

# 12. I Am



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

**Exodus 3:1-15**  
(summarise rest of  
**Exodus 1-4**)

God appears to Moses at the burning bush and calls him to go to Pharaoh and rescue the Israelites from slavery



## AIMS

To help the children understand how God revealed himself to Moses as "I Am," the eternal God who never changes.

To help them reflect on what they know of God's character

**God revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush and called him to a daunting task. It was important that Moses understood who God was so that he could have confidence in the fact that God was with him.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What does this passage reveal to us about who God is?
- What does God mean when he says, "I am who I am"?
- How does knowing God in this way help Moses as he takes on the challenge of going to Pharaoh? Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Get the child who is outside to come back in and stand in the middle of the circle. See how quickly they can identify the leader.

### ▶ **Israelite Slaves Game**

If you choose to play this game, you may want to include the recap from the Exploring the Bible section below at the start to set the context.

Play a game similar to "Port, Starboard" but with the children taking on the role of the Israelite slaves.

Assign different sides of the room to be their homes, the fields, the building site and the palace and give them instructions to run to different locations and also to perform various actions, e.g. gather straw, mix mortar, build walls, bow to Pharaoh, pray to God.

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ **Guess The Leader Game**

Have the children sitting in a circle and send one child out of the room.

Nominate one child in the circle to be the leader. They perform an action, e.g. tapping their knees, pretending to play the piano etc. and the rest of the children must copy them.

From time to time the leader must switch to a different action and everyone else must also switch to the new action as quickly as they can.

This game can be just for fun to let the children run off some energy or you can play with the last child to reach the right location or do the right action being eliminated each time until there is a winner.

### ▶ **Guess The Voice Game**

*You will need: cards (from additional document: Guess the voice cards)*

Have all the children gathered at one end of the room and choose one child to go and sit at the other end with their back to the others.

Give one of the children in the group a card (*see additional document: Guess the voice cards*) Get them to disguise their voice and call out the name of the child who is at the opposite end of the room, and then to read out what is on the card.

The child at the opposite end of the room has to try to identify who was speaking. Once they have worked it out you can choose a different child to take their place as the guesser.

You can use the phrases on the cards more than once if you wish, depending on the number of children and how much time you have.

The phrases may sound strange to the children, but you can tell them that they are from the part of the Bible you will be looking at today and you'll find out more about them as you go through the story.



## **EXPLORING THE BIBLE**

### ▶ **Recap**

*You will need: family tree (additional documents: family tree from session 8 of One Big Story)*

Remind the children of where

you left the story of the Bible at the end of Genesis last term with Joseph and his family moving to Egypt. Show them the family tree diagram as a reminder of what you looked at last term.

**We're going to continue with the story of this family but we're going to jump ahead over 300 years. Joseph and his brothers had died by this point, but their descendants were still living in Egypt. They were now known as the Israelites, but they were being made to work as slaves by the Egyptians.**

**The Pharaoh who was on the throne of Egypt at that time didn't know the history of why the Israelites were there and how they had been welcomed because Joseph had helped the Egyptians. This Pharaoh saw the Israelites as a threat, so he made them work as slaves - making bricks and building cities. They were badly paid and badly treated, and this went on for a long time.**

### ▶ **Moses' Story**

*You will need: pictures printed out or on PowerPoint, Bible, simple costume for Moses e.g. headdress (could be a tea towel tied on with a piece of cord), robe and stick - picture of burning bush (see additional documents: Burning Bush Picture). You could have the picture of the burning bush stuck on the wall before the children arrive, so that it is ready for the drama later on.*

**The Israelites were slaves for many years, but finally God sent someone to help them.**

**What kind of leader do you think the Israelites would have needed?** (Probably someone strong, powerful, brave...)

**The person God chose to free the Israelites is probably not the kind of person you'd expect. It was a man called**

**Moses.**

**We can read about Moses in the Bible in the book of Exodus.**

*(You could use the images from slides 2,3 and 5 here: <http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/bpa-escape-egypt/> as you summarise the first part of Moses' story.)*

**There's an amazing story of how he was rescued as a baby when Pharaoh made a law that all baby boys born to the Israelite people should be killed.**

*(If the children are interested, you can tell them they can read it in Exodus 2:1-10. They could look it up if they have a Bible at home or search for it on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).)*

**As Moses grew up, he got angry about how the Israelites were being treated, but one day he took things too far and killed an Egyptian. He had to run away to another land and he worked as a shepherd for 40 years.**

Look up Exodus 3 in a Bible and read out verse 1 to set the scene. Tell the children this is where they can find the story later if they want to read it for themselves but for now they are going to hear the story through a drama.

Have two leaders tell the story as a drama with one person being Moses and the other the voice of God. *(The script below is also included as an additional document: Moses and the Burning Bush Script.)* Make sure the burning bush picture is stuck on the wall for Moses to indicate as he talks about it.

**Moses:** One day I was out in the fields, looking after my sheep. It was just an ordinary day, but suddenly I saw something amazing. I saw a bush and it was on fire. That's not very special in itself, but the strange thing was

that it kept on burning and burning but it didn't burn up! I went closer to take a look, and then something even more weird happened. The bush talked to me!

**God:** Moses! Moses!

**Moses:** Yes, here I am.

**God:** Don't come any closer! Take off your sandals! You are standing on holy ground. I am the God of your father - the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**Moses:** (to audience) So it wasn't really the bush talking, but it was God's voice coming out from the bush. I wondered why God was talking to me. What would he have to say to me? It was pretty scary.

**God:** I have seen the way my people are being treated as slaves and I have heard them cry to me for help, so I am going to rescue them and lead them to their own land. I want you to go to Pharaoh and lead my people out of Egypt.

**Moses:** But why me? Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people?

**God:** I will be with you and I will help you.

**Moses:** But if I tell the people, "God spoke to me," they will say, "What is his name?" What should I tell them?

**God:** I am who I am. This is my eternal name.

**Moses:** But I can't go and say to the people that God spoke to me. They'll never believe me.

**God:** I will give you a sign to show them. Then they will believe you.

**Moses:** But God, I'm not good at speaking. I'll get my words mixed up and say the wrong thing.

**God:** Who is it who made your mouth? Was it not me? I will help you to have the right words

to say.

**Moses:** But God, I don't want to do it. Please can you send someone else?

**God:** Ok, your brother Aaron is a good speaker. He can help you. I will tell you both what to say. Now go and get ready to go back to Egypt.

### ▶ Video

*You will need: equipment to play video*

If you prefer not to use a drama, you could show the children the video clip of this part of the story from the film "Prince of Egypt": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqDMBIRaJJM>



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ▶ Reflection

**In the middle of an ordinary day, God spoke to Moses. When God told Moses to take off his shoes and said that he was standing on holy ground, it was because something very special was happening. God was there and he was speaking to Moses.**

**He asked him to do something really challenging. Can you remember what it was?** To go to Pharaoh and to lead the Israelite people out of Egypt to the new land God was going to give them.

**Moses felt it was too hard. Can you remember the different excuses he made?**

The people won't believe me, I'm not good at speaking, I don't want to do it.

**Moses knew he wouldn't be able to do it by himself. That's why it was really important that he understood who God**

**was so that he knew who was going to be with him to help him.**

**God said something that sounded a bit strange. He said "I am who I am." I wonder what you think that could mean?**

**Basically, God was saying that he is the same forever. He was there before time began and he will be there for ever and ever, and he is always the same - he will never change. He will always be exactly who he is.**

**When God is talked about in this way in the Bible, it is often in connection with him rescuing his people and that's exactly what he was going to do. He was going to rescue the Israelites from being slaves.**

**Moses had been given this task, but he needed to know who God was and that God was with him so that he could take on the challenge and go to Pharaoh.**

### ▶ Memory Verse

*You will need: cards with words for memory verse on*

**God revealed himself to Moses as God who is the same forever and who never changes.**

Teach the children this verse as a reminder of that: "I am the Lord, and I do not change." (Malachi 3:6 NLT)

You could have each word written on a separate card and have them hidden around the room. Get the children to find the cards and help them sort the words into order. Then get them to repeat the verse several times, removing two or three cards each time until they can say it from memory.

### ▶ Prayer Activity

*You will need: burning bush picture, flame picture for each child (see additional document: flames), pens or pencils, blu tack or similar*

God spoke to Moses and showed him more of who he is and what he is like. I wonder what three words you would use to describe God? We gave you the chance to think about that at the very start of One Big Story, but now that you've heard more from the Bible maybe your understanding of who God is will have changed a bit.

