

AT HOME FAITH TIME FOR PRETEENS

PRETEEN SECTION

Make sure your parents read the Bible story too! You may read together, or separately.

BIBLE STORY: THE CALL OF MOSES (EXODUS 1-5)

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.

Pro Tip! *Jacob was given the name Israel by God. The Israelites are Jacob's descendants. Sometimes they are also called "Hebrews".*

Then a new king, one who never heard of Joseph, came to power in Egypt. "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

Notice: *Why is the new king afraid of the Israelites? What does the king do out of fear?*

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live."

Pro Tip! *Midwives are people who help people give birth.*

The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?"

The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."

Notice: *Did Shiphrah and Puah listen to the king? Who did the midwives "fear"?*

So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

Now an Israelite woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

Then Pharaoh’s daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. “This is one of the Hebrew babies,” she said.

Notice: *Who is the baby?
Whose is this baby?*

Then his sister asked Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?”

“Yes, go,” she answered. So the girl went and got the baby’s mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.” So the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, “I drew him out of the water.”

Notice: *What relationship
does Moses have to Pharaoh?*

One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

Pro Tip! *If Moses is
grown up, this is at
least 16 years later.*

But news spread quickly of what Moses had done.

When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh.

Moses went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well. Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.

Pro Tip! Midian is a couple 100 miles east of Egypt.

When the girls returned to Reuel their father, he asked them, "Why have you returned so early today?"

They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock."

"And where is he?" Reuel asked his daughters. "Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat." Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage.

During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Notice: What does God ask Moses to do? Why?

The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come

down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

Notice: Moses objects to God’s plan 5 times. What are Moses’ 5 objections? Why doesn’t Moses want to do what God wants?

Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

God said to Moses, “I am who I am.”

Moses replied, “🤔”

God said again to Moses, “This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

Moses replied, “🤔”

Notice: The emoticons don’t exist in the original text. God spoke three times, but Moses never replied. Why was Moses confused about the name God gave him to tell the Israelites?

God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’”

Moses replied, “😊”

God continued, “Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey.’”

“The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God.’ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.”

Moses answered, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you?’”

Then the Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?”

“A staff,” he replied.

The Lord said, “Throw it on the ground.”

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. Then the Lord said to him, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.” So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand.

Then the Lord said, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, the skin was leprous—it had become as white as snow.

“Now put it back into your cloak,” he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.

Then the Lord said, “If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first sign, they may believe the second. But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground.”

Moses said to the Lord, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”

The Lord said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

But Moses said, “Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.”

Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses and he said, “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it.”

Notice: *God does get upset, but does God ever tell Moses, “Stop complaining and just do what I say?” How does God respond each time Moses objects?*

Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, “Let me return to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are still alive.”

Jethro said, “Go, and I wish you well.”

The Lord said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he met Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him. Then Moses told Aaron everything the Lord had sent him to say, and also about all the signs he had commanded him to perform.

Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, and Aaron told them everything the Lord had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, and they believed. And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped.

Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.'"

Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go."

Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God, or he may strike us with plagues or with the sword."

But the king of Egypt said, "Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!" Then Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are now numerous, and you are stopping them from working."

That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the people: "You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' Make the work harder for the people so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies."

Notice: *What does Pharaoh think of Moses' request? What does Pharaoh do in response to this request?*

Then the slave drivers and the overseers went out and told the people Pharaoh's commands. So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw. The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, "Complete the work required of you for each day, just as when you had straw." And Pharaoh's slave drivers beat the Israelite overseers they had appointed, demanding, "Why haven't you met your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?"

Then the Israelite overseers went and appealed to Pharaoh: “Why have you treated your servants this way? Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, ‘Make bricks!’ Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people.”

Pharaoh said, “Lazy, that’s what you are—lazy! That is why you keep saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.’ Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks.”

The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told, “You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day.” When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, and they said, “May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

Notice: *The Israelites believed Moses at first. What do they think now? What does Moses think of the Israelites?*

Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.”

LET’S SUMMARIZE!

Answer each question yourself.

What is God doing in this story?

What does this story tell me about God?

What does this story tell me about me?

What does this story tell me about my relationship with God?

MEMORY WORK: THE APOSTLES' CREED

The Apostles' Creed is a statement of faith accepted by almost all Christians as a true summary of our faith. "Creed" simply believe, "I believe." This is a short summary of what we believe.

Memorize the first "I believe" statement. It's short!

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

THINGS TO NOTICE

We don't say a lot about God. Just "Father" (what Jesus called God), "almighty" (all-powerful), and "creator" (God made everything). That's not much!

What more would you want to say about God?

AT HOME FAITH TIME FOR PRETEENS

PARENT SECTION

As you discuss questions with your preteens, these thoughts might help you go deeper.

CONVERSATIONS – BIBLE

Why is the new king afraid of the Israelites? What does the king do out of fear?

There are a lot of Israelites. Later in the Exodus story, the book claims that there were 600,000 Israelites. That's a lot!

The king is afraid the Israelites will side with Egypt's enemies and fight against him. Out of fear, the king turns all the Israelites into slaves.

