

DEVOTION 1

WELCOME!

Hey team! I'm excited about this season! We're gonna have a lot of fun playing and getting to know each other better.

I want to ask you a question. How many of you like stories? Raise your hand.

Me too! I love a good story. And throughout this season during our devotion time at each practice, we're going to be talking about the life of Moses. We read all about Moses in the book of Exodus, found in the Old Testament of the Bible. We'll use the Bible each week in our devotion time.

Before we get into the story, let me share a few reasons why we will use the Bible each week during devotion time and why it's a reliable book.

First of all, it's historically accurate. All of the stories from the Bible actually happened. We know this because historians have studied various manuscripts and personal accounts of stories. Secondly, the Bible represents the lives of real people. The people in the Bible faced real problems and made real mistakes. They aren't any better or any worse than we are. Because of that, we can find important lessons that pertain to our own lives through their stories.

Third, the Bible is a life-changing book. We'll talk more about this as the season goes along, but the essence of the Bible is this: God made us, He loves us, and even when we do things that displease him, he still wants us to trust him. That's where God's Son Jesus comes in. Because of Jesus living on earth, dying on the cross for our sins, and rising from the dead, we can be forgiven of our sins and have eternal life! More on that later, but it's a really important part of the Bible.

Lastly, the Bible is inspired by God. We read this in 2 Timothy: *All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. (2 Timothy 3:16)* When we are unsure as to what is right and wrong, we can look to the Bible for answers.

The story of Moses is full of some amazing events. More importantly, it has a lot of applications to our lives. One of the biggest takeaways from the life of Moses is this: God has a plan for every single person. When we follow his plan and do what he asks us to do, amazing things happen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » Have you ever read anything in the Bible? What do you know about it?
- » Do you believe God has a plan for your life? Why or why not?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » Have you ever read the Bible? Do you believe it to be true?
- » What are some things you may have learned from the Bible?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » 2 Timothy 3:16 says the Bible is "inspired by God". Do you believe that? Why or why not?
- » Do you believe the Bible is relevant to you? What other things are useful in learning how to live the right way?

PRAYER

God, thank you for these young athletes. I thank you for their excitement and energy as we begin a new season. God, use your Word, the Bible, to teach us wisdom. Use these stories from Jesus to teach us how we should live. Open our eyes to understand what you want to say to us. We love you, Lord. Amen.

DEVOTION 2

GOD HAS A PLAN (THE BIRTH OF MOSES: EXODUS 1:22-2:10)

Key Story Verse:

Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls live." Exodus 1:22

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 2."

MEMORY VERSE:

For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

- Jeremiah 29:11

In the Bible, in the book of Exodus, we read about Moses. His story starts in an intriguing way. Moses was born in Egypt during a time when the Israelite people were enslaved by the Egyptians. The Egyptians were cruel to the Israelites and made them work really hard.

The Egyptian king was named Pharaoh. He hated the Israelites and made a decree that every baby boy born to an Israelite was to be thrown into the river!

Soon after this, a married couple from an Israelite tribe called Levi had a baby boy named Moses. The woman kept him hidden for a few months until she couldn't keep him a secret anymore. Then in hopes of protecting Moses, the woman laid him in a basket and placed the basket in the river. The baby's sister stood at the riverbank to see what would happen to this basket holding her baby brother.

Pharaoh's daughter discovered the basket and opened it up. Can you imagine the shock when she saw a baby boy in the basket? She felt sad for him knowing he must be the son of an Israelite woman. The baby's sister, who had seen all this happen, went to the princess and asked: "can I find someone to feed him for you?" The princess told her yes, and the girl went and got the boy's mother! Pharaoh's daughter told the woman to take the baby home and nurse him! How amazing!

When the mother brought the boy back to Pharaoh's daughter, she adopted him as her own. She named the baby Moses. Moses would spend the rest of his childhood and teenage years living among royalty in the palace.

There's no question that from the beginning, God had an amazing plan for Moses' life. Despite the difficult circumstances he was born into, God protected him and allowed even the daughter of a terrible king to show Moses compassion.

Not only did God have a special plan for Moses' life, but He has one for you too! He created you to love Him and to have the opportunity to be his adopted son or daughter. Another book of the Bible says this: *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."* God has a great plan for you!

