

Holy and Humble Curiosity

This week's story from Exodus presents us with what, for Moses, was the unexpected, surprising, and humbling call to be an agent of God's justice. Moses has much to lose. His life has grown comfortable, but as Jesus affirms in today's gospel reading, life is only gained when you are ready to let it go. It all begins on holy ground, a place Moses enters with humility, but also a place he leaves with a renewed commitment to let his love, his passion for justice have the genuineness spoken of by the Apostle Paul.

Focus scripture: Exodus 3:1–15

When Moses encounters a burning bush, he has every reason to feel that the passion he once had for the suffering of the Israelite people was something that he long ago put behind him. As a young man and the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, he had risked everything to intervene on behalf of a Hebrew slave who was being abused by an Egyptian. In exile, he had started a new life with a family and a livelihood as a shepherd for his Midianite father-in-law. But Moses remained one who asked questions, whose curiosity led him to places he might otherwise never go. His exile was the direct result of his questioning the abuse of his people. When Moses comes upon a bush that is burning, but not consumed, he asks questions and investigates, which in turn leads him to holy ground where he encounters the voice of God.

It is impossible to separate the curiosity and questioning of Moses from his encounter with the holy. Without a spirit willing to explore, wonder, and be open to what he was unable to understand, there would be no voice calling out to him. The questioning, the curiosity, and the sacred place in which he encounters the holy voice of God go hand in hand. What's more, the curiosity and the experience of holiness are inseparable from what comes next, the call of God for Moses to be God's agent of justice and liberation for the people. It may have seemed to the Hebrews that God had moved on, just as Moses had sought to move on, leaving the agony of the Israelites behind. However, God was listening to the cry of their oppression. When this questioning, curiosity-driven son of Pharaoh's daughter shows up, God calls upon Moses to speak out on behalf of justice. The kind of holy curiosity that

leads one in the ways of God is necessarily accompanied by the type of humility that inspires a person to remove their shoes on holy ground and to acknowledge their own weaknesses and limitations. It should come as no surprise that Moses humbly responds with apprehension at this justice liberation call. According to this week's text, Moses hears from God a word that is spoken to all whose curiosity brings them to holy ground and the call to be agents of justice, "I will be with you."

Psalm 105:1–6, 23–26, 45c opens with a song of praise to God. This moment of praise continues through the highlighting of the prophets, Abraham, and Jacob and ends with a description of Moses' call with his brother Aaron. This passage upholds the history and gratitude for past leaders. Moses is the first of a long line of prophets, who with the prophet Micah continue posing the question "What does the Lord require, but to do justice, to love kindness and walk humbly with our God?"

It is this counter anti-imperial, pro-covenant life that the Apostle Paul has in mind in **Romans 12:9–21** when he says, "let love be genuine...(v. 9). If your enemies are hungry feed them...(v. 20)"

It is this anti-imperial, God embracing covenant that Jesus bears witness to in **Matthew 16:21–28** when he says, "For those who want to save their lives will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

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Curiosity and questioning bring Moses in humility to the place of holy ground. What does holy ground look like for your community of faith?



Focus scripture Exodus 3:1–15

Additional Scriptures
Psalm 105:1–6, 23–26,
45c
Romans 12:9–21
Matthew 16:21–28

You who speak into the mystery of the universe, creating life out of chaos, you invite us to look at our world with wonder, humility, and an unrelenting commitment to your liberating love. May our worship bring us into an encounter with the calling of your holiness and the life of your justice. Amen.

Lecture Connection
links current events with this week's scriptures. Go to www.seasonsonline.ca and click on the link.

The Focus for Ages 3–5

Young children appreciate hearing their names spoken lovingly, and have a clear sense of what it means to be singled out and “called.” Being called by name helps children to feel affirmed for who they are and shows them that they are recognized and valued. Hearing and participating in this week’s story of Moses’ call from God can lead the children to be alert for their own names.

Children in this age group learn through their senses. The Bible story itself has many sensory elements, and session activities such as finger painting to music will tap into the children’s senses.

