

On your marks

Many children's leaders have found the style of storytelling that has been developed within Godly Play to be a very helpful and effective way of opening up the Bible with children. In the *Barnabas* Ministry Team we have been experimenting with some additional stories from scripture presented in this style, which we have used at *Barnabas* events and on Quiet Days. We are making them available so you can try them out with your children's group and we would be interested in any feedback on how they were received. Remember to tell the story slowly, focusing on the objects and on the story itself, **not** on the children who are listening. When you have finished telling the story, leave a short space and then use the wondering questions written out for you at the end of the piece.

Get set

You can find the call of Moses in Exodus 3:1-15. The strange sight of a bush on fire but not burnt up draws Moses into the presence of God where he discovers the special work that God is calling him to do. This is really a story box version of one small but important part of the life of Moses and as such goes alongside the main Exodus story that is already in print in *The Complete Guide to Godly Play* volume 2. Also, as this is another story that happens in the desert we suggest that you begin it with the usual words about the desert being a dangerous place etc., which you will find in that same volume. There is an abridged version of this included in the story below.

For this presentation you will need the following items, choosing or making 3-D objects that are both simple and attractive:

- A large tray or bowl filled with sand;
- some wooden sheep;
- a wooden figure for Moses;
- a burning bush made from a number of flame coloured dried flower pieces stuck into an oasis.

Go!

- **1**
Introduce the desert tray or bowl. As you say the following words, move your hands slowly back and forth over the sand, expressing in movement the sentiments behind the words
- This is the desert. It is a dangerous place. People do not go into the desert unless they have to. There is no water there, and without water we die. There is no food there. Without food we die.
- When the wind blows, it changes the shape of the desert. People get lost. Some never come back.
- In the daytime the sun is so hot that people must wear lots of clothes to protect themselves from the sun and the blowing sand. The sand stings when it hits your skin. The sun scorches you by day. At night it is cold. You need many clothes to keep warm. The desert is a dangerous

place. People only go there if they have to.

• **2**

Place the Moses figure near the edge of the desert tray/bowl nearest the children; put several sheep alongside

- The people of God were trapped as slaves in Egypt. Moses was no longer in Egypt. He had run away and was a shepherd in the desert. He looked after the sheep belonging to his father-in-law Jethro.

• **3**

Move your hand back and forth across the sand to indicate Moses' movements

- He used to guide them from place to place to find food to eat. Moses was travelling west when he came close to Mount Sinai. This was God's mountain.

• **4**

Place the oasis with the flame-coloured dried flower display in the centre of the desert tray/bowl

- As he walked by he noticed a bush that seemed to be on fire. But it was a strange fire because it did not burn. The bush remained the same even in the midst of the flames. It was a sign from God.

• **5**

Move Moses slowly near to the bush

- Moses paused and decided to go towards the bush to see it more closely.

Cup your hand above Moses as if in blessing

- It was when Moses turned aside that God then came so close to Moses and Moses came so close to God that Moses knew what God was saying. God told Moses to take off his shoes because this was a holy place. He was in the presence of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Moses was so frightened that he hid his face.

• **6**

Then God said to Moses "I have seen the pain of my people in Egypt and I have heard their prayers for help. I know how much they are suffering and I am coming to rescue them. I will bring them to a safe place, to a land that is good and which flows with milk and honey. I am sending you Moses to Pharaoh to rescue my people.

Point away beyond the desert bowl perimeter to indicate Moses' mission to Pharaoh

- Now Moses was very afraid and said to God that he could never do such a thing. But God said that he would go with Moses and promised him that he would bring the people out of Egypt right back to this very mountain to worship him.
- But then Moses said, 'Who shall I say has sent me, when they ask me for your name?' And God said, 'This is my name. I am Yahweh, which means 'I am who I am' and 'I will be who I will be'. Tell them that Yahweh, the 'I am', has sent you. This is my name forever and by this name I will be remembered for all generations.
- *I wonder what you like best about this story?*



I wonder what is most important in this story?

I wonder where you are in this story or which part of the story is especially about you?

I wonder if there is any part of this story we can leave out and still have all the story we need?