

CITY LG – May 14th/15th

Bible Story: We Can't Get No Satisfaction (Israelites long for Egypt) • *Exodus 16:2-21; 17:1-4*

Bottom Line: When you focus on what you used to have, you can miss what you have now.

Memory Verse: "I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough." *Philippians 4:12b, NIV*

Life App: Contentment—deciding to be happy with what you've got.

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

CG: THEME

Opener

Host enters and is depressed. He walks to a chair behind his table and slumps down in it. He pulls out the stack of letters and starts going through them one by one.

STORYTELLER: *(Depressed)* "Bill for the electric ... bill for the gas charge *(Stop and gasp, suddenly excited.)* I might have won \$1,000,000? Details inside? *(Rip open the envelope.)* I can't believe it! I actually ... *(slowly coming off the excited high)* got more junk mail *(fling envelope)* *(Fling another envelope.)*

Quickly flip through the rest of the envelopes, muttering about bills and more bills.

"Oh, come on! Being a responsible adult isn't all that it's cracked up to be. There are way too many things to be worried about! All I get any more is bills! It's not that I can't pay them—I can—but I'm just not that organized. I can never remember which ones are due when!

Pick up an envelope marked "DUE IN MAY" on it. Sit up straight.

"Oh, here's one! Hey, it's May, I can totally take care of this.

Turn it over to reveal the "2012" and make sure the audience sees it.

"Argh! You see? *(Slump down in chair again.)* I can remember a time when I didn't have to worry about bills. You all out there in the audience, you have it good. What I wouldn't GIVE to be a kid again and have no bills and no problems whatsoever.

Have a "eureka" moment and stand suddenly.

"That's it! I know how to be content!

CG: Contentment Slide

"Contentment is deciding to be happy with what you've got. Well, what I've got ... is a great idea. I just need someone from the audience to help me.

Chose a child from the audience and bring them up.

STORYTELLER: "Ok, well I have decided that I want to go back and be a kid again. So, we need someone to be the large group leader and teach the kids. We are learning about contentment today. You'll be great. I have to go sit down with the rest of the kids."

Go sit in the audience and stare up at the child on the stage.

"Isn't it so fun to be the large group leader?? I mean, you get to tell the Bible story! How cool is that?! I'm just going to sit here and be one of the kids. So I thought that I could just sit and not worry about anything."

STORYTELLER: "You're doing great! They will listen to everything you have to say. So go ahead! You can tell us all about the Israelites and how they wanted to go back to Egypt. GO on..."

"SO, what's the problem? *(Let the kid answer)*

Oh, you don't know how to teach the group? Ugh, OK well I guess my idea of going back to being one of the kids didn't work out so well! So, I guess you can go back to your seat. I will have to take it from here."

"I just thought if I was a kid again I wouldn't have any responsibilities.... like bills! But I guess if I was a kid again, I wouldn't be able to teach you guys. I mean I LOVE teaching you guys about the Bible.

Like today! I wanted to tell you guys about a story from the Bible that teaches us about contentment. Our story is from Exodus 16. *(Open Bible to Exodus 16.)* Back in the day, God's people had it a bit rough, working hard, being slaves, making bricks ... but before I begin telling you this Bible story, I need some help.

(Grab the box of props)

"Let's dive in! Cast your minds back to ancient Egypt. For hundreds of years, God's people lived as slaves in Egypt. Life was really difficult. They had to work REALLY hard!"

Host slaps two pieces of wood together, creating a whip crack sound.

STORYTELLER: “The Egyptians wanted their slaves to be strong, so they made sure the Israelites had plenty of food.”

Host grabs a bread bag and throws several pieces of bread out into the crowd.

“Eat up, Israelites! Hard work requires a good breakfast!”

STORYTELLER: “God’s people cried out for help ... and God led them to safety through Moses. Moses, with God’s help, even parted the Red Sea to help them escape.

Host picks up a red bed sheet and flaps it over the heads of a group of kids (not hard, not enough to whip-crack the end of the sheet).

“The Israelites made it across, out of slavery, and were free!

Host waves the bed sheet back and forth.

“But ... they ended up in the desert.”

During this next description, Host takes the sheet and wraps it around his head and body like a burqa.

ISRAELITES COMPLAIN ABOUT FOOD

STORYTELLER: “Yep. There was nothing. Just hot sun. No food, no water, and seemingly nowhere to go! The Israelites started to complain. ‘What are we going to eat?’ they said. ‘Who’s in charge out here, anyway?’ they said. Well, Moses and his brother Aaron were in charge, and the Israelites started to complain to them.”

Host talks through a bullhorn (or just a megaphone, rolled-up cardstock, or something similar).

HOST: “Hey, Moses. I’m STARVING. At least when we were back in Egypt we had food given to us.”

Host throws one more piece of bread at someone

STORYTELLER: “Their complaints were so bad that they even started saying that they wished, instead of being free, that they had died back in Egypt as slaves!