Many young children are learning that what they do is important, and discovering that their actions have consequences for the people and things around them. This session will provide opportunities for children to engage personally in activities that have an impact on others. The key to the session is to help children recognize that they are called by God too, called to show God’s love in the world.

Pray that these young children will stay open to God’s call throughout their lives – however that call comes to them.

Prepare

Before the session

- ❑ Prayerfully reflect on this week’s focus scripture, Exodus 3:1–15, and biblical background material (p. 75).
- ❑ Set a worship space with green cloth, candle, offering basket, Bible with bookmark placed in focus passage.
- ❑ Bring basic supply kit (p. 2) and, if possible, *Seasons Growing Faith Songbook*, *Seasons Growing Faith Music CD*, and CD or MP3 player; downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings are available at www.seasonsonline.ca.

Gather

- ❑ Bring “Welcome Song” (on resource sheet “Additional Songs and Poems,” p. 82) or “Family Thank You” (p. 8 in *SGF Songbook*; #4 on *SGF Music CD*).
- ❑ Bring resource sheet “Name Games” (p. 84); option: bring a puppet (see information on p. 2).

Engage

- ❑ Bring story figure of Miriam (from the poster Storytelling Resources #2).
- ❑ Bring resource sheet “A Surprising Call,” red, orange, and yellow markers or crayons, and sheet of poster board; draw the outline of a simple bush shape on the poster board.

- ❑ Bring a paper child figure for each child (see “Patterns,” p. 83).

Respond

Choose from the options provided. Prepare and bring the materials.

- ❑ **Love necklace:** red pipe cleaners, yarn
- ❑ **Puppets:** copies of resource sheet “Puppet Faces,” small paper bags; cut out a set of faces for each child.
- ❑ **Art response:** white crayons or candles, permanent marker, sheets of white paper, watercolour paints, brushes, painting shirts; print “God calls (*Child’s name*)” at the top of each sheet of paper, using a white crayon or candle to print children’s names (press firmly); make one for yourself.

Bless

- ❑ Bring “Blessing Song” (on resource sheet “Additional Songs and Poems,” p. 82) or “Like a Rock” (p. 16 in *SGF Songbook*; #11 on *SGF Music CD*).

For groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds, supplemental resources can be downloaded from the Library at www.seasonsonline.ca.



August 30, 2020

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Scripture

Exodus 3:1–15

FOCUS To hear how God called Moses and that God calls us too

Gather

Welcome each child, saying “Hello, *(child’s name)*, we’re happy you’re here.” Invite them to share experiences from the past week.

Opening ritual

Gather around the worship space. Light the candle, saying, “This candle reminds us of God’s love which is all around us.”

Pray Thank you, God,
for the stories in the Bible,
that help us learn about your love.
Thank you that we can be
with our friends here today. Amen.

Sing “Welcome Song” (p. 82) or “Family Thank You” (p. 8 in *SGF Songbook*; #4 on *SGF Music CD*).

Extinguish the candle to signal that the opening ritual has ended.

Moving into the theme

Choose one of the following:

☐ Puppet conversation

Priscilla: Hi, everybody! (*Goes around the circle saying to each child, “I’m happy to see you [name].”*)

Leader: Hi, Priscilla. We’re happy to see you too. And we like hearing you say our names!

Priscilla: Boys and girls, how do you feel when friends call out your name? (*Encourage responses.*)

Leader: Let’s play a name game together. (*Choose a game from the resource sheet “Name Games,” p. 84.*) Our story from the Bible today is about someone who heard God call out his name in a surprising way. (*Say goodbye to Priscilla.*)

☐ **Name game** Say hello to each of the children, using their names, and then invite them to take turns saying each other’s name as they say hello. Then choose one or two games from the resource sheet “Name Games” (p. 84) to play together. Explain that in today’s story from the Bible someone hears God call his name in a surprising way.

Engage

Before the story

Invite a child to bring the Bible from the worship table and use the bookmark to open it to the book of Exodus.

Show the story figure of Miriam (from the poster (*Storytelling Resources #2*)) and help children remember last week’s story about baby Moses being looked after by his mother, by his sister

Miriam, and by a princess. Explain that in this week’s story Moses is now a grownup.

