

Semicontinuous

Exod. 3:1–15
Ps. 105:1–6,
23–26, 45b

Complementary

Jer. 15:15–21
Ps. 26:1–8
Rom. 12:9–21
Matt. 16:21–28

You Called?

Goal for the Session *Tweens will analyze the story of Moses and the burning bush and consider what God might be calling them to do.*

■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

Focus on Exodus 3:1–15

WHAT is important to know?

—From “Exegetical Perspective” by Gary W. Charles

God gives Moses a seemingly insurmountable task to accomplish, but God will not allow Moses to assume that he will engage the powers of Egypt alone. Moses assumes he needs more authoritative information, but the voice from the burning bush reminds Moses that he knows more than enough: “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your ancestors, 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 title for all generations” (v. 15).

WHERE is God in these words?

—From “Theological Perspective” by Rebecca Blair Young

God uses the name, YHWH Elohim, the Hebrew expression for Lord God, in reference to God’s relationship with Israel’s ancestors. In the context of human relationship, God graciously identifies Godself in familiar and familial terms. This three-step progression—from God’s identification of Godself as Supreme Being, then as Supreme Being who acts in human history by sending shepherds, and finally as the God in relationship with Israel—is God’s way of acknowledging and responding to Moses and to Israel, joining in the common refrain, “Here I am.”

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “Pastoral Perspective” by H. James Hopkins

Moses learned that it was time to let go of his life as a shepherd and embrace a new role as the deliverer of the Hebrew people. What old ways of being have we been asked to let go of? What current ways of being are we being asked to let go of? What new ways of being are we being asked to claim? Absent the appearance of a burning bush, how do we know when it is time to let go of the old and take hold of the new?

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From “Homiletical Perspective” by Geoffrey M. St. J. Hoare

The import of this name is that YHWH cannot be reduced to a characteristic any more than captured in a definition. However comfortable we may be with ambiguity as an intellectual matter, most of us, at the level of practical theology, want everything sorted out, logical, definitive, and clear. YHWH will fill out the content of the character implied in the divine name as the promised constancy and fidelity unfolds in history. In Exodus 20:2 YHWH will offer content to the name: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Exodus 3:1–15

Focus on Your Teaching

Tweens are starting the journey to independence and want to be considered capable. Being chosen to do a particular job means a lot to them. Still, some may wonder what God is calling them to do. The challenge for tweens is to respond to God's presence and call, even while learning to recognize them. They need help as they discover how to discern God's voice and respond. Affirm the ways you see God speaking to them. Be honest about your own experiences and struggles. Tweens need role models of authentic discipleship.

Loving God, help me to recognize what you are calling me to do. Give me wisdom as I invite tweens to listen for your call in their lives. Amen.

YOU WILL NEED

- green cloth
- battery-powered candle
- Color Pack 1, 27, 28
- Singing the Feast*, 2023–2024; CD player
- copies of Resource Sheet 1
- Bibles
- newsprint or markerboard
- markers
- plain paper
- buttons or pennies

For Responding

- option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 2, pens
- option 2: scissors, pencils, markers, orange and yellow paper, Color Pack 2, bulletin board, push pins
- option 3: self-hardening clay, slips of paper, pens

LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, if you are using the extended activity in option 2 in Responding, make arrangements to visit an adult or youth class.

Welcome tweens by name and encourage them to tell about high points of their week. Ask them to write on newsprint or markerboard any nicknames they have right now and any they had as children. Add your own.

Gather the group by playing “Amazing Grace” (Color Pack 27; track 1 on *Singing the Feast*, 2023–2024). Invite tweens to sing along as they arrange the green cloth in the center of your learning space and place the candle and Bible on it. Light the candle as a reminder of Jesus' presence. Pray aloud:

Loving God, we gather to learn more about you and your word. Help us to feel your presence with us. Amen.

Draw attention to the names on the newsprint or board. Ask:

- ✠ Who calls out your name on a regular basis?
- ✠ How do you distinguish between the different voices that call your name?
- ✠ How do you respond when you hear someone call your name?

