Lesson 9: God Is My Banner

Overview:

Key Focus: Jehovah Nissi; Some battles we will stand still and see the salvation of the LORD. Some battles we will have to fight actively. Victory is achieved through both methods.

Bible Story: The Israelites in Battle (Jehovah Nissi)

Scriptures: Exodus 14:13–14, 17:8–16

Memory Verse: 1 John 4:4 (NKJV) You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Prep:

Materials Needed:

- Sign with the words "Jehovah Nissi."
- Posterboard for each small group and markers or crayons
- Blanket

Engage:

Review the names of God Jehovah Jireh (Provider), Jehovah Rapha (Healer), and Jehovah M'Kaddesh (Sanctifier/Holy). Hold up the "Jehovah Nissi" sign.

Today we will learn what the name Jehovah Nissi means and why it can help us. I want you to stand up if you remember your first day of school. Select someone standing to tell you about their experience. **Stand up if you remember the first time you rode on an amusement ride.** After choosing someone to share about their experience, continue the pattern with these topics: first time on an airplane, first visit to another state or country, and first visit to the dentist. **The first time you do something, you might not know what to expect and sometimes you feel scared. In today's Bible story, we will learn about the first time the children of Israel did something and how God calmed them down by letting them know His true nature through the name Jehovah Nissi.** Place the "Jehovah Nissi" sign by the other names of God

Memory Verse Activity:
Display and discuss the verse. Select a volunteer to choose and lead a motion or action, such as pretend to swim, clap, or jumping jacks, while everyone says the verse together. Repeat several times with a new leader and new motions or actions.

Memory Verse: 1 John 4:4 (NKJV) You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Bible Story:

Today's Bible story explains the name Jehovah Nissi. Let's review what we know about the book of Exodus. (Possible answers: Exodus is the second book of the Old Testament; Exodus tells the story of Moses and how he led the children of Israel out of Egypt: the Israelites complained the water was bitter and God told Moses to throw a stick into the water to make the water drinkable; God showed His name Jehovah Rapha, the God who heals.)

Now let's talk about who the children of Israel were. Back in the book of Genesis, God told Abram that his descendants, or the relatives who would live after him, would be as many as the stars in the sky and through him all nations of the earth would be blessed. Well, the problem was that Abram didn't have children, and he was an old man. God changed Abram's name to Abraham and did a miracle—his wife had a baby boy, Isaac.

When Isaac grew up, he and his wife had twins named Jacob and Esau. When they grew up, one day Esau was so hungry that he traded his special privilege of being the firstborn to his twin brother for a bowl of stew. Later, Esau was very angry that he had been so foolish. He hated his brother, and Jacob ran away to be safe from his brother. Well, many, many years later, the descendants of Esau still hated the descendants of Jacob. Jacob's descendants were God's chosen people we call the children of Israel or the Israelites. In Exodus 17 we find the descendants of Esau and they are called the Amalekites. They were in the land where Moses led the Israelites through the desert.

The Israelites hadn't fought anyone because they had been slaves in Egypt. How do you think they felt when the Amalekites came? (Possible answers: scared, fearful, mad that they had to fight, afraid) **Before we find out what happened in the battle, let's turn back a few chapters and remember something God told the Israelites when He parted the Red Sea for them to escape from Pharaoh and his army.** Read Exodus 14:13–14. **What two things did God promise to the Israelites?** (Their enemy the Egyptians wouldn't be seen again, and the Lord will fight for them.) **The children of Israel had already seen their Egyptian enemies come after them, and it looked disastrous for the Israelites until God did a miracle and parted the Red**

Sea while the Israelites crossed. What happened after the Israelites got to the other side of the Red Sea? (God sent the waters back on the Egyptians who were chasing them.) **Did the Israelites have to fight the Egyptians?** (No.) **God fought for them by doing the miracle of opening a way across the Red Sea to escape. The Israelites didn't have to do anything except watch God take care of their enemies.**

Now let's turn three chapters later and find out what happens when the Amalekites show up for a fight. Read Exodus 17:8–9. **Who was with Moses?** (Joshua) **Joshua was learning from Moses how to be the leader of the Israelites. Moses was his mentor. What do you know about the "rod of God?"** (The rod is the stick that turned into a serpent and Moses held it out while the people crossed the Red Sea.) **The stick wasn't magical. God used the stick to show His power. The people should recognize that when Moses used the stick, God always showed up and did a miracle.**

Read Exodus 17:10–11. Have the children match your actions as you raise your arm up and hold it while the children announce that the Israelites are winning. Then put your hand down and have the children announce that the Amalekites are winning. Do this several times as you explain the battle didn't last for just a few minutes, it lasted all day for many, many hours.

