



# The Gift of Manna

Level C

Ages 11-14

**Exodus 16:1-35 - selections**

**Series Theme:** The Lord leads and provides for us, and we can choose to follow Him.

**Lesson Focus:** The Lord loves and provides for everyone, and we can choose to love Him in return.

**Reading Summary:** The children of Israel celebrated their miraculous escape from Egypt, and then found only bitter water to drink. The Lord healed the water, and led them to an oasis. Journeying on into the Wilderness of Sin, the people complained because there was no food. The Lord promised He would give them bread from heaven each morning, and meat (quails) each evening. The people were to gather only what they needed each day, except on the sixth day, when they were to gather enough for two days. When the children of Israel saw the manna they said, “What is it?” because they did not know what it was. Most people gathered just enough for their families, but some took too much. The next day the left-over manna had bred worms and stank, and Moses became angry. On the sixth day, people gathered twice as much manna and prepared it for the Sabbath. No bread was given on the seventh day; the people rested. The manna looked like white coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. The children of Israel ate manna for 40 years until they reached Canaan.

<b>Lesson 4</b>		<b>Materials Supplied</b>	<b>Materials Needed</b>
<b>1. Welcome Warm-up Activity</b> (2-3 minutes)	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Trust</b> directions p. 2	
<b>2. Focus on the Word</b> Use all activities (5-7 minutes)	<b>Read the Word and Talk About It</b>	see <i>Reading Summary</i> above; <i>Manna in the Wilderness Readings</i> , p. 5 discussion guide p. 2	
<b>3. Learn by Doing</b> Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	<b>Video and Discussion</b> watch a video that brings the meaning of manna in the wilderness into focus with our lives today and discuss	<b>Manna in the Wilderness</b> directions p. 3 <i>Manna in the Wilderness</i> video online at <a href="https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-manna-in-the-wilderness/">https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-manna-in-the-wilderness/</a>	equipment for viewing video, internet access
	<b>Service Activity</b> choose a service project that can be finished in one class, or choose a longer project to do over time	<b>Heavenly Bread</b> directions p. 4 <i>Heavenly Bread Service Activities</i> p. 6 <i>Suggestions for Drives or Fundraising Events</i> p. 7	supplies will vary depending on which activity you choose
<b>4. Wrap It Up</b> (2-3 minutes)	<b>Take the Message Home</b> introduce the take home page	<b>Being a Branch of the Lord's Vine</b> p. 8	

# 1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

## Trust

Encourage students to develop and share their thoughts about trusting in the Lord. Choose one or two questions to read aloud. Invite students to respond.

1. What makes it difficult to trust that the Lord is caring for *you*?
2. What makes it difficult to trust that the Lord is caring for *everyone*?
3. Is it easier to trust the Lord when things are going well for you, or when things are difficult for you?

## 2. Focus on the Word

**Read:** Selections from Exodus 16:1-35 on p. 5.

**The children of Israel celebrated the parting of the Red Sea, then they went forward into the wilderness. At first, they could only find bitter water, which the Lord made sweet. Then, as they set out again they faced the hardship of not finding food. Have you ever faced a similar hardship? How did you handle the situation?**

**The Lord gave two kinds of food, one in the morning, and one in the evening. Which food came in the morning, and which came in the evening?** Manna in the morning, quail in the evening.

**What were the rules for gathering manna?** People were to gather enough for their families each day, but no more. On the sixth day they were to gather enough for two days, so they would have a day of rest.

**Psalm 78:25 calls manna “angels’ food”, and the Writings tell us that the food given to the angels is like the spiritual food we receive from the true ideas in the Word. Our spiritual “bread”—the Lord’s spiritual *goodness*—comes to us when we experience joy or delight from doing what the Word teaches.**

**What happened when people took more manna than they needed?** The manna bred worms and stank.

**Our spiritual strength comes from reading the Word and doing what it teaches daily, just as we pray, ‘Give us this day our daily bread’ in the Lord’s prayer. True ideas that we learn but ignore or do not use do not amount to any good in our lives. They are like the manna that bred worms.**

**The children of Israel ate quail every evening. In what ways is evening different from morning?** Evening is darker, and often colder. The sun does not shine directly on us, and the sky is dimly lit by the moon and stars.