Comment that the Bible story today is about someone who heard God calling his name.

EXPLORING

Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Moses Grows Up). Ask for volunteers to read the parts of the two narrators. The entire group will read the “Chorus” parts in unison. Give tweens a few minutes to read over their lines and then perform the choral reading.



FEASTING on the WORD

CURRICULUM

You Called?

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet
the sound,
That saved someone like me.
I once was lost but now am
found,
Was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers,
toils, and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace that brought me
safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

When we've been here ten
thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing
God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

If tweens are puzzled by God's name, explain that one of the great mysteries of our faith is that God was not created. God is eternal—has no beginning or end. That is why one of God's names is I AM.

If discussion stalls, invite tweens to think of verbs that could describe ways to follow in God's way. Examples: pray, care, share, help, welcome, comfort, protect, tell, read, plant, transform, and defend. Point out that we are all called to do those things.

Invite learners to listen as you read what happened to Moses next. Read aloud Exodus 3:1–15 from your Bible. Distribute paper and markers, and ask tweens to illustrate the story as you read it aloud a second time. Encourage volunteers to show and tell about their illustrations.

Ask:

- ✧ How do you imagine you would react if you heard God's voice speaking to you from a burning bush?

Ask tweens to turn to Exodus 3 in their Bibles, helping each other as needed. Discuss the story:

- ✧ How did Moses know that it was God speaking?
- ✧ Why do you think God spoke to Moses through a burning bush?
- ✧ Why did God choose Moses to be the one to go to Pharaoh and free the Hebrew slaves?
- ✧ What qualifications did Moses have for this job?
- ✧ How did God help Moses prepare to do this job?
- ✧ What promises did God make to Moses?
- ✧ What do we learn about God from verses 14–15?

Form two groups. Invite tweens to imagine Moses is mulling over whether he should do what God is calling him to do. Group 1 must come up with reasons why Moses should say yes to God's call. Group 2 must come up with reasons why Moses should say no to God. Give groups several minutes to discuss their reasons and choose a spokesperson for the group. Ask each spokesperson to present the group's case.

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Exodus 5:1.

- ✧ Did Moses say yes or no to God's call?
- ✧ How difficult do you think it was for Moses to say yes to God?
- ✧ How did Moses' "yes" change his life?
- ✧ How did Moses' "yes" change the lives of the Hebrew people?

Place Color Pack 1 on a table or the floor, and explain that the check mark means "agree," the "X" means "disagree," and the question mark means "not sure." Give a button or penny to each learner. Read aloud the following statements. Pause after each one for tweens to place their buttons or pennies on the mark that shows their responses. Ask for volunteers to give reasons for their choices.

- ✧ Moses should have said yes to God immediately.
- ✧ It is harder for people to hear God's voice today than it was in Moses' time.
- ✧ Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between my imagination and God's voice.
- ✧ I wish God would speak to me from a burning bush. That way, I would know for sure that it is God speaking.
- ✧ If I had been Moses, I would have done what God asked without hesitation.

Observe that just as God called Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt and into the promised land, so God has something for each one of them to do. Ask:

- ✧ What might God be calling you to do?

EASY
PREP

Extend this activity by arranging for tweens to visit with members of an adult or youth class. Have tweens ask, “What are some things you feel God has called you to do?” Have tweens write the responses on blank paper flames and add them to the display.

RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

- 1. Conversations with God** Tweens will listen for Jesus’ call through a writing and prayer exercise. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Conversations with God) and pens. Have tweens find a quiet spot and sit quietly and listen for what God may be speaking to their hearts. They may take off their shoes if they wish. When they are ready, they can answer the questions on the sheet. Invite volunteers to share their answers.
- 2. Bulletin Board** Tweens will create a bulletin board display about what God might call them to do. Show Color Pack 2, and invite tweens to imagine that this is the burning bush Moses saw in the wilderness. Distribute orange and yellow paper, pencils, markers, and scissors. Ask tweens to cut out two flame shapes similar to those on the image. On each flame, write one thing that God might call them to do. Make two flames and record your own ideas, too. (It is fine if there are some duplicates.) Mount Color Pack 2 on a bulletin board, and have tweens arrange their construction-paper flames around it. Allow a few quiet moments for everyone to read what is written on each flame.
- 3. Prayer Bowl** Tweens will enjoy a creative activity as they reflect on what God is calling them to do. Give a small ball of self-hardening clay to each learner. Demonstrate how to mold the clay in their hands until it is warm and pliable. Have them sit quietly and shape the clay into a bowl as they think about what God might be calling them to do. When they have finished, provide slips of paper and have tweens write down some of the ideas that came to them as they created their bowls. Provide any instructions needed for hardening the clay, and encourage them to place the bowls in their rooms at home as a reminder of God’s call.

