INTRODUCTION

To all Sunday School Teachers

This is the fourth book in our Anglican series of Sunday School lessons. This year we have followed the readings for Year A in accordance with the lectionary. The New Testament lessons have focused on the gospel of Matthew and the Old Testament lessons on the books of Genesis and Exodus. As mentioned before, we are not able to follow the lectionary exactly – the reasons for this are outlined on pg 3 of this book. We do follow the seasons of the church, which will be apparent in this set of lessons.

This term we continue with our study of the Old Testament, specifically the book of Exodus and the story of Moses. Our focus will then move onto the meaning of Advent and the story of Christmas. We will end the year with a lesson on how much the children have learnt this year.

You will notice that many of the lessons for this term have been presented in a very different manner. We hope that you and the children enjoy the variety of ideas, but may this also serve as a reminder that there are many ways to teach a lesson and you are encouraged to make use of your own creativity as well as other resources to add to your lesson.

Please also note it is not always possible to use all the ideas presented in the lessons of this manual. Sunday Schools do not all have the same amount of time allocated to lessons and so it is important that you plan your lesson carefully beforehand, selecting the activities you plan to do and estimating the time needed for each part of your lesson.

It is also beneficial to start thinking about your lesson a few weeks before you are to teach it - you will notice that a number of the lessons for this term require materials for crafts that may take a few weeks to collect, such as egg cartons and shoe boxes - let the children's parents know about these materials a few weeks before you need them so they can help with the collection.

Should you have any comments pertaining to the content of these lessons, please do contact Alice Muggleston at alice.muggleston@saintthomas.co.za.

And as the end of the year draws quickly to an end, do keep in mind the true meaning of Christmas!

God bless you all!

Dioceses of Johannesburg Children’s ministry

Advent prayer
As we fast approach Christmas,
We will be preparing our homes, our gifts and our food.
Help us, Lord, to remember to prepare our hearts.

Help us in all our busyness,
To remember the reason for the season
Help us to be like Jesus and bring love, hope and peace to all.
Amen
About this Curriculum

We believe that we have designed a curriculum that is unique to other Sunday school programmes. We aim to provide the children with a firm knowledge of stories from both the New and Old Testaments, while at the same time, observing the Seasons of the Anglican Church and the readings as set out in the lectionary.

As Anglicans, we would very much like to follow the lectionary as closely as possible as it offers a richness to our faith. There are, however, a number of obstacles associated with this when trying to design a Sunday school Curriculum:

- The Sunday Lectionary readings do not always follow on from one week to the next hence the children do not get a sense of the chronological order of events of the Bible.
- Not all the Bible stories that children should know are covered in the Sunday readings.
- Stories that come up during the holiday period are never covered.
- Sometimes two stories that we would like to cover come up in the same week e.g. The Story of Jacob and Esau and Jesus feeds the five thousand (Year A, 18th Sunday of the Year), while other weeks may have readings that are not that applicable to children.

This curriculum has been devised to follow all the stories and themes for a year as prescribed in the lectionary, but not necessarily the order of the lectionary. Topics that do correspond with the lectionary reading for the day have been indicated with a *.

Each year will begin with stories relating to the life of Jesus, miracles and parables. We will then move into Lent with topics relating to a special Lenten theme. After Easter the topics chosen for the second term will relate to going out into the world to live a life for Jesus. The third and fourth term will focus on the Old Testament stories.

The section from the Old Testament that the lectionary focuses on for a particular year will be covered:

- Year A: The Creation through to Moses
- Year B: Joshua through to Samson
- Year C: The Prophets.

The last few lessons of each year are devoted to Advent and Christmas.
How to prepare for a lesson

Pray for yourself, the children in your group and the lesson message.

Read the Bible to learn and understand the story and the spiritual truths. Study related Bible passages and other translations of the Scriptures.

Enrich your background understanding. Read the information for the teacher found at the beginning of each of our lessons in this manual. If you are able to, look at reference books, consult an atlas etc.

Prepare. Preferably, you should be thinking about your lesson a week before you are due to give it, so that you are able to collect the materials you need over that week. Decide how you will present the material and what activities you will do. Prepare the teaching aids and anything else needed for the lesson. It is important to plan a lesson which is not too short or too long. It is good to have a few extra activities planned should the church be running late.

Here follows a basic lesson structure you can use, although not all components are necessary every lesson:

- Welcome
- Introduction to the theme and attention grabber
- Bible reading
- Prayer
- Memory verse
- Craft
- Song
- Physical activity
- Worksheet
- Snack

Aim of the lesson. Know what you wish to accomplish during the lesson.

Reach the children. Choose the best methods to convey the message to the children. Use an age appropriate Bible. Remember that children learn best by actively doing things and exploring and discovering for themselves. Try to vary your activities from week to week e.g. try artwork activities that include painting and collage to encourage creativity.

Evaluate the lesson after teaching it. Ask yourself questions such as:

- What went really well?
- What did the children enjoy?
- What will I do the same next time and what will I do differently?

(The PREPARE idea is inspired by The South African Sunday School Association)
Curriculum

Term 4 2014

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Gauteng School Term: 13 October – 10 Dec 2014
Moses: God to the rescue!

Twenty-ninth Sunday of the year
Between 16 and 22 October

Readings: Exodus 1 - 4
Theme: God has a plan
Memory verses: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”
Proverbs 3:5

Information for the teacher:
The story of Moses is found in the book of Exodus and follows on from the story of Joseph and his family in Egypt. Joseph’s father Jacob and his family moved to Egypt from Canaan to avoid the 7-year famine. They lived in Goshen, a very fertile land in Egypt as successful shepherds and breeders of livestock. Jacob died at 132 years and he was buried back in his home town of Canaan in his ancestral tomb.

Some 400 years later, after the death of Joseph and all of his generation, things had changed dramatically for the Israelites (the name given to the descendants of Jacob, who was renamed Israel by God during a struggle with an angel during his journey back home to his brother Esau. Gen 32:28). The new Pharaoh and the other Egyptians became worried that there were too many Israelites and felt that if a war were to break out, they may join with the enemies to defeat the Egyptians. So, a decision was made to make them slaves of the Egyptians, forcing them to work in fields and do very hard manual labour. But the more the Israelites were treated badly the more they multiplied and spread. The King then ordered the Egyptian midwives to kill all of the Israelite males at birth, an order which they disobeyed and so their numbers continued to increase. This made the Pharaoh furious and thus he decreed that every Israelite boy child be thrown into the river Nile. Through all this suffering, God heard the cries of His people – He had a plan to free His people from slavery, and this is where our lessons begin – the story of Moses.

The lessons for the next 4 weeks will follow the story of Moses. For the younger ones, today’s lesson will focus on Moses, the baby in the basket. Since the older children should be familiar with the story of Moses as a baby, today’s lesson will primarily deal with Moses’ encounter with God in the Burning Bush.

The next few weeks will tell the story of Moses’ encounter with God - the burning bush, the Ten Plagues, the Exodus from Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the Israelites’ time in the desert and finally, their entry into Canaan, the Promised Land.

In order to remind the children of what has been done each week in the lessons on Moses, a suggestion is to create a Moses corner in the room where your Sunday School is held. A doll in a basket can represent Moses in the bulrushes; a small tree surrounded by sand can represent the burning bush etc. Another suggestion is to place samples of each week’s activities on a table. Each week, your lesson could begin around this collage of things where children recall the story so far. A map to follow the events of each week can be stuck onto the wall.

It would be beneficial to remind yourself of the story of Joseph learnt last term as well as to familiarise yourself with the whole story of Moses before beginning this series of lessons. Reading the story from a Children’s Bible can give a good overview.
Lesson Suggestions:

Younger Children (3 – 6 year olds)

Lesson Objectives:
- To teach children the story of Baby Moses and how he was saved
- To remind the children that God cares for us

Attention Grabber:
Who has baby Moses? The children sit in a circle close together. The child who is “it” stands away from the circle and looks away while baby Moses is passed around. (Baby Moses needs to be something small like a tiny figure – even a clothes peg can represent baby Moses). When “it” says “stop”, the child holding baby Moses hides it e.g. under a leg or up a sleeve etc. The child who is “it” now guesses who has baby Moses. The child who had Baby Moses then becomes “it” and the game is repeated.

Setting the scene:
Materials needed:
Doll/play dough figure of Moses; a small cloth to represent a blanket to wrap baby Moses; a small basket or container that can be used as a basket for baby Moses; 4 female play dough figures or 4 dolls, one of whom has a crown; a long piece of blue fabric or crepe paper to represent the river Nile; some “veld” grass, perhaps put in bottles to represent the reeds along the river.

Ask the children to sit in a circle with you at the head. Spread out the blue fabric or paper to represent the river Nile. Put some tall grass along one end of the river. Place the dolls and other materials next to you. Now, begin to tell the story.

Bible Story (Ex 1 and 2:1-10) – Moses in the bulrushes
Begin: “I’m going to tell you a story about a little baby named Moses. This story is found in the second book of the Bible called Exodus. Can you remember the name of the first book of the Bible? (Give the children time to respond).

Moses had an older brother named Aaron and an older sister, Miriam. His family lived in a country called Egypt but their home town was very far away in another place Canaan. So, what were they doing in Egypt? Listen and you will find out!

A long, long, very long time before, Moses’ ancestors (Moses’ great – great- great –great ........ grandparents)didn’t have enough food in their hometown of Canaan so they had to travel all the way to Egypt to find food.

(Perhaps use a map to trace the journey of Joseph’s family from Canaan to Egypt- one is at the end of the lesson)
Luckily for them, one family member, Joseph was already living there and had a very important job. They were treated very well so they decided to stay. *(You may want to ask them if they remember the story of Joseph but if you think it will distract them, don’t!)*

But things started to change just before Moses was born. Pharaoh – the King, and the people of Egypt became worried because there were a lot of Israelite people and they felt that if there was a war, the Israelites would join with the enemy (the people who didn’t like them) and kill the Egyptians. So, the King who was very mean decided to make them slaves, which means they were given very hard jobs to do like building cities and they had to work all day. And, if that wasn’t bad enough, he came up with a plan that all the Israelite baby boys must be killed. God was of course not happy with the way that His people were being treated – He needed a plan to rescue His people. *(Now this is where our story really begins…)*

Baby Moses was one of those babies that Pharaoh wanted killed. However, Moses’ mother came up with a plan of her own. She was going to hide her baby. Do you think that it would be easy to hide a baby? *(Give the children a chance to speak)*

Of course, many families also tried to hide their babies. But after 3 months, as Moses grew bigger, it was much more difficult to hide him as he was very noisy and would cry loudly.

In the end, his mother took a basket and covered it with a black paste called tar so that water couldn’t get in, and she gently laid her baby in it. She then took the basket down to the River Nile and placed it among the tall, thick grass near the edge of the water so it won’t float away. Miriam, Moses’ big sister was to look after baby Moses, to watch that nobody found him.

*(At this stage, take up the Moses figure, wrap it in the small cloth and place him in the basket. Put the basket among the grass, then take one of the dolls representing Miriam, his sister and put her a little way off in the grass.)*

*Song:* Have the children sing, **Where is Moses?** *(Tune: Where is Thumbkin?)*

*Where is Moses, where is Moses*
*There he is, there he is!* *(pointing)*
*He is in the river, right among the tall grass*
*Amen! Amen!*

*(For the slightly older children you may like to try one group singing the 1st line and the other the 2nd. You will probably need another teacher to help you with this)*

*Continue:* A little while afterwards, a young princess and some of her servants came walking along the bank of the river as they were coming for a little swim.

*(Have 3 children take the remaining dolls and move them along the end of the river with the Princess in front)*

At the same time, Miriam was becoming nervous. What was she going to do? *(Start to bite you fingers and have the children do the same as if they are worried)*

It was at that time that the Princess saw the basket and sent one of her servants to fetch it. As soon as the Princess saw the baby she realised he must be an Israeliite boy. As she lifted him up he began to cry!
(Have the children pretend to be crying).
She felt sad for this poor little baby and decided to take him home and keep him.

Brave Miriam (coming out of hiding and approaching the princess) went up to the Princess and asked, “Would you like me to find a nurse for the baby, your Highness?” “Yes, that would be lovely”, replied the Princess. Miriam then ran home to fetch her mother to be the nurse. The princess said to the baby’s mother, “Take this baby and look after him for me until he is older”

Song: Rock-a-by-Moses (Tune of “Rock-a-Bye Baby”)

Rock-a-bye Moses in your small boat (Rock pretend baby – Cup hands like a boat.)
Made by your mother so it would float (Make wave motions with hands)
God planned you special, a baby dear—— (Point up)
Rocking and sleeping without any fear (Rest head on hands.)

Continue: When the child grew older, his mother took him to the princess, and he became her son. So, the little baby grew up like a little Egyptian Prince in the palace of the King. The Princess loved him so much that she decided to call him Moses, which means “saved from the waters”.

(Now, this is only the beginning of the story of Moses! It gets more exciting as God had great plans for Moses as he gave him a big and important job to do – to save God’s people from slavery)

Discussion:

- Ask the children if they liked the story and to give their favourite part of the story. (Allow the children time to respond and express their ideas freely without interrupting)
- Who were the people in the story?
- Who is your favourite person in the story?
- Who found Moses?
- Who took care of the baby?
- What does the name Moses mean?

Craft:

- Make a collage of baby Moses in the bulrushes.

Materials needed: strips of blue paper to represent water; either grass or strips of green paper for the reeds; a picture of a basket with a baby in it; 3 pictures of girls – pictures can be found at the end of this lesson

The children can stick the materials onto an A4 card or paper.

- Colour in a picture of baby Moses in the bulrushes – a picture can be found at the end of the lesson.
Snack: Make the scene of baby Moses in the bulrushes using snacks! Here is an example:
On a paper plate, use blue jelly* to represent the river; green icing on either side of the river with brown pretzel sticks stuck up to represent the reeds; a small ice-cream cone cup to represent the basket and a jelly baby to represent baby Moses. (*Blue jelly can sometimes be found in the shops, else add blue food colouring and sugar to gelatine)

Song:
God is so good
God is so good, God is so good, God is so good. He’s so good to me.
He saved my soul. He saved my soul. He saved my soul. He’s so good to me.
I love him so. I love him so. I love him so. He’s so good to me.

Prayer: Dear Lord we thank you that just as you cared for your people in Egypt, you also love us and care for us. Bless our families and those who care for us and keep us safe. Amen.

