
EXPLORERS

Seeking God in the Great Outdoors



PRAIRIES

WEEK 2: PRAIRIES

BIBLE VERSE: *You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; The river of God is full of water; You provide their grain, for so You have prepared it. Psalm 65:9 NLT*

BOTTOM LINE: God provides for all our needs.

SUPPLIES

- 4 pieces of paper (each with a number from 1-4)
- Music for game
- Paper and pen (one for each small group)
- Paper and crayons (one per student in Lower Elementary Small Group)
- Index card and pencil for each student.
- Copies of WEEK 2 – Take Home Sheet

LEADER NOTES

Society has been telling our kids what they “need” since the moment they were born.

It can be difficult for students to know the difference between a “need” and a “want”.

Use this lesson to remind students that God knows exactly what they NEED, and He will always provide for His children.

Pray that students will have a better appreciation for what they have, desire to give to those who don't, and trust God for all their needs!

WELCOME

Say: I'm so glad you're here! We're going to have a great time together.

Today, we are talking about Prairies. Has anyone ever seen a prairie in real life?

Have you ever read or watched the TV show, *Little House on the Prairie*?

Prairies are grassy areas of land that are covered with vegetation—a variety of tall grasses, wheat, or vegetable. Another thing you find on the prairie is animals!

We're going to start with a fun Opening Activity that features one of those animals.

Can anyone guess what that is? (*Allow responses.*)

Before we jump into our lesson, let's start by going over some guidelines that will help us have an awesome day together.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Unless we ask you to stand up, please stay in your seats.
- We will give you time to talk, but when a leader is talking, please listen.
- We want to keep your personal items safe, so keep your phones, toys, and fidget toys under your seat.
- And most of all, we want to take a moment to pray and ask God to help us learn something about Him that we've never known before.

If you don't know God at all, today will be your day to hear who He is.

Ask a leader or student to open in prayer.

WORSHIP

This would be a great time to open with a time of praise and worship.

OFFERING

Encourage students to give their offering willingly and with a grateful heart.

OPENING ACTIVITY: PRAIRIE DOG CALL

GAME PREP

Choose four corners in the space where you are meeting and mark them 1 – 2 – 3 – 4.

Then, choose one student to act as the "Prairie Dog Caller."

This student will not participate in the game.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Say: Our Opening Activity is going to feature an animal that is found on the prairie.

Let me introduce you to our *Prairie Dog Caller*.

Point to the student that will play that part.

Prairie dogs are actually rodents, but they are called prairie *dogs* because they make a sound that is similar to a dog's bark.

Have the prairie dog caller bark a couple of times.

When the game begins, the *Prairie Dog Caller* will turn away from the students who are playing the game.

The *Prairie Dog Caller* is not allowed to watch!

Play music, and have students walk all around.

They can even dance, if that is appropriate for your group.

When the music stops, students will race to a corner that they have chosen.

The *Prairie Dog Caller* will then bark one to four times.

As many times as the *Prairie Dog Caller* barks will determine which corner is OUT.

If they bark three times, then all the students in Corner #3 are out, and they have to sit down.

Keep playing the game until all the students are out except for one.

That student is declared the WINNER!

Optional: Switch out the Prairie Dog Caller and allow other students to play the part and bark out the numbers.

After the activity, have students return to their seats for the large group lesson.

TEACH

Say: All of you did a great job with that game!

I have never seen a prairie dog in real life, but I'm sure that was pretty close to what one sounds like!

Today, we're talking about prairies and I have some fun facts that I want to share with you!

Show the "Prairies Slide Show," either on TV/projection, or even print the slides and show them to the students.

Slide 1: Title Slide

Slide 2: The Bible uses the word "plain," which is the same as prairie.

Slide 3: Big Bluestem grass can grow up to 10-feet tall on the prairie.

Slide 4: Prairie dogs, bison, chickens, snakes, fox, rabbits, wolves and deer live on the prairie.

Slide 5: Bison weigh about 1,400lbs and can stand up to 6.5-feet tall.

Slide 6: Savanna, steppe, pampas, grasslands, plains, and prairies are all the same thing.

Slide 7: Almost every vegetable can be farmed on the prairie.

Slide 8: Think about it. God provides for all of our needs.

Slide 9: Title Slide

Say: I hope you learned a couple of things you didn't know before.

Prairies are really cool!

I want us to start our lesson by reading a Bible verse.

Let's read Psalm 65:9 NLT.

You take care of the earth and water it, making it rich and fertile.

The river of God has plenty of water; it provides a bountiful harvest of grain, for you have ordered it so.

Have you ever thought about who takes care of the earth?

We have read in the Book of Genesis how God created the entire earth and the whole universe!

But He didn't just create the earth and then abandon it.

He has continued to care for it.

When it rains, the ground soaks up the water and provides nourishment to plants.

The rain fills up rivers and lakes, and animals drink the water.

The sun causes the water on the earth to evaporate and fill the clouds, and then it rains, and it starts all over again.

God created this system to take care of the earth and the Bible says this happens because God has "ordered it so."

The earth does what God tells it to do!

So, God has taken a lot of love and care to make sure that the earth is taken care of.

