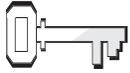


The Rock and the Sand



References

Matthew 7:12-29;
Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,
pp. 147-152



Memory Verse

"My God is my rock,
in whom I take refuge"
(Psalm 18:2).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that we
worship God by
living for Jesus.

Feel a desire to live for Jesus.

Respond by resolving to
daily build their life on Jesus.



The Message

I am joyful when I
build my life on Jesus.

Monthly Theme

Worship makes us joyful every day.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jesus tells a story to a crowd about two houses and two builders. One builder builds his house on a rock, which gives it a firm foundation. During the rainy season the winds and floods come, but the house has a strong foundation, so it is safe. Another man builds his house on the sand. When the storms come, his house is washed away because the foundation is not good.

This is a story about worship.

When we obey His Word, we are building our lives on Jesus. We joyfully do what Jesus says in response to His extravagant gift of love and grace. This is an act of worship.

Teacher Enrichment

In Palestine the builder must think ahead. Many gullies that were pleasant sandy hollows in summer become raging torrents of rushing water in winter. The house built there would disintegrate. It was tempting to begin building on the smoothed-over sand, and not bother to dig down to the shelf of rock below.

The houses in Jesus' day were not as sturdy as today's houses. Thieves were able to dig through the walls (Matthew 6:19). The roof of earth or grass could easily be opened up (Mark 2:4). Everything, therefore, depended on the foundation.

Room Decorations

Prepare an outdoor scene. Include palm trees and a toy donkey.

If possible, prepare bulletin boards showing:

- What houses were like in Bible times.
- A house built on a rock and one being swept away by water.
- A village with Jesus and His disciples outside one of the houses. Show a donkey nearby.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>House Building</i> B. <i>Building Right</i>	empty appliance boxes or grocery boxes and lots of wide duct tape, or small tent or blankets and chairs carpenter or handyman with wood, nails, and hammer
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> small house-shaped box with a slit on top, flat rock medium-sized rock, pencils or pens, sticky papers, prayer diary
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	adult Bible-times costume, hammer, Bible, chair Bibles Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Rock, Sand, and Water Test</i>	for each group of five children: two 4" x 6" index cards, pencils, water, clear tape, a large plastic dishpan with a brick or flat stone, sand
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Paper Weights</i> B. <i>Refrigerator Magnet</i>	rocks, markers, spray paint, clear shellac in a spray can (optional) cup, construction paper, scissors, art supplies, glue, magnetic tape or cellophane tape

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they're pleased/troubled about. Ask what they especially enjoyed about their Bible lesson this week. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- empty appliance boxes or grocery boxes
- wide duct tape
- small tent or blankets to drape over chairs

A. House Building

Say: **Some people actually live in boxes.** Challenge the children to fashion a house in the next five to 10 minutes, using the empty appliance boxes or grocery boxes and lots of wide duct tape. **Option:** Provide a small tent to pitch inside or blankets to drape over chairs. Or divide the children into two groups, with one group working on the box house and the other on the tent. Test their houses for comfort and durability by seeing how many children can sleep in each house.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What would you think about living in a cardboard box or a tent all the time? Which would be better? Why? What is your house made of? Jesus told some people that hearing and doing His word is like building a strong house. Let's read what He said in Matthew 7:24.** Help the children find and read the text. **What do you think Jesus meant?** (If we make Jesus and His Word the most important in our lives, we will enjoy good times and have strength for the bad times.) **Every day we are building important things in our lives, our characters. Everything we do decides what kind of person we are building. If we build our lives on Jesus and what He tells us in the Bible, it is like having a good, strong foundation. Today's message tells us what the results will be:**



I AM JOYFUL WHEN I BUILD MY LIFE ON JESUS.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- guest carpenter or handyman
- hammer, nails, wood

B. Building Right

Invite a carpenter, builder, or handyman to visit your class. Ask him or her to bring wood, nails, and a hammer to teach the children how to pound a nail in straight. Have him or her show some tools and explain their use, then explain why a house should be built on a firm foundation. If you can't find someone, demonstrate and supervise the hammering yourself.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What did you just learn about building a house? Why is a good foundation important?** (To be sure the building will stand all kinds of weather.) **When we make decisions, we need to have a good foundation. Who could be a strong foundation for us?** (Jesus) **If we build our lives on Jesus, we will enjoy good times and have strength for the bad times. Our message today tells us what will happen if we build our lives on Him.**



I AM JOYFUL WHEN I BUILD MY LIFE ON JESUS.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any Time



Fellowship

Report the children's joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study. Give a special warm greeting to visitors and introduce each by name. Acknowledge birthdays or special events.