Older children (7 to 13 years)

Lesson Objectives:
• To revise the story of the early life of Moses
• To teach the children about Moses’ encounter with God through the burning bush.
• To learn to trust in God and not lean on our own understanding

Attention Grabber:
(There are 2 different concepts in the discussion which follows. Choose one concept so as to not spend too much time on this part of the lesson)

• Do you think you could move to another country and leave everything including your family behind if God asked you to?
• Who in the Bible had to move/relocate leaving almost everything behind and why?
  (Abraham when God asked him to move from Ur to the land of Canaan; Joseph, who was sold into slavery and taken to Egypt)
  OR
• What are some of the traditional ways people communicated with each other: (smoke signals; drums; vuvuzela; telegram, Homing pigeons have been used in war times to send and bring information. smoke signal is one of the oldest forms of long distance communication used to transmit news or alert people to danger)
• How do we communicate with each other now? (letters, email, telephone, skype)
• Do you think God communicates with us using any of the ways mentioned above?
• What are some of the ways God communicates with God’s people? *(Through symbols such as the Dove – Jesus’ baptism; Cloud – Ascension; Flames of Fire, Dove – Pentecost; through the Prophets- messengers of God; voice – as with the story of Samuel)*

In today’s lesson we will learn about a man called Moses – it is a familiar story so you might have heard it before. We will learn how God spoke to him and the plan that God had for him – a plan which was very different to Moses’ plan for his life. As you listen to the story today think how you would have reacted.

**Setting the scene:**

Make use of the information for the teacher at the beginning of this lesson to set the scene, briefly reminding the children of the story of Joseph and how the Israelites came to live in Egypt. A map is provided at the end of the lesson to trace the journey of Joseph’s family from Canaan to Egypt.

Explain how God’s chosen people were now called Israelites.

Continue by discussing how things changed when the Pharaoh became worried that there were too many Israelites, and that a decision was made to make the Israelites slaves of the Egyptians. He further decreed that every Israelite boy was to be thrown into the River Nile.

Explain that God heard the cries of His people – He remembered His covenant or agreement with their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

He had a plan to free His people from slavery and this is our story for the next few weeks – the story of Moses.

Continue by telling them that today’s story is taken from the second book of the Bible, Exodus where we learn about Moses, a little Israelite boy who grew up in an Egyptian palace.

Since the birth of Moses is a familiar story, ask for volunteers to recap the story about Moses as a baby. Refer to Exodus 2: 1 – 10.

Also, briefly discuss that when Moses was a young man, he had to flee from Egypt – why? Moses did not like it that the Israelites, his own people, were being treated as slaves. One day, he saw an Egyptian assaulting an Israelite. He became so angry that he killed the Egyptian. He then fled to Midian (Ex 2:11-15)

After much wandering, he came to a well, where he protected a young girl and her sister from some shepherds who were bullying them. He later married the young girl, Zipporah.

Today our lesson will focus on the story of the burning bush – when God called Moses to come to the aid of the Israelites.
Bible Story - (Ex 3 and 4) - The burning bush

The following skit can be used instead of reading the story from the Bible. It would be very beneficial if the children presenting this skit have a few minutes to practice before performing it to the class – the better presented, the more impact this skit will have. The person chosen to perform the role of Moses needs to provide actions following the words of the script.

SKIT
(Print the script and distribute)

Setting: Church gardens. (Find a bush and do the lesson in front of the bush)

Characters: Narrator; Moses; God

Props: A staff for Moses, made out of pipe cleaner or something that can bend

Start the story a little way from the bush.

Narrator: One day, Moses was taking care of a flock of sheep, belonging to Jethro, his father-in-law. He led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, also called Mount Sinai, the mountain of God when he saw a strange sight. There was a bush on fire but even though there were flames, it didn’t burn.

Moses: Hmm! Very strange. Let me go closer and see what’s happening. (Start walking towards the bush). I wonder why the bush is not burning up.

Narrator: As he drew nearer, he heard a voice coming from the flames.

God’s Voice: Moses, Moses!

Moses: Here I am.

God’s Voice: Do not come near - remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. (Moses takes off his shoes)

God’s Voice: I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Narrator: Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Moses turns away)

God’s Voice: I have been observing the hardships of my people who are in Egypt, and I am aware of their suffering. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians. So Moses, I am sending you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring my people, out of Egypt.
**Moses:** Me! Why me? Who am I to go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?

**God’s Voice:** Do not be afraid, Moses! I will be with you.

**Moses:** And, what must I say to them? They won’t believe me?

**God’s Voice:** This is what you will say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you. The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ He will deliver you out of your misery in Egypt and take you into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey!

Moses, don’t worry! The elders will listen to you. Then you with the elders of Israel must go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go on a three days’ journey into the wilderness, to make a sacrifice to the Lord our God.’

But I know that the king of Egypt will not allow this. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my miracles and after that he will let you go.

**Moses:** But what if they do not believe me or listen to what I have to say?

**God’s voice:** Is that a staff in your hand? Then throw it down. (*Before throwing it down, twist the staff to make a snake*)

**Moses:** A Snake!! (*Moses runs off*)

**God’s voice:** Pick it up by the tail. (*Moses, looking scared, picks it up, and straightens it into a staff*)

**Narrator:** As Moses picked up the snake it turned back into a staff. The Lord performed many more miracles. He asked Moses to put his hand inside his cloak. When he took it out, it was white as if he was suffering from leprosy. He then asked him to put his hand again in his cloak and when he took it out it was normal. The Lord continued by showing him another sign just in case the Pharaoh did not believe the first two signs. He told him to take a cup of water from the river Nile and to pour it on dry ground. The water will then turn to blood when it touches the ground.

**Moses:** But, but... I’m not good at speaking. I talk very slowly.

**God’s voice** (sounding a bit angry): Who gave man his mouth? Is it not I? Then I will help you to speak and will teach you what to say.

**Narrator:** Moses was still not convinced and he begged God to send someone else. So God suggested that his brother Aaron, who was good at speaking, would do all the talking, and Moses would perform the miraculous signs.

Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and told him about his mission from God.
Discussion and Questions: *(Please note there are many questions – it may be overwhelming to do all of them. Select questions which you think are best suited to the needs of your class)*

- What is your favourite part of the story and why?
- Do you sometimes feel as Moses did, like you’re not able to do some of the things being asked of you? How can you overcome these feelings?

Fact Questions

- Before the story about the burning bush, we learn that Moses had to run away from Egypt. Why? *(He had killed an Egyptian and he was scared)*
- Name the place that Moses fled to? *(Midian)*
- Where did he meet the girls? *(At a well)*
- Which one did he marry? *(Zipporah)*
- What was the name of his father-in-law? *(Jethro)*
- Name the mountain where Moses saw the Burning Bush? *(Mount Horeb / Mount Sinai)*
- Why did God instruct Moses to take off his shoes? *(The ground Moses was standing on was holy ground, for God was present)*
- What was God’s plan for Moses? *(To lead God’s people out of slavery)*
- What miracles did God show Moses for him to demonstrate to the Israelites as well as the Pharaoh that God was with him? *(When Moses placed his hand into his cloak, it came out with leprosy and then when he put it back into his cloak, it came back normal; Moses staff changed into a snake)*
- Why did Moses think he was not fit for the task being given to him? *(He wasn’t good at speaking. Perhaps he lacked confidence)*
- Who did God send with Moses to help him lead the people out of Egypt? *(Moses’ brother, Aaron)*

Emotion questions

- What feelings do you think caused Moses to go closer to the burning bush? *(wonder, curiosity)*
- What feelings do you think prompted Moses to give excuses? *(fear)*
- What did Moses do that made God angry? *(Asked not to be sent back to Egypt; made excuses for not doing what God asked of him)*
Application Questions

- How do we accomplish tasks that we think are too hard for us to do? (We trust in God to provide everything we need)
- So, what can we learn from this story?
  (Let the children come up with their own suggestions – each child may have a different response to the lesson and there is no correct answer – some suggestions are: God equips us; God is with us; Trust in God.

  **God can use each one of us. We only need to listen for him and to do what he needs us to do. We may not hear the words of God coming out of a burning bush the way Moses did, but we can hear the voice inside us that helps guide us to do what we are supposed to do.**

Snack: Sour worms to represent Moses’ staff that changed into a snake, or any red, yellow and orange snacks to represent the burning bush e.g. oros, nik-nak chips

Worksheet: Activities can be found at the end of the lesson. To make the coded word worksheet harder, you can remove the answers at the bottom of the page.

Craft:

- Each child can create their own response to the lesson – what in the lesson stood out most for each child?
- An outline for a pyramid can be found at the end of the lesson, which the children can construct to remind them of the Israelite’s time in Egypt.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we know that with you all things are possible. Help us to lean not on our own understanding but to trust you with all our heart. Help us to find our true purpose in life and not to run away and doubt, but to have faith. Amen

References:

1. [http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=map+from+canaan+to+egypt&qs=n&form=QBIR&p q=map+from+canaan+to+egypt&sc=0-12&sp=-1&sk=#view=detail&id=7F22048C19A2001FBC3CDD833EAE851E6B3B86E2&selectedIndex=9](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=map+from+canaan+to+egypt&qs=n&form=QBIR&pq=map+from+canaan+to+egypt&sc=0-12&sp=-1&sk=#view=detail&id=7F22048C19A2001FBC3CDD833EAE851E6B3B86E2&selectedIndex=9)
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7. [http://www.sermons4kids.com/moses_and_the_burning_bush_decoder.htm](http://www.sermons4kids.com/moses_and_the_burning_bush_decoder.htm)
**He Is Jehovah**

He is Jehovah, God of creation.
He is Jehovah, Lord God almighty.
The Balm of Gilead, the Rock of Ages,
He is Jehovah, the God that healeth thee.

**Chorus:**

Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah,
Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah.
He is Jehovah, Lord God almighty.
He is Jehovah, the God that healeth thee.

He is the great I Am, the God of Abraham,
Jehovah Shalom, the God peace I am.
The God of Israel, the Everlasting One,
He is Jehovah, the God that healeth thee.

He’s your Provider, Jehovah Jireh;
God of salvation, God of Messiah;
The Son he sent to you, and testified of him.
He is Jehovah, the God that healeth thee.

**Do not be afraid**

**Chorus:**

Do not be afraid,
For I am with you
I have called you by your name
You are mine

When you walk through the waters I’ll be with you
You will never sink beneath the waves
When the fire is burning all around you
You will never be consumed by the flames
When the fear of loneliness is looming,
Then remember I am at your side
When you dwell in the exile of a stranger,
Remember you are precious in my eyes
You are mine, O my child, I am your Father,
And I love you with a perfect love

**Our God is an awesome God**

Our God is an awesome God
He reigns over heaven and earth
With wisdom, power and might
Our God is an awesome God

**This is Holy ground**

This is holy ground - we’re standing on holy ground
For the Lord is present and where He is, is holy
This is holy ground - we’re standing on holy ground
For the Lord is present and where He is, is holy

**Trust and obey**

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word
What a glory He sheds on our way
While we do His good will
He abides in us still,
And with all who will trust and obey
Template for pyramid
MAPS

(These maps show Canaan in relation to Egypt. They also show the possible routes of the Exodus which we will learn about over the next few weeks.)
Moses and the Burning Bush

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Exodus 3:5 (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

| U | T | Z | R | O | Q | M | H | E | P | D | A | F | L | I | K | G | N | Y | V | J | X | W | C | S | B |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |

1. 7-5-25-9-25
2. 26-1-25-8
3. 13-15-4-9
4. 26-1-4-18
5. 25-12-18-11-12-14-25
6. 8-5-14-19
7. 17-4-5-1-18-11
8. 14-12-18-11
9. 7-15-14-16
10. 8-5-18-9-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SANDALS</th>
<th>BURN</th>
<th>HOLY</th>
<th>LAND</th>
<th>GROUND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MILK</td>
<td>BUSH</td>
<td>MOSES</td>
<td>FIRE</td>
<td>HONEY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Moses and the Burning Bush

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Exodus 3:5 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Exodus 3:1-15

Moses and the Burning Bush

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COLLAGE: BABY IN A BASKET
Moses: Let my people go!

Thirteenth Sunday of the year
Between 23 and 29 October

Readings: Exodus 3 and 4 (younger children); Exodus 4:27-31, Exodus 7-10 (older children)
Themes: An all powerful and holy God
Memory verses: “And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.” (Exodus 7:5)

Information for the teacher:

Last week the lesson for the younger children focused on the Moses: Baby in a Basket while the lesson for the older children focused on Moses’ encounter with God in the Burning Bush.

The lesson for the younger children this week deals with Moses’ encounter with God in the Burning Bush, and the lesson for the older children will focus on his return to Egypt with his brother Aaron, his confronting Pharaoh and the Plagues of Egypt.

Both stories for today point to an awesome, all powerful God who has dominion over all things. This is in contrast to the many gods worshipped by the Egyptians, which were powerless as each gloomy plague descended upon their land. Hapi, the god of the Nile River, could not prevent the waters from turning to blood. Hathor, the crafty cow-goddess was helpless as Egyptian livestock died in droves. Amon-Re, the sun-god could not stop an eerie darkness from covering the land for 3 days.

Living in Egypt where there were so many “gods”, Moses wanted to know God’s name so that the Israelites would know exactly who had sent him to them. God called Himself “Yahweh” which means “I Am”, a name describing His eternal power and unchangeable character.

The lesson on the Burning Bush emphasises the holiness of God. Moses encounters God in the Burning Bush on Mount Horeb, also referred to as Mount Sinai. It is one of the most sacred places in Israel’s history. It is also where Moses received the Ten Commandments.

Just as Moses was called by God in the burning bush to take off His sandals as the ground was holy, so we need to develop a reverence within ourselves and our children for our sovereign God.
Lesson Suggestions:

Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To teach the children the story of the burning bush
- To teach them that God speaks to us in many different ways
- To teach them that it is not always easy to do what God asks of us
- To realise that God is mighty and holy

Attention Grabber:

Ask the children to take their shoes off when they enter the room – the reason for this will become apparent during the lesson.

Now ask them: How do we communicate with each other? (Letters, email, telephone)

How do you get your friends’ attention when they’re not listening to you or when they’re far away? (Give the children a chance to volunteer answers)

Have you ever seen a fire burning? What happens? Have a candle burning, then place a piece of paper on the flame and watch it burn. Ask the children to describe what happens. Tell them that today’s story is about a bush on fire but the bush, unlike a piece of paper, never burns up. (Warning: You must warn children about the dangers of fires and that they must not play with fire)

Setting the Scene: Briefly remind the children of what they learnt last week i.e. the birth of Moses

Bible Story: (Ex 3 and 4) - The burning bush

Before telling the story of the burning bush, you may want to mention that when Moses was a young man, he had to flee from Egypt – why? Moses did not like it that the Israelites, his own people, were being treated as slaves. One day he saw an Egyptian treating one of the Israelites badly. He became so angry that he killed the Egyptian. (Ex 2: 11 -21). He then fled to the desert where he became a shepherd. This is where our story for today starts.

Read Exodus 3 and 4 from a children’s bible or tell the story in your own words.
Discussion and questions:

Ask the children to say what they most liked about the story. Give them time to reflect. Also ask them what stood out for them.

