

Exodus 17, 18

Moses and the children of Israel had been walking in the hot, dry, wilderness for many days. When they found creeks or little ponds they would fill jars of water to carry with them as they traveled. But now the jars of water were empty and it had been a long time since Moses had found any water. The cows were mooing and the sheep were going "baaa, baaa" because they were so thirsty. The people were thirsty too and they began to complain to Moses, saying, "Why did you bring us into this wilderness just to let us die of thirst?" The further they went the more and more angry the people became. They yelled at Moses and were even ready to throw stones at him! "We are thirsty, do something, Moses or you'll be sorry!"

Was this fair do you think? It wasn't Moses' fault that there was no water close by, was it? What do you think Moses did?

When we need help but don't know what to do, who can we go to?
We can pray to God for help, can't we? This is what Moses did, for he knew that God answers our prayers.



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God answered Moses' prayer and told him what to do. Moses was to take his walking stick, called a rod, and go to the rocky hill nearby. Then Moses was to strike the rock with his rod and God said water would come out.

This seemed like a strange thing to do, Moses thought. Everyone knows that water comes from rivers and streams and lakes and ponds. Water doesn't come from inside rocks, does it? Even though this seemed strange, Moses believed God, so he told the children of Israel to follow him, and taking his rod Moses raised it in the air and hit the rock.

What do you think happened? Just as God had said, water came gushing out of the rock and ran down into a stream, filling ditches so the children of Israel could drink all they wanted and fill their jars and even water all the cattle and sheep and camels. This was a wonderful miracle and showed the people how God wouldn't leave them to die, but would take care of them if only they would believe in him.



Shortly after leaving the water, Moses noticed a lot of dust in the air behind them. There was shouting and clashing of swords and the Israelites quickly turned back to find a band of people called Amalekites attacking them and trying to steal their cattle and sheep. The Israelite army quickly turned and began to fight with the Amalekites. God told Moses to climb up a nearby hill and hold up his rod so all the Israelites could see Moses and see the rod. Many wonderful things had been done when God had told Moses to use this rod, so this encouraged the Israelite army and they fought the Amalekites even harder.

Have you ever held your hands over your head for very long? Try it ... hold your hands up in the air and see how long you can hold them there. They soon get very tired, don't they? Think of having to hold your hands up all day long ... that would really be hard, wouldn't it? Well Moses soon got tired holding up his hands too, but the minute he would lower his arms to rest them, the Israelite army began to lose the battle.

So poor Moses would have to raise his arms again.



Aaron soon noticed how the army started to lose the battle when Moses lowered his arms and he saw how tired poor Moses was getting. Aaron quickly got a friend named Hur and they climbed the hill where Moses was standing. They rolled a rock close to Moses and had him sit down, then Aaron stood beside Moses and held up one of his arms and Hur stood on the other side and held up the other arm. This way Moses could keep holding up the rod. The Israelites saw that Moses was still watching over the battle and soon they completely chased the Amalekites away.

The next day the Israelites traveled on. Moses was leading the Israelites toward his father-in-law's place. His wife Zipporah and their two sons had gone to stay with his father-in-law while all the bad things were happening in Egypt. Moses was very lonesome for his wife and for his two boys. One day Moses saw some people coming toward them. As they got closer, he saw his father-in-law and there behind him was his lovely wife and his two boys. Oh how happy Moses was! He ran to meet them and there was much hugging and kissing and crying as they were all so happy to see each other!



What a wonderful time they had that night. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, gave a big feast for Moses and his family. They sat around the campfire long into the night listening to Moses tell all the things that had happened in Egypt and how God had saved the children of Israel. Jethro was amazed to see the tall pillar of cloud that God had sent to lead the children of Israel and the pillar of fire that gave them light during the night as they rested.

Jethro told Moses that he would also like to worship God, so Moses built an altar of stones and Moses and Jethro and their family made a sacrifice to God and prayed that God would continue to watch over them and to watch over Jethro and his family as well.

