



Moses and the Burning Bush

Goal: To recognize that God knows us by name.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Exodus 3:1-15

When Moses was a shepherd for his father-in-law, Jethro, he saw a strange sight. A bush was burning, but never burned up.

When Moses took a closer look, he heard himself addressed by God. God called to him from the bush: “‘Moses, Moses!’ And [Moses] said, ‘Here I am’” (v. 4). God revealed who God was: the God of Moses’ ancestors. He then gave Moses the mission of delivering the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt.

When Moses encountered God in the bush, God called him by name. In that sacred place, God was revealed to Moses. He learned who this God was. Then he heard what God wanted Moses to do: Go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt (v. 10). This began Moses’ work as the leader God called and used.

When God calls us to do God’s work, God addresses us by name. God knows us well, and God has work for us to do. It all begins by recognizing God is calling us. This can happen anywhere. We can be thankful God wants to use us. Then we can respond in gratitude and, like Moses, say, “Here I am” (v. 4).

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Moses and the burning bush is a vivid story for children to engage with all their imagination and wonderings. A bush burns but is not consumed. Then God calls Moses by name. And, as if that isn’t enough, God asks Moses to take on a really hard task.

Younger children will have many concrete “why” questions, while older children will be able to wonder about how Moses might have responded. Children will easily get into the role of Moses and express what he might have been thinking and feeling when God called him.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

One way to help children make the connection between the story of Moses and their lives is to invite them to talk about their names and the family and friends who know them by their names. Just like Moses, you can help children know that God knows each one of them by name.

Be aware of children who are new to the group or those with special needs. Also be aware of children who are the first ones to talk and those who are more introverted and quiet. This is a great session to begin a closing ritual by calling each child by name and then saying, “God loves you and calls you by name.”

O God, you call my name, challenging me to share my faith in you with your beloved children. Call me to courage and faith in this task. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2022–2023

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 3, 3a, 16

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

e-book or story audio
(see p. vii)

candle

one battery-operated
votive candle

green cloth

one copy of **Grace
Notes (GN) 4**

copies of **GN 1**

Responding

Claiming

invited guests, copies of
GN 2

Praying

copies of **GN 3**

Offering

copies of **GN 4**; yellow,
red, and orange paint;
drinking straws; water

Extra

copies of **GN 5**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Claiming God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

FM **TD** **B**

Play “Bim Bam”—**MM 3**—as children arrive. Welcome each child with “Grace and peace be with you, (*Name*).” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.”

Invite the children to help prepare the setting as they arrive. Create a worship center with a green cloth, a candle, and a Bible.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Ask for one or two volunteers to practice today’s Scripture reading.

Invite children to create a burning bush. Have one child cut out the burning bush from a copy of **GN 4**. (They may cut around the bush, not each leaf and branch.) Glue or tape the bush to the inside of a paper lunch bag with the bush facing the outside of the bag. Turn on the votive candle and place it inside the bag. The light from the candle should make the silhouette of the bush appear to be burning. Add the burning bush to your worship space.

MS *As you select and plan activities, think about space children need to maneuver a wheelchair, walker, or leg casts.*

Singing

MS

Welcome the children into a circle near the burning bush. Play, listen to, clap, and dance to “Bim Bam”—**MM 3**; **SCM 16**—a traditional Jewish song. *Shabbat shalom* means, “Peace be with you on this sabbath day.”

Stand in a circle and dance to the music. Take turns dancing from one side of the circle through the middle to the other side. Encourage everybody to change sides at least once.

Praying

C

Turn on the candle as a reminder of God’s light in the world in Jesus. Invite the children to share one glad thing (a happy moment) and one sad thing (a concern or worry) from their week. Prompt the children to respond to each happy share with “Thanks be to God!” and each concern or worry with “Hear our prayer, gracious God.”

Affirm each child’s response and respect those who do not wish to share.

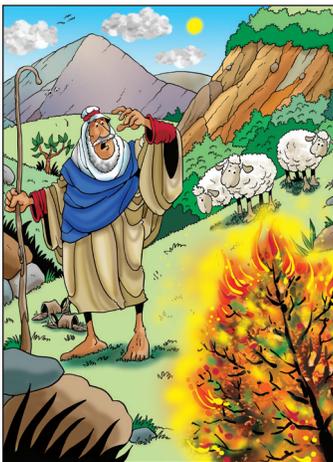


Preparing to Hear the Story

Since this story of Moses takes place when he is an adult and the stories leading up to this one are not used in this quarter, tell the children a brief story of Moses' earlier life. Show **SCM 3a**. Ask if anyone knows what happened to Moses in this part of his life.

