



Day 3: Wilderness Leads

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Exodus 13:17-22

Scripture Focus: Exodus 13:21

“The Lord went in front of them during the day in a column of cloud to guide them and at night in a column of lightning to give them light. This way they could travel during the day and at night.”

Theological Summary: God will never leave you. The Lord cares for you, guides you, and keeps you safe.

Daily Goals...

- Consider our own individual and collective wilderness experiences.
- Be assured God is with us in our wilderness.
- Explore signs of God’s guidance and provision around us.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Cloud Tennis	PLAY	Paper plate racquet game
__ Short vs. Long	LEARN PLAY	Obstacle courses
__ Cloud Painting	PLAY CREATE	Making puffy paint
__ Feeling Safe	SERVE PRAY	Calming activities
__ Travel Satchels	PRAY CREATE	Paper bag satchels
__ Desert Sand	CREATE LEARN	Sand pictures
__ The Journey	LEARN CREATE	Torn paper pictures
__ Guide Us	PRAY	Circle activity

Leader notes: Young campers might not have heard the story of the Israelites in Egypt, so be ready to tell the story fully or use an appropriate children’s story Bible.

Prayer: “Dear Lord, thank you for loving me, guiding me, and keeping me safe. Amen.”

Daily Activities

Cloud Tennis

PLAY

Supplies: Paper plates, large popsicle sticks, tape, balloons, and crayons.

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22. Ask campers to tell you how God helped the Israelites. Ask them what they think the clouds and lightning might have looked like. Give campers paper plates and markers to create a cloud on one side and lightning on the other. Tape large popsicle sticks to the back of the paper plate to make a racquet. Partner the campers up and let them use the “racquets” to keep the balloon in the air!

Try This: Play a game of “Red Light/Green Light,” but change Green to “lightning” and Red to “clouds.”

Short vs. Long

LEARN PLAY

Supplies: Obstacle course items (traffic cones, balls, hula hoops, anything to create a challenging path).

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22. Remind campers that when Moses led the Israelites, they had to walk a long way, and it wasn’t easy. Create two obstacle courses, one shorter in distance but with more challenging tasks that take longer amounts of time (like bouncing a basketball 10 times, walking backward, crawling over and around items, etc.); and one longer in distance, but easier to complete (fewer and easier obstacles). Demonstrate the path for each course. Separate the campers into two teams. One at a time, campers in each line race to complete their course. After each team has completed their course, have the teams switch courses. Ask campers which course they liked better. What made the obstacles hard? What made it easier? Invite campers to think about what obstacles the Israelites had to face (walking a long way, fear of who was chasing them, the heat of the desert, etc.) How do you think they might have encouraged each other?

Try This: Have each team create its own obstacle course and invite the other team to try it out. To make it even more challenging, invite campers to work in pairs. One camper closes their eyes as they try to do a task, and the other camper calls out directions or encouragement.

Cloud Painting

PLAY CREATE

Supplies: Liquid glue, shaving cream, food coloring, paint brushes, straws or popsicle sticks to stir, and bowls.

How: Remind campers about the cloud of smoke God gave the Israelites to guide them during the day. If you have not read the scripture yet, do so. Invite campers to look up in the sky and see if they can see any clouds. Invite campers to think about shapes and figures they see. If no clouds, invite them to think about cloud shapes they have seen. In your activity space, put equal parts glue and shaving cream in a bowl with some drops of food coloring. Stir to combine to create cloud paint. Use $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of shaving cream and glue for a small group. Campers can draw what they plan to paint or just start painting their cloud picture. It will take about a day to dry, and gets flatter and darker as it dries.

Try This: Use a small amount of shaving cream to finger paint on a table. When finished, wipe off with a damp cloth. Do not add food coloring or glue! Finger painting with shaving cream will make those spots very clean. You may need to finish by covering the entire table with shaving cream to remove images, or you can leave the clean lines as decorations for others to see.

Feeling Safe

SERVE PRAY

Supplies: None.

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22. Invite campers to share how they think the Israelites might have felt. Invite them to share times when they may have felt the same way. Try some different activities that might help campers calm down and feel safe when they are scared or aggravated. They can also think about things that are troubling them while they are breathing.

- **Belly breathing:** Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. When inhaling, concentrate on the hand covering your heart. When exhaling, feel the hand on your belly rise.
- **Star Breathing:** Spread the fingers on one hand (like a star). Use the pointer finger from the other hand to slowly trace each finger on the star hand, starting at the base of the thumb. Inhale while tracing up each finger, and exhale while traveling down each finger. Repeat on the other hand.

- Inhale while slowly moving up to tippy toes, exhale while slowly lowering heels back to the ground. Provide something for campers to hold on to, if needed. This can also be done while seated in a chair.

Close with the prayer of the day or say, “Dear God, we love you. Thank you for always being with us.”

Try This: Try the above exercises in different locations (somewhere noisy, somewhere quiet) or different positions. Does it change how they feel? Invite campers to share other ways they might use movement or breathing to calm themselves down.

Travel Satchels

LEARN CREATE

Supplies: Paper lunch bags, markers, scissors, construction paper, a hole punch and yarn, tape, or a stapler.

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22. Discuss what things the Israelites might have wanted to take with them. Invite campers to think about what they would take with them if they had to leave suddenly. Give each camper a bag to decorate with symbols or words that remind them of God. After decorating, fold over top of bag about 2 inches. Leaders should cut 3 slits into the top of the bag. Unfold the top and campers can string yarn through the slits to make a drawstring for the bag. Invite campers to use the bag to hold special items they acquire during camp.

