



## Moses

### MEETING AIM

To reflect on how and why God called Moses.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 3:1-4:23

### BACKGROUND

This session is designed for you to do online in a group video call (on something like FaceTime or Zoom). Make sure you have parental permission to do this, as well as following your church's safeguarding procedure.

This story is quite well known, particularly with young people from a church background. However, these are strange events! A bush that is on fire but not burning up, a leprous arm, a stick turning into a snake, God speaking from the bush – all things that might make us run a mile. Recognise the strangeness of this passage, but help young people realise its significance in the story of salvation, and how God addresses Moses' objections to serving.

### GATHERING TIME

5 MINS

As people join you online, ask them to share what they have been doing during the past seven days. Ask the group to reflect on their week by asking: "Have you encountered God over the last week? If so, where and how?"

### INTRO ACTIVITY

5 MINS

**You will need:** list of items the young people might have in their house

Hold an online scavenger hunt. Read out the items on your list one by one. The first person to find that item and show it to you onscreen gets a point. As you play, talk about 'rounding up' the different things on the list. Include a toy sheep as one of the items.

### BIBLE EXPLORATION

10 MINS

**You will need:** Bibles

Explain that you're going to be looking at Moses this week, but specifically the story of the burning bush. Ask the group if they know what happened in Moses' life up to this point? If they have some knowledge of his story, they might be able to fill in what has already happened, but be prepared to help. This recap is to put this story in the context of Moses's life so far.

The conversation between Moses and God in the burning bush is quite a bizarre one! Not only is God appearing as a burning bush, but the dialogue between the two is quite strange, though wonderful. Don't shy away from this being a weird moment – the idea with doing this is to recognise how strange (and maybe even comedic) it is!

Ask for two volunteers from the group to do some acting, and one to read. If you get too many volunteers, you can ask them to rotate reading parts. Invite ask one actor to crouch down (still in view of their camera!) and one to stand up. Explain that one is Moses and one is God, as the burning bush! Invite everyone to find the Bible passage, and ask the narrator to read the passage, but with Moses and the burning bush reading their parts.

### CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Use these questions as a guide, but feel free to see how and where the discussion goes.

- What do you think was going through Moses' mind throughout the encounter?
- What have you learned about God through this encounter?
- Why do you think God asked Moses to go?
- How do you think you would have felt if you were Moses?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE

10 MINS

**You will need:** 'fire' coloured paper; Blu Tack; scissors

Make sure everyone has some Post-it notes or paper and ask each group cut out flame shapes.

Explain that Moses noticed God in the burning bush when he was going through his ordinary shepherding work. Though Moses was reluctant with the task, he was ready to respond to God by saying: "Here I am" (3:4). Ask the group to take their flames and stick them somewhere that they'll see regularly as a reminder to look out for God and be available to him in the middle of their ordinary lives. It might be helpful to discuss how they can be available to God, how they can listen out for him, or the kind of things God might ask of them in their lives, while you're cutting out together.

Ask the group to take a moment of silence and individual reflection. Suggest that it might be helpful if they shut their eyes to help them focus and think.

When you've reached a quiet atmosphere, ask them to imagine if it was them stumbling across a burning bush. Encourage them to think about what they might feel if God had asked them to do a big task like Moses'. They might think about what makes them hesitant to say yes. What do the young people sense God might ask them to do with their lives for him and for his people? Give a good amount of silence and time after each question for them to consider quietly.

### PRAYER

5 MINS

Moses' response when God called him was: "Here I am." Explain that this is a big prayer to pray! God asks us if we're available to do his work, and sometimes that involves doing things we didn't expect or feel ready for!

Ask the group to shut their eyes and pray for everyone, that you would be ready for what God would ask you to do. Ask them to open their hands and hold them out as a sign of being ready, and at the end of the prayer invite them to join in agreement by saying: "Here I am."

### BECCA DEAN

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## Passover

### MEETING AIM

To explore the story of the first Passover and its significance to God's people.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 11-12

### BACKGROUND

This session is designed for you to do online in a group video call (on something like FaceTime or Zoom). Make sure you have parental permission to do this, as well as following your church's safeguarding procedure.

God's rescue of his people from Egypt is a central story in the identity of the people of God. It's significance echoes through the centuries to the time of David, Josiah and Ezra. It's central, too, to communion and Jesus' use of the Passover symbols in the Last Supper (eg Matthew 26:17-30) is significant. Whether the young people in your group know this story or not, help them to see how pivotal these moments are, and how much the idea of rescue is important for our own faith.

### GATHERING TIME

5 MINS

As you begin to gather together over Zoom, ask the group if anyone is scared of anything. This week it's Moses and the Passover. Before the final plague, there were nine plagues of water turned into blood, frogs, biting insects, livestock disease, boils, hail, locusts and darkness. What would be the worst plague to experience?

### INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

**You will need:** online escape room activities

Before your session, put together an escape room for your group. There is lots of help and inspiration online, so do a search and choose some activities that your group can do on your video call. Make sure you stick to activities that don't require any specialist equipment.

