

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

PART 1: BEGINNINGS

LESSON 11 || THE EXODUS AND THE RED SEA

SESSION SNAPSHOT

NARRATIVE PASSAGE: Exodus 13:17-22; Exodus 14

GOSPEL FOCUS: Romans 5:6-8

STUDENT TAKEAWAYS:

- See how powerfully God acts to accomplish His purposes.
- Understand that just like God rescued the Israelites in their hopeless state, Jesus rescues us from sin while we are most helpless.
- Think of a few people in their lives who, even though they may not deserve it, could benefit by being shown God's love.

OVERVIEW:

God is a miracle worker, and in the book of Exodus, we see the power of God displayed in His mighty works. After the Hebrew people were delivered from captivity in Egypt, their joy quickly turned to fear and anger as they found themselves trapped with the Red Sea in front of them and Pharaoh and his mighty army behind them. God led Moses and His people into this situation so His mighty power could be revealed. As you teach this lesson, you will lead your students to discover that God is the God who saves, both then and now.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, we encourage teachers to help students know *who* wrote a particular book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHY TEACH CONTEXT?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

EXODUS

- *Author:* While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Exodus, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).

- *Time frame:* The dating of the book of Exodus is a point of debate. The issue is that no one knows exactly when the Exodus occurred, whether in the mid-1400s BC or a later date around the mid-1200s BC. The writing of the book of Exodus would have occurred around those general dates.
- *Purpose:* Exodus means “a going out” or a “departure.” Exodus was written to be a record of God’s great rescue of His people from slavery in Egypt and His commands to His people, guiding them to live for His purposes in a new land.

ROMANS

- *Author:* Paul is the author of Romans.
- *Time frame:* Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.
- *Purpose:* Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, a level playing field needed to be given to all believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- **GETTING STARTED**– An introductory activity designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- **THE STORY**– A section featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- **THE THREAD**– A special emphasis where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- **WRAPPING UP**– An application-focused segment helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

GETTING STARTED

- *Goal:* To introduce students to the idea of no-win situations.
- *Set-Up:* You’ll need a dry-erase board and two different color markers. (Or if you’re super high-speed, you can download a tic-tac-toe app and arrange to run an iPad, or something else, through a projector.) You may also want to provide some candy or something similar for prizes to the winning team.

FIRST, explain that you’re going to divide the group into two teams and decide which team is the best. Explain that this decision will be made by whichever team performs the best in a “best out of 9” tic-tac-toe competition. You have two choices of how to facilitate the game. You can have each team send a different team member up for each match, or you can have teams select one representative to play all 9 matches. (It’s essential to play somewhere in the neighborhood of 7 to 9 matches. If you play fewer than that, you may not end up with a match that ends in a draw, which is the point of the activity.) Make sure the teams understand the rules and how you’re going to play the game. Then, play your 9 matches of tic-tac-toe, keeping track of wins, losses, and draws.

THEN, when you’ve finished, if one team has more wins than the other, award a winner. (There could be a scenario where, due to draws, both teams have the same number of wins. This is not a problem at all. It may actually work in your favor to make the point you want to make with the activity.) Ask your students if they have ever heard the phrase “a no-win situation.” Explain that a no-win situation is where winning is not a reasonable outcome for anyone involved. Point out that in “x” number of your matches, there was no clear winner. These matches were no-win situations.

NEXT, ask the students the following questions:

- Can you think of some real-life situations that might be considered no-win situations?
 - *Answers will vary.*
- Have you ever felt like you were in a no-win situation? What emotions or feelings did it cause?
 - *Answers will vary.* But lead students to see that no-win situations can often feel like traps you can’t find a way out of.

FINALLY, tell your students that as you continue to look at the big-picture story of the Bible, in this lesson, you’ll study a situation that seemingly appears to be a no-win situation. However, they’ll discover that there isn’t a “no win” situation that God can’t turn around. Transition to your time of Bible study by **saying something like:**

- The children of Israel had seen God do miracle after miracle as He prepared to free them from slavery in Egypt. What seemed impossible became possible with God leading them. They would soon face something that seemed impossible – a no-win scenario where they were trapped at the mercy of the Egyptian army. But God was about to reveal Himself as the God who never loses!

