

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

Called by Name

Goal for the Session After hearing the story of Moses and the burning bush, children will imagine 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

YOU WILL NEED

- small table
- green cloth
- Christ candle, matches or battery-powered candle
- Bible
- offering basket
- Color Pack 1, 2, 27, 32
- Resource Sheet 1, 2
- Singing the Feast*, bit.ly/SingingTheFeast
- scissors

For Responding

- option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 3, scissors, crayons, craft sticks, tape, glue
- option 2: Color Pack 2, orange, red, and yellow construction paper; scissors; newsprint; marker; pens; dark poster board; tape
- option 3: newsprint; marker; 1" orange, red, and yellow ribbon; fine-tipped permanent markers; 18" twig; stapler; yarn
- option 4: plastic storage containers with lids; clean sand; small stones; plastic forks; *Singing the Feast*, bit.ly/SingingTheFeast

Focus on Your Teaching

Most children understand that when they hear their name called, it requires some kind of response. If a parent uses their full name, they may shudder at the prospect. Younger children are very open to the idea that God speaks to people today, though perhaps not from a burning bush. Older children may have questions and be a little more cynical. Be ready to tell about the ways in which you have heard God's call and how you have responded. One response may be teaching church school.

Loving God, help me to recognize your voice of love and hear what you might be calling me to do. Amen.

LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, print the gathering litany on newsprint or poster board to use in each session. Display Color Pack 1. Cut apart the memory verse on Resource Sheet 2. For option 2 in Responding, draw a simple tree trunk in the middle of a dark piece of poster board. For option 3 in Responding, cut the ribbons into 3' lengths. For option 4 in Responding, make a sample sand garden.

As you greet the children, have them help you arrange the green cloth on the small table to make a worship table. Place a Christ candle (white pillar candle with a symbol of Christ etched or drawn on it), an offering basket, and a Bible open to Exodus 3 on it.

Tell learners that the green cloth means the church is in the Ordinary Time (or the Season after Pentecost), a part of the church year when there are no special days. Point to this season on Color Pack 1.

Light the Christ candle. If you wish, have a child gather the offerings.

Sing the gathering song for these weeks, "Bim Bom" (Color Pack 27, *Singing the Feast*). Note that the words *bim* and *bom* have no meaning, but the words *Shabbat shalom* are Hebrew for "peaceful Sabbath."

Then lead the group in this gathering litany:

Leader: Loving God, be with us today.

Children: We have come to learn about you.

Leader: Teacher Jesus, we want to follow your teachings.

Children: We have come to learn what you teach.

Leader: Holy Spirit, we look for your help.

Children: Amen.



FEASTING on the WORD

CURRICULUM

Called by Name

If open flames are not allowed in your Sunday school, use a battery-powered candle.

Bim Bom

Bim bom bim bim bim bom
 Bim bim bim bim bim bom.
 Bim bom bim bim bim bom
 Bim bim bim bim bim bom.

Shabbat shalom!
 Shabbat shalom!
 Shabbat, shabbat, shabbat,
 Shabbat shalom!

Extinguish candle.

Have the children sit in a circle. Call a child's name and ask her or him to perform a specific action such as hopping on one foot, twirling around, or making a funny face. The child stands, performs the action, then calls on another child and names an action to do. Continue until every child has been called. Ask:

- ✪ Who called your name this week?
- ✪ What is it like to hear your name called?

Comment that in today's Bible story God calls someone's name.

EXPLORING

Ask a child to get the Bible from the worship table. Explain that today's story is from the book of Exodus in the Old Testament, the books of the Bible written before Jesus was born. Invite the children to tell what they know about Moses. Explain that when Moses grew up he went to live in another country. Tell the story on Resource Sheet 1 (God Calls Moses).

Suggest that the children take off their shoes like Moses did and slowly walk to look at the burning bush on Color Pack 2. Ask:

- ✪ What might Moses see? Hear? Smell?

Say to the children: "Feel the warmth of the flames. Hear the crackle of the fire. Listen! A voice is speaking from the bush! Cover your eyes with your hands."

After a moment, ask:

- ✪ What did God call Moses to do?
- ✪ What did Moses say?

Show the children the words for Exodus 3:12 from Resource Sheet 2 (Rebus) prepared earlier. Together, arrange the pieces to form the verse. Read the verse together. Repeat it five times. Each time, turn over one piece until no words are showing. Ask:

- ✪ How do you think God's promise helped Moses?

Sit in a circle around Color Pack 2. Play "Blessed to Be a Blessing" (*Singing the Feast*). Invite the children to look at the image, listen to the music, and imagine what God might be calling them to do. When the music ends, ask:

- ✪ When might people hear God's voice today?
- ✪ What might God be calling you to do?

RESPONDING

If possible, offer at least two options so the children have a choice. One might be more challenging to interest older children who can work on their own.

1. **Puppets** With puppets, the children will imagine how God might call them. Follow the instructions on Resource Sheet 3 (Moses and Me) for making puppets. Have the

If children have difficulty imagining what God is calling them to do, ask questions like: Is there someone who needs help? How could you show God's love this week? Who could you encourage? How could you look after the earth?

EASY
PREP

children practice being Moses and saying, “God has called me to lead the people out of Egypt.” Then, have the children turn the puppet around, and say, “God has called me to (*children name something God might call them to do*).”