- ▼ Moses was a Hebrew, and Pharaoh had enslaved the Hebrew people.
- ▼ Moses' mother put him in a basket in the river to keep him safe from Pharaoh's soldiers.
- ▼ Pharaoh's daughter pulled him out of the river and raised him as her son.

Explain that today's story is about something amazing that happened to Moses. He had grown up and was married to a woman named Zipporah (zip-POR-ah). Moses took care of his father-in-law's sheep and goats, far away from the place where Pharaoh was keeping the Hebrew people as slaves.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story

L

Invite a child to find Exodus 3 in the Bible. Have one or two volunteers read Exodus 3:1-15. Conclude by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt children to say, "Thanks be to God." Place the open Bible on the worship table.

Hand out copies of **GN 1** and colored pencils, crayons, or markers. Ask the children to turn the paper over and draw what they think the burning bush looked like as they hear a retelling of the story. Read **SCM 3** or the story audio. After the story, allow time to complete the front of **GN 1**. Reading the story again may be helpful.

Reflecting on God's Grace

C

Comment that many people have wondered about today's story over the years. Invite the children to do their own imagining about the story. Prompt their imagining with the following:

- ▼ I wonder, "Why did God choose Moses to lead the Israelites?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Why did God choose a burning bush to speak to Moses?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What do you do when your parents or teachers call you?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Does God call us? How does God call us?"

Tell the children that when God calls us, God will always be here for us.

- C Give children time to respond and to share; for some children, listening and speaking may take longer.



Singing

Play, listen to, or sing “Bim Bam”—**MM 3; SCM 16**. Suggest that the boys sing, “bim bam,” and the girls respond with, “shabbat shalom,” then all sing “shabbat” together. Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.



Claiming God’s Grace

LG A B C

*Before the session, invite a man and a woman from your congregation to talk about how each of them heard God’s call. Give copies of **GN 2** to the guests to help them prepare for the discussion.*

Ask your visitors to share briefly and specifically about how they were called to share in God’s work. Prompt their stories with the following:

- ▼ What are your gifts and skills?
- ▼ What has God called you to do?
- ▼ How do you use your gifts and skills to serve God’s call?
- ▼ How did God communicate the message to you?
- ▼ How hard was it for you to do what was asked of you?
- ▼ Who has helped you in this work?

Ask the children and the guests:

- ▼ How do you think God might be calling you today?
- ▼ What things do you think God might want you to do?

If the children seem hesitant, suggest things such as welcoming visitors, visiting sick friends, picking up trash, and so on.

Thank your guests and pray for their service to God.

Praying God’s Grace

TD

Make burning-bush prayer pockets to help the children remember God’s conversation with Moses at the burning bush. Suggest that one way to think about prayer is a conversation between God and us. Ask the children to remember what God said to Moses. Wonder what the children might hear in a conversation with God and what God might ask them to do.

- ▼ Give each child a copy of **GN 3** and have them cut out the pocket template and strips.
- ▼ Fold according to the picture on **GN 3** and tape each side.
- ▼ Turn over and draw a bush with no leaves, just branches. Tear small pieces of red, orange, or yellow tissue or construction paper and glue them on the branches to suggest the burning bush.
- ▼ Punch a hole where indicated and tie a piece of ribbon or yarn through it for hanging.



- ▼ Give each child three large craft sticks. Instruct them to glue a strip cut from **GN 3** on each stick.
- ▼ Use a marker to number an end of each stick as follows:
 - 1—"God, what do you want me to do?"
 - 2—"God, how can I do it?"
 - 3—" [*Your name*], I will be with you."

Demonstrate how to use the prayer sticks as prompts for prayer. For example, imagine a question or problem you have. Pull out and read stick #1 and remain silent. Then read stick #2 and remain silent. Finally, read stick #3 and hear God say your name and promise to be with you.

Suggest they hang the burning-bush prayer pocket in a place at home where they will be reminded to pray in the confidence of God's grace.

Offering God's Grace

Focus on God's ongoing presence revealed in the burning bush.

Cover the work area with plastic. Supply copies of **GN 4** and crayons. Have the children add color to the bush and the words.

While the children color, put yellow, red, and orange paint into cups. Thin the paint with water. Prepare a cup or two with clean water for the children to clean their straws.

When they are finished coloring, hand out drinking straws to the children. Show how to draw a small amount of paint into the straw by dipping one end of the straw into the paint cup and closing the other end with a finger or thumb. Position the straw over the coloring page and release the paint. As the paint drips onto the page, gently blow the paint on the paper through the straw. Continue with the different colors.

Notice with the children that the crayon resists the paint. The burning bush and the words remain, just as God does. Suggest that they offer their picture to family members or people at church, inviting others to consider God's call.

