Preschool–Grade 6

Balaam's Donkey

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Listen to God and do what He says. When we are wrong, we say so and turn back.
Bible passage: Numbers 22:21–35. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak." *Numbers 22:35 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 7 paper strips, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 7 paper strips (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at Numbers 22:28 and Numbers 22:35.

1. Opening game: Only My Word (5 minutes)

Ask a helper (or an older child) to stand beside you. Give the kids instructions: "Touch your nose." "Hop two times." At the same time, the helper calls out different instructions: "Sit down!" "Spin around!" Kids must do **only** what you say. Play a few rounds. Ask: *Was it hard to listen to just one voice?* Say: "Today we will meet a man who had to learn to say only what God told him. And God used a donkey to get his attention!"

2. Bible story: The Donkey That Talked (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Numbers 22, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words. The Bible calls the donkey an **ass**. That is an old word for a donkey.

A man named **Balaam** got up in the morning and put a saddle on his donkey. He went with some princes from the land of Moab (Numbers 22:21). But God was not pleased that he went (22:22). Balaam rode on his donkey, and two of his servants went with him (22:22).

The angel of the LORD stood in the road to stop Balaam. Balaam could not see him, but the donkey could! The angel had a sword in his hand, so the donkey turned off the road into a field. Balaam hit her to make her go back on the road (22:23).

Then the road went between vineyards, the gardens where grapes grow, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side (22:24). The donkey saw the angel again. She pushed against the wall and squeezed Balaam's foot against it. Balaam hit her again (22:25).

Then the angel stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn right or left (22:26). When the donkey saw him, she lay down under Balaam. Balaam was very angry, and he hit her with his staff, his walking stick (22:27).

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The story continues: Then something amazing happened. **Read Numbers 22:28 from your Bible:** "And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" Say: "The donkey talked! God made her talk. She asked, 'What did I do to you, that you hit me three times?'"

Balaam answered her angrily (22:29). The donkey said, "Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee?" That means, "Haven't I always carried you? Did I ever do this before?" Balaam said, "Nay," which means no (22:30).

Then **the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam**, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword. Balaam bowed down and fell on his face (22:31). The angel said the donkey had turned away three times, and that kept Balaam safe (22:32–33). Balaam said, **"I have sinned"** (22:34). He told the truth: he was wrong. The angel said Balaam could go with the men, but he must say **only the words God gave him** (22:35).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What animal did Balaam ride? *(A donkey; the Bible says an ass, Numbers 22:21)*
2. Who saw the angel of the LORD first? *(The donkey, 22:23)*
3. How many times did Balaam hit the donkey? *(Three times, 22:28)*
4. Who opened the donkey's mouth? *(The LORD, 22:28)*
5. What did Balaam say when he saw the angel? *("I have sinned," 22:34)*

4. Memory verse: Only the Word (5 minutes)

Tape the 7 strips up in order: *And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, / Go with the men: / but only the word / that I shall speak unto thee, / that thou shalt speak. / So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. / Numbers 22:35.* Explain the old words: **thee** means you; **thou shalt speak** means you will say. Balaam could say only what God told him. Read the verse together. Then take one strip away and read it again. Keep taking strips away until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God wants us to listen to Him. When Balaam saw he was wrong, he said, 'I have sinned.' God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we tell God we are wrong, we are sorry for our sin, and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: listen the first time. And when you do something wrong, say, "I was wrong. I'm sorry."

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Balaam's donkey word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/balaam-word-search), the Balaam's donkey craft (vbshq.com/crafts/balaam-craft), or **Three Times:** act out the story. One child is the donkey and walks on hands and knees; another child is Balaam and walks beside. You call "Field!", "Wall!" and "Narrow place!", and the donkey turns aside, leans on the wall, and lies down. Then everyone says, "What have I done unto thee?" Take turns. (No hitting; Balaam just stops and frowns.)

7. Prayer

"Dear God, help us listen to You and do what You say. When we are wrong, help us tell the truth and say we are sorry. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why Balaam hit the donkey: say that Balaam was angry because he could not see what the donkey saw (Numbers 22:27). The angel of the LORD asked him why he did it (22:32).

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