
Overview

Biblical Passage Exodus 3:1-10, 4:10-18

Supporting Passages Exodus 3:11-22, Hebrews 11:23-29

Memory Verse Exodus 4:12

Biblical Truth Though he felt inadequate, Moses surrendered to God's call to mission.

Context While most of us claim to want to be on mission with God, when His call to action comes, we often hesitate. Isn't someone else better equipped to carry out this task? What is this going to cost me? Isn't there another way? If we are going to surrender to God's call to mission, then we have to learn to trust Him—to trust that God is sovereign, trust that He can indeed use us despite all of our flaws, and trust that the success of the mission ultimately rests in God's hands and not our own. These six lessons in the Living Loud series will take a closer look at the specific lives of those who responded to God's call to the mission, living their lives out loud for the world to see and hear.

Learning Goals

- **Explore:** Students will learn that God calls unlikely people to carry out His mission.
- **Transform:** Students will examine their willingness to surrender to God's call to mission.

Prayer Suggestions

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.

- Pray that your students will understand that God is faithful.
- Pray that your students will be attentive to God's call.
- Pray that your students will surrender when God calls them to be on mission.

Biblical Commentary

Investigation

“Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt” (Ex. 1:8). This verse marks a turning point in the Israelites’ history. Joseph—favorite son of Jacob, grandson of Isaac, great-grandson of Abraham—had been Pharaoh’s second in command, helping Egypt to successfully survive a brutal seven-year famine. Because of Joseph’s leadership and stewardship, Pharaoh emerged from this period in a position of heightened power, as hungry people from throughout Egypt and Canaan relinquished first their money, then their livestock, then their land, and finally their own lives to Pharaoh’s control. In appreciation for Joseph’s efforts, Pharaoh provided Joseph’s father and brothers and their families with prime property in Goshen, where they settled and were fruitful, increasing exponentially in number (Gen. 47:27).

As the memory of Joseph’s heroics faded through subsequent generations, the Egyptians’ attitude toward the Israelites changed. Because of sheer numbers, the Israelite immigrants were viewed as a threat to Egypt’s domestic security (Ex. 1:10). Pharaoh responded to this perceived threat by enslaving the Israelites; yet amidst severe oppression, the people of Israel continued to multiply. In response, Pharaoh ordered two Hebrew midwives to kill Hebrew baby boys as soon as they were born (Ex. 1:15-19). When his evil plan was thwarted and the Israelites continued to increase in number, the Egyptian king issued an order to throw every male baby into the Nile (Ex. 1:22).

Desperate times definitely called for desperate measures. And so came a Hebrew infant named **Moses**. The infant was set adrift by his fearful mother in a basket of papyrus among the reeds of the Nile. As providence would have it, Moses was discovered by none other than Pharaoh’s daughter, who adopted the boy as her own son (Ex. 2:10). God’s mission to save His people was beginning to take shape.

Importance

This passage of Scripture is important because it reminds students of the Essential Truth that **God Is**. Before Moses surrendered to God’s mission to rescue the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, he needed some reassurance. Why was God calling him to do this? Weren’t others better suited for the task?

Moses made the mistake of focusing on his own limitations rather than God’s unlimited power. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was sending Moses on this mission of deliverance. None other than the great **“I AM”** had called him (Ex. 3:14). The Creator of the universe would empower Moses to act on His behalf. The omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God was on a mission to save His people, and He chose to use a shepherd who, because of his past, was uniquely qualified to be God’s instrument. But first Moses had to surrender.

These verses also teach us that **People are God's Treasure**.

Interpretation

Exodus 3:1 Moses had fled into the wilderness of **Midian** when he was 40 years old, after he killed an Egyptian whom he witnessed mistreating an Israelite (Acts 7:23-29). Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush on Horeb (likely an alternate name for Mount Sinai) occurred 40 years later (Acts 7:30). During the four decades that he spent living in the wilderness, Moses married Zipporah, had two sons, and labored as a shepherd for his father-in-law (Jethro) over his flock. Perhaps God used Moses' experiences tending stubborn sheep in the desert to prepare this future prophet to lead a flock of equally stubborn people through the same wilderness.

