

The Burning Bush

Exodus 3:1-4:17

MEMORY VERSE

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” JOHN 10:27

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A string and the divided memory verse written on 3x 5 cards.

Markers or crayons, scissors, tongue depressors, tape and as many burning bush activity sheets as the number of children in your class.

Cupcakes in green paper with dyed green frosting and yellow, orange and red sprinkles.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Un-spin the Web

You will need string and the memory verse written one word at a time on 3x5 cards.

Split your class into pairs. Have your teams untangle the puzzled memory verse by working their way through the maze of a web of string. Let your starting place be your ending place and take a long string and wind it all around the room.

Shuffle the 3 x 5 cards and tape them at intervals along the string. Have the pairs work together by having one person find the words and the other write down the words found by their partner. Have each team work their way through the web until they have gathered all the words or phrases (place pairs at different intervals on the web so they don't "bottle-neck").

The first team to unscramble the verse correctly is the winner.

LESSON TIME!

In today's lesson we are going to learn the story of Moses and the burning bush. This was a very important time in Moses' life. It is when God spoke to Him and shared with him the special plans that He had for Moses' life. God wanted Moses to be the one to lead His people out of Egypt, but as we will see it was a pretty scary thing for Moses to think about.

Just like Moses, God has a plan and a call for our lives. Certainly He wants us first of all to be saved and then to grow in our relationship with Him; but as we grow in Him, we will find that He wants to use our lives for His purposes. Sometimes it can be kind of scary for us to step out into those areas in which God wants to use us. But as Moses learned, God will always provide everything we need to help us to do what He has called us to do. **God desires to prepare us to do His work.**

EXODUS 3:1-6

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed.

Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."

Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

Moses had been a shepherd for forty years in the desert. All of that time, God was preparing Him for the work that He had before him. Sometimes we think that God is moving slowly to show us what He would have us to do; but God knows the future that He has for each one of us. At His right time, He will reveal to us what He wants us to do for Him.

Maybe Moses felt like God couldn't use him anymore because of the mistake he made in killing the Egyptian, but that wasn't the case. God still had some amazing plans for Moses. He was now 80 years old and was about to begin the most exciting period of his life.

God appears to Moses in a flaming bush which was not consumed. God's people, the Israelites, had been slaves in Egypt for many years and they cried out to Him for help. God heard their cries and appeared to Moses in a burning bush so He could call Moses to lead them out of their slavery. When God called, Moses listened and said, "Here I am." What a great example for us when we hear God speak to our hearts. We need to immediately say, "Here I am!"

Moses realized that God was speaking to him. He became afraid and hid his face from God. Could you imagine actually speaking with God? It might be kind of frightening to us as well, but Moses will find out that God in His love and grace has a wonderful plan for Moses to help His people to be delivered from slavery in Egypt.

We need to listen to God when He calls on us because He has wonderful plans for our lives. It all begins by saying to God, "Here I am!" Then we will find out that if we will let Him, He will use us for some pretty amazing things. Maybe God would have you be a missionary, a pastor or evangelist. Maybe He would use you to share the gospel with a friend down the street. It is a wonderful and exciting life to follow Jesus. God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit who lives inside of His people. Let's listen for the voice of God in our hearts and jump at the opportunity to serve Him. **God desires to prepare us to do His work.**

Animated Burning Bush

You will need markers or crayons, scissors, tongue depressors, tape and as many burning bush activity sheets (provided with curriculum) as the number of children in your class.

Have your class color and cut out the burning bush. Have each student tape a tongue depressor to the back of the fire. Slide the flame through the back of the slit in the bush and move it back and forth to burn the bush without consuming it.

EXODUS 3:9-12

"Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

"Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

We first see that God has heard the cry of His people. Sometimes as God's people we may feel like He has forgotten us when we have difficult times, but that is never the case. When we are going through difficult times our heavenly Father has never forgotten about us. That doesn't mean that He won't allow us to have rough times in our lives; sometimes He does, but it does mean that He will hear our cries and help us in His timing and according to His plans.

God's plan to help His people in this situation was to go to a man named Moses and have Him go to Egypt and deliver the people from the hands of Pharaoh. So God reveals His plan to Moses. He says that He has chosen Moses to be the man to go and help His people.

Moses response is very similar to our response many times. Basically he told God, "You must have the wrong guy!" He asks God, "Who am I to do this thing?" It is easy to look at our own abilities and weaknesses and think that we could never do anything great for God. But that isn't how God looks at it. God knows that He didn't make a mistake. He knows exactly what He is doing.

God is very patient with Moses and tells Him, "Certainly I will be with you." Then He gives Moses a sign that this will happen. Some time later this was fulfilled when Moses along with over 2 million Israelites did worship at this very mountain. Isn't God great to encourage us when we are discouraged and give us hope when we think we can't do what He asks us?