Host smacks two pieces of wood together again.

“God had kept the Israelites safe from Pharaoh’s entire army when he rescued them in Egypt—yet they didn’t even trust God now to give them what they needed! God spoke to Moses, and He told Moses and his brother Aaron to gather the people together.

Host leads all the kids, if possible, to scoot together or lean into one another.

“Aaron said (*read Exodus 16:9*), ‘Come to the Lord. He has heard you speak against Him.’ (*NirV*) As Aaron spoke to the people, the glory of the Lord appeared in the desert, hovering like a cloud.”

Host pulls out a white bedsheet and flutters it about the heads of the kids.

GOD GIVES THE ISRAELITES QUAIL

STORYTELLER: “The people were amazed! Moses told them that God said this (*read Exodus 16:12*), ‘When the sun goes down, you will eat meat. In the morning, you will be filled with bread. Then you will know I am the Lord your God.’ (*NirV*) Well, the people saw that the sun was going down right then! And, wouldn’t you know ...

Starts throwing out the plush birds in the audience.

“... birds! God sent quail for the Israelites to eat! It was more than enough for them to fill their bellies—all the meat they could eat! And in the morning, they were promised bread, and that’s what they got. Thin white flakes on the ground, looking like frost, tasted amazingly like bread. It was all over the ground!”

Host opens up the bag of bread, and throws it all over the audience.

STORYTELLER: “Each morning, the bread—called manna—appeared again. And every evening, the quail returned. The Israelites were no longer hungry!”

ISRAELITES COMPLAIN ABOUT WATER

STORYTELLER: “However, the Israelites found something to complain about AGAIN. This time they were thirsty. ‘I’m totally parched!’ they said. ‘I’m so thirsty I’m about to pass out!’ they whined. Moses told them, again, to gather around.

Host leads all the kids again, if possible, to scoot together or lean into one another.

“Moses was getting frustrated. (*Read from Exodus 17:2*) ‘Why are you arguing with me? Why are you testing the Lord?’ (*NirV*) The Israelites kept up their complaining. ‘Why did you bring us out here to the desert?’ they cried. ‘Was it just to watch us all die of thirst?’ Instead of remembering all that God had given them and how He promised to take care of them, the people got so upset they were ready to take it out on Moses! (*Read Exodus 17:4.*) ‘What am I going to do with these people?’ Moses said to God. ‘They are almost ready to kill me by throwing stones at me!’ (*NirV*)

"Well, God answered Moses. He told him to get out in front of the people. Then He said (*read Exodus 17:5-6*), 'Take in your hand the walking stick you used when you struck the Nile River. Go. I will stand there in front of you by the rock at Mount Horeb. Hit the rock.' Moses did as God instructed. Once he hit the rock ..."

Host has gotten a Super Soaker™ out of the box and he unleashes a torrent of water on the kids.

HOST: "Water poured out! Mwahahahahaha!"

STORYTELLER: "God had continually given the Israelites what they needed, as they needed it. But they were so focused on what they had in Egypt, what was in the past, that they kept missing out on what God was providing."

HOST: "Wow, those Israelites were stuck in the past. They really needed to live in the present."

"That ... was ... awesome! Kids, help me gather up the props!"

Host gathers up all of the props, and with the help of the audience, gathers all of the thrown props as well.

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "So, kids, what can we learn from the Israelites? God provides for us every day—and if we dwell too much on what we USED to have, we miss how God is working for us right now! You might say, 'I used to have great friends, but since I moved I'm lonely,' or, 'I used to have a great bike, but now it's all old and broken.' You don't realize that though you might not have the same friends as you did in your old town, God is even now providing you with awesome new friends here! And maybe you've outgrown your old bike—but I bet you've gotten some awesome things since then that are even more fun.

CG: Contentment Slide

"Being content means deciding to be happy with what you've got. The Israelites sure weren't happy, even though God gave them food every day and water every day ... IN A DESERT. I suppose people will always find something to complain about, but God doesn't want us to be the whiners and complainers. He wants us to be content!

CG: Bottom Line Slide

"Speaking of that, let's look at the one thing to remember for today: **[Bottom Line] When you focus on what you used to have, you can miss what you have now.** Think about all of the amazing things you have in this moment! Friends, family, a great church, a great school, even a wonderful person who loves to tell you stories on Sunday mornings! God provides for you—every day! Let's pray."

Pray

STORYTELLER: "Lord, thank You for showing us how to be content, here and now, through the story of the Israelites in the desert. Please help us to find ways to see Your provision, Your help, Your hand,

in all that we do—and that we don't lose sight of what You're doing by focusing too much on what we used to have or how things used to be. Our lives are Yours, here and now. Thank You for providing for us every day. We ask these things in Jesus' name, amen."

ADD 252 WEEK 3 VIDEO FOR EMERGENCY