SU Scotland

12. I Am

BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Exodus 3:1-15 (summarise rest of Exodus 1-4)

God appears to Moses at the burning bush and calls him to go to Pharaoh and rescue the Israelites from slavery

AIMS

To help the children understand how God revealed himself to Moses as "I Am," the eternal God who never changes.

To help them reflect on what they know of God's character

GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

God revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush and called him to a daunting task. It was important that Moses understood who God was so that he could have confidence in the fact that God was with him.

PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What does this passage reveal to us about who God is?
- What does God mean when he says, "I am who I am"?
- How does knowing God in this way help Moses as he takes on the challenge of going to Pharaoh? Take some time to pray for your group.

Guess The Leader Game

Have the children sitting in a circle and send one child out of the room. Nominate one child in the circle to be the leader. They perform an action, e.g. tapping their knees, pretending to play the piano etc. and the rest of the children must copy them. From time to time the leader must switch to a different action and everyone else must also switch to the new action as quickly as they can.

Get the child who is outside to come back in and stand in the middle of the circle. See how quickly they can identify the leader.

Israelite Slaves Game

If you choose to play this game, you may want to include the recap from the Exploring the Bible section below at the start to set the context.

Play a game similar to *Port, Starboard* but with the children taking on the role of the Israelite slaves.

Assign different sides of the room to be their homes, the fields, the building site and the palace and give them instructions to run to different locations and also to perform various actions, e.g. gather straw, mix mortar, build walls, bow to Pharaoh, pray to God. This game can be just for fun to let the children run off some energy or you can play with the last child to reach the right location or do the right action being eliminated each time until there is a winner.

Guess The Voice Game

You will need: cards (from additional document: Guess the voice cards)

Have all the children gathered at one end of the room and choose one child to go and sit at the other end with their back to the others.

Give one of the children in the group a card *(see additional*

(continued overleaf)

document: Guess the voice cards) Get them to disguise their voice and call out the name of the child who is at the opposite end of the room, and then to read out what is on the card.

The child at the opposite end of the room has to try to identify who was speaking. Once they have worked it out you can choose a different child to take their place as the guesser.

You can use the phrases on the cards more than once if you wish, depending on the number of children and how much time you have.

The phrases may sound strange to the children, but you can tell them that they are from the part of the Bible you will be looking at today and you'll find out more about them as you go through the story.

EXPLORING THE BIBLE

Recap

You will need: family tree (additional documents: family tree from session 8 of One Big Story)

Remind the children of where you left the story of the Bible at the end of Genesis last term with Joseph and his family moving to Egypt. Show them the family tree diagram as a reminder of what you looked at last term.

We're going to continue with the story of this family but we're going to jump ahead over 300 years. Joseph and his brothers had died by this point, but their descendants were still living in Egypt. They were now known as the Israelites, but they were being made to work as slaves by the Egyptians. The Pharaoh who was on the throne of Egypt at that time didn't know the history of why the Israelites were there and how they had been welcomed because Joseph had helped the Egyptians. This Pharaoh saw the Israelites as a threat, so he made them work as slaves - making bricks and building cities. They were badly paid and badly treated, and this went on for a long time.

Moses' Story

You will need: pictures printed out or on PowerPoint, Bible, simple costume for Moses e.g. headdress (could be a tea towel tied on with a piece of cord), robe and stick - picture of burning bush (see additional documents: Burning Bush Picture). You could have the picture of the burning bush stuck on the wall before the children arrive, so that it is ready for the drama later on.

The Israelites were slaves for many years, but finally God sent someone to help them.

What kind of leader do you think the Israelites would have needed? (Probably someone strong, powerful, brave...)

The person God chose to free the Israelites is probably not the kind of person you'd expect. It was a man called Moses. We can read about Moses in the Bible in the book of Exodus.

(You could use the images from slides 2,3 and 5 here: ***bit.ly/2FFNHU2*** *as you summarise the first part of Moses' story.)*

There's an amazing story of how he was rescued as a baby when Pharaoh made a law that all baby boys born to the Israelite people should be killed.

(If the children are interested, you can tell them they can read it in Exodus 2:1-10. They could look it up if they have a Bible at home or search for it on ***biblegateway.com****)*

As Moses grew up, he got angry about how the Israelites were being treated, but one day he took things too far and killed an Egyptian. He had to run away to another land and he worked as a shepherd for 40 years.

