



**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Series:** God is Our Rescuer  
Summer Year 2, Lesson 12

# Rescue Us From Whining

**Take Home Point:** \* Don't whine. Be thankful!

\*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

**Bible Event:** Numbers 21:4-9. The bronze serpent.

**Key Verse:** John 3:14-15, "As Moses lifted up the snake on a pole in the desert, so the Son of Man (*Jesus*) must be lifted up. Then everyone who believes in him will have eternal life."

**We will help kids know:**

- The Biblical account that the Israelites' complaining was a rejection of God.
- How God judged the Israelites' sins with snakes but sent a rescue which was the bronze serpent on a pole.
- This is a picture of Jesus lifted up as our rescuer.




**We will help kids feel:**

- Convicted when they whine; that it can be a serious offense against God.
- Thankful that God has given them a savior as well as many other blessings.

**We will help kids do:**

- Identify areas in their lives where they are quick to whine.
- Show their thankfulness by participating in a mission project.

# THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
<b>Small Group Warm-Up</b> 	3	As children play with a rubber snake, they experience the sound of whining.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rubber snake for each group</li> </ul>
<b>Large Group</b> 	4  7  8       10	<b>Overview</b>  <b>Puppet Presentation:</b> “Gordy and the Whining Contest.”—Gordy competes in the whining contest.  <b>Interactive Bible Event:</b> “The Bronze Serpent.”—the consequence for the Israelites complaining against God was death from poisonous snakes. Moses interceded for the people and God made a way to be healed.  <b>Puppet Conclusion:</b> “Gordy and the Whining Contest”—just as the people were saved from death when they looked up at the bronze snake on a pole, we, too, are saved when we look to Jesus and what he did for us on the cross.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gordy with a clothespin on his nose</li> <li>• bronze colored rubber snake wrapped around the top of a pole</li> <li>• cross beam that can easily be attached to the pole</li> <li>• cloth to cover the pole</li> <li>• several rubber snakes</li> </ul>
<b>Small Group Application</b> 	4	Children discuss and review why whining is not appreciated by God. They change their whining into gratitude and share their abundance with those less fortunate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supplies for a mission project</li> </ul> <i>Optional activity:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• half sheets of construction paper</li> <li>• pencils, crayons, or markers</li> <li>• tape</li> <li>• the cross from large group accessible to the children</li> </ul>

## Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



**Purpose:** *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

*Each group should have a small rubber snake to be passed among the children.*

Begin the discussion with:

**Do you know how to whine? I have a rubber “whining” snake in my hand. When I hold this rubber snake, I can practice one of my favorite whines. Let me show you how it works.**

Give a personal example of a complaint using a whining tone. For example, “I hate doing dishes.”

**Let’s play the whining game. I will pass the snake around the circle and you are going to think of something you might whine about. It might be something about a chore at home, a rule you don’t like to follow, school, or even your brothers or sisters. When someone passes the snake to you, give us your best whine.**

After all participants have shared their whining complaint, let the group vote on the best whine.

**Who do you think has the best whine in our group? When we go to large group today we will have a whining contest with someone from each grade. Who should represent our group just in case they ask us to send a volunteer forward?**

Have the kids select a representative.

**What do your parents usually do when you whine? How do they feel about your whining? How do you think God feels about your whining?**

**Today we will learn how God feels about our whining and what he does to help us get rid of it.**

**Our point today is *\*don’t whine. Be thankful!***

# Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



**Purpose:** *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible Event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

**Puppet Presentation:** “Gordy and the Whining Contest”—Gordy competes in the whining contest and learns how God rewards whining and complaining.

**Interactive Bible Event:** “The Bronze Serpent”—the consequence for the Israelites complaining against God was death from poisonous snakes. Because Moses interceded for the people, God made a way for them to look to him and be healed.

**Puppet Conclusion:** “Gordy and the Whining Contest”—just as the people were saved from death when they looked up at the bronze snake on a pole, we, too, are saved when we look to Jesus and what he did for us on the cross.

# Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



**Purpose:** *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

*Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.*

## Observation Questions: What happened?

Have kids refer to Numbers 21:4-9 in their Bibles.

**Why did the Israelites complain?** *(Numbers 21:5. They were tired of manna.)*

**What happened when they complained?** *(Numbers 21:6. God sent snakes to bite them. They became sick and some died.)*

**Why did God save them?** *(Numbers 21:7-8. The people admitted they had sinned and asked Moses to pray for them.)*

**What did the people have to do to be saved?** *(Numbers 21:9. They had to look up at the bronze snake Moses made and put on a pole.)*

## **Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?**

**Why was God so angry with the people and their complaining?**  
*(Because complaining against Moses was like complaining against God. They were forgetting to be thankful for what God had provided for them.)*

**How did this event remind the Israelites to be thankful again?**  
*(Because of their sin of complaining, God sent death with poisonous snakes. God provided a rescue from their sins when they looked up to the snake on the pole.)*

## **Application Questions: What does this mean to me?**

**Why does God want us to be thankful?** *(Because he wants us to remember that he provides us with all we need.)*

**What is the best gift God could give us?** *(The gift of his Son Jesus. Because of him we can have eternal life in heaven.)*

Read aloud John 3:14-15 or have a volunteer read.