Exodus 3:2-3 God capitalized on natural human curiosity to get Moses' attention. The burning bush was God's visible revelation to a man who would, in turn, become God's own messenger to Pharaoh and the Israelites. Fire is associated with God in other places in the Old Testament: a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared when God made His covenant with Abram (Gen. 15:17-21); God guided the Israelites through the wilderness in a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21); and God descended upon Mount Sinai in fire on the day when Moses went up from the Israelites to receive the Law (Ex. 19:18-19).

Exodus 3:4 This account of God's call to Moses parallels the calls of Abram (Gen. 22:11) and Samuel (1 Sam. 3:10). All three of these stories feature God's repetition of the individual's name, thus conveying a sense of urgency (Barker, 38). Moses' response—"Here I am"—is also familiar, since Abram (Gen. 22:1, 22:11), Samuel (1 Sam. 3:4), and Isaiah (Isa. 6:8) all answered God's personal call in the manner of a servant responding to a master (Barker, 37).

Exodus 3:5 This place on Mount Horeb was not inherently **holy**; it was made holy because of the presence of God. Taking off one's sandals was an act of reverence. God consecrated this spot on the mountain then He consecrated Israel's first prophet to carry out His mission of deliverance.

Exodus 3:6 When God heard the cries of the Israelites, He remembered—it was not as though He had forgotten, but rather that it was time to fulfill His promise—the covenant He had made with Abraham (Gen. 17:1-8), Isaac (Gen. 26:24), and Jacob (Gen. 35:11-12). By invoking the names of the patriarchs, God invited Moses to play a key role in a new chapter of the divine drama that had been unfolding for generations: a love story about God and His people.

Moses was understandably fearful in the midst of this encounter with God, since the Israelites believed that to see the face of God would result in death (Gen. 32:30). But Moses would not always be so fearful in God's presence, for one day he would boldly ask God to show him His glory (Ex. 33:18).

Exodus 3:7-10 Acting out of compassion for His children, God initiated a plan of action to rescue the Israelites and lead them into Canaan, the land that He had long before promised to give Abram's offspring (Gen. 12:7). Moses would be God's instrument of deliverance. Through Moses, God would lead His beloved people out of the land of bondage and into a land of freedom.

Exodus 4:10 A reluctant prophet, Moses had already offered up a series of objections to God's call: his unworthiness for the mission (Ex. 3:11), his uncertainty about God's identity (Ex. 3:13), and his potential rejection by the Israelites (Ex. 4:1). These are doubts with which we may all identify. God reassured Moses of His presence (Ex. 3:12), formally introduced Himself (Ex. 3:14-15), and promised that the elders of Israel would listen to Moses (Ex. 3:18). In this verse, Moses argued that he was simply not eloquent enough to make God's case effectively before Pharaoh. This does not mean that Moses had a speech impediment; instead, he was

concerned that he would not be able to think quickly on his feet and respond appropriately in Pharaoh's imposing presence.

Exodus 4:11-12 God summarily rejected Moses' "I'm a bad speaker" objection. After all, hadn't God created Moses in the first place? Didn't He know what He was capable of doing through Moses? Wouldn't He provide Moses with the right words at the right time to carry out His mission? There are many times in which God must remind us of who we are and who He is. When we come to the end of ourselves, we realize that the excuses we throw up against God are exactly right. We can't do it. That's when God reminds us that He can. He chooses only to use us as His instruments. What a high calling this is!

Exodus 4:13 Running out of excuses, but still hesitant to embrace God's call to mission, Moses entered his final plea: Send someone else. The task simply seemed too daunting. Moses lacked faith in himself and faith in God.

Exodus 4:14-16 God did not excuse Moses from the task but instead chose to provide him with a partner in mission. Moses' brother, **Aaron** the **Levite**, would serve as the official spokesperson: God would speak to Moses, who would relay the message to Aaron, who would communicate God's message to Pharaoh and the Israelites. Moses would be Israel's first prophet and Aaron would be Israel's first priest, with Israel's future priests coming from the tribe of Levi.

