



Moses and the Burning Bush

Goal: To learn that God knows us and calls us by name.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Exodus 3:1-15

When Moses was a shepherd for his father-in-law, Jethro, he saw a strange sight. A bush was burning, but never burned up.

When Moses took a closer look, he heard himself addressed by God. God called to him from the bush: “‘Moses, Moses!’ And [Moses] said, ‘Here I am’” (v. 4). God revealed who God was: the God of Moses’ ancestors. He then gave Moses the mission of delivering the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt.

When Moses encountered God in the bush, God called him by name. In that sacred place, God was revealed to Moses. He learned who this God was. Then he heard what God wanted Moses to do: Go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt (v. 10). This began Moses’ work as the leader God called and used.

When God calls us to do God’s work, God addresses us by name. God knows us well, and God has work for us to do. It all begins by recognizing God is calling us. This can happen anywhere. We can be thankful God wants to use us. Then we can respond in gratitude and, like Moses, say, “Here I am” (v. 4).

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Moses and the burning bush is a vivid story for children to engage with all their imagination and wonderings. A bush burns but is not consumed. Then God calls Moses by name. And, as if that isn’t enough, God asks Moses to take on a really hard task.

Younger children will have many concrete “why” questions, while older children will be able to wonder about how Moses might have responded. Children will easily get into the role of Moses and express what he might have been thinking and feeling when God called him.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

One way to help children make the connection between the story of Moses and their lives is to invite them to talk about their names and the family and friends who know them by their names. Just like Moses, you can help children know that God knows each one of them by name.

Be aware of children who are new to the group or those with special needs. Also be aware of children who are the first ones to talk and those who are more introverted and quiet. This is a great session to begin a closing ritual by calling each child by name and then saying, “God loves you and calls you by name.”

*O God, you call my name, challenging me to share my faith in you
with your beloved children. Call me to courage and faith in this task. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 3, 16

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: prepared
papers with children's
names

choice 2: tree branch;
bucket of sand or
gravel; red, orange, and
yellow crepe paper

choice 3: prepared
sandal soles made with
template on **Grace
Notes (GN) 1**

Exploring

choice 1: copies of **GN 2**

choice 3: ball

choice 4: copies of **GN 3**



GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner, and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

Before the session, for “Guided Play” choice 1, write each child’s first name in large bubble or outline letters on white paper. Have extra paper on hand for new children attending today.

For “Guided Play” choice 3, cut a cardboard pair of sandal soles for each child, using the template on **GN 1**. Cereal boxes work well. Punch holes in each sandal as indicated on the template. Cut string or yarn in one-yard lengths, two per child. Prepare an example pair of sandals prior to the children arriving to use as a guide.

Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive, and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.” Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time.

Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about Moses and the burning bush. Invite the children to look at the guided play activities and pick one to start:

1. Names—Give each child the prepared paper with their name.

Invite them to decorate their papers with crayons or markers. Set aside the paper for “Transitioning to Story Time.”

2. Making a Burning Bush—Secure a tree branch in a bucket of sand or gravel. Tell the children they are going to make a bush that looks like it is on fire. Invite them to hang short red, orange, and yellow crepe-paper streamers on the branches to simulate flames. Use the “burning bush” in “Hearing the Story.”

3. Sandal Lacing—Provide soles and yarn or string. Show the children how to find the middle of the string and put each end down through the top of the sandal. Thread the string back up through the ankle holes on each side. Let the children experiment with slipping their toes under the front strap and wrapping the yarn around their ankles. Help them tie the sandals on. If their feet are smaller, suggest that they tie the sandal over their shoes.



- T** Give the children a signal when it's time for something new; sing a familiar song or repeat a phrase such as: "One, two, something new." Expect this to be difficult for some, especially if they are new to your group. It may be helpful to give a child a specific task.

Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing "Bim Bam"—**SCM 16**. Tell the children that this is a traditional Jewish song. Explain that *Shabbat shalom* means, "Peace be with you on this Sabbath day." Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

If the children made name pictures in "Guided Play" choice 1, hold up each picture, saying the child's name. Encourage them to say, "That's me!" when their names are called.

Once I Was So Very Small

MS A L

Teach children an action rhyme about growing. Invite them to follow your words and actions.

