

Sunday School Stories – Moses in the River
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Reflection & Discussion Questions

Exodus tells the story of God freeing His people from slavery and oppression

Read and discuss Exodus 1:6-14 (NIV)

⁶ Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, ⁷ but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.

⁸ Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. ⁹ “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. ¹⁰ Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.”

¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ¹³ and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴ They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

*What stands out to you from this passage?

*What are some of the reasons that people in power choose oppression?

*As God’s people, how can we continue our awareness of oppression?

Power is not needed to stand against oppression

Read and discuss Exodus 1:15-22 (NIV)

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, ¹⁶ “When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” ¹⁷ The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. ¹⁸ Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”

¹⁹ The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.”

²⁰ So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

²² Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

*What can we learn from Shiphrah and Puah in this passage?

*How did they make sure their resources and abilities were at use for liberation not oppression?

*Where have you seen someone use their skills or abilities, even while lacking ‘power’?

The hand of God who delivers His creation is on Moses

Read and discuss Exodus 2:1-10 (NIV)

² Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, ² and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

⁵ Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. ⁶ She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

⁷ Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

⁸ "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

*What characteristics of the Moses birth story are in other stories of deliverance – past and future?

*What do you find interesting about the translation of Moses' basket being the same word as the ark in the flood narrative?

*Discuss the ancient Rabbi's comparison of Scripture to a precious gem. How have you experienced layers of meaning in the Bible?

As the people of God, we can be like the midwives

One place to start is with a Resource Inventory

List all the things you have as resources and abilities:

Skills you have developed

Your education and career

Your personality

Your passions

Your current situation

*What do you have?

*How could it serve the work of our God who delivers?

*Do you sense the Spirit telling you something about aligning your resources and abilities with God's liberating character?