Suggested Songs

- "The Wise Man and the Foolish Man" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 62)
- "Sandy Land" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 121)
- "Trust and Obey" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 113)
- "His Banner Over Me Is Love" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 25) (last verse)



Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Use a house-shaped small box with a slit on top to collect the offering. Place the house on a flat rock. Ask a child to pray that the offering will be used wisely to help people in _____ (the part of the world designated to receive the offering) to learn about Jesus, the Best Foundation.



You Need:

- house-shaped box
- large flat rock



Prayer

Ask the children if there are any answers or requests to write in the class prayer diary started last week.

Place a medium-sized rock up front to represent Jesus. Have the children write on a sticky paper (or use paper and cellophane tape) the name of someone they know whose life is not built on the Rock, Jesus. Invite them to come up and stick their paper on the rock. Then make a circle with everyone holding hands, and invite those who stuck a paper on the rock to mention the name of the person written on their paper. Pray that these people will start building their lives on Jesus. Close by thanking Jesus that He is a firm foundation.



You Need:

- medium-size rock
- prayer diary
- sticky papers
- pencils or pens

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- adult Bible-times costume
- hammer
- Bible
- chair

Experiencing the Story

Invite a man to dress in a Bible-times costume and tell the story as if he had been there and heard Jesus speak.

Instructions to storyteller: Invite some children to come forward and be the house as it is being built. Large group: Use one group to make one house and a second group to make the second house. Small group: Use all the children to build both houses.

Begin the story by strolling up front, head down, thoughtfully stroking your chin with one hand and clutching the hammer in the other. Turn to face the children. Put the hammer down, push your sleeves up, and then look around as if seeing the audience for the first time.

Read or tell the story.

Oh, excuse me. I didn't know you were there. I just saw and heard the most amazing thing. And I can't quite figure out what it means.

It started with a crowd of people seated on a hillside in the middle of the day. I mean, all those people had work to do. Like me; I build houses. *[Hold up the hammer.]* But not on this particular day. I joined those people sitting on the hill.

Jesus was there. He was telling stories and teaching the people. His voice carried so that we all could hear Him. And here's what puzzled me: He told about a house. Here, let me tell you the story.

Once a man decided to build a house, like me. *[Hold up the hammer, and then put the hammer down.]* The man chose a rocky ledge, well above water level, on which to build his house. The man worked hard carrying the building materials. *[Take two children by the hand*

and lead them up front.] Pretend you are my building materials. *[Stand the two children about three feet (one meter) apart.]*

So the man carried the materials *[grab two more children for the other two corners]* all the way up onto the rock. *[Bring up children to fill in the walls as you continue talking.]* Here the house would be safe and the foundation strong.

At last the roof was finished. *[The children stretch their arms forward for the flat roof.]* When the rainy season came, the wind blew and blew. *[Get the teachers and any remaining children to blow up a storm.]* The streams grew bigger and bigger, overflowing their banks. Now there was flooding to worry about. *[Stand on a chair to get out of the water.]* But the house was safe. The man had built it on a strong, firm foundation of solid rock.

That makes sense, doesn't it? The people thought so. They all nodded and said, "Amen." *[Get everyone to shout "Amen."]* And Jesus told them, "If you listen to God's Word and live for Him you are building your house on the Rock."

Does that make sense, building on rock? Yes, it does, so say "Amen" again. *[Put your hand to your ears to encourage the "Amen." Then applaud the people who made the house. They can return to their seats.]*

But then Jesus told about another man who built a house. *[Begin bringing up children to build a similar house a few feet away from the last.]* This man chose to build his house on the sand at the water's edge. He probably built a strong house, too. He probably worked very hard at it.

At last the roof was finished. *[The children stretch their arms forward for the flat roof.]* When the rainy season came, the wind blew and blew. *[Get the teachers and any remaining children to blow up a storm.]* The streams grew bigger and bigger,

overflowing their banks. Now there was flooding to worry about. *[Stand on a chair to get out of the water.]*

But the house tottered and fell. *[The children representing the house collapse. Affirm them for a great job and ask them to return to their seats.]*

What went wrong? *[Look puzzled.]* Why did the house fall? *[Accept their responses.]* The man had built the house on sand. And the flood washed the sand away. The foundation was no good.

This is what Jesus said about it. *[Read Matthew 7:26.]* I think Jesus was saying something very important. I wonder what He meant. *[Pick up your hammer, put your head down, and stroke your chin as you leave by the way you came.]*

Debriefing

Have a teacher other than the storyteller ask the children:

1. What is the Rock in this story?

Read aloud Psalm 18:2. (my God)

2. How do you build on the Rock?

Read aloud Matthew 7:26. (hear Jesus' words and put them into practice)

3. How do you think the wise builder felt after the storm? (happy that his house did not fall)

This story helps us understand today's message. Say it with me.