Ask: Let me ask you a question: Do you think God takes care of you?

Allow a few responses from students.

Of course, He does!

You are part of His creation!

In this world, some people have a lot of stuff, and others have a little.

Sometimes, it might not seem fair.

Have you ever looked at what your friends have and wished that you could have the same things?

But here's the thing... God knows what you need.

Does He care about what you want?

Yes! He does.

God is generous and there are times that He gives us wonderful gifts just because He loves us.

What do I mean?

Let me give you a couple of examples...

- Are you healthy? That is a gift!
- Do you have a family, and people who love you? That is a gift!
- Do you have a home, bed, food, and clothing? Those are gifts from God!

You don't *deserve* anything.

You have received those things from God because He loves you and takes care of you.

So, what about people who don't have much?

Does that mean that God doesn't love them?

God doesn't look at things the same way that we do.

In God's eyes, a person who is satisfied and grateful for what they have, even if they don't have much, is better off than someone who has a lot and is ungrateful.

Before we continue talking about how God provides for our needs, we are going to take a moment to pray.

Let's thank God for what we have, and trust God to provide for all of our needs.

Take a few minutes to pray and then, divide into small groups.



SMALL GROUPS: LOWER ELEMENTARY

SUPPLIES

- A piece of paper and a crayon (one per student)
- A piece of paper and a pen (for the leader)

Say: We have been talking about how God provides for our needs.

But let's list the things that are actually **needs** in our lives.

Use the pen and paper to write a list of needs. Examples: air, food, shelter, clothes, shoes, water, etc.

Next, look at the list and circle any of the items that you don't have.

There shouldn't be any items that were listed that the students don't have.

As you look at this list, can you see that God provides for you?

Now, we're going to turn our paper over and make a list of "wants."

These are things that you would like to have, but you don't *need* them.

Allow students to make a list of small and big things that they want (fancy cars, expensive jewelry, video game systems, candy, etc.).

As we look over this list, are there any things that we have written down that would make your life happier?

Yes! Sometimes it's fun to have nice things.

But is there anything on that list that will make you closer to God and bring peace in your heart?

No. Only God can do that.

Give each kid a piece of paper and a crayon.

I would like for you to draw a picture that shows how God provides and cares for you.

Include a drawing of yourself and how you feel when you know God is taking care of you.

Allow the kids a few minutes to draw and then have each kid explain what their picture represents.

You did an excellent job drawing your pictures.

Now, we're going to take a couple of minutes to pray and thank God for all that He does in our lives.

Close in prayer.

**SMALL GROUPS: UPPER ELEMENTARY****SUPPLIES**

- A piece of paper and a pen (for the leader)]
- An index card and pen (one for each kid)

Say: We have been talking about how God provides for our needs.

But let's list the things that are actually **needs** in our lives.

Use the pen and paper to write a list of needs. Examples: air, food, shelter, clothes, shoes, water, etc.

Next, look at the list and circle any of the items that you don't have.

There shouldn't be any items that were listed that the kids don't have.

As you look at this list, can you see that God provides for you?

Now, we're going to turn our paper over and make a list of "wants."

These are things that you would like to have, but you don't *need* them.

Allow students to make a list of small and big things that they want (fancy cars, expensive jewelry, video game systems, candy, etc.).

As we look over this list, are there any things that we have written down that would make your life happier?

Yes! Sometimes it's fun to have nice things.

But is there anything on that list that will make you closer to God and bring peace in your heart?

No. Only God can do that.

Finish up and move into the Small Group Activity.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Each kid will need an index card and a pencil.

Let's take a couple of minutes and write a note to God.

In this note, we are going to thank God for everything that He has given to us.

Then, ask God to show you how to be generous to others.

Finally, tell God, in your own words, that you trust Him to provide for you and your family.

You are going to take your index card home and put it some place where you can see it.

When you feel like you can't tell the difference between a need and a want in your life, allow this card to help you remember that God takes care of your needs.

BONUS: BIBLE QUIZ QUESTIONS

If you have extra time, use the following questions at the end of the lesson.

Call two students to the front. Hand each student a KJV Bible, read the question, and then give the Bible reference.

The first person to give the correct answer wins that round.

The winner remains up front, and a new "challenger" takes the other student's place.

1. **Where did he sit in the heat of the day? Genesis 18:1.**

And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in **the tent door** in the heat of the day;

2. **Where are the plains of Moab near? Numbers 33:48.**

And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab **by Jordan near Jericho**.

3. **What place is known as the city of palm trees? Deuteronomy 34:3.**

And the south, and the plain of the valley of **Jericho**, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

4. How many people prepared for war? Joshua 4:13.

About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

5. What word is used to describe the ground in 1 Kings 7:46?

In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the **clay** ground between Succoth and Zarthan.

6. Name a type of tree mentioned in 2 Chronicles 9:27.

And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that are in the low plains in abundance.

7. What animal is mentioned in Deuteronomy 11:15?

And I will send grass in thy fields for thy **cattle**, that thou mayest eat and be full.

8. What was the king's wrath as? Proverbs 19:12.

The king's wrath is as the **roaring of a lion**; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.