

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – Third Sunday in Lent**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**  
*Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One*

**Scripture: Exodus 17:1-7**

In the early Church the Easter Vigil was the only time that Baptisms were performed. The forty days leading up to Easter was used as a time of reflection, self-examination, and instruction for the catechumens, or new converts, in preparation for the new life they would receive at Baptism. Lent has always been a teaching season. All the lectionary readings during Lent point towards Baptism, either its promises and covenants, or its signs and symbols. Lent is often referred to as a short course in Baptism or a primer of our Christian faith.

**Notation for This Week’s Scripture**

The Israelites do not yet trust that the Lord will provide for them, and they question Moses’ leadership, as well as vent their fears and frustrations on him. Today’s lectionary story relates to the waters of baptism. “Now sanctify this water, we pray you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that those who here are cleansed from sin and born again may continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our savior.” [*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 307.]

**Theme: Trust in God**

**Before Class:** Fill water basin. Make a sign on a sheet of construction paper that says, Water: Source of Life. You will need crackers, a pitcher of water, and cups. For the Map Quest Activity, you may want to do a search online for a map of this journey.

**Continuing the Journey of Lent**

**Lenten Waiting Table**

A wonderful visual reminder to the children would be to create a “Waiting Table.” A purple cloth covering a table, a box or even a ledge would provide the display space. At the beginning of the season you could plant grass seed in a basket to produce a “living Easter basket.” Other ideas include fast growing seeds or bulbs, and caterpillars. The message we convey is that growth takes time and nurturing, and although we can’t always see it we can trust that it is taking place.

**Lenten Roadmap:** A visual tool to help the children mark time is recommended. Some possibilities include a large paper cross with forty spaces marked off, a “road map” with forty spaces leading to Easter, and made or purchased Lenten calendars.

**Lenten Giving**

A jar or other container to collect Lenten offerings is a visual reminder of sacrificial giving.

**Beginning:** Announce that it is the Third Sunday in Lent, the season that helps us to be ready for Easter. Show the children where you are at on the Lenten calendar or time telling aid from the week before.

Collect contributions for your mission project.

Invite the children to wash their hands in a basin of water. During Abraham's time it was a sign of hospitality to offer guests water to wash with when they arrived at your home. Why was this so important? Today's lesson is all wet. Let's find out why.

**Opening Prayer:** Dear God, help us to put our trust in you who provides for all our needs. Amen.

**The Story: Exodus 17: 1-7** This story is short and readable enough from the NSRV Bible, if you wish to do so. Or use the following:

The Hebrew people were wondering, "Is the Lord among us or not?" They were far from their old homes in Egypt where they were slaves. They didn't know anything about this new land where God and Moses were leading them. They were scared. They were impatient. They were not so sure of Moses, or God for that matter. Yesterday they were hungry. God provided for them with manna and quails. Today they are thirsty, and they still don't trust that God will provide for them. Let's find out what happens.

**Reflection:** Has there ever been a time in your life when you were scared or worried or needed something very badly, and God provided for you? Invite the children to share their stories.

#### **Activity: Map Quest**

Follow the Hebrews on their journey from Sin to Rephidim on a Bible map. Talk about the nature of the desert.

#### **Activity: How we use water**

Make a list of all the things the children use water for each day, each week, each month. If time permits children can choose one to illustrate. Be sure to include Baptism and worship services. Combine into a display called "Water: Source of Life." Ask the children which thing they would miss the most if they didn't have access to water.

#### **Enacted Parable**

Give the children crackers to eat. Have a pitcher of water and cups visible. Ask the children what they would most like right now? Pour each a small amount of water. Give them more crackers. Ask what they want again. Inquire if they are thirsty. Say, but I just gave you water. Pour them some more. Ask what do they thirst for in life? What do they desire? Make a list. Ask who ever asked for a toy or game for a present and then got bored with it fairly quickly? Then what did you want? What kind of things does God want to give you? God wants to give you things that don't make you hungry or thirsty a minute later. God wants to give you things of lasting value. You can trust that.

Read Psalm 23 together "The Lord is My Shepherd." Discuss what God is giving the writer of the psalm.

**Closing:** Have the children stand and stretch their arms up to the ceiling and then bow to the teacher to say thank you, and then to one another, as a way of thanking one another for the time together. Remind them to bring in their Lenten offerings next week.

**Closing Prayer:** Dear God thank you for this time to learn about you. You provide for all our needs. You give us living water to drink. Amen.

---

## **The Scripture for Today: Exodus 17:1-7**

### **Water from the Rock**

17From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>The people quarreled with Moses, and said, ‘Give us water to drink.’ Moses said to them, ‘Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?’ <sup>3</sup>But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, ‘Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?’ <sup>4</sup>So Moses cried out to the LORD, ‘What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.’ <sup>5</sup>The LORD said to Moses, ‘Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup>I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.’ Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup>He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, ‘Is the LORD among us or not?’

*Lent Lesson Plans for Older Children written by Trudy Ardizzone.*

*Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.*

*© 2014 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.*