Review Questions

- Before the story of the burning bush we learnt that Moses ran away. Why? *(He had killed someone and he was scared)*
- What was his new job? *(A shepherd)*
- What did Moses see when he was watching his flock of sheep? *(A burning bush)*
- What was strange about the burning bush? *(It didn’t burn up)*
- What did Moses hear when he got close to the bush? *(God speaking to him)*
- What did God tell Moses to do? *(To take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground)*
- What was God worried about? *(The suffering of his people in Egypt)*
- What did He want Moses to do? *(To go and bring the people out of Egypt)*
- Did Moses say yes and go right away? *(No)*
- Why? *(He didn’t think he could do it because he didn’t speak well)*
- What was God’s answer? *(I will be with you)*
- Who did God say would go with Moses? *(His brother Aaron)*
- Why do you think we took off our shoes when we came into class today? *(To remind us of the story where God asked Moses to take his shoes off, because the ground he was standing on was holy)*

Application Questions:

1. How would you have felt if you were in a field and you suddenly saw a fire burning? *(scared; amazed)*
2. Do you do as God asks of you? Why? *(He is God – mighty and ruler of the world!)*
3. God spoke to Moses through a burning bush. How does God speak to us today? *(Through the Bible; prayer, other people etc)*
4. Do you read your bibles?
5. Do you do as God asks of you?
6. What are some of the things God asks us to do? *(be nice to others; don’t fight; share; be good etc)*
7. Is it always easy to do what God asks of us? *(No!)*
Craft:
- Cut leaf shapes out of green coloured paper. Then cut flame shapes out of red and orange paper. Children can stick these shapes onto a big piece of cardboard to make the burning bush. A picture of Moses can also be stuck onto the card – don’t forget his sandals! This could be a classroom poster. The children can also make individual pictures using the same idea. A heading such as “The burning bush” or “Our awesome God” or “This is holy ground” can be added to the poster.
- Colour in a picture of the burning bush - see end of lesson.
- A poster can be prepared with a basic outline of a bush. The children can then spread red and yellow finger paints over the outline to represent the burning bush.

Game: Play the ‘Broken Telephone’ Game.
Have the children sit in a circle, then tell the first person to say, “I’m sending you to bring my people out of Egypt.” That child has to whisper to the next who whispers to the next child and so it continues until you get to the last child who has to shout out what s/he hears. (It will probably sound nothing like the original sentence). Now have the children repeat the sentence.
This can also be done with the memory verse.

Snack: Anything orange, red or yellow to represent the flames of the burning bush e.g. oros to drink and orange nik-naks or cling chips – discuss the relevance of these colours to the lesson i.e. these colours represent fire.

Songs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We will Listen and Obey (To the tune of Old MacDonald had a Farm)</th>
<th>Our God is an awesome God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We will listen and obey, yes Lord, yes we will. We will Listen and obey, yes Lord, yes we will. With a Yes Lord here and a Yes Lord there Here a Yes, There a Yes, Everywhere a Yes! Yes! We will Listen and obey, yes Lord, yes we will</td>
<td>Our God is an awesome God, He reigns in heaven above. With wisdom, love and power. Our God is an awesome God.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prayer: Dear God, we know you are holy, strong and mighty and that you are always with us. Help us to always trust you and to do what you want us to do. Amen
Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:
- To learn about the plagues of Egypt
- To gain reverence for our awesome, holy, powerful God

Attention Grabber: Make an origami frog (instructions can be found at the end of this lesson. Be careful that this part of the lesson does not take up too much time - The children should be able to make the frog within 5 minutes – make sure you have practiced how to make the frog beforehand!

Setting the Scene:
Ask the children to help you recap the story from last week. Have some props to help with the recapping e.g. maps, image of burning bush, baby in a basket.

(Pharaoh became worried that there were too many Israelites and a decision was made to make the Israelites slaves of the Egyptians. He further decreed that every Israelite boy was to be thrown into the River Nile. Moses’ mother hid him in the bulrushes but he was found by the Egyptian princess. His mother was able to look after him as a baby, but when he was older, Moses was taken to Pharaoh’s daughter and he grew up as an Egyptian prince. He then had to flee for his life of luxury after killing an Egyptian. While wandering in the desert he protected a young girl and her sisters by a well and later married the girl. He became a shepherd and looked after his father-in-law, Jethro’s flocks. One day, God spoke to Moses on Mount Horeb / Mount Sinai through a burning bush and gave him a special mission to return to the Pharaoh in Egypt and demand that the Israelites be set free from a life of slavery. God showed him miraculous signs which he was to show his own people as well as the Pharaoh if they didn’t believe him. So, Moses having said farewell to his father-in-law set off for Egypt)

Bible Story: (Exodus 4: 27-31; Exodus 7-10) – Moses and Aaron return to Egypt and the plagues of Egypt
This week’s lesson begins with Moses meeting his brother, Aaron, and together, they enter Egypt. Moses and Aaron confront Pharaoh to ask him to free the Israelites. Pharaoh refuses and so ten terrible plagues descend on Egypt.

This story is covered in Exodus 4:29 -31; Exodus 7:8 -10:29. A summary of these chapters follows. It is suggested that you read this summary to the children and then get the children to present the television interview on page 28.
Horrible plagues

(Exodus 7:8 – 10:29)

Pharaoh bluntly refused to listen to Moses and Aaron. The Lord told Moses to approach him one more time. He would convince Pharaoh in the most miraculous way that he was dealing with the true God.

When the brothers arrived, Pharaoh demanded that they perform a miracle. So Aaron threw Moses’ staff on the ground where it turned into a snake. Pharaoh was not impressed. His magicians could do the same. He refused to let the Israelites go.

The Lord told Moses that He was going to be harsh. And the more stubborn Pharaoh was, the more severe his punishment would be, so ten terrible plagues descended on Egypt.

A plague is a disaster that you cannot explain or cure. First, all the water in the land turned into blood, even the water of the mighty Nile! Next, their land was swarmed with frogs. After that came gnats, flies, animals dying, boils, hail, locusts, darkness - one blow after the other. Still Pharaoh’s heart was like stone.

What would The Lord do next? The tenth plague would be the worst of all the plagues.
SCRIPT TV REPORT

PANDEMONIUM IN EGYPT

Cast: Mishal, news Anchor; One of Pharaoh’s commissioners (Mr Adullam) both sitting at the opposite end of a table; Reporter: Sheik

Mishal, news anchor: Today, we have with us in the studio Mr Adullam, one of Pharaoh’s commissioners. Good morning Mr Adullam. First of all, can you please explain to us what has been happening these last few weeks in Egypt. We’re told that the murderer Moses has returned after many years and is stirring up trouble. We Egyptians are becoming very scared as a number of strange things which have been happening.

Mr Adullam: Well he claims to be sent by his God, the God of Israel which must be a big lie because we have the most powerful Gods in the world! This God has sent him to demand, can you imagine, demand that we let the Israelites go. Can you believe such a thing? These lazy people don’t want to work. After all we’ve done for them! Now this Moses fellow has started performing magic tricks! Magic! He thinks he’s more powerful than our Gods.

News anchor: Explain please. What sort of tricks are you talking about?

Mr Adullam: Well, first of all he throws down his staff on the ground and it becomes a snake. Now our magicians did the same but Moses’ snake ate all of their snakes. You think that would make our King let them go? No way!

News anchor: Is that all? Oh wait it seems like we have some breaking news… Viewers I now have to cross live to my reporter Ahab by the river Nile.

Sheik, are you there?

Sheik: Yes, I’m right outside the Nile where the river has all turned to blood and there are dead fish floating in it. This has something to do with that man Moses. I’ve heard that this morning the King went for his usual morning walk and guess who showed up? Yes, Moses and his brother Aaron. They say trouble comes in twos. This means we won’t get clean water to drink. Oh! This is terrible.

News anchor: What else can you tell me? All I know is that the King has said that no God of Moses with his nasty tricks will convince him to let the Israelites go.

News anchor: Thanks Sheik. Please stay tuned to this station for more breaking news. Now back to Adullam? What do you say to this?

Mr Adullam: You know all of this can be traced back to that Joseph with that multi-coloured coat! If we had known all of this was going to happen when we allowed him and his family to stay here, we would have allowed them to die from hunger!

News anchor: But wouldn’t it be better just to let them return home?

Mr Adullam: No way. We can’t give in to these people!
**News anchor:** Well, you’ve heard him *(pause)* Stay tuned for more live updates.

(Take a short break and ask the children to reflect on what has been happening. What has stood out for them in this story? Ask: What is a plague? *(a disaster which affects many people)*; Which plague has been discussed in this scene?)

**A DARK DAY IN EGYPT**

*(Cast: Mishal -news anchor); Rizwan, Amina, Hamed – eye witnesses)*

**Mishal (sad voice):** Today is another sad day in Egypt. A lot of terrible things have happened to us. I have with me a number of witnesses to these terrible things. Let’s listen to what they have to say. Rizwan, can you tell us your story first?

**Rizwan:** Well, just when we were beginning to think that all our problems were finished, seven days after the water in the Nile turned to blood, there was a plague of *frogs* like you’ve never seen before. They were everywhere. The King called for the magicians who tried to show their power by calling for a plague of frogs. A few days later Moses prayed to his God and all the frogs died leaving a huge stink mess in our homes. It was awful. And again, Pharaoh refused to let the people go.

**Mishal:** So, Amina, tell me what you witnessed.

**Amina:** I saw *gnats*. These tiny insects were in my food, you couldn’t even speak as they would fly into your mouth. This happened when Aaron struck the dust of the ground with his staff. Pharaoh’s heart was again hardened and he refused to let the Israelites go.

**Mishal:** I hear he would first agree to let them go, then change his mind. This is too much for our people to bear.

**Amina:** Well, after the *flies* there was a *plague on all our livestock*. My dad is a shepherd and he lost everything. So sad! The strange thing is only the livestock belonging to the Egyptians died. I really think the God of Moses is more powerful than all our Gods and Pharaoh shouldn’t defy him any longer. *(Starts to cry)*

**Mishal (upon seeing the hands of one of her guests):** Oh my goodness! What happened to you? Did you have *boils* on your hands?

**Hamed:** Oh! That’s the next plague that attacked upon us and all of our animals. Even the magicians had them. What are we going to do? Can you imagine that Moses gave Pharaoh another chance to let the people go and he refused again? That’s the reason why we had that terrible *hailstorm*. We’ve never had thunder and lightning like that before. We thought Pharaoh was going to give up because he admitted to Moses that he was wrong and promised to send the Israelites back to Canaan. Moses then prayed to his God for the storm to stop but when it did, he changed his mind.

**Mishal:** This is very depressing! Because last week locusts ate all our crops and look today it is completely black, a *plague of darkness*. This is the third day since we’ve been in Egypt. What are we going to do? *(She raises her hand in despair)*

(Again, take a short break and ask the children to reflect on what has been happening during this scene. What has stood out for them in the story? Which plagues were discussed during this scene?)
Physical activity: Play a game of hopscotch with ten squares. Mark each square as a plague. Have the students repeat each plague as they hop through it.

Fact Questions

1. How many plagues did we learn about today? (Nine)
2. Name as many plagues as you, and preferably in the correct order!
   1. water to blood
   2. frogs
   3. lice
   4. flies
   5. disease
   6. boils
   7. hail
   8. locusts
   9. darkness

Review questions

1. Why did God send the plagues? (To persuade Pharaoh to free the Israelites)
2. Why did Pharaoh want the Israelites to remain in Egypt? (He wanted to use them as slaves)
3. Did the Israelites suffer from the plagues? (No)
4. How would you describe Pharaoh i.e. what sort of a person was he?

Application Questions

What do you think we can learn from the story so far?
Songs:

- Our God is an awesome God (See words in previous lesson)

- Let my people go (This is a very well know song – you will be able to find the tune on the internet – else just let the children say the words in their own way, perhaps as a rap etc)

Let my people go

When Israel was in Egypt's land,
    let my people go;

Oppressed so hard they could not
    stand,
    Let my people go.

Refrain:
    Go down, Moses,
    Way down in Egypt's land;
    Tell old Pharaoh
    To let my people go.

The Lord told Moses what to do,
    let my people go;
    to lead the children of Israel
    through,
    let my people go.

They journeyed on at his command,
    Let my people go;
    And came at length to Canaan's
    land,
    Let my people go.
**Worksheet:** Give the children different images of the nine plagues mentioned – images of the plagues can be found at the end of the lesson. Put them into groups and see which group can put the images into the correct order first. Note that you will have to tippex out the numbers in each picture and mix the pictures up before using this task.

**Prayer:** Ask the children to sit in a circle. Then ask each child to pray silently or aloud but after each prayer they should say Amen to signal to the next person to begin. Perhaps focus on our one and only, all powerful God who cares for His people.

**References:**
http://sermons4kids.com/moses_and_the_burning_bush.htm
http://childrenschurch.wordpress.com/2012/04/16/moses-and-the-burning-bush/
http://www.sundayschoolsources.com/lessons/OT/Exodus/Plagues.htm


**MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH**
God asked Moses to take off his sandals for the place where he was standing was Holy Ground (Exodus 3:5)
HOW TO MAKE AN ORIGAMI FROG

Make sure you have tried this yourself before you use in class! The origami frog can be folded in five minutes or less. As you follow the instructions, use the pictures as a guide.

1. Make the Preliminary Creases
Use paper which is about 10 cm by 19 cm i.e. 1/3 of an A4 page. You do not need to draw the lines on your project as shown in the diagram below - they are for demonstration purposes only. Fold the paper in half vertically, creasing firmly. Unfold. Fold both of your top corners to the opposite edge of the paper. Unfold. At the spot where the diagonal creases meet in the middle, fold your paper backward. Crease well, and then unfold. Your origami jumping frog should look like the picture below.

© Dana Hinders

2. Create Your Origami Frog’s Head
Hold your paper at the sides, bringing the points to the centre line, and then flatten to make a triangle, again as shown in the picture below. This will be the head of your origami frog.

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3. Fold the Front Legs of Your Paper Frog
Fold the bottom of the triangle upwards, and then fold back to form the frog’s front legs as shown in the picture below.

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4. Fold into the Centre
Fold the left and right sides of your paper in to meet the centre crease. When you’re finished, your project should look like the photo below.

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5. Begin the Frog’s Legs
Fold the bottom of the paper up to meet the nose of the frog, as shown in the picture below. Crease firmly.

© Dana Hinders

6. Finish the Frog’s Legs
Fold the top paper back to meet the bottom edge. This will create the feet of your frog.
7. Decorate Your Origami Jumping Frog
Give your frog some colour with crayons, markers, or coloured pencils. Add google eyes to your origami jumping frog if desired. To make your frog jump, push on his hind legs.

© Dana Hinders
Free at last!

Thirty-first Sunday of the year
Between 30 October and 5 November

Readings: Exodus 7:14-24; 13:1-16
Theme: God is powerful; God keeps his promise.
Memory verses: “With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” Ex 13:14

Information for the teacher:

We continue with the story of Moses and this week both the older and younger children are learning about the same theme: God saving the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

The younger children will learn about the 10 plagues before going on to the Exodus story.

The lesson for the older children primarily deals with the Passover – the tenth plague- the night that the Angel of Death passed over the homes of the Israelites and spared their first born. The older children will be introduced to a Seder meal. This meal is used every year by the Jews (Descendents of the Israelites) to remember the night of the Passover as well as the hardships they suffered in Egypt. It is also an occasion for praise and thanksgiving, as well as a primary vehicle for the transmission of faith from one generation to another – it is therefore a good way to revise the lesson for today and to remind us of the plight of the Israelites. There are several components to this meal, each having special significance - the details for this meal are at the end of the lesson. By participating in a Jewish tradition, we are reminded of our roots in Judaism and the link with Christianity – this will be further explored during Lent next year.