Once I was so very small (*stoop down low*) /
and then I grew and grew. (*slowly rise*) /
Now just see how very tall (*reach high*) /
that I can reach! Can you? (*point to another person*) /

Moses Was a Baby

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To help children begin to understand that baby Moses grew into a man, say the following poem as the children repeat each line after you:

Moses was a baby, /
then he grew and grew. /
He became a great man /
and helped God's people too. /

Tell the children they will hear a story about a time when Moses was a grown-up man. He became a shepherd. One day, something surprising happened to him that changed his life.

- A** Adapt activities to the needs of the children in your group.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story

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Place the burning bush made during “Guided Play” choice 2 in the center of your story time space. Pretend the bush is on fire and the strips are the flames.

Open the Bible to Exodus 3 so that children know that the story comes from the Bible. Read **SCM 3**. Express the emotions of the story with your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Have the children put on the sandals they made in “Guided Play” choice 3. Encourage them to pretend to be Moses—seeing the bush, taking off his sandals, and listening and talking to God, as you read the story again.

Wonder with the children:

- ▼ I wonder, “How did Moses feel when he saw the bush?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did Moses feel when he heard God calling his name?”

EXPLORING GOD’S GRACE

1. Making a Burning Bush

FM

Cover the work area with plastic. Supply copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of the bush and the words.

While the children color, put red, orange, and yellow tempera paint into cups, and thin the paint with water. Have a straw ready for use with each color.

When they are finished coloring, hand out drinking straws to the children. Use the straws in each paint color to draw up a small amount of paint by dipping one end of the straw into the paint cup and closing the other end with your thumb. Position the straw over the children’s coloring page and release your thumb. As the paint drips onto the page, instruct the children to gently blow the paint on the paper through their straws in different directions, spreading the paint like flames across the bush. Continue with different colors.

Notice with the children that the crayon resists the paint. The burning bush and the words remain, just as God does. Encourage the children to take the picture home and tell their families about Moses and how God knows each of us.

FM *To help children build fine motor skills, encourage enjoyment in activity participation instead of focusing on a “successful” outcome such as whether the paint actually looks like flames.*



2. Breathing God's Name



Tell the children that a Hebrew word for God is *Yahweh*. It is the name that God gave Moses at the burning bush. Explain that God's name—*Yahweh*—sounded like breath or wind. Say that when we breathe in we can make the “yah” sound. When we breathe out, we can make the “weh” sound. Encourage the children to practice with you. Say the prayer, prompting the children to join you on “Yah-weh.” Take your time saying, “Yah-weh,” pausing after each “yah” and “weh” so the children have time to breathe in and out.

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. You called to Moses from a burning bush.

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. You gave Moses your name.

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. You heard the cries of your people in Egypt.

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. You sent Moses to help your people.

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. You are with us in happy times and sad times.

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. You have work for us to do.

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. When the work is hard, and we don't know what to do,

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. You will be with us, just like you were with Moses.

3. Listening for God



Play a game to remind the children that God knows their names.

- ▼ Arrange the group standing in a circle. Sit in a circle, if you would prefer rolling the ball rather than tossing.
- ▼ One person starts off by saying the name of someone else in the circle, “(Name), God knows your name.” That person then tosses, or rolls, the ball to the person named.
- ▼ That person responds with the ball-tosser's name, “(Name), I know your name too.” Then, in turn, she or he says the name of a different person, with “God knows your name,” and tosses, or rolls, the ball to someone else who has not yet received the ball.
- ▼ Continue until everyone in the circle has received the ball once.

Active variation: Follow the same rules, but instead of tossing or rolling a ball, participants cross the circle, exchange high fives for the caller and fist bumps for the responder, and take each other's spots in the circle.

Caller: (Name), God knows your name. (*high five*)

Response: (Name), I know your name too. (*fist bump*)



Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

4. Coloring Page



Hand out copies of **GN 3** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “Why did God tell Moses to remove his sandals?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did Moses do after God spoke to him?”

T *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as squeezing your hands, stretching, and so on.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Invite the children to help you clean up the space.

