

LESSON 39

Miriam

NUMBERS 12



BIBLE TRUTH

MOSES MEDIATED ON BEHALF OF MIRIAM

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read Numbers 12 from the Scriptures or read story 39, “Miriam,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
Translator
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ two individuals who can speak Spanish or another language (at least one should be bilingual)
 - ✓ a snack
 - ✓ drinks
 - ✓ cups
 - ✓ bags
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
From Every Tribe and Nation
6. **SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **10 MIN**
Coloring Activity
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ coloring page 39—one copy for each child
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
Leprosy
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ brown water-based marker
 - ✓ hot soapy water
 - ✓ rag
 - ✓ roll of paper towels

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses—God has already given Moses 70 elders to help him. Now, God pours out his Spirit on them and they begin to prophesy—to speak messages from God. Two other men also begin to prophesy, and Moses approves of it.

News of this seems to tempt Miriam and Aaron—Moses’ own sister and brother—to pride and jealousy. Aaron (who made the golden calf) was the high priest of Israel and was probably one of the elders. Miriam and Aaron want Moses to become less important so they can become more important. They want to be known as people who also speak words from God. Instead of being humbled by what God has already done for them, they become proud.

God pronounces judgment for their sin—In response to their pride, God humbles Miriam and Aaron. He calls them to the tent of meeting where he rebukes Aaron and Miriam for speaking against Moses. God makes it very clear that Moses is closer to him than any other person. They are foolish to think that prophesying can make them equal to Moses. As judgment for their sin, God strikes Miriam with leprosy. He wants them to know just how serious it is to grumble against Moses.

Moses never boasts about the fact that he meets with God face to face. God said that he was the most humble (or “meek”) person on the earth!

God extends his mercy—It may seem that God punished Miriam severely by giving her leprosy. But God would have been perfectly just in killing her for her sin.

Yet in response to Moses’ prayer, God heals Miriam of her leprosy. As a leper, Miriam has to spend seven days outside the camp. The fact that she is allowed back into the camp proves she is completely healed. Surely this reminded Israel of sin’s seriousness and of the greatness of God’s mercy.

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

Read Philippians 2:1–11.

Consider the pride of Aaron and Miriam and the humility of Moses who God said was the most humble (meek) man “on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3). Moses, whose life and ministry is a picture of Jesus, is also a picture of Jesus in his humility. No one ever humbled himself more than Jesus, the Son of God, who came to earth and died on the cross for our sins.

Consider the humble response of Moses when Aaron and Miriam came before God in the tent of meeting and complained against him. Moses did not object to what they said about him, and when Miriam was struck with leprosy, Moses interceded with God for her. In the same way, Jesus prayed for those who mocked and crucified him. Jesus said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Numbers 12 from the Scriptures or read story 39, “Miriam,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Translator

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two individuals who can speak Spanish or another language (at least one should be bilingual)
- ✓ a snack
- ✓ drinks

- ✓ cups
- ✓ bags

Prior to class place the snacks in a bag and put it in the back left corner of the room. Place the drinks and cups in another bag and put it in the back right corner of the room.

The object is to demonstrate how a mediator is a critical component of communication.

Have the first guest (not the translator) give the following instructions in a foreign language:

I need three volunteers from the audience. (Do not translate.)

Ask the class if they knew what the guest said. (If by chance you have a bilingual student, prohibit them from participation.) If no one guesses, have the translator tell the class what was said.

Then have the guest relay the following instructions. Have the interpreter translate each step.

Volunteer 1: Go to the bag in the back left corner, take out the snacks, and pass them out to the class.

Volunteer 2: Go to the bag in the back right corner, take out the drinks and cups, bring them to the front of the room, and pour drinks for everyone.

Volunteer 3: Pass out the cups to your classmates.

After the instructions are completed, thank the guests and volunteers and dismiss them.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **Why did we need the interpreter in the middle?**
(The interpreter helped us by translating what the guest said to us.)
- **When a person communicates between two others, we call them a mediator. How was Moses a mediator between God and the people of Israel?**
(Moses would communicate with God and then tell the people what God said. He would also pray on their behalf so that God would pour out mercy and not judgment on the sinful nation of Israel.)

■ How was Moses like Jesus?

(Jesus is now in heaven praying for us. God is able to pour out grace instead of punishment because of Jesus' death on the cross. When Moses asked for Miriam's healing, he was a picture of Jesus who would one day pray to the Father on our behalf.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

From Every Tribe and Nation

Aaron and Miriam spoke against Moses for marrying a Cushite woman. She may have been a new wife; Zipporah may have died, or this could be an additional wife. In any case, Moses was being criticized because of her race. There is no indication she was a pagan. She was likely a convert among the Israelites. God clearly rebukes Aaron and Miriam for their criticism.

Read Revelation 7:9–10. What is God's plan with regard to the peoples of the earth? (God is going to bring together all the different peoples of the earth in heaven.)

■ Is any race, tribe, color, or language of people going to be excluded? Are some superior to the others?

(No ethnic group of people will be excluded, and none are superior to others. God loves all people no matter their tribe or language.)

God is about the work of restoring to himself one people who had been separated at the tower of Babel. They will be reunited in Christ to worship him.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 39—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- How do you think Miriam felt when she discovered her leprosy?
(Guide them toward saying that she may have felt sad or fearful.)
- What did Miriam learn about God?
(God is so powerful that he hears all we say.)

Share Psalm 139:4 (NIV) with the children. “Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.”

- God hears every one of our words. How should that help us to be careful of what we say?

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Leprosy

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ brown water-based marker
- ✓ hot soapy water
- ✓ rag
- ✓ roll of paper towels

Wear a long-sleeve shirt that can easily be pushed up to your elbow.

Prior to class, draw a dozen or so large spots on your arm that can be hidden by your shirtsleeve. When you tell the story of Miriam’s disobedience and punishment roll up your sleeve to reveal your “leprosy.” Although the children will know it is not real leprosy, they will not expect it and it will bring drama to the retelling.

When you reach the point of the story where Moses appeals to God on behalf of his sister, pick up the rag doused in the soapy water and begin to wash away the spots. Use this as a way to talk about God's mercy. If you have time, put a spot on the back of each child's hand as you explain that we are all sinners who are jealous of others and complain. Then go around again and wash the spots off the children's hands and give them a paper towel. While you are washing off their hands, talk about how Jesus' death on the cross has made a way for all of us to have our sins washed away.

LESSON 39 - MIRIAM