***“As Moses lifted up the snake on a pole in the desert, so the Son of Man (Jesus) must be lifted up. Then everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.”***

**When we remember this we *\*won’t whine* but will remember to *be thankful*.**

**What are other things we have today that we are thankful for?** *(Allow the children to list answers.)*

### Application Activity:

Inquire about mission work in your church or community for suggestions on how the children might be of help. For example: Children might collect small toys and school supplies to make care-kits that are delivered to Cambodian Christian churches and distributed to children.

Working together with other small groups, collect items that can be sent to a mission organization. Do this as a reminder of how much God has provided for us and how we can use those blessings to help others.

Here is a possibility:

Lutheran Hour Ministries: Global Care Packages  
660 Mason Ridge Center Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63141  
Phone: 800-944-3450 Fax: 314-317-4298  
[www.lhm.org/globalcare](http://www.lhm.org/globalcare)

### Optional Craft Activity:

#### Supplies:

- *half sheets of construction paper*
- *pencils, crayons, or markers*
- *tape*
- *the cross from large group accessible to the children*

Give each child a half sheet of construction paper. Have the children write about or draw pictures to represent the top ten things they are thankful for. These sheets can then be taped to the pole used in large group. This would remind everyone that, as we look to God and see what he's done for us in Jesus and our other blessings, we can't help but be thankful.

Review the take home point: ***\*Don't whine. Be thankful!***

#### Closing Prayer:

Have the children pray to be thankful instead of whining because that is complaining against God. Pray that the cross would be a reminder of how much Jesus did for us. He gives us eternal life when we look to him and believe in him, and for that we can be most thankful.

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# Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

## Gordy and the Whining Contest Puppet Presentation

*Supplies:*

- Gordy with a clothespin on his nose
- bronze colored rubber snake wrapped around the top of a pole
- cross beam that can easily be attached to the pole
- cloth to cover the pole
- several rubber snakes

Gordy enters with a clothespin on his nose. He speaks in a whiny, nasally tone.

**Presenter :** Hi, Gordy. Come on out.

Gordy: *(In a nasally tone.)* Hi, everyone.

**Presenter :** Gordy, what's that on your nose?

Gordy: It's a clothespin.

**Presenter :** Why don't you take it off? I can hardly understand you.

Gordy: No! I don't like it when you tell me what to do.

**Presenter :** Gordy, I wasn't telling you what to do. I was just suggesting that you take the clothespin off.

Gordy: Well, it's supposed to help me in the whining contest.

**Presenter :** You mean you get to be in the contest? Why, I didn't know...

Gordy: Of course I'm in the contest! What's the matter? Didn't you think I could do it? I hate it when people keep me out of games—especially games I'm good at.

**Presenter :** What game is that?

Gordy: Whining!

**Presenter :** Okay, Gordy. Kids, I hope you're not as big of experts at whining as Gordy is. Let's call forward the "best at whining" representative from a few groups and have our whining contest.

Gordy: Who's going to decide the winner? I hate it when there's no winner.

**Presenter : I will decide.**

Choose four representatives to give their best whines. You might choose one from each grade. Gordy might comment on some of them. When all have completed, it is Gordy's turn.

Gordy: *(Still in a nasally tone.)* I hate it when everyone is whining! Oh, stop your whining. Whine, whine, whine!

**Presenter : That was a great job, Gordy. I think the winner is... Gordy!**

Gordy: Yea for me!

**Presenter : Kids, you can take your seats, and I will give Gordy his award. Here it is.** *(Hands Gordy a rubber snake.)*

Gordy: What? A snake? I was expecting a trophy or something cool, and you just give me a snake!

**Presenter : I'm afraid that's the way God awarded whining.**

Gordy: With a rubber snake?

**Presenter : No, with real snakes.**

Gordy: Why did he do that?

**Presenter : In the Bible event today we will learn that God hates complaining and whining because when we do this we are complaining and whining against him.**

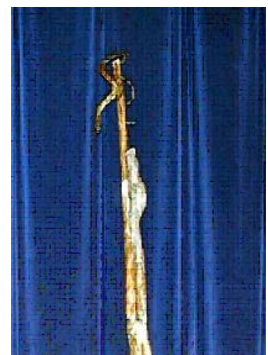
Gordy: Uh-oh. That sounds serious. What happened?