Try This: Have campers draw and color items they would take with them and cut out to place in their bag. What would they include? What would they share with others?

Desert Sand

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Liquid glue, colored sand or salt (colored with food coloring), construction paper, and pencils.

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22. Invite campers to think about what would make traveling through the desert a little bit easier. Campers draw the item they would bring on a piece of paper. Using glue, trace the lines. Shake colored sand or colored salt over the glue and make a colorful sand picture!

Try This: Invite campers to draw something from the story and then trace with glue. Create a group mural of all the parts of the scene.

The Journey

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: White paper, torn construction paper, glue, and paintbrushes.

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22. On a piece of white paper, have campers draw a large bolt of lightning/fire and then use torn pieces of paper to fill in their outline. Using a paintbrush, campers should put a small amount of glue on their paper and cover that section with torn paper. Then repeat for each section. Write or help campers write the Bible verse on the paper.

Try This: Have campers draw a path across a paper (adding people and animals if desired). Campers then cut out a cloud shape out of white paper. Tape one edge of the cloud on the top part of the paper to allow the cloud to be lifted to see the path below. Write the Bible verse on the path.

Guide Us

PRAY PLAY

Supplies: Two balls.

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22 together. Remind campers that God guided the Israelites both day and night. We know God guides us with prayer, but what are other ways that the Lord guides us? Sit in a circle and give one camper a ball. The camper says a way that God guides people, then rolls the ball to another camper. Expand the game by adding a second ball, having the campers stand up and bounce the ball to another camper, or other more complex physical motions. Invite campers to close their eyes and think about the ways God guides them, and to thank God for always being with them. Close with the prayer of the day.

Try This: Using a flashlight, shine on campers to have them stand up and say a way that God guides them.



Story Resources

Piper, Disney Pixar 2018 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIPV1iwzrzg>

An animated short film showing the brave journey of a baby sandpiper as they learn to leave the nest. The theme of a journey and bravery fits in well with Exodus 13:17-22.

Sheila Rae the Brave, By Kevin Henkes

Sheila Rae takes pride in being brave until she gets lost, and her sister guides her home.

Finding Nemo, Disney Pixar 2003

A clown fish named Marlin goes on an epic quest, leaving the only home he has ever known, to find his son, Nemo.



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Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Exodus 13:17-22

Scripture Focus: The column of cloud during the day and the column of lightning at night never left its place in front of the people.

Theological Summary: God acts as a guide on our journey, never leaving us.

Daily Goals...

- Consider our own individual and collective wilderness experiences.
- Be assured God is with us in our wildernesses.
- Explore signs of God's guidance and provision around us.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Ready Steady	LEARN PLAY	Strategic tug of war
__ Signs of Love	CREATE SERVE	Creating space to pause and feel
__ Following Light	PLAY LEARN	A flashlight creates a path
__ Box of Courage	PRAY	Recognize what makes us brave
__ Unexpected Path	PLAY CREATE	Construct a bridge from marshmallow
__ Find a Way	PLAY	Move a ball safely from place to place
__ Night-Lights	PRAY	Contemplate the stars
__ Best Path Forward	PLAY	Blindfolded obstacle course

Leader notes: Creating a safe space to learn and lean into God means acknowledging that some of the campers always feel the need to be brave. As the campers journey together, make it safe to say that out loud.

Prayer: "God of fluffy clouds and crackling bolts of light, thank you for being a constant and guide in our lives, no matter what the weather is around us. Amen."

Daily Activities

Ready Steady

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Masking tape, bandana/short rope, and Bible.

How: In advance, make two 1 ½'x 1 ½' squares with masking tape on the floor, about 2' apart. Invite campers to read Exodus 13:17-22 and consider:

- Why did the Israelites ready themselves for battle when they had God's plan to avoid conflict?
- Can we always plan for everything?
- What makes us feel supported and comfortable?

Divide campers into two groups. Invite each group to choose one camper to stand on one foot in the square, hold one end of the rope, and try to pull the other over. Give the campers a few minutes to strategize and prepare. What do they think will be their biggest challenge? What strategy is most likely to lead to victory? Invite the campers to try out their preparations. What went right/wrong? We try to prepare ourselves to enter our realities each day—what doesn't/work? How do we adjust? Allow them to try as many times, with as many different campers, as they wish.

Try This: Invite campers to physically support their tug of war candidate. How might the group as a whole change the challenge? What difference does a solid community make for one person? How does one person impact the community?

Signs of Love

SERVE CREATE

Supplies: Sidewalk chalk, paper, and pens.

How: Invite campers to think about what makes them feel safe at camp, at home, at school, etc. Make a list of single words (at least 3, no more than 5 or 6). Using sidewalk chalk, write "Stop and think about (fill in with one of the single words)" in bold letters. Encourage the campers to embellish the statement with drawn designs. Invite everyone at camp to stop in these places and see if they are aware of God's guidance.

Try This: Limit the number of sidewalk chalk messages to no more than three, and leave the chalk there. Invite others at camp to add to the embellishments, growing the message and the designs with every moment taken.

Following Light

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Flashlight, Bible, gathering space which can be darkened, and chairs.

How: In advance, set up chairs/other obstacles around the space. Read Exodus 13:17-22 together. Ask the campers how the people might have prepared for the journey they were on. How does one prepare when one doesn't know what one might face?