The Bible story

Use the resource sheet “A Surprising Call” and the poster board to tell the story based on **Exodus 3:1–15**, inviting children to participate as indicated.

After the story

Sing "Moses Heard God's Call" (tune: "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

Moses heard God call his name,
call his name, call his name.
Moses heard God call his name
beside the burning bush.

God calls us to show God's love,
show God's love, show God's love.
God calls us to show God's love.
There's so much we can do!

Give each child a paper child figure. Invite them, one at a time, to place their figure on the worship table, and name a loving thing they could do.

Respond

Choose from the following activities.

- ☐ **Love necklaces** God calls us to help people too. Invite children to make a love necklace as a reminder of this call. Distribute pipe cleaners and show them how to form these into a heart shape. Help them attach lengths of yarn to the top of the shapes and tie these around their necks as necklaces. Take turns holding up the necklaces and saying "God is love, and I can share God's love by..." Encourage them to make extra love necklaces to give away.



- ☐ **Puppets** Moses heard God's call to help people. Like Moses, we can help people too. Distribute faces from the resource sheet "[Puppet Faces](#)" and invite children to decorate one as their own face. Follow the instructions for making

the puppets. Help the children practice being Moses and saying, "God is with me. I am going to help the people." Then, turn the puppet around and say, "God is with me. I can..." Encourage children to think of ways they can show God's love as they help others.

- ☐ **Art response** Moses heard his name called in an unusual way. This activity invites children to recognize their names in a surprising way. Distribute papers with the hidden names. Read the words "God calls..." and then demonstrate how to paint over the paper with a wash of water-colour to reveal your name. As they repeat the process with their own papers, have them call out their names as they appear.

Bless

Gather in the worship space. Light the candle again and remind children that God loves them very much.

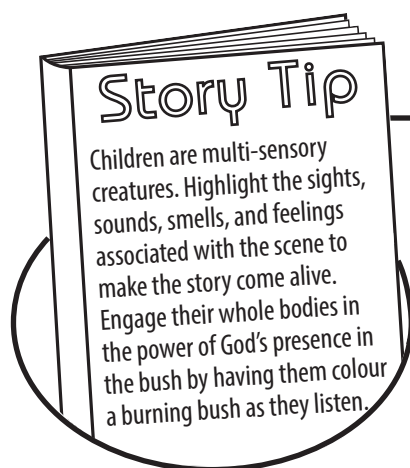
Pray Thank you, God,
for your BIG (*stretch arms wide*) love.
Thank you for helping
us to share your love. Amen.

Sing the "[Blessing Song](#)" (p. 82) or the song, "Like a Rock" (p. 16 in *SGF Songbook*, #11 on *SGF Music CD*).

Send each child out with the words, "(Child's name), God will always be with you."

Reflect

As this is your final session as a group for this season, please take a moment to complete the evaluation form (at the end of this resource or in Library at www.seasonsonline.ca). The developers of the *Seasons of the Spirit* resources appreciate hearing about your experiences with the materials.



A Surprising Call

(based on Exodus 3:1–15)

Long ago in Bible times, God's people worked hard for a mean king. But God had a plan to help them. Moses was an important part of God's plan.

Moses knew about the king. Moses had run away from the king and was living in the desert, caring for sheep. One day Moses decided to go up on a mountain.

(Set out the poster board bush with red, orange, and yellow crayons or markers. Invite children to colour the outline of the burning bush as they listen to the rest of the story.)

There on the mountain Moses saw something amazing – a bush. Not an ordinary bush, but a bush on fire! Not an ordinary bush on fire, but a bush on fire that didn't burn up!
Imagine hearing that fire crackle.
Imagine smelling the branches burn.
Imagine feeling heat from the burning bush.
Imagine seeing a fire that just keeps burning.

Moses could hardly look. But he heard a voice call, "Moses, Moses!"

Moses answered, "Here I am."

The voice told Moses to take off his shoes, because he was in a very special place.

Moses felt his shoes slip off, but he still could hardly look at the burning bush.

Then Moses heard the voice say, "I am God and I am calling you."

Moses listened carefully to God's call.

God said, "I want you to help the people get away from the mean king. I want you to take them to a new home."