The leaders could briefly share three words they would use to describe God (think about this in advance!), then give each child a picture of a flame and let them write their words onto it.

When the children have finished, get them to come and stick their flame onto the picture of the burning bush. (See *additional document: Burning Bush picture*)

Lead the children in praising God, using some of the words the children wrote on the flames.



## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

### ▶ Video

*You will need: equipment to play video*

This video from Crossroads Kids Club summarises the story of Moses being rescued as a baby as well as his encounter with God at the burning bush: <https://vimeo.com/49018352>

# 13. Challenge



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

### Exodus 5-11 (summary)

God sends plagues on the Egyptians



## AIMS

To help the children reflect on the fact that God is in control and to think about how that relates to challenging situations they may be facing

**There are consequences for people who, like Pharaoh, continue to rebel against God. Just because God has told us to do something it doesn't mean it will be easy. Sometimes, like Moses, we have to keep going, doing the right thing, even when it is really hard.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

If you have time, read through the whole section from the Bible about Moses going to Pharaoh. If not, skim through it to remind yourself of the key events and read Exodus 5:1-5, Exodus 7:14-8:15 and Exodus 11:4-10. Reflect:

- Why do you think God sent the plagues on the Egyptians?
  - Why did Pharaoh continue to be stubborn after seeing God's power?
  - When has God helped you to persevere through a difficult time?
- Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme. The first two link with the idea of persevering to complete a challenge and the third has a more direct link to the story.

### ► Shoe Game

*You will need: 2 chairs, plastic bottle with a small amount of water in it*

This works with larger groups.

Divide the children into two teams and have each team sitting in a line facing one another on opposite sides of the hall. Number the children in each team. If one team is a person short, give one member of that team two numbers.

Place a chair at each end of the hall between the lines of children and allocate one of the chairs to each team. Then place the plastic bottle in the middle of the hall.

To play the game, call out a number. The child from each team who was given that number runs to their team's

*(continued overleaf)*

chair. They sit down on it and take off one of their shoes, which they throw at the plastic bottle, aiming to knock it over. If they miss with their first shoe, they can try again with the other one.

If neither player manages to knock the bottle over, they can retrieve their shoes, sit on the chair and try again.

The child who knocks the bottle over gets a point for their team.

Repeat this calling a different number and make sure that all the children get a turn.

### ▶ Minute To Win It Challenges

Provide the children with some challenges they have to complete in one minute. Some examples are listed below, and you can find several more ideas here: <https://birthdayinspire.com/minute-to-win-it-games/> To add to the drama, you could use a timer video which you can find online, for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhrh2GJ-1I>

#### **Suck it up**

*You will need: 4 bowls, straws, small sweets (such as Smarties or Skittles), timer*

Choose two children to compete in this challenge. Give each child a bowl of sweets, an empty bowl and a straw. They need to transfer the sweets to the empty bowl one at a time by sucking them up with the straw. See who can transfer the most in one minute.

#### **Chocolate Unicorn**

*You will need: Jaffa cakes, timer*

Choose a child to take part in this challenge and place seven Jaffa Cakes on a table beside them. The child has to pick up one Jaffa Cake and place it on their forehead. They will need to lean back so that it doesn't fall. They then have to pick up the

second Jaffa Cake and stack it on top of the first. They continue like this, aiming to have all seven Jaffa Cakes in a stack on their forehead within one minute. If the Jaffa Cakes fall they have to start again.

#### **Bucket Head**

*You will need: bucket, ping pong balls, timer*

Choose a child to take part in this challenge. Give them a bucket and some ping pong balls. They have to bounce a ping pong ball on the floor and then try to catch it in the bucket, which they are holding on the top of their head. To complete the challenge, they need to catch three ping pong balls within one minute.

### ▶ Lego Building Game

*You will need: Lego bricks, building plan - just design something simple based on the Lego bricks you have, timer*

Give the children some Lego bricks and a plan to follow. See how quickly they can build the Lego model according to the plan. Depending on numbers and the amount of Lego you have, you could divide the children into small groups and give each group a set to work with, or you could have a few children doing the activity while the others watch.

After the children complete their model, tell them you want them to do it again to see if they can beat their time. Mix all the Lego bricks together, or mix the set the children are using in with other Lego bricks. This time, they have to find the Lego bricks they need before they can build their model. Tell them you still want them to do it in a faster time. Expect complaints that it is not fair and make the link with the story of the Israelite slaves in Egypt.

**Things were bad for them last week, but they got even worse.**

**Pharaoh demanded that the Israelites not only had to make bricks for the Egyptians, but now they had to find the straw to make them from too, and they were still expected to make the same amount of bricks! It wasn't fair!**



## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ▶ Recap

Remind the children of what they heard last week.

**The Israelite people were being made to work as slaves in Egypt. Then God spoke to Moses at the burning bush and told him he had to go and lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses felt very scared at first. He didn't feel that he would be able to do the task, but God promised to be with him and help him so he agreed to go.**

### ▶ Moses' Story

*You will need: headdresses for Moses and Pharaoh (Moses' could be a tea towel tied on with a piece of cord; you can find instructions and a template to make a Pharaoh's headdress here: [https://www.firstpalette.com/Craft\\_themes/Wearables/pharaohheaddress/pharaohheaddress.html](https://www.firstpalette.com/Craft_themes/Wearables/pharaohheaddress/pharaohheaddress.html) Keep this to use again for the next session!), words for Moses and Pharaoh to read (see additional document: Words for Moses and Pharaoh), plague pictures (see additional document: Plague pictures)*

**After his conversation with God, Moses met up with his brother Aaron, who was going to help him, and they went back to Egypt. Moses managed to persuade the Israelite leaders that God had sent them and that they were going to be free from slavery. Now Moses had to speak to**

## Pharaoh and persuade him to let his slaves go free.

(Choose two children to be Moses and Pharaoh and give them headaddresses to wear and words to read. These are the words marked in bold in the script below. Prompt them to say their words at the right moment.)

Moses went to Pharaoh and he said:

**The God of Israel says, "Please let my people go."**

Pharaoh said: **No, why should I listen to him? I don't know God and I won't let the people go. Stop this. You're distracting the people from their work.**

So Pharaoh made the Israelites work even harder and he treated them even more cruelly.

Moses was upset by this and he cried out to God:

**"Why have you brought all this trouble on your people, Lord? Ever since I went to Pharaoh things have been worse for the people and you have done nothing to help them."**

God said, "Now I am going to show Pharaoh my power so that he will let the Israelites go free."

Moses went back to Pharaoh again but Pharaoh was stubborn and he refused to let the Israelites go, so God sent plagues on the Egyptian people which meant that bad things happened to them.

There were ten plagues all together. After each plague, Pharaoh was given a chance to let the Israelites go, but he kept on refusing. Sometimes he would say they could go while the plague was happening, but as soon as it stopped he changed his mind.

Talk through the ten plagues, showing pictures to the children. (See additional document: *Plagues Pictures*. If

*you print the document double-sided you will have the words below on the back of each picture so you can read them out.)*

**First, God turned all the water in the River Nile into blood. It was like that for seven whole days and the people struggled to find something to drink.**

**Then God sent frogs across the whole land of Egypt. They came up out of the river and into people's houses and there were frogs everywhere!**

**Next God sent a plague of gnats on the land.**

**Then he sent flies. This time there were no flies in the part of Egypt where the Israelites lived, but where the Egyptians lived the flies were everywhere.**

**Pharaoh continued to refuse to let the people go so God sent a disease that killed many of the Egyptians' animals - sheep, horses, camels, cattle and donkeys.**

**Next God made boils come up all over the Egyptians' skin.**

**Then he sent hailstones on the land. It was the worst hailstorm that had ever been seen in the land of Egypt.**

**Then God sent locusts which ate all the crops.**

**After that God sent darkness on the land. For three days it didn't get light at all and the people couldn't see anything.**

**Even after all that, Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go, so God sent a final plague. The firstborn son in every family in Egypt died. Before God sent this plague, he gave the Israelites instructions to follow. They had to kill a lamb or a goat and smear blood from the animal round the doorframe of their house. If they followed those instructions, they would be**

**safe and no one in their family would be killed. After the final plague, Pharaoh finally said that the Israelites could leave Egypt.**

**We're going to come back to that final plague in a few weeks' time to think some more about what the Israelites were asked to do, and also to look at how it ties in with the Easter story. (See Session 19 - *Passover*)**



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ▶ Reflection

*You will need: sin image (additional document: sin)*

**It was a battle for control. Pharaoh liked to be in charge and he didn't like the idea that God was really in charge. God showed his power by sending the plagues. He was very patient with Pharaoh and gave him lots of chances but, in the end, there were consequences because Pharaoh refused to obey God.**

**Last week we heard how Moses discovered who God was, and how that helped him to take on a challenging task, but Pharaoh didn't really understand who God was and that he was in control. Even after he saw how powerful God was, he didn't want to obey him.**

**We talked last term about sin and the effects it had. One definition of sin sums up Pharaoh's attitude here.**

**It was like he was saying:**

**"Shove off, God!  
I'm in charge!  
No to your rules!"**

*Show the children the image (from additional document: sin) to highlight this.*

Imagine how Moses must have felt. He was trying to do what God told him to do but it must have been difficult when Pharaoh kept changing his mind. Just because Moses was obeying God didn't mean that life was easy. Sometimes we just have to try and keep going, doing the right thing even when it is hard and it seems that things are not working out. Moses was able to keep going because he knew that God was really in charge, and in the end God helped Moses to succeed at what he was being asked to do.