How we need to learn from this that if God is asking us to do something, He certainly is going to accomplish it in our lives! It is never a matter of whether or not we have talents or abilities. It is

God's call. Where God guides He provides. So if God is asking you to do something great for Him, even at a young age, don't be afraid. Ask Him to show you how you can prepare and how He will accomplish His plans through you.

You will find that God will give you the strength and power you need to do what He wants you to do. So God assures Moses of His power to help him. **God desires to prepare us to do His work.** Let's find out what Moses does next...

EXODUS 3:13-15

Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'"

Moses was afraid people wouldn't believe that God had called him and sent him to deliver them. We see here that Moses was very afraid. He wasn't trusting that God would do what He said He would do. We so often do the same thing. It is hard for us to trust God sometimes, but when we do there is such blessing in our lives. We will find that He will live up to every promise He makes.

We can't let the fear of man overcome the mightiness of God in our lives. Trust in God alone. When He calls you, He will equip you.

God had been preparing Moses for forty years in the wilderness for the things He had planned, just as He is preparing us for the work He wants to do in our lives.

God is all-powerful and self-existing. In fact, that's what "I AM WHO I AM" means; the self-existent one. He has no beginning or end. He was not created. He alone is God and has all authority over heaven and earth. This is Who was sending Moses. Certainly Moses can trust in God's authority and power. God can do all things and is willing to use us for good things if we let Him. God is our assurance. He will give us favor just as He did for Moses. **God desires to prepare us to do His work.**

EXODUS 4:1-9

Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.' "

So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A rod."

And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand),

"that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his

bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow.

And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh.

"Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign.

"And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. And the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land."

Now Moses begins to bring up some "what ifs." He still doubts God and asks, "what if they don't listen to me or do what I say?" God is so patient with Moses and isn't He incredibly patient with us? Moses is thinking about all of the things that can go wrong instead of all of the things that can go right. He is still afraid. There is no doubt that this was a big task for God to ask Moses to take on. Any of us would be fearful, but God is teaching Moses, even at 80 years old that he needs to trust Him.

Certainly we can learn this lesson as well. We need to trust that God will go before us in whatever He asks us to do. Out of grace, God gave Moses signs for the people because of Moses' lack of faith. Even though circumstances may cause us to doubt we must trust in the Word of God. God never fails us and is trustworthy. His will is perfect and good and when He calls us to something we mustn't be concerned about other's belief but have assurance that God is in control. **God desires to prepare us to do His work.**

EXODUS 4:10-12

Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?"

"Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."

It certainly sounds like Moses doesn't want to do this. Maybe he really doesn't. Perhaps his life is pretty comfortable out in the desert all by himself. He's just tending sheep for his father in law, no worries or cares. His family is provided for, he doesn't have to deal with any problems, and life is pretty good right now. We don't know if he thought those thoughts but they could have been a temptation. Maybe we don't feel like doing what God wants us to do so we think of all kinds of excuses.

Moses felt like he wasn't a very good speaker. He felt like he couldn't go and talk to the people and to Pharaoh. Moses tried to make excuses to God about his lack of ability; but like the last excuses that Moses gave, God comes back with a response. God is still very patient with Moses. We see nothing but love and grace towards Moses.

God told Moses that He made him that way for a purpose. All of us have inabilities but God will still work through us. God made each of us just the way we are for a specific plan. He loves all of us just the way we are in all of our frailties, but He will be our strength and work through us. **God desires to prepare us to do His work.**

EXODUS 4:13-17

But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send."

So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite 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.

"So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.

"And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs."

We see here that God begins to become frustrated with Moses. Basically Moses is saying, "I don't want to do this, send someone else." We don't know what was in Moses heart to respond this way. We do know that he was fearful and felt inadequate. But he certainly didn't want to obey and trust the Lord.

Our continual lack of belief in God and His plans for us can cause us to miss out on God's best in our lives. God wanted to bless Moses and have him be the one to do the speaking, but now God would use his brother Aaron to do that. Moses would now miss out on God's best plan. Later Aaron, in a leadership role, would cause problems for Moses and the children of Israel. That wasn't God's perfect way.

We need to be careful to do what God wants us to do the way He wants us to do it. Many times we bring problem upon ourselves when we don't trust the Lord. We need to trust Him for everything!

When God tells us to do something we must obey Him. He has a purpose for each of our lives and when we obey Him completely God can do mighty things through our lives. Instead of fearing man we must trust in the God who created us and holds all the power in the universe. He will equip us and do good things through us when we listen to Him. **God desires to prepare us to do His work.**

Burning Bushes That Are Consumed

Treat your class to cupcakes in green paper. Dye the frosting green and sprinkle with yellow, orange and red sprinkles.

Explain that these burning bushes are meant to be consumed.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust the Lord in everything. Have the children ask the Lord to reveal to them His plans for them and then to have the faith and trust to do what God would have them to do. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

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