

Uplift Those in Need

EXODUS 3:1-12

3

GOAL

Youth envision an abundant world where all are uplifted and discern how the church, including themselves, fit into that vision.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

I know I cannot teach, guide, or uplift on my own. It is good news that I am not alone! You are here, now, and forevermore. Thanks be to God.

THIS SESSION

We follow a long tradition of people who extended open hands to uplift those in need. From the ancient Israelites, who supported one another in the wilderness, to Jesus who healed sick and marginalized people and included them in his community, to the early church, who shared resources to support widows, orphans, and others, the people of God have long been working to support those who are in need. We are at our best as a community when our attention and care are directed outward to others.

THE BIBLE STORY

Exodus 3:1–12 reveals God’s concern for oppression, suffering, and injustice in our world and reminds us that God, like Moses, asks us to bear witness to this pain and then respond. At the beginning of the book of Exodus, the Israelites were being exploited and marginalized at the hands of the Egyptians. Moses, an Israelite man who was raised in the privilege of Pharaoh’s house, was tending to a flock of sheep when God spoke to him through part of God’s creation. God directed Moses to liberate the Israelites and, when Moses doubted himself, God reassured him that God is always present and had already equipped Moses to succeed.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

In adolescence, youth are beginning to develop consciousness about their community. They are becoming more aware of social, political, economic, and environmental conditions, discerning their own positions and perspectives on community issues. Youth will appreciate a safe place and community to discuss the injustices they see as they learn how to respond lovingly and faithfully as Christians. This session will build their confidence in their ability to name injustices and empower them to advocate for themselves and others.

SESSION PREPARATION

- “Look and Wonder” (p. 25): Gather the newsprint from session 1 with lyrics to “O Look and Wonder.”

Depending on the options you choose:

- “Our Church Uplifts” (p. 23): Invite and prepare a representative of your congregation’s care group (for example, a Stephen’s minister or stewardship committee member) to speak about ways your community and denomination uplift those in need.
- “Uplifting Letters” (p. 24): Obtain names and contact information from your pastor or a community leader of people in your congregation who might be helped by an encouraging letter written by your youth.

GETTING STARTED

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- Newsprint
 - Writing utensils
 - Battery-operated candles

WALL OF PRAYERS

Post a sheet of newsprint on the wall of your meeting space. As youth gather, invite them to write prayer requests on the paper. Encourage them to also write encouraging notes next to the prayer requests that others have written. Inform youth that they may also turn on one of the candles for prayer requests they prefer not to write.

GOD IS WITH US

Gather everyone around the newsprint used in the “Wall of Prayers” activity. Ask for one or two volunteers to read off the prayer requests. Allow some time for silent prayer for any unspoken prayer requests. Finish the prayer by saying this prayer and having youth respond, “God is with us,” at the end of each line. Pause after their response.

God has seen God’s people oppressed.

God has heard the cries of injustice.

God knows our pain, our suffering, and our struggles.

We too have seen, heard, and know.

God asks us to respond and is sending us.

God encourages us, strengthens us, and inspires us.




In trust and hope, we go and act.

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

LOOKING TO THE PAST




Ask youth who were present to tell what they learned during the last two sessions—“Gather across Differences” and “Feast and Listen Together.” Discuss the following questions to introduce today’s theme:

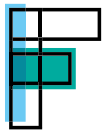
-  Why is it sometimes hard for people to gather across differences?
-  How do feasting and listening together support Christian communities?
-  How might Christians gather and feast more?

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- Internet-connected device

REFLECTING ON A SONG

Play the YouTube video “You Don’t Love God If You Don’t Love Your Neighbor” (bit.ly/FMLoveGod, 5:16). After listening, use the following questions to help youth process the song’s meaning:

-  What are some actions mentioned in the song that do not show love to neighbors or God?
-  What are some actions that would show love for both God and neighbor?
-  How is loving your neighbor connected to loving God?



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or more options.

MARKING THE TEXT

QC AT

Distribute Resource Page 1 and a pen or colored pencil to each participant. Instruct youth to underline words or phrases that stick out to them as the text is read and to circle any words they do not know. Invite a volunteer to read Exodus 3:1–12 from the Resource Page.

Read the passage aloud again. This time, instruct youth to do the following:

- In the margins of the page, write what you think are the most important points in the passage.
- In the space at the bottom of the page, write any questions the passage brings up.

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- Copies of Resource Page 1
 - Pens or colored pencils

ACTING OUT

C D

Read aloud Exodus 3:1–12. Use the following questions to facilitate a brief discussion:

- ➔ What do you think Moses was thinking when the God of his ancestors spoke through the burning bush?
- ➔ How do you think Moses felt after the conversation with God?
- ➔ Imagine if God unexpectedly spoke to you and told you that you would be a revolutionary leader. How would you react?

