

PEULAT SHABBAT
JUNE 30, 2012

Give summary of theme: After 40 years of wandering through the desert, the people of Israel arrive in the wilderness of Zin. Miriam dies, and the people are very thirsty for water. God tells Moshe to speak to a special rock and command it to give water. Moshe gets angry at the people and hits the rock instead of just talking to it. The water still comes out of the rock, but God punishes Moshe: Moshe will not be allowed to enter the Promised Land, and neither will his brother Aaron.

Questions for discussion: [5-7 minutes: make sure 4+ people answer each question. Then give a personal response.

- Is it fair that Moshe was punished?
- Should there have been a different punishment, or none at all?
- Has there ever been a time that you felt you were punished in a way that you did not deserve?
- What are some ways you can deal with a punishment you did not think was fair?

Game: [10-12 minutes]

Materials:

- 8 plastic cups
- 4 ping pong balls or rocks if ping pong balls not available

Steps:

- Have everybody stand in a circle
- Place the two cups at opposite ends of the circle
- Have volunteer 1 try to place the ball into the cups while the group gives bad direction/talks at the same time
- Have volunteer 2 place the ball into the cups while half the group is give good directions and the other half giving bad directions
- Have volunteer 3 place the ball into the cups while having the entire group give good directions

Discussion:

When being given directions is trust a important thing to consider? Why?

Relevance

- Because the Israelites lost their trust in Moses directing them though desert many decided to turn against him through complaining and even rebellion
- Just like it may have been hard for some people to follow directions to complete the task when given bad directions, we learn how hard it was for Moshe to lead the people in the desert when the people were complaining all the time.

- Trust

The Israelites lost trust in Moshe while they were in the desert. Even though Moshe was helping them throughout the whole time in the desert, they did not recognize the good things that he did and instead complained.

Questions for discussion: [5-7 minutes: make sure 4+ people answer each question. Then give a personal response]

- Why do you think the people complained so much?
- Were they just complaining for the sake of complaining or did they have a valid reason?
- How would one lose trust in someone?
- How would you work to regain trust in someone?

Context for game: Because the Israelites complained so much, they were punished with serpents/snakes that came and bit them. They learned their lesson that what they had done was bad and apologized to Moshe. He created a special copper serpent that looked like a snake with wings. Anyone who was bitten could look at the staff and would be healed.

Game: [10-12 minutes]

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Questions after game:

- When are punishments appropriate and not appropriate?
- Is it ok to forgive somebody even if their action hurt you?
- Are there time when it is ok for people to do something wrong *without* being punished for it?
 - Lying for a friend?
 - Moral/legal punishment
- How can someone validate the punishment of something that is morally just vs. legally just?
- Are there universal standards that we don't talk about, rather we just know? (rules that we just hold even if they are not written down)