

# SABBATH SCHOOL

Level 3 • Unit 6 • Week 2

## MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

### OBJECTIVE:

To show the students that God calls us for His special purpose. We can see this by the story of how God called Moses by talking to him through the burning bush.

### ATTENTION GETTER:

If lighting a match is permitted in your building, do the following experiments in front of the children. If lighting a match is prohibited, do the experiments at home and describe what you did to the students and then show the results.

Supplies: Two glass jars with lids  
Two small scraps of newspaper (approximately 3 inches square)  
Matches

Say: Before we start, I want to remind everyone that fire is dangerous and must be handled very carefully.

Ask: Have any of you ever watched someone light a fire in a fireplace or when you were camping? [Students respond.]

What do you have to do to make a fire? [Students respond—wood that's dry, kindling, fire.]

Say: You're right! Those are all necessary for you to start a fire. Basically, to have a fire you need two things: fuel and oxygen. We can show how important both of these are by doing an experiment.

Do: Take one of the jars and put a scrap of newspaper inside. Light the newspaper and then put the lid on it. The fire will go out very quickly, even though there's still unburned newspaper.

Say: When we put the lid on the jar, we took away the supply of oxygen and the fire went out. You have to have oxygen to have a fire. But let's do another experiment.

Do: Take the other jar and put a scrap of newspaper inside it. Light the newspaper and this time leave the lid off and let it completely burn out.

Say: This shows us the importance of the fuel. Once the fuel supply—in this case, the newspaper—runs out, the fire will go out.

Ask: And once that newspaper is burned, can we light it again and have another fire? [Let students respond. If necessary, use a third match to try to light it again.]

Say: No, we can't. The fire just leaves these black remains, and it won't burn anymore.

But once there was a fire that didn't work like this! This fire burned and burned and burned and yet it didn't burn up the fuel. The fuel never turned black like this piece of paper [point to jar with the charred remains].

### **BIBLE LESSON:**

Optional: To tell the story, you can use a flannel board set with Old Testament characters and background. Or you may choose to use a storybook that has pictures. Also, you may wish to have a paper with YHWH written in Hebrew.

Say: Remember in our last class we talked about how God protected the baby Moses? He protected him as a baby and then God continued to protect Moses as he grew up. He protected him when he had to flee from Egypt.

After Moses left Egypt he headed to the land of Midian. After his long travels, he sat down to rest near a well. There he saw the seven daughters of Jethro, who came to the well to draw water for their father's flocks. Some other shepherds came and tried to drive them away, but Moses helped them. When they told their father what had happened, Jethro was grateful and wanted to meet this Moses. Moses ended up sticking around and married Jethro's daughter Zipporah and helped Jethro with his flocks of sheep. Many years passed.

Then, suddenly, our story gets exciting. Let's turn in our Bibles to Exodus 3:1.

Do: Read Exodus 3:1-2.

Say: Moses saw the bush burning, but not burning up! And he thought it was pretty incredible! Wouldn't we think it was amazing if we saw this newspaper in the jar burning and burning, but never burning up? We sure would!

Moses decided to go closer to investigate, but God called to him from the midst of the bush.

Let's continue reading from the Bible in verse 5. [Let students read verses 5-7.] God was ready to help the children of Israel and He was calling Moses—in a pretty spectacular way!—to help.

First of all, God wanted Moses to know to whom he was talking. Moses saw by the miracle of the burning bush and by the command to take off his sandals that he was in the presence of God! Moses was so scared he hid his face.

Then God told Moses what He was planning to do: He was going to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt and take them to a land “flowing with milk and honey.”

Ask: What do you suppose that meant? [Students respond.]

Say: “Flowing with milk and honey” didn't mean it would be really sticky. It meant it was a productive land that would grow good crops and raise large herds of sheep, cows and goats. God was going to take them back to the land where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob used to live.

And He was calling Moses to help. Let's read verse 10. [Let a student read verse 10.]

But Moses wasn't so sure about this. Remember, he had fled from Egypt for his life.

Ask: How do you think he might have felt? [Let students respond—afraid, nervous...]