Call the children to snack time, singing “Bim Bam”—**SCM 16**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

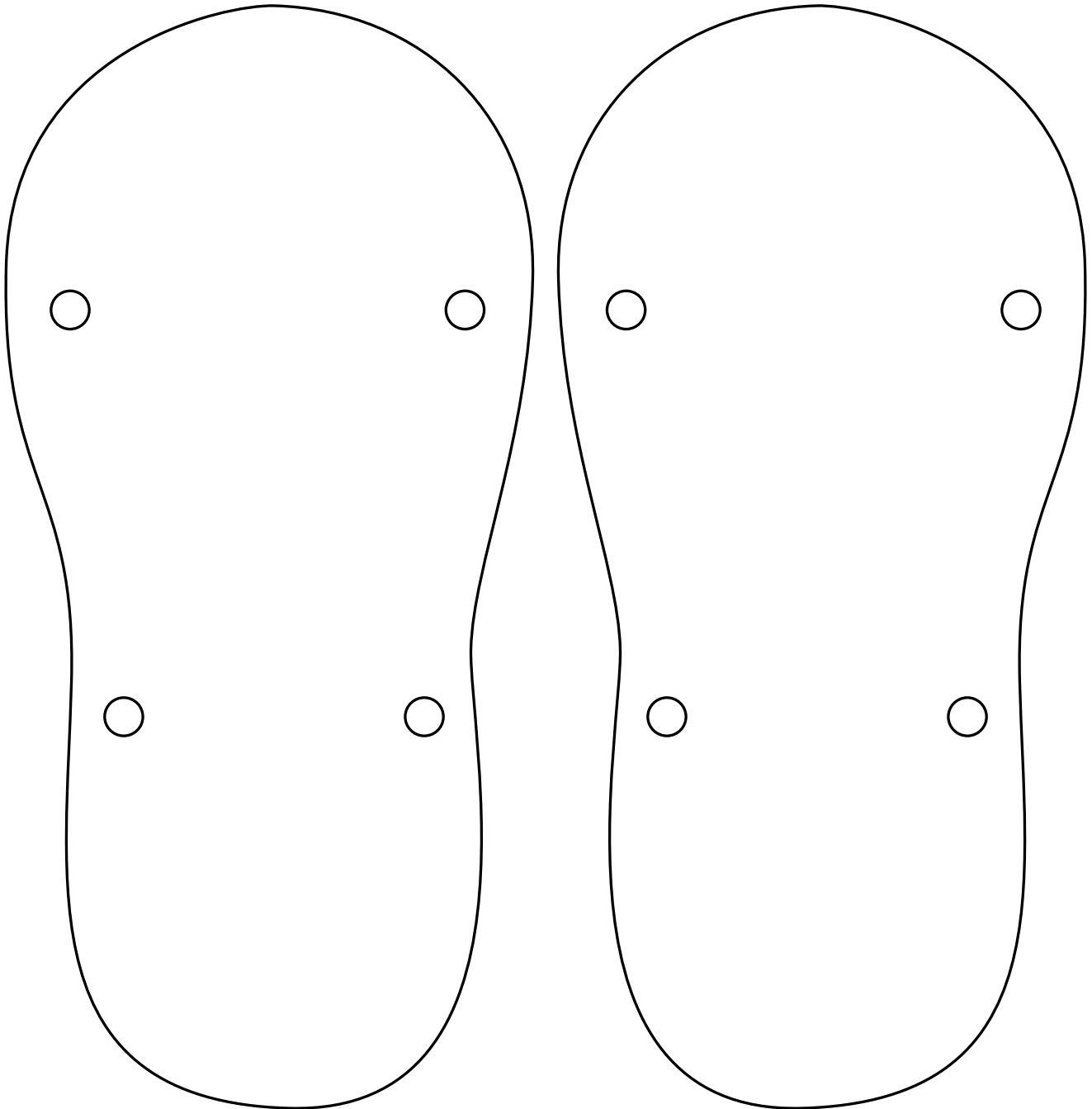
Invite everyone to sit around a table or on the floor. Lead the children in praying this shorter version of the prayer in “Breathing God’s Name.”

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. Thank you for the food we share.

Yah-weh, Yah-weh. Thank you for your love and care. Amen.

Enjoy a snack. Take a moment to tell each child something positive about your time, such as: “Thank you for the good job you did with the blocks” or “I’m glad that you and (Name) had fun today.”

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), God knows you and loves you. The grace of God is with you.”





Moses and the Burning Bush



God calls to Moses from the burning bush.