2. **Art Activity** Children will create art that helps them imagine what God is calling them to do. Place Color Pack 2 nearby for inspiration. Have children cut large flame shapes from construction paper. Ask them to imagine what God might be calling them to do. List their ideas on newsprint. Have children choose one idea and print it on their flames. Attach the flames around the tree trunk on dark poster board.
3. **Ribbon Mobile** Children will use their imagination to think about God’s call in their lives. Ask the children to think about what God might be calling them to do. List their ideas on newsprint. Have each child choose one idea and print it on a length of ribbon. Lay the ribbons over the twig to create flames. Adjust the two ends to hang evenly. Pinch both sides of each ribbon together under the twig and staple. Tie the ends of a length of yarn to the twig, about 8" apart. Hang the mobile where the ribbons will move in the breeze and look like dancing flames.
4. **Sand Gardens** Sitting with a meditation sand garden will allow children to reflect on God’s call. Show the meditation sand garden you made, and demonstrate how to quietly rake it with a plastic fork while praying or saying a Bible verse. Distribute supplies. Begin by filling containers $\frac{3}{4}$ full with sand. Add stones to the container, encouraging children to try different arrangements until they are pleased. Distribute plastic forks. Play “Music for Meditation” (*Singing the Feast*) and invite children to rake patterns in their sand gardens as they think about what God may call them to do. Provide lids and encourage children to take their sand gardens home.

CLOSING

Play and sing “This Little Light of Mine” (Color Pack 32, *Singing the Feast*) as the children gather at the worship table. Light the candle.

Ask the children to take deep breaths and pay attention to their breath as it comes in and goes out. Observe that God is as close to them as their breath. God is always with them.

Pray:

God of stories, thank you for stories that help us discover more about you and what it means to live in Jesus’ ways. Amen.

Invite the children to pile their hands in the middle of the circle for the closing ritual:

Leader: Let us go out remembering that

All: God goes with us.

Extinguish the candle. Thank each child for coming and affirm positive contributions. Remind them that you will pray for them throughout the coming week.

This Little Light of Mine

This little light of mine,
 I’m gonna let it shine.
 This little light of mine,
 I’m gonna let it shine.
 This little light of mine,
 I’m gonna let it shine,
 Let it shine, let it shine, let
 it shine.

Everywhere I go . . .

Jesus gave it to me . . .

God Calls Moses**based on Exodus 3:1–15**

When the Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt, they were very badly treated. But God had a plan to help them, and Moses was part of God's plan.

Moses had grown up in the royal palace, so Moses knew about Pharaoh. When Moses was a young man, he ran away from the palace and lived in the wilderness, caring for sheep.

One day, Moses saw something very strange. A bush was on fire. Well, the bush was blazing away, but it wasn't burning up. Suddenly, Moses heard God calling to him from inside the bush.

"Moses! Don't come any closer," God commanded. "Take off your sandals. You are standing on holy ground."

Moses did what God said and waited to hear what God wanted.

"I am the God of your parents and grandparents," God said. "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Moses covered his face with his hands, for he was afraid to look at the burning bush.

"I have heard the cries of my people in Egypt," said God. "I have seen how badly they are treated and I have counted every tear they have shed. Now I am sending you to Pharaoh so you can lead my people out of Egypt and take them to a new home."

Moses didn't think he could do what God was asking.

"I am nobody," Moses said. "How can I go to Pharaoh and lead the people out of Egypt?"

"I will be with you, Moses. I will help you," God answered.

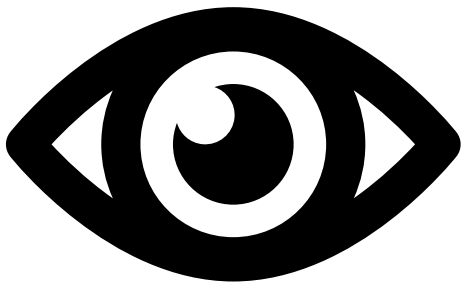
"Yes, but . . ." spluttered Moses. "What if they ask me your name? What do I tell them?"

"I AM WHO I AM," answered God. "Tell them the one called I AM sent me to you. Tell them I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

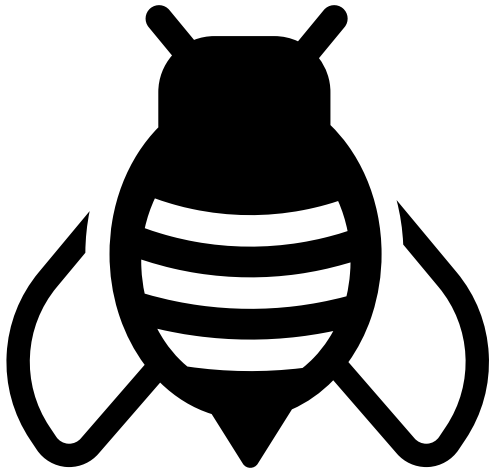
Moses obeyed God and went to Pharaoh. And that was the beginning of a whole new adventure.



Rebus



will



with

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Moses and Me

Directions:

- Draw your face in the blank outline.
- Cut out both faces.
- Tape a craft stick to the back of one face.
- Glue the other face to the other side so you have a puppet with Moses' face on one side and your face on the other.