Turn out the light. Shine the flashlight onto the floor somewhere in the room and invite campers to go to the lit spot. Move the light around, guiding the campers around or through whatever else that space contains. Invite campers to discuss: What is it like following this lit spot? Did you feel prepared for the journey? What is it like moving without being able to see everything around you?

Try This: How did the group move? Did the campers help one another? Invite the campers to think about what difference the group's interaction with each other might have made. Invite the campers to try the journey again, this time with an intentional strategy for the group.

Box of Courage

CREATE PRAY

Supplies: Shoe box, small river stones, Sharpie markers, acrylic paint (optional), paint brushes (optional), colored paper (optional), and glue (optional).

How: Invite campers to think about what makes them feel brave when things are hard. Invite campers to draw or write each thing that is helpful to them on a stone, and to hold that for a moment. Each camper can make as many as they like. Invite campers to place the stones in the box. When they have finished, invite each camper to take a turn holding the box, feeling the weight of so much courage. When everyone has had a chance, place the box in a worship area. If you have time, invite the campers to share some of the things that make them feel brave so they can draw inspiration from each other.

Try This: Invite campers to decorate the box, creating a sacred space for the courage it holds.

Unexpected Path

PLAY CREATE

Supplies: Toothpicks, mini marshmallows, 12" ruler, and small objects (optional).

How: Invite the campers to create a bridge that spans at least 12 inches out of toothpicks and mini marshmallows that does not touch the ground in the middle. Bridges are meant to make a safe path for travelers needing to get around or through unsafe conditions. Ask the campers what is involved in building such a path. What makes this path successful or unsuccessful? Ask the campers how they feel about someone putting so much planning into some paths while others, like outdoor trails, just appear over time. Ask them if they prepare to plan out their trips or plan their day, or just go along and see where they go and what happens.

Try This: Once a bridge is built, try testing it out by adding small objects to the middle. How does it hold up? What might need to be adjusted to make the bridge stronger? What else can be learned about making a safe space for travelers?

Find a Way

PLAY

Supplies: Wrapping paper tubes, scissors, and ping pong balls.

How: In advance, cut wrapping paper tubes into quarters lengthwise. Give each camper a piece of a tube. Invite campers to move a ping pong ball from one end of the gathering space to the other, using only the tubes. If the ball hits the floor, they must begin again.

Try This: Time the campers as they make their way. Can they go faster? How? Try again!

Night-Lights

PRAY

Supplies: None.

How: Invite campers to sit outside after dark. Explain to the campers that various cultures have used the stars, planets, and moon to navigate and find their way for centuries. Invite campers to look up and consider what they see. Are there patterns in the heavenly bodies? Are some brighter than others? Those who live in/near cities often can't see many stars or planets; what is it like to see so many? Can God be sensed in the night sky? Even if God can't be sensed, invite campers to thank God for these guiding lights.

Try This: Invite campers to choose just one star to focus on. As they stare at that one place, what happens to the perception of the others? Do others fade or brighten? Do all of the campers experience the same thing?

Best Path Forward

PLAY

Supplies: Blindfolds, masking tape, newspaper, and chairs/other obstacles.

How: In advance, tape wads of newspaper to the floor, and arrange obstacles throughout the space. Invite campers to partner up, one wearing a blindfold. The camper without the blindfold guides their partner through the space with words only, trying to avoid touching any of the paper wads. What is it like to follow a path that you can't see ahead on? What is it like to guide someone with only your words? What mistakes do each make? What is it like to succeed? Invite campers to switch roles and try again.

Try This: Try this without blindfolds, but with the camper walking backwards. What is it like moving through the space, guided, but also being able to see a little? What is it like guiding someone this way? How is it different from having one camper blindfolded entirely?



Story Resources

Up (Pixar 2009): An old man and a young boy accidentally embark on a journey together. As they encounter new challenges, they learn more about each other's stories, and they find frustration, comfort, and help in each other's presence. Each discovers that they are not alone on their journey and that guidance and hope are there if they seek it.

"The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights" by Carole Boston Weatherford: picks up on the theme that God is always with us, even in the hard stuff.



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Scripture Focus: Exodus 13:21

The LORD went in front of them during the day in a column of cloud to guide them and at night in a column of lightning to give them light. This way they could travel during the day and at night.”

Theological Summary: The path out of the wilderness may not be obvious. With trust in God, we can find our way through hardship into hopeful futures.

Daily Goals...

- Consider our own individual and collective wilderness experiences.
- Be assured God is with us in our wildernesses.
- Explore signs of God’s guidance and provision around us.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Two Trails	PLAY	Campers choose obstacles
__ Night Clouds	CREATE	Cloud nightlights
__ Packing Up	PRAY	Pray for those that must leave home
__ Rock Signs	CREATE SERVE	Painting rocks
__ Crash and Woosh	PLAY LEARN	Blindfolded follow the leader
__ Meditation and Mingle	LEARN PLAY	Scripture reflection
__ Is It Obvious	PLAY	Imagine creative solutions
__ Journey Tracking	PRAY CREATE	Draw life maps

Leader notes: The idea of carrying someone’s bones may be gross or funny to some campers. Try and center them on the importance of bringing important items and/or people back home.

Prayer: “God, thank you for watching over us in times of difficulty and leading us to new experiences. May we have patience for our journeys ahead, and remember you are always here to help guide us. Amen.”

Daily Activities

Night Clouds

CREATE

Supplies: Mason jars, cotton balls, LED tealights, acrylic paint, glitter, water, bowls, and gloves.