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- Bibles

After this discussion, ask for three volunteers to help reenact the story. One volunteer will be the narrator, one will play the part of Moses, and one will play the part of God. Encourage youth to be emotive as they act.

CROSSWORD

CT

Read Exodus 3:1–12. Distribute Resource Page 2 and a pen to each participant. Allow youth to work on the crossword puzzle for about five minutes before moving on to the next activity. Encourage them to take the crossword puzzle home to finish, if necessary.

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- Copies of Resource Page 2
 - Pens

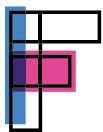


Answer Key:

Down: 1. Pharaoh, 3. Holy, 4. Egypt, 6. Burning, 8. Ground, 9. Sandals, 10. Ancestors, 12. Worship, 13. Flock, 15. Afraid

Across: 2. With, 3. Honey, 5. Milk, 7. Bush, 11. Mountain, 14. Israelites

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- Invited guest



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

OUR CHURCH UPLIFTS

C CT X

Introduce the guest leader to explain ways your congregation and your denomination uplift and support those in need. Before the guest arrives, invite youth to brainstorm questions for them about the work the congregation does to help those in need. After the discussion, challenge participants to think of ways that they can get involved in the work the church already does.

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- Internet-connected devices
 - Newsprint
 - Markers

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

C CT T

Ask youth to list issues of injustice they witness or experience. Have a volunteer write these issues on a sheet of newsprint. Provide each youth with a marker and invite them to put a tally mark next to the four issues they consider the most pressing or have the most passion about resolving.

Form small groups. Depending on the number of groups, assign each group one of the issues considered the most pressing by the larger group. Instruct groups to search “[*your denomination*] + [*issue*]” on their internet-connected devices. Allow youth to research for five minutes before inviting them to summarize what they learned about their issue and the church’s response. Give each group a few minutes to teach.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

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- Paper and pens
 - Envelopes and stamps (optional)

UPLIFTING LETTERS

C S X

Distribute paper and pens to youth. Suggest that one helpful way to uplift people in need is to communicate concern to them. Share the information about people in your community who may appreciate a letter of support; discuss phrases and ideas that might be helpful to people in need. Encourage them to write a letter to someone—either from the supplied list or another person in need—that expresses compassion, community, and support for that person. If possible, mail these letters to their recipients or hand-deliver them.

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- Paper
 - Drawing supplies
 - Tape

VISION HEAVEN ON EARTH

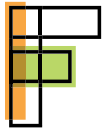
A AT QC

Invite youth to imagine some personal, communal, or systemic injustice that they witness in their communities and in the world. Invite them to imagine what a world without these injustices might look like. Allow about a minute or two for youth to consider possibilities. Have them draw a picture illustrating a more just world that resembles heaven on earth. Encourage youth to include themselves and illustrate how they contribute to this just world. Post the pictures around the room. Invite youth to walk around and view each other’s drawings.

GROUP PRAYER

AT QC

Gather participants in a circle and invite them to hold hands. Invite them to share one way they plan to uplift someone in need in the upcoming week. Tell them you will begin and then squeeze the hand of the person on your right to indicate that it is now their turn. After everyone has taken their turn, close the prayer, saying, “Let us honor God in these ways. Amen.”



FOLLOWING JESUS

LOOK AND WONDER

Before singing, explain that Aaron, Moses' brother, helped deliver the Israelites out of their suffering and oppression. Oil was used to anoint someone and indicate that they were holy and set apart to do something great. Comparing the unity of the people to oil on Aaron's beard indicates that something great is happening for all people when we gather together. It also reminds us that, like Aaron and Moses worked to uplift and bring people together, we too have to work so we can all live in community together.

Sing, or listen to, the song "O Look and Wonder." To hear the tune, go to bit.ly/FMOLookTune (0:21). To sing along in Spanish (words not provided), show the YouTube video "*Miren que Bueno* (O Look and Wonder)" (bit.ly/FMOLook, 1:52).

M

- Newsprint with lyrics to "O Look and Wonder"
- Internet-connected device

Marking the Text

Exodus 3:1–12¹

¹Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. Leading the flock deep into the wilderness, Moses came to Horeb, the Mountain of God.

²The messenger of YHWH appeared to Moses in a blazing fire from the midst of a thornbush. Moses saw—“The bush is ablaze with fire, and yet it isn’t consumed!” ³Moses said, “Let me go over and look at this remarkable sight—and see why the bush doesn’t burn up!”

⁴When YHWH saw Moses coming to look more closely, God called out to him from the midst of the bush: “Moses! Moses!”

Moses answered, “I am here.”

⁵God said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground!”