Today’s lesson once again reminds us of our powerful God – our God who always keeps His promise.
Lesson Suggestions:

Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn the story of the 10 plagues of Egypt.
- To know that God takes care of His people
- To know that God is mighty and powerful

Attention Grabber:

Get a few plastic toys or pictures of insects such as flies, grasshoppers, spiders; mosquitoes - place them on a table or on the floor and let the children interact with them.

Find out from the children which bugs they are afraid of and ask what they would do if they saw lots and lots of them flying around their garden one day. Tell them that when you have too many insects or if they bring disease and make people sick, this is called a plague and that is what our story is about today.

Setting the scene:

If you prepared a ‘Moses Display’ as discussed in the first lesson, then begin the story there. Get the children to look at all of the items there and ask them to recap the story so far. Ensure that you fill in the missing pieces so that all of the children know what is going on in the story.

Bible Story: (Exodus 7-12) – The Ten plagues

(Be sensitive when you tell the story as some children, especially the smaller ones, may be scared of flies and bugs, blood, the dark, and especially death. In this case, you can tell them that 10 very bad things happened to the Egyptians but don’t discuss the details. Also, help them to understand that in all of this, God took care of the people of Israel, God’s chosen people and no harm came to them. Ensure that what is portrayed is God’s love and care for God’s people)

The story of the ten plagues is covered over a number of chapters in the Bible, and is usually quite long, even in children’s bibles. It is suggested that you use the passage that follows to tell the story – even this passage may need to be condensed -you may choose to just describe the story in your own words. However, make sure you always have a bible next to you so the children know the source of the story. You may want to make use of pictures or props as you tell this story – pictures of the plagues can be found in the older children’s section of the previous lesson or in a children’s bible.)
The Story of Moses and the Pharaoh

By Leanne Guenther (adapted for this lesson)

(While reading the story, get the children involved by prompting them to say “Let the people go!” every time it comes up in the story.)

When Moses and his brother Aaron arrived in Egypt, the Lord told them what to do. God said, "Go to Pharaoh and tell him to let the people go. He will refuse and it won’t be easy, that is why I will send many signs and miracles before he will let the people go; but everyone will know that I am God when he finally frees the Israelites."

So they did what God asked and they went to see Pharaoh. In front of Pharaoh Aaron threw down his staff (stick with a curved handle/walking stick) and it became a snake (just as God told Moses it would).

Pharaoh didn't look surprised at all, he actually just smiled at Moses and Aaron. You see, he had magicians who could do the same thing so he sent for them and asked them to throw down their staffs.

All at the same time they threw the staffs they were carrying to the ground and they became snakes, just like Moses. But, Moses' snake swallowed up all of the other snakes. This made Moses smile, surely Pharaoh would let the people go. But Pharaoh didn't seem to care, he shook his head and said, "Nice try, but the Israelites belong to me, and they work for Egypt I will not let the people go."

Moses left disappointed. After all God told them that it wouldn't be easy. So when God spoke next, they listened well, "Pharaoh's heart is hard, he's still not going to change his mind. Go see him tomorrow morning, he didn't listen today but I will continue to show him that I am God."

With their instructions from God, Moses and Aaron met Pharaoh the next morning. Aaron explained to Pharaoh, "Because you still won't listen, God is going to change all the water in Egypt into blood. The fish will die, the river will stink, and none of the Egyptians will be able to drink it."

Pharaoh smiled and said, "Go ahead." So Aaron did what the Lord told him and put his staff into the water and it turned to blood. All the fish died, and the water smelled so bad, no matter where you were you could smell it. (Can you imagine turning on your tap at home and having blood come out, what about having a bath, or even the water in your toilet. Of course the Egyptians didn't have sinks and toilets back then, but they still used water to drink, to make food, and to clean with.)

After a whole week of this Pharaoh still wouldn't let the people go. But his magicians couldn't turn the blood back into water either. Only God could and he did! Then God instructed Aaron and Moses to go see Pharaoh once again and to tell him again, "Let the people go". If he refuses to let them go, I will plague the whole country with frogs."

They did as God asked and Pharaoh once again refused to let the people go. So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt and the frogs came up and covered everything. They really were everywhere! In the kitchen where the people cooked, in their beds, and they even jumped on them.

The magicians could also make frogs appear - but this would be the last time that their magic would work. After a day of this, Pharaoh couldn't take it anymore and he called for Moses and Aaron. (He probably didn't get any sleep with frogs jumping all over him!)

He begged Moses, "Pray to the Lord to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let the people go." So Moses prayed to the Lord, and all the frogs died. But when Pharaoh saw that all the frogs were dead, he was relieved and he hardened his heart and changed his mind.
There were many other plagues that followed: Gnats (these are flying insects like mosquitos) and flies, all the livestock got sick and died, the Egyptians were covered in sores, hail came down and killed all the crops, locusts came and ate all the grass and everything green, and then there was complete darkness. Nobody left their homes because they couldn't even see where they were going.

With each of these plagues Pharaoh said he'd let the people go if God put things back to normal, but then he kept changing his mind. You'd think he would've learned his lesson and let the Israelites go. But when God has a plan, God doesn't give up!

You may have felt sorry for the Israelites during all these plagues, but God made sure they were not touched by them. Only the Pharaoh and 'his people' the Egyptians went through these terrible times. The Israelites did not live in the same area and God kept them safe.

If you thought all the other plagues were bad, there was one last plague (the tenth plague) that was way worse than any of the others. The Lord told them, "This will be the last plague on Pharaoh and Egypt, after this they will let the people go. Around midnight I will go throughout Egypt. All the firstborn of the Egyptians will die, even the son of Pharaoh, and there will be great sadness." Moses and Aaron warned Pharaoh, but he refused to listen.

The Lord had special instructions for Moses and Aaron, so that the Israelites would be sure to stay safe during this last plague. He told them, "The Israelites must kill their best lamb (a baby sheep or goat). Then they are to take some of the blood and sprinkle it on the sides and tops of the doors on their houses.

On that same night I will pass through Egypt like a ghost and take the life from every first born. If I see blood on the doorway, that will be a sign for me to pass over the house and keep all who are inside safe.

This day will always be known as the Passover, because you were passed over and kept safe by God. You will continue to celebrate this day for many years." (Some people still celebrate it today!) They were also to eat unleavened bread (bread that is flat, not fluffy like we eat it). They also had to roast the lamb and not waste any part of it.

After Pharaoh realized what happened in Egypt he called for Moses and Aaron just after midnight and he said, "Leave my people, you and all the Israelites! I will let the people go. Go worship the Lord as you wanted, take all your animals and get out of here!" The Israelites gathered up gold and silver from the Egyptians who were glad to see them leave and they left with Moses. They were free at last!! Or were they?

(Tell the kids that they will have to come back next week to find out what really happened
Discussion:

What did you think of the story? How did it make you feel?

Review Questions:

1. How many plagues were there? (10)
2. Can you list the plagues?
3. Why did bad things happen to the Egyptians? (They were not treating God’s people very well; God was trying to persuade Pharaoh to free His people from slavery)
4. Did the plagues also happen to God’s people? (No)

Craft:

Get empty egg-holder cartons. Cut the egg cartons so that each child receives a carton that can hold 10 eggs. Instead of eggs, put items into each egg cup that represents the ten plagues e.g. a piece of red string to represent blood, little Styrofoam balls to represent hail, a piece of black paper to represent darkness, etc. Get the children to place these into the different egg cups. (If you do not have enough egg cartons for each child, the ten items can just be put in a bag to take home as a reminder of the lesson)

Or

Colour in pictures of the plagues found at the end of this lesson

Physical activity: Game: Frogs on a Lily Pad

This game is an adaptation of musical chairs. Cut out large lily pad shapes or circles out of green card board paper. You need to have 1 less than the number of children in the class. Tape the lilies to an area of floor where there is a big enough safe playing area. The children will be the frogs in this game. Show them how to leap like a frog from their legs bent. Have them start off on the side of the room. Play music and when the music stops, each child must jump to a lily pad. The child who does not get to a lily pad is “out” of the game. Perhaps for younger children, don’t remove another lily pad after each round and let the child who was “out” rejoin the game.

Ask the children why we are playing a game about frogs.

Songs:

- Let my people go – the words to this song are in the previous lesson
- My God is so big, so strong and so mighty

My God is so big

My God is so big, so strong and so mighty,
there’s nothing my God cannot do (x2)

The mountains are His, the rivers are His,
The stars are His handiwork too

My God is so big. So strong and so mighty,
There’s nothing my God cannot do
Snack:
- Make bug snacks using strawberry, marshmallows, grapes, bananas, crackers, peanut butter (be careful if there are allergies), butter, jam, raisins, pretzels etc. - See images at the end of lesson for ideas
- Eat Matzah like the Israelites did – explain why they did this

Memory Game: Plagues memory game. Print the memory cards at the end of the lesson or use the pictures from the craft, stick onto stiff card, cut out and let the children have fun playing.

To play the memory game, you will need to make 2 copies of the memory cards for each group. Cut out each picture, turn upside down and shuffle. The children then take turns to pick up two cards. If the two cards are the same picture, that child keeps the pair of cards.

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you that you are so strong and mighty and that there is nothing that you cannot do. Thank you that you always watch over us and take care of us and our families. Amen.

Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:
- To learn of the night of the tenth plague
- To be reminded that God cares for His people
- To encourage the children to keep trusting God and be patient, even if their prayers are not answered immediately

Setting the scene: Remind the children that God had called Moses to ask Pharaoh to free the Israelites from slavery. Pharaoh refused, so God sent plagues onto the land of Egypt. How many plagues did we learn about last week? (9). With each plague, Pharaoh promised to let the Israelites go, but then each time his heart would harden – what is meant by this? Today we will learn about the tenth plague – the worst of all the plagues.

Bible Story: The tenth plague and the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 11-12)
The last lesson stopped at the ninth plague. Show the children a picture with these plagues and ask them to recall what these were. (Perhaps mix the pictures up again from last week and put in the correct order)

The story of the tenth plague and the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt is very long in most bibles. The extract that follows is a good summary of the story:
The night of the Passover
Exodus 12

Moses called for all the elders of Israel and spoke to them, in accordance with the command of the Lord, saying: "Take a lamb from your flocks, according to the size of your families, and kill it. Take a bunch of herbs and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike with the blood the top and the two side posts of the doorways of your houses. And none of you shall go out of his house until morning.

"You shall roast the lamb and shall eat the meat with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs. When you eat it you shall be ready to depart, with your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.

"For The Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood upon the door top and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not allow death to come into your houses to strike you.

"And you shall observe this thing as a covenant with God for you and for your sons forever. It shall come to pass, when you come to the land which the Lord will give to you, according to his promise, that you shall keep this service. And when your children say,"What do you mean by this sacrifice?", you shall say, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when he struck down the Egyptians, and he saved all our families."

The people bowed their heads and worshipped. Then the children of Israel went away and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron.

And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born child of Pharaoh on his throne to the first-born of the captive in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle.

Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead.

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise up and get out from among my people, both you and all the children of Israel. And go worship the Lord as you have asked. And take your flocks and your herds, as you asked, and be gone."

And the Egyptians urged the people, and tried to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, "We are all dead men."

So the people took their dough before it was raised, and bound their kneading boards up in their clothes bundles on their shoulders. And the people of Israel departed and journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand of them on foot, not counting the children, and there also went with them many other people, and large flocks and herds of cattle.

The night they went out of Egypt, the children of Israel had been living in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years.
Review Questions:
1. What was the tenth plague? *(The death of the first born)*
2. How were God’s people saved from the Angel of Death? *(They painted the doorways of their houses with the blood of a lamb – the Angel of Death then knew to pass over these homes)*
3. What was Pharaoh’s response to this plague? *(He let them go!)*
4. With what did the people leave? *(sandals, staff, unleavened bread and clothes on shoulders, livestock)*

Discussion:
1. Explain to the children that the term Exodus means to leave, hence the title of this book of the Bible.
2. Ask the children to predict what would happen next, but do not tell them! Instead, encourage them to return next week for the conclusion.
3. The Jewish people of today are the descendents of the Israelites. The night of the tenth plague, or the Passover is still remembered by the Jews every year. The Festival of the Passover is celebrated when Christians celebrate Easter – we will discuss this in more detail next year. Why do you think the Jews celebrate Passover every year? *(It is a reminder of the night when the Angel of Death “passed over” the homes of the Israelites. It was this plague which finally persuaded the Pharaoh to let the Israelites go – they were freed from slavery!)*

Snack: Share in a Seder meal – this involves Matzo crackers, boiled egg, lettuce, parsley dipped in salt water, red grape juice to represent the blood that was shed – the details are found at the end of this lesson.
Ask the children to sit around a table on which is placed a plate with the above items.
Start the meal by saying, “Shalom” which means peace and say a blessing.
Pour the grape juice but have the children wait before drinking.
Continue: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God. Bless this cup which is a symbol of our joy.” *(The children now drink)*
Explain the significance of each individual item before eating – first ask the children what they think is the significance of each item – again details are at the end of the lesson.
End the meal with the following prayer -you may also want to sing it if you know the tune

**Shalom**
Shalom my friend, shalom my friend
Shalom, shalom
The peace of God I give to you
Shalom, Shalom

*(“Shalom” means “peace”)*
Craft: Make a placemat representing the Seder Meal – see end of lesson

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for showing us through Moses that you always keep your promises to your people and you care. Thank you for saving the people of Israel and from rescuing them from slavery. Help us to always trust you and to be patient and wait for you to act. Amen

Song:
- Ten Plagues of Egypt. (See end of lesson – make up actions to go with song)
  Or
- Ask the children to compose their own song about the plagues.

References:
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http://judaism.about.com/od/holidays/a/sederplatesymbols.htm
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### PLAGUES MEMORY CARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>A horrible darkness lasted for three days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>A terrible fiery hailstorm came.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Egyptian animals began to die.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Gnats tormented the Egyptians and their animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Water turned into blood.</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>The eldest child of every Egyptian died one night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Clouds of locustate up what the hailstorm had left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image8.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Egyptian people were ill with horrible sores (boils) on their bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image9.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Flies filled Egyptian homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image10.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Frogs swarmed out of the river.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BUG THEMED SNACKS

![Image](image11.png)

![Image](image12.png)

![Image](image13.png)

![Image](image14.png)
THE SEDER MEAL

The Passover Seder plate (*ke‘ara*) is a special plate containing six symbolic foods used during the Passover Seder. The seventh item is matzo crackers.

**Shank bone (Zaroah) / Roasted Beet** – The roasted shank bone of a lamb reminds us of the tenth plague in Egypt, when all firstborn Egyptians died. The Israelites marked the doorposts of their homes with the blood of a lamb as a signal that death should pass over them. The shank bone is sometimes called the Paschal lamb, with “paschal” meaning “He [God] skipped over” the houses of Israel.

Vegetarians sometimes replace the shank bone with a roasted beet, which has the colour of blood but is not derived from an animal.