Exodus 4:17 A shepherd's crook, one of the tools of Moses' trade, would play a key role in God's mission of deliverance. God had already confirmed His power to Moses by turning this staff into a snake, and the prophet would use it to perform miraculous signs that would demonstrate God's authority (Ex. 4:2-5). With this staff, Moses would initiate the plagues of hail (Ex. 9:23) and locusts (Ex. 10:13), part the Red Sea (Ex. 14:16), and produce water from a rock (Ex. 17:6).

Exodus 4:18 Moses likely still had many doubts about God's mission but ultimately surrendered to the call. After his encounter with God at the burning bush, the newly consecrated prophet descended from Mount Horeb to rejoin his family. Jethro affirmed his son-in-law's call to return to Egypt, and one day the two men would be reunited to celebrate God's mighty work of deliverance (Ex. 18:9-12).

Implications

Students should readily identify with Moses' story since feelings of inadequacy permeate the teenage years. Many young Christ-followers often want to attempt great things for God, yet they feel ill-equipped to serve Him. Plagued by self-doubt, excuses flow freely. "I'm not worthy." "I don't know what I'm talking about." "I can't speak." "I'm too young." "Surely somebody else would be better at this." Like Moses, they lack faith not only in themselves but also in God. They haven't yet learned from experience that God equips and empowers those He calls and that it is God-reliance rather than self-reliance that is necessary to be on mission with God. How have you experienced God's faithfulness relative to a call to serve? What personal words of testimony can you share with your students?

And then there's the issue of surrender. What a frightening concept! In order to surrender to God's mission, we have to submit to His authority. In order to surrender to God's mission, we have to give up control. In order to surrender to God's mission, we have to trust God with the results. None of these things come easily for us—it doesn't matter if we are 16 years old or 60 years old. In the end, Moses surrendered to God and took on the divine mission of deliverance. Moses may have still been plagued by self-doubt, but he finally came to the point

of trusting God enough to take a step of faith. Encourage your students as they wrestle with their own doubts of unworthiness. Redirect their focus to God's power instead of their weaknesses. How can you prepare your students to be open to God's call?

Teaching Plan

Connect Activity

Media Option: Living Loud

(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

Students will watch a video about living life loud.

(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb Media Pass or the Reverb DVD, preview and arrange to show the "Living Loud" video. (If your church has not purchased the Reverb Media Pass, you can purchase this single video through the "Media" tab.)

Play the video for your students. When the video is over, ask students what they thought about the video. Say: **If you could say one thing about the "guy" in the video, it would be that he lived life loud! We are about to spend the next six weeks looking at people who lived their lives loud too. The main difference is that their lives were lived through actions, not words.** Explain to students that by the time that *Living Loud* is over, they will have an excellent grasp on what it means to live Godly lives, lives of action that are on mission for God.

Drama: Star-Maker

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will watch a drama about a music producer who wants to sign a seemingly untalented girl.

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the drama script. Prior to the session, enlist two students to enact the drama. Give copies of the script to cast members ahead of time so that they will be ready to perform it.

Prompt students to perform the drama. Afterward, ask: **So, what did you think of Leah's performing skills?** Allow students to respond. They say: **Reggie seemed pretty confident that he could turn Leah into a star in spite of her poor performance.** Ask: **Do you think that Reggie has the ability to turn her into a star? Do you think that God can make you into anything that He wants you to be?** Say: **In today's study we'll consider Moses, his lack of self-confidence, and God's ability to make Him into the instrument that He desired Him to be.**

Explore Activity

Master Teacher Key Study: Moses Surrender to the Mission

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will study Exodus 3:1-10 and 4:10-18 to understand God's call to Moses.

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the Master Teacher Key Study. Print one copy for your own use. Also download the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens.

Learning Goal: Students will learn that God calls unlikely people to carry out His mission.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Exodus 3:1-10 and 4:10-18.

Transform Activity

Deeper Discussion

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss how God calls people to service these days.

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Learning Goal: Students will examine their willingness to surrender to God's call to mission.

Use the following prompts to begin a discussion about God's call:

- **How does God call us when a phone and a burning bush are not His choice of communication?**
- **What does surrender look like in our lives?**
- **What adjustments do we have to make in order to surrender to God's call?**
- **How have you been obedient to God's call(s) in the past?**

How have you been affirmed when you have responded in obedience to God's call?