CLOSING

Gather around the candle and light it, if necessary. Invite tweens to mention one thing they want to remember from the story of Moses and the burning bush. Pray aloud:

Loving God, thank you for stories that help us discover more about you and your loving ways. Help us to live and love as Jesus taught. Amen.

Sing “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me” (Color Pack 28; track 11 on *Singing the Feast, 2023–2024*). Lead the closing charge:

Leader: We are ready to live so God can use us.

All: Go with God! Amen!

Extinguish the candle. Say good-bye to each tween by name.

I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

I’m gonna live so God can
use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I’m gonna live so God can
use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I’m gonna work . . .

I’m gonna share . . .

I’m gonna care . . .

MOSES GROWS UP (The really short version)

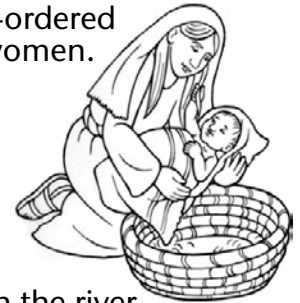
Narrator 1: For many years, the Hebrew people were slaves in the land of Egypt.

Narrator 2: Pharaoh—that's what Egyptians called their king—ordered his soldiers to kill all baby boys born to Hebrew women.

Chorus: How terrible!

Narrator 1: When Moses was born, his mother hid him away.

Narrator 2: You cannot hide a baby for long, so something had to be done.



Narrator 1: Moses' mother put him in a basket and put him in the river.

Chorus: She left her baby?

Narrator 2: She told her daughter to watch over him.

Narrator 1: Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river each day to swim.

Narrator 2: And she found Moses and adopted him as her own child.

Narrator 1: Moses' sister volunteered to get a nursemaid for the child.

Narrator 2: Moses' mother was hired to look after the new prince.

Chorus: Baby Moses was saved!

Narrator 1: Moses grew up as a prince in the royal household.

Narrator 2: He learned how to read and write.

Narrator 1: He learned how to speak to Pharaoh.

Chorus: This guy knew his way around court.

Narrator 2: But Moses never forgot that he was a Hebrew.

Narrator 1: One day he went outside.

Narrator 2: And saw a slave master beating one the Hebrew slaves.

Narrator 1: Moses was angry and killed the slave master!

Chorus: What happened next?

Narrator 2: Pharaoh found out.

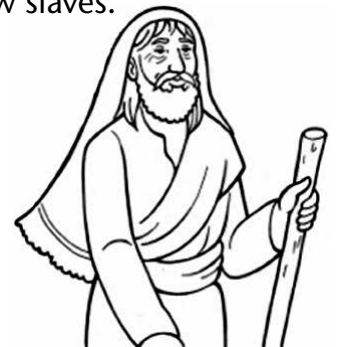
Narrator 1: Moses had to run away and go into hiding.

Narrator 2: For forty years.

Chorus: That's a really long time!

Narrator 1: For forty long years, Moses tended sheep in the wilderness.

Narrator 2: Then one day something amazing happened!



September 3, 2023
You Called?

Tweens
Resource Sheet 2

Conversations with God

How might God use someone like you?

What kind of personality do you have?



What job at church
would you love to try?

What are some things
God is asking you to do?

What things do you do well?

How could God use these gifts?

How might God use someone like you?

Write a prayer asking the Spirit to help you to
hear God's voice and recognize God's call.