I AM JOYFUL WHEN I BUILD MY LIFE ON JESUS.

Memory Verse

Help the children find and read aloud Psalm 18:2. **"My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge" (Psalm 18:2).** Then proceed to teach the verse as follows. Repeat the activity until the children know the verse.

My	Point to self.
God	Point upward.
is my	Point to self.
rock,	Pound one fist

You Need:
• Bibles

in whom I take refuge.

Psalm 18:2

with the other.
Point to self.
Cover face with hands.
Palms together, then apart.

Bible Study

Say: **The story of the two houses is at the end of a wonderful sermon that Jesus preached. Find it in your Bibles in Matthew 7:24-27.** Allow time. **The beginning of this sermon is found in Matthew 5:1, 2. Let's read that text together.** Adult helpers assist as needed. Ask: **Where was Jesus when He preached this sermon?** (on a mountain-side) **That's probably why we call this sermon "The Sermon on the Mount."**

Ahead of time, write the references listed below on pieces of paper—one reference on each piece of paper. Divide your class into as many teams as there are papers. If possible, make groups of no more than four. For a small class, each child will get a text. Say: **Jesus told us that when we hear His words and put them in practice it is like building on a rock. Therefore, we can say that the Bible—God's Word—is like a rock. So we are going to have an activity called "Rock Solid." When I call out a reference, check to see if that is the one you are holding. If it is, then work with your team to find the verse quickly and read it together or have one person read it. Every time a verse is read, everyone is to shout "Rock Solid!" to remind us that when we hear and do God's Word, it's like building on a rock. Are you ready? Let's go!** Call out the references in an enthusiastic voice and remind the children to shout "Rock Solid!" after each verse is read.

Exodus 17:6	Psalm 18:2
Exodus 33:21-23	Psalm 40:2
Numbers 20:8	Isaiah 26:4
2 Samuel 22:2	Matthew 16:18

You Need:
• Bibles

Debriefing

Ask: **Why do Bible writers say that God is like a rock?** (He is a shelter, a place to run to; He protects us.) **What came out of the rock when Moses hit it?** (water) **By telling Moses to speak to the rock to get water, God was trying to teach the Israelites that He could supply all their needs. Jesus supplies all our needs too. When we build our lives on Jesus, we know that He will always care for us. Even**

when bad things happen, we can trust Him to give us strength to get through it. Sometimes God even makes something good come from something bad. Nothing can shake us. And how will this make us feel? Our message tells us:



I AM JOYFUL WHEN I BUILD MY LIFE ON JESUS.

Say that with me.

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

for each group:

- two 4" x 6" index cards
- pencils or markers
- pitcher of water
- cellophane tape
- large dishpan
- brick or large flat stone
- sand for dishpan

Rock, Sand, and Water Test

Form groups of not more than five children. Have the children draw a door and windows on each index card, then make a fold across the bottom of the card. Use cellophane tape on the fold to secure one card to the brick or stone and the other to the sand.

Say: **This index-card house represents your life. Let's see what happens to your life when problems arise.** Hold up the pitcher of water and say: **This water represents problems that come to our lives.** Pour water just in front of each house, not directly on them. Say: **This is a test. It will tell us how strong the foundation is.**

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What happened to the house built on**

the sand? (The sand washed away; the foundation washed away; the house fell down.) **What happened to the house on the rock (or brick)?** (It was safe; it stood firm; it didn't wash away.) **What will happen if you build your life on Jesus, our Rock?** (We won't be destroyed when problems come; when trouble comes our way, we will trust in Jesus.) **How can we keep our foundation firm and anchor our lives in Jesus?** (Choose to love Jesus. Stay close to Jesus. Ask Jesus to keep us close and help us. Read the Bible and pray.) **If we do that, what will our lives be like?** (happy, joyful, glad, good and strong when the bad times come.)

How does loving and obeying Jesus bring us joy? (We know we can trust Jesus; Jesus cares for us; we don't have to worry about things.) **Let's say our message together again:**



I AM JOYFUL WHEN I BUILD MY LIFE ON JESUS.

Sharing the Lesson

A. Paper weights

In advance, spray paint the rocks.

Give each child a rock and say: **In our lesson today, we learned that Jesus is our Rock, our Protector. We want others to know about that, so we are going to make something to give them. Our rocks will become paperweights that we can give to someone. On the rock, write "Jesus is our Rock. He never fails."** Allow time. If desired, spray the rocks with clear shellac to make them shine.

