

date: **10/29/17****Bible Passage: Exodus 13:21–22; 14:19–24; 33:9–10; Numbers 14:14**
(Pillars of Fire and Cloud)

God Is with Me

REMEMBER VERSE

No one is like you, LORD; you are great, and your name is mighty in power.
Jeremiah 10:6

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

I walked into the chapel and found my seat. An elderly man walked up to the podium, set his Bible down, and quietly started to pray. He made no apologies for his lack of fanfare. The chapel fell to a silent hush. All that could be heard was this man's prayer. It wasn't the words that were spoken, but the manner with which they were delivered. He talked to God as if He were physically present and the two of them were the only ones in the room. He was familiar, reverent, honest, comfortable, respectful, and tender. I was enthralled. I wanted to know more about his relationship with God. How can I know God like this?

Over the next few days, this peaceful, deep, and beautifully ragged man shared his story. He shared God's story, and the part he had found was his to play. He spoke of the redemption we have through Christ and its cost. Somehow this message spoke to my heart in a new way. "You were created by God and for God. He loves you. He has redeemed you. He is with you, and you are His."

This changed my world. How would I respond with the rest of my life? It was uncomfortable. Something inside of me had been turned upside down. God drew near to me. Coming face-to-face with Christ's redemption and His presence caused me to respond with my entire life. All my decisions began with the question, "How can I be a part of what God has been doing?" I was filled with peace and confidence: God is with me, and I belong to Him.

Cristi Thomas
TruWonder Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

God has always desired to be with us. Throughout the Old Testament, God appeared to man. *Theophany* is a term for the manifestation of God in a way that's tangible to the human senses. At times, He appeared in the form of a person, as He did with Abraham (Genesis 12:7; 17:1; 18:1). When God called Moses to deliver the Israelites from Pharaoh, God appeared as a burning bush (Exodus 3:4).

In today's part of The Big God Story, God made His presence known to the Israelites in a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud. The pillar wasn't a natural phenomenon, like a tornado. This pillar was a physical representation of the presence of God with the Israelites. When the pillar of cloud moved from in front of the Israelites to behind them, standing between God's people and the pursuing Egyptians, it appeared as darkness to the Egyptians but as light to the Israelites (Exodus 14:20).

This is an important image for us as believers today. Just as God physically saved the Israelites from slavery and led them to the Promised Land, God spiritually redeemed us and guides us through this life into eternity. We were bound to sin and death until Jesus came and rescued us. God didn't leave us alone in our bondage. He sent Christ, who is Immanuel: "God with us." He also sent His Holy Spirit to dwell within us. Now, as children of God, we have a new identity and a new calling. "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8).

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

Read Psalm 139 completely, one time.

Read verses 7 through 10 again. Throughout this psalm, the writer establishes just how precious you are to God. With meticulous detail you were designed and created. God goes before you in all things and is always with you. There is no place where you can go that He isn't present. He loves you. You are His. This is beautiful truth!

Take a few minutes to pray. Find a quiet place and pray this statement of truth to the Lord: "Abba, I belong to You." As you say His name, wait and sit in the silence. Repeat this statement. You'll be sweetly surprised at how something so simple can remind you on a regular basis of who you are and to whom you belong.

May grace and peace go before you this week in all you do. May you know, truly know, the deep love and presence of our Father.

EXPLORE:: 10 min.

Host/Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Cloud Gazing

Today in The Big God Story, children will hear how God led His people with a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. At this station, kids will have a chance to look at clouds and make their own using cotton balls. Later, they'll try to imagine what a pillar of cloud might have looked like.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Cloud template \(see Resources\)](#)
- Construction paper (blue, 1 sheet for every 4 children)
- Cotton balls (1 bag)
- Glue sticks

PREPARE AHEAD

Print multiple copies of the Cloud template to show as examples. Cut the blue construction paper into quarter sheets.

SET UP

Place the materials out at the EXPLORE Station.

RELATE

Welcome children and show them pictures of different kinds of clouds from the Cloud template. **Friends, we have some pictures of different kinds of clouds to look at. Which kind do you see most often? Which one is your favorite? Why? Let's make our own clouds from the materials we have here. You can make a cloud like you see shown in these pictures. If you'd like, take a piece of paper and glue on cotton balls in that shape. Or make a cloud all on your own, however you'd like! Who wants to help me make a cloud?** Encourage the kids to copy the clouds as they like.

DISCOVER::: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point God Is with Me

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "I May Be Small," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours* and "He Knows Me," TruWorship *Your Love*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song

will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

RELATE

Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

No one is like you, LORD; you are great, and your name is mighty in power.
Jeremiah 10:6

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITION

Power: Strength or ability

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

No one: Both hands open, palms down, cross right hand over left hand and back again.

is like you, LORD: Point up to sky with right index finger. Then create "L" with right index finger and thumb, place over left shoulder and move down to right hip.

you are great: Bring both fists up to sky and splay hands open together.

and your name: Put index and middle finger together on both hands. Tap two fingers on right hand gently on two fingers on left hand three times quickly.

is mighty in power: Hold up both arms in strong-arm pose.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- What'sIt: Fluffy Cloud
- Wardrobe of Wonder

What'sIt: Fluffy Cloud

God promised to be with His people as He led them out of Egypt, through the desert to the land He promised them. To show the people He was with them, God went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. God was their guide, protector, and provider. He was with the Israelites every step of the way, just as He said He would be.