TRANSITION TO THE STORY.

THE STORY

- *Goal:* To help your students understand that God was leading the Israelites in every step they took, providing the perfect way for their salvation.
- *Set-Up:* Maps of the potential route of the Exodus can be helpful to give your students a visual of what was happening in this lesson. Do a simple Google search for “possible route of Exodus” and arrange to display the map where your students can see it.

FIRST, explain that in this lesson, you’ll be helping them learn about the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea from Exodus chapters 13 and 14. If you’d like, use the Connecting The Dots section below to review or fill in the gaps between your last lesson and this one.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it to review or connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- The book of Exodus opens with the Hebrew people being enslaved by the Egyptians.
- God called on Moses to speak to Pharaoh and to eventually lead them to freedom as they made their way to the Promised Land.
- Last week, we looked at the ten plagues sent from God that ultimately forced Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

THEN, ask the students to find Exodus 13 in their Bibles. If you choose, provide some of the context for the book using the Bible Background section of our lesson plan. Then, read or have a student read verses 17-22. When you’ve finished reading, lead students in a discussion. **Ask:**

- **Okay, I want you to look at this passage and point out three things you think are significant. They can be any detail you think is important. Give me a detail, and then tell me why you think it may be important.**
 - *Answers will vary.* Engage with students as you will. Here are a few things worth pointing out.
 - He led them in a direction away from a confrontation with the Philistine army so as not to cause them to get discouraged and want to go back to Egypt.
 - The path was longer, giving them time to get organized (after all, hundreds of thousands of people).
 - God sent a cloud to guide them by day and a pillar of fire to light the way at night.

Help your students see that God was taking care of every detail of their escape and providing the path for their salvation from the Pharaoh as He saw fit. You may want to comment on the verse about carrying Joseph’s bones with them to help them recall what brought the Israelites to Egypt in the first place.

NEXT, move on to Exodus chapter 14 and read or have a student read verses 1-9. If you are using a map of the Exodus, have a student point out the approximate route the Israelites took before they camped by the Red Sea. Ask if anyone notices anything about this location that would be problematic. Explain that God led His people to a place where they felt trapped by the Egyptian army. **Ask your students the following question:**

- **Why do you think God would lead the Israelites into what felt like a no-win situation?**
 - *Answer:* Sometimes, God allows us to find ourselves in situations where His intervention is the only possible outcome. He does this so that we will see Him as someone who lovingly delivers us from our troubling predicaments.

THEN, read or have a student read verses 10-18. **Ask something like:**

- **How would you sum up the response of the people?**
 - *Answers may include* panic; fear; crying out to God; doubting Moses’ leadership; doubting God’s power.

- **How do you see Moses responding?**
 - *Answer:* Urging the people not to be afraid, reminding people that God would rescue them, and so on.
- **What does the text tell us was God's purpose for allowing these events to unfold as they did?**
 - *Answer:* For Him to receive glory from saving the Israelites and to let the Egyptians know that the Lord is God.

NEXT, tell the students it's time to read about the big miracle at the Red Sea. Read or have a student read verses 19-31. Explain that this narrative is beautifully written. Have them pay attention to key details that stand out to them. Then, lead them in a discussion about what details they noted. Ask follow-up questions about what they thought was significant about the details they shared.

FINALLY, conclude this part of the Bible study by reminding the students that the story of the parting of the Red Sea is a story about God's redemption. **Say something like:**

- **God saved His people through His miraculous works and put His marvelous glory on display for everyone to see. The Israelites were in a hopeless, no-win situation. But "hopeless" and "no-win" aren't in God's vocabulary. He is always about saving people and making the impossible possible for His glory.**

IF STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE THREAD TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS SEE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TODAY'S BIBLE NARRATIVE AND THE GOSPEL.