You Need:

- rocks
- markers
- spray paint
- clear shellac in a spray can (optional)

Debriefing

Ask: **What are paperweights used for?** (to keep things in place) **How does that remind you of Jesus?** (He keeps me safe; He helps me keep my life in order; etc.)

Think of someone you want to share your paperweight with, someone you want to know that Jesus keeps them safe too. How can you explain what it means when we say Jesus is our Rock?

Allow time for discussion, then form pairs and have the children practice explaining with a partner. Say: **We can have real joy only when we build our lives on Jesus, our Rock. Let's say our message together again.**



I AM JOYFUL WHEN I BUILD MY LIFE ON JESUS.

B. Refrigerator Magnet

Distribute the supplies and give the following directions:

Use the bigger end of the cup to draw a circle on the paper. Cut out the circle.

Draw a house inside the circle and make some music notes around it.

On the house, write the words "Building on the Rock."

Glue some magnetic tape (or a loop of cellophane tape) to the back.

Allow time.

Debriefing

Ask: **Who is the rock on which you are building your life?** (God, Jesus) **Why do you want to do that?** (So I will be safe; so I will have a happy life; so I will have strength for the bad times, etc.) **How will you explain this magnet to someone who wants to know what it means?** Allow discussion time. **When someone asks about it, you can share today's lesson story and today's message with them. Let's say our message together again.**



I AM JOYFUL WHEN I BUILD MY LIFE ON JESUS.

Closing

Sing together the third verse of "His Banner Over Me Is Love" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 25) ("Jesus is the Rock of my salvation," etc.). Ask the children to raise their hand if they want to build their lives on Jesus. Then ask them to pray silently and thank Jesus for being their Rock. Close with a short prayer.

You Need:

- large paper or Styrofoam cup
- construction paper
- scissors
- art supplies
- glue
- magnetic or cellophane tape

The Rock and the Sand

References

Matthew 7:12-29;
*Thoughts From the
 Mount of Blessing,*
 pp. 147-152

Memory Verse

“My God is my
 rock, in whom I
 take refuge”
 (Psalm 18:2).

The Message

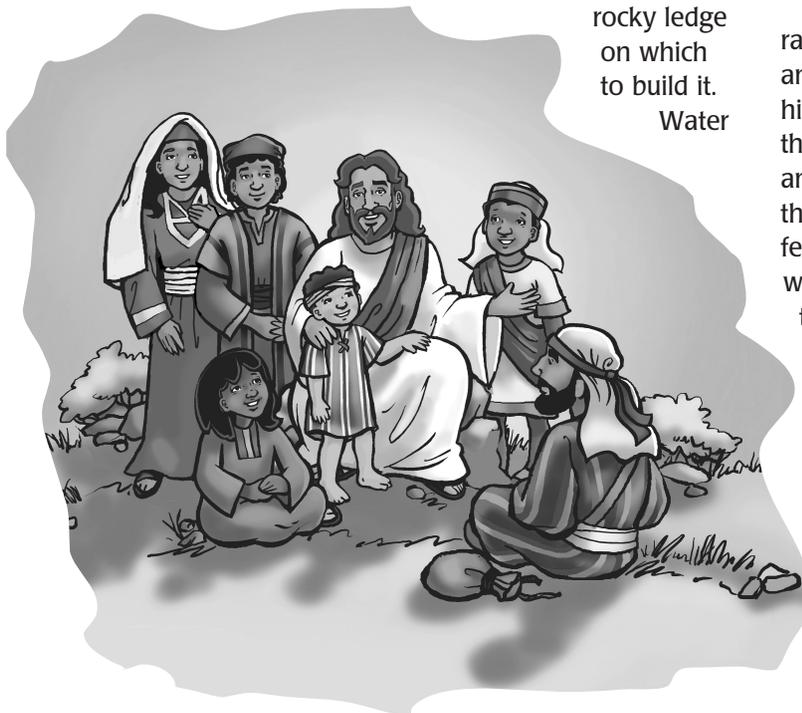
I am joyful when
 I build my life on
 Jesus.

Have you ever built a sand castle on the beach? Even though you build it high and you pat the sand until it is firm, what happens when the foamy waves wash around it? A long time ago Jesus told a story about that.

One day Jesus sat on the side of a hill, talking to hundreds of people seated on the grass in front of Him. Jesus knew about storms and floods. So did the people seated around Him. Many of them had lived near the Sea of Galilee all of their lives. When they were children, they probably played at the water’s edge.

