

MANNA

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Pieces of paper, pens
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: UNSCRAMBLE REVISITED

Write out the following scrambled words for teens to unscramble together as they arrive. Each scrambled word contains two antonyms that must be separated out of the single scrambled word. You may need to give them an added clue in the form of spaces for the separated words (for example: _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ _). If this is still too challenging, fill in one or two letters to get them started. See how many they can get in the allotted time.

NUSOFLODT (LOST/FOUND)

PHRODEAIPES (HOPE/DESPAIR)

EDINDGHTBLIS (BLIND/SIGHTED)

BRUTTDOUST (TRUST / DOUBT)

LUFGLURHYN (HUNGRY/FULL)

DEPENDING ON YOUR GROUP, YOU MIGHT ASK THE TEENS TO WORK ON THE WORDS INDIVIDUALLY ON THEIR OWN PAPER AND COMPETE FOR SPEED OR HAVE THEM WORK TOGETHER ON DIFFERENT WORDS AS TEAMS.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: THE OTHER SIDE OF LOST

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- Ask the teens to pick one of the “negatives” from the unscrambled words in the ice breaker, and describe a time in their life when they felt that way: lost, doubtful, despairing, blind, or hungry. What needed to happen before you could get to the other side of that place (found, trusting, hopeful, sighted, full)?
- Read through the following quote, and then invite comments on it: **“The Bible isn’t about people trying to discover God, but about God reaching out to find us.” – John Stott**
- Can this perspective (God reaching out to find us), change how we understand the Bible? Our own lives?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *This is a good opportunity to set the tone by sharing a story of your own. Encourage all the teens to participate. The question allows them to choose a level of vulnerability that they're comfortable with. If something of a serious and current nature arises during the discussion, take a moment to pray for that need.*
- *Remembering God's love for us and the lengths to which he has gone to save us, can help us when dealing with difficult passages of scripture and it can also help us to cope during difficult times in our own lives. We can pause and look for ways in which God is present: listening, providing, teaching, and seeking to draw us closer to himself.*



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THE LESSON: EXODUS 16

The first part of the lesson gives a bit of context to the story of the manna in Exodus. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND "DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 2: OUR LIFE IN THE CHURCH" BY SUE CARELESS.)

In the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus said to the crowds that followed him:

"It was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven... I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die... unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you..."

What was Jesus talking about? This was difficult for the people of that day to understand even though they were very familiar with Moses and the story of the manna in the wilderness that Jesus was referring to.

When we read these words of Jesus today, we come to them with the advantage of knowing all about his death, resurrection and the sacrament of Holy Communion. But in order to better understand the meaning behind these words of Christ and our own act of worship, we have to look back at the Old Testament book of Exodus.

The book of Exodus starts by telling the story of the Israelites being rescued from slavery in Egypt. Remember the first Passover? Their rescue was cause for great rejoicing, but very soon the Israelites found themselves in a new situation that required even greater trust in God: they were lost in the desert. Yet even in the wilderness God was with them, listening to them, providing for them, teaching them, and setting things in place so that coming generations might know how great was his love for them.

As we read through this passage that describes God's gift of manna in the wilderness, keep in mind that this was what Jesus was referring to when he explained to the crowds that he was the true bread of heaven.

Refer to Exodus 16:2-5, 9-35.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: EXODUS 16:2-35.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- How would you describe the people of Israel in this story? In what ways are we similar to them?
- What was God trying to teach them? How long were they eating manna in the wilderness? How do these lessons relate to us today?
- What are the similarities between the manna in the wilderness and Jesus? What are the differences?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *The people of Israel in the passage didn't deserve God's patient love. They were whiny and ungrateful. They had just been rescued – miraculously – and yet they did not trust that God would care for them in this new situation! The text also demonstrates that when they were given the miraculous bread from heaven, they disobeyed the instructions that came with it – that's how we know what happened when they kept some overnight or when they went out to look for it on the Sabbath! In the same way, we can be whiny, ungrateful and disobedient. It's good to know that our God is a patient God!*
- *God wanted the people of Israel to learn to trust him for what they needed each day. And he wanted their obedience. They were not quick learners! They were in the wilderness eating manna for 40 years. Trust and obedience are what God wants from us as well.*



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- *Both the manna and Jesus are described as “bread from heaven”. Both were sent by God to provide for the needs of his people. But Jesus is the true bread from heaven. The NT sometimes refers to the OT as a “shadow” of heavenly realities that are fully revealed in Jesus. Eating manna each day sustained the people of Israel during a difficult transitional time: they’d been freed from slavery, but they had not yet arrived in the promised land. In a similar way, we receive Holy Communion not just once, but repeatedly, and it sustains us throughout our lives while we live in a world where we have been saved from our sins, but are still “aliens and strangers” here, looking forward to a “heavenly kingdom”.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn’t make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families”, which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don’t have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

*Set aside a few moments when you pray, to say along with the words of Simon Peter (John 6:68-69):
**“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,
 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”***

(Note: Jesus’ teaching about the true bread of life was hard for people of that day to understand, and scripture tells us that many of his disciples “turned back and no longer walked with him”. But when Jesus asked those who remained if they wanted to leave as well, Simon Peter gave this reply: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”)

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, BCP PAGE 128)

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Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.



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EXODUS 16: **BREAD IN THE WILDERNESS**

²The whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, ³and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

⁴Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not...

¹²I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’”

¹³In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. ¹⁶This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’” ¹⁷And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. ¹⁹And Moses said to them, “Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.” ²⁰But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. ²¹Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted.

²²On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, ²³he said to them, “This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.’” ²⁴So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it...

²⁷On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. ²⁸And the Lord said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? ²⁹See! The Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.” ³⁰So the people rested on the seventh day.

³¹Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. ³²Moses said, “This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” ³³And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar, and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout your generations.” ³⁴As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept. ³⁵The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.