Creative Prayer

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will pray to express their trust to God and surrender before Him.

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Post five large pieces of butcher paper on the wall. Provide at least one marker per student. For each piece of paper, write the following headings, one heading per piece of paper: How God Speaks, How I Respond, Excuses I Give, How I Can Trust and Surrender, Here I Am!

Learning Goal: Students will examine their willingness to surrender to God's call to mission.

Lead students to spend some time in prayer, examining their willingness to surrender to God's call to mission. Instruct them to visit each of the papers on the wall and write about 1) how God has spoken to them, 2) how they have responded (both appropriately and inappropriately), 3) excuses that they have given, and 4) how they can trust and surrender. On the last sheet of paper (Here I Am!), lead students to trace their hand on the paper and write their name on the inside of their handprint. Explain that this will demonstrate to each other and to God that they are trusting and surrendering to God's call to mission. Lead students in a prayer of commitment to be open and faithful to whatever He chooses to do in and through their lives.

Living Loud 1: "Moses: Surrender to the Mission"
Drama

Star-Maker

Characters:

LEAH
REGGIE

Props: sofa, dance music

Costumes: Leah should be dressed as plainly as possible. Reggie should wear designer clothing.

Creative Note: When Leah sings and dances, she should be really, really bad. Consider letting those moments go on for an awkward and uncomfortable length of time.

(On a single sofa sits LEAH, an average girl with very little that is remarkable about her. REGGIE enters, dressed in designer clothing. He speaks with a posh British accent and looks like he's got an expensive haircut. He's somewhat like Simon Cowell, only a bit slicker and sleazier.)

REGGIE: Ah, Leah, my dear. Thank you so much for coming in.

LEAH: Sure thing, Mr. Reginald.

REGGIE: Please, call me Reggie.

LEAH: Um, okay, Reggie. I was pretty surprised to get your call.

REGGIE: *(interrupting)* Leah, let me get right to the point. I've been behind some of the biggest stars and biggest records of the past fifteen years.

LEAH: Yeah, I know.

REGGIE: And I want you to be my next star and make my next hit record.

LEAH: Me?

REGGIE: Yes. You.

LEAH: But Mr. R . . .

REGGIE: Ah, ah, ah.

LEAH: I mean, Reggie . . . I'm not really much of a singer.

REGGIE: Oh, I don't believe it. Let's hear it.

LEAH: Okay, if you really want.

(LEAH clears her throat and then begins to sing very much off-key.)

LEAH: *(singing)* Amazing grace, how sweet the sound . . .

(REGGIE interrupts her, undaunted.)

REGGIE: No matter. That can all be fixed with auto-tune. Besides, all anyone really cares about is the performance, the dancing.

LEAH: But I don't really dance, either.

REGGIE: Have you ever tried?

LEAH: Well, I don't guess.

REGGIE: Go on. Give it a shot.

(REGGIE snaps his fingers and music magically begins playing. LEAH begins "dancing," if you can call it that. She's terrible and offbeat. REGGIE snaps his fingers again and the music stops.)

REGGIE: *(unfazed)* That's no problem. We'll surround you with the best back-up dancers you've ever seen.

LEAH: But, Reggie, look at me. I'm really not that . . .

REGGIE: We'll give you a makeover.

LEAH: Well, you see, my time is just . . .

REGGIE: We'll work according to your schedule.

LEAH: But I can't really afford . . .

REGGIE: We'll pay you a million dollars.

LEAH: Honestly, Reggie, I just don't think I'm really right for all of this. I mean . . .

REGGIE: Leah, you may not think you're right, but I do. And I'm the star-maker. I'm the record producer.

LEAH: *(considering)* That's true.

REGGIE: Trust me. Now, are you in?

(Leah thinks for a moment.)

LEAH: Yeah. Yes. I'm in. Let's do it.

REGGIE: Splendid. Now, come on. We've got lots—and I mean LOTS—of work to do.

(They both exit.)

(The End)

Master Teacher Key Study

MOSES: SURRENDER TO THE MISSION

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

Intro: What is the likelihood of God calling “unlikely” people for His plans and purposes?