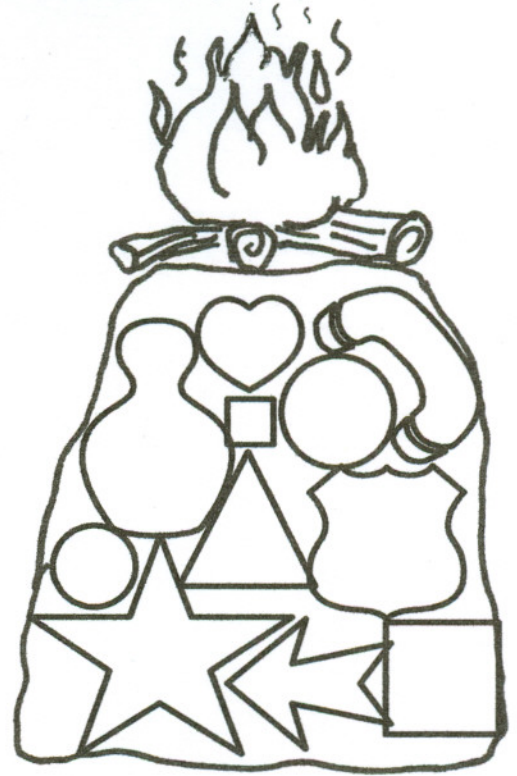
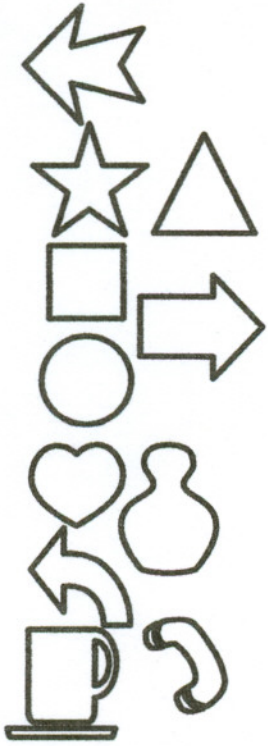
This was a happy time for Moses and his family. The children of Israel enjoyed having a time to rest and worship God also. But they had not yet reached the land that God had promised to give them. So after several days of rest, the company packed up their tents and again followed the pillar of cloud as it began to move off toward the promised land.



Question Page

1. Why were the cows mooing and the sheep going baa, baa in the wilderness?
2. Were the Israelites happy with Moses or mad at him?
3. Who did Moses pray to when everyone was unhappy and angry at him?
4. Will God hear us when we say prayers to him?
5. What happened when Moses hit the rock with his rod?
6. Who were the bad people who attacked Moses and his group, Amalekites or Israelites?
7. What did Moses do while his army was fighting the Amalekites?
8. What happened to the Israelites when Moses put his arms down?
(did they start to win or lose the battle)?
9. What did Aaron and Hur do to help Moses when he got tired?
10. Did the pillar of cloud or the pillar of fire lead the Israelites in the daytime?
11. Moses' father-in-law Jethro came out to meet Moses, who else was with Jethro?
12. Did Jethro want to build an altar and worship God along with Moses?

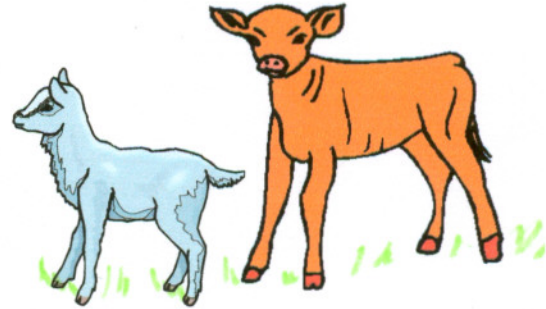
The altar that Moses and Jethro built was probably made out of a stack of stones. Below is an altar made out of stones, but these stones have funny shapes. Can you match the stones on the altar with the shapes at the side. Not all the shapes are in the altar. Draw a picture of Moses and Jethro praying at the altar.



Color the picture of Moses's wife and his two boys. The boys names are Gershom and Eliezer and his wife is named Zipporah. Can you say all of these names?



Color water coming from the rock so the animals can drink. Which thing did Moses use to hit the rock?



There are many ways of holding our hands. Moses had to hold his hands a certain way so the Israelites would win the war. Circle and count all the pictures below that look close to the way Moses held his hands.

