



Mountains into Plains

By Deborah Wassenberg

Introduction:

God can help children do things that feel too big, too hard, or impossible. His Spirit gives them strength, courage, and help that they don't have on their own.

Set the Scene:

Create a mountain backdrop for the lesson. Use large, stacked cardboard boxes. Position a lamp or lantern ready to turn on during the lesson.

You will also need 5 phrases on flash cards to identify the 'mountainous' problems God's people faced:

- The people felt small
- The task felt impossible
- Zerubbabel felt like a failure
- The enemies felt too strong
- The work looked too big

You'll need a way to attach the flash cards to the mountain boxes.

You'll also need a large, separate cardboard box for the leader who is sharing the Bible Lesson to carry in at the beginning.

Bible Lesson: The Golden Lampstand and the Olive Trees

Bible Reference: Zechariah 4:1-14

Visuals You Will Need:

1. The leader carries in an overlarge cardboard box
2. Children of Israel led into captivity
3. King Cyrus
4. Zerubbabel lays the foundation
5. Zechariah
6. The Vision: gold lampstand, 7 lamps, and 2 olive trees + olives
7. Scripture: Zechariah 4:6
8. A mountain and a plain
9. God's people celebrate the new Temple

Words:

The Leader enters, trying to carry the overlarge box, has to put it down a few times, and even tries putting it on the ground to slide it along. Finally, the leader asks the other leader or volunteer for help, and they carry the box into the teaching space and place it down carefully.

1. Boy, that box was big and heavy.
(To the volunteer)
Thanks for your help.
I thought I was strong and could carry it all by myself.
But I needed help.
Our Bible story is about people who needed help.
They were trying to do something BIG for God.
But God never asks us to do His work alone.
His Spirit helps us!
2. God's people had been in exile.
They had been taken away to Babylon because they repeatedly turned away from God.
Their city, Jerusalem, was destroyed, and the Temple was burned down.
For 70 years, the Children of Israel lived as captives far from home in a foreign land.
3. When the Persian Empire conquered Babylon, King Cyrus made a surprising decree.
God stirred his heart to let the Jewish people return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple.
Rebuilding the Temple was important because it was the centre of their worship.
It was a place of sacrifice and a symbol of God's presence.
Rebuilding the Temple meant, 'We are home.'
King Cyrus' decree was a miracle.
It fulfilled prophecies from Jeremiah and Isaiah.
4. A man named Zerubbabel was governor of Judah.
He was a descendant of King David and was chosen as the leader to guide the Temple's rebuilding.
He wasn't a king, but he carried all the responsibilities of a king.
Zerubbabel laid the foundation soon after they returned to Jerusalem.
But then the work stopped.
For about 16 years!
Because of a mountain of problems...
(Add the phrases to the mountain of boxes one by one)
 - The people felt small
 - The task felt impossible
 - Zerubbabel felt like a failure
 - The enemies felt too strong
 - The work looked too big

5. So God sent a prophet named Zechariah with a personal message to Zerubbabel.
His message from God was, 'God is with you so don't be afraid.'
Zechariah could say this because God had given him a vision.
A vision from God is a supernatural picture or scene that God shows to a person while they are awake, to help them understand His message, His plans, or His truth.
It is not imagination and not a dream.
It is something God reveals.
The Bible says that Zechariah was awakened by an angel, *as if from sleep*, to see a new vision.
God wanted Zechariah's full attention because the message was important and full of hope for His people.
6. Zechariah saw a solid gold lampstand with a bowl on top.
Seven lamps were arranged around it, and seven channels fed oil into each lamp.
On either side of the lampstand stood two olive trees.
Normally, olive oil had to be harvested, pressed, purified, and poured.
But in this vision, the olive trees themselves are directly supplying oil to the lampstand.
There is no human effort involved.
No priests refilling the lamps.
No workers pressing the olives.
The supply of oil was constant, pure, and supernatural.
The oil represented God's Spirit.
The lampstand represented God's people shining for Him.
God's endless oil meant the lamp would burn steadily, never flickering and never dimming.
It is a picture of God's presence, God's power, and His Spirit flowing without limit.
7. Then the angel spoke:
"God says...
Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit."
Which meant:
- The Temple won't be finished by human strength because human strength is limited
 - Not by armies, cleverness, or effort, because they run out
 - But by the power of God's Spirit working through His people because God's Spirit never runs dry!

