

Dunamis

Lesson 1-Balaam's Donkey

Series Objective: Students will learn:

- That "Dunamis" means "powerful."
- God is powerful and God's power is displayed in and through the stories of the Bible.
- That the Bible begins with a powerful act of God in Genesis 1:1.
- That the powerful acts of God in the Bible give us a picture of how God's power affects our lives today.

Series Theme Verse: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1

Lesson Objective: Students will understand:

- God can speak through any instrument, no matter how great or small
- God continued to fulfill the promises he had made to Abraham and to the nation of Israel, even though he was in process of punishing the rebellious generation
- God controls the destiny of peoples and nations
- God is able to overcome any obstacle
- God humbles the proud and defeats the strategies of his enemies

Lesson Passage: Numbers 22-24

Lesson Materials: Tube of toothpaste, plates, 5 drop cloths, 5 large clear plastic tubs, approx. 40 35mm film canisters, various colors of tempera paint, 5 canvases, 5 bowls of water, 5 rolls of paper towels

Small Group Room Set-Up:

- No chairs or tables (Just stack in the corner of room)
- 14 Film Canisters
- 1 Tote
- 1 Drop Cloth
- 1 Canvas
- 3 Tempera Paints
- 1 Bowl of Water
- 1 Roll of Paper Towels

Intramural Games Introduction:

- The Shirt
- The Teams
- The Score:
 - Group participation
 - Wins
 - Attendance & Attitude

Series Theme Introduction:

- Dunamis – Power!
- We get our English word “Dynamite”
- This semester, we will be studying the Dunamis Stories of God!

Lesson with Turning Points:

- The Joys and Struggles of Toothpaste...and Our Words
 - Bring a tube of toothpaste to class. Squeeze a little toothpaste out onto a plate. Try putting the cap on and be a little messy. Then squeeze a bunch of toothpaste out of the tube. As you do this you can chat to the children about how toothpaste is great but it can be messy. Finally, when you have a bit of a mess ask the children to help you put the toothpaste back into the tube. After a few attempts you can talk about how easy it is for the toothpaste to come out but how it is practically impossible to put it back in. Compare this to words that we say. Once unkind words are said they cannot be taken back. A good scripture to read together is *“The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” Proverbs 12:18, NIV*
- **The Power of Israel and Moabite Fear**
 - The children of Israel were a mighty nation. As they wandered through the wilderness and the desert, many other nations came to fear them. They fought and won many battles. They captured cities and conquered the enemies of God who attacked them. One of the nations who wanted to hurt Israel was known as Moab. When the Moabites saw the great number of people and heard of the victories they had won, they became very worried. The Moabite King was named Balak. He decided to do something about the Israelites.
- **Bribing a Sorcerer**
 - In those days, people believed in magic and evil spirits and curses. King Balak believed in these things. He knew of a sorcerer, named Balaam, who cursed people. That meant that he would say bad

things and wish for bad things to happen to them. Many people believed that terrible things happened when Balaam cursed anyone. King Balak sent men to ask Balaam to curse God's people. The king's men offered Balaam lots of money to come with them to the Israelite camp and curse them. Balaam really wanted the money so he told the king's men that he would ask the Lord. Balaam probably did not really believe in the Lord but he wanted the men to believe that his curses really worked. Balaam must have been very surprised when the Lord really did answer him! The Lord told Balaam not to take the money from King Balak. He did not want Balaam to ever say bad things about the Israelites. Balaam did not take the money and he did not go with the king's men. When the King heard about this, he told the men to go back to Balaam and offer him even more money. This time the Lord told Balaam to go with the men. The king's men thought Balaam would curse the Israelites but God had a special plan for Balaam. He wanted to show Balaam that the Lord is more awesome than magic or the evil spirits that Balaam said he believed in.