Read Exodus 17:12–13. **What was Moses' problem?** (Moses' hand was tired and heavy so he couldn't keep it raised up.) **What was the solution to the problem?** (They gave Moses a rock to sit on and Aaron and Hur held up his hands.) Demonstrate by choosing a volunteer to sit on a chair and two other volunteers to hold up the hands of the seated person. **Who won the battle?** (the Israelites) Lead a cheer for God helping the Israelites win the battle against the Amalekites. **With the Egyptians, God did the work, and the Israelites just watched. With the Amalekites, God helped, but the Israelites had to do the fighting. In both situations, Jehovah Nissi was protecting them.**

Read Exodus 17:14–16. **God wanted the Israelites to remember that He protects and fights for them. When He told Moses to write a memorial in the book, He wanted the miracle recorded so they wouldn't forget. Today, people take pictures on their phones or write in a journal to remember things. What do you think Moses wrote down?** Allow several children to share responses. **Moses built an altar. What was the altar used for?** (The altar was used to sacrifice an animal to cover the people's sins.) **Remember that they had altars to cover the punishment of sin because Jesus hadn't come yet to pay that price for sin. What name did Moses give to the altar?** (The Lord Is My Banner) **The altar was a reminder that Jehovah Nissi loved them and protected them. A banner isn't used today the same way it was throughout history. Today, you might put a sports team's banner or flag on your porch. When people see the team's emblem or picture, they know that team is your favorite. Back in the Old Testament, the Israelites used a pole and put an emblem on it as a signal that God was with them, protecting them, and fighting for them. God promised to fight for them because He loved the Israelites.**

We can go into our day marching under the banner of Jehovah Nissi. Thankfully, we aren't going into a war, but God can still be our Jehovah Nissi. Think about your week ahead, what situations might come up that you need Jehovah Nissi? (Possible answers: I will go to the doctor for some tests; there are some bullies at school; my parent is traveling on a business trip.) **We can trust God to be our protector. Sometimes, we just watch as He works things out. Other times, God needs us to participate in what He is doing. This week be on the lookout for the times Jehovah Nissi protects you.**

Bible Story Questions:

- **Why did the Israelites have a battle**? (The descendants of Esau were in the land and still hated the Israelites.)
- **Who led the Israelites into battle?** (Joshua)
- **How did Moses participate in the battle?** (He held up the rod of God so the Israelites would win.)
- **Why did the battle go back and forth between the Israelites winning and then the Amalekites?** (As Moses' hand got tired and went down, the Amalekites won. When he held his hand up, the Israelites won.)
- **What finally stopped the Amalekites from winning?** (They gave Moses a rock to sit on, and two men held up his arms.)
- **What did Moses do so they would remember God's protection?** (Moses built an altar and named it The Lord Is My Banner. He also wrote a memorial in the book.)
- **This week if you are fearful or need help, what will help you remember that God is your banner and your protection?** Allow time for responses.

Bible Story Activities:

Games:

- Divide the class into small groups, preferably with a helper in each group, and give each group a sheet of posterboard and markers or crayons. Direct the groups to talk about how God has been a protector to them. Work together to create a banner showing how God is our protector. When banners are finished, have each helper hold up a banner and lead the children as they march around the room under each banner. Recite the memory verse as you march. If possible, display the banners in a hallway at church and encourage the children to show and explain the banners to people.

- Ideas for Working with Younger Kids:
  Take a blanket and spread it over some chairs to create a tent. Have each child say, "God is my protector. His banner of love protects me." Then have the child crawl into the sheltered area.

Craft Ideas:

- Ideas for Working with Older Kids:
  Create a banner showing that your church trusts God as their protector and is the banner they are under as they serve your city. Depending on your church's history, create a memorial of how God has protected your church or church members.

Worksheet:
Guide the children to cross out every other word starting with the word "If." When they finish, they should look up the verse in their Bibles to check it. Then, read the directions about memorials and have them draw or write about God's protection to them. If someone struggles to remember a personal account, let them draw or write about Moses and the Israelites. On the back of their papers, have them write today's memory verse in fancy lettering with decorations.

Affirmation/Declaration:
God is my protector.
I live under His banner of love and protection.
Jesus, the undefeated champion, lives in me!

