

God is

INFINITELY MORE

than we could ever imagine...

FEAR TO BOLDNESS

Key Passage: Exodus 3

Moses was in a difficult place. Seeing the injustice placed upon his people, his fury had led him to kill an Egyptian, consequently fleeing for his life. While he's in the wilderness, tending to his father-in-law's flock, God appears to him in flames of fire within a bush. In that encounter Moses is commissioned by God to free the Israelites, thus starting a journey with consequent encounters spanning hundreds of years.

Session Aims:

1. To help children understand that God reveals himself in unexpected ways
2. To help children know that God transforms lives
3. To encourage children to live boldly for Jesus

Leader's Reflection:

Are there times where you have felt alone? Fearful? Lacking courage?

Can you recall the times God has reached out and surrounded you with love and care? How did this change your way of thinking?

The Bible is filled with wonderful examples of God revealing himself to those who follow him, who are transformed by him and who have felt fearful of the commission God has placed on their lives. But the Bible is also filled with examples of God's response, God's commitment and provision for those he commissions. In today's session, we consider how Moses responded to God's call.



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At a time of darkness for Moses, God revealed himself in a very special way in the form of a burning bush, hence transforming his life. God gives Moses a very important task - but Moses objects. Moses is fearful, and tries to find several reasons why he should not do what God is asking him to do, but God makes provision for each of Moses' objections.

The burning bush was an incredible miracle which got Moses' attention, but it wasn't until Moses went over to look that God called out to him. Calling him by name shows that God knew who he was and how special he was to him. How often do we give our attention fully to God as Moses did?

In preparing for exploring this with children, it is important to remember that discussing fears could open up conversations around many different topics. Spending time considering what those fears may be and how you respond is important.

God made each of us unique, and one person's experience and coping mechanisms can be very different from another. Things which could seem small to adults can be a big deal to children. Consider how a child may feel trying new food, entering a church, going to a party, making conversation with someone new...

If a child expresses fears, it is important not to criticise or respond negatively, but to encourage them to share and, if suitable, explore how to overcome those fears.



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WARM-UPS

Fearful to brave

If possible, you could deliver this session in a different setting. Alternatively, you could set up the room differently, eg, facing everyone a different way round.

Begin the session by asking the young people how they feel about being in a new location or a different room set-up. Some may be excited or intrigued, others may be nervous or worried, and some may have a mixture of feelings. Reassure them that all these feelings are natural and OK.

If possible, share a personal example of something you are fearful of and why: spiders, heights, small spaces... or find a story of someone else's fear. Ask the children, if they are comfortable, to share examples of things they are fearful of. Reassure them that everyone is scared of something, that fear is a natural response and may actually be a useful defence mechanism, and that today we are going to be exploring the story of someone who went from feeling fearful to being brave with God's power.

Light up the dark

Ask the children to share if they use, or have used in the past, a nightlight when they go to sleep. Sensitively discuss if any of the group have been or are afraid of the dark. If no one objects, you could turn the lights out in the room and talk about how, as a group, we are safe because we can all look out for each other even though the darkness alone can be scary.

Ask children to consider different ways that light can be seen in darkness: nightlight, torches, car headlight, street lamp, firework, sparkler, lighthouse.



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If possible find a dark place, and in the darkness turn on a torch (you could share torches with the children) and ask the children to think about where their eyes are drawn to. Why were their eyes drawn to the light? How did the light make them feel? Does the light make them feel a little braver?

Turn the lights back on.

It is very common for people of all ages to be fearful of the dark. It is sensible to be careful in the dark as it could be easy to trip or bump into things. However, being careful in the dark is different from being fearful of the dark. When a person is afraid of the dark, they could be letting their imagination get carried away. If a person keeps thinking this way then the fear may get worse.



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TELL THE STORY

Explain to the children that we are travelling back over three thousand years to hear about someone who, by listening to the call of God and overcoming their fear, started a journey which made a difference to many people for many years. Our story today is of someone who was in a very difficult place. Seeing injustice and unfairness to his family and friends, he had killed someone responsible for being unkind but then had to flee for his life. For 40 years he lived in the wilderness looking after flocks of sheep. This is the story of Moses' encounter with God in the wilderness.

There are many ways the following story could be shared:

- The clip from the film *The Prince of Egypt* where God speaks to Moses is a powerful retelling with lots of scope for discussion - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ds9y3LJGig>
- Three leaders or older children with simple props, could act the story for others - <https://ministry-to-children.com/skit-moses-and-the-burning-bush/>
- A Godly Play adaptation using resources from the whole of Moses' story - <https://ideas.brf.org.uk/the-burning-bush-a-reflective-story>

I wonder...

- I wonder what Moses thought when he saw the burning bush.
- I wonder why God revealed himself through a burning bush.
- I wonder how Moses felt hearing God's voice.
- I wonder what you think Moses' fears were.
- I wonder if you think God's voice changed how he felt.
- I wonder how Moses felt being equipped by God.
- I wonder what you would have done seeing the burning bush.
- I wonder how you would have responded to God's voice.
- I wonder what some of your fears are.



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- I wonder if you've heard God speaking to you.
- I wonder how God is calling you to live boldly today. This week. This year.



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EXPLORE

Draw

Discuss as a group the word 'bold' and what children think it looks like. Give children space to create a drawing showing boldness - they could work together or individually. Encourage children to share their drawings, explaining their thoughts. Another image could show a place where children feel they would like God to help them be bold.

Role Play

Discuss different situations where children might currently be feeling fearful. Role play how children might show boldness in these situations. For each one, talk about how God could equip them and what steps they need to take to be bolder when they face these times.

Collage

Ask the children to share some examples of historical and modern-day young people who have been bold in standing up for what they believe in. You could print pictures in advance and write down the attributes of these people. Encourage the children to choose an attribute they feel they need to develop in their own life. Discuss situations where this would help and how they could develop.



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PRAY

Play some reflective music to help create a calm atmosphere. Give each child a sticky label and pen.

Reread the following verses (Exodus 3:11-14 *International Children's Bible*):

But Moses said to God, 'I am not a great man! Why should I be the one to go to the king and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?'

God said, 'I will be with you. This will be the proof that I am sending you: You will lead the people out of Egypt. Then all of you will worship me on this mountain.'

Moses said to God, 'When I go to the Israelites, I will say to them, "The God of your ancestors sent me to you." What if the people say, "What is his name?" What should I tell them?'

Then God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. When you go to the people of Israel, tell them, "I AM sent me to you."'

Ask the children to think how Moses felt when God called him. Have you experienced God calling you? If you have, share where and how this happened.

Encourage the children to choose a verse from the passage above:

- *God said, 'I will be with you.'*
- *'Tell them, "I AM sent me to you."'*



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Ask the children to write the verse on the sticker and then stick it to their shoe, then pray that God will help them overcome their fears so they can live boldly for him.



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TAKE HOME

Prepare a jar of lolly sticks with different ideas written on them that encourage children to live boldly for God. For example: Pray for someone you know needing healing; Make friends with someone lonely at school; Be kind to someone you have been struggling to get on with; Invite a friend to children's club / church next week...

Encourage the children to explore some of the different ideas in the jar and select one to put in their pocket and take home to try this week.

The song 'Be bold, be strong' could be used to finish together.

