

Action Scene 3: A new way of living

Action Scene 3 illustrates the story of the manna in Exodus 16:1-33, a slightly longer passage than the set reading for the day. The Scene comes in two versions: one with words in the speech bubbles and one with blank speech bubbles. See [Using Action Scenes](#) for more advice. To use this Action Scene consider the following possibilities:

Display Action Scene 3 during the reading or retelling of the story. Cover the four sections of the scene and reveal each one in turn at the relevant point. For a shorter retelling use a children's text such as *The Lion Bible for Children* by Murray Watts,

Now look at the story again using the version of Action Scene 3 supplied with blank speech bubbles. Take each of the four parts of the scene in turn. Ask the group to say what is happening in the story and ask for suggestions for words to put in the empty bubbles. Ask, 'What would you be thinking? What would you say?'

- **Scene 1: the hungry Israelites (16:1-3)** What might be the emotions of a hungry people - disappointment, disillusionment, anger, grumbling, sorrow, loss of faith? Write some words in the speech bubbles
- **Scenes 2: the presence of God (16:6-8)** How might the people feel about claiming that God is present when they were hungry? Write some answers in the speech bubbles
- **Scene 3: the provision of God (16:13-18)** How might the people feel faced with this completely new and strange food? Write some answers in the speech bubbles.
- **Scene 4: the manna jar (16:31-33)** What might the people be thinking and feeling as they come to terms with this strange provision; only enough for what they need? Write some answers in the speech bubbles.

As you review the story in this way, you could also fill in the parts missed by the illustrations: God's appearance in the shining cloud (between parts 2 and 3), the rotting of what was kept overnight and God's gift of the Sabbath – a day when they would eat without having to gather food (between parts 3 and 4). Children could draw these extra scenes and then colour and cut up the Action scene to make a frieze of the whole manna story.

Ask the group to imagine they are the Israelites in the desert. For each of the four scenes in turn, spend time thinking what they would have felt, what they would have said, thought or done in that situation. Then try acting out those ideas in an improvised scene. If there is time, chat about how they felt the scene went, before trying it out again. One person, perhaps a leader, can act as Moses. With a larger group, you could split into four, each working on a different scene – reading the relevant Bible verses above as background. Show each other what you have done. Group members could choose to write down or record the improvised dialogue to show others in the church.

Invite everyone to look at the whole scene and choose which of the speech/thought bubbles most closely reflects their attitude to God and their possessions at the moment. You could encourage people to add their own speech/thought bubble if they feel none is close enough. If appropriate, repeat this, asking each person to choose which of the bubbles most closely reflects your attitude *as a church* to God's provision for you. Encourage reflection or discussion about your answers – all together or in smaller groups. Look again at the picture as a reminder of how God was with his people in the desert and provided for them. Does this story challenge you to change how you think about God and about what he provides for you – as individuals and as a church? Keep a record of any comments and suggestions about actions for the church.