#### ▶ Prayer

Like Moses, sometimes we have to keep going in situations where it's hard. It might be difficult situations in our families, it might be things we struggle with at school, it might be problems in our friendships, but Christians believe that God is with us in those times to help us keep going, and that he is still in charge.

Give the children a moment to think about a difficult situation they are facing and then lead them in the prayer below, giving them a few seconds to mention their own situation silently to God.

**“God, help me to trust that even when... you are in control.” Amen.**



## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

### ▶ Song – Only A Prayer Away

*You will need: equipment to play music*

This song links with the theme of God being in control during the difficult times and reminds the children that they can call on him to help them. You can find it on YouTube here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq\\_BSFkxHys](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq_BSFkxHys)



# 14. Rescuer



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

### Exodus 14

God parts the Red Sea for Moses and the Israelites to escape from the Egyptians.



## AIMS

To help the children reflect on the story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and to consider what it reveals to us about God

God has amazing power to rescue, even in situations where it seems impossible. Like the Israelites, we can ask God for help when we need it.



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passage for this session and reflect:

- What do you think it would have been like for the Israelites to witness God's rescue in this way?
- What does this passage teach us about God?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ Freeze Tig

Depending on the size of your group, choose either one or two children to be the chaser(s). The other children run away from them, trying to avoid being caught. If they are caught, they have to freeze in position. They can only be "rescued" and unfrozen by another player who is not frozen tapping them as they run past.

### ▶ Rescue The Jelly Babies

*You will need: two bowls of jelly containing jelly babies (prepared in advance), newspaper or cover for table,*

*baby wipes and paper towels to clean up*

Choose two children to take part in a challenge. You will need two bowls of jelly with some jelly babies in them, made up in advance. Get the children to try to "rescue" the jelly babies by picking them out of the jelly with their teeth. See which child can be the first to rescue all their jelly babies.

### ▶ Sharks and Lifeguards

*You will need: a parachute (you could ask if either the school or your church has one you could borrow)*

Have all the children sitting round the parachute with their legs straight out underneath. Choose one child to be the shark and one to be the lifeguard. The shark goes under the parachute and the lifeguard stands up at the side.

When the game begins, get

*(continued overleaf)*

the children sitting round the parachute to shake it to make waves. The shark pulls on someone's legs, trying to bring them under the parachute too. When a child feels the shark pulling on their legs, they can call for the lifeguard to come and help them by attempting to pull them back out and prevent them from being pulled under the parachute. If a child is pulled under by a shark, they become a shark too. Once several children have become sharks, you can stop the game and choose a new shark and a new lifeguard to begin the next round.



### ▶ Recap

Remind the children of the story of Moses so far - his call from God at the burning bush and the challenge of persuading Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. Last week we heard how God sent ten plagues before Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites leave Egypt. Today we're going to find out what happened after that.

Choose one of the following three methods to help the children explore today's story:

### ▶ Red Sea Drama

*You will need: headdresses and printed words as detailed below, staff for Moses, 2 swords, 2 blue sheets or towels, gold coloured throw (optional)*

Choose children to play the different characters and give them props as follows:

Pharaoh - headdress (you can find instructions to help you make one here: [https://www.firstpalette.com/Craft\\_themes/Wearables/pharaohheaddress/pharaohheaddress.html](https://www.firstpalette.com/Craft_themes/Wearables/pharaohheaddress/pharaohheaddress.html)), words to say (see additional

*document: words for Pharaoh and Israelites)*

Moses - headdress (can be a tea towel tied on with a cord) and staff

Aaron - headdress

2 Israelites - words to say (see additional document: words for Pharaoh and Israelites)

2 Egyptians - swords

The rest of the children can be the other Israelites.

Have Pharaoh sitting on a "throne" at one side of the room with the two Egyptians guarding him on either side. (The throne can simply be a chair, or you could make it look more special by draping a gold coloured throw over it.) Have Moses, Aaron and all the other Israelites at the opposite side of the room.

Later in the story you will need two blue sheets or towels to represent the Red Sea.

Encourage the children to act the story out as you tell it.

**After the last plague, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron.**

(Moses goes over to where Pharaoh is sitting on his throne.)

Pharaoh: **"Get out and take all your people with you."**

**At last Moses and the rest of the Israelites could leave Egypt. They got everything ready and set off. God led them on their way by putting a pillar of cloud in the sky to guide them during the day and a pillar of fire to lead them at night.**

After the Israelites had travelled for a bit, God told them to stop for the night and set up camp so they did. They settled down to sleep.

**Meanwhile back in Egypt, Pharaoh was having second thoughts.**

Pharaoh: **"What have I done? Why did I let all my slaves go? We must go after them and bring them back."**

**So Pharaoh got his army together and they set out after the Israelites to bring them back.**

(Pharaoh and the Egyptians go after the Israelites.)

**When the Israelites saw the Egyptians in the distance, they panicked.**

(The Israelites get up to go on their way. Place blue cloths/towels on the floor to represent the Red Sea blocking their way.)

**They had just reached the edge of the Red Sea and there was no other way for them to escape. They started to complain to God and to Moses.**

Israelite 1: **"Why did you bring us out of Egypt just to die?"**

Israelite 2: **"It would be better to be a slave there than to die here."**

**Moses said, "Don't be afraid. Just watch. God will fight for you. He will rescue you."**

**Then God told Moses to take his staff and to raise it over the sea to divide the water so the Israelites could walk through on dry ground. Moses did and God opened up a path through the sea.**

(With a helper, lift up blue cloths to form walls of water. You could direct a child to help you if you don't have another adult there.)

**The Israelites all walked safely through.**

**The Egyptians chased them into the middle of the sea but God confused the Egyptian forces and made their chariots difficult to drive. When all the Israelites had reached the other side, God told Moses to raise his hand over the sea**

**again and he did. Immediately the water flooded over the Egyptians and not one of them survived.**

(Throw blue cloths over the Egyptians.)

**The Israelites were amazed and they put their trust in both God and Moses.**

Collect in the props and costumes and get the children to sit down.

#### ▶ Video

*You will need: equipment to play video*

If you prefer not to use a drama to tell the story, you could use a video clip as an alternative.

This video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MyUo87I5TE> provides a simple animated version of the story.

This one: <https://vimeo.com/176635067> uses a storyteller and, as well as telling the story of the crossing of the Red Sea, it also recaps the story of the plagues.

#### ▶ Story with images

*You will need: images either printed or on PowerPoint*

You can find a set of images to illustrate the story here: <http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/moses-red-sea/>

If you download the document entitled "Story planner" you will find a suggested script to use along with each picture to tell the story.



## REFLECT & RESPOND

#### ▶ Reflection

Get the children to imagine that they are one of the Israelite people: they had been slaves

for a long time, they'd been praying to God but it seemed like he wasn't answering, then Moses came and said he was going to lead them to freedom, but Pharaoh said no. Then there was a long time while the plagues were happening when they had to wait. At last they were allowed to go, but then the Egyptians chased them again. Finally they witnessed the parting of the Red Sea and God's amazing rescue.