**Hard Boiled Egg (Beitzah)** – Hard boiled eggs were traditionally the food of mourners and hence they were an appropriate symbol for the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem. Another interpretation of the egg is that most foods become softer the longer they are cooked. The egg, on the other hand becomes harder. So it was with the Jewish people- the more they were oppressed, the stronger they became.

**Bitter Herbs (Maror and Chazeret)** – Two types of bitter herbs are used, symbolising the bitterness and harshness of the slavery which the Jews endured in Egypt. For Maror, many people use freshly grated horseradish or a paste. For Chazaret, romaine lettuce is typically used – the stem is bitter although the leaves are not.

**The mixture (Charoset)** – This is a mixture that is often made of apples, nuts, wine and spices. This mixture resembles bricks and mortar made by the Israelites, reminding the Jewish people how hard they were forced to work when they were slaves in Egypt.

**The vegetable (Karpas)** – This part of the Seder plate dates back to a first and second century tradition in Jerusalem that involved beginning a formal meal by dipping vegetables in salt water before eating them. Hence, at the beginning of the Seder a vegetable – usually parsley, celery or cooked potato – is dipped in salt water and eaten. It is sometimes said that the salt water represents the tears the Jewish ancestors shed during their years of enslavement in Egypt.

**Matzos** – Matzo means unleavened bread. The reason why unleavened bread is eaten is because the Israelites did not have enough time for their bread to rise. It is sometimes viewed as the bread of affliction which reminds people to be humble and not ‘puffed up’. 3 pieces of Matzos are usually stacked on the table and covered with a cloth

**More interesting points about the Seder meal:**
- The participants are required to lean to the left during the drinking of the wine / grape juice and eating the matzo, as a symbol of freedom, as in the olden days, when rich people used to lounge on pillows and special couches. When eating everything else, the participants do not lean to the left – this is a reminder of slavery.
- To act in a way that shows majesty and freedom, each participant’s cup is filled by someone else.
- During the meal, the youngest person asks the question: “Why is this night different from all other nights?”
The Ten Plagues of Egypt Song
(Tune: Twelve days of Christmas)

With the first plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them, some blood in the red, red sea.

With the second plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them, Frogs in their hair,
And some blood in the red, red sea.

With the third plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them, Gnats flying free,
Frogs in their hair, And some blood in the red, red sea.

With the fourth plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them,
Flies all around, Gnats flying free, Frogs in their hair,
And some blood in the red, red sea.

With the fifth plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them,
Sick, dead livestock, Flies all around, Gnats flying free, Frogs in their hair,
And some blood in the red, red sea.

With the sixth plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them,
Boils and illness, Sick, dead livestock, Flies all around, Gnats flying free, Frogs in their hair,
And some blood in the red, red sea.

With the seventh plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them, Hailstones a-Dropping, Boils and illness,
Sick, dead livestock, Flies all around, Gnats flying free, Frogs in their hair,
And some blood in the red, red sea.

With the eighth plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them,
Locusts eating crops, Hailstones a-Dropping, Boils and illness, Sick, dead livestock,
Flies all around, Gnats flying free, Frogs in their hair,
And some blood in the red, red sea.

With the ninth plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them,
Darkness all over, Locusts eating crops, Hailstones a-Dropping,
Boils and illness, Sick, dead livestock, Flies all around, Gnats flying free,
Frogs in their hair,
And some blood in the red, red sea.

With the tenth plague of Egypt the Lord God sent to them,
Firstborn children dying, Darkness all over, Locusts eating crops,
Hailstones a-Dropping, Boils and illness, Sick, dead livestock, flies all around,
Gnats flying free, Frogs in their hair,
And some blood in the red, red sea.
A Desert Adventure!

Thirty-second Sunday of the year
Between 6 and 12 November

Readings: Exodus 13:17 -17:7; 19; 32
Theme: God is always with us and protects us
Memory verses: “The Lord will fight for you, you need only to be still.” (Ex 14:14); “The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation” (Ex 15:2)

Information for the teacher:

This is the final week of our Moses lessons and the focus is on the journey through the desert to the Promised Land of Canaan. It was not easy task to mobilise this mass of humanity, but they fled Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the desert behind Moses and the pillar of cloud and fire.

Despite continual evidence of God’s love and power, the people complained and began to yearn for their days in Egypt. God provided for their physical and spiritual needs, but He also judged their disobedience and unbelief, ultimately resulting in the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for 40 years before finally reaching the Promised Land.

The lesson for today is taken from a number of chapters in the Bible. You are encouraged to read these chapters, although it may be easier to use a Children’s Bible to get a synopsis of the stories in the lesson.

Make the story your own by using a language of your choice. If you and your children are fortunate to speak many different languages, it would be more interesting if you could use these while telling the story. But whatever you do, have fun and ensure that the children do too.

Today’s lesson is also a good time to recap the entire story of Moses. There are ideas and pictures at the end of the lesson to aid you.
Lesson Suggestions:

Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:
- To learn about the Israelites’ journey through the desert to the Promised Land.
- To assure the children that God is always with us and cares for us and always keeps His promise
- To encourage the children to keep trusting God and be patient, even if their prayers are not answered immediately

Attention Grabber:
- Ask the children if they have even been in a desert or seen pictures of a desert. (Give them a chance to speak)
- The deserts in Africa are: the Kalahari (the south west part of South Africa is in this desert), the Namib and the Sahara (the largest).
- Deserts are dry with lots of sand and not much rain. Show them pictures of a desert – some can be found at the end of the lesson.
- Explain that there are lots of prickly plants (cactus) in the desert because they can store water. An important animal used to transport people is the camel which stores water in his hump and so can travel for long distances without drinking water.

Setting the Scene: Remind the children of the story of Moses that we learnt last week - Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go. Today we will learn about their trip through the desert to the land God promised them – the land of milk and honey – Canaan.

Bible Story: Exodus 13 (The Israelites’ journey through the desert and the parting of the Red Sea)

Instead of reading the Bible story for today, it is suggested that you act out the story using the script below:

Characters: Teacher- Moses, holding a curved stick; Children - people of Israel.
Setting: The church hall/church garden. Place the following signs at various points in the hall/garden: Leaving Egypt; The Red Sea; Mount Sinai; Canaan

Props:
- Curved stick for Moses;
- Children can dress up with their heads covered with blankets, scarves, towels and can perhaps be carrying plastic farm animals to represent their livestock.
- Perhaps have a few cactus / succulents to represent the desert.
• At the sign of the Red Sea have 2 long pieces of blue material, placed in a line so that they overlap each other slightly – this will represent the Red Sea. As the Israelites pass through the Red Sea, the overlapping pieces of material can be pulled away from each other so that a path can be made for the Israelites to pass through. These 2 pieces can then be put back together once the Israelites have passed through.
• Also have a jug of water containing something salt/ lemon / vinegar or something that makes it taste bitter and is not poisonous! – This needs to be placed somewhere between the Red Sea and Mount Sinai and represents the bitter water the Israelites came across in the desert.
• Broken pieces of bread with honey on it to represent manna can also be put somewhere along the path.
• Milk and honey to represent the Promised Land, Canaan – put by the Canaan sign.

Tell them you are taking them on an adventure through the desert. You’re not going in a 4x4 but rather you will be walking because during the time of Moses there were no vehicles. Now start the story standing in front of a sign that says Egypt.

Today is a very important day. Pharaoh has finally agreed to send the people of Israel back to their home land in Canaan. Yes, they are finally free and they are not slaves anymore. They are excited and a bit scared. They leave Egypt with just the clothes on their back and their animals – all their other belongings are left behind. The Lord leads the way - During the day he appears in a big cloud which helps provide some shade from the desert heat and at night, in a big fire that provides warmth on the cold desert nights.

The people pray: We thank you God for saving us from the Pharaoh and from slavery. We thank God for rescuing baby Moses, for speaking to him through the burning bush and giving him the important job of saving his people. Thank you for protecting him and for his brother, Aaron and giving them the courage to lead the people back to the land that was promised to them. Thank you for setting us free. Amen.

Song: “We are marching in the light of God”.

(Begin to walk towards the next sign which reads, Red Sea while singing, but go a long way round to get to it).
The journey is not easy – they have to take a long hard route through the dangerous desert.

In the meantime, the Pharaoh is not happy about his decision to set the people free. Who is going to do all the hard work? So he sends his army with their chariots (wagons) to go and capture the people of Israel and bring them back to Egypt.

When Pharaoh comes near, the Israelites look up, and seeing the Egyptians coming after them, they are very frightened. They start to cry, shouting, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt into the desert to die?” Moses answers “Do not be afraid. God will take care of us”.

But the people become more afraid, especially when they see the sea in front of them. God then tells Moses to stretch his stick toward the water and the water divides into two. (The children pass through the “Red Sea”). So Moses and the Israelites cross the big sea with the Egyptian army following them. (Tell children to run).

As soon as the army enters the water the sea came back together - the Egyptians can not get them. The Israelites are free! Moses’ sister, Miriam leads everyone in a song.
Song:

Our God is an awesome God
He reigns in heaven above
With wisdom, love and power
Our God is an awesome God.

After this Moses and the people travel for a few days without finding good water to drink as the water they find is bitter. *(Let the children taste the bitter water.)* They start to complain again. Have the children repeat, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt? We are hungry and thirsty”

God makes the bitter water sweet but still they complain, “In Egypt we had food!” Moses is getting frustrated so God promises food for them. You see God is always with them and He knows all that is happening. So the Lord provides quail (a little bird) and manna, a kind of sweet bread which falls down from the skies, for the people to eat. *(Let the children eat the pieces of bread covered in honey)*

*(Continue walking toward the sign which says Mount Sinai and spread blankets for the children to sit.)*

After 3 months the people arrive at the Mount Sinai in the Sinai desert. They set up camp there while Moses goes up the mountain. He meets the Lord who gives him a special message for the people. Moses goes back down to them and gives them the message and they promise to do everything the Lord said. Who knows what this special message is? *(The Ten Commandments)*

Now Moses is on the mountain for a long time, and while he is on the mountain, the people say, “Let us make a god to lead us, because we do not know what has become of Moses”. The people decide to make a calf out of gold and worship it as their God. When Moses comes down from the mountain and sees this he is very angry. But God forgives the people and gives them another chance.

But ..... it takes the Israelites 40 years of wandering in the desert to finally arrive in the Promised Land, Canaan – the land of milk and honey. *(Let the children enjoy some milk and honey)*

*(You may want to show the children the map from lesson 1 and this time, trace the journey from Egypt to Canaan)*

**Discussion:**

1. What did you most enjoy about the story we learnt today?
2. What did you not like about the story?
3. What did you learn about God in this story?
4. Do you think God was always with his people? How do you know?
Review Questions:
Recap the story for today - the craft below can be a good way to do this. Recap the entire Moses story using the pictures found at the end of the lesson OR items from the previous lessons.

Craft: Create desert scenes of the Israelites in the wilderness. There are a number of scenes from the story for today that can be used – the Israelites can be shown following a cloud – use cotton wool for the cloud; small pieces of paper scattered across the page can represent manna. Pictures such as the golden calf can be traced from a children’s bible. To complete the desert scene, spread glue over the page and scatter sand over the glue – “sand pit” sand works well. If the different scenes are allocated between the children, then a “timeline” of events can be created, which can be displayed on a board. Some pictures of today’s story have been included at the end of the lesson.

Physical activity:
- Crossing the Red Sea Game
  Divide the children into two groups: one group, the Israelites, standing in front and the other, the Egyptians, standing further behind. With another teacher, hold a big sheet in your hands but it must be touching the ground.
  Ask the ‘Egyptians’ to chase the ‘Israelites’. Let the Israelites have a head start. As the Israelites approach the white sheet, raise it above your head for them to run through.
  Lower it as soon as all of the Israelites have passed through. See if all the Israelites can pass thorough before any of the Egyptians get to the white sheet. Replay the game, giving the Israelites a greater or smaller head start, depending on the outcome of the previous game.
  Discuss the significance of the game – it represents the Israelites passing through the Red Sea with the Egyptians chasing them.
- If a sand pit is available, the children will enjoy playing in it – it will also be a reminder of the desert experience!

Prayer: Dear God we thank you that you always keep your promises and care for us. Help us to always trust you. Amen
Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:
- To learn about the Israelites’ journey through the desert to the Promised Land
- To remind the children that God is always with us and cares for us

Attention Grabber: How well do you know the desert?
- Ask the children to name the deserts in Africa and which one is the biggest. (Sahara – biggest); the Namib Desert and The Kalahari Desert. Show the children the map.
- How many of you have been in a desert? What was it like?
- Describe the desert conditions: very hot and dry; not much rain fall; trees sparse and not very tall; very sandy – sand dunes; dangerous; in some parts camels used for transport; people have to be fully covered from head to toe for protection from the sun and sand.
- Use the pictures at the end of the lesson to show the children

Setting the Scene: Briefly remind the children of the story of Moses that we have so far learnt, especially the lesson from last week - Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go. Today we will learn about their trip through the desert to the land God promised them – the land of milk and honey – Canaan.

Bible Story: Exodus: 13:17 – 17:7; 19; 32 – The Israelites in the Wilderness

Tell the children that we’re going on a desert adventure today. The people of Israel are returning to Canaan after spending hundreds of years in Egypt. They are taking a different route home from the one Joseph’s family took.

(Show the children the map from Lesson 1)

Now take them on a imaginative journey with Moses – the story follows on the next page.
AN IMAGINATIVE JOURNEY WITH MOSES

Start: I would like you to close your eyes and imagine that you are an Israelite in Goshen (Egypt), getting ready for the long trip through the Sinai desert to Canaan. You are excited but filled with some dread and fear for Goshen (Egypt) has always been your home. It is a bitter sweet moment.

You as an Israelite might pray: We thank you God for saving us from the Pharaoh and from slavery. We thank God for rescuing Moses as a baby, for speaking to him through the burning bush and giving him the important job of saving your people. Thank you for protecting Moses and for his brother, Aaron and giving them the courage to lead your people back to the land that was promised to them. Thank you for setting us free. Amen.

Now let us hurry because we really cannot trust Pharaoh and his men! We take with us dough with no yeast – with this we can make unleavened bread. We have just the clothes on our back and our animals – all our other belongings have been left behind. Oh! The sun is very hot now but Look! There’s a cloud in the sky and it seems to be leading us. It must be the God of our Ancestors.

So the Israelites travel on for hours and decide to rest for the night at a place called Etham. As night falls the cloud becomes a pillar of fire. God is again with them protecting them. They set off the next day and seem to be walking for hours and hours but don’t really know where they are.

In the meantime, Pharaoh is regretting his decision to let the people go and gathers up his army with about 600 chariots and set off in pursuit of the Israelites.

Moses senses that something is not right. He says, listen! I can hear a sound. It’s getting louder. He looks up and there are the Egyptians pursuing them and right in front of them is the Red Sea. At the same time, the people start to complain, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt? We’re going to die here.” “Do not be afraid”, Moses answers. “God is with us. He will fight for us.