How: Prepare a building station with enough materials for each camper to have one mason jar, one tealight, and enough cotton balls to fill the sides of their jar. Provide bowls to mix each color of acrylic paint with water. Provide each camper with their jar and a handful of cotton balls. Have campers use gloves and pull each cotton ball apart until it is thin and flexible. Once a cotton ball is stretched, it can be dipped into the paint and water mixture. Have campers place cotton on the sides of the jar like a layer of cloud. Be sure to leave a hole in the middle for the tealight. Continue pulling cotton balls until the sides of the jar are full. Next, campers can add glitter to the cotton balls inside the jar. Campers may use as much or as little color and glitter as they like. Finally, place a lit tealight into the center of the jar, and close the lid. The result should be a dazzling, bright cloud night light. If camps have strict lights-out policies, allow campers to test out their lights to ensure they look just right, then with gloves, carefully remove and turn off the tealight for use later.

Try This: With glow-in-the-dark paint, campers can add designs such as lightning bolts to the sides of the jar before placing the cotton balls. At night, this will allow campers to see their striking lightning paintings and their colorful clouds.

Packing Up

PRAY

Supplies: Notecard, pens, and Bible.

How: Invite a camper to read Exodus 13:17-22. Then initiate a time of reflection using questions like: What would it be like to leave a place you have lived in for a long time? How would it feel to know you were leaving one place for the unknown? Are there important things you would take with you? Next, pass each camper a notecard. Ask campers to draw/write five things they would take if they had to move. Once finished, ask the campers to share what items they chose to pack and the importance behind those items. Finally, lead a prayer saying, "God take care of those who must leave their homes behind in search of the unknown. Be with them as they plan what they can take with them on

their journey. We thank you for our (list some of the important items drawn by the campers) that bring us comfort in times of uncertainty. May we be grateful for all that we have. Amen."

Try This: Have campers turn in their cards without reading them aloud. Share the items on each card and have campers guess whose is whose. Have campers compare what is in their bags and deem what is a necessity and what is a want. This can provide campers with an important perspective on what it is like to make these life-changing decisions.

Two Trails

PLAY

Supplies: Cones, hula hoops, pool noodles, and a timer.

How: Before campers arrive, mark two paths with cones in a field or other open space. Make one path longer in length with no obstacles, and the other path shorter in length but filled with obstacles made from hula hoops and pool noodles. The campers must decide which path they would rather take as a team to complete the path together in a prescribed timeframe. If they choose the long path, they cannot run it. They must all walk together. Start with a base time of one minute. For the second attempt, give thirty seconds. For the last attempt, give the campers ten seconds. At the end of the activity, discuss with the campers the struggles of the games. Which path was easier to complete in time? How did their ability to overcome certain obstacles influence their choice? Was the short path worth the risk?

Try This: To make the game more difficult add math problems and riddles to the short trail.

Rock Signs

CREATE SERVE

Supplies: Rocks, acrylic paint, brushes, and Bible.

How: Begin by reading Exodus 13:17-22 as a group. Enter a time of wondering. What would it be like to see something and know it is God? What imagery brings you comfort? Have you ever seen a sign from God? What things make you feel safe and loved? Next, hand out a rock to each camper and invite them to paint a sign/symbol that represents comfort, safety, or God to them. Once all the rock paintings are completed, set them out to dry, and then disperse them around camp as signs of love to help other campers feel God's presence.

Try This: Have campers make rocks with positive affirmations that encourage others to remember to love themselves. Create enough rocks for the campers to take some back with them to leave at school, the park, a store, etc., as an act of kindness.

Crash and Woosh

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Blindfolds, cones, and Bible.

How: This activity is a version of the game “Follow the Leader.” In advance, place cones to create a path with lots of twists and turns. Gather the campers and choose one to be the group leader. Then, blindfold the other campers. The camper chosen to be the leader will guide the group around the path using only the words “Crash” and “Woosh”. How they choose to use these words is up to them. The goal is to lead the group through without anyone stepping off the path, and without any physical guidance. Have each camper take turns as the leader. At the end of the game, discuss some of the challenges: Was it hard to know where to go? Did you ever feel like you were lost? How did the limited use of words make you feel? Once campers have had time to discuss the questions, read Exodus 13:17-22. Invite campers to wonder if the Israelites may have felt a similar way. How would it feel to not know where you are going? Would it be easier to follow a column of cloud or lightning rather than a voice? What form of guidance would be the most comforting?

Try This: To make the game more difficult, counselors make other loud noises to distract the group. You can also try spreading campers apart in the path, with the leader having to guide each group member separately.

Journey Tracking

CREATE

Supplies: Paper and markers.

How: Provide each camper with a piece of paper and markers. Have campers draw a map that connects key moments in their lives. Invite campers to get creative with how the trail of the map looks and moves, and to draw symbols or illustrations to represent specific memories. Once all campers have finished their life maps, ask them to pair up and share their illustrated journeys. Then, discuss as a group what each pair had in common on their maps, or things that stood out to them about their partner’s map.

Try This: Use a piece of butcher paper to make a life map for the campers’ time at camp. Have them draw up to day two with space to add each day as the week continues. At the end of the week, discuss how the campers’ expectations for the week and the map have changed over time.

Is it Obvious?

