

Exodus 3:1-17; 4:1-17 and 27-31

Aim of Lesson

To show how God revealed himself to the chosen leader of his people and assured him of his powerful presence.

Background study

Exodus 18; Acts 7:30-37. Look up details of the life of the nomadic sheep farmers in Midian, and locate all the places on a map.

Suggested outline of lesson

By question and answer, help the children to recreate the dramatic turn of events which led Moses, at the age of forty, to flee from Egypt and seek refuge in another land. The prince became a shepherd; the life of luxury in a palace was replaced by the simple life of a Midianite husband and father. God had prepared a further period of forty years during which Moses was to develop the qualities needed to lead a nation out of slavery. Many lessons must have been learned by Moses as God watched over him during that time, although he was unaware of the purpose for which he was being trained.

Jethro must have influenced Moses during that period. He was a man of wisdom and keen judgement (Exodus 18) whose opinion Moses would no doubt value, and in his company, working as a shepherd, Moses would learn patience, hardiness, humility, quiet strength and responsibility. Although content with his simple life style, Moses' life was to change dramatically.

In response to the pleas of his suffering people, God intervened and called Moses to his service. Describe vividly the strange sight that arrested Moses' attention. The class will appreciate his bewilderment at seeing the bush remain intact whilst appearing to burn. Although it is good that the children should think of God as a loving and gentle Father, it is also essential for them to recognize that our Creator is awesome and very powerful. At the burning bush Moses was shown the authority and holiness of God, and the experience made him afraid. But the message that followed must have convinced Moses of God's great compassion for his people.

From that moment, God's relationship with his chosen deliverer was to develop. The dialogue that follows was to prepare Moses for the great task ahead. You should consider carefully the progression of the conversation between God and Moses. Note that God first made an intensely strong impression upon him by alerting all his senses to the presence of the Almighty. By contrast, his was the humility of a servant who must approach his God with fearful reverence. God revealed his compassion by telling Moses of his anguish at the continuing plight of his persecuted people and his vow to deliver them. He made it clear that Moses was to be the instrument of this deliverance, a statement which filled Moses with feelings of inadequacy for such a challenge.

God's reply was positive and authoritative. A refusal was impossible. In answer to Moses' doubts, God told him that the people would listen to him. He rehearsed with him the words he would speak to Pharaoh, warned him that Pharaoh would not let them go, and promised to punish Egypt until the enslaved people were freed. As Moses demurred, God offered him signs by which he would be able to convince the people that he had been sent by God. Still, this now humble man shrank from the awesome task of challenging the might of Pharaoh and re-entering the political scene which he had left so long ago. To all Moses' protestations God gave an answer, so that Moses finally committed himself to the vocation.

Explain that God had agreed that Aaron, the brother of Moses, should help him when he went to talk to the people and to Pharaoh. Speculate on the atmosphere of the reunion of the two very different brothers, and conclude the lesson with the raised hopes of the afflicted people as they gladly received Moses' assurances of God's plan of salvation.

Relevance to the children's lives

How can we show our respect and reverence for God? Do we show this in our respect for parents and teachers? Do we show it in the way we behave in Sunday School? When we have been chosen to do a job are we always willing to tackle it, or do we sometimes make excuses?

Worksheets

The words in the flames are (left to right): holy, fire, flock, burning, sandals, bush, God, Horeb.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, we know you love us as a kind Father. Help us also to realize how great and powerful you are. Amen.

Memory verse

"Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground". (Exodus 3:5).