Say: But God told him not to worry. He was calling him to a special job and God said, “I will certainly be with you.”

Moses mentioned another problem. How would he answer when the people asked what God's name is? So God told Moses His name. And the Bible records it as “I AM.” In Hebrew, the language the Old Testament was originally written in, this was written with four letters.

Do: You may wish to show the Hebrew letters that form YHWH. You can mention that Hebrew is written from right to left, and identify each letter.

Say: YHWH means “the Eternal,” the One who is always there.

God told Moses that he was to go to the king of Egypt. He was to ask the king—the Pharaoh—to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh would be angry and refuse, God told Moses, but God would send plagues on Egypt so that finally Pharaoh would let the children of Israel go.

“But what if they do not believe that I am sent by God?” Moses asked.

“What is in your hand?” God asked.

“A rod.”

“Throw it on the ground.” And Moses threw it on the ground and it instantly became a wriggling snake. Moses jumped back! I’m sure I would have, too!

“Now lift it up by the tail,” God told Moses.

As Moses picked up the snake, it turned back into the wooden stick.

Then God showed Moses another miracle that Moses could use to prove that God was with him. God told him to put his hand inside his shirt. And when he took it out, it was covered with horrible sores. But when God told him to tuck his hand in his shirt again, it came out perfectly normal.

God then told Moses of another miracle that He would perform to prove He was with Moses. Moses could take water from the river and it would turn into blood when he poured it out.

“But,” said Moses, still making excuses, “I’m not a good speaker.”

“Who has made man’s mouth?” said God. “Have not I, the Lord? Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

“O my Lord, please, couldn’t you send someone else?”

God began to get tired of all Moses’ worrying. “Is not Aaron your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do.”

And so Moses was called to do an important job. He was to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. Moses knew he couldn’t do the job by himself. But God assured him that He would be with him every step of the way. Let’s look at Exodus 3:12 again. “So He said, ‘I will certainly be with you.’” That’s actually our memory verse. Let’s say it together.

God is calling us to do a job for Him today. He wants us to live His way—obey His Commandments and do the things that please Him. And He wants us to help His Church to preach the message of the Kingdom of God to the world. By ourselves, we might feel like Moses felt at first. But God tells us that He’ll be with us too. Let’s turn to Matthew 28:19-20, in the first book in the New Testament, where Jesus told His Church what to do. [Let a student read.] “Lo, I am with you always.” God calls, and He’s always there to help.

## **LESSON APPLICATION:**

Supplies: Small boxes (such as shoeboxes)

Brown clay

Twigs

Orange and/or yellow cellophane, plastic wrap or tissue paper cut into small triangle shapes;

Glue

Construction paper

Crayons or markers.

Let students make dioramas to illustrate the story of Moses and the burning bush.

1. Use clay to form a "mountain" in the box.
2. Use the twigs to form the bush.
3. Glue the cellophane, plastic wrap or tissue paper onto the bush to represent the fire.
4. Push the trunk of the "burning bush" into the clay mountain.
5. Students can use construction paper, crayons or markers to add other features to the scene—such as Moses, sun, grass, sheep, etc. If they run out of time, encourage students that they can add more to their diorama at home.

## **Music:**

From the United Church of God Hymnal, page 51, "God Is Calling Children," verses 1, 3 and 4.

God is calling children To His royal family  
Sharing in His blessings, Living in His love.

Help us live more simply, Teach us to teach others,  
Help us come out of this world, Living in Your love.

We can live forever, Helping all God's children,  
Building in His Kingdom, Living in His love.

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

Exodus 3:12, first part, "So He said, 'I will certainly be with you.'"

# *family activity*

**THE POINT:**

God calls us for His special purpose. We can see this by the story of how God called Moses by talking to him through the burning bush.

**ASK ME...**

What did you learn about fire and about Moses' calling.

What would you have done if you saw a burning bush?

Did Moses want the job of leading the Israelites out of Egypt?

What miracles did God give Moses to do?

**FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:**

Talk about how God called your family into the Church. Talk about the job we've been given.

**MEMORY VERSE:**

Exodus 3:12, first part "So He said, 'I will certainly be with you.'"