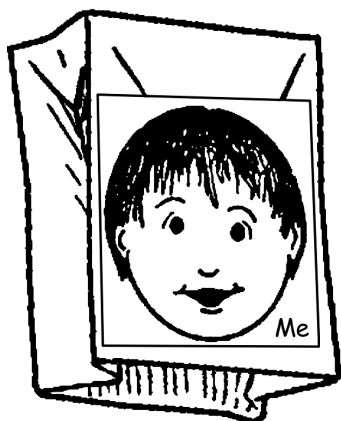
Moses didn't know what to think. He said, "How can I do that?"

Then God said, "I will be with you."

Moses heard God's call and also felt God's love all around him. Moses knew he would do what God called him to do.

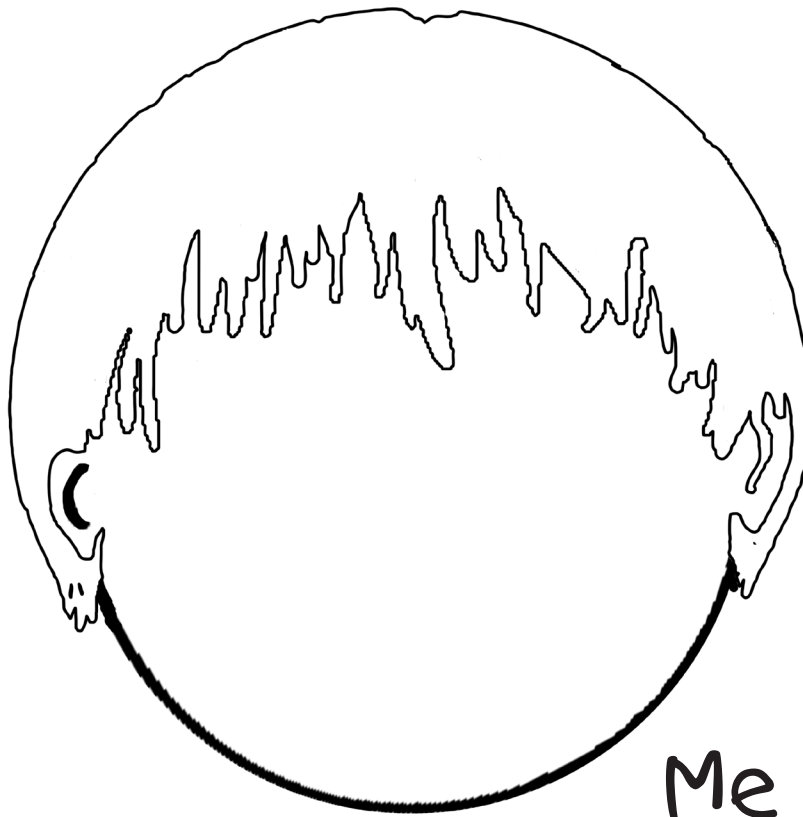


Puppet Faces



Instructions

- Cut out the pair of faces and decorate.
- Turn a paper bag upside down so the open edge is at the bottom.
- Glue Moses' face to one side.
- Glue child's face to the other side.
- Slip the bag over the hand and move the hand when Moses is talking.
- Turn the bag around to show the child's face when the child is talking.



ADDITIONAL SONGS AND POEMS

WELCOME SONG

(tune: "London Bridge")

Gather round with us today,
to sing and pray, to learn and play.
Gather round with us today,
God loves us in every way.

BLESSING SONG

(tune: "London Bridge")

God is with us as we go,
as we go, home today.
God is with us as we go.
God loves us in every way.

GOD'S LOVE

(tune: "The Wheels on the Bus")

God's love for me goes on and on,
on and on, on and on.
God's love for me goes on and on,
everywhere I go.
(Repeat song using the words "you" and
"us" instead of "me.")

I CAN SING AND PRAY

(tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

I can sing and pray and grow.
I can draw and laugh and throw.
I can push and pull and lift.
I can choose to share my gifts.
I can sing and pray and grow,
all because God loves me so.