Make Connections:

Biblical Worldview Connection:
Fear is rampant in today's world. Just as the Israelites feared their first battle, people around you fear global issues, pandemics, economics, and countless other issues. When we embrace Jehovah Nissi and live under His banner, we can live without fear possessing us. Help the children to remember that when they feel fear, they should picture themselves under God's banner of love and protection.

Missions Connections:
Many missionaries tell about experiences where God supernaturally protected them from danger. The people who saw that God protected them usually wanted His protection too. Often, we don't tell our testimonies of God's help and protection, but people need to learn about this aspect of God's true nature. Lead the children in a prayer time for God's protection of missionaries so they can tell about God's power. Also, pray for the children to boldly tell others about God's protection and love for the people He created for a relationship with Him.

Family Connection:
Work together to make a family banner showing that your family trusts God as their protector. Use a white flat bedsheet and markers or paper to create the banner. Spend time thanking God

for being with your family as you recount the times and many ways He has been your Jehovah Nissi.

Prayer Points:
Gather in small groups and have a helper lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving to God for being their protector.

Dear God, Thank You for protecting me when … Please help me remember this week that I live under Your banner of love and protection. In Jesus' name, amen.

Name _____

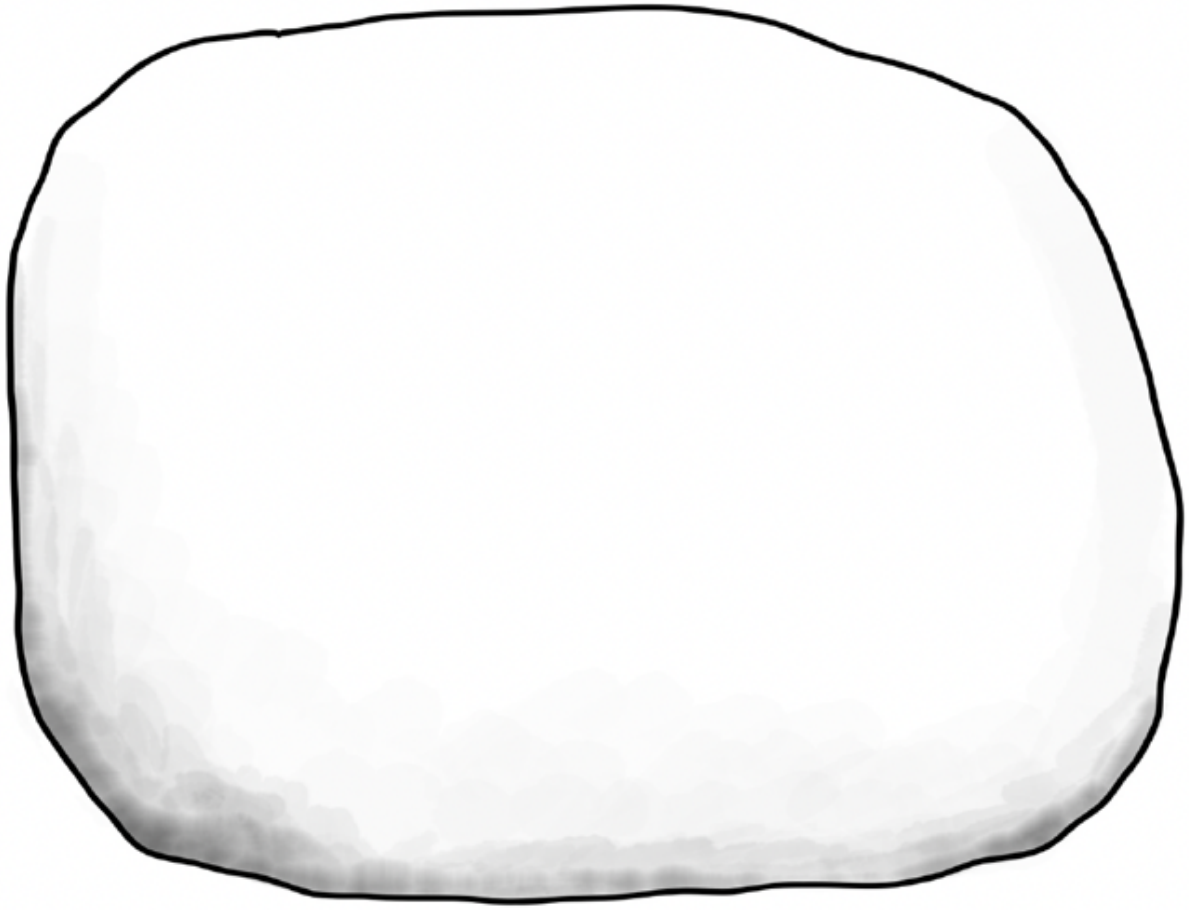
Lesson 9: God Is My Banner

Cross out every other word to discover Romans 8:31 (NKJV).

