ring* went.)
- **Who was guiding you?** (No one; the *twirlybird*.)
- **What happens when you're away from home and you don't know where to go and there's no one to guide you?** (I get lost; I get mixed up; I go wherever I want to go.)
- **Was there ever a time you felt lost and couldn't find anyone to guide you? Tell us about it.** (Yes, once I got lost in a crowd, and I couldn't see where to go because everyone was taller; once I couldn't find my family at the mall.)

Say: **In games it can be fun to go anywhere at all, just as you did with the *twirlybird ring*. But in real life, it's scary when we don't know where to go and there's no one to guide us. Today we're going to talk about how *God guides his people*. Sometimes we don't know where God is taking us, just as we didn't know where we'd end up with the *twirlybirds*. But God is in charge, and he'll lead us to wonderful places. Let's talk about how God guided his people when they were wandering in the wilderness.**



### BIBLE POINT

## Bible Exploration & Application



### Clouds and Fire

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, tape

Choose a volunteer to wear the *rain poncho*. Reattach any newspaper strips that may have fallen off since Lesson 7. Tape the sides back together if you split the poncho.

Say: **When God's people were wandering through the wilderness, God guided them with a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night. Let's act out what that may have been like. The Israelites may have sung songs while they traveled, so we're going to sing a song while we travel behind our guide.**

Play a game of Follow the Leader. The person in the *rain poncho* is the leader. While the children are following the leader, have them sing "I Have Decided to Follow God Now" to the tune of "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." (This song is not on the CD.) For the first verse, have the leader wear the poncho so the white side faces the class. While you sing the second verse, twist the poncho so the newspaper side faces the class.



**I have decided to follow God now.  
I have decided to follow God now.  
I have decided to follow God now  
Through all the day—through all the day.**

**I have decided to follow God now.  
I have decided to follow God now.  
I have decided to follow God now  
Through all the night—through all the night.**

After you've sung the song, gather the children in a circle on the floor. Put the poncho "fire" side up in the middle of the circle. Say: **At night, a pillar of fire stayed with the people.**

### Bible Insight

God appeared as pillars of cloud and fire to assure his people that he was present, guiding them and providing for them. Yet they did not see God directly but rather a form of his glory, shrouded by the cloud and fire.

Ask: • **How would you feel if a pillar of fire were with you at night?** (Good; I'd know that God was with me; it might keep me awake.)

• **How many of you have a night light in your house? What does the night light do?** (It helps me see my way to the bathroom; it keeps me from being scared.)

• **How many of you have sat around a campfire before? What's it like to sit around a campfire?** (Fun; exciting; it's warm; it looks pretty.)

Say: **Seeing the pillar of fire at night helped the Israelites know that God was with them all the time and was guiding them to a special place. It probably made them feel safe, too. Something else happened with the cloud. When the Israelites traveled, the cloud led them in the right direction. But sometimes the cloud stood still over the tabernacle—the tent where the people worshipped God. When the cloud stood still, the people didn't travel. They stopped and rested and waited for the cloud to move again. God knows that sometimes people need to rest. Listen to Exodus 40:38.** Read the verse.

Ask: • **What would you think if a cloud guided you to school every day?** (I'd know where to go; I'd remember God; I'd be embarrassed.)

• **What do you think the real pillars of cloud and fire looked like?** (I'm not sure; very big; kind of scary.)

• **Why do you think God chose to lead the people this way?** (So they'd be able to see that God was with them; so they'd know that God is real and powerful.)

• **How does God lead us today?** (By the Bible; by giving us good parents and teachers; by teaching us what we should do.)

Say: **Long ago, God led his people in a special way. Now we don't see God in a pillar of cloud or fire, but he is guiding us still. Listen to what God's Word says. This is our Bible verse for today, from Psalm 23:3.** Read the verse: ► **"He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name."**

Ask: • **What's one way God guides you along a right path?** (When I obey my parents, God is guiding me; when I do the right thing even if it's hard.)

• **How does that bring honor to God's name?** (People see God's goodness in me.)

Say: **It's clear from the Bible that ► God always guides his people, and that includes us!**

Remove the newspaper strips from the *rain poncho* for the next activity.

## ◀ BIBLE VERSE

## ◀ BIBLE POINT



## ■ Silent Guiding

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, scissors, blindfold



Cut 2-inch-wide strips along the bottom of the *rain poncho* to make large plastic loops. Form pairs, and give each pair, except one, a plastic loop. Have the pairs spread out around the room. Show partners how to face each other and hold the plastic between them so it forms an open loop perpendicular to the floor. The bottom of the loop should be just an inch or two off the floor.