Moses shouts, “Run, run toward the Sea. I’m going to stretch out my staff as soon as I get there.” The cloud that was in front of them moves between them and the Egyptian army. Moses stretches out his hand. The sea is separating. There is a path in the middle. “Quick, quick,” Moses cries, “hurry!”

As they reach the opposite side, the Egyptian army enters the sea. Moses stretches out his staff and the waters start to flow again. The Egyptians cannot get us! The Israelites are free! Moses’ sister, Miriam leads everyone in a song. Again, the Lord has come to the rescue of the people of Israel.

Discussion:

Now ask the children to open their eyes very slowly and given them a few seconds to adjust. Then ask them to reflect on the experience and the story so far. Do they think God was with the Israelites throughout their journey in the desert? What evidence is there to substantiate this?
Continue the Bible story:
Divide the children into groups, each group taking one of the Bible readings from the list below. In each group, the children need to read through the story and then give a brief summary of the story to the rest of the class in their own words. A summary of each of the readings has been included to guide you.

**Group 1: Ex 15:22-27 and Ex 17:1-7:** The Israelites travelled in the desert but could find no water. They came to a place called Marah, but they could not drink the water as it was bitter. (“Marah” means bitter) The people grumbled. Moses cried out to the Lord and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water and the water became sweet. (Ex 15:22-27)

The Israelites were travelling in the desert and again there was no water to drink. They quarrelled with Moses and asked him to give them water. Moses cried to the Lord and the Lord told Moses to strike the rock – water came out for the people to drink.

**Group 2: Ex 16:** The Israelites were complaining as they had no food. God provided them with manna (a type of bread) in the morning and quail (a type of bird) in the evening. They were only to gather as much as they needed, but not all the people listened.

**Group 3: Ex 32:1-14** - Before this group goes off, explain that the story that proceeds this reading is that Moses had been called to meet God on Mount Sinai. It was here that he was given the 10 Commandments. Moses was on Mount Sinai for a long time.

Moses was long in coming down from the mountain. The people wanted to make a “god” who would go before them. They melted their gold jewellery and made a golden calf. God was very angry with them but Moses pleaded with God not to destroy them. God relented.

**Discussion:**
What can we learn from the stories about the water from the rock and the manna and quail? *(It was not easy for the Israelites in the desert, but God always provided for them)*

Despite God’s constant provision for the Israelites, they still lost faith in God, as seen with the story of the golden calf. It was because of their lack of belief in God’s word and promises that they were cursed with 40 years of wilderness wandering before entering the Promised Land – the Land of milk and honey. We will learn more about this next year.

**Snack:**
- pieces of bread with honey on it to represent manna
- cold, refreshing water!

Play the Exodus board game at the end of the lesson. The questions are at the end of the lesson and are taken from the review questions in each lesson.
### Song:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Come Bless the Lord</strong></th>
<th><strong>Hosanna in the Highest</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Come bless the Lord</td>
<td>Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All you servants of the Lord</td>
<td>(twice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who stand by night</td>
<td>Lord we lift up your name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the house of the Lord</td>
<td>With hearts full of praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lift up your hands in the holy place</td>
<td>Be exalted o Lord my God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come bless the Lord</td>
<td>Hosanna in the highest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come bless the Lord</td>
<td>(Repeat Song)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prayer:

Ask the children to write their own prayers of thanksgiving.

### References:

- [www.bing.com/images](http://www.bing.com/images)
- [www.momjunction.com](http://www.momjunction.com)
DESERTS

THE SAHARA DESERT

THE KALAHARI DESERT

MAP OF THE THREE DESERTS IN AFRICA
How to Play

Put children in groups of at least 2, and preferably not more than 4. Each group should get a copy of the board as shown above as well as the list of questions which follow below. Give the students game pieces or just coins. Place all pieces on start. Have each student roll a die and move forward the number of spaces they roll. If they land on a positive number, they move that many spaces forward too. If they land on a negative number, they move that many spaces back. You then ask them a question from the list. If they get the question wrong, they need to move back to where they started before they rolled the die. The first person to get to the end wins. Play the game again if not all the questions have been answered.

Desert adventure: Review questions for the game.

1. Why did Moses’ mother put him in a basket?
2. Who found him?
3. What was the name of Moses’ sister?
4. What does the name Moses mean?
5. Before the story about the burning bush, we learn that Moses had to run away from Egypt. Why?
6. Name the place that Moses fled to?
7. Where did he meet the girls?
8. What’s the name of his father-in-law?
9. Name the mountain where Moses saw the Burning Bush?
10. Why did God instruct Moses to take off his shoes?
11. What did God ask Moses to do when He spoke to him in the burning bush?
12. Who did God send with Moses to help him lead the people out of Egypt?
13. How many plagues were there?
14. Why did God send the plagues?
15. Name 5 of the plagues.
16. How did God spare the Israelites?
17. What was the name of the special meal they had to prepare before they left Egypt?
18. Why did Pharaoh want the Israelites to remain in Egypt?
19. What does the word Exodus mean?
20. What is a Seder meal?
21. How did God save the Israelites when they were running away from the Egyptians in the desert?
22. What was their final destination i.e. where were they going?

MOSES PICTURES FOR LESSON RECAP
Be Prepared
(Parable of the ten Bridesmaids)

Thirty third Sunday of the year
Between 13 and 19 November

_readings:_ Matthew 25:1-13
_theme:_ Spiritual readiness; be prepared
_memory verses:_
- “Stay awake and be prepared.” Matthew 25:13 (younger children)
- “Stay awake and be prepared, because you do not know the day or hour of my return.”
  Matthew 25:13 (older children)

_information for the teacher:_

The lessons for the next 2 weeks will focus on the season of Advent. Advent is the Season marking the 4 weeks before Christmas. The word advent is derived from the Latin word, “adventus” meaning, “coming or arrival, especially of something extremely important.” It is the time when Christians remember that Jesus came into the world 2000 years ago and that Jesus also promised one day to return in all His glory.

Advent is a time of expectant waiting, preparation and joyful anticipation. Today’s lesson centre’s around a wedding – weddings are also times of expectant waiting, preparation and joyful anticipation.

The story for today is the parable of the 10 bridesmaids which is based on ancient Jewish wedding customs. On the wedding day the bridegroom goes to the bride’s house for the ceremony; then the bride and groom, along with a great procession, return to the groom’s house where a feast takes place, often lasting a full week.

This parable tells of 10 bridesmaids, waiting expectantly to join the procession. They wait with joyous anticipation to take part in the wedding banquet. The wedding usually takes place in the evening and so those waiting for the procession must be prepared - they carry lamps which they must ensure contain enough oil so that the lamps do not burn out. When the bride and groom do not come at the expected time, 5 of the bridesmaids run out of oil. By the time they have purchased the extra oil, it is too late to join in the feast.

In this parable, the 10 bridesmaids are the church members, the oil is our spiritual preparation, the bridegroom is Jesus and the marriage is the second coming of Jesus.

Jesus told this story to clarify what it meant to be ready for His return and how to live until He comes, a theme found throughout the lectionary readings for November. We not know the time or hour when Jesus will return, but we must be ready. Spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed. Our relationship with God must be our own.

Please note that the theme of Advent will be covered every year. Next year the lesson will focus around the 4 weeks of Advent - a time of expectant, joyful anticipation.
Lesson Suggestions:

Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:
- To learn the story of the 10 bridesmaids
- To introduce the children to the idea of Advent
- To encourage the children to always be spiritually prepared

Attention Grabber:
Play the following well-known memory game: I’m going on holiday and I’m taking a spade; next child then says: I’m going on holiday and I’m taking a spade and a book. Each child repeats what the children before have added to the list and then add something of their own.

Who likes going to a wedding? Why? (It’s fun etc)
Do you need to get ready for a wedding? Yes, and you need to make sure you are on time, else you will miss out.
Just as when you go on holiday, you need to get ready, so you also need to get ready for a wedding.
Today we are going to learn about some people who were not ready for a wedding.

Bible Story: Matt 25:1-13 (The parable of the 10 bridesmaids)
You may like to use the passage below to tell this story. Make sure you have a picture of the parable to show the children as you tell the story.

There was to be a wedding in the town. Everyone was looking forward to the wedding with great excitement. There were 10 bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom to come past so that they could join the procession.

The wedding feast would go into the night, so the bridesmaids each carried an oil lamp. 5 of these bridesmaids were wise – they brought extra oil in a jar with them in case their lamps ran out of oil. 5 of these bridesmaids were foolish – they did not bring extra oil with them. The bridegroom took a long time to come, and all the bridesmaids became drowsy and fell asleep.

At midnight a call was heard, “The bridegroom is coming! Come and meet him!” Then all the bridesmaids woke up, but their lamps needed more oil. The foolish bridesmaids said to the wise bridesmaids, “Give us some oil – our lamps are going out.” “No”, the wise bridesmaids replied, “Then there may not be enough for us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for your selves.”

While they were on their way to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived. The wise bridesmaids who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast. And the door shut. Later the foolish bridesmaids arrived at the door. “Sir, Sir!” they said, “Open the door for us”.

But it was too late – they were not able to join the feast.
Fact Questions:
1. Did everyone in the story get to the wedding? *(No, there were 10 bridesmaids – only 5 made it to the wedding.)*
2. Why did 5 of the Bridesmaids not make it to the wedding? *(Their lamps ran out of oil. They were not prepared.)*

Emotion question:
1. How do you think the bridesmaids who missed the wedding felt? *(sad)*

Application Questions: *(Some of these questions may be too difficult for the very young children)*

1. Christmas is coming soon! Do you know what the season before Christmas is known as in the Christian church? *(Advent)*
2. Does anyone know what Advent means? *(Arrival of something very important. It is the time when we remember that Jesus came into the world 2000 years ago and that Jesus also promised that one day He will come again)*
3. Today we learnt about a parable. Who can remember what a parable is? *(It is a story that Jesus told to teach the people about something important)*

Today’s lesson is the parable of the 10 bridesmaids. It is a story about a wedding, but it is actually a story about Jesus’ coming again.

Do we know when Jesus will come back? No! So we must be ready, waiting for Him.

How can we be ready? *(Read our Bible, pray, go to church, live our life as Jesus would want us to live, i.e. be kind to others, are about those in need etc)*

Craft:
- Colour in the picture below. You can enlarge it if you click on the corner. Decorate with glitter.

*Be prepared!* *(Matthew 25: 1-13)*
**Make a paper lantern** (This may be too difficult for the very little ones to do)

**You will need:**
A piece of coloured paper
Scissors
Scotch/ sticky tape

**What to do:**
- Fold a piece of coloured paper in half. (If your paper is only coloured on one side, fold it so the coloured side is visible.)
- Cut a series of slits perpendicular (at right angles) to the folded edge, as shown below.
- Unfold the paper and form the lantern by sticking the left edge of the paper to the right edge of the paper using scotch tape

**Song:** Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning, burning, burning

**Snack:** Have a wedding feast! Bring crisps, cold drinks etc

**Physical activity:**

1. Jar relay: Just like the bridesmaids’ lamps needed to be filled with oil, we are going to fill these jars with water. Divide the children into teams. Have 10 small jars (jam or olive jars, plastic cups etc) available for each team. See how long it will take each team to run back and forth while taking turns, to fill the 10 jars with water. The teams can use a small plastic cup to do the filling of the jars.
2. Play the game, “Wolfie, wolfie, what’s the time?” One child is the “wolf”. The other children ask Mr Wolf what time it is and then take that many steps toward the wolf. When they get close to the wolf, Mr Wolf calls out “feeding time!” and chases the players. Remind the children that we do not know when Jesus will come again, but we must be ready.
Prayer: Dear God. Thank you for Christmas when we remember that you sent baby Jesus into the world to show us how to live and also that you will come again one day. Help us to be a shining light for you. Amen

Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:
- To learn about the parable of the 10 bridesmaids
- To learn about advent
- To encourage the children to always be spiritually prepared

Attention Grabber: Play the following game: Give one child a ball. He/she can throw it anyone in the group, without any warning.

Discuss with the children that in order to catch the ball they need to be awake and prepared, otherwise they will be caught off guard – this is the theme for today’s lesson.

Discussion: Before reading the bible story for today, discuss with the children that Christmas is coming!

Ask the following questions:

1. Do you know what the season before Christmas is known as in the Christian church? (Advent)
2. Does anyone know what Advent means? (Arrival of something very important. It is the time when Christians remember that Jesus came into the world 2000 years ago and that Jesus also promised that one day He would come again in all His glory.)

Today’s lesson is the parable of the 10 bridesmaids, which is a story about Jesus’ second coming. The parable is based around a wedding.

1. What feelings are conjured up in you when you think of a wedding? (Let the children come up with a few descriptions.)
2. Weddings are a time of waiting expectantly, joyful anticipation and preparation. Advent is also a time of expectant waiting, joyful anticipation and preparation.

As you go through the story today, see if you can identify all these aspects of a wedding. These are also the themes of Advent!
Bible Story: Matthew 25:1 -13 (The parable of the 10 bridesmaids)

Fact Questions:
Ask the children to retell the story

Application Questions

1. Today’s lesson was a parable. What is meant by a parable? *(It is a story that Jesus told to teach people about something important)*
2. Who/what do you think is represented by:
   a. The bridegroom? *(Jesus)*
   b. The ten bridesmaids? *(The church members)*
   c. The wedding? *(Jesus second coming)*
   d. The oil in the lamps? *(Our spiritual preparation – are we ready for the second coming of Christ? Note that just as the foolish bridesmaids were not able to borrow oil from the wise bridesmaids, so spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed. Our relationship with God must be our own.)*
3. Does anyone know when Christ will come again? *(No. “No-one knows the time or hour.”)*
4. How can we be ready for Jesus to return? *(Asking Jesus into our heart; being faithful in our Christian ways i.e. read bible, attend church; pray; associate with other Christians)*

5. As we mentioned earlier in this lesson advent i.e. preparing for Christmas can be compared to preparing for a wedding. Where in today’s story was there
   a. A time of expectant waiting?
   b. Joyful anticipation?
   c. Preparation?

6. As you prepare for Christmas this year, which aspect of advent do you think will be most important to you?

Song:

Give me oil in my lamp
Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning
Give me oil in my lamp I pray
Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning
Keep me burning til the break of day

Sing Hosanna, sing hosanna, sing hosanna to the king of kings (x2)
Craft:

- Make a lamp out of clay as shown in the diagram below.
- Make a “lamp” from a glass jar, or a tin can with holes pierced into it. Place a candle in the glass or tin. Add phrases such as “Be prepared” to the “lamp”
- Make a banner – each child can add to the banner what has most struck them about the lesson.

**NB: Do be aware that some of these crafts could be a fire hazard or burn the children.**

Physical activity: jar relay

Just like the bridesmaids’ lamps needed to be filled with oil, we are going to fill these jars with water. Divide the children into teams. Have 10 small jars (jam or olive jars, plastic cups etc) available for each team. See how long it will take each team to run back and forth while taking turns, to fill the 10 jars with water. The teams can use a small plastic cup to do the filling of the jars.

