

W A New Beginning

Week of Sept. 12th
Exodus 13:17-22

As the Israelites began their journey towards the Promised Land, God did not lead them through the land of the Philistines *“Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt”* (Ex.13:17). This, however, would result in them being trapped between the Red Sea and an approaching Egyptian army. Like the Israelites, sometimes God’s plans are confusing to us, and we need trust in his guidance and abiding presence with us.

1. Icebreaker - Before we dive into Israel’s journey, share a memorable adventure / journey you have taken.
2. As we kick off this new year of Community Group, we want to know each others’ stories. Set a timer for 15 minutes and have one person share the 5 things that have most shaped who they are today. This isn’t just the 5 highlights, but the most impactful things in their life. After the 15 minutes is up, you can set another timer for 5 minutes of questions. Then have one person pray for the one who shared. (One person will share each week until everyone has had a chance to share).
3. Read Exodus 13:17-18. As God led the Israelites out of Egypt, he led them the longer way because He knew what was best. They trusted His leadership. In what ways are you currently wrestling to trust God or His Word? What would it be like for you if you were to trust God, His Word or His direction this week?
4. Read Exodus 13:19 and Hebrews 11:22, 12:1. Though Joseph hadn’t seen God’s promised fulfilled, he believed it would happen. In what ways can we be strengthened in our faith by remembering the saints who have gone before us or who are ahead of us in the journey? Who is someone older than you, who you respect and could spend time learning from?
5. Read Exodus 13:20-22. God led the Israelites with a visible, external manifestation of His presence that provided both guidance and security. As believers, we have God’s Spirit dwelling in us and providing constant guidance and security.
 - Read Romans 8:9-11. How would your life look different if you lived in the truth that the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead lives in us and empowers us to live a life that glorifies Him?
 - What might it look like to rest in His abiding presence?
 - What stood out from the video story about the work of God’s Spirit?

(Questions written by Karin Harper)

NOTES:

OTHER RESOURCES

READY TO GO DEEPER?

“God where are you taking me?”

(written by Tim Davis)

As we travel through the book of Exodus, this deeper reflection section will teach you to see how each passage fits into the grand narrative of Scripture. As a result, you'll see how God's redemptive work points to his ultimate act of deliverance achieved through Jesus!

God led his son the long way out of Egypt (Ex 4:22-23). Israel's only hope of survival is if God fights for them, and he does just that! The reference to Joseph's bones reminds us of Joseph's final words indicating that God will lead his people towards the promised land—a land reminiscent of Eden (Gen 2:8-9, 12:1, 50:24-25; Ex 3:17). As they advance, God's presence guides them, as he does elsewhere—with fire and cloud (Ex 3:2, 16:10, 19:18, 40:38).

When our God-directed path perplexes us, reflecting on God's handiwork in Exodus 13:17-22 gives us hope as we cast our gaze upwards towards the climactic exodus achieved through his True Son (Prov 16:9; Luke 9:31). The road you're on may feel like a roundabout, but Jesus will safely lead you into the promise land and guide you with his Spirit—a more intimate presence than pillars of fire or smoke (Heb 11:16; Rev 21:1-2; Matt 28:20; Acts 2:2-4).

- Take some time to read the selected passages above on your own, to better understand Exodus 13:17-22 in its redemptive context.
- How does this Old Testament passage enable you to see the finished work of Jesus more clearly?
- How does your awe of God's finished work through your Savior give you hope during this season of life?
- How can you rely more deeply on the guidance of Jesus' Spirit in your life?

Outside our Walls

Week of Prayer

God's people are no strangers to the wilderness. From Jacob to Moses to John the Baptist, and to Christ Himself, we see God's faithfulness on display as the Lord's people navigate uncharted, desolate places. As we begin this ministry year together with a week of prayer, let us look to the God who is ever-present and let us find hope in the One who makes a way in the desert.

You can find the prayer points for each day at...

www.woodmenvalley.org/prayer

DIVE IN ON YOUR OWN TO GET READY FOR NEXT WEEKEND

Crossing the Red Sea

Exodus 14:1-31