I hope you're as excited as I am about this season and learning about the life of Moses. I think along the way you'll learn some really great things about what the Bible has to say about your life too!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » From what we know so far in Moses' story, do you think Pharaoh is good or evil? Why?
- » How do you know from the story so far that God had a plan for Moses' life?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » The story of Moses' birth shows God's protection. When in your life have you felt protected by someone?
- » How does it feel knowing that God has a plan for your life?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » Moses' birth tells a story of God's protection. What can you think of that God has protected you from in your life so far?
- » In your opinion, what does God's plan for your life look like?

PRAYER

God, thank You for protecting me. You have been so good to us. Thank you for giving us life. We're so excited to get to learn more about your plan for our lives this year. Help us to trust You and the things You say in your word. We love you, God. Amen.



DEVOTION 3

GOD KNOWS US (MOSES KILLS AN EGYPTIAN: EXODUS 2:11-15)

Key Story Verse:

After looking in all directions to make sure no one was watching, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand. Exodus 2:12

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 3."

MEMORY VERSE:

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.

- Psalm 139:1

When we left the story of Moses last week, he was a boy growing up in the palace after being taken in by the princess. Now he's much older dealing with the freedom of being an adopted son of the princess but also seeing his native people being enslaved by the Egyptians.

One day he went out to visit some of the Hebrews, which was another name for the group of people called the Israelites. While he was out and about, he saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews. Moses became angry. He looked around to see if anyone was looking, then he killed the Egyptian. He buried the body of the Egyptian in the sand.

The very next day, Moses saw two Hebrews fighting. Moses looked at the one who had started the fight and said: "Why are you beating up your friend?" The man looked at Moses and asked him "Who appointed you to be our prince and judge? Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?"

Yikes. Moses had been found out. He became afraid, knowing that other people knew what he had done, killing the Egyptian. When Pharaoh found out, he tried to have Moses killed. But Moses managed to flee and live somewhere else.

Moses thought he had gotten away with murder. He hoped no one had seen him. And even if no one had seen him, God had. God sees everything.

Psalm 139:1 states this: "O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me." Remember, God made us. He knows everything about us. He knows everything we say, do, or even think.

Most people have never killed someone, but God says even having a desire to hurt someone out of anger is sin. And sin is anything we say, do, or think that displeases God. Just as Moses displeased God by murdering someone, we displease God when we lie, cheat, steal, or show disrespect.

Moses ran away when he was called out for his actions. We need to know that we don't have to run away when we do wrong. We need to admit our wrongdoing to God and ask Him to forgive us. When we do, He is quick to forgive us and guide us on the plan He has for our lives. We'll talk more about that next week!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » Have you ever done something you knew was wrong but thought you might get away with?
- » How does the fact God knows everything about you make you feel?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » What did Moses do wrong when he saw the Hebrew slave being beaten?
- » Have you ever tried to get away with doing something wrong? What did you do when you were found out?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » When Moses saw injustice, did he react in the right way? Why or why not?
- » God knows everything about you. Does this truth change how you view God? Why or why not?

PRAYER

God, we know that You created us. We realize You know everything about us. You examine our thoughts, our words, and our actions. God, please forgive us for the times we have failed You. Forgive us for our sins. Help us to understand that we are no better than Moses was when he killed the Egyptian. All sin displeases you. Help us turn to you and seek forgiveness. We love You. Amen.



DEVOTION 4

GOD CALLS US (THE BURNING BUSH: EXODUS 3:1-22)

Key Story Verse:

Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt. Exodus 3:10

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 4."

MEMORY VERSE:

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

- 1 Peter 2:9

Have you ever imagined what it would be like to hear God talk to you? What would his voice sound like? What would He say? One day Moses was tending to some sheep when that very thing happened: God spoke to him. But God didn't just use his voice to communicate with Moses. He used a burning bush.

As Moses tended the sheep, he saw a bush in flames, but it wasn't burning up! Moses went closer to the bush when God called to him. Can you imagine the scene? Moses minding his business, tending to some sheep when all of the sudden a bush erupts in flames?