Description: Based on the fact that Moses had become a shepherd instead of a pharaoh, what was the likelihood of him becoming a leader over Israel—and over pharaoh? The evidence in Scripture indicates that God chooses to use people for His plans and purposes whom the world labels as “unlikely.”

Illustration: There are many opinions concerning America’s president today. However, whether you agree or disagree with Barack Obama, the temperature of the country seemed right to elect an African American as president when he would have been an unlikely candidate even just ten years ago.

1. God expects His people to respond to His call (Ex. 3:1–6).

Description: God revealed Himself to Moses through a burning bush, attracting his attention and drawing him closer to where God could identify Himself and reveal His plan. Moses responded by saying “Here I am.”

Illustration: Not everyone gets to have an audience with the president. Only those who are invited to meet with the president at the White House ever have that opportunity. However, one couple decided to take it upon themselves and show up at a White House state dinner. Tareq and Michaela Salah managed to get past the Secret Service and had photos taken with the president, vice president, and other important officials at President Obama’s first state dinner, given in honor of the prime minister of India. Moses, however, was called to have an audience with the God of all the universe.

Application: You might have to be someone of importance to have an audience with the president of the United States. But God calls on those who are unlikely to meet with Him and respond to His call to be a part of His plans.

2. God expects His people to trust His plans and purposes (Ex. 3:7–10).

Description: God told Moses that He had heard the cries of the Israelites, and then He revealed to Moses what He was about to do. He wanted to use Moses as His messenger and the one who would lead the Israelites from captivity.

Illustration: *Trust* is a big word. Tiger Woods had the trust of Americans as being one of the good ones—the role model who would never let us down. (But in all fairness to Tiger, he is human and has admitted that he’s not perfect.) The trust that most people had in Tiger has been shaken in reports of alleged unfaithfulness to his wife. It makes people wonder—if they can’t trust in someone like Tiger Woods, can they trust in anyone?

Application: God identified Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His plans and purposes had been trusted from one generation to the next. He had never failed His people. He still hasn’t.

3. God expects His people to surrender their own agendas to His will and respond in obedience (Ex. 4:10–18).

Description: Moses did not see his own plan for life as corresponding with God's. When God outlined His plan, Moses must have felt inadequate. After all, there he was serving as a shepherd in the wilderness. But God had in mind for Moses to become the shepherd of another and entirely different flock.

Illustration: A marine tells the story of arriving at boot camp on the bus. Even before the men on the bus exit, the sergeant is there shouting at them, letting them know that life will be different now, that they are not their own, and that they are now living and running according to the ways of their superior officers and for the greater good of the entire marine corps and the agenda of their commander in chief. Those getting off the bus are offered only one option—surrender and obedience.

Application: We have a commander in chief who has an agenda to redeem the world. His plans and purposes are perfect, and His ways are unfailing. We can try to do it our way and face failure, or we can surrender in obedience to Him, realizing His perfect outcome.

Conclusion: God is the great "I AM." He is *all*-powerful and *all*-knowing and therefore *all* we will ever need.

Description: If God calls us to fulfill His plans and purposes, it is because we are unlikely candidates, and He has the ability to enable us and use us to be His instruments.

Application: God called and still calls unlikely people to carry out His mission. We must respond by acknowledging that He is God and we are not. In addition, we have to be willing to be used and place our complete trust in Him and surrender to what He has called us to do, knowing that He will enable to accomplish what He has determined to do through us.

REVERB::LIVING LOUD::lesson one

MOSES: SURRENDER TO THE MISSION

biblical passage: Exodus 3:1–10, 4:10–18

memory verse: Exodus 4:12 “Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

MOSES: SURRENDER TO THE MISSION

1. God expects His people to _____ to His _____ (Ex. 3:1–6).
2. God expects His people to _____ His plans and _____ (Ex. 3:7–10).
3. God expects His people to _____ their own agendas to His will and respond in _____ (Ex. 4:10–18).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does God call us when a phone and a burning bush are not His choice of communication?
- What does surrender look like in our lives?
- What adjustments do we have to make in order to surrender to God’s call?
- How have you been obedient to God’s call(s) in the past?
- How have you been affirmed when you have responded in obedience to God’s call?