PLAY

Supplies: Paper, markers, and Bible

How: Divide campers into small groups of three or four. Give each group a piece of paper and markers. Invite campers to devise a creative solution as groups to the problem: “What to do when your shoes keep coming untied?” Give groups two minutes to draw or write down their solution on and plan a presentation of their solution. Once all groups are prepared, have each group take turns presenting their creative solutions. Next, ask a camper to read Exodus 13:17-22. Invite campers into a time of reflection. Can an unobvious choice end up being a better decision? What aspect of their creativity made their solutions more interesting? How can we use creative solutions to make our lives better?

Try This: Apply the activity format to help solve world issues. What are creative solutions to climate change, war, racism, inequality, etc.?

Meditation and Mingle

LEARN PLAY

Supplies: Paper, scissors, and a pen.

How: In advance, prepare enough slips of paper for each camper to have one. On each piece, write one verse of Exodus 13:17-22 (repeat verses are okay). Gather the campers in an open space with room to walk and have them draw a piece at random. Invite campers to meditate on their scripture as they walk around the space. At random times during this meditation, call out “Connection.” At this time, campers must pair up and share the verse on their slip of paper with their partner. Once every pair seems to have shared their verses, call out “Mingle.” Campers must then separate and walk around the room again until the next connection is called. Once two campers have connected, they cannot pair up again. Call for connection ten times, or until all the campers have shared. At the end, have the campers enter a time of reflection. What did they find interesting about their verse? What verses did it connect well with? How did another camper’s verse change how they saw their own verse of scripture?

Try This: Instead of handing each camper a slip of paper, scatter enough for five per camper on the ground. Once “connection” is called, campers must grab a slip of paper to then share with a partner. They can then keep this slip and meditate on it until the next connection is called. Keeping their first slip, they must grab another and connect again. Do this until all slips of paper have been collected.



Story Resources

Frozen 2 (Walt Disney Studios Pictures 2019):

Queen Elsa of Arendelle is called into the unknown, sensing that the journey ahead is of grave importance. Her sister Anna and their friends journey together to find the source of Elsa’s call, but wind up finding a magical forest holding the truth about their kingdom.

The Sound of Music (20th Century Studios & Argyle Enterprises 1965): A young woman named Maria leaves the abbey to become a governess to the Von Trapp family. She introduces the children and their single father to love, laughter, and music. However, this love is shadowed by the hate around them as Austria has fallen under Nazi control.



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Scripture Focus: Exodus 13:21

“The LORD went in front of them during the day in a column of cloud to guide them and at night in a column of lightning to give them light. This way they could travel during the day and at night.”

Theological Summary: The wildernesses of our lives are scary and confusing. No matter how lost we may feel, God can help us find our way through tough situations and into more hopeful spaces.

Daily Goals...

- Consider our own individual and collective wilderness experiences.
- Be assured God is with us in our wildernesses.
- Explore signs of God’s guidance and provision around us.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Manna Hunt	PLAY	Find today’s scattered snack
__ Cloud & Fire	PLAY	Follow without being distracted
__ Wilderness Tales	LEARN	Sharing wilderness experiences
__ Then and Now	LEARN	God’s help, past and present
__ Provision Journals	PRAY CREATE	Recording daily manna
__ Signs of Presence	SERVE	Sharing encouragement
__ Cairns of Remembrance	CREATE PRAY	Remember God’s presence
__ Sign Tag	PLAY	Non-running signal game

Leader notes: Today is a day when story sharing will be invited. Take care to emphasize that sharing is always voluntary, that every story is sacred, and that covenant confidentiality does not apply to the disclosure of abuse/neglect.

Prayer: “God, eventually all of us experience the wilderness – times of trouble, confusion, and fear. Help us to know in our bones that you are with us in the wilderness; loving us with a ferocity that overshadows any, and all, evil. Help us to trust, to notice, to grieve, and to heal. Amen.”

Daily Activities

Manna Hunt

PLAY

Supplies: Wrapped candies/snacks (or “coupons for snacks” on paper).

How: Before your meeting, hide wrapped candies or snacks around your meeting space. Make some easy to find and others more difficult. If it is hot outside, you might make “coupons” for snacks on bright colored paper to hide instead. When campers arrive, inform them that the snack provisions for your meeting are here but need to be gathered. Tell them how many items there are that need to be found. Invite them to start hunting and gathering. When all the snacks have been gathered, invite campers to enjoy a snack with you. Place the leftovers in a spot where campers can see and access them whenever they need one.

Try This: This activity can easily become a discussion starter. Invite campers to reflect on what it was like to have their snacking needs provided for them, so long as they put in the effort to gather them. Explain that in the larger Exodus story, God not only led the people through the wilderness with pillars of cloud and fire but also provided them daily food in the form of manna – a substance that they had to gather up each morning. Invite campers to consider how God provides for us now.

Cloud & Fire

PLAY

Supplies: Cones or other boundary markers.

How: The goal of this game is for the leaders (Cloud and Fire) to get their followers (Israelites) from one point to another. Complicating the task are obstacles (Blockers). Select two campers to serve as “Cloud & Fire,” which will be leaders and must always stay together. Divide the rest, with half being Israelites and half being Obstacles. Assign a starting line and a finish line. “Obstacles” will spread out in the middle. Once set, they must stay in place with one foot always planted in its original position. Their goal is to make it harder for the Israelites to stay together. Obstacles may tag Israelites, who must freeze for three seconds before continuing. Obstacles may not tag the same person twice, and Cloud and Fire may not be tagged. Adjust your boundaries to make it hard for Cloud and Fire to guide the Israelites through, but not impossible.