Blindfold one of the partners from the pair without a loop. Tell the blindfolded child's partner to guide him or her through each plastic loop. Explain that the guide can't talk but can guide with his or her hands. Take turns so each child in class gets to guide and to be guided. When everyone has had a turn, put the plastic loops away, and gather the children. Say: **God promises to guide his people. Listen to this verse from Isaiah.** Read **Isaiah 42:16**. Then ask:



Some children object to wearing blindfolds or anything that covers their eyes. Be sensitive to their fears. If children resist having something put over their eyes, just have them close their eyes instead.





### BIBLE POINT ►

• **What was hardest about being the guide?** (The person I was guiding went too fast; I wanted to talk.)

• **What was hardest about being guided?** (Not being able to see; not being able to talk about where to go.)

Say: ► ***God guides his people*** today, but his directions are quiet. We have to pay close attention when God guides us, just as we did when our guides helped us through the plastic loops. And we can trust God because God knows just where to lead us, just as the guides in this activity did.

## ■ Guiding Places

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, scissors, tape



Before class, create the *kids cube* by cutting, folding, and taping the page, if you haven't done so already.

Have students form groups of three or four. Hold the *kids cube* in the front of the room.

Select a volunteer from each group. Have volunteers come up one at a time to the front of the room, roll the *kids cube*, and study the picture that appears on top. The volunteers are to go back to their groups and act out the picture of the scenario. When a group guesses the picture, they may call out "God guides me while I'm..." (spending time at school, hanging out with friends, and so forth).

Play for several rounds. Then put the *kids cube* away and gather the children in a circle.

Ask: • **What are some of the places you just acted out?** (Spending time in school; playing in the park; hanging out at home.)

• **What was the easiest place for you to figure out? Why?** (School, because it looked like she was reading a book; swimming, because it was easy to tell he was pretending to swim.)

• **What are some places God guides you?** (At school; at church; at camp.)

• **Is there anywhere you go that God isn't guiding you?** (No, God is always with us; sometimes I don't feel God close by, so I wonder if he's there.)

Read **Psalm 32:8** aloud. Say: **The Bible says God promises to show us the best pathway for our lives. He knows exactly in what place we are, and he will direct us in the way we should go. ► *God guides his people*. Now let's play a game where we get to guide someone.**



### BIBLE POINT ►

## ■ Who to Believe

**SUPPLIES:** Bible



Have a volunteer leave the room with an adult until you give the signal to return. Then say: **We're going to hide two objects for [child's name] to find. Let's use this stuffed snake to represent bad things that tempt us to do wrong. Where should we hide it?** Hide it where the children tell you to hide it.

Make a bow with the *shimmery ribbon*, and then say: **Let's**

use this *shimmery ribbon* to remind us of all the good things we can do to please God. Where should we hide it? Hide it where the children tell you to hide it.

Then form two groups. Say: **When [child's name] comes back into the room, Group 1 will direct him [her] to the snake by saying "hot" if he [she] gets close to it and "cold" if he [she] is far away from it. Group 2 will direct [child's name] to the *shimmery ribbon* by saying "hot" and "cold."**

Call the volunteer back. Say: **We've hidden something in this room, and we're going to guide you to it. Before we start, though, I'd like to read something from the Bible. Read Isaiah 30:21. Then say: Go!**

The children will start yelling "hot" and "cold." The volunteer may be confused, but let him or her choose who to listen to in order to find the object.

When the volunteer has found either item, give him or her a round of applause. Then raise your hand to get the children's attention. Wait until they respond. Have someone show the volunteer the other item the class hid.

Say: **We hid the snake to remind us of all the bad things that tempt us. We hid the *shimmery ribbon* to remind us of all the good things that please God.**

Ask the volunteer:

- **How did you feel when the class was guiding you?** (Confused; I didn't know who to listen to.)
- **Why did you listen to the people who guided you to find the snake [ribbon]?** (Because they yelled the loudest; because they pointed to it; because they're my best friends.)
- **How was this game like or unlike the way God guides us?** (We have to listen to what God says; there are some people telling us to do wrong even when God tells us to do right; it wasn't like the way God guides us because I can't hear God talking to me.)



Say: **We know from our Bible verse that *God guides his people*, but we need to listen carefully to hear God's voice. Our volunteer could've listened to the people telling how to get to the snake or to the people telling how to get to the *shimmery ribbon*. If we listen to the wrong message, we might end up doing the wrong thing. That was the reason God sent his Son, Jesus, to die for our sins—for all the wrong things we do. When we put our trust in Jesus, it becomes easier to follow God's guidance and become more like Jesus. In our game it was hard to tell who to listen to, but if we pray and read the Bible, we'll learn to recognize God's voice.**

The *stuffed snake* and *shimmery ribbon* are used in the closing activity, "Class Conductor."



It's nice to imagine God leading us this way or that way with pillars of cloud and fire, rather than trying to figure out where he wants us to go without the benefit of a visible guide. Teach your children that prayer is one of the keys to following God's will and that he can still be their guide without visible signs.