God had Moses' attention. He told Moses that He had heard the despair of his people, the Hebrews. He told Moses he was sending him to Pharaoh to bring His people out of Egypt. How did Moses respond? With questions. He said "Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?"

God told Moses He would be with him. He would help him every step of the way. Still, Moses was unsure. Moses wondered what he was supposed to tell Pharaoh about who was sending him?

God told Moses what was going to happen. How Moses would go to Pharaoh and ask him to release the Hebrews but Pharaoh would refuse. He told Moses that He would perform miracles before Pharaoh and the Egyptians and that eventually, Pharaoh would let the people go.

It's hard to imagine how Moses felt, seeing God appear to him from a burning bush. But you might have some previous experiences where you felt unworthy or unqualified for something. Moses didn't feel like he was good enough to do this really big thing God was asking him to do. Still, God called him to do something really important. Did you know God has called you for something important too?

1 Peter 2:9 says this: "...you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light." God has chosen you for something special. You are his possession. He wants you to tell others about Him!

Don't doubt how God feels about you. He loves you. Trust in Him and that He has an amazing plan for you to share the good news with others about his love!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » What would you have done if you saw a burning bush?
- » Is there something God wants you to do that you haven't done? What might it be?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » If you were Moses, what would you have done when you saw the burning bush?
- » What did God want Moses to do? What might God want you to do?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » What might God use in your life to get your attention?
- » If God spoke to you in an audible voice, what might He say to you? How would you respond?

PRAYER

God, you are amazing. You had an amazing plan for Moses' life, and we know You have an amazing plan for ours. Help us to trust You. In times when we feel unqualified for something you want us to do, help us have the courage to trust You. We love You, Lord. Amen.



DEVOTION 5

GOD USES US (MOSES AND HIS STAFF: EXODUS 4:1-5)

Key Story Verse:

“Throw it down on the ground,” the Lord told him. So Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back. Exodus 4:3

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 5.”

MEMORY VERSE:

For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

- Ephesians 2:10

When we pick up Moses’ story, we look at Exodus 4. This chapter begins with Moses still talking to God, questioning things even though God has told him how He would use Moses and that He would be with him. So God decided to prove Himself again to Moses.

Moses was still worried that Pharaoh and the Hebrew leaders wouldn’t believe him if he told them God had spoken to him. Then God made an interesting command. He told Moses to throw his shepherd’s staff on the ground. When he did, the staff turned into a snake!

Then God told Moses to grab the snake by the tail. When he did so, the snake turned back into a staff. God told Moses if he does this in front of the Hebrew leaders and if he does this in front of Pharaoh, they’ll believe God had spoken to him.

God wanted to use Moses. What’s interesting is God didn’t give Moses some supernatural powers like the ability to fly or read people’s minds. He repurposed something Moses already used to show himself to others. Moses worked as a shepherd, so God used his shepherd’s tool, his staff, to do something miraculous.

That’s what God wants to do with us. He wants to empower us through the skills and talents we already have to share His love with others! If you’re a good soccer player, He wants to use your soccer talent to tell others about Him. If you’re an artist or a musician, He wants you to use those talents to share His story.

Often, God will use whatever we have to do His work. In Ephesians 2:10 we are told that we are God’s masterpiece and that He created us to do good things. He didn’t create us to just stand still and do nothing! He wants us to do good things He has planned for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » What do you think Moses might have been thinking when the staff turned into a snake?
- » What skills and talents do you have that God might want to use to show His love to others?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » What skills and talents have God blessed you with?
- » God created you to do “good things.” How can you use your skills and talents to do good?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » Do you believe God has given you certain talents and abilities? What are they? How might you use those talents to serve God?
- » Do you get prideful in your own ability, or do you recognize it as a gift from God?

PRAYER

God, thank You for giving us the skills and talents to serve You. Help us to be obedient when You ask us to do something. Thank You for the story of Moses that shows us how you ask even unqualified people to serve You. Forgive us when we use our skills and talents in selfish ways. We love You. Amen.



DEVOTION 6

GOD WANTS US TO TRUST HIM (MOSES MEETS WITH PHARAOH: EXODUS 5:1-6:13)

Key Story Verse:

"I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the Lord!" Exodus 6:8

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 6."