I'M LOVED

(tune: "Head and Shoulders")

Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes, knees and toes.
Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
all of me is loved!
(Other verses: Wiggly fingers, wiggly
toes... Eyes and ears, and mouth and
nose... Neck and elbows, hips and
feet...)

LISTEN, LISTEN

(tune: "London Bridge")

Listen, listen, God loves us,
God loves us, God loves us.
Listen, listen, God loves us,
God helps us to be friends.

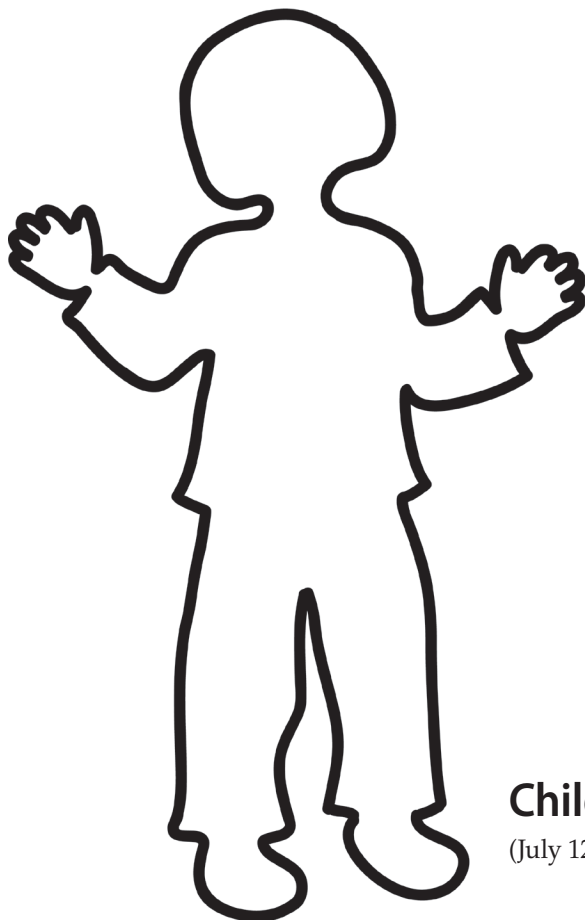
SLEEP LITTLE BABY

(August 23)

Sleep little baby (close eyes and lay
head on folded hands),
safe in my arms (hug arms around
self).
I'll hug and rock you (cradle arms and
rock back and forth),
and keep you from harm (pretend to
hug a baby).
Hush little baby (put finger to mouth
and say "Shhh"),
don't start to cry (wave finger back
and forth and shake head),
I'll hug and rock you (cradle arms and
rock back and forth),
'cause I love you, that's why! (Fold
arms over heart.)



PATTERNS

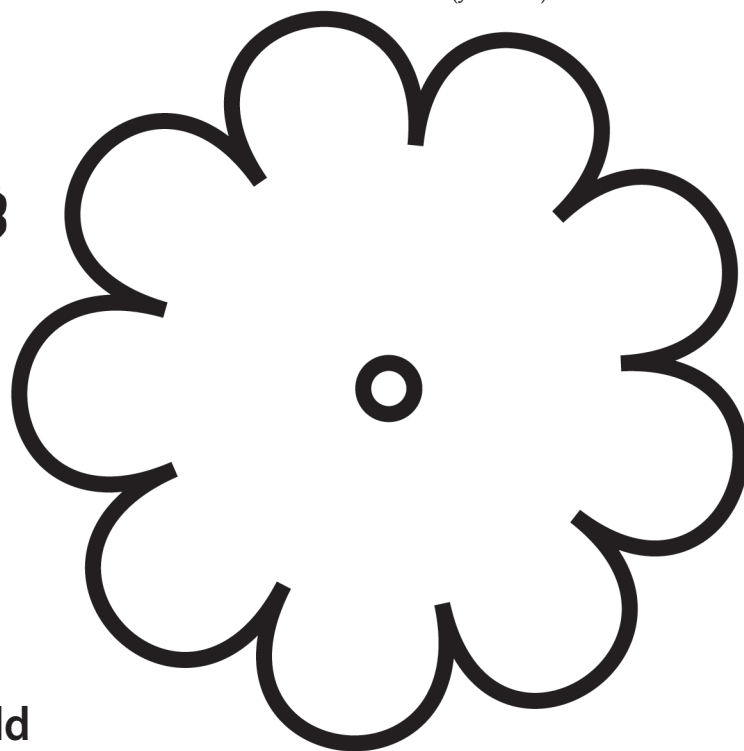


Child

(July 12, August 23, 30)

