

The Bronze Snake

Storyteller: (*spreads out the Desert Bag*): This is the Desert Bag. So many wonderful and important things happen in the desert, we need to know what it is like. We can't get the whole desert into our church, so here is just a little piece of the desert.

Numbers 21:4-9

The Israelites had to go around the territory of Edom, so when they left Mount Hor, they headed south toward the Red Sea. But along the way, the people became so impatient that they complained against God and said to Moses, "Did you bring us out of Egypt, just to let us die in the desert? There's no water out here, and we can't stand this awful food!"

Then the Lord sent poisonous snakes that bit and killed many of them.

Some of the people went to Moses and admitted, "It was wrong of us to insult you and the Lord. Now please ask him to make these snakes go away."

Moses prayed, and the Lord answered, "Make a snake out of bronze and place it on top of a pole. Anyone who gets bitten can look at the snake and won't die."

Moses obeyed the Lord. And all of those who looked at the bronze snake lived, even though they had been bitten by the poisonous snakes.

The Storyteller smooths the sand while s/he talks. The desert is a dangerous place. There is little water, and almost nothing grows there. It is hot in the daytime and cold at night.

- Story Materials**
- Desert bag
 - Moses figure
 - People of Israel figures
 - Caduceous

If any of the children reach out to touch the sand, smile at them but say "You may work with the desert bag later in the Story Room. Right now we all need to be ready to listen to the story. This is how you get ready.

Demonstrate folding your hands in your lap. Then smooth the sand in one smooth motion around the edges of the desert bag, reinforcing the limits imposed by the edge of the bag.

Put Moses and some People of God figures in the desert bag. The People of God travelled through the desert when they left Egypt. Move the figures toward you (you are "North".) Move them a few steps at a time, so that they stay together, and make tracks in the sand. God gave them the Law in the Desert. Turn the figures around and move them away from you They had to go around the land of Edom, so when they left the mountain

they headed south.

But along the way, the people became so impatient – *move the people into a circle, facing inward, with Moses in the middle* -- that they complained against God and said to Moses, "Did you bring us out of Egypt, just to let us die in the desert? There's no water out here, and we can't stand this awful food!" -- *turn the people around, with their backs to Moses.*

Then the Lord sent poisonous snakes that bit and killed many of them. *Make a slithering motion with your hand, and use it to knock down two of the figures.*

Turn the figures back, facing Moses again. Some of the people went to Moses and admitted, "It was wrong of us to insult you and the Lord. Now please ask him to make these snakes go away."

Moses prayed, and the Lord answered, "Make a snake out of bronze and place it on top of a

pole. *Place the caduceus in the middle of the circle beside Moses.* Anyone who gets bitten can look at the snake and won't die."

Moses obeyed the Lord. And all of those who looked at the bronze snake lived, even though they had been bitten by the poisonous snakes. *Stand up the two fallen people again, facing the caduceus.*