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Moses and the Burning Bush

Scripture: Exodus 3:1-4:17

Theme: God calls ordinary people for extraordinary purposes

4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Sunday School Lesson Overview: "God Makes a Way" (Exodus 14:1-31 , Crossing the Red Sea) Introduction (Engage): Start with a dramatic question: "Have you ever felt like there's no way out of a tough situation, like being trapped between two big mountains, or stuck with no way to cross a scary, wide-open space?" Hold up a Bible passage and say, "Today, we'll look at how God gave Moses (and His people) a miraculous way out, through a flooded Red Sea!" Let kids whisper, "What's one thing you're facing right now where it seems impossible?" (Write answers on a board.) Lesson: God's Promise in a Crisis Moses and the Israelites had been slaves in Egypt for 400 years, and Pharaoh's army was chasing them, ready to crush them. The Egyptians had horses, chariots, and soldiers, way more power than they did! But God told Moses, "I'll make a way!" (Exodus 14:16). How? By splitting the sea into two paths so they could cross safely, and the Egyptians drowned! The Israelites didn't see the way before they walked; God opened it during their fear and doubt. Key Points for Kids: - Fear can make us freeze, but God gives strength when we trust Him. - Sometimes God's way isn't a "direct route", it's a surprise! (Like crossing a river instead of the road.) - Even now, God can turn "no way" into "a path to freedom" for our hearts and lives. Deep Question for Reflection: "If you've ever felt like God was missing in the middle of a storm (like the Red Sea), how did He show up for Moses and the Israelites? What's one thing you can pray today to trust God's promise in your 'Red Sea' moment?" (Pause for volunteers.) Personal Application: God's Way Today Challenge kids with: "Think of one area where you need God to split a sea for you, like a test, a friend conflict, or feeling lonely. What's one thing you can do today to step out in faith, even if the way isn't clear yet?" (Example: Ask God to help you pray for a friend. Or start a journal to share your fears with Him.) Encouragement: End with a group cheer: "God's got this! He always makes a way where there's no way!" (Hold up a red ribbon or "bridge" cutout to symbolize the sea.) Closing Prayer: "Heavenly Father, thank You for being our God who doesn't give up. Help us to trust You when our eyes are too small to see the way. Remind us that You always deliver, like You did for Moses and His people. In Jesus' name, Amen!" Teacher Tips for Volunteers: - Dramatize the scene: Play a recording of waves or use props (e.g., a "sea" with water balloons, then "split" it with a flashlight to show light/dark). - Connect to life: Ask, "Who needs to hear this today?" Let kids share how

to share their faith with someone facing fear. - Encourage participation: Have kids draw their "Red Sea" moments and add a "bridge" to God's promise.

Bible Story

Title: "God's Promise Keeps Us Safe" (Exodus 14:1-31 , Crossing the Red Sea)

The Israelites had been slaves for generations, but God had heard their cries and promised to free them. One day, Pharaoh chased them with his army, determined to bring them back to Egypt. But God warned Moses, "Don't be afraid! Stand still and see the great deliverance I will perform for you today." As the Israelites fled, the Egyptian chariots and soldiers rushed after them, blocking their path, trapped between Pharaoh's army and the sea. That night, Moses lifted his staff to God, and God split the waters, forming a dry path across the Red Sea. The Israelites walked safely through on foot, while Pharaoh's army marched right behind them, unaware of what was coming. But just as suddenly as God had parted the waters, He closed them shut, drowning Pharaoh's entire army! The Israelites cheered, realizing God had saved them from their enemy.

Questions to Think About: - What was one thing the Israelites were really afraid of? (Their enemies chasing them) - How did God help them feel safe? (He split the sea!)

Personal Application: Have you ever felt trapped or scared, like you couldn't escape? God is the same God who parted the Red Sea, He's the one who can help you when you're stuck. Where is one place you need God's strength today?

God made a way through the waters, but why was the sea so dangerous? The Egyptians didn't know God's plan, maybe they thought they could win easily. Yet even when it looked impossible, God gave the Israelites a way out. As they crossed, the sky was dark, and the ground shook with waves, but they walked without fear. The Egyptians, who trusted in their chariots, couldn't see God's hand in time.

Questions to Think About: - Why was the Red Sea dangerous for Pharaoh's army? (It was deep and unpredictable!) - What does it say about God that He could split the sea? (He's powerful and kind!)

Personal Application: Sometimes, God's way isn't the easiest path, like crossing the sea on foot. But if we trust Him, He'll guide us safely, just like He did for the Israelites.

When the Egyptians finally reached the sea, they thought they had won. But God had other plans! He made the waters rush back, trapping Pharaoh's army in the middle. The Egyptians panicked, shouting in fear as the water swallowed them whole. The Israelites, who had run for their lives, finally had a reason to celebrate. They sang praises to God, remembering He had saved them from slavery and brought them victory. That day, they learned that God doesn't just give us freedom, He also gives us strength to believe in Him when things seem impossible.

