

Moses Part 2 - Lost





In today's session we begin our journey through the life of Moses. We'll discover a small baby boy benefiting from the bravery of a big sister. We'll see a fall from royal privilege to isolating exile, and we'll discover what it means to live in a spiritual wilderness. Moses was lost, but God had a plan. Today we will discover the beginning of that plan and take a moment to explore what we can do in times of spiritual wilderness.

You will need:

- Paper and pens



Leader's notes:

The Beat activity will focus on the meaning of the young people's names and why those names were chosen for them. You can check the meanings of names at Ancestry.co.uk. This conversation will need to be handled with sensitivity, depending on the life experiences of your group. The aim is to recognise that names have meanings and discuss whether those meanings relate to a person's personality and character.

Ask:

What do you think the name Moses means?

Say:

The name Moses means 'drawn out'. There are many examples of moments in Moses' life where he was drawn out of one situation and pulled into another. We will be able to explore many of these as we follow through this series.







Say:

Spoiler alert: Later in the session, we will find out about Moses' marriage and the birth of his firstborn son, Gershon.

Read:

- ²² Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, 'I have become a foreigner in a foreign land.'
- (Exodus 2:22)

Ask:

- What do you think of Moses' name choice for his son?
- Do you think that naming your children after your life experiences is a trend that would be popular today? If so, why?



Say:

Today we continue our journey through the story of Moses.

Leader's notes:

Each member of the group will need a pen/pencil and something to write on. As they listen to a reading of Exodus 1, ask them to jot down everything they discover about the situation the Israelites faced and how their lives changed under Pharaoh's rule. When the clip is finished, share the key events of Exodus 1 together.

Listen:

David Suchet NIV Bible 0051 Exodus 1 (2:56)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z49pNGcZGQ

Read:

- ¹ 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.
- (Exodus 2:1-4)



Ask:

- What kind of world was Moses born into?
- Why were Moses' parents eager to hide their child? What decree had Pharaoh made? (Exodus 1:22)

Say:

The following clip is taken from the animation The Prince of Egypt and shows the moment Moses' mother sends him out on the River Nile.

Leader's notes:

Watch the clip and discuss the key points of the story. Read Exodus 2:1-10 and discuss how Moses' life changed in that moment. If you are short of time, then you can skip the clip and focus on the Scripture reading.

Watch:

Moses in a Basket – *The Prince of Egypt* (1998) Family Flicks (4:21) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CoA3sPjzv4

Ask:

- Why was Moses given his name?
- What did it mean?

Say:

We don't find out until Exodus 15:20 that Moses' sister is called Miriam. Her name is often interpreted to mean 'bitter' or 'rebellion'.

Ask:

- How did Miriam show her rebellious spirit when she met the Pharaoh's daughter?
- Think of the context of Exodus 1 and 2. Why was this such a risky move?

Say:

Moses was returned to his family under the care of his mother. We do not know how long he lived there, but a significant part of his childhood was spent in a Hebrew home. His life was forever changed when he moved into the royal palace as the son of a princess.

Ask:

How do you think Moses' life experience impacted his sense of identity?

Say:

Moses had been brought up in the Egyptian palace by the daughter of the Pharaoh. He would have had the best education and been well trained in the Egyptian military (the most advanced army in the world at that time). He was a strong and successful warrior and a prince of Egypt. But somewhere deep inside, it seems that he never forgot his roots. His parents must have taught him enough of his Jewish heritage and of their God in the few years they had him before they had to give him back to the daughter of Pharaoh.



Ask:

Exodus 2:11 says, 'One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labour.' How old do you think Moses might have been when this happened?

Say:

To find out, we need to look at Acts 7:23 where Stephen is sharing the story of Moses.

Ask:

- How old was Moses when he went to visit his own people? Acts 7:23
- Why do you think he waited 40 years to face their suffering?
- What emotions do you think surfaced when he was face to face with their circumstances?

Read:

- ¹¹ One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labour. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. ¹² Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³ The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, 'Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?'
- ¹⁴ The man said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?' Then Moses was afraid and thought, 'What I did must have become known.'
- ¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.
- (Exodus 2:11-15)

Ask:

- What ethical and spiritual dilemmas are raised by Moses' actions?
- Moses stood up against the oppression of God's people. Do you think God condoned or approved of Moses' actions? Explain your response.