MEMORY VERSE:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

- Proverbs 3:5

After talking with the leaders of Israel, Moses and his brother Aaron went to talk to Pharaoh, just as God asked him to do. Perhaps Moses thought they would just walk up to Pharaoh, ask him to free the Israelites, and then be on his way. That didn't happen.

Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh, telling him that God has said for him to let his people free. Pharaoh responded, saying he doesn't know this God that Moses is talking about, and he refused to let the people go.

Moses and Aaron persisted, pressing Pharaoh to free the Hebrews. Again, Pharaoh rejected their request. But Pharaoh didn't stop there. He then decided to make the Hebrew slaves work even harder. They were charged with making bricks from straw. But now the straw wouldn't be provided for them. They'd have to go get it themselves.

The Israelite leaders were concerned with how harsh Pharaoh was treating the people. They went to Moses and Aaron pleading with them to stop confronting Pharaoh. They feared Pharaoh would become so angry that he'd kill the Israelites!

Moses went back to God to question Him. Why did He send Moses to Pharaoh only to fail in his mission? Not only fail but make things even worse for the Hebrew slaves? God responded to Moses, reminding him of all the wonderful things He's done before and the things He will do. He reinforced His promise to free the Israelites and bring them into the promised land.

Can you imagine how Moses felt? He was doing this big task that God called him to do, but he wasn't experiencing success right away. How frustrating! But we read in the book of Proverbs that we are to trust God with all our heart and not depend on our own understanding.

See, Moses wanted things to work in his way and in His timing instead of God's way and timing. He wanted immediate success, but God had bigger and greater plans. Trusting God is not always easy because life isn't easy. Sometimes we might feel like God isn't listening to us. We might feel as if He doesn't care about us. That's where faith comes in. We need to have faith and trust in God that He will protect us and guide us in the things He wants us to do.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » When is the last time you tried to do something big but failed?
- » Is it easy to trust God? Why or why not?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » How do you think Moses felt meeting with Pharaoh? How might you have felt?
- » Do you find it easy or difficult to trust God? Why?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » When have you experienced failure? How did you react to it? What did you learn from it?
- » Moses might have been tempted to stop trusting God when his meeting with Pharaoh was unsuccessful. What can you do when life's events cause you to consider losing faith in God?

PRAYER

God, we want to trust You. Will you help us see past our own ways and trust yours? Help us trust You when life is difficult. Help us trust You when we're angry or sad. Forgive us for the times we're too impatient to wait on You to work in our lives. We love You, God. Amen.



DEVOTION 7

GOD DISCIPLINES SIN (THE 10 PLAGUES: EXODUS 7:14-11:10)

Key Story Verse:

*“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn, and he still refuses to let the people go.”
Exodus 7:14*

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 7.”

MEMORY VERSE:

My child, don’t reject the Lord’s discipline, and don’t be upset when he corrects you.

- Proverbs 3:11

Think back on a time in your life when you were punished for something you did. Maybe you were put on restriction. Something like no video games for a week, or no more sweets for a while, or no getting to see your friends this weekend. Being punished when we do wrong is no fun. But it happens to hopefully teach us a lesson.

In Exodus, we’ve been reading about Moses and how he tried several times to convince Pharaoh to let the Israelite slaves go free. Pharaoh wouldn’t listen. Pharaoh was refusing to obey God. Pharaoh was sinning.

God chose to discipline Pharaoh for his sin. But despite God’s discipline, Pharaoh still didn’t listen.

God used ten plagues to punish Pharaoh. It began when God turned all the water in the Nile River into blood. The Egyptians could not drink any water from the river. Then all the other rivers and ponds and reservoirs turned to blood. Even water the Egyptians had stored in their homes turned to blood. But this wasn’t enough to convince Pharaoh to change his mind.

Next, God sent frogs to the Egyptians. So many frogs that they covered the palace and all the homes in Egypt. This time, Pharaoh agreed to let the people go if Moses prayed to remove the frogs. But when God removed the frogs, Pharaoh changed his mind. He decided to keep the Hebrews in Egypt.