Prayer: Dear Lord. As Christmas approaches and we wait expectantly and with joyful anticipation, let us not forget the true meaning of Christmas – that you sent Jesus as a baby into the world to show us how to live and that you will come again one day in glory. Help us to keep your light in our heart, burning for you forever. Amen

References:
The make and do Bible, Gillian Chapman, Lux Verbi. BM, 2005
[www.ehow.com](http://www.ehow.com)
[http://www.sermons4kids.com](http://www.sermons4kids.com)
His name is John
(John the Baptist)

Thirty fourth Sunday of the year
Between 20 and 26 November

Theme: Prepare the way
Memory verse: “Prepare the way for the Lord” (Matt 3:3)

Information for the teacher:
In last week’s lesson, we learnt that Advent is a time of preparation and reflection. Today we learn about John the Baptist, the person sent by God to prepare the way for Jesus.

In the Old Testament we learn of many prophets who foretold the birth of Christ. John the Baptist is the last of these prophets. His story is told in the New Testament. He was chosen by the Lord to be the one to go before Jesus to announce His coming and prepare the hearts and minds of people. He taught turning away from sin and repentance. People would come to the river Jordan where they would be baptised as an outward sign of their cleansing.

He particularly criticised the teachers of the law, the Pharisees and Sadducees because they were oppressing the people with the temple system. It is interesting to note that John was aware of what they were doing and started the refrain on criticism of the Pharisees before Jesus. Jesus continued to criticise these teachers of the law because they 'placed heavy burdens on the people'.

John tells the teachers of the law and the people to produce fruit in keeping with repentance – this foreshadows Jesus message that a 'tree will be known by its fruit' and also the fruit of the spirit. He would also identify Jesus as the Messiah and speak of His infinite greatness.

It is important to realise that John the Baptist was not the same person as Jesus’ disciple named John – “the one he loved”.

As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, may we, like the people of Israel also reflect on that which is not good in our lives. May we also turn away from sin and ask God to make us clean so that we can walk with Jesus each day of our life.
Lesson Suggestions:

Younger Children:

Lesson Objectives:
- To know who John the Baptist was
- To feel the need to make our hearts clean for Jesus
- To reflect on our lives and what we need to repent of

Attention Grabber:
How do we prepare for the birth of a baby? Maybe show the children some baby things and talk about preparing for a baby - Making a place ready for the baby and getting rid of anything that could be dangerous for a little baby – such as dishwasher etc kept under the sink, breakable things etc. Let the children contribute ideas.

or
Say something without making a sound so that the children need to lip read what you are saying. Perhaps say, “His name is John”. The children will soon understand the link between this attention grabber and the lesson for today.

Bible Story 1: Luke 1:5-23; 57-80 (The birth of John the Baptist)
Use a children's Bible or relate the story in your own words.

Review Questions:
1. Who was John’s mother? (Elizabeth)
2. Who was John’s father? (Zechariah)
3. Who appeared to Zechariah? (The angel Gabriel)
4. What was the angel’s message? (Elizabeth would have a baby, and they were to call the baby John)
5. What happened to Zachariah because he did not believe the angel’s news? (He was not able to speak until the baby was born)
6. When was Zechariah able to speak again? When the baby was born Zechariah was asked what the name should be. He wrote. “His name is John.” Immediately he was able to speak again.

Application Questions:
1. Elizabeth went to visit Mary, who was expecting Baby Jesus, and Baby John leapt in his mother’s tummy at the sound of Mary’s voice. Why do you think John leapt at the sound of Mary’s voice? (Perhaps he leapt because he was excited or full of joy)
3. How do you prepare / get ready for Christmas? (Put up Christmas tree; make Christmas decorations; make food; buy presents; make sure home is looking neat and tidy for people who may visit us)

We tidy the house and decorate for Christmas—we prepare—we get ready. In the same way we should make sure our hearts are ready for Jesus—we need to make sure they are clean.
4. How do you think we can make our hearts clean? *(Think of all the bad things we have done and say that we are sorry)*

When John grew up, he went to live in the desert. He lived on locusts and honey. He wore clothes made of camels’ hair - this must have been very itchy! He wore a leather belt around his waist. His job was to tell everyone about Jesus and to prepare the hearts of the people – get them ready – make their hearts clean.

When people heard that John was in the area they would come from all over to listen to him and get baptized. When someone believes in God, baptism is a way of showing others that you believe in Him and want to live your life the way God wants. The people were baptised in the River Jordan – it was like having a bath to make them selves clean on the inside.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord Jesus. We thank you for people like John the Baptist who tell others about Jesus. Just as the people in the story were sorry for the bad things they had done, we are sorry for the bad things we do, such as ......... Help us to not do these bad things anymore and to become more like you everyday.

**Snack:** honey on toast - to remind the children of what John ate in the desert. (The toast represents the crunchiness of the locusts!) They could perhaps have their eyes closed and guess what the snack is.

**Craft:** Children colour the picture of John the Baptist and then glue on short pieces of wool to his clothes.

**Physical Activity:**
1. Wash some things – if this is appropriate – symbolising cleaning and getting ready, or tidy the Sunday school room or hall or decorate it – anything that will help the children with the idea of getting ready for Jesus.

2. Quiet Ball: Have the kids spread out at least at arms- length with each other across the room, field, gym, etc. Give the rules: Everyone must be quiet. If a child speaks, makes any noises, etc, he or she is out. You’re sure to get the “What if I sneeze/cough/burp, etc.” question. If you do, just say, “one sneeze/cough/burp per person and then you’re out.”

   Demonstrate how to play by throwing the ball to a kid who you know will catch it. Have the kid throw it back to you. Drop the ball. Announce that when a player drops the ball he is out and must sit down. (If a throw is too high, too low, or “un-catchable,” the thrower is out and he/she can get back in when the person that he threw it to is out.)

   Have that kid throw it to another kid. Have that kid throw it back to the first one. Have the first kid drop the ball. Announce that if the person that got you out, gets out, (in this case the first kid) you can get back in. You’re now in the game and the first kid is out. He can get back in if you get out. Start playing. Remember, if any child talks or makes any noise he must sit down, he is out.
The rules of this game may need to be adapted for the very young children. Ask the children why we are playing the “quiet game” today - to remind us of Zechariah who was not able to speak.

**Older children:**

**Lesson objectives:**
- To know who John the Baptist was
- To feel the need to make our hearts clean for Jesus
- To reflect on our lives and what we need to repent of

**Attention Grabber:**
Say something without making a sound so that the children need to lip read what you are saying. Perhaps say, “His name is John”. If they do not get what you are saying, then slowly write it down to see if they can guess what you are writing. The children will soon understand the link between this attention grabber and the lesson for today.

**Bible Story 1: Luke 1:5-23; 57-80 (The birth of John the Baptist)**

**Questions:**
Who was John’s mother? *(Elizabeth)*
Who was John’s father? *(Zechariah)*

Briefly relate the story. *(Both Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were old. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and told him that Elizabeth would have a baby, and they were to call the baby John. Because Zechariah doubted the angel’s news, he was not able to speak until the baby was born. When the baby was born Zechariah was asked what the name should be. He wrote. “His name is John.” Immediately he was able to speak again.)*

John was no ordinary baby. His story continues when he was about 30 years old. Before we read more about John, the following phrases in the bible give us some clues about him.

What do the following descriptions tell us about this man?
- John, the Baptist
- A voice in the Wilderness (or desert) *(Isaiah 40:3)*

**NB!** Next week our lesson will be on Christmas. The theme is Jesus, the gift of Christmas and the children will be invited to share in Jesus’ birthday party. You may like to hand out an invitation to the party at the end of this week’s lesson. It is up to you whether you tell them we are celebrating Jesus’ birthday next week or keep the reason for the party a secret!

Please also note that next week the children will making their own nativity scene and it would be preferable if they each have their own shoe box, which will represent the stable. Ask each child to bring their own shoe box, although you will probably need to bring a few extras for all those who forget and for those who were not at today’s lesson. Shops which sell shoes often have empty shoe boxes which they can give you.
• A horn of salvation (Luke 1:69)
• A prophet of the most high (Luke 1:76)
• A witness to the light (John 1:8)

(Here are some suggestions to what these descriptions tell us about John: This man baptised people; he lived in the desert; he was a prophet; he told others about Jesus)

Now read the following passage:
Bible reading 2: Matt 3:1-12 (John the Baptist in the desert)

Questions:
1. Describe the appearance of John and the Baptist and his lifestyle. (He lived in the desert; his clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist; his food was locusts and honey)
2. John had been spoken of through the prophet Isaiah. How had he been described? (He was to prepare the way for Jesus)
3. John had a specific task – what was it? (To announce the coming of the Messiah and to prepare people’s hearts)
4. How did John prepare the hearts of the people? (He told them to repent, for the kingdom of God is here. He baptised people in the river Jordan as a sign of their repentance – they were now “clean”.)
5. Some people thought he was the Christ – what was his reply to this? (Luke 3:15-16) (John replied, “One more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”)

Application Questions
1. In Luke 3, John addresses the crowd. He tells those with plenty should share, tax collectors are to be honest and not exploit people by collecting more than they should, and the soldiers should not bully and oppress people, and accuse them falsely. Religious people should stop thinking of themselves as special and judging others. Instead people must repent and produce good fruit. If John was to come to talk to you today, what do you think he would tell you to change?
2. John asked the people to repent. What is meant by repentance? (To repent means to turn away from sin and to turn to God. It involves changing your actions. Just saying you are sorry is not repentance. One’s actions show what is in the heart. It is not true repentance until it shows)
3. Have you ever had someone tell you they were sorry when they did not mean it? How did it make you feel? (sad; can’t take them seriously; you know that the same situation may come up again because they have not changed their actions)
4. We are approaching advent – who knows what is meant by advent? (It is the 4 weeks before Christmas when we prepare our hearts to once again accept Jesus into our lives)
5. During this Advent, think of what you may need to repent of i.e. change in your life.

Did you know?
• John the Baptist was a relative of Jesus. His mother Elizabeth was a relation of Mary, Jesus’ mother (Luke 1:36)
• John the Baptist is not the same person as John, who was one of Jesus’ twelve disciples.
Worksheet: Unscramble the words - See the end of the lesson

Craft: Make sand pictures – Use glue and coloured sand. Let the children create a response to the lesson. They can draw a picture or perhaps they can write “His name is John” or “Prepare the Way”

Snack: honey and toast - this is to remind us of the food John ate in the desert. The toast represents the locusts – crunchy!

Activities:
- Zechariah had to talk with his hands or write on a piece of paper. Play charades with the children.
- Play hangman: Here are some phrases you can use for this game: “prepare the way”; “His name is John”; “Repent, for the kingdom of God is here”; “John the Baptist”

Prayer: “Change my heart O Lord,
Make it ever pure
Change my heart O Lord
May I be like you”

As we start to prepare for Christmas, may we also make sure that we are ready for the coming of the Christ of Christmas. Lord, please help us to look into our hearts - Help us to turn from sin and turn more to You and may this been seen in our actions over this Christmas season.

References:
http://www.sermons4kids.com
www.dtlk-bible.com
www.kidssundayschool.com
http://SundaySchoolZone.com
http://www.missionarlington.org

Prepare the way
I hear a sound coming from the mountain
I hear it louder each day
I hear a sound coming from the mountain
And it says, “Prepare ye the way”
Prepare ye the way, prepare ye the way
Prepare ye the way of the Lord
John the Baptist Word Scramble

Unscramble each of the clue words. Take the letters that appear in the circle boxes and unscramble them to find the answer to the last phrase.

SIBATPM
NYOEH
HOJN
DANOJR
STLUCO
RSMENSEEG
MSSAEHI
NERTE
RIRVE
NSIS
RAWTE
WESISLDNER

John told the people this:

[Blank spaces for answers]
JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4
Jesus, the gift of Christmas

Advent 1
Between 27 November and 3 December

Theme: God’s gift of love
Memory verses: Younger Children-“I bring you good news of great joy, Jesus is born in Bethlehem”.
(Luke 2:10-11)
Older Children –“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.”(1 John 4:9)

Information for the teacher:

There is a tendency for Christians, priests, Sunday school teachers and parents, to go on about the absence of Christ at Christmas, and about how secularized Christmas has become. Indeed there is no other time in the year when the landscape is so changed with flashing lights, decorated trees and brightly covered packages, office parties and frantic shopping, and an abundance of good cheer all round.

However, amidst all the celebrations Jesus IS present, because Christmas is all about the Incarnation. The Incarnation means that when Jesus was born, God became human. He was not part human and part God; he was completely human and completely God- Emmanuel- God with us. Jesus being born as one of us means that we have God with us in the person to help us live good lives, make right decisions and guide us through tricky situations. It is not that we won’t go wrong anymore, but it does mean that we can always be in touch with The One who can help us.

Christmas is about God expressing himself; Jesus being born as a human baby is God saying to all of us, “I love you!” And so let us enjoy the festivities of Christmas, but let us not lose focus of the presence of Christ in Christmas, and help our young ones to find Jesus who is the gift of Christmas.
Lesson Suggestions:

Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:
To know that the birth of Jesus is God’s gift of Love to us
To feel excited about receiving Jesus, the gift of love, at Christmas
To celebrate the birth of Jesus, God’s Son, sent to be our Saviour, and, along with Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds, share this love with those around us.

Attention Grabber:
Begin by asking the children if they have ever received an invitation. To what were they invited? Ask them how they might get an invitation - by email, cell phone, word of mouth, letter etc.

We receive invitations for all sorts of occasions, birthdays, weddings - we may be invited to participate in something. (Have a few invitations ready to show the children)

You may have handed out an invitation to Jesus’ birthday party last week, as suggested in last week’s lesson. If this is the case, then draw their attention to that invitation.

Today we are going to hear about some people who had received very special invitations - Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. It was an invitation to be part of God’s special plan which was to show the world how much he loves them by giving them the gift of Jesus.

Ask the children how they think Mary, Joseph and the shepherds received the invitation - allow time for interaction. Then go on to say they received the invitation from an angel to be part of God’s plan.

Bible Story: The Birth of Jesus
As you tell this story, make use of a nativity scene. Information on a nativity scene can be found at the end of this lesson. You may have your own nativity scene or your church may have one that you can borrow. Alternatively, the characters of the nativity scene can be found at the end of this lesson. You may like to recreate the nativity scene before you start the lesson – see the children’s craft idea for today. Or, you may want to bring out the characters one at a time, asking the children who each of the characters are and what they know about them.

Familiarise yourself with the Christmas story by reading the following passages beforehand. The important points to include when telling the story can be found below.

Luke 1:26-38: An angel promises the birth of Jesus to Mary
Mary was from Nazareth and engaged to Joseph. The Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary to give her an important message – God had chosen Mary to have a very special baby – He would be God’s son. He would be a king and his kingdom would have no end. How must Mary have felt at this news?
Matt 1:18 -25: An angel appears to Joseph
Joseph, a carpenter, was engaged to Mary. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that Mary was to have a baby. He must not be afraid as the Holy Spirit made this happen. He was to marry Mary and name the baby, “Jesus”. How must Joseph have felt at this news?

Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem – a census was taking place and everyone had to go back to their home town. While they were in Bethlehem, Baby Jesus was born. There was no room for them at the inn, so baby Jesus was wrapped in cloths and placed in a manger. (Note that there is no mention of a donkey in the bible, but the children may still like to mention it as part of the story.)

There were shepherds in the hills nearby, looking after their sheep. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to them and they were terrified. The angel told them not to be afraid for the angel brought good news of great joy. A baby had been born in the town of Bethlehem who was to be the saviour of the world. Then a whole group of angels appeared, praising God. The shepherds rushed to Bethlehem to find the new born babe. How do you think the shepherds felt about this news?

Matt 2:1-12: The wise men from the East
Some wise men from the East saw a star and knew that Jesus had been born. They followed the star until it stopped over the place where the baby was. They brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. (You may want to mention that the wise men only visited Jesus much later, as discussed in the first lesson this year.)

Discussion:

1. Who were all invited to share in the birth of Jesus? (Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men)
2. Did everyone say “yes” to the invitation? (Yes!)
3. We celebrate Jesus’ birthday every year. Who knows when we do this? (At Christmas)
4. Who knows why we give presents at Christmas? (Because Jesus is God’s gift to us)
5. Why did God give us the gift of Jesus? (Because He loves us!)
6. You have been given an invitation to celebrate Jesus’ birthday. Sometimes, with all the fun of Christmas we forget that it is Jesus’ birthday. Are we going to remember to celebrate Jesus’ birthday this year? (Yes!)
7. When we go to a party we also give a present. Just as God has given us the gift of Jesus because He loves us, God would like us to give the gift of love to others. How can we do this? (By being loving to others, caring, sharing and forgiving)
Craft:
1. The children make their own nativity scene, as shown pg 90. The characters for the nativity scene can be found at the end of this lesson. There are coloured characters pg 90 and 91 which the children can cut out, as well as black and white pg 92-94, which the children would first need to colour in. The coloured characters may need to be pasted onto cardboard, with a flap at the bottom to help them stand up. If you have a shoe box (or some other suitable box) for each child, then this can be used as the stable. Alternatively, an outline for a stable can also be found at the end of this lesson—just paste cardboard onto it to support it. If using a shoe box, blue /coloured paper can be added to the back of the box. Cream coloured raffia can be added to represent the hay.

2. If you are unable to photocopy the characters for the nativity scene, the children can draw their own nativity scene.

Physical activity:
**Send a Message:** Sit the children in a circle. Start a whisper around the circle; *I bring you good news of great joy. The baby Jesus is born in Bethlehem.* Have the last child in the circle say the message out loud as he/she heard it. Then have someone at the beginning repeat the verse. Make sure that they are able to recite the verse and the scripture reference.

Song: Sing a few Christmas carols—the children will enjoy playing with musical instruments such as bells while you do this. Alternatively, play a C.D. with Christmas carols while the children do their craft.

Snack: Prepare biscuits at home. A recipe for biscuits can be found at the end of this lesson. Make use of a heart shape cutter to remind the children that Jesus is God’s gift of love, or else use shapes that have a Christmas theme e.g. a star. It time, the children can ice and decorate the biscuits.

Prayer:
Gather around the nativity scene. Point to each of the characters as you prayer. Let the children join in with the response- ‘Thank you, Lord’

**Teacher:** For Mary and Joseph,
**Response:** Thank you, Lord.
**Teacher:** For the news the Angels brought,
**Response:** Thank you, Lord
**Teacher:** For the excitement of the shepherds,
**Response:** Thank you Lord
**Teacher:** For Jesus’ birthday, we especially
**Response:** Thank You, Lord. AMEN
Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:
To know the story of the birth of Jesus and that Jesus is God’s gift to us
To feel thankful for God’s Gift of love
To open our hearts to receive this gift and to then live a life filled with love

Attention Grabber:
Complete the sixteen piece puzzle on pg 89 of Mary and baby Jesus. (NB! The numbers in the blocks give you the order that the puzzle pieces need to be placed, so tippex these numbers out before making copies for the class)

There is also a heart on pg 88 which can also be made into a puzzle. This memory verse puzzle can be done at the same time as the picture puzzle.

You can organize the class into teams and challenge them to be the first to complete the task. Make sure you have enough copies of the puzzles for the number of groups. Don’t let this task take too long!

• What, according to the verse in the heart, is the reason for God sending his Son to be one of us? (Because he loves us)
• Today we are discussing Christmas. Christmas is the season of gifts. Why do we give gifts? (gifts are a way of telling others we love them)
• The giving of gifts at Christmas started with God. What was the gift that God gave to the world that we celebrate at Christmas? (The gift of Jesus)
• What is so special about this gift? (When Jesus was born, God became human. He was not part human and part God – he was completely human and completely God. In Jesus, God became one of us – he doesn’t love us from a distance. God took away the distance between the divine God and the human. Abstract talk about God can leave us feeling very empty – we need a God made of flesh, human like us, walking our streets, even in our shoes, teaching us the way of God. This is precisely what we celebrate at Christmas)

God sent us the gift of Jesus because He loves us! This gift of love is for everyone, it is unearned, unchanging, and unending. WOW! The birth of God’s Son, Jesus, is therefore a reason for everyone to celebrate. Let’s now remind ourselves of the birth of Jesus.

As with the Bible story for the younger children, perhaps make use a nativity scene, asking the children who each of the characters are and what they know about them. Use the information given in the younger children’s section as a guide, but you may want to elaborate or provide more detail. Familiarise yourself with the actual Bible readings of the Christmas story beforehand. A map is provided for the children to see where Bethlehem is in relation to Nazareth and Jerusalem.

Some information on the origin of the nativity scene can be found at the end of this lesson – you may want to share this with your class.

**Application Questions:**

1. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men were all invited to participate in the birth of Jesus. God also wants us to participate in celebrating the birth of Jesus – what does He want of us? *(Just as God sent Jesus as a gift into the world because He loves us, God wants us to be a gift of love to all those around us.)*

2. How do we show this love? *(We need to be generous hearted, kind, humble, joyful, peaceful, compassionate, patient, helpful etc)*

3. God offers you an invitation to participate in celebrating the birth of Jesus. Is this Christmas going to be about how many presents you receive or how much food and fun you are going to have, or is it also going to be a time where you share the gift of God’s love in the world? How are you in particular going to do this? Give the children a chance to reflect on this.

**Prayer:** Start with an open form of prayer, encouraging the children to focus on today’s lesson. Are they going to accept the invitation to be part of God’s plan in filling the world with love this Christmas? Ask God to show them how they can be a gift of love to others this Christmas. They may want to mention specific people. Perhaps end with the prayer found in the younger children’s section.

**Craft: Heart Shaped Christmas tree decoration**

Have a heart shaped card for each child. On the one side write the words, “Jesus is God’s gift of love”. On the other side of the card write, “My gift of love to Jesus is....” Punch a hole at the top and
thread a ribbon through and hang on your Christmas tree. This decoration can be decorated with glitter etc.

Another idea is to make heart shaped cookies, which can also be hung on the Christmas tree. A recipe for Christmas biscuits can be found at the end of this lesson.

Song: Perhaps listen to Christmas carols while doing the craft or worksheet.

Worksheet: A crossword can be found at the end of this lesson

References
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Huffaker, A. 1985 The Sunday School Clip Art Book. USA Gospel Light
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Scripture Union 1989 Learning Together
www.makingfriends.com/printer/printpage.php
http://catholichotdish.com/faith-and-reasons

Recipe For Christmas Biscuits
110g butter 275g cake flour
110g brown sugar 1 tsp. baking powder
75g golden syrup 2 tsp. ground ginger
1 medium egg 1 tsp. cinnamon
110g sifted icing sugar 1 tbl. Water
Food colouring, silver balls and ribbon

Method
1. Cream butter and sugar and then add syrup and egg, and mix until smooth.
2. Sift flour, baking powder and spices and fold them into the mixture to form stiff dough.
3. Shape the dough into a ball and leave it in a cool place or the fridge for at least an hour.
4. Turn the dough on to a floured surface and roll out to 3mm thick. Use cookie cutters to cut out shapes and using an plastic straw make a hole in some of the cookies to hang them on the Christmas Tree.
5. Place the cookies on a greased baking tray and place in a pre-heated oven (180⁰C) for 10-15 min. or until golden brown. Leave them to cool on a wire tray.
6. To make icing, gradually stir the water into the icing sugar until the icing is smooth and firm. If you want coloured icing, add a few drops of food colouring.
7. Decorate the cookies with the icing and silver balls, and leave to dry. Thread ribbon through the holes of some of the cookies to hang on the tree. The other cookies may be wrapped and given as special Christmas presents.

ENJOY!
Where did the Nativity scene come from?

The first Nativity scene

In 1223, St. Francis of Assisi created the first living Nativity scene in a cave near Greccio, Italy, at midnight Mass in an effort to make Christmas more meaningful for the townspeople.

The only historical account we have of Francis' nativity scene comes from The Life of St. Francis of Assisi by St. Bonaventure, a Franciscan monk who was born five years before Francis' death. According to Bonaventure's biography, St. Francis got permission from Pope Honorious III to set up a manger with hay and two live animals—an ox and an ass—in a cave in the Italian village of Grecio. He then invited the villagers to come gaze upon the scene while he preached about “the babe of Bethlehem.” (Francis was supposedly so overcome by emotion that he couldn't say "Jesus.") Bonaventure also claims that the hay used by Francis miraculously acquired the power to cure local cattle diseases and pestilences.

While this part of Bonaventure's story is dubious, it's clear that nativity scenes had enormous popular appeal. Within a couple of centuries of Francis' inaugural display, nativity scenes had spread throughout Europe. It's unclear from Bonaventure's account whether Francis used people or figures to stand in for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, or if the spectators just used their imagination. The familiar cast of characters we see today—namely the three wise men and the shepherds—aren't biblically accurate. Of the four gospels in the New Testament, only Matthew and Luke describe Jesus' birth, the former focusing on the story of the wise men's trek to see the infant king, the latter recounting the shepherds' visit to the manger where Jesus was born. Nowhere in the Bible do the shepherds and wise men appear together, and nowhere in the Bible are donkeys, oxen, cattle, or other domesticated animals mentioned in conjunction with Jesus' birth. But early nativity scenes took their cues more from religious art than from scripture.
This is how God showed his love among us:
He sent his one and only Son into the world
That we might live through him.

1John 4:9
Puzzle A.

[Diagram of a puzzle with numbers from 1 to 16]
Glue behind donkey head and just along top back edge

KEY:
1. Rough cut first on all dotted lines to separate pieces
2. Cut all animals and people on outside solid lines
3. FOLD along all dashed lines. Check your folds on the dashed lines so the people and animals will stand

When Mary is cut out, glue behind head only
Cut around head carefully

When Joseph is cut out, and you have folded on the lines, glue behind head only
Cut around head carefully

Joseph brings a lamp for Mary
Glue behind sheep head and just along top back edge
FOLD before gluing. Be careful folding on dashed lines. If you fold them crooked, they might fall over.
The Birth of the King

Across
2. Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to pay these.
3. A precious metal: one of the gifts from the 3 kings.
5. A fragrant gum used to make incense; one of the gifts from the wisemen.
9. The 3 kings from the east.
10. A pungent tasting herb: A gift from the wisemen.
11. Bethlehem is here.
12. Mary's husband.
14. These appeared to shepherds and told them about the birth of Christ.
16. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a ______, which is Christ the Lord.
17. This led the wisemen to Jesus.

Down
1. An open box to hold food for livestock: Mary laid Jesus in one.
4. The city of His birth.
6. The Roman emperor who taxed everyone.
7. Angels told these guys about His birth while they were watching their flocks.
8. The king of Judea when Jesus was born.
10. His mother.
11. And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call His name.
13. He was born in a stable because there was no room here.
15. We celebrate His _______ at Christmas.

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How much do you know?

Second week of Advent
Between 4 and 10 December

Information for the teacher:

Today's lesson is the last for the year, and so it is a good opportunity to revise all the lessons that have been covered.

This could be done in the form of a quiz, which can be done in many ways. The children can do a quiz within their classes. For the very young children, this could involve paging through the Bible, asking simple questions about the stories taught, and singing songs learnt throughout the year about each of the stories.

For the older children, each teacher may prepare a quiz based on all the lessons taught this year. The questions should range from simple to difficult. A few memory verses can be included. To make the quiz less daunting, the children may like to answer the quiz in groups. Each group can write their answers on a piece of paper, which the other groups, or the teacher can mark at the end of the quiz. The quiz, including the marking of it, should not take much more than 30 minutes - it is supposed to be fun! There can be a small prize for the winning team.

Another way to conduct the quiz is to bring the whole Sunday School together, and then to divide the children into groups, such that each group has a range of ages. The quiz then needs to have easy questions for the very young to answer, as well as more challenging questions for the older children.

As you work through today's lesson, you will find that all aspects are a form of revision. If you have kept samples of the crafts and worksheets done this year, they can be put on display. You may have taken photos of some of the activities which can also serve as a reminder of all that has been done. Today is also an opportunity to invite the parents to the Sunday School to see what the children have learnt throughout the year.
Lesson Suggestions:

**Snacks:** Select a variety of snacks from the lessons which have been covered this year. Before eating the snacks, there can be a discussion as to which lesson each snack is a reminder of.

**Activities:** Select the most loved games from the lessons taught this year or perhaps play a game which you did not get a chance to play during the lessons earlier this year.

**Songs:** Select songs learnt within the lessons this year.

**Craft:** Put out some materials that the children can use as a response to what they have learnt this year, or what has stood out for them in Sunday School, or what their favourite lesson was, or what Sunday school means to them. Materials could include paper, cardboard, scissors, glue, crayons, glitter, sand, or perhaps they could make use of something in the church gardens. Again, this craft work can be put on display for all to see.

**Prayer:** Use the prayer as an opportunity to remind the children of all that has been learnt this year. Once again, the ACTS form of prayer used at the beginning of the year is always a good guideline to follow. Perhaps the teacher can introduce an idea and the children can add their own prayers. Note that the prayer should not be too long, so it is therefore not possible to include all the lessons taught this year. Here follows an example of a prayer that can be used. This would need to be simplified for the very young children.

Dear Lord. We thank you for the beautiful world you have made us. We thank you for the animals, flowers, ......... (children contribute). Please help us to look after our world so that our own children may also be able to enjoy it one day.

We thank you for the Bible where we can learn all about you. We thank you for the many stories that make us realise that you are the only true God, such as ......... (children contribute), and we thank you for the all the people who wrote down these stories, that we may believe. Help us to read our Bibles every day to learn more about you.

We thank you that you sent people such as John the Baptist into the world to get us ready for Jesus. We also thank you that Jesus chose disciples to help spread the news about Jesus. Help us also to be good disciples for Jesus.

We are sorry for the times where we don't do as you would like. We thank you that if we are truly sorry, our sins can be forgiven. We thank you that throughout history you have always made a plan to bring your people back to you. Thank you that you care so much for all of us.

We thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus, who you sent into the world because you love us. We thank you for the gift of Christmas, which is always a time of joy. Help us to spread your love and peace throughout the world.

Amen