Extra Activity



Provide copies of **GN 5** and pencils. Allow the children time to unscramble the words and arrange the letters in the circles to discover the solution to the question, "What did the voice say to Moses when Moses asked God's name?" For a challenge, fold the clues portion under before photocopying.

 *Don't assume what children can or cannot do with regard to participating in activities. Think of multiple ways children may be able to participate without feeling excluded.*

GN 5 Solution:

sandals, holy ground,
Moses, mountain, burning,
voice, Hebrew
God said,
"I am who I am."



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Ask the children to help clean the space.

Gather the children. Tell them that a litany is a prayer in which a leader makes a statement and then the people respond. Explain that their response to each prompt is “We give you thanks, O God.”

For calling Moses to do a hard job,

We give you thanks, O God.

For the help you gave Moses in doing the job,

We give you thanks, O God.

For calling us to do your work,

We give you thanks, O God.

For helping us do what you call us to do,

We give you thanks, O God.

For promising to always be with us.

We give you thanks, O God.

Amen.

Send each child by name, saying, “(Name), God is calling you. Go in God’s grace.”

Remind the children about the free e-book, and challenge them to read the story during the week.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit gracesightings.org. Remind the parents and caregivers about the e-book and story audio (see p. vii).

God Speaks to Moses

Directions: Read the sentences below. If the sentence is false, cross out the letter inside the circle under the false column. If the sentence is true, cross out the letter inside the circle under the true column. Once you have finished, complete the Bible verse with the remaining letters. Check your answers by reading Exodus 3:10.

	True	False
Moses grew up in a Hebrew home.	(A)	(M)
After fleeing from Egypt, Moses became a soldier.	(Y)	(N)
At Mount Horeb, Moses saw a burning bush that did not burn up.	(F)	(P)
The Israelites were such bad people that God did not want to save them.	(E)	(T)
God called Moses to help him save the Israelites.	(M)	(O)
Moses readily and enthusiastically answered yes to God.	(P)	(W)
The covenant is an everlasting agreement between God and Israel.	(A)	(L)
God told Moses, "I will be with you."	(S)	(E)



“So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring

the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

Thank you

for agreeing to visit our class on _____ in room _____ . We will be reading the story of how God called Moses to free the Hebrews from slavery. We will focus on call and hope you will share briefly and specifically about how you were called to share in God's work. Consider the following:

- ▾ What are your gifts and skills?

- ▾ What has God called you to do?

- ▾ How do you use your gifts and skills to serve God's call?

- ▾ How did God communicate the message to you?

- ▾ How hard was it for you to do what was asked of you?

- ▾ Who has helped you in this work?

- ▾ How do you think God might be calling you today?

- ▾ What other things do you think God might want you to do?



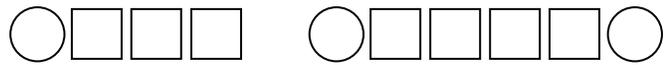
Is God calling you?



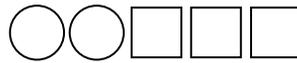
1. **NASSDLA**



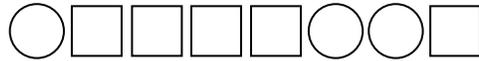
2. **OLHY RNUOGD**



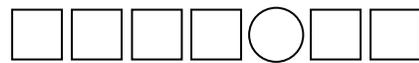
3. **SOEMS**



4. **UNAOTIMN**



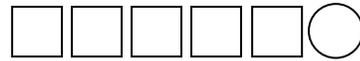
5. **NUIRNBG**



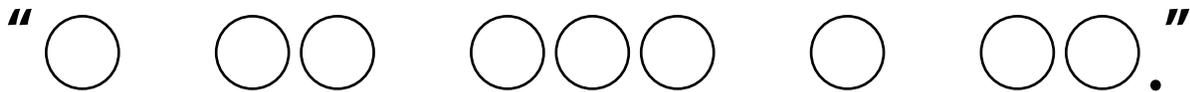
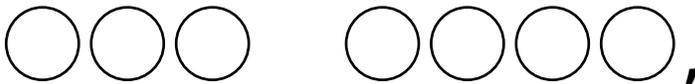
6. **OVEIC**



7. **HEREWB**



What did the voice say to Moses when Moses asked God's name?



Clues:

1. God asked Moses to remove his ____.
2. Because he was on ____.
3. ____ was married to Zipporah.
4. Moses took his sheep up a ____ to meet with God.
5. Moses was surprised to see that the bush was ____.
6. Moses heard a ____ from the bush.
7. Pharaoh made the ____ people slaves.