THE THREAD

FIRST, ask the students to go to the New Testament for the book of Romans. While they're turning in their Bibles, provide them with some brief context for the book by referencing the Bible Background section at the beginning of this leader's guide. Then, read or have a student read Romans 5:6-8, and ask the following questions:

- **In verse 6, what three statements does Paul make about salvation?**
 - Our spiritual condition was utterly hopeless because we were helpless to do anything to make our relationship with God right.
 - "At the right time Christ died" means that throughout all of history, the timing of Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection was God's appointed time, which was perfect.
 - Paul gives the solution to our sin problem: Christ died for sinners.
- **In verse 7, what do you think is meant by the terms "righteous person" and "good person?"**
 - *Answer:* Paul is saying that you probably would not find anyone to die for a righteous person—someone who kept the Law but didn't go beyond what the Law required. You may find someone to die for a good person—someone who went above and beyond even what the Law demanded—but no one would die for an ungodly person.
- **In verse 8, what classification of people did Christ die for?**
 - *Answer:* Christ died for all the classifications of people. Paul's point was that people believed no one would die for all types of people, but Christ did. And the reason He died for our salvation is God's great love for us.

THEN, ask your students if they know what the thread or connecting point is between the Red Sea story and the passage they just read from Romans. Help them see that the Israelites were in an utterly hopeless situation, and God saved them by creating a path through the Red Sea. The passage in the book of Romans says, "ditto." Explain that we are utterly hopeless when it comes to saving ourselves. The Good News is that God created a path to save people from spiritual destruction by sending His son Jesus to die on the cross for sin. Remind them that God's plan of redemption in the early part of the Old Testament included stories of His mighty power saving the Israelites over and over again. In the New Testament, the picture of salvation is that God brings salvation for Jews and Gentiles once-and-for-all through Jesus.

FINALLY, close the Bible study section of the lesson by **saying something like:**

- **God's timing is always perfect. He parted the Red Sea at just the right time to show His mighty power to both the Israelites and the Egyptians. God's actions saved His people from dying at the hands of their oppressive enemy. In Romans, Paul says that God's timing for sending His son Jesus to Earth was also perfect. Jesus' death and resurrection saved God's people, this time from the oppressive enemy, Satan. Let's see how we can apply what you learned to your daily life.**

IF YOUR STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE WRAPPING UP SECTION.

WRAPPING UP

- *Goal:* To help students identify some people who could benefit from being shown God's love.
- *Set-Up:* None needed

FIRST, explain that in today's lesson, students saw God's power and love on display. Tell them that the Hebrew people were unlovable at different times in the Old Testament, and many years later, Christ died for some people who would never love Him in return. Begin by asking the students if they can think of some unlovable groups of people (not individuals).

Answers might include:

- Terrorists, murderers, cheaters, abusive people, liars, thieves, etc.

THEN, tell them they have come up with a pretty unlovable list. Ask if they can think of some unlovable people at school.

(You may need to say “no names,” only types of people.) You want to help them to come up with a list of regular groups of their peers that are hard to love.

NEXT, ask if they can think of some people who aren’t bad people but just difficult to love. Comment that it seems like there are a whole bunch of people at their schools who could benefit from being shown God’s love. Then ask the students to think of some ways they could show God’s love to these seemingly unlovable students this next week. Help them come up with identifiable, actionable steps. Challenge them to be as realistic as possible, and then do the hard work of following up with them to make sure they’re actually attempting to do it.

FINALLY, encourage your students to look at others through the lens of God’s love this week and try to put one of their action plans into motion before next week’s lesson. Close your Bible study in prayer.

- If you’ve purchased the corresponding devotional journal, remind students they’ll be working through Week 11 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions and to give memorizing this week’s verse their best shot.
- If you’re utilizing the digital devotions included in the Thread curriculum, remind students how you’ll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well that you want to share?
- Something that didn’t work that you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns at feedback@youthministry360.com.