Flower

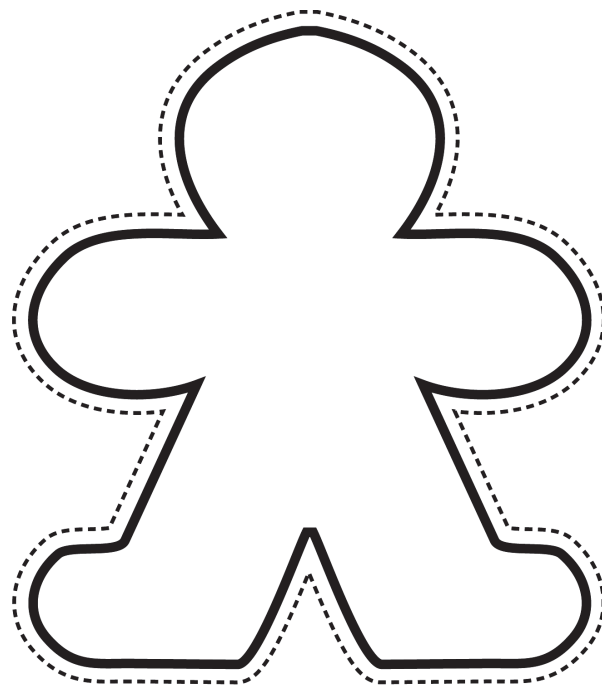
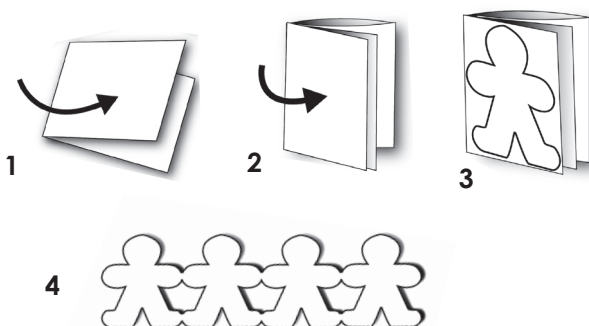
(June 28)



PAPER DOLLS

(August 16)

1. Use half a sheet of paper that has been cut lengthwise.
2. Fold paper in half and in half again in the same direction.
3. On the top section, draw a person whose hands extend to the folds of the paper (or trace pattern on this page).
4. Invite the children to do the unfolding to reveal four people.



Name

Games

Sock welcome

Hand out pairs of unmatched socks to the children to put over their hands. Play some music and ask the children to walk around the room, and each time they meet someone, they shake hands and say, "Welcome, my name is (*say name*)."

When the music stops, everyone removes one sock and switches it with another person. Start the music again and repeat as before. Do this several times and then for the last turn, everyone tries to find a matched pair of socks to wear. (Important: make sure that all socks have a match.)

Name clap

Sit in a circle. Demonstrate how to clap for each syllable of a name. For example, Je-sus would have two claps; Jer-e-mi-ah would have four claps. Clap the first name of the child sitting beside you. Encourage everyone to repeat that child's name with the appropriate number of claps. Repeat for each child around the circle. (Variation: stand and stomp each name around the circle.)

Magnetic people

Scatter around the room. When the music begins, walk (skip, slide, crawl, jump) around the room. When the music stops, call out a child's name. Everyone immediately surrounds and gently touches the named child (the magnet). Start the music again and repeat using another child's name. Continue until every child has become a magnet. (Note: if some children do not want to be touched, move close to them or simply point to them.)

Rolling ball

Sit in a circle. Children say their own names aloud just before rolling the ball to another person in the circle. Encourage eye contact so that the children will know when they will be receiving the ball. If the children already know each other's names, call out the name of the child who is to receive the ball.