**How do you think you would feel about God?**

**What do you think you would have learned through all of this?**

**The Bible says two things about the Israelites' reaction (Exodus 14:31): they were filled with awe (amazed at God's power) and they put their faith in God (they had seen how he had power to rescue them so they decided they were going to follow him).**

**Christians believe that God is still the same today. He still rescues people and he can still do amazing things. Christians believe that the most amazing rescue is that God sent Jesus to rescue people from sin and to deal with all the wrong things in the world. We'll think more about that around Easter time.**

#### ▶ Craft activity

*You will need: brown or grey card, blue card, scissors, glue sticks, felt pens, Moses figures and Bible verses (from additional documents detailed below)*

Give each child a rectangular piece of brown or grey card and two pieces of blue card with waves cut along one edge of each. (For templates, see additional document: *Red Sea Templates*.) Get them to fold a thin strip along the edge opposite the wavy edge on each piece of blue card and

then to glue these and stick them to each side of the brown/grey piece of card so that the blue pieces overlap and can fold back, allowing the sea to open.

Give them a Moses figure (see additional document: *Moses*) and let them colour this and stick it on to the blue card. Also give them a copy of Exodus 14:13 (see additional document: *Red Sea Craft Bible verses*) to stick on.

Give them a copy of Exodus 14:31 (see additional document: *Red Sea Craft Bible verses*) to stick inside along the path through the sea. They can also draw figures to represent the Israelites praising God.

Images of a finished version of this craft are included in the additional document: *Red Sea Craft*.

#### ▶ Prayer

Lead the children in prayer, thanking God for his power to rescue. You could incorporate some of the thoughts they shared in the reflection time.

# 15. Provider



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

### Exodus 16:1-17:7

God provides food and water for the Israelites as they travel through the wilderness



## AIMS

To encourage the children to reflect on what they are thankful for, and to thank God for these things

**Like Moses and the Israelites, we can trust God to provide all our needs. We should be thankful for the things we have, rather than complaining about things we want but don't have.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Why do you think the Israelites were so quick to begin complaining?
- What kind of things are you tempted to complain about?
- Make a list of things you are thankful for. How does that change your perspective?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ Fortunately, Unfortunately Game

Have the children sitting in a circle. One person starts by making up the first sentence of a story. The person next to them continues it with the next sentence but they must begin their sentence with the word "fortunately." Then the next person adds a sentence to the story, beginning, "unfortunately."

Continue round the circle alternating fortunately and

unfortunately, for example:

- One day I got a new puppy.
- Fortunately he was a lovely, friendly dog.
- Unfortunately he ran away.
- Fortunately someone found him and brought him back the next day.
- Unfortunately they were asking for £1000 reward.

Expect it to get silly fairly quickly! The story is likely to go on without a clear ending so just decide when you think it is time to move on and choose someone to begin a new story.

### Picture Hunt

*You will need: pictures (from additional document: Picture Hunt)*

Before the children arrive, hide sets of pictures around

*(continued overleaf)*

the room. (See additional document: *Picture Hunt*.) You will need to print enough sets of pictures so that there is one for roughly every three children. Print each set on a different colour of paper, or put marks with felt pen on each picture (a different colour for each set.)

Divide the children into teams of about three and give each team a colour (corresponding to the paper or pen marks you used). They have to try to be the first team to find all the pictures of their colour.

Once they have found all the pictures, see if they can spot the common theme. (They are all things we would need for a camping trip.)



## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ▶ Recap

Recap the story of Moses. **God chose Moses to lead the Israelites away from Egypt where they were slaves. He had problems when Pharaoh wouldn't let his slaves go and lots of plagues were sent on the Egyptians but finally the Israelites were free. We heard last time about how God opened up the Red Sea to let the Israelites through and so they were able to keep travelling on their way to the land God had promised them.**

### ▶ Moses' Story

*You will need: complaints cards or speech bubbles (see additional documents: *Complaints*, or *Complaints speech bubbles*.)*

**It was a long journey. At first they were just happy to be free from Egypt but then they started to get weary from all the travelling, and sometimes it was hard for them to find food to eat. About a month after they left Egypt the**

### **Israelites started to complain.**

Get the children to read out the sentences below.

There are different options provided for this:

You could get all the children to read the sentences together, or print different sentences on different colours of paper and divide the children into colour-coded groups. (See additional document: *Complaints*.)

You could give sentences to individual children to read out in turn. (See additional document: *Complaint speech bubbles*.)

Be sensitive to children who may struggle with reading or may not want to read in front of others.

1. We've got no food to eat.
2. We're going to starve out here in the wilderness.
3. I wish we were back in Egypt.
4. Me too. In Egypt we had plenty of food.
5. We had lots of meat and all the bread we wanted.
6. Now we have nothing.
7. We're so hungry.
8. It would have been better if God had just let us die in Egypt.

**God told Moses that he was going to give the Israelites food. The next day when the Israelites woke up they saw that strange flaky things had fallen from the sky during the night. It wasn't snow - this was the food God had given them to eat. They called it manna, which actually means "what is it?" because the Israelites didn't know what it was. It wasn't like any food they had seen before, but they thought it tasted like honey wafers and it was good.**

**Moses told the people to**

**collect as much food as they needed for themselves and their families for that day. They weren't to take extra to keep for the next day. They had to trust that God would give them what they needed again tomorrow. Some of the Israelites didn't listen and they kept food for the next day but in the morning they found that it had gone all mouldy and bad. Every day as they travelled the Israelites found that God gave them the food they needed.**

**However a little while later they started complaining again about something else:**

9. We're really thirsty.
10. We've nothing at all to drink.
11. There's nowhere to find water out here.
12. You're our leader. What are you going to do?
13. We have to get water soon or we'll die.
14. Why did you bring us out of Egypt anyway?
15. At least we had what we needed there.
16. Now we're going to die of thirst out here.

**Moses asked God what to do. God told Moses to take his staff - the stick he had used to part the Red Sea - and to hit a rock with it. Moses did, and water came pouring out of the rock for the Israelites to drink.**



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ▶ Reflection

**The Israelites did a lot of complaining. How do you think that would have made Moses feel as their leader? How do you think it would have made**

**God feel? The Israelites had just been rescued from slavery. You'd think they would have been thankful for that, but they were even saying they wished they were back in Egypt!**

**We can all be tempted to complain at times if things aren't going as we want them to. What kind of things do you sometimes complain about?**

**Actually we all have a lot to be thankful for and it makes a difference when we stop to appreciate these things instead of taking them for granted.**

### **▶ Prayer Activity**

*You will need: coloured paper triangles (see additional document: Bunting), pens or pencils, string or wool, stapler or Sellotape and scissors*

Ask the children to come up with some examples of things they are thankful for. Point out that, as well as being thankful for the physical things we have, such as food and clothes, and for our family and friends, it is also good to be thankful for what we know of God.

Have some triangles printed out on coloured paper for each child (from the additional document: Bunting). Point out that on one side is a verse from Exodus 15 - these are some of the things Moses and the people were thankful for about God after he had helped them cross the Red Sea. Get the children to read these and then to write or draw something they are thankful for on the other side.

Tape or staple the triangles onto a piece of wool or string to create bunting which can be hung up to remind them of all they have to be thankful for.

You could then pray together, getting the children to pray in turn, "Thank you, God, for..." and say the thing they wrote on

their bunting, or if you are pushed for time a leader could pray, using some of the children's suggestions.

# 16. Ruler



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Exodus 20:1-17

God gives Moses the Ten Commandments



## AIMS

To help the children reflect on the rules God gave his people and that he gave them these rules because he wanted what was best for them

To help them to understand that following God's instructions is the best way to live

Now that God had rescued the Israelites from slavery and was leading them to their own land, he gave them instructions about how they should live as his people. He gave them these rules because he loved them and wanted them to live in the best way.



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Why do we sometimes dislike the idea of following rules?
- Why did God give the people these commandments?
- How would the world be different if everyone followed these commandments?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ Human Bop It

*You will need: equipment to play music*

Play some music with a strong beat and call out a series of actions telling the children to respond in the following ways:

Kick it - children kick in front of them (ensure they're all in a space first!)

Twist it - twist their bodies

half way around then back, feet remaining in same place on the floor

Spin it - children turn around

Pull it - pretend they are pulling two levers down from above their heads

Bop it - put their hands on their head and jump in the air

Call the actions out fairly slowly at first and gradually increase the speed. See if the children can keep up. Once they have got used to the game, you could eliminate those who do the wrong actions until you have a winner.