**Presenter : Let's tell the story and you will see.**

## **The Bronze Serpent**

### Interactive Bible Event

*The prop needed for this is a rubber snake painted bronze. Wrap this snake around the top of a pole. The pole will have a crossbeam that can quickly be wired to it so a cross is shaped later in the presentation. As you begin, have a sheet covering this prop. It can be lifted off when you reach the appropriate part of the story. (Extra rubber snakes are also needed.)*





Invite the children to participate with their own comments. Gordy can add his comments as the story proceeds, especially as he does impersonations of the whining people. For example, when the Israelites complain about being thirsty, Gordy could say, "Come on guys! I'm really thirsty. I wanna Gatorade."

**Presenter :** The Israelites were in the desert wandering on their journey. Their feet were tired and the sand was hot. Their throats were dry and they had very little water. The hotter they became, the more they complained. Pretend you are an Israelite and let's hear you whine. *(Ad-libs an example of whining for all the kids.)* "It's hot out here. We're thirsty. We're sooooo thirsty."

The Israelites were also hungry. It's not that they didn't have food. They had manna. But they were just so tired of it. Can you hear them whine? Come on. Let's help them...."We're soooo tired of this manna. Can't we have some pizza instead?"

Then they said to Moses, "Did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? Look at all these things going wrong. No water. We're hot. We're tired. This manna is soooo gross."

While they were complaining, snakes crawled into the camp and began to bite those who were complaining. The poison burned them like fire. Those who were bitten began to die.

Takes some of the extra rubber snakes and throws them into the crowd. If the children are hit by a snake, they can pretend they are dying.

As the other Israelites saw people dying, they realized their sin. They knew they had done wrong. They were not just whining; they were whining against Moses and God. Now they were being punished.

They quickly went to Moses and admitted, "We have sinned. We have whined and complained against you and the Lord. Pray to the Lord and ask him to take away these things."

So Moses prayed for the people and God rescued them. God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. "When someone is bitten he should look up to the serpent on the pole and he will be healed." So Moses did this.

Unveil the serpent on the pole.

From that moment if people were bitten, they were reminded that they had a rescue as they looked to the symbol of God's healing. As the people looked at the snake pole, God saw their need, he heard their cries, and he made them well.

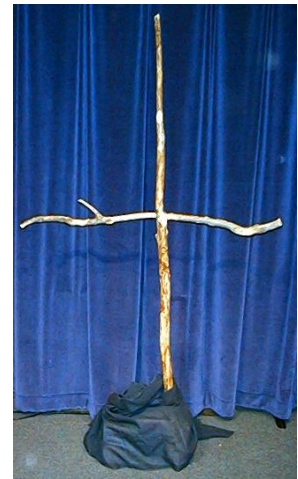
# **Gordy and the Whining Contest**

## **Puppet Conclusion**

**Presenter :** Today we, too, might be in a bad habit of whining. Sometimes we whine and complain while we have so many things to be thankful for. We should remember *\*don't whine. Be thankful!* Instead of whining, we can look up to another type of pole.

Removes the bronze serpent and convert the pole into a cross.

**What can we look up to and be thankful for? Right, the cross! The cross reminds us of Jesus and what he has given for us. Let me read to you from John 3:14. *"As Moses lifted up the snake on the pole in the desert so the Son of Man (Jesus) must be lifted up. Then, everyone who believes in him will have eternal life."***



**Jesus was lifted up on a cross. If we look at him with eyes of faith, we will be healed.**

**Gordy:** (No longer has clothespin on nose.) Healed from snake bites?

**Presenter :** In a way. We are healed from the power of sin to keep us away from God. Remember how the serpent tricked Adam and Eve to sin and all have sinned since then?

**Gordy:** Yes.

**Presenter :** Sin has the power to keep us from God. When Jesus died on the cross he took the punishment of sin on himself. He was lifted up for all to see.

**Gordy:** But I can't see him now.

**Presenter :** When we trust Jesus as our Savior, we can look to the cross and see he gave his life so we can live.

**Gordy:** Wow! That's pretty important!

**Presenter :** It's very important. When you know this, you can be so thankful that it puts an end to whining.

**Gordy:** What if you're really good at whining?

**Presenter :** Gordy, God hates whining. When you whine, it's just like you are complaining against him.

Gordy: Uh-oh. I better stop my whining.

**Presenter :** Why don't you start with giving thanks instead? Would you please close us with prayer, Gordy?

Gordy: *(In a whiny voice)* But I don't wanna... Just kidding!

Dear God, thank you for showing us how you hate whining. We don't want to complain against you or anyone else—especially when you've given us so much. You've given us our families and our food and our health and our church and our friends and money. Most of all, thank you for Jesus who gave his life for us. We love you, Jesus. Be with us every day to help us *\*not whine*, but to *be thankful*. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.