**“Evening” corresponds to times when we think less about spiritual things and more about natural things. Instead of experiencing joy from serving others, the joy that comes from eating quail is like the personal pride and joy we might feel from doing something good (see *Arcana Coelestia* 8487). This isn’t bad, just not as good as the “manna” feelings.**

**The Lord fed the children of Israel for forty years, until they reached the land of Canaan. The years they wandered in the wilderness are like times when we struggle to remember and do what is right. These times are an important part of our journey to heaven.**

**The Lord loves and provides spiritual food for everyone He creates. He asks us to trust that He will give us what we really need. Like the children of Israel we may sometimes complain about what we have. The Lord asks us to trust that He loves and cares for us and to love Him in return, because He knows that this will make us happy to eternity.**

# 3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

**Choice**

## Manna in the Wilderness

Watch a video by the Rev. Chris Barber that explores the kinds of manna the Lord provides for us every day, and then discuss.

### Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever experienced a time of great sadness? What was it like?
2. Have you ever felt angry at the Lord?
3. Do you think the Lord ever gets angry? (The Lord *appears* to be angry in places in the Old Testament, just as parents sometimes appear to be angry with their children. However, the Writings for the New Church tell us that the Lord is *never* angry, but only appears to be angry. What is the Lord actually feeling is a kind of love called “zeal”. The stories where the Lord seems to be angry actually show His great love for us.)
4. What kinds of things have you or other people you know tried doing to overcome feelings of grief or anger?
5. Rev. Chris Barber suggested that the manna in our lives is
  - the feelings of **gratitude** we experience when someone does something nice for us
  - the **satisfaction** we get from doing a job well
  - or the warm feelings we get from **connecting** with others.What kinds of gratitude, satisfaction, and connection has the Lord provided for you?
6. The children of Israel were told to gather manna daily, taking only as much as they needed. How does this relate to the spiritual manna in your life?
7. Can a person be too grateful, too satisfied, or enjoy friendships too much?
8. Can we ever have enough of a good thing to last a lifetime? (Our spirits need *continual* nourishment just as our bodies do because our spirits are always growing and changing like our bodies.)
9. Manna needed to be gathered and also prepared before it could be eaten. In what ways do you need to gather and prepare your positive experiences to take them into your life and make them your own?
10. What is the promised land “flowing with milk and honey”? (Heaven.)



### Materials Needed

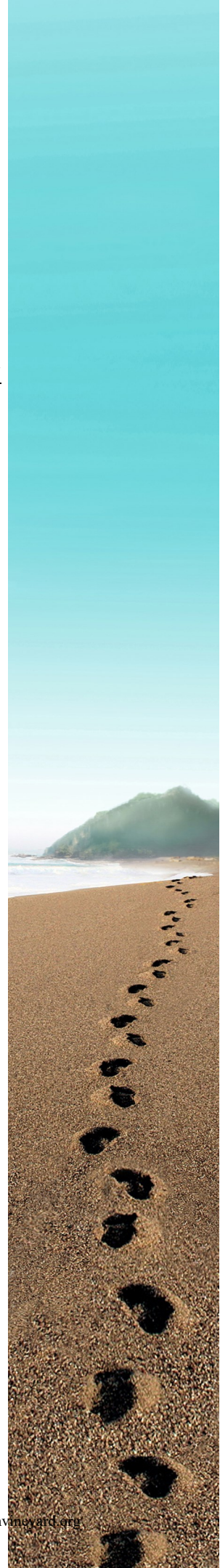
*Manna in the Wilderness* video, online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-manna-in-the-wilderness/>, equipment for showing the video; internet access

### Prepare in Advance

Watch the video before the lesson and reflect on the message. Prepare equipment to show the video during the lesson.