### ▶ Rule-Breaker

Play a game the children are familiar with, but have one of the leaders breaking all the

*(continued overleaf)*

rules. Discuss why having rules are important for a game to go well. Then play again with everyone keeping the rules to illustrate the difference it makes.

### ► Rules for a better world

*You will need: pens and paper*

You can do this activity as one group or split into smaller groups depending in your numbers. Get the children to come up with five rules which they think would make the world a better place if everyone followed them. What would those rules be, and why?



## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ► Recap

Remind the children of the story so far. God had rescued his people from being slaves in Egypt and he was leading them to a land of their own. He had shown his power in Egypt by sending plagues when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go free, and when he opened up a path through the middle of the Red Sea so they could escape.

### ► 10 Commandments

*You will need: cards (from additional document 10 Commandments cards)*

**The next thing God did was give his people some rules, or commandments.**

**Why do you think God wanted to give them rules? He had called them to be his own people, he had promised them their own land which he was leading them to, he had rescued them from slavery and from their enemies, he had provided everything they needed along the way. Now he wanted to tell them how they should live as his people.**

There were lots of rules God

**gave but we are going to look at the most famous ones, which are called the 10 Commandments.**

Talk through the commandments with the children, briefly explaining each one. Some text is provided below to help you do this. Keep it brief - don't get into the technicalities of each commandment and exactly what commandments like observing the Sabbath mean today. Focus on the instructions God was giving the Israelites and his motivation behind giving them this set of rules.

There are two options provided for explaining the commandments. Depending on the time available, you may choose to use one or both.

**Option 1:** Use a set of cards with illustrations relating to each commandment: see additional document: 10 Commandments cards. If you print the document double-sided, you will have the text below on the reverse side of the picture it relates to so that you can refer to it as you talk about that commandment with the children.

**Option 2:** This video demonstrates a way of teaching the children the commandments using finger signs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3MZnOpMwVY>

This is not a video to show to the children, but one to watch yourself so that you are familiar with the finger signs and able to teach them to the children.

**Don't worship other gods. Make God number one. The Israelites were being asked to put God first in everything.**

**Don't bow down to idols. An idol was something they made themselves that they worshipped, for example, a statue of silver or gold. They were told not to do this, but to**

**worship only God. This ties in with commandment number one.**

**Show respect when you use God's name. It was not something to use carelessly or in a way that was disrespectful.**

**Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. The Sabbath was a day of rest. For one day each week, the people were to rest from their usual work. It was a time to focus on God.**

**Honour your parents. Children were told to have respect for their parents and show them honour.**

**Don't murder.**

**Be faithful in marriage. They were told to be faithful to their husband or wife.**

**Don't steal.**

**Don't lie or bear false witness. Telling the truth is something God says is very important.**

**Don't want what other people have. Don't look at what others have and be jealous and want it for yourself.**



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ► Reflection

Ask the children what they think of the commandments.

- Are any of them surprising?
- Which ones do they think would have been especially hard to follow?
- What would the world be like if everyone followed these commandments? How would it be different?

**We don't always like following rules. Sometimes it can seem like rules are just there to spoil our fun, but actually God was**



giving the people rules because he cared about them and wanted the best for them. If God is the one who created everyone and everything surely it makes sense that he knows best.

Often when our parents or teachers give us rules it is for the same reason - they want what is best for us and the rules are often to keep us safe or so that we can get along well with others.

One example is on the roads: what would happen if there were no rules and we could just drive or cycle wherever we liked at whatever speed we wanted to? It would be chaotic and dangerous.

When we don't understand a rule, it helps if we can trust the person giving us the rule. Moses knew that he could trust God and that his rules were to help him and the people live well.

Give the children a moment to think about any rules they are struggling to follow, and lead them in prayer, asking God to help them with this.



## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

### ▶ Song – 10 Rules, 1 God

*You will need: equipment to play music*

This song links with the theme and could be used to remind the children of the Ten Commandments.

It can be found on Dave Godfrey's CD "Zoom" and there is also a version on YouTube, which you can find here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3-YhjKWBGm>

# 17. Obedience



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

### Exodus 32

The Israelites make a golden calf to worship



## AIMS

To help the children understand that sin separates us from God, but that when we say sorry he promises to forgive

To allow them to reflect on anything they may want to say sorry for

**Despite God's faithfulness to the Israelites, they struggled to be faithful to him and obey him, building a golden calf to worship. We also struggle to obey God's rules, and there are consequences to that, but God remains faithful.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Why do you think the Israelites worshipped the golden calf?
- Why was this sin so serious?
- Is there anything you want to confess to God?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ Hey, Harry

*You will need: lipstick and baby wipes, or small coloured stickers*

Have the children sitting in a circle. One is designated to start. They turn to the person on their left and say "Hey, Harry!" That person responds, "What, Harry?" and the first child says, "Tell Harry," indicating the person two places to their left.

The second child then turns to the person on their left and

repeats the conversation. It passes round the circle in this manner.

If someone makes a mistake at any point by saying the wrong words or speaking at the wrong time, they receive a spot of lipstick or a sticker on their face, and instead of being referred to as Harry they are now referred to as "One Spot." If they make a mistake again they become "Two Spot" and so on.

This game highlights the challenges of keeping to the rules.

### ▶ Rapidough

*You will need: play dough*

Divide the children into teams of four or five. Give each team some play dough. Get one child from each team to come to you and tell them the first

thing they are to make. They have to return to their team and make that item from the play dough and their team have to guess what it is. Once they guess correctly, another member of the team comes to you for the next word. They repeat this until they have completed the list of words. The first team to do so wins.

A suggested list of words, which will help to briefly recap Moses' story so far is: baby, basket, bush, arrow, frog, cloud, calf.

When they reach the final word - calf - tell them to keep their models so you can refer to them as you tell the story.

### ► Obedience Games

Three further games on the theme of obedience are included in Session 3 of One Big Story.



## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ► Recap

*You will need: pictures of commandments tablets (see additional document: Stone tablets). These could simply be printed out on paper or you could glue them onto cardboard and cut round the outline of the tablets.*

If you used the Rapidough game, you can use the items the children modelled to briefly recap Moses' story. He was rescued as a **baby** by being put in the river in a **basket** and he was adopted by the princess of Egypt. Many years later he had run away but God spoke to him in a burning **bush** and told him to go (**arrow**) to Egypt to speak to Pharaoh and to lead the Israelites to freedom. Pharaoh refused several times so God sent plagues (**frog**). Finally he let the Israelites go and God led them by a pillar of **cloud** and fire

and opened up the sea for them to escape. The **calf** is part of this week's story so we'll find out about that soon.

Remind the children of what they learned last week - that now God had rescued the Israelites and he was leading them to their own land, he gave them some rules to follow to tell them how they should live as his people. See if the children can remember any of the 10 Commandments.

Show "stone" tablets and explain that God gave them to Moses to remind the people of his commands.

### ► The Golden Calf

*You will need: printed pictures (see below) or equipment to display images on PowerPoint, Sin picture (from Session 13 additional document: sin)*

Tell the next part of the story using images from <http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/moses-golden-calf/> The numbers by the different parts of the story relate to the slide numbers in the presentation found at the link. (Some slides have been omitted for brevity.)

**1. While Moses was up the mountain getting the 10 Commandments from God, the Israelites were waiting down at the bottom of the mountain. Moses was gone for quite a long time, and after a while they started to get fed up and wonder where he was.**

**2. Eventually they said to Aaron, Moses' brother, "Moses isn't coming back. He's left us here." So they asked Aaron to make a god to lead them in place of Moses.**

**3. Aaron asked all the people to bring their gold earrings together. There were thousands and thousands of people, so Aaron collected a lot of gold.**

**4. He melted it down and then he took the gold and made it into a statue of a calf.**

**7. They started worshipping it by bowing down and singing to the golden calf and praising it, saying it was the golden calf that had rescued them from Egypt. It sounds ridiculous! The golden calf was just something that they had made themselves. How could it have rescued them from Egypt? Some of you made a calf from play dough earlier on, but it would be silly to think you had made a god you could pray to! I wonder why the Israelites did that!**

**12. Finally Moses came back down from the mountain where he had spoken to God. As he reached the Israelite camp he heard them singing and saw them dancing and as he got closer he saw the golden calf in the middle of all the people and he saw the people bowing down to it and worshipping it. Moses was absolutely furious.**

**14. In fact, he was so angry that he took the stone tablets from God and he threw them down on the ground and they smashed into little pieces. Then he took the calf and burned it. He told the Israelites that if they were going to be God's people they had to listen to God and do what he said.**

**20. Moses asked the people to make a choice and gave them a chance to say they were on God's side. Several of those who didn't were punished and God sent a plague on the people. Moses knew that all the people deserved to die. After God had saved them from being slaves and led them on their journey and helped them so much what the Israelites had done was really bad. Moses pleaded with God not to abandon the people and to forgive them and keep on**

helping them. The Israelites weren't really sorry for what they had done and it damaged their friendship with God but even so, God didn't abandon them. He promised to still be with them and to help them.