Say:

From reading Stephen's account in Acts 7, it would not be unreasonable to assume that God had already put it into Moses' mind that he would one day, through some as yet un-revealed plan, lead his people out of slavery. Moses knew God's will, but he took the matter into his own hands. He didn't bother to wait for God's timing or his call. He tried to sort things out on his own. The result: he killed a man and covered up his wrongdoing; his own people lost respect for him; his adopted family passed a death sentence on him; and Moses had to flee for his life to the deserts of Midian.





Ask:

Was Moses' violent action against the slave master justifiable? Explain your answer.

Read:

- ¹⁶ Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷ Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.
- ¹⁸ When the girls returned to Reuel [also known as Jethro] their father, he asked them, 'Why have you returned so early today?'
- ¹⁹ They answered, 'An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock.'
- ²⁰ 'And where is he?' Reuel asked his daughters. 'Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat.'
- ²¹ Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. ²² Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, 'I have become a foreigner in a foreign land.'
- ²³ During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.
- (Exodus 2:16-25)

Ask:

- How did Moses' life change when he reached Midian?
- What signs do we see in this Scripture passage that point to Moses' continuing struggle with his identity?

Say:

Moses spent the next 40 years working as a shepherd in the desert of Midian, looking after his father-in-law's sheep. We are told little about this time in Moses' life, but it is clear that this was a strategic part of God's plan. God was preparing Moses for leadership. Living the life of a shepherd, he learned not only humility, but also about life in the desert, and the ways of the people he would be leading.



Leader's notes:

Use some of the following questions to prompt a discussion about seasons of our faith where we feel we are in God's wilderness. As the group leader, you may wish to share – at an appropriate level – about any time of your own when you have experienced the wilderness in your walk with God.

- What experiences can send us into God's wilderness?
- Do any of the group feel that they have spent time in God's wilderness? If they feel comfortable, then they can share what happened and how it made them feel.
- Have you had a time of difficulty in your life in which you later saw that God's hand had been upon the situation the entire time? How did you see God at work in the situation?

Say:

We all go through spiritual desert times when we feel lost. Sometimes it is as a result of the poor choices we have made, and other times we just feel distant from God. In these moments we need encouragement but are often too spiritually low to find it.

Leader's notes:

Working in any groupings they prefer, ask the young people to create the contents of a 'spiritual comfort package'. They can generate ideas for what could be included in this package and put one together when they get home.

Examples are included below, but the young people will have many more creative ideas.

- Find and write out favourite Bible verses that remind you of God's faithfulness.
- Write down any prayers or quotes from Christian books that have been helpful to you.
- Create a playlist of songs that speak of God's faithfulness.
- Write down the name of a friend you would feel comfortable to talk and pray with.

Generate and share together as many ideas as possible. Ask the group to identify which ones they would find useful and discuss what form their 'spiritual comfort package' could take.







Leader's notes:

Read and discuss the following quote.

'What was that Midian desert like? Incredibly barren. Hot, arid sand and gravel, punctuated by craggy chunks of rock, with an occasional scraggly bush somehow clinging to life.

Can you visualise Moses stumbling through that wasteland, catching his tailored clothing on thorns, tripping and lurching over half-submerged rocks, picking his way through that tortured wilderness?

Moses wasn't strutting down the road singing 'I Did It My Way'. He was a frightened and disillusioned fugitive, running, escaping for his very life. His vaunted education now meant nothing to him. His knowledge of hieroglyphics and Egyptian poetry gave him no comfort. His military victories seemed hollow. Thanks to a rash act of violence, that same military wanted to kill him. And with every step he probably groaned within himself over his untimely deed, saying things like, "Life is over, God can never, never use me. I'm absolutely finished." He was wrong, of course. But it would be many weary years before he fully realised that fact.'

- Charles Swindoll: Moses: A Man of Selfless Dedication



Say

We have spent time today reflecting on moments in the spiritual wilderness when we feel lost. We saw Moses wracked with guilt and searching for a new identity. We reflected on our own moments of wilderness and created a 'spiritual comfort package' to help us in those times. For our Selah today, we're going to focus on the people we know who are currently experiencing a time of wilderness in their faith.

Leader's notes:

Ask the young people to think of a person in their group, at home or from church, who is experiencing a wilderness season in their faith. What could they do to encourage them and remind them that not only is God close, but so are their Christian friends? Consider one practical thing to do and commit to taking action on it.

To bring this time of reflection to a close, pray for those who feel lost and are experiencing a time of wilderness in their faith.







Say:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from the events in today's story?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.