Look up Exodus 3 in a Bible and read out verse 1 to set the scene. Tell the children this is where they can find the story later if they want to read it for themselves but for now they are going to hear the story through a drama.

Have two leaders tell the story as a drama with one person being Moses and the other the voice of God. *(The script below is also included as an additional document: Moses and the Burning Bush Script.)* Make sure the burning bush picture is stuck on the wall for Moses to indicate as he talks about it.

Moses: One day I was out in the fields, looking after my sheep. It was just an ordinary day, but suddenly I saw something amazing. I saw a bush and it was on fire. That's not very special in itself, but the strange thing was that it kept on burning and burning but it didn't burn up! I went closer to take a look, and then something even more weird happened. The bush talked to me!

God: Moses! Moses!

Moses: Yes, here I am.

God: Don't come any closer! Take off your sandals! You are standing on holy ground. I am the God of your father - the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Moses: *(to audience)* So it wasn't really the bush talking, but it was God's voice coming out from the bush. I wondered why God was talking to me. What would he have to say to me? It was pretty scary.

God: I have seen the way my people are being treated as

slaves and I have heard them cry to me for help, so I am going to rescue them and lead them to their own land. I want you to go to Pharaoh and lead my people out of Egypt.

Moses: But why me? Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people?

God: I will be with you and I will help you.

Moses: But if I tell the people, "God spoke to me," they will say, "What is his name?" What should I tell them?

God: I am who I am. This is my eternal name.

Moses: But I can't go and say to the people that God spoke to me. They'll never believe me.

God: I will give you a sign to show them. Then they will believe you.

Moses: But God, I'm not good at speaking. I'll get my words mixed up and say the wrong thing.

God: Who is it who made your mouth? Was it not me? I will help you to have the right words to say.

Moses: But God, I don't want to do it. Please can you send someone else?

God: Ok, your brother Aaron is a good speaker. He can help you. I will tell you both what to say. Now go and get ready to go back to Egypt.

Video

You will need: equipment to play video

If you prefer not to use a drama, you could show the children this video clip from the film *Prince of Egypt*: **youtu.be/GqDMBlRaJJM**

REFLECT & RESPOND

Reflection

In the middle of an ordinary day, God spoke to Moses. When God told Moses to take off his shoes and said that he was standing on holy ground, it was because something very special was happening. God was there and he was speaking to Moses.

He asked him to do something really challenging. Can you remember what it was? To go to Pharaoh and to lead the Israelite people out of Egypt to the new land God was going to give them.

Moses felt it was too hard. Can you remember the different excuses he made? The people won't believe me, I'm not good at speaking, I don't want to do it.

Moses knew he wouldn't be able to do it by himself. That's why it was really important that he understood who God was so that he knew who was going to be with him to help him. God said something that sounded a bit strange. He said "I am who I am." I wonder what you think that could mean?

Basically, God was saying that he is the same forever. He was there before time began and he will be there for ever and ever, and he is always the same- he will never change. He will always be exactly who he is.

When God is talked about in this way in the Bible, it is often in connection with him rescuing his people and that's exactly what he was going to do. He was going to rescue the Israelites from being slaves.

Moses had been given this task, but he needed to know who God was and that God was with him so that he could take on the challenge and go to Pharaoh.

Memory Verse

You will need: cards with words for memory verse on

God revealed himself to Moses as God who is the same forever and who never changes.

Teach the children this verse as a reminder of that: "I am the Lord, and I do not change." (Malachi 3:6 NLT) You could have each word written on a separate card and have them hidden around the room. Get the children to find the cards and help them sort the words into order. Then get them to repeat the verse several times, removing two or three cards each time until they can say it from memory.

Prayer Activity

You will need: burning bush picture, flame picture for each child (see additional document: flames), pens or pencils, blu tack or similar

God spoke to Moses and showed him more of who he is and what he is like. I wonder what three words you would use to describe God? We gave you the chance to think about that at the very start of One Big Story, but now that you've heard more from the Bible maybe your understanding of who God is will have changed a bit.

The leaders could briefly share three words they would use to describe God (think about this in advance!), then give each child a picture of a flame and let them write their words onto it. When the children have finished, get them to come and stick their flame onto the picture of the burning bush. *(See additional document: Burning Bush picture)*

Lead the children in praising God, using some of the words the children wrote on the flames.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Video

You will need: equipment to play video

This video from Crossroads Kids Club summarises the story of Moses being rescued as a baby as well as his encounter with God at the burning bush: **vimeo.com/49018352**