8. And then God said something amazing about the big problems they were facing:

"Who are you, O Great Mountain?

Before Zerubbabel, you will become a plain!

God was promising to flatten all the problems.

Because nothing can stop what God has decided to finish!

(Turn on the lamp or lantern)

The lamp kept burning because the oil kept flowing.

That's like God's Spirit helping us every day.

(Disassemble the mountain, taking down the boxes as you teach)

God's Spirit gives us strength.

Not muscles, not cleverness, not being the best.

His Spirit helps us inside our hearts.

God's Spirit helps us keep going.

When we feel tired, discouraged or small.

God can flatten any mountain.

Problems that look huge to us are small to Him.

God finishes what He starts.

9. God told the people not to look down on the "day of small beginnings..."

Even if the work looks small or slow, God is happy to see it begin.

He values faithfulness more than size or speed.

With renewed courage from Zechariah's vision, the people worked faithfully, and the Temple was finished.

The people held a great celebration.

"We are God's people again, worshipping in God's house."

Just like He helped Zerubbabel finish rebuilding the Temple, God helps us finish the good thing He asks us to do.

Ministry to the Children:

The greatest obstacle every person faces is their own sin and sinful nature. No matter how hard we try, God says we can never get rid of our sin by ourselves. That's why our sin is like a mountain - too high to climb and too strong to conquer on our own.

Jesus knew this, so He came to earth and died on the cross for us. He was completely innocent, so His suffering and death gives Him the right to forgive our sins and make our hearts clean.

The Holy Spirit comes to live inside you when you belong to Jesus. All you need to do is to ask Jesus to forgive you for your sins, repent (turn away) from your old life, and live for Him from this moment on.

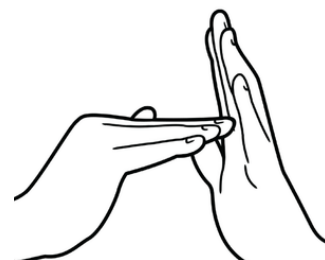
God's Spirit helps you do hard things. You don't have to do them by yourself. God's Spirit helps you on the inside. God is bigger than your problems. Your job is to trust Him. His job is to move the mountain. Every little step is important to God. He loves small beginnings because He knows what they will grow into.

Memory Verse: Zechariah 4:6

Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord.

Actions and Words:

Not by:	Shake head 'No'
Might:	Show muscles
Not by:	Shake head 'No'
Power:	Stand at attention and salute like you're in the armed forces
But by My Spirit:	Make a flame ascending movement with two hands
Says the Lord:	Point to the sky
Zechariah:	Make a 'Z' in sign language
Chapter 4:	Hold up four fingers
Verse 6:	Hold up six fingers



Game: Finska

- You have a stick of wood to throw and several wooden pins, called “skittles”, to knock over.
- Each skittle is marked with a number, which is the number of points you get if you knock it over.
- The goal is to reach 50 points, but there's an added twist that you must get exactly 50 points. If you go over, your points are dropped to 25, and you have to build back up.
- Also, if you don't hit any skittles three throws in a row, you're out!

You may prefer to play a game of Skittles, or if you are indoors, 10 Pin Bowling.

Craft: Paper Lantern

You will need:

- 1 x sheet of coloured A4 paper (or patterned scrapbook paper)
- Scissors
- Glue stick or stapler
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Optional: string, stickers, glitter, battery tea light

What to do:

1. Prepare the paper

- Lay the A4 sheet **portrait** (tall) on the table.
- Cut a **2–3 cm strip** off the long side. This will become the handle.
- Set the strip aside.

2. Fold and mark

- Fold the remaining large piece **in half lengthwise** (like a long, skinny card).
- Along the folded edge, use a ruler to draw a line **2 cm from the open edge**. This is your “stop line”, so kids don’t cut all the way through.

3. Cut the slits

- Starting at the folded edge, cut straight lines up to the stop line.
- Space the cuts about **1–2 cm apart**.
- When you open the paper, it will look like a ribbed sheet.

4. Form the lantern

- Unfold the paper.
- Bring the two short ends together to form a cylinder.
- Glue or staple the ends.
- The slits will naturally bow outward to create the lantern shape.

5. Add the handle

- Attach the strip you cut earlier to the top with glue or staples.