Allow time for both groups to make a plan, then have the Obstacles take their places and begin. After that, they can join the group, unless they get tagged by another Obstacle. Cloud/Fire lead, changing direction as needed, and the Israelites must follow while dodging obstacles. The game continues until the Israelites reach the finish line. Rotate roles and play again so that everyone gets to experience the different roles. Use these questions or some of your own to debrief after playing:

- How did it feel to be an Israelite? Was it hard to follow?
- How did the Cloud and Fire help lead the way?
- What obstacles did you encounter? How did they affect your journey?
- What are the “Clouds” that guide us today? What are the “obstacles” that distract us from trusting God?

Try This: Adapt the game based on the space allowed and the size of your group. This could easily be upscaled into a total camp activity. Just be clear to set very clear rules as you add more people. You could also yell out “day” and “night” and have the two leaders switch who is allowed to speak based on that.

Wilderness Tales

LEARN

Supplies: Bible.

How: Explain that one of the most formative experiences for the people of God was a wilderness journey called the Exodus - when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness in search of a promised land after escaping slavery in Egypt. Read Exodus 13:17-22 aloud. This is part of the Israelites’ wilderness experience, that God cared for and guided them so that they wouldn’t become/remain hopelessly lost.

Discuss with campers that wilderness doesn’t always mean physical wilderness. It can be any time or experience where campers have felt loss, uncertainty, or even big changes in their lives. Invite campers to share stories of historical and/or personal wilderness experiences. Discuss these stories with questions like:

- What made this a wilderness experience?
- Where did you see or wish for God’s presence?
- Where do you imagine God was at work in that story?
- What helped you find your way through?

Try This: Using paper and colored pencils, invite campers to create an image of their wilderness experience. It can be factual or imagery showing their remembrance of that time.

Then and Now

LEARN

Supplies: Bible, 2 large sheets of paper, and markers.

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22 aloud.

Discuss how the pillar of cloud and fire guided the Israelites. Invite campers to think of other ways that God showed up to guide people in the Bible (angels, prophets, stars, etc.) Using one of two large sheets of paper or poster board labeled “Then,” make a list that includes these (along with pillar of cloud and pillar of fire).

Next, brainstorm modern equivalents: What is today’s “pillars” that help guide us? (e.g., community, scripture, intuition, activism, nature, etc.) On a second sheet of paper or poster board labeled “Now,” make a list of these current ways that God shows up to guide us. Invite campers to reflect on the ways that most influence their own lives and actions.

Try This: After your group has created their lists, divide the group into two teams. Give one team the “Then” poster and the other team the “Now” poster. Invite the teams to imagine they are at a debate tournament – using their poster as a list of facts/proof, have each team prepare to debate the question: Does God guide people more now, or did God guide people more in biblical times? Give each team five minutes to make their case before discussing an alternative: God shows up differently, but still provides the same amount of guidance.

Provision Journals

CREATE PRAY

Supplies: Journal (or folded paper) for each camper, markers, colored pencils, pens, and a music player (optional).

How: Explain to campers that because our provision from God usually doesn’t show up dramatically with pillars of fire or manna from heaven, sometimes it is easy to miss in the moment. Looking back on our day or our week is often a helpful way to get perspective and see where God was at work.

Give each camper a journal. Invite them to turn these blank journals into “Provision Journals” – a place where they can record the moments and ways that God has

provided for them each week or day. Provide markers, colored pencils, and other drawing/decorating supplies so that campers can decorate their journal covers.

When the covers are decorated, invite campers to spend some time making the first entry in their journals. Give them a prompt like: Where have I seen God at work within me or around me this past week?

Turn this into a more immersive prayer activity by playing either meditative music or praise music while campers write in their journals. Then invite campers into a circle and have them share how/where they have experienced God’s provision in recent days. After all of them have shared, close in prayer or simply invite the whole group to say “Amen.”

Try This: Invite campers to come up with prompts for the rest of the week. Share these as a group, and post the list in your group area or bring it out during a quiet time each day.

Signs of Presence

SERVE

Supplies: Notecards or paper, markers, pens, posterboard (optional), and Ziplock bags (optional).

How: Remind campers that when we are in the middle of a wilderness experience, it is very common to feel alone. Sometimes, receiving an encouraging word (even from a stranger) can make all the difference and help us keep moving until we make it through.

Invite campers to use blank notecards, greeting cards, and other art supplies to make notes of encouragement that can be shared in a variety of ways. Encourage them to consider a wide variety of people as they make different cards. Some could be given to a camp nurse or chaplain to share with campers who are having a tough time at camp this summer. Others could be for friends, family, camp staff, postal workers, etc.

Messages might say something like: “God is with you always.” -or- “When you’re going through the wilderness, keep going. God is with you!”

Set aside some time to deliver and/or post these notes. If notes are for the camp in general, leave them in places where they will be found and read. If the notes are for specific individuals at camp, deliver them together. Notes for home can be put in a Ziplock bag for campers to take with them.

Try This: If campers would like to make general signs of encouragement and presence for the whole camp

community, use some poster board instead of note cards. Place these signs along well-used walkways and paths, or post them in general use buildings/areas like your dining area or worship space.

Sign Tag

PLAY

Supplies: None.