### New Church Concept Nourishment

“Food and drink” signify all things that nourish and sustain spiritual life, and these in general are knowledges of truth and good. Spiritual life needs nourishment and support just as much as natural life does; so it is said to be famished when a person is deprived of knowledges. *Apocalypse Explained* 386





**Choice****Heavenly Bread**

The food of our spirits is good and truth from the Lord. He is continually offering us the nourishment we need day by day.

There are two ways we can take in this nourishment—by learning the truths from the Word and by putting them to use in our lives.

These two ways of receiving truth are reflected in two statements the Lord made while on earth: “[We] shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4); and “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (John 4:34).

Choose a *Heavenly Bread Service Activity* (p. 7) to do with your students to help them gather “manna” by helping others.

1. One way the Lord rains bread from heaven on us is by giving us experiences of heavenly joy. The joy of the angels comes from being useful. And this is true for us too, even if sometimes that seems hard to believe. Our deepest delights come from being useful.
2. Being useful can involve helping in major ways or it can simply be being kind and helpful in small ways that make other people happy. Today, we are going to gather “manna” by helping others.
3. Describe the activity you will be doing. Ask students to identify specific ways in which the activity will be of useful service to others.
4. Get students started on the activity.
5. At the end of class, thank students for their participation and affirm them for their service to others.

## 4. Wrap It Up

### Closing

The Lord loves and provides for all people, as He cared for the children of Israel in the wilderness. One of the ways that He gives us love and care is through good people around us. We can choose to help the Lord in this work, by helping and being kind to our neighbors—to other people. This is one of the primary ways that we can love the Lord in return for His love.

### Take the Message Home

Hand out a copy of *Being a Branch of the Lord’s Vine* (p. 8) to each student. Read the quotation at the top of the page aloud together. Encourage students to take the page home and think about it.



### Materials Needed

supplies will vary depending on which activity you choose from Heavenly Bread Service Activities p. 6 or *Suggestions for Drives or Fundraising Events* p. 7

### Prepare in Advance

Choose which activity you will do.

### New Church Concept Bread from Heaven

Manna is heavenly food, heavenly food is goodness and truth, and goodness and truth in heaven are the Lord since they come from Him. The rules for gathering manna describe how Divine Good from the Lord is shared with all in heaven according to the capacity to receive it. Some can receive little and some can receive much. Those who receive little are on the borders of heaven; those who receive much are in the inner parts. Each person's capacity to receive is determined by the nature and amount of good acquired in the world. *Arcana Coelestia* 8472



# Manna in the Wilderness Readings

Exodus 16:1-7,10-26,30-31,35 - *selections*

The children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin. Then the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron and said, “Oh, that we had died in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.”

Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, “At evening you shall know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord.” Now as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’”

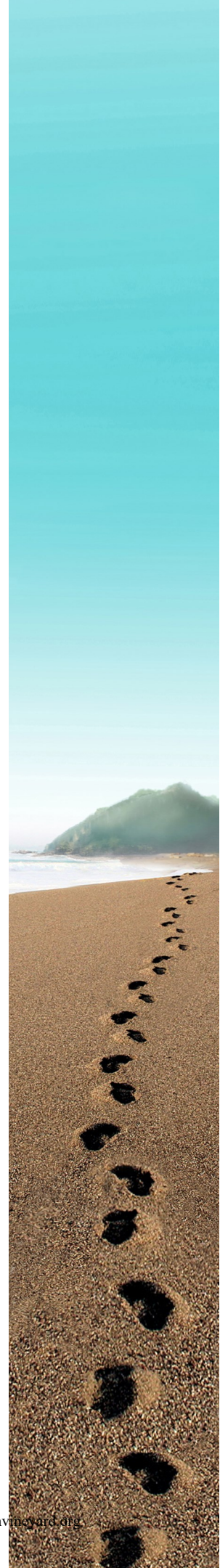
So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the children of Israel saw it, they said, “What is it?” And Moses said to them, “This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. The Lord has commanded: ‘Let every man take for those who are in his tent.’”

Then the children of Israel gathered, some more, some less. He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. And Moses said, “Let no one leave any of it till morning.” They did not heed Moses. Some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry. So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.