But before the king made them slaves, why would Israel fight against Egypt? Egypt has been their home for at least a couple 100 years at this point. Do you think the king had good reason to be afraid? How else could the king have responded instead of with fear?

Did you know that when the United States entered World War II, they had the same thought about Japanese Americans. They were afraid they would fight against America, even if they'd been living in our country for over 100 years. Out of fear, the United States put many Japanese Americans in internment camps.

Did Shiphrah and Puah listen to the king? Who did the midwives "fear"?

The midwives ignored the king because they feared God. Do you think they were right or wrong to ignore the king? What consequences do you think they might have faced for disobeying the king?

When is it right or wrong to ignore someone who's in charge of us? Do you think there might be consequences for ignoring them?

What do you suppose it means to "fear" God? Are you afraid of God? Maybe fearing God has something more to do with a deep trust and respect, like what someone might feel for their parents. You're not afraid of your parents, but obeying their rules might be more important to you than listening to other people you don't trust or respect.

Who is the baby? Whose is this baby?

The baby is Moses, and his mom is an Israelite. The Bible tells us her name is Jochebed. Does it surprise you that when Pharaoh's daughter found an Israelite baby, she didn't kill him like her father had ordered? Why do you think she kept the baby?

Even though Moses is adopted, did Moses get to know his biological mom?

What relationship does Moses have to Pharaoh?

Moses is Pharaoh's adopted grandson. That means he was raised in the royal court and knew Pharaoh personally. This gives Moses more power than any other Israelite; remember, all the other Israelites are slaves. Moses is free, and he's royalty!

What does God ask Moses to do? Why?

Take off his sandals, because he's standing on holy ground. When do you have to remove your shoes? Why does Moses have to remove his shoes? Why can't shoes be worn on holy ground?

Moses doesn't just remove his shoes. He also hides his face. Why would he be afraid to look at God? (if you're not sure about the answer, this question will come up again in a few weeks!)

What are Moses' 5 objections? Why doesn't Moses want to do what God wants?

Moses' 5 objections are:

"Who am I?"

Moses doesn't consider himself anyone special or important. What does God promise to do for Moses?

"What if the Israelites ask me your name?"

Remember, in Moses's people worshipped many different gods. They will want to know that the god who sent Moses is their God. What name does God give Moses?

"What if they don't believe me?"

If someone came to you and said, "God told me such and such," would you believe them? What signs does God give Moses to back up his claim?

"I'm not a good speaker."

Some people think Moses may have had a stutter or another speech impairment. Though public speaking is scary for anyone. What does God promise to do for Moses?

"Please send someone else."

This fifth complaint really seems to annoy God, but what does God do to help Moses?

Why was Moses confused about the name God gave him to tell the Israelites?

“I am who I am” isn’t really a name, is it? Imagine saying to someone, “I AM sent me to you.” Would they have any idea what you’re saying? What does this name tell you about God?

Does God tell Moses to stop complaining? How does God respond each time Moses objects?

God does get annoyed (it says “God’s anger burned”), but God always helps Moses and provides Moses support no matter how many times Moses objects. Sometimes we are asked to do things that seem too big or difficult. When you face a challenge, would you rather avoid the challenge or receive support? Why didn’t God let Moses back out of this assignment?

What does Pharaoh think of Moses’ request? What does Pharaoh do in response?

Pharaoh doesn’t care about their request and doesn’t believe in their God. Instead, Pharaoh thinks the Israelites are lazy and makes them work harder and punishes them for asking for a holiday. Do your requests for something good ever backfire on you? Have you ever been accused of being lazy? Do you think of yourself as lazy? Why is Pharaoh being so mean?

Do the Israelites believe Moses anymore? What does Moses think of the Israelites?

No; the Israelites think Moses has done something wrong, and they demand that the Lord punish Moses. Moses finds the Israelites exhausting and also wonders why God doesn’t seem to be helping. Have things ever gotten hard or difficult in your life? Where was God during these challenging times? Why do you think God doesn’t instantly make things better?

LET’S SUMMARIZE!

Answer each question yourself. I’ve put in some of my answers but remember: Our answers don’t have to be the same. You may have heard and seen things I didn’t even notice!

What is God doing in this story?

Being feared, given people families, appearing in miracles, asking people to do things, helping and supporting, not acting as fast as we’d like

What does this story tell me about God?

God blesses people. God hears our tears and pain. God remembers God’s promises. God has compassion. God simply is (“I am who I am”). God can get angry. God helps people through their challenges.

What does this story tell me about me?

It’s easy for me to be afraid. Fear can cause me to hurt other people. Fear can cause me to doubt God. I may be able to do more amazing things than I realize. Sometimes I can make huge mistakes. Sometimes my excuses are requests for help.

What does this story tell me about my relationship with God?

Trusting God (aka “fearing God”) can help me do good. God may ask me to do big things. God will support me through all my challenges. God doesn’t always work on my schedule. Others won’t always like what God asks me to do.

CONVERSATIONS – THE APOSTLES’ CREED

What more would you want to say about God?

Each week in the “Let’s Summarize” section you’ve been answering the question, “What does this story tell me about God?” What are some of the most important things you’ve realized about God in all the stories we’ve read?