What an incredibly stubborn man! After two terrible plagues, Pharaoh still refused to let the people go. So God continued to send plagues. He sent swarms of gnats and then flies. He killed off all of the Egyptians horses, donkeys, and sheep. God sent sores on the Egyptians. He sent large hailstones that destroyed their crops. He sent swarms of locusts to devour other crops. God even sent a plague of darkness that blacked out the sun and made the entire land as dark as night.

After each time, Pharaoh said he’d let the people go only to change his mind. He refused to learn from the plagues. He refused to allow God’s discipline to correct him. So God used one final plague to accomplish the goal of freeing the Israelites.

Every firstborn son in every Egyptian family died, including Pharaoh’s son. This was God’s final plague on the land, and finally, Pharaoh knew it was time to let the Hebrews go free. God used the devastating consequences of sin to reveal His power and free His people.

God administers his discipline in a variety of ways but it's always for our good. What we see from the story of Pharaoh is that our sin doesn't just affect us. Our sin can hurt those around us as well. Millions of Egyptians suffered because of Pharaoh's stubborn pride.

Proverbs 3:11 says this: *My child, don't reject the Lord's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you. For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.* When God disciplines us, it's not because He is angry with us or wants us to hurt. He loves us and wants us to trust Him and follow Him. When He disciplines us, He's expressing our love for us. He's saying "I love you too much to let you continue doing what you're doing."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » When is the last time you were disciplined for something? How did it make you feel?
- » When your parents punish you for doing something wrong, do they do it because they hate you or because they love you?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » What's the worst discipline you've ever faced?
- » Does the idea of discipline as an act of love change your perspective? Why or why not?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » When you are disciplined for failing to obey your parents or a teacher, what is your reaction?
- » How does God discipline us so we will learn to fully trust and obey him? What needs to change in your life to better follow God?

PRAYER

God, help us. Too often we despise discipline that you intend for our benefit. God, forgive us for our sins. Help us follow You. We know You love us and want what's best for us. We trust You to guide our lives. Thank You, Lord. Amen.



DEVOTION 8

GOD FREES THOSE WHO TRUST HIM (THE EXODUS: EXODUS 12:21-42)

Key Story Verse:

That night the people of Israel left Rameses and started for Succoth. There were about 600,000 men, plus all the women and children. Exodus 12:37

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 8."

MEMORY VERSE:

So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

- Galatians 5:1

The last plague God allowed to happen to the Egyptians was the death of every first-born son. There was actually an act of obedience by the Israelites that took place before that occurred. During the Old Testament, it was common for those who trusted God to offer him animal sacrifices. This was a way of honoring God who had given so much to the people. It was an act of worship. It was also a way the people received forgiveness for their sins.

Before God came through the land for the tenth plague, he told Moses to command the people to do this: they were to sacrifice a young lamb or goat and paint the animal's blood on their doorposts. This was a sign for God to pass over their house and not strike down their first-born son.

This act of obedience was a sign of the people's trust in God. They had seen Him perform amazing acts during the ten plagues and knew that He had a plan for them.

After Pharaoh realized what had happened, that the firstborn of every Egyptian household had died, he sent for Moses and Aaron and told them to leave. He commanded Moses and Aaron to get every Israelite and leave the land of Egypt. God's people had been freed!

That night, 600,000 men plus all the women and children left Egypt. The Egyptians were so eager to get rid of them they gave them anything they asked for: clothing, animals, silver, and gold. The Israelites had lived in Egypt for 430 years. Now they were finally free.

God freed the people just as He said He would. And just as God freed the Israelites from slavery, He frees us from the slavery of sin.

The truth is, we all serve someone. We all have put our trust in someone. When we sin, we're putting our trust in ourselves, doing whatever we want to make us happy. But when we trust God, we no longer serve ourselves and live a life of sin. In the book of Galatians, there's a verse that tells us Christ sets us free. And since He sets us free from our sin, we should not get tied up in the slavery of sin again.