Jesus loved the people so much. He wanted them to understand about God. He wanted them to understand how to be joyful. Maybe a story about building at the water’s edge would help them understand. And so Jesus told this story.

“Once a man decided to build a house. He chose a high, rocky ledge on which to build it.
 Water



wouldn’t flood his house. His house would be safe and the foundation strong.

“The man worked hard carrying the building materials all the way up onto the rock. After the house was finished, the rains came down. The wind blew and blew. The streams grew bigger and bigger, overflowing their banks. Now there was flooding to worry about. But the house was safe. The man had built it on a strong, firm foundation of solid rock.”

That makes sense, doesn’t it? The people thought so. They may have nodded their heads in agreement. And Jesus told them, “If you listen to God and live for Me, you are building your house on the Rock.”

And all the people may have nodded in agreement again, because building on rock made sense.

Then Jesus continued. His story was not done.

“Another man built himself a house. This man chose to build his house on the sand at the water’s edge. He probably built a strong house too. And he probably worked very hard at it.

“After the house was finished, the rains came and pounded it. The wind blew and blew. The streams rose higher and higher and overflowed their banks. Soon they flooded the house. The waves beat and beat against the house, washing away the sand underneath it. And the house fell in with a mighty crash because there was no deep, firm foundation supporting the walls.”

What a foolish man! the people may have thought. *He should have known better.* And so he should have. But listen to what Jesus said next.

“When people listen to My words but do not do anything about them, they are as foolish as that man.

They cannot expect to be joyful and strong. The wise person not only listens, but is willing to do what I say.”

The people opened their eyes in

amazement as they listened to Jesus. His teaching was very different from the teachers of the law they usually heard. Some of the people may even have remembered what David said in Psalm 18:2: "My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge."

I wonder how many people who heard Jesus that day were willing to build their lives on Jesus. How many wanted to study and live by God's Word? How about you?

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Go with your family to sit on a big rock or on a sandy beach. Read the Bible lesson story together. Sing "The Wise Man and the Foolish Man" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 62).
- Read aloud Psalm 18:2. Review the part that is your memory verse.

Sunday

- Together with your family, read and discuss Matthew 7:24-29.
- Find 11 small, flat rocks. With a marker, write one word of your memory verse on each rock. (Don't forget the reference.) Or, use rock cutouts from paper.
- If possible, visit a construction site with your parents. Notice the foundation.

Monday

- Arrange your memory verse rocks in the correct order.
- From the list below, circle the words that describe what a rock is like.
STRONG HEAVY WEAK UNCHANGING
STEADY ANGRY SOFT HARD
- Compare the words you circled to Jesus. Do any of those words also describe who Jesus is? Which ones? Choose one of the words that you used to describe a rock. Make an acrostic using words that describe Jesus. Remember that an acrostic is a poem where the first letter of each line spells a word. So, for example, you chose the word *strong*. Your first word in the poem would begin with S—Savior. Then the next word would begin with T, the next with R and so on.

Tuesday

- At worship time, look for pictures of walls, roads, and other things made from rock. People use rock because it is strong and provides good protection. How is Jesus like a rock? Read 2 Samuel 22:2 together.

- Put your memory verse rocks in the right order, then say your memory verse without looking.

Wednesday

- Say your memory verse together during family worship. Then review Psalm 23 together.
- Look for a verse from Psalm 23 that has a close meaning to the memory verse.
- Sing "A Shelter in the Time of Storm" (*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 528).

Thursday

- During worship today, read Matthew 7:24.
- Place a pile of sand (or sugar or salt) on a dish. On another dish, place a flat rock. Add drops of water, one at a time, to each dish. What happens when the water hits the sand? the rock? Can anything sink into a rock? Jesus is steady and strong like a rock.*
- Review your memory verse with your family.

Friday

- For family worship, sing your family's favorite "rock" songs from *Sing for Joy* or *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*.
- Memorizing Scripture and doing what it says is a great way to build your house on the Rock and to worship God. Try to say for your family all the memory verses you have learned so far this quarter.
- Bring a large rock to worship and sign your name on it with a marker. Invite your family members to do this too. Read Isaiah 26:4 out loud. Then ask everyone to put their hands on the rock and ask God to help them always to remember that He is strong and that they can count on Him to take care of them. Thank God for being your Rock forever.†

* Adapted from Kathie Reimer, *1001 Ways to Help Your Child Walk With God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1994), p. 85.

† Adapted from Lisa Flinn and Barbara Younger, *Making Scripture Stick* (Loveland, Colo.: Group Books, 1992), p. 127.