**The Bible teaches us that God still always cares about people and loves them even if they do really bad things. But those things are a problem and they have to be dealt with. We talk about that as sin.** (You could refer back to the definition of sin given in Session 13 and show the card used to illustrate that. See Session 13 additional document: Sin)



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ► Reflection

**We can see that what the Israelites did was bad, but I'm sure all of us do things that are bad as well. It might be things that seem pretty small like fighting with our brother or sister or not doing what our mum or dad tell us to or telling a little tiny lie, but actually any sin, no matter how small, causes problems between us and God.**

**However God promises that if we are sorry he will always forgive us. Take a moment to think if there's something you want to say sorry to God for.**

### ► Prayer Activities

*You will need: soluble vitamin tablets and bowl of water, or tray with sand*

You could give each child a piece of a soluble vitamin tablet - get them to think of something they want to say sorry for, then drop it into a bowl of water and watch it dissolve as a reminder that when we say sorry to God he promises to forgive.

Alternatively, you could provide a tray of sand and let each child in turn write the word "sin" in the sand with their finger while thinking about something they want to say sorry for. Then they can wipe the word away as a reminder that when we say sorry to God, he promises to forgive.

Lead the children in prayer, thanking God for his forgiveness.

# 18. Trust



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

### Numbers 13-14

Twelve spies explore the Promised Land and bring back their reports



## AIMS

To help the children reflect on the choice we have about where to focus in a challenging situation - on the difficult circumstances, or on God's power - and to encourage them that God is bigger than any of the difficulties we face

**12 spies explored the Promised Land and brought back their reports, but only two trusted God enough to believe that he would help them get into the land. It is important to God that his people trust him.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- All 12 spies saw the same land but Joshua and Caleb returned with a very different perspective from the other ten. What was the reason for this?
- What circumstances do you find overwhelming and daunting?
- What truths about God can change this perspective?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ Wink Murder

Have the children sitting in a circle and choose one person to be the detective. Get the detective to stand outside the room while you choose another child to be the murderer. Call the detective back in. The child who is the murderer has to murder people by winking at them, trying not to let the detective

see, and the murdered child has to act dead, either silently or with a scream. The detective has to watch carefully and try to work out who the murderer is. Once they guess correctly you can choose a new detective and start again.

### ▶ What's missing?

*You will need: tray of 15-20 small objects, cloth to cover the tray*

Show the children a tray of objects you have brought with you - about 15-20 small items such as a pen, key, coin, hair clip etc. Give the children a minute or so to study the items, then cover the tray and remove one item. Uncover the tray again and see how quickly

*(continued overleaf)*

the children are able to identify what is missing.

### ▶ Optical Illusions

*You will need: printouts of images from websites below, or equipment to display them on a computer or screen*

Show the children some optical illusions. You can find a selection here: <https://www.optics4kids.org/illusions> You can also find a set of pictures where things are not as they seem here: <https://www.elitereaders.com/50-stunning-photos-arent-seem/>

Discuss how things are not always as they appear and how we can look at the same thing in different ways and see them quite differently.

### ▶ Trust Games

There are two games on the theme of faith in Session 6 of One Big Story which would also fit well with today's theme.



## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ▶ Recap

#### **It had been quite a journey for the Israelites!**

Recap the story from the last few weeks - God had called Moses to lead the Israelites to freedom, Pharaoh had tried to stop this so God sent plagues on the Egyptians. Finally the Israelites were allowed to leave and God opened up the Red Sea so that they could walk through on dry land. The challenges continued though as the Israelites got hungry and thirsty as they walked through the wilderness and they began complaining, but God provided food and water and gave them all they needed. Then he gave them his law and told them how to live as his people, but the people struggled to obey. Last

time we heard that they even made a statue of a calf from their gold jewellery and began worshipping that instead of God!

### ▶ The 12 Spies

*You will need: spy cards (see additional document: spy cards: print double-sided and cut into twelve individual cards, hide these around the room before the children arrive), equipment to play music (optional)*

**The Israelites carried on travelling and eventually they arrived at the edge of the land of Canaan, the land that God had promised to give them. God told Moses to send 12 spies into the land, one from each of the 12 tribes. They were to check out the land and come and give a report to the rest of the people before they went in.**

(Choose 12 spies and send them out to find cards placed around the room. (If you have less than 12 children you can ask them to find two or three cards each.) You could play mysterious music, e.g. the James Bond theme as they do this. Get spies to come back to the front and stand in order of the numbers on their cards. (If some children have more than one card you can just get them to read them in numerical order.)

**After 40 days spying in the land, the spies came back to give their reports.**

#### **What did you find out?**

(Get the children to read the words on their cards in turn, or give them the option to hand the card to you for you to read it if they prefer.)

1. The land is really nice.
2. It's got lots of trees.
3. Lots of lovely fruit.
4. I found a bunch of grapes so big it took two of us to carry it.
5. They tasted really good.

6. The people are really scary though.
7. They're massive - they're like giants!
8. There's no way we can take them on.
9. They're far too strong for us.
10. We can't go back into the land. If we do they'll kill us.

**Stop there for a moment. The first ten spies gave the report that the land was really good but they were scared of the people there. When Moses asked them what they thought they should do, they said the Israelites shouldn't go into the land because the people there were too powerful. They were afraid they would be killed!**

**That's disappointing after such a long journey to get there. Let's see what spies numbers 11 and 12 think.**

11. Of course we should go into the land. It's a wonderful land.
12. If God's giving us this land, he'll help us. We should do it.

**These two men were called Joshua and Caleb and they, along with Moses, were the only ones who wanted to go into the land. Everyone else listened to the other ten spies and got scared.**

**The Bible tells us that it's really important to God that his people trust him and believe what he says, so, because they wouldn't trust God, he decided that the Israelites would have to wander in the desert for 40 years before they would be allowed into the land. In 40 years' time, most of the Israelites who were adults now would have died and God said that the only ones who would be allowed into the land would be Joshua and Caleb, the two spies who trusted God and believed that he would help them.**

(Collect the cards from the children and let them sit down.)

**The people had to go back the**

way they came and wander in the desert. It would be 40 years before they were able to go into the Promised Land!



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ► Reflection

**How do you think you would have felt if you were one of the spies? Would you have encouraged the people to go into the Promised Land or would you have been scared?**

**If the people had already seen God's power when he rescued them from Egypt and parted the Red Sea, why do you think they were worried about the people in the land?**

**When we face challenges it's easy to look at what's happening around us and to feel afraid, but if we are following God, he wants us to know that he is bigger than any challenge we face and to put our trust in him.**

### ► Prayer cards

*You will need: prayer card for each child (see additional document: prayer cards), pens or pencils*

Give the children a card (see additional document: Prayer cards) with Jeremiah 32:17 on one side. On the other side, they have the words, "Please help me with..." Get the children to turn to this side and think about something difficult they are facing - a challenge or a problem. Get them to write or draw something that represents that, assuring them that they won't be asked to share it with anyone.

**When we look at situations we face they can seem difficult and scary, but there's another way to look at things.**

Get them to turn over their cards and read out the verse: "Lord God, you stretched out your mighty arm and made the sky and the earth. You can do anything." (Jeremiah 32:17 CEV)

**This is a prayer a man called Jeremiah (who lived long after Moses) prayed. He was facing a difficult situation but he remembered that God was bigger and that God could help him.**

**This doesn't mean that God will always fix our problems or make things easy. Remember when we talked about the plagues, Moses had to keep going even when it was really difficult. God didn't make everything work out quickly or easily, but he was with Moses and he helped him, and in the end Moses saw that God was in control.**

Lead the children in prayer - let them pray silently for the thing they wrote or drew on their card, then get them to flip the card over and read the verse together.

Encourage the children to take the card home and when they think about the challenge they wrote down to look at the other side of the card to help them remember all they have heard about how powerful God is, and to ask him for help.



## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

► Song – Our God Is A Great Big God

*You will need: equipment to play music*

This song links with the theme of today's session. You can find it on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSTfM8M2Md8>

# 19. Passover



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Exodus 12:1-14,  
Matthew 26:20-27

Jesus and his disciples celebrate the Passover meal together and Jesus shares bread and wine with them, pointing ahead to his sacrifice



## AIMS

To help the children understand the connection between Passover and Jesus' sacrifice and to reflect on what that means for them

**When God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, they were saved by sacrificing a lamb and putting its blood around their doorframe. When Jesus' body was broken and his blood was shed, he became the perfect sacrifice so that people can be saved from sin by trusting in him.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- In what ways does the story of the Passover link with Jesus' sacrifice?
- How has Jesus' sacrifice made a difference for you?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme. The first two games link with the idea of getting ready to go on a journey and the third introduces the idea of questions, which will link with the reflection later on.

### ► Clothes Relay

*You will need: sets of clothes*

Divide the children into teams. Have a set of clothes for each team, e.g. a jacket, hat, scarf and gloves, at the other side of the room. The children have to take it in turns to run to their team's pile of clothes, put all the clothes on, run back to their team, then run back to

the other side of the room, take the clothes off again and return to their team. The first team to have every member complete the relay wins.

### ► Buckaroo

*You will need: Buckaroo set(s)*

This works well with a smaller group, but if you have multiple sets of Buckaroo available, you could split a larger group into small groups to play.

The children take it in turns to load an item onto the mule. They are aiming not to be the one to make him buck and scatter his load!

### ► Questions Game

Have the children sitting in a circle. Get them to take it in turns to think of a question. It can be any question they like, but there are two key rules:

*(continued overleaf)*



their question must not begin with the same word (what, where, why...) as the person before them, and they must not repeat a question that has already been used in the game. (They can use the same question word again as long as at least one different word has been used in between.)

Try to keep it moving quickly. After the children have got the hang of it, you can eliminate people when they make a mistake and keep going until you have a winner.

## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ▶ Recap of plagues story

*You will need: pictures (see additional document for session 13: Plagues Pictures)*

**Last week we heard about the Israelites wandering in the wilderness after they failed to go into the Promised Land because they didn't trust God enough. They had to wander for 40 years before they finally got into the land.**

**We'll hear another day about what happened when they got into the land, but today we're going to go back a little bit and talk about something that happened before they left Egypt and also think ahead a bit to talk about Jesus as we get near to Easter.**

**Think back to what we thought about at the start of term. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. Who was the man God called to lead them out of Egypt? Moses. Do you remember what happened when Moses asked Pharaoh to let the Israelite people go free? Remind the children that Pharaoh said, "No!" so God sent plagues on the Egyptian people.**

See how many of the plagues

the children can remember. (Use visual aids as a reminder - session 13 additional document: Plagues pictures)

**Before the last plague when the first-born son in every Egyptian family died, can you remember what God asked the Israelites to do? He told them to kill a lamb or a goat and to put the blood from the animal around the doorframe on the outside of their house. That would protect them and mean that when the plague came on Egypt, no one in their family would be killed as God would pass over their house.**

**This festival was called the Passover, and it was something that the Israelite people celebrated every year to remind them of how God had rescued them.**

### ▶ The Last Supper

*You will need: bread, plate, grape juice, plastic cups, cushions (optional)*

You might want to bring some cushions and have the children sitting in a circle on the floor. This is designed to be a quieter, more reflective session than many in One Big Story.

Please note that in giving the children bread and grape juice, they are not taking part in the act of communion. In most traditions, communion is part of a worship service, overseen by an ordained minister, and participation is an expression of personal faith. By contrast, the script below describes a tactile way of telling the story of Jesus' meal with his disciples at the Last Supper. If you are not comfortable with giving the children the bread and grape juice, feel free to simply use them as visual aids.

**Hundreds of years after the Israelites left Egypt, Jesus celebrated this with his friends and they had a Passover meal together. This was just before**

**the events we think about at Easter time. As Jesus and his friends were sitting round the table, Jesus told his friends that he knew what was about to happen. He said, "One of you is going to betray me to my enemies."**

**At this point in Jesus' life he was about 33 years old. For the last three years Jesus had spent a lot of time travelling around doing miracles and teaching people about God. Many people had believed in him and become his followers, but there were others who hated him and wanted to put a stop to what he was teaching. Now Jesus was saying that one of his own friends was going to hand him over to the people who wanted to kill him. The friends looked around and wondered which of them it could be.**

**Later on, Jesus took some bread. He broke it up and passed it round for his friends to eat. He said, "Take this and eat it. This is my body which will be broken for you. Do this to remember me." (Break the bread into small pieces and pass the plate round, allowing the children to take a piece.)**

**Jesus was saying that he was going to die. His body was going to be broken like the bread.**

**Then he took some wine and poured it out and passed it round for his friends to drink. "This is my blood," he said, "which will be poured out for you. It will be poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many people." (Give the children a small amount of grape juice to drink.)**



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ▶ Reflection Questions

You will need: question cards  
(see additional document:  
Question Cards)

Still sitting in the circle with the children, spread out the question cards in the middle of the circle.

Pick up the relevant question card as you ask the children these questions to help them reflect on what they have heard:

**What** do you think Jesus meant when he said the bread was his body and the wine was his blood?

**When** did Jesus' words come true?

**Who** is rescued by what Jesus did?

**How** did he do it?

**Why** did he do it?

Allow the children to share their thoughts, and try to bring out the following points:

- Jesus was saying he was going to die, but it wouldn't be an accident. It was all part of God's plan. It is something that there are clues about all the way through the Old Testament
- When the Israelites obeyed God's instructions at the first Passover, they were saved from dying because the lamb was killed and its blood protected them. Also, in the story of Abraham we heard last term, you might remember that he was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac but at the last minute God stopped him and provided a lamb to die in his place
- After the meal with his friends, Jesus went on to die on a cross (we'll talk more about that next week) but Christians believe that when Jesus died it was as a sacrifice for everyone in the world. We've said before that everyone has sinned and done things that

are wrong, and the punishment for that is death and separation from God, but Christians believe Jesus was like the lamb, dying in our place, taking our punishment, and that it is by trusting in him that we can be forgiven and that we can know God

Give the children an opportunity to ask any questions they might have. They can pick up the relevant question card as they do. Talk together about the answers to the children's questions.

### ▶ Prayer

Give the children a short time (about 30 seconds) to think silently about what they have heard today and any questions they still have.

Then lead them in prayer, thanking Jesus for his sacrifice, and praying for God to help the children (and leaders) with their questions.

# 20. Easter



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Matthew 26:36-56,  
Matthew 27:11-56,  
Matthew 28:1-10,  
John 3:16

Jesus dies on the cross,  
but rises again on the  
third day



## AIMS

To help the children understand the events of the Easter Story and to reflect on their significance for our lives today

**Jesus was arrested and crucified, but his death on the cross was not the end of the story. He rose to life, and he promises forgiveness and eternal life for those who trust in him.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Why are Jesus' death and resurrection important for us today?
- Think through what they mean to you and how you can best communicate that to the children. Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ Egg Game

Teach the children actions associated with different kinds of eggs as follows:

Runny egg - run around the room

Scrambled egg - spin round

Poached egg - put their arms out to the side and pretend they are floating in water

Fried egg - lie down

Hard boiled egg - stand up straight and freeze

Egg and soldiers - march

around like a soldier

Chocolate egg - rub their tummy and say, "Mmmm..."

Once the children have got used to the actions, call them out in a random order, gradually getting faster, and see if they can keep up. This game is just for fun and to let them run off some energy.

### ▶ Egg Hunt

*You will need: plastic Easter eggs (filled in advance with slips from additional document: Egg Hunt Slips)*

Hide plastic eggs around the room before the children arrive - each containing an Easter fact, joke or question. (If the school will allow you, you could include a small chocolate Easter egg along with the slip of paper, but do check with the school first and be aware of any allergies.

Make sure you have enough for each child.)

Divide the children into teams and get each team to hunt for a particular colour of egg and see which team can find all of their eggs first.

Once they have found them give them a few minutes to talk about the things inside/tell each other the jokes/answer the questions etc.

### ▶ Egg and Spoon Race

*You will need: plastic or chocolate eggs, spoons*

Divide the children into teams and give each team an egg and a spoon. (Use a plastic egg or a chocolate egg rather than a real one!) Get them to run a relay race with each child in turn placing the egg onto their spoon and going to the other side of the hall and back. If the egg falls off their spoon they have to pick it up and continue from the place where they dropped it. The first team to complete the race wins.

