



## LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

### INVITATION

*We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...*

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God's Good Plans Cannot Be Stopped

**SCRIPTURE:** [Numbers 22–23](#)

**WORD OF WONDER:** [From Ephesians 3:20](#)

One of the best sermons I've ever encountered came in the form of a broken seashell.

I had gone to see the sunrise, but it was cloudy so there wasn't one to see. I was disappointed and decided instead to hunt for seashells. The shoreline was full of shells, but most of them were broken.

Soon a mother with her girls joined me and, oh my, the shrieks of delight! "So many shells, Mommy! They are so beautiful!" These girls didn't care the shells were broken. They saw the beauty in their brokenness.

I felt God say to me, "I love broken shells too." That brief encounter spoke volumes to me about the love of God. It changed me.

I wonder if that's how Balaam in our story felt. Here he was, casting curses for money, when God interrupts his life through a talking donkey and a sword-wielding angel. Could he ever go back to the way things were again?

Read [Numbers 22:24–38](#). The final statement, "I can only speak the words God puts in my mouth" is pretty telling ([Numbers 22:38](#)). I tend to believe Balaam's words indicate more of a life change than a momentary utterance.

In what unexpected way has God spoken to you? What broken thing, familiar item, or everyday moment became life-altering and transformational? How has God used something ordinary—something unexpected—to further His plans in your life? God's good plans cannot be stopped.

—Christina Embree

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LESSON 2 **FOR LEADERS**  
**BALAAM'S DONKEY**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

Balak, the king of Moab; Balaam, well-known Aramean diviner and prophet; the people of Israel who have entered Canaan and set up camp near Moab; Balaam's donkey; the angel of the Lord.

**WHAT?**

Israel has gained a reputation for conquering lands in Canaan, and the Moabite king Balak is scared of them. He employs the diviner Balaam to curse the Israelites, but the Lord intervenes, and Balaam is only able to bless them.

**WHERE?**

Israel is camped in the plain of Moab, east of the Jordan River, after their entrance into Canaan. The kingdom of Moab was located east of the Dead Sea in what is now Jordan.

**WHEN?**

This narrative takes place close to the end of the Israelites 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, shortly before the death of Moses and before God's people cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

God protected His people from being cursed by Balaam while they wandered in the wilderness. God had promised land to His people, and in 2 Corinthians, Paul reminds us that God's promises are "all 'Yes' because of what Christ has done" (1:20). Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's good plans!



## Curiosity

### LESSON 2 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

*Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.*

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#### Play Stations

**SUPPLIES:** cookie sheet or magnet board, sticky-backed magnets, scissors (prep only), clear tape, coloring utensils

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

**Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?**

#### Play Station: Donkey Face

**Set-up:** Ahead of time, print a copy of the [Donkey Face Sheet](#). Cut out the pictures of donkey mouths and attach a magnet to the back of each piece. Tape the donkey face to the cookie sheet or magnet board and set the mouth pieces nearby.

**Play:** Allow kids to attach the different face pieces onto the donkey face using the magnets.



#### Play Station: Balaam's Donkey Coloring Sheet

**Set-up:** Print one copy per kid of the [Coloring Sheet](#). Set out the [Coloring Sheets](#) and coloring utensils.

**Play:** Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of a donkey.



9:00 Service

## Belief

### LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.*

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#### Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for being with us. Please help us hear from You today. Open our ears and our minds so we can hear what You have to say to us today. Help us learn that Your good plans cannot be stopped. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

#### God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? The Bible

Ask: Why is the Bible important? Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.

#### Tell the Bible Story

The Big Picture Bible, page 46

Balaam and the Donkey

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What animal did God use to talk to Balaam? (*a donkey*)
- Why did the donkey stop walking? (*An angel was blocking the way.*)
- What did God tell Balaam to do? (*only speak the words that He would give him*)
- Why was Balak worried when God's people were camping nearby? (*He had heard that God was powerful and took care of them.*)
- How does it make you feel knowing God's good plans cannot be stopped?
- If you could hear any animal talking, which animal would you want to hear from?

## Word of Wonder

### WORD OF WONDER

**God is able to do far more than we could  
ever ask for or imagine.**

— Ephesians 3:20

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **How high do you think we could build our tower? How high do you think God could build a**
- **tower? Is there anything that God can't do? How do you know?**



## Faith

### LESSON 2 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

*Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.*

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#### Craft: Talking Donkey Puppet

**SUPPLIES:** brown paper lunch bags (1 per kid), donkey template, glue, coloring utensils

**Let's make a donkey puppet that can talk! We know that only God can make donkeys talk, but we can pretend!**



Show the kids how to glue the donkey face onto their bag so the mouth is over the folded part of the bag and glue the body to the bottom part of the bag. Once the glue is dry, kids can put their hands into the bag and move the folded part to make it look like the donkey is talking!

**If your donkey could really talk, what would it say? Would it remind you that God's good plans cannot be stopped? Let's pretend our donkeys are saying our Wonder Truth: God's good plans cannot be stopped!**

**Leader Tip:** Encourage kids to have their donkeys tell their parents that "God's good plans cannot be stopped" at pick-up time!



9:00 Service

## Identity

### LESSON 2 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

*Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.*

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#### Responding in Worship: Breath Prayers

God can speak in unexpected ways. He even used a donkey to speak in God's big story today! God might not cause a donkey talk to us, but He can talk to us in other ways. He speaks to us and shares His plans for us through the Bible, through other people, through worship, and through prayer. Sometimes it can be hard for us to hear God. Let's do some breath prayers together to help us focus on God. Let's pray some of God's Word together and listen for Him to speak to us.

Everybody take a deep breath in. Now let it out. That's how we do a breath prayer. We think the words of the prayer while breathing in and out. This allows our bodies and minds to focus on God together. I'll say the first part of each breath prayer while you breathe in and then the second part while you breathe out.

- **When I am afraid** (take a deep breath in), **I will trust God** (let your breath out). **Psalm 56:3**
- **God knows the plans** (take a deep breath in) **He has for me** (let your breath out). **Jeremiah 29:11**
- **God loves me so much** (take a deep breath in) **that He gave His only Son for me** (let your breath out). **John 3:16**
- **I can do anything** (takes a deep breath in) **because God gives me strength** (let your breath out). **Philippians 4:13**
- **I can trust in God** (take a deep breath in) **with all my heart** (let your breath out). **Proverbs 3:5**

Let's sit and breathe quietly and listen for God to speak to us today. Guide kids in breathing in and out silently.

When you are scared or afraid or you feel like you don't understand what's happening, you can do these breath prayers and remember that God's good plans cannot be stopped.

## Prayer and Blessing

Pray with the kids, thanking God for His good plans and promises.

**Let's talk to God. God, thank You for keeping Your promises. Thank You for always having a good plan for us. Help us remember that Your good plans cannot be stopped. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** May you always remember that God's good plans cannot be stopped. God wants the best for you and will always love you and take care of you. May you remember that even when you don't understand why something is happening, God is there with you.