RELATE

Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What'sIt by peeking into the wardrobe. Have him whisper the identity of the What'sIt in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What'sIt. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What'sIt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

What would a cloud be doing in the wardrobe? Wait for responses and interact with the answers given. **It must have something to do with the part of The Big God Story we're going to hear today.** Look at the cloud as if you're inspecting it. **Where have you seen a cloud before?** Children respond. **What do clouds do?** Children answer. **Yes, they send down rain. I think this cloud is a very special kind of cloud. Where can we find the answer to our questions? That's right, in the Bible. Do you know what time it is?** Children answer.

The Big God Story

Exodus 13:21–22; 14:19–24; 33:9–10; Numbers 14:14

God Is with Me

Storytelling Technique: Props and Actions

SUPPLIES

- Optional: [Storytelling video](#) (see Resources)

RELATE

Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image. Storyteller enters and sits in front of tent. **Hello, friends! It's so good to see you on this fine night.** Storyteller looks around at stars and campsite. **Well, I think I have everything set up and ready for my campout. There's not much I enjoy more than sleeping under the stars and listening to the crickets. Can you hear them?** *Tech: Cue Crickets sound effect; play on a loop for remainder of storytelling.* Pause. Put hand up to ear and encourage kids to listen. **What do you do when you're camping and sitting around a campfire?** Interact with kids and their responses. **We tell stories, that's right. Well today we're going to hear another part of The Big God Story. But before we do, let's pray and talk to God together.** Lead children in Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Today, we're going to hear more from the Bible, God's true story. The very first time Moses met God, where did Moses see Him? Do you remember? Children respond. Yes, the burning bush! It was on fire, but it didn't burn up. God was introducing Himself to Moses. He told Moses that He is I AM. God was going to lead Moses and all of His people to a special place.

After God showed Himself to Moses in the burning bush, He told Moses to go talk to the king of Egypt. The king in Egypt was called a pharaoh. Can you say that with me? Say "pharaoh" with the children. God wanted Pharaoh to let God's people go so they could worship Him and not be slaves anymore. Pharaoh didn't want to let God's people go. So Moses went to visit him many, many times. Each time, Moses went to talk with Pharaoh and told him everything God told him to. But Pharaoh just sent Moses away, until one day, the king finally said yes and let the people go.

God promised He would be with Moses and the Israelites. As they left Egypt and headed to the Promised Land, God was with them. Why? Children answer. Because God said He would be, that's right. And God always keeps His promises! To always remind the people that He was with them, "By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night" (Exodus 13:21). Do you know what shape a pillar is? It's a tall column, like a giant tree trunk. Can you picture that in the sky? Wow!

God was their leader through a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. Have you ever played Follow the Leader? When you play, what do you do? Children answer. Yes, you follow the leader and do whatever she does. If we were playing this game right now (start marching in circle), what would you do? Children answer. You would follow what I'm doing and start to march. Okay, friends, let's play Follow the Leader. I'm going to do something, and then you're going to copy me and do what I do. Let's play!

Follow the Leader

Play a short game, with no more than four motions. If you have a group that's larger than 15 children, consider having each of the motions take place from where they're standing.

That was so fun! Okay, you can sit back down. Great listening! Well, God was leading His people through the desert. How did He lead them during the day? Children answer. And how did He lead them at night? Children answer. Yes! The pillar was in front of God's people leading them during the day as a pillar of cloud and at night as a pillar of fire. When the pharaoh realized the people were fleeing from Egypt, he came after them with his army. So God moved and put the pillar right between Pharaoh and His people. God blocked the army with the pillar of cloud and fire until all the people got away safely. Then, the pillar moved back to the front to lead the people.

When it was time to stop and rest, God would stop. When the pillar was in front of the tent, they knew God was talking with Moses. They would stop everything they were doing and they would worship God. He was their God and they were His people! Then, when it was time to go, God would move the cloud above the camp, and the people would know it was time to pack everything up. Storyteller takes down tent. God was leading them again. God was with His people all the time. He didn't leave them alone—not even for one minute!

Just like God was with Moses and the people in the desert, God is with you. He isn't with you in a pillar of cloud and fire, but He is always with you. Even though you can't see Him, He is there. Can you see the wind blowing? Allow children to answer. No. Can you feel the wind when it blows? Children answer. Yes, you can feel it. We can't see the wind, but when it starts to blow, we know it's there. God is always with us, all the time. He cares for us and protects us because we're His children. We belong to God! We can trust Him and follow Him wherever He leads, no matter what! God is with me. And God is with you.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages](#) (see Resources)
- Crayons

RELATE

In The Big God Story, we heard how God promised Moses He would be with him and the Israelites as they left Egypt. They could see God leading them in a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. God cares for us and protects us, too, because we're His children. We can trust Him and follow Him wherever He leads, no matter what!

I wonder ... Did the pillar make noise during the day or at night?

I wonder ... How has God protected me?

I wonder ... When is God with me?

BLESS::: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards](#) (see Resources)

RELATE

Have the children sit in a circle. **God made a promise to be with those who belong to Him. Each of you belongs to God. He will never leave you. He will guide you and show you where to go. He is always with you.**

As you individually bless each child in your small group, place your hand on each child's head and repeat the following blessing:

God made you, and you belong to Him.

After each child is blessed individually, bless the group with the following:

May you know how great is God's love for you. May you know that He is with you always, and that He will never leave you.