### ▶ Easter Verse Hunt

*You will need: John 3:16 egg printouts (see additional document: Easter Verse Hunt) cut into pieces and hidden around the room*

Print out the eggs with John 3:16 on them, cut each egg into six or seven pieces and hide the pieces around the room before the children arrive. (There are six different colours of egg in the document so you can have up to six teams.)

Divide the children into small teams and get each team to hunt for the pieces of a particular colour. Their aim is to be the first team to find all the pieces and assemble their egg so that they can read the Bible verse.



## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ▶ Recap

**Last week we began thinking about Easter and Jesus telling his friends he was going to die, as a sacrifice so that people's sins could be forgiven. Today we're going to think about that a bit more.**

Choose one of the following methods to tell the story.

### ▶ Easter Story

*You will need: printed pictures or equipment to display images on PowerPoint*

Show children pictures, either printed out or on PowerPoint to go through the Easter story. Links to pictures from <http://www.bricktestament.com> are provided for each section of the story, and suggestions for alternative images from <http://freebibleimages.org> are listed at the end of this section.

**Picture 1:** Last time we talked about the special meal that Jesus and his friends shared together. Jesus broke some bread and passed it round for his disciples to eat. (See if the children can remember what Jesus said - "This is my body which is broken for you.")

**Picture 2:** Then he took some wine and gave it to them to drink, saying, "This is my blood which will be poured out for you." Jesus was saying that through his death, many people would be forgiven for the things they have done wrong.

**Picture 3:** After the meal, Jesus and his disciples went out into a garden. Jesus went off by himself for a while to pray to God. He was upset and troubled because he knew what was going to happen next and he knew it was going to be

really difficult and painful, but he also knew he had to go through with it because it was an important part of God's plan.

**Picture 4:** After Jesus finished praying he went back to join his disciples. Then some men came to arrest him. They were led by Judas, one of Jesus' close friends who had betrayed him to the people who hated him.

**Picture 5:** Jesus was tied up and taken away. His disciples were scared and so they ran away.

**Picture 6:** Jesus was taken and put on trial first before the High Priest and then before Pilate who was the Roman Governor. Jesus hadn't done anything wrong, but people were angry because he had said that he was from God and some of them came and told lies about Jesus to try to get him into trouble. Pilate couldn't see any reason for Jesus to be killed but he decided to let the crowd make the choice. It was during the Passover celebration and the tradition was that one prisoner could be freed at that time of year, any prisoner chosen by the crowd. Pilate was sure that the crowd would choose to free Jesus, but his enemies turned the crowd against him and they shouted for Jesus to die and someone else to be freed instead.

**Picture 7:** Jesus was handed over to the soldiers who had him whipped and beaten. They made fun of him by putting a crown of thorns on his head and bowing down to him, pretending to worship him as king. Some of them hit him and spat on him and treated him really badly. Then it was time for him to be crucified. They made Jesus carry his own cross to the place where he would be killed, but because he

was so weak from having been beaten a man called Simon had to help him.

**Picture 8:** When they reached the place, Jesus was nailed to the cross by his hands and feet. There were two thieves being crucified as well. A huge crowd came to watch. Some of them were Jesus' friends and were really upset as they saw what happened; others were Jesus' enemies and they made fun of him, telling him to come down and save himself if he was really the Son of God. As Jesus hung on the cross the sky went dark across the whole land even though it was the middle of the day. After three more hours, he called out "It is finished." He had completed the task God had given him to do. He gave up his spirit to God and he died.

**Picture 9:** Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and buried in a tomb. It was like a cave carved out of a rock with a stone that rolled across the entrance. Some women who were Jesus' friends watched where his body was taken. They wanted to take oils and spices to put on his body, but it was time for the Sabbath, their day of rest, and so they had to go home and wait until the Sabbath was over.

**Picture 10:** Early on the Sunday morning, the women returned to the tomb. As they walked they wondered how they were going to move the stone away.

**Picture 11:** But when they got there, they got a surprise - the stone was already rolled away, and the tomb was open!

**Picture 12:** Then an angel appeared and told them that Jesus was alive. He had risen from the dead! The women were very confused and frightened. They didn't know whether to believe the angel's message. They went to find Jesus' disciples to see if they

knew what was going on.

**Picture 13:** Later that day, they got to see for themselves that the angel's message was true. Jesus appeared and they saw him for themselves. They got to touch the wounds in his hands that had been made by the nails and they saw that it wasn't a ghost. It was really him. He was alive! This is what Christians celebrate on Easter Sunday. We believe that Jesus died on the cross but he rose again. He showed that his power is stronger than the power of death. Christians believe that Jesus is still alive today, that we don't worship someone who is dead but someone who is alive forever.

Show the children John 3:16. You could look it up in a Bible or, if you used PowerPoint to display the images for the story you could add it as a final slide. If you used the Easter Verse Hunt activity earlier, you can refer back to this.

**This verse sums up what Christians believe - that God sent Jesus to earth to take the punishment for all the wrong things in the world so that we can be forgiven, and that he rose to life again and he promises life that goes on forever for everyone who puts their trust in him.**

**Last term in One Big Story, we thought about the problem of sin and how that led to death. Jesus was God's solution to that problem - he came to sort it out and to deal with sin and death forever.**

Alternative images:

Slides 7 and 9 from <http://freebibleimages.org/photos/last-supper/>

Slides 3, 12 and 20 from <http://freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-gethsemane/>

Slide 1 from <http://freebibleimages.org/photos/>

[jesus-pilate/](http://freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-pilate/)

Slide 7 from <http://freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-crucified/>

Slides 8 and 17 from <http://freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-dies/>

Slides 1, 2, 3 and 15 from <http://freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-alive/>

### ▶ Story using props

*You will need: props or pictures to place around the room as detailed below*

Another way to tell the story is to have props around the room and to move round with the children, stopping at each prop to tell the next part of the story. You could use the script above along with props as follows: bread and wine, garden, silver coins, bowl of water, crown of thorns, cross, tomb, folded cloth. (A few of these may need to be pictures rather than the item itself.)

### ▶ Miracle Maker Video Clip

*You will need: equipment to show video*

An alternative method of telling the story is to use a clip from the film "The Miracle Maker". The section covering Jesus' crucifixion runs from 1:10:07-1:13:26. (It is also available on YouTube here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88vJ5A\\_oLRM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88vJ5A_oLRM))

The clip does not include the Resurrection story, so you could follow it up by reading Matthew 28:1-10 from the Bible, or using images as detailed in sections 9-13 above.



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ▶ Questions

You may want to give the

children the chance to ask any questions they have after hearing this story.

### ▶ Reflection

*You will need: a parachute, folded sheet*

Get the children to stand round the parachute, holding onto the edge. Then get them to lift it up and pull it down behind them, so that everyone is sitting under the parachute. Have the sheet in the middle to represent Jesus' body and help the children to reflect on the fact that Jesus had died and his body was in the tomb.

**What would it have been like for Jesus' friends and followers to witness his death?**

**Why was it part of God's plan for Jesus to die?** (You can refer back to some of the things you talked about in the last session.)

**What difference does it make to our lives today?**

**Christians believe that Jesus died to take the punishment for all the sin in the world, and that by trusting in him we can be forgiven and we can know God. But Jesus' death wasn't the end of the story...**

Get the children to come out from under the parachute and reflect on Jesus' resurrection.

**What would it have been like for Jesus' friends and followers to see him alive again?**

**What difference does it make for us today to know that Jesus is alive?**

**Christians believe that because Jesus conquered death by rising to life again, we can have eternal life too by trusting in him. That is what Christians celebrate at Easter.**

Lead the children in prayer, thanking God for Jesus' death and resurrection.

### ▶ Prayer Activity

*You will need: post-it notes, pens or pencils, images of cross and empty tomb (see additional document: Prayer activity pictures)*

Give the children two post-it notes each, along with a pen or pencil. Get them to think about Jesus' death, what it means to them and what they would like to say to God. Give them a moment to write or draw it on one of the post-it notes and then stick it round the picture of the cross.

Get them to think about Jesus' resurrection, what it means to them and what they would like to say to God. Give them a moment to write or draw it on the second post-it note and then stick it round the picture of the empty tomb.

Lead the children in prayer, incorporating some of the things they put on their post-it notes.