And on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread. And Moses said to them, “Tomorrow is a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and keep all that remains until morning.” So they kept it till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. Then Moses said, “Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.” So the people rested on the seventh day.

And the house of Israel called it Manna. And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.



# Heavenly Bread Service Activities

Encourage students to make a difference to their community by doing one of the following activities. A list of same day service activities is included to spark your thinking. Or your congregation may have an ongoing service activity you could help with, such as sorting and packing already collected food. If you are feeling really ambitious, a list of other ideas for planning longer-term projects is provided on the next page.

## Food Related Activities

- Prepare and serve snacks for the congregation after church. Clean up afterwards.
- Make a meal for a needy family.
- Clean the church kitchen.
- Take an inventory of kitchen supplies.

## Art and Craft Activities

- Prepare decorations for an upcoming festival services for the sanctuary, pews or newsletter.
- Prepare thank you cards or small gifts for small group leaders or Sunday school teachers.
- Create name badges for the members of your congregation.
- Make signs or decorations that welcome others to your church building.
- Put up a bulletin board display.

## Cleaning Activities

- Clean and organize an art supply closet, e.g. sort markers, and throw away ones that don't work.
- Clean and organize nursery toys. Wash dirty toys. Throw out broken or dangerous toys.
- Wash windows.

## Outdoor Activities

- Plant flowers to beautify the church.
- Clean up the church grounds.
- Do yardwork for someone in your neighborhood who needs help, e.g. an elderly or disabled person.

## Helping Others

- Put on a play for younger children.
- Adopt an elderly person after church. Make something for him/her during class. Give it to him/her after church. Have a conversation with him/her.
- Staff the church nursery.
- Teach Sunday school or help with a younger Sunday school class.

## Suggestions for Drives or Fund-raising Events

Events	Activities
Empty Bowls Event	Host a soup and bread meal. In exchange for a donation, guests keep a bowl to remind them of all the empty bowls in the world. The money is donated to an organization working to end hunger: <a href="http://www.emptybowls.net/">http://www.emptybowls.net/</a> .
Talent Night	Charge admission, solicit donations of food or raffle items, and sell refreshments.
Food/Can Drive	Contact local food banks for information on donation checkpoints for non-perishable foods. In the USA, you can find these listed at <a href="http://FeedingAmerica.org">FeedingAmerica.org</a> .
Cake Auction	Bake and decorate cakes creatively. (Cake mixes are OK.) Hold a cake auction during which people bid on cakes via a silent auction (everyone walks past all cakes in the room three times and bids via bidding sheets) <i>or</i> a live auction using paper plates as number paddles.
Pancake Breakfast/ Pasta Dinner	Host breakfast before church or on a Saturday and charge a fixed fee or ask for donations. Host a pasta dinner and charge a fixed price.
Art Auction	Students create pieces of art work and auction them off. May hold along with a breakfast or dinner.
Rocking-Chair-a- thon	Solicit sponsorship for a rock-a-thon. Students get paid to keep a rocking chair rocking by the minute, quarter hour, or half hour. Teams of three might keep the chair rocking for 24 hours.
Babysitting	Provide drop-off babysitting at the church or encourage students to donate their babysitting takings from a specific church-held event.
Coat/Clothing drive	Donors clean out their closets and give coats, shoes or other clothing. Several organizations collect new or used clothing for charity: <a href="http://onewarmcoat.org">http://onewarmcoat.org</a> ; <a href="http://soles4souls.org">http://soles4souls.org</a> ; <a href="http://www.purpleheartpickup.org">www.purpleheartpickup.org</a> (benefits veterans).



## Being a Branch of the Lord's Vine

No person left to himself is able to do what is good or think what is true; he can only do so with the Lord's help. This is clear in John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9445).

1. In what way are you a branch of the Lord's vine? In what ways are you helpful
  - At home
  - At school
  - When you are by yourself
2. Can you think of one or two ways to be even more helpful—ways to make your branch stronger and more fruitful?



Photo by  
Gretchen Keith