The Israelites showed they trusted God. They believed in the things Moses told them because they knew Moses was talking to God regularly. God told them each year they were to celebrate this moment in their lives as the Passover- the moment death "passed over" their homes. The Israelites were joyful to celebrate God's goodness. He had come through on his promise to free them from slavery! And He wants to free us from our sin just the same.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » How did the Israelites show obedience to God before leaving Egypt?
- » Is it easier to serve God or yourself? Why?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » Why did the Israelites paint the blood of an animal on their doorposts?
- » Just as the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, we are slaves to sin until we come to trust in Jesus. Is it better to be a slave to sin or to be obedient to God? Why?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » What would have happened to the Israelites if they had not painted the blood of an animal on their doorposts? What happens to us when we disobey God?
- » Is it better to follow God or follow your own way? Why?

PRAYER

God, You have been so good to us. Just like You were to the Israelites, freeing them from 430 years of slavery, You want to free us too from sin. God, forgive us for serving ourselves instead of You. We know You have a great plan for us and that You want us to serve You. Help us to do that. Amen.



DEVOTION 9

GOD GUIDES US (THE 10 COMMANDMENTS: EXODUS 20:1-21)**Key Story Verse:**

You must not have any other god but me. Exodus 20:3

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 9."

MEMORY VERSE:

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

- Romans 8:14

Not long after the Israelites had left Egypt, Pharaoh again changed his mind. He thought to himself "What have we done, letting all those Israelite slaves get away?" So Pharaoh decided to go after them and bring them back.

The Israelites saw the Egyptians coming for them, and ran faster! But there was a problem: they were facing the Red Sea. How would they ever get across it to get away from Pharaoh and his men? The people cried out to God in fear. But just as He always does, God had a plan.

He told Moses to hold up his hand over the sea. When he did, God opened a path through the sea, turning the middle of the water into dry land! The people crossed unharmed, but when the Egyptians tried to follow them, God released the waters and Pharaoh and all of his men drowned. God had once again saved the Israelites.

Now that the people no longer had to worry about the Egyptians coming for them, God wanted to give them some rules to follow so they wouldn't stray from Him. These rules became known as the 10 Commandments. These rules were given so the people would remember to serve God and to avoid sin.

The people were commanded to follow these rules: to not serve any god other than the true God. They were to not make an idol out of anything. They were to not misuse God's name. They were to keep one day each week set aside as a day of worship.

Then the people were told to honor their father and mother. They were told to not murder. Husbands and wives were told to remain faithful to one another. People were told to not steal. They were told to not lie about someone else. They were told to not be eaten up with jealousy over what someone else has.

All ten of these rules were given to Moses at a place called Mount Sinai. When God gave Moses these commandments, there was a loud blast from a horn and thunder and lightning. The people were afraid, but Moses told them "God has come in this way to test you and so that your fear of him will keep you from sinning!"

The 10 Commandments were not an impossible list of rules that we could never keep so God could strike us down. God gave them to the people so that they would continue trusting Him and not themselves.

We've talked before about how God knows us better than anyone. He knows the things people tend to do. We tend to want to follow things that aren't of God. We tend to get jealous of others for what they have. We tend to be disrespectful to our parents. God wants us to follow His rules because He loves us and He knows what's best for us.

We can trust Him to guide us. Romans 8:14 says that those who are led by God are God's children. Don't view His rules as something to punish us. View them as a guide to help us live the life He wants us to live.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » Is there a rule that is hard for you to follow? Why?
- » Why does God want you to follow His rules?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » Are there certain rules that you wish didn't exist? Why?
- » How does following God's rules show honor to Him?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » Which of the 10 Commandments do you find most difficult to follow? Why?
- » Can someone follow the 10 commandments and live joyfully?

PRAYER

God, thank You for rescuing us from sin. Thank You for wanting us to be free from sin. Will You help us to follow You? We are so often tempted to go our own way and do what we want. Help us to do what You want us to do. Amen.



DEVOTION 10

GOD FORGIVES US (THE NEW COVENANT: EXODUS 32:1-29, 34:1-10)

Key Story Verse:

I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. Exodus 34:7b

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 10."

MEMORY VERSE:

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

- 1 John 1:9

Later on in the life of Moses there comes another time when God speaks to him on a mountaintop. While Moses meets with God, the people grow tired of waiting for him. Without Moses, they felt they didn't have a leader. They felt God wasn't with them. So they went to Aaron for help.

They told Aaron to make them gods to lead them, so he took their gold rings and melted them. He then molded the gold into a calf. The people began to worship the golden calf instead of God.