How: Every camper should choose an individual motion to be their sign. Signs should be simple and not require standing up. Invite campers to sit in a circle, and each camper demonstrates their sign (thumbs up, pat their head, touch a shoulder, and so on). Repeat twice to help campers remember the signs. Choose one camper to start. Their goal is to catch who is “It”. Have them close their eyes. The game starts with one camper making their own sign and then passing it to another by making another camper’s sign. That camper is now “it”. The camper in the middle then opens their eyes. The campers in the circle continue to tag each other as secretly as possible. The camper in the middle tries to guess who is currently “it”. After three guesses, switch roles. After playing for a while, invite the campers to come up with some signs for God using the same requirements. Remind them that cloud and fire, or lightning, are not the only signs of God’s presence. Invite them to close their prayers for the rest of the day with one of these signs as the “Amen.”

Try This: This is also a great game for waiting times, if everyone remembers their signs.



Story Resources

The Prince of Egypt (DreamWorks Pictures 1998):

Animated version of the Exodus story that helps fill in the gaps for campers who don’t know the overall story arc of Moses, Pharaoh, Aaron, Miriam, and the Israelites. Plus, some catchy songs that might be applicable for worship and prayer times!

Underground Railroad Quilt Codes, by Marie Claire Bryant on Smithsonian Center for Folklife at Si.edu, May 3, 2019.



Day 3: Wilderness Leads

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Exodus 13:17-22

Scripture Focus: “The column of cloud during the day and the column of lightning at night never left its place in front of the people” (Exodus 13:22).

Theological Summary: God is not only found in light, but in the darkness. Whatever we face and wherever we go, God’s presence and guidance can be found.

Daily Goals...

- Consider our own individual and collective wilderness experiences.
- Be assured, God is with us in our wildernesses.
- Explore signs of God’s guidance and provision around us.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Directions Game	PLAY	Achieve a goal together
__ What Guides You	LEARN	Signs and guidance
__ Picture Prompts	PLAY LEARN	Stories reimagined
__ Family Flag	CREATE LEARN	Identify who you are
__ Night and Day Prayers	PRAY	Clock themed prayer practice
__ My Turn!	PLAY	Improv activity

Leader notes: The Israelites are fleeing slavery in Egypt. The experience is freeing but also tragic. The experience will define their lives and the identity of their ancestors. “Wilderness” experiences don’t have to be tragic, but they can shape and define us. Be mindful of your own experiences and narratives while listening to those of the campers.

Prayer: “God of Light and Darkness both, grant us the wisdom to travel by day and by night. Teach us to search for you in all seasons and all times of day, and not to fear the lessons we learn before the sun rises and after it sets. Amen.”

Daily Activities

Directions Game

PLAY

Supplies: Blindfolds and random objects.

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22. Remind campers that the Israelites had to work together to make the dangerous trip. Explain that the group will work together to help one person gather items while blindfolded. Each camper can only choose one directional or descriptive word to say. Have campers decide what word they would like to use. If you have a large group, divide them into two smaller groups. Ask one camper to volunteer to wear a blindfold. After they are blindfolded, arrange a series of grabbable objects in the space around them. The other campers direct the blindfolded person to collect all the items. Once the items have all been collected, tell the group their time and challenge them to achieve the task faster. Let them choose new words if they want for this round. Run as many rounds as you like to see how low they can get their time! Debrief the activity and what it was like to guide someone as a team.

Try This: Have two people blindfolded at the same time to gather objects. Discuss what made it difficult - was it hard to know which word was for them?

Way Finders

LEARN

Supplies: Large paper and markers.

How: Ask the campers to brainstorm how we find our way. What tools and resources do we have for knowing where we are and where we are going? This might include a compass, maps, GPS, or even the stars. Encourage campers to share things they used to use, even if they are technologically less useful today. Some might know about things in nature, such as how moss grows on trees or the migration patterns of animals. As the group names things, write them on a large piece of paper. After brainstorming, let the campers take turns pretending to use one of those tools and see if the group can guess which one they are using. Ask the campers how they feel about the different tools and resources listed, and which ones they are most confident in and which make them uneasy. Read Exodus 13:17-22 together and ask the campers how they feel about following a pillar of clouds or a

lightning storm as forms of wayfinding and how they are similar or different from things we use today. Ask everyone if they were Moses, what would make them feel most secure while leading the people into the wilderness.

Try This: Ask the campers what kind of travel they prefer. Do they plan everything out in advance or figure it out as they go? Would they rather know where they are going or be surprised? Ask them how these different attitudes might have been present in Moses' community.

What Guides You

LEARN CREATE

Supplies: Paper and markers.

How: Ask the campers to think about the ways we give and receive directions from signs and draw as many as they can think of. Read Exodus 13:17-22 as a group, with different campers taking turns reading each verse. Remind the campers that directions often come from those we trust. Invite campers to think about who and what guides them in life. Who gives them direction? Who are the positive role models they follow? What are the goals and values that guide their decision-making? For younger members, you may have them draw pictures of the people who lead them.

Try This: Invite campers to make signs to put around camp that use the shape and color of familiar directional signs but have positive guiding words added.

Picture Prompts

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Paper, colored pencils (or crayons), ruler (or straight edge), black marker, and scissors.

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22 together, then remind the campers how scary the world had to feel for the Israelites as they followed God through wild places and into an unknown future. Give each person a piece of paper and ask them to fold it twice so the creases divide the paper into four equal quadrants. Invite the campers to think about a time when they were really scared and draw a picture of that in the top left space. Ask them to think about when that fear went away and draw what changed, who helped, or what happened. They can draw this in the upper right section. In the bottom left, invite them to draw something they still worry about a lot that might happen in the future. In the bottom right, invite them to draw something that

gives them hope or reminds them that God is with them. Allow some time for campers to share their work with one another, then give them a black marker and invite them to draw thick lines around the edges of their four drawings. Provide straight edges, rulers, or other guides to help them. Now, invite the campers to cut out the four images and put them in a stack. Shuffle them and divide the stack into four sets. Split the campers into four groups and ask them to piece the images together like a comic book to tell a new story. Allow time for each group to share their story with the images.