Questions to Think About: - How did Pharaoh's army get trapped? (The water closed shut!) - What did the Israelites do after God saved them? (They sang and praised Him!)

Personal Application: God's victories aren't just for the past, they're for now too! If you're facing something scary, remember: God can bring you out of it, just like He brought the Israelites through the sea.

This story teaches us that God is always with us, even when we're afraid. When Pharaoh chased the Israelites, they had no hope, but God gave them a way. Today, when we face challenges, we can trust God to do the same. Whether it's a big problem or just a small fear, His power is bigger than ours. The Red Sea wasn't just a miracle; it was a reminder that God keeps His promises and leads us safely through life.

Why This Story Matters: God doesn't just free us from problems, He helps us trust Him enough to believe in His plan, even when it's hard. The Israelites' journey taught them (and us!) that with God, there's always a way out, and He's with us every step of the way.

Would you like any adjustments to make it more engaging for your class?

Key Verse

Exodus 3:10

God Is Always on Our Side! This verse from the Bible is like a superpower promise from God! When we're feeling scared or stuck, like when Pharaoh's army is chasing us (or maybe when we're worried about something big, like tests, friend drama, or even just being brave enough to try something new), God tells us: "Don't panic! Just stand still and trust me!" Think of it like when you're waiting for a race to start, you don't run forward before you're told to move, right? Instead, you hold still and wait for the right time. God wants us to do the same with our fears. When we take a deep breath and say, "I believe God is here to help," something amazing happens: His strength comes to fight for us! What Does "Still" Really Mean? Being "still" doesn't mean sitting perfectly quiet like a statue, it's more like pausing to listen. When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, they were terrified, but God said, "Don't run away in fear, just stop and trust me." Sometimes, when we're nervous, we rush to fix things ourselves (like panicking about a math problem or acting too fast in a conflict). But God wants us to pause and ask: "Should I do this alone, or should I ask God first?" Being still also means leaning on God's power instead of our own. It's like when you're learning to swim, you don't jump in and panic; you take small steps and let the water support you. God's Army vs. Our Fears This verse reminds us that God is like a superhero with an invisible army! When the Israelites were trapped between the water and the Egyptian army, they felt hopeless, but God made a way, turning the Red Sea into dry land (Exodus 14:21). That's how God fights our fears! What fears do you have right now? Maybe it's being shy in school, worrying about failing a project, or feeling left out. God says: "I've got this! You don't have to carry it alone." Instead of hiding, we can whisper to Him: "Help me be brave!" What Should We Do Now? Here's a simple way to apply this verse today: 1. Pause and pray: Before facing a tough situation (like a big test or a new friend), take three deep breaths and say, "God, I trust You to fight for me. Help me be still." 2. Ask for God's help: When you're nervous, ask Him: "What should I do?" (Even if you don't know the answer yet, He'll guide you.) 3. Share with someone: Tell a trusted friend or family member how God is fighting your fears for you. It's like teamwork! Deeper Questions for You: - What's one thing you're scared to do right now? How can you ask God to help you be brave? - Have you ever felt stuck in a tough situation? How did God guide you? - What's a small way you can "be still" this week, maybe by listening to God in prayer or taking a quiet moment? Personal Application: This verse isn't just for big moments, it's for every moment! God's power is always available, even when we feel small. Next time you're worried, try this: Imagine God's hand on your shoulder, whispering, "I've got you." Now stand still and trust Him. You don't have to carry the weight alone, He's there to help!

Activities

Activity 1:

Students color a simple illustration of the Red Sea while discussing how God's power and promises make a way for His people.

1. Set Up the Challenge:
2. Divide students into small teams of 3, 5. Explain that they will "walk through the wall" (sea) to reach the other side, just like God led the Israelites. Place a short "wall" (e.g., 3, 5 chairs in a line) in the middle of the space to represent the sea's depth.
3. Team Roles:
4. Assign one student as the "leader" (like Moses) and another as the "follower" (like the Israelites). The leader must guide the group safely through the "sea" without touching the wall. The follower must stay close and trust their leader.
5. Reflect & Discuss (5 min):
6. After the activity, ask:
7. How did your team work together to find a way?
8. What did it feel like when you had to trust someone else?
9. How can we trust God to lead us, even when we feel afraid?