God saw this and told Moses to go down the mountain saying of the people that "they have turned away from the way I commanded them to live." God was angry at the people's sin. God was going to punish the people for their sin.

But Moses intervened.

He prayed that God would show mercy to His people. God did. He changed his mind and decided to show them mercy. God still disciplined the people, but He didn't bring the destruction on them that He might have.

A few chapters over in Exodus 34 we read about a new covenant God made with his people. He said "I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin." God forgives sin when we confess to Him. This doesn't mean He lets sin go unpunished. There are always consequences for our sin. But God's grace and mercy are greater than any sin.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites continued a pattern of sin, confession, and receiving God's forgiveness. God is always faithful. He loves his people. His heart breaks when they sin.

When you sin, we know God will forgive you when you confess to Him. 1 John 1:9 states But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

God wants us to follow Him and His commands because He knows what's best for us. He wants to forgive us when we do wrong.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » Why was God upset the people had made a golden calf?
- » Is there anything you serve in your life other than God?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » You may not have a golden calf, but what other idols in your life are you tempted to “worship” instead of God?
- » What will God do if we confess our sins to Him?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » An idol isn't just something made out of gold that we bow down to. It's anything that takes priority over God in our lives. What are some idols in your life that steal your attention and devotion away from God?
- » What steps can you take to worship God and God alone?

PRAYER

Thank You God for your rich mercy. You forgive us when we do wrong. Thank You that you are kind, compassionate, and patient. Thank You for your unending love. God, please forgive us for the times we worship something other than You. We love You, Lord. Amen.



DEVOTION 11

GOOD NEWS

Key Story Verse:

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NLT)

COACH:

At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 11."

THINK ABOUT IT:

Because everyone that has ever lived has sinned, everyone needs forgiveness from their sin.

The story of Moses is filled with ups and downs. It's filled with losses and triumphs. It's filled with death and with life. It also tells us a lot about how God feels about his people. Today, I want to talk about the good news we learn about in not only the life of Moses but all throughout the Bible.

The good news actually starts with something difficult to hear: we are slaves to sin. Just as the Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians, we are often controlled by our sin. In John 8:34, Jesus says "Everyone who sins is a slave of sin." We are all born with a desire to sin, That's our human nature. Everyone who has ever lived and will ever live has sinned. Everyone except for Jesus.

So how can we get freedom from sin? For the Israelites, they ultimately were freed by God who commanded everyone who desired to follow Him to kill a young lamb or goat and paint its blood on their doorposts. It took the death of something living to get the Israelites freedom. For us to be free from sin, it also takes the death of something living. But we don't have to kill any lamb or goat as they did in the Old Testament. Jesus came and died in our place so that we may be forgiven and free from sin. God showed us how deeply He loves us through His Son, Jesus. Romans 5:8 states "But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Freedom from sin is God's way of giving us new life. When we confess our sin, ask for forgiveness, and begin to follow Jesus, we are what the Bible calls a "new creation." 1 Corinthians 5:17 states "When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here!" When we choose to follow Jesus, we are, at the same time, leaving our old lives of slavery behind, just as the Israelites did when they crossed the Jordan River.

The ultimate goal of the Israelites was to make it to the Promised Land, a wonderful place God set aside for his people to live in. Because of their sins, many of the Israelites never got to see the Promised Land. But for those of us who put our trust in Jesus, we are promised eternal life in Heaven. John 3:16 tells us "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life." Now that is good news!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

K-2nd Grade Questions:

- » How do you know God loves you?
- » What is so good about the good news?

3rd-6th Grade Questions:

- » Are you able to admit that you've sinned? Why or why not?
- » What are the benefits of choosing to follow Jesus?

7th Grade and Up Questions:

- » Is confessing your sin easy or difficult? How might knowing God loves you no matter what you've done change how you view your sin?
- » Do you consider yourself a follower of Jesus? Why or why not?

PRAYER

God, thank you for this good news. Thank you that you loved us so much you willingly gave up your own Son for us. I pray for anyone here who does not have a relationship with you. I pray that you will speak to them through your Word and your Spirit so they may come to faith in you. We love you, God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