## HANDS-ON BIBLE

Have students spread out and find a spot on the floor where they can stretch their arms out in front of them and not touch anyone else. Ask them to open their *Hands-On Bibles* to the “Hey! Quiet Down” activity on page 557.



Say: **The Bible tells us that God spoke directly to Moses and helped him guide the Israelites to safety. God guides us, too, but how do we know what he’s telling us? God speaks in different ways, so it’s important that we know how to hear him.**

Read Psalm 46:10a aloud to the class. Then lead kids through the activity, and give them time to silently pray. Ask:

- **How did being still help your hearing? your praying?** (I wasn’t busy with other things, so I could really talk to God; it was peaceful.)
- **What else happened while you were sitting quietly?** (I thought about something my mom said and it reminded me of something in the Bible; I prayed about my grandma; I heard music down the hall.)
- **What does it mean to be still before God?** (To try and listen; to look for signs from God.)

Say: **We might not see pillars of fire from God, but if we listen quietly we can hear messages he gives us when we pray—and also through our parents, friends, teachers, and the Bible. ► God guides his people; just as he guided Moses and the Israelites, he guides us, too.**



BIBLE POINT ►

## Closing

## ■ Class Conductor

SUPPLIES: CD player

track 1



Cue the CD to track 9, “Everything Is Possible With God” (Mark 10:27). Ask for a volunteer to conduct the class as you sing with the CD. Give the volunteer the *stuffed snake* to use as a baton to “conduct” the class. After the song, turn off the CD player, and ask:

- **Why do music groups have conductors?** (So they know when to play; so they all sing together.)

Say: ► **God guides his people to do good and special things, just as a conductor guides musicians to make beautiful music. God guides us to work together. When we work together according to God’s plan, our lives are like beautiful music for God.**

Take out the *shimmering ribbon* (untied), and ask:

- **What are some ways God guides us to work together?** (By helping our family with chores at home; by making it easy for us to get along in school.)
- **What kinds of good and special things is God guiding you to do?** (Being nice to my family; getting good grades; learning more about the Bible.)



BIBLE POINT ►



As children share, have them take hold of the *shimmery ribbon*. When all the children are holding on to the ribbon, pull them around the room as you pray: **Thank you, God, for guiding us. You are a great God, and we know that you'll take care of us as you lead us to do good things for you. In Jesus' name, amen.**



If your class enjoys singing and you have time, you may want to cue the CD to "Your Word in My Heart" (Psalm 119:11) (Track 11) and sing it with a second volunteer conductor.



### Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Growing Together" handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage children and parents to use the handout to plan meaningful activities on this week's topic. Follow up the "Growing Together" activities next week by asking children what their families did together.

# Growing... Together

## Bible Story

God leads the people with pillars of cloud and fire (Exodus 13:17-22; 40:36-38).

God's People in the Wilderness 9:  
God guides his people.

## Bible Verse

"He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name" (Psalm 23:3).

## In Touch

Today your child learned that God guides his people both in miraculous ways and in the everyday events of life. Because we are God's people, we can depend on God to guide our steps no matter where we go. Use these activities to teach your child about God's guidance.

### Family Fun

Dip your finger in orange, apple, or lemon juice, and write a message on paper directing your child to a fun treat. The note will be invisible when it dries. Have your child carefully hold the note near a light bulb or above a warm toaster until the message becomes visible. While you enjoy the treat, talk about how God will always reveal what he wants us to do and where he wants us to go.

### Chalk Guides

Use this recipe to make nonedible sidewalk chalk: 2 cups plaster of Paris, 1 cup cool water, and 2 tablespoons powdered tempera paint. Mix together and pour into plastic foam cups. Dry thoroughly. Peel the cup away from the chalk a little at a time as you use it so that the cup forms a casing for your chalk. Draw an intricate maze with your chalk, and use it to guide your family to a hidden treat. Talk about how God guides us to good things.

### Science Guides

Compasses have guided travelers for centuries. A compass needle always points toward the magnetic north pole of the earth. Use a compass to teach about God's perfect guidance. You can make your own compass by magnetizing a sewing needle. Rub the needle on a magnet. Put it into a clear plastic bowl of water. It will point north! Take your compass to a local park and practice finding north. Talk with your child about how God always leads us toward what is right and good and true.

### More Like Jesus

Use this craft to teach your child that when we follow God's guidance, we become more like Jesus. Straighten the hook of a small wire hanger. Help your child bend the triangle part of the hanger into a heart shape. Put the hook end in a flower pot, anchor it with small rocks, and fill the pot with potting soil. Plant a small ivy plant in the soil, and wrap the ivy around the wire frame. Explain to your child that as the plant grows, it will follow the guidance of the wire. Have your child continue to train the ivy to wrap around the wire base. Talk about how we can follow God's guidance and become more like Jesus.