- **The Sorcerer's Donkey (Numbers 22:21-35)**

- Balaam put a saddle on his donkey and began riding toward the Israelite camp. As Balaam and his donkey were travelling along, an angel stood in front of the donkey. Balaam could not see the angel but the donkey did. The donkey walked off of the path so she would not run into the angel. Balaam became angry so he beat the donkey with a stick. After that Balaam got back on his donkey and started riding again. Balaam's donkey saw the angel again but Balaam still could not see it. The angel had a sword in his hand and the donkey pressed against a wall to try to get out of the way. Balaam's foot got caught against the wall and was crushed. He was even angrier at the donkey so he beat her again. Then Balaam got back on his donkey and rode on until they came to a narrow place in the road. The angel appeared to the donkey again. This time there was not room to go anywhere so the donkey just sat down in the middle of the path. Balaam could not believe it! What was wrong with his donkey? He was just about to hit the donkey again when an amazing thing happened. His donkey began to talk to him! "What have I done to make you beat me three times?" Now the angel appeared to Balaam too and said, "Why do you keep beating your donkey? If she would not have kept stopping, I would have killed you by now." Only God could make a donkey talk and an angel appear! Balaam realized that the Lord was angry with him. Now he would do exactly what the Lord said to do.

- **The Rest of the Story**
 - When Balaam met King Balak at the Israelite camp he did not curse the Israelites. He only said good things about them. He blessed them and talked about how good the Lord was. He did not say one bad thing. He even had alters built so he could worship the Lord. King Balak was angry. This is not what he had planned at all! He wanted Balaam to say bad things but Balaam only said good things. King Balak was unhappy but the Lord was pleased. He loves His people and He wants what's best for them!
- **Takaway**
 - God is Powerful
 - God can use anyone or anything if we are willing
 - God wants our words to be a positive experience for others so others will come to know God

Small Groups:

- You have a new Team, so spend time getting to know each other. Use an ice breaker like "The Human Knot" to help kids become comfortable with one another.
- Next, go around the group and have students answer three questions:
 - What is your name?
 - What is your favorite color?
 - Do you like making things explode like a rocket or fireworks?
- Remind students that of the Semester Theme: "Dunamis"
 - Ask if anyone remembers what "Dunamis" means? (It is the Greek word for power, like explosive power. We get our modern word "dynamite" from "Dunamis")
 - Ask students how we saw God's power in the story of Balaam and his donkey? (A donkey talked, God spoke to Balaam through a donkey and an angel, God stopped an evil nation from hurting another nation, etc.)
- Explain to students that the Bible starts off with an example of God's Dunamis power in Genesis 1:1.
 - Have someone read Genesis 1:1.
 - Ask students why you would say this is an example of God's Dunamis power? (Because God created everything!)
- Explain to students that Genesis 1:1 will be our Theme Verse for the semester, and today we are going to think about God's creative, explosive power together and how God's creative, explosive power shapes us, too.

- Give each student a film canister, and a package of Alka-Seltzer.
- Have them choose a paint and put just enough paint in their canister to cover the bottom. **Too much paint will glob and look bad.**
- While they are doing this, place the canvas on a drop cloth in the floor.
- Then have students break **ONE (1)** of their Alka-Seltzer into 2 or 3 pieces.
- Have them put the Alka-Seltzer pieces into their container, shake it up and put it lid side down on the canvas. **This needs to all be done at once, no slowpokes aloud!**
- Cover the canvas with the Tote and then tell students you are going to begin memorizing the Series Theme Verse.
- Have students say the verse one word at a time, going around the group (totally ignore the canvas and any questions kids have about the canvas)!
 - “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”
Genesis 1:1
- Ask students questions about creation like,
 - What is the most important thing to you that God created?
 - What is your favorite animal that God created?
 - Have you ever camped out in God’s creation?
 - What do you see in God’s creation that sometimes takes your breath away and makes you realize how powerful God is? (Sunset, stars, etc)
- While you are doing all of this, the canisters will begin popping and painting the canvas! It will cause kids to lose focus and that is okay, enjoy the moment and continue on.
- When all canisters have popped, remove the Tote and have students rinse their canisters and dry them off.
- Repeat the process letting students choose a new color. **Remember to put the Alka-Seltzer in at the same time!**
- You can repeat the process a couple times and “paint” your canvas.
- After you finish, let the whole team sign the Canvas around the edge in Sharpie.
- Conclude the group time by explaining that God’s explosive power is a lot like the painting we just did. God’s power:
 - Is Unpredictable
 - Affects us
 - And when we have a choice to be a part of God’s powerful works...when we say yes to God, great things happen!

- Close in a prayer like, “Powerful God, thank you for creating each one of us and allowing us to live in your amazing creation. Help us to be instruments in your hands so that your power can change the lives of those around us. Amen”
- Here is a link to a video to show what the painting will look like:
<http://kidsactivitiesblog.com/75017/exploding-paint-bombs-activity>