After you have finished, ask how easy it was to 'escape'.

### BIBLE EXPLORATION

10 MINS

**You will need:** *The Prince of Egypt* and the means to play it; Bibles

Remind the group of what has happened so far in the great story of the Bible.

Show the clip from *The Prince of Egypt* that shows plagues two to nine (01:02:30 to 01:05:20, chapter 21 of the DVD). Ask the group to think about what it must have been like for the Egyptians. Which plague does the film show that isn't in the Bible? (Fiery hail!) Why did the pharaoh act the way he did?

Show another clip (01:09:18 to 01:13:48, chapter 23). This shows the final plague and Pharaoh at last setting the Hebrews free. What has changed for Pharaoh?

Give out the Bibles and ask the group to turn to Exodus 12:21-28. Read the passage together and ask the young people to think about why God told the Israelites to celebrate Passover every year. What is it about this event which is special?

*The Prince of Egypt* is currently available on Netflix.

### CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Use these questions as a guide to discussion, though try to be attentive to the questions the group may have, or significant points that the conversation takes.

- What do you think it would have been like to experience the first Passover?
- What do you think the Passover meant to the Israelites?
- How did the Passover change the lives of the Jewish people?
- Why do you think Jewish people still celebrate the Passover today?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE

10 MINS

**You will need:** pitta bread (or other flat bread or crackers); red grape juice

Explain that Jewish people still celebrate and remember the Passover. You can find more information about the Jewish Passover meal or Sedah online if you want to explain it in more detail.

Two parts of the Passover meal are the unleavened bread and wine. The wine symbolises the sacrificed lamb's blood that was painted on the doors, so that the Lord would pass over their home.

Make sure everyone has some bread and some red-coloured drink. Explain that as part of the Passover meal, Jewish people will drink from four cups of wine, each symbolising four promises of redemption that God makes to his people about their Exodus from Egypt: "I will take you out..." "I will save you..." "I will redeem you..." and "I will take you as a nation..."

Ask the group if they can see any connection between these symbols and a Christian celebration? They may recognise the bread and wine as communion.

Explain that at the Last Supper, Jesus was celebrating the Passover meal with his friends. Ask them why they think Jesus linked his death with the Passover meal.

Invite the group to share in the bread and juice to celebrate and remember the first Passover.

### PRAYER

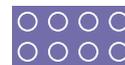
5 MINS

**You will need:** Zoom whiteboard or paper and pen

One big element of the Exodus is that God is interested in setting people free. Ask the group for suggestions of the kinds of slavery people are in today. Together write a list of these people, and invite the group to pray for them together. You could pray for someone on the list and then pass the paper to the next person.

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## Ten Commandments

### MEETING AIM

To explore how to live God's way.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 19-20

### BACKGROUND

This session is designed for you to do online in a group video call (on something like FaceTime or Zoom). Make sure you have parental permission to do this, as well as following your church's safeguarding procedure.

The Ten Commandments are part of our cultural consciousness, but it's unlikely that people will be able to name more than three or four! Use this session to explore these rules for living together – with God and with other people. But try to help young people see that these rules shouldn't lead us to slavish obedience, rather that they should come out of a love for God and of God's love for us. God doesn't give us these guides to restrict us and keep us down. He wants the best for us, both in our relationship with him and in our friendships with others.

### GATHERING TIME

5 MINS

As you begin to gather together over Zoom, break the ice in conversation by asking: "What would you do if you were Prime Minister for a day? What laws would you make?"

### INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

**You will need:** Zoom whiteboard or paper and pena

If you have any rules or guidelines for your group, review them now. Do you need to amend any guidelines to take into account meeting online?

If you don't have any, ask the group if they can come up with no more than four guidelines for how to behave and treat other people when you are together.

Consider together what makes a good, supportive community, where everyone is treated well and valued.

### BIBLE EXPLORATION

10 MINS

**You will need:** Bibles; paper; felt-tip pens

Ask the group to recap on what you've already learned about Moses' journey. So far, he's been called at the burning bush, and led the Israelites out of Egypt after the Passover. Encourage them to go over what you've learned about the Israelites. Who are they and where did they come from?

Introduce that today you're looking at the Ten Commandments and the moment when God was giving Moses instructions to give to the Israelites about how to live as God's people.

Before you open up the Bible, ask the group if they can remember what the Ten Commandments are. They may have gone through these another time!

As a group, read Exodus 19:1-6 and then Exodus 20. You could break it up by asking different volunteers to read different verses.

Break into smaller groups and discuss how you might rephrase the Ten Commandments using modern-day language. Write down the new lists on paper, then draw everyone back together. Get some feedback and compare the young people's rephrasings. Ask everyone why they chose to write what they did.

### CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Put your lists of commandments up, so that everyone can see and refer back to them as you discuss these questions:

- Are these difficult laws to keep?
- Why do you think these are the laws that God chose?
- Why do you think God gave the Israelite laws? Was it helpful or unhelpful?
- Are there any laws that you think God missed out?
- What would the world be like if everyone kept all of these laws?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE

10 MINS

**You will need:** paper; felt-tip pens

Make sure everyone has a folded sheet of A4 (to make it look like a small booklet) and felt-tip pens. Ask the small groups to get creative and write a short manual on 'How to be God's chosen people'. It can include laws, suggestions or any kind of instructions. They could write it in a way

that is applicable today. Give them five or ten minutes to get to work on these booklets and then come back together and ask them to share them with each other. Enjoy seeing their ideas and explanations as to why they came up with these different things.

### PRAYER

5 MINS

**You will need:** paper; pens

The Ten Commandments were God's instructions to the Israelites so that they would be the best version of his holy community that they could be. Not only were they given to help them live with one another, but also to set them apart as God's example to other people. In many ways, this is still what God asks of us today, as it says in Hebrews 12:14: "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."

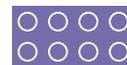
Ask the group to consider how God might ask them to live set apart for him in their lives. Give each person a piece of paper and a pen and ask them to write two letters on each side of the paper. The first is a letter from them to God, saying sorry for how they have got it wrong, how they've been disobedient to the Ten Commandments or holy living, and asking for help with living obediently to God. You could play some quiet worship music to help them focus and give them space to write, and warn them that they have a few minutes before you ask them to do something else.

After a few minutes ask them to re-read their letter and sit and listen to see if they get a sense of what God might say back to them. Then ask them to write a returning letter from God to them in response to their own letter.

After this they can keep their letters or throw them away, but make sure they know that their letters are private and they won't be expected to share them or read by you.

### JOEL TOOMBS

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## The promised land

### MEETING AIM

To explore the trust-worthiness of God and his promises.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

To explore the trust-worthiness of God and his promises.

### BACKGROUND

This session is designed for you to do online in a group video call (on something like FaceTime or Zoom). Make sure you have parental permission to do this, as well as following your church's safeguarding procedure.

Sometimes, God promises us things and we can expect them to be delivered to us on a plate. At this point in the Israelites' story, they have reached the land God promised them, but are scared off by the people already living there. They let their fear get the better of their faith in God. Fear can be a huge obstacle to putting your trust in God. Help the young people think about what they're worried about in their lives and how that might be standing in the way of their growing with God.

### GATHERING TIME

5 MINS

As you begin to gather together over Zoom, break the ice by asking the group what their dream place to live would be!

### INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

Play a few rounds of wink murder. Choose someone to be the murderer by sending them a message using the chat function. Then, openly choose a spy. (Call them a spy rather than detective for this game!) The murderer has to kill people off by winking at them, without the spy seeing. The spy has to catch the murderer before they've killed everyone. Have enough rounds for everyone to have a turn.

### BIBLE EXPLORATION

10 MINS

**You will need:** Bibles; *The Message* paraphrase; breakout room facility

Remind the group of the Israelites' journey that you have followed so far. God had taken them out of Egypt with Moses leading them and given them the Ten Commandments.

Explain that you're using two Bible passages from different books in the Bible, but that fit together to be part one and two of the story. Split the group into three. Give one group Numbers 13, one Numbers 14 and the other Joshua 3 to work with. It might be easier for them to work from *The Message*. Give both groups time to read the passage each and then come up with a small skit about how they're going to act it out to the other group. Encourage them to keep it simple and they can use the passage to read from as they act in it. Although they can get as creative as they can in ten minutes too!

Depending on how the skits go, it might be helpful to summarise the two stories as one together, drawing out the main points about what's happened in all the passages.

### CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Continue chatting about the story using these questions and others:

- How do you think the Israelites would be feeling about the promised land?
- What do you think taking over from Moses would have been like for Joshua?
- What do you think it would have been like getting to the promised land, only to find out there were huge people living in it already?
- What part did fear play in the reactions of the Israelites?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE

10 MINS

**You will need:** paper; art materials

Ask for a couple of volunteers to role play being the spies. Encourage the rest of the group to ask them questions about their experience of finding the promised land, what they were hoping for, and how they felt! If many people want to have a go at being the spies, let a few have turns.

Now do the same with Joshua. Prompt the group to ask all kinds of questions, such as how he felt about taking over from Moses or what was good about being a leader. Let the group reflect together on their ideas using this role play, and gently encourage them to stay on topic if there are too many tangents (though some will be good fun!).

Ask the group to take some time to think about what it would have been like after 40 years in the desert for the Israelites to finally know that they were going to have their own place called home. Allow some time to process this idea. If you have time, invite the group to make a creative response, using any art materials they have to hand.

### PRAYER

5 MINS

**You will need:** world map

The story of the Israelites is very reminiscent of the many refugees we have in our world today. For a visual aid, show a map, and show the group the area that the Israelites wandered between Egypt and Canaan (now in Israel). Show them where Syria, Israel and Palestine are, and explain that many Syrians are refugees; many Palestinians are now displaced in the separation between Palestine and Israel, and many Jewish people were refugees in Israel after the Second World War. Encourage the group to pray for these groups, and others who are refugees and homeless in the world.

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