"If Do God you be like for today us love who sin can find be people against obey us world?"

Moses wrote a memorial in a book to remember how God protected the Israelites. Other times, the Israelites took stones to build a memorial to remember how God cared for them.

Draw or write on the memorial stone about a time God took care of you.



BONUS: *On the back of this page, write today's memory verse (1 John 4:4) in fancy lettering with decorations.*

ANSWERS:

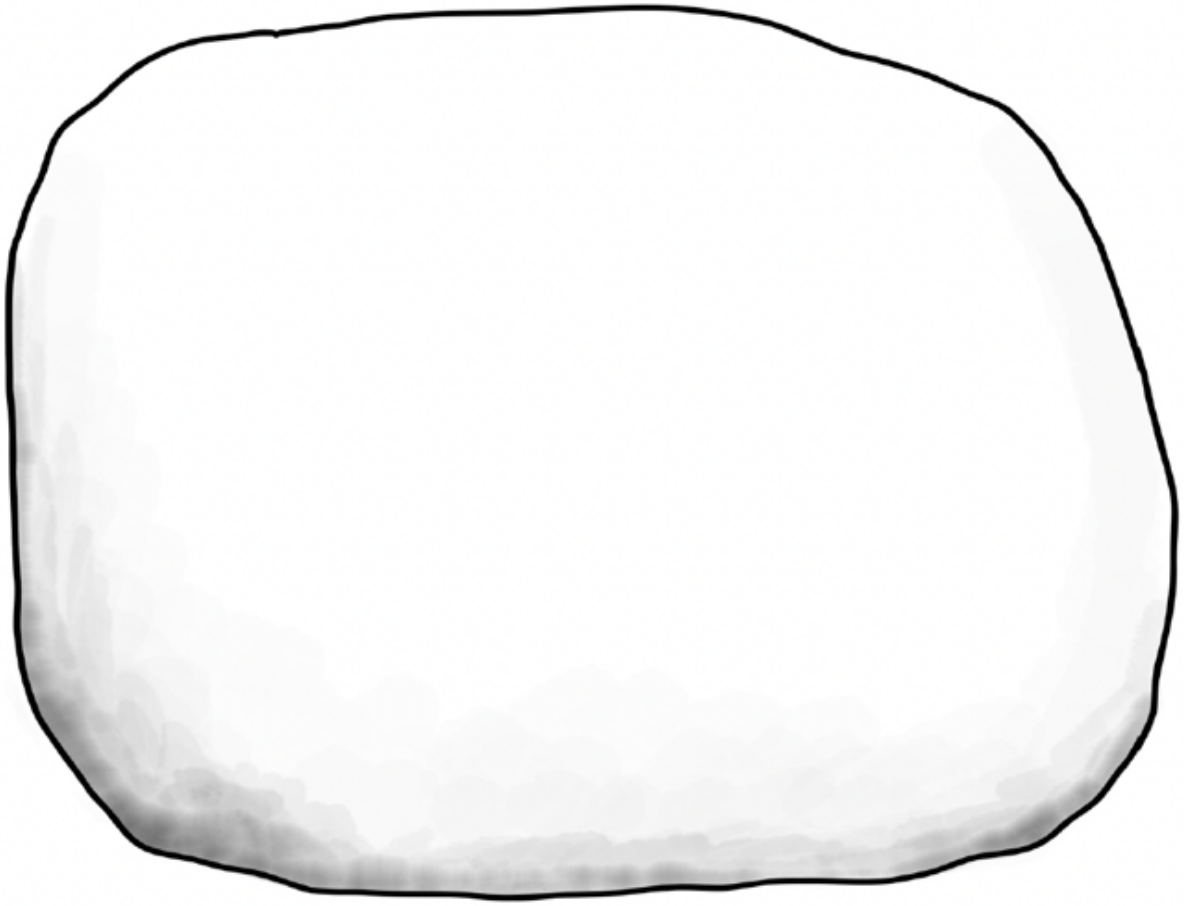
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