Try This: If you have a creative group, you might ask them to create a comic strip by each drawing a part of their day at camp and combine them to tell the story. Encourage them to include things in the drawing that remind us of God's presence or show how God is leading us.

Family Flag

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Paper, Markers, and Family Flag Handout.

How: Pass around the Family Flag Handout and provide markers and paper. Share a couple of the examples of flag meanings from the handout, then invite campers to design their own flag. This can be for their family, community, or other group they feel deeply connected to. They can make them on their own, or you can pair up partners from the same family to design together. There are some questions on the handout to help everyone think about what should be included. Allow time for everyone to design, create, and then share.

Try This: Invite the group to brainstorm symbols that might have been on a flag designed by the community Moses was leading through the wilderness. Remind them that this is before Moses had received the law (commandments) and way before Jesus' time.

Night & Day Prayers

PRAY

Supplies: Sticky notes, writing utensils, and large paper (optional: clock with hands).

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22, repeating verse 22. Ask campers where they experience God, both in light and also in the dark. Ask campers to think about when each type of surrounding can be comforting and when it might be scary or uncomfortable. Invite campers to especially think of times that darkness can be comforting or relaxing. Draw a simple clock on a large

piece of paper or bring a simple clock to your meeting space. Show the campers how a clock only has 12 hours but 24 hours in a day, so each number is used twice in a day. Starting with the closest hour of the day, ask campers to write a prayer about something currently happening. For example, if this is a morning group session, they might give thanks for the weather, or those in the group. Invite everyone to write their prayer on a sticky note, then place them in a stack next to the hour. Repeat this for a few other hours of the day. Now, ask them to imagine they are coming back to that same hour on the clock, but it is now dark (if the first hour was already dark, they can imagine it is now morning), and ask them what they might want to pray for at that time. Repeat the same practice with the sticky notes. Compare the sticky note prayers attached to the same number on the clock. Remind the campers that even though things keep changing, God is always with us.

Try This: You could make this a multi-day activity by adding prayers throughout the day for a full day, then coming back to compare the ones that naturally overlap since we are awake during both.

Or Try This: Provide larger paper for drawing and let campers draw their prayer requests. Use command strips to hang a clipboard of drawings next to the clock.

My Turn!

PLAY

How: Read Exodus 13:17-22 together. Invite three to four campers to start acting out the story from Exodus, expanding it as they wish, using wide and expressive hand gestures and poses. Any of the campers who are watching can, at any time, say "freeze," and the three actors have the freeze in place exactly as they are. The person who said "freeze" then chooses one actor to tap out and replace. When the scene resumes, the new actor creates a new scene using the poses from the previous scene. Encourage the campers to think creatively about who they might be in the story. The game continues as long as you like. You can also invite them to act out other scenes where someone is following or giving directions. After playing for a while, ask the campers how members of the group led or guided the activity by joining a scene. If some campers are nervous, you could let intergenerational pairs tag in together so they can act out their idea with a familiar partner.

Try This: Add props for extra fun!



Story Resources

***In God's Name*, by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso**

This picture book comes from a Jewish context, which is an important perspective to engage with on a day centered on a Hebrew Bible passage. This particular story is about God's many names, which pairs well with today's Exodus story, in which God appears as both a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. Explore some of the diverse names of God and come up with your own!

Family Flag Handout

Whether they're being used to represent a country, a community, or a holiday, flags symbolize who we are and who we want to be. They tell a visual story through color and design that communicates history, hospitality, values, and cultural and community affiliation. For example:



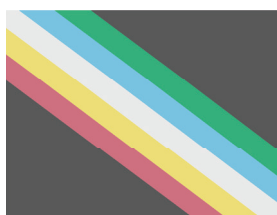
For the flag of Jamaica, black represents the strength and creativity of the people, gold represents the country's natural wealth and the golden sunshine, and green represents hope and the island's vegetation.



The blue in the Utah flag represents wide open skies, faith, knowledge, freedom, optimism, and tradition. The white and red stand for the snowy mountains and red canyons, and the beehive stands for community and industry.



In the Cherokee Nation flag, the seven yellow stars represent the seven clans of the Cherokee, and the one black star memorializes those lost to the Trail of Tears. The oak leaves represent the sacred and eternal fire of the Cherokee people, which is often burned on oak wood.



The Disability Pride flag stands for solidarity, pride, and acceptance for people with physical disabilities (red), neurodiverse people (gold), invisible and undiagnosed disabilities (white), emotional/psychiatric disabilities and mental illness (blue), and sensory disabilities such as blindness (green).



The city of Trenton, New Jersey, celebrates agriculture in its flag with three bushels of wheat and the head of a horse. The year at the bottom of the seal, 1792, is when the state legislature granted the city's charter.

What will be on your flag?

- 1) Shapes, stripes, and colors that symbolize your values or history
- 2) Symbol of your cultural heritage and/or family background.
- 3) A word or phrase that is important to you.
- 4) An important date or year in your lives.
- 5) Something from nature (for example, a native plant from your home community).