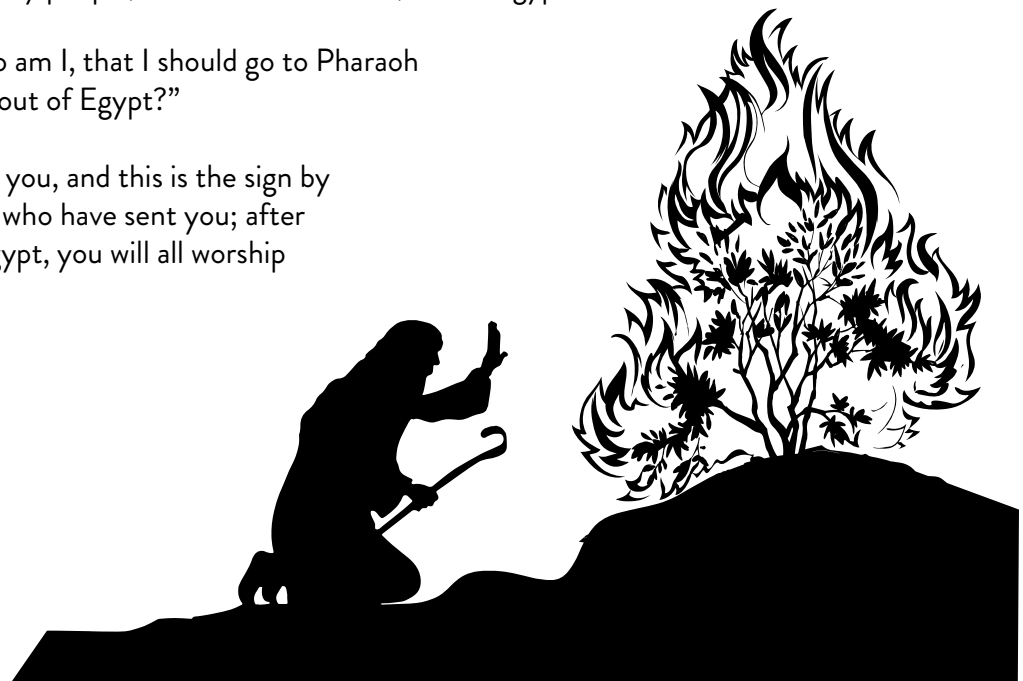
⁶“I am the God of your ancestors,” the voice continued, “the God of Sarah and Abraham, the God of Rebecca and Isaac, the God of Leah and Rachel and Jacob!”

Moses hid his face, afraid to look at the Holy One.

⁷Then YHWH said, “I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt; I have heard their cries under those who oppress them; I have felt their sufferings. ⁸Now I have come down to rescue them from the hand of Egypt, out of their place of suffering, and bring them to a place that is wide and fertile, a land flowing with milk and honey—the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, and Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹The cry of the children of Israel has reached me, and I have watched how the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰Now, go! I will send you to Pharaoh, to bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

¹¹But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

¹²God answered, “I will be with you, and this is the sign by which you will know that it is I who have sent you; after you bring my people out of Egypt, you will all worship at this very mountain.”



1. Text from *The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation*. This translation avoids gendered language for God and includes Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel in the list of Jesus’ ancestors. copyright © 2007 by Priests for Equality

Complete a Crossword



A crossword puzzle grid with 15 numbered starting points for words:

- 1: Down, 10 letters (top right)
- 2: Across, 4 letters (top right)
- 3: Down, 4 letters (middle left)
- 4: Down, 3 letters (middle left)
- 5: Across, 4 letters (middle left)
- 6: Down, 3 letters (middle right)
- 7: Across, 4 letters (middle right)
- 8: Down, 3 letters (middle left)
- 9: Down, 3 letters (middle left)
- 10: Down, 5 letters (middle right)
- 11: Across, 7 letters (middle left)
- 12: Down, 5 letters (far right)
- 13: Down, 3 letters (middle right)
- 14: Across, 6 letters (bottom left)
- 15: Down, 4 letters (bottom left)

- While Moses was taking care of a (13 DOWN) of sheep, he found himself atop a (11 ACROSS).
- Here, God speaks to Moses through a (6 DOWN) (7 ACROSS).
- God instructs Moses to remove his (10 DOWN) for the place he stands is (3 DOWN) (8 DOWN).
- God reassures Moses and tells him that it is the God of his (10 DOWN) speaking to him.
- Moses hid his face because he was (15 DOWN).
- God claims God has witnessed the suffering of God’s people in (4 DOWN).
- God promises to bring the Israelites to the land flowing with (5 ACROSS) and (3 ACROSS).
- God asks Moses to help God deliver the (14 ACROSS).
- God tells Moses to rescue God’s people out of the hands of (1 DOWN).
- When Moses is afraid, God reassures him, saying, “I will be (2 ACROSS) you.”
- God promised that they would all (12 DOWN) together again on this mountain.