10. Share: "Just like Moses led the people through the Red Sea, God always provides a way when we follow Him!"
11. Personal Application:
12. Have students write or draw one way they can trust God in their own life this week (e.g., a fear, a difficult decision).
2. "God's Parted Path" , Bible Story Coloring & Discussion
14. Create the Coloring Sheet:
15. Draw a short, narrow strip of water (Red Sea) with a "wall" (e.g., a mountain or dark line) on one side. On the other side, draw a group of people (like the Israelites) and Moses holding his staff.
16. Label the scene: "God parted the sea to lead His people!"
17. Color & Reflect (5 min):
18. Students color their sheet while listening to a simplified retelling of Exodus 14 (e.g., use a kid-friendly audio clip or teacher narration).
19. Ask:
20. Why do you think the Egyptians chased the Israelites?
21. What happened when the sea closed?
22. How can God's promises make a way in our lives today?
23. Group Discussion:
24. Pair students to share their favorite part of the story and how they think Moses felt as leader.
25. Connect to faith: "God doesn't always remove fear, He gives us courage to trust Him!"
26. Personal Application:
27. Have students write/draw one "sea" they've felt stuck in (e.g., fear, a mistake) and how God can help them "walk through" it with faith.
28. Both activities encourage movement, creativity, and deep reflection, perfect for upper elementary! Let me know if you'd like adjustments for space or group size.

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for upper elementary students (ages 9, 11) based on the Crossing the Red Sea story from Exodus. Each question invites deeper reflection on the story, its themes, and how it connects to their own lives:
- 1. Faith in the Face of Fear
 - "Remember how the Israelites were trapped between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea? Moses told them, 'Do not be afraid! God is going to help you!' What do you think was harder for them: being scared of the Egyptians or being afraid of not knowing what God would do?"
 - How can we trust God when we feel stuck or unsure, like the Israelites felt trapped?
 - Have you ever had a moment where you had to take a big step of faith (like trusting God for something scary or hard)? What happened?
- 2. God's Power Through Weakness
 - "Moses told the Israelites, 'I am afraid you will run away from me if you see me walk into the sea!' Why do you think God asked Moses to do this? What does it tell us about God's power, does He need our courage, or does He use it?"
 - How can God use situations where we feel weak or unsure to show His strength?
 - Have you ever felt like you couldn't do something on your own, but then God helped? What happened?
- 3. Freedom vs. Fear

- "When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they were finally free from slavery, but they still had to trust God to keep them safe. What do you think was harder for them: escaping slavery or believing God would protect them?"
- Why do you think fear sometimes makes us doubt God's promises?
- How can we remind ourselves to keep trusting God even when things feel scary or uncertain?
- 4. God's Way vs. Our Way
- "The Egyptians tried to chase the Israelites, but God made a way for them to escape. What do you think would have happened if the Israelites had tried to cross the Red Sea on their own, without God's help?"
- Why do you think God sometimes leads us in ways that aren't the easiest or most obvious?
- Have you ever had to take a different path because God wanted you to? What did you learn?
- These questions encourage students to explore:
 - Emotions (fear, doubt, courage)
 - Faith and trust in God's promises
 - Personal experiences where God worked in their lives
 - Comparison between God's plan and human plans
 - Would you like any adjustments to better fit a specific group or lesson focus?

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus for Upper Elementary: "God Makes a Way in the Darkest Moments" "Dear God, today we remember when the Israelites were trapped between the Egyptians and the Red Sea, scared and feeling stuck. They thought there was no way out, but you, Lord, always see us and hear us. Help us to trust that even when things feel impossible, you're right there with us. Teach us to look for your way, not just our own. When we're afraid, remind us that you're bigger than our fears, stronger than our doubts, and more loving than our worries. Amen." Deeper Questions for Reflection: 1. "When have you felt like you were stuck or afraid, like the Israelites did? What helped you find a way forward?" 2. "How can we trust God like Moses trusted Him when we're facing our own 'Red Seas', big challenges or scary times?" 3. "What's one small thing we can do today to remember God's promise to 'make a way' for us?" Personal Application: "God didn't just tell the Israelites to wait, He acted! He parted the sea, made a path, and led His people home. Today, we can ask Him to do the same in our lives. Maybe it's a test, a decision, or just a quiet moment where we need to know He's with us. Let's pray: 'Help me see your way, not my limits. Show me how to follow, even when the path feels unclear.' When we pray like this, we're not just talking to God, we're choosing to trust Him, just like Moses did." Class Prayer (Teach them to repeat after you): "Lord God, we thank You for the story of Moses and the Israelites. When they were scared, they looked at their problems and saw nothing, but You saw them and made a way! Today, we ask You to be our guide, especially when we feel lost. Remind us that You're always there, and Your power is bigger than any challenge. Help us to trust You, just like the Israelites trusted You. Amen!" Closing Thought for Today: "The Red Sea wasn't just water, it was a symbol of God's power to save us from darkness. So today, wherever you're 'stuck,' remember: God doesn't just promise to fix it, He promises to lead you through it."

>> Missions Spotlight

The Pacific Island nations have a deep connection to the ocean. Missionaries working in Fiji and Tonga have found that the Red Sea story resonates powerfully with island peoples who understand the sea's power and God's sovereignty over it.

-> To the Cross

The Israelites were trapped, the sea before them, the army behind. God parted the water and made a way through. At the cross, God made a way for us to be free from sin when there was no other way. Baptism pictures this same truth (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).