



Moses 1

Moses – a whistle stop tour of Exodus 1-4! – Leaders version

For a one hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

1. What do you already know about Moses?

*You may like to use a flip-chart and do this question as a group shout-out. Write down wrong answers too, and at the end of the shout-out, **circle the right answers** (don't cross out the wrong ones – this is a form of criticism which people may not be able to handle).*

Give an introduction to the story so far:

The nation of Israel was a group of people chosen by God to be his people. God made a covenant (promise) with a man called Abraham in Genesis 17 v 7-8 – read Gen 17 v 7-8 to the group. God promised them that he would be their God and would give them the land of Canaan to be their own land. At that time Abraham and his wife did not have a son, and Abraham was 90, but later, after quite a long time, God gave Abraham and his elderly wife a son. They called him Isaac, and it would be through Isaac and his descendants that the covenant would be fulfilled. The rest of the Old Testament is about the fulfilling of this covenant, and what happened to the nation of Israel.

In Exodus 1 v 5 the nation of Israel was just 70 people living in Egypt in the days of the Pharaohs (around 1400 BC). But Exodus 1 v 7 tells us that the Israelites multiplied greatly (12 v 37 tells us there were 600,000 men plus women and children) and became a potential political threat to Egypt (1 v 10). Egypt made the Israelites their slaves, to control the threat. But they continued to multiply (1 v 12) and we join the story 430 years after the Israelites arrived in Egypt (12 v 40).

What does the passage say and mean?

60 minutes

*2. Read Exodus 1 v 22 – 2 v 10. What order did Pharaoh give? What happened to the baby and what name did the princess give him?

All the Israelite baby boys to be thrown into the Nile. This baby is saved, 2 v 1-9, and named Moses.

*3. In what ways was the baby protected and who do you think was protecting him?

His mother didn't drown him – putting him in a basket in the water was probably similar to leaving a baby on the hospital steps today – she knew someone would find him.

Pharaoh's daughter didn't drown him either.

His sister stayed and watched him and then acted on his behalf.

He was taken back to his own home to be fed by his own mother until he was older, during which time he would have learnt about God and the history of his people.

Ultimately, God was protecting him, through a series of women who cared for him.

Questions 4-6 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. You need to write them on flip-chart sheets for the group to work on in pairs.

*4. **SDL** It was no accident that Moses ended up living in the palace – God wanted him there. What do you think Moses learnt while he lived in Pharaoh's palace?

He got an education, he was safe and he probably got to know Pharaoh's son, who would be the next Pharaoh.

*5. **SDL** Growing up in the palace didn't mean that Moses' life was going to be easy. By Exodus 2, Moses is 40 years old. What happens in Exodus 2 v 12&15 and why?

Moses killed a man because he was beating one of Moses' people. Moses wanted to save his people, but he went about it the wrong way. Pharaoh found out and planned to kill Moses so Moses went on the run.

*6. **SDL** Based on what you've read so far, what do you think is going to happen to Moses now?

As the group answer this, don't tell people if they're wrong, just say that we're going to read on and find out.

7. Read Exodus 2 v 23-25. What happens to the Israelites, while Moses is on the run?

The Pharaoh who wants to kill Moses dies and the Israelites remain in slavery. God hears their groaning and remembers that he made a promise to Abraham to preserve the nation of Israel. Look at Genesis 17 v 7-8 again to remind the group of the content of the covenant. (nb God 'remembering' Israel doesn't mean that he had forgotten them – it's referring to the covenant being reactivated). Vaughan Roberts, in 'God's Big Picture' describes the covenant as 'God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing'.

*8. Forty years pass until we meet Moses again in Exodus 3, at the age of 80. What's he up to, what does he find and who else is there? (v 1-4)

He's a shepherd. He finds a burning bush which is not being destroyed by the fire and goes to have a look. God calls to him from the bush – God was using the bush to show himself to Moses.

9. What does God say to Moses in Exodus 3 v 5-6 and why?

To take off his shoes because it's holy ground – God is holy and Moses needs to behave appropriately in God's presence. Moses doesn't seem to know who is speaking to him so God identifies himself as the God of Moses' father, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – when Moses realises who he's talking to, he is afraid because he knows that God is holy and he is a sinner.

*10. Read Exodus 3 v 7-8 and v10. What has God heard and seen, what is his response and why?

God has seen the misery of the Israelites in Egypt – he is going to save them by sending Moses to Pharaoh to bring the people out of Egypt, v10, because he is concerned about them, v7, i.e. he loves them, has compassion on them.

*11. Why do you think God didn't act sooner? Why has he left the Israelites in slavery to Egypt for 40 years and why has Moses been pottering around the desert for 40 years?

Although the Israelites are suffering in slavery, they are gradually growing into a huge group of people – they need to grow in number before God starts to move them, so that they are big enough to conquer the nations in the land that God is taking them to. God had been preparing Moses to lead the people around the desert – he was training him up, as he led sheep around. Moses was learning the geography of the desert and learning desert survival skills. Also, sheep are a lot like people – they follow each other around, they get lost, they get hurt, they are vulnerable to attack and need leading to water and food, so Moses was learning skills that would help him to look after over a million people in the desert.

*12. Moses asks God two questions in v 11-15. What are the questions, and what are the answers?

Q1. 'Who am I?'

A. 'I will be with you.' (When he killed the Egyptian, Moses fully trusted his own ability to deal with the situation (and look how it turned out...). Now, he doesn't trust himself, but he doesn't trust God either. God says 'You are nobody Moses, but I will be with you! You're doing this in my strength, not yours.')

Q2. 'Who are you?'

A. 'I AM.' v14. 'Watch me Moses, and you'll see who I am!' I am the God of your ancestors, v15.

13. In Chapter 4, God tells Moses that he will be with him. What does Moses say to God in 4 v 13 and why?

He asks God to send someone else! Moses is scared and he knows that he can't do this on his own. He knows it is dangerous work (he's on the run from Egypt for one thing, but note 4 v 19!).

14. How did the people respond to Moses' and Aaron's message in 4 v 29-31?

They believed them and they worshipped God.

*15. Can you think of any similarities or differences between what you have learnt so far about Moses' life and Jesus' life?

It might help to write these answers on a flip-chart – maybe write down one or other answer for each row in preparation, and let the group work out the missing answers.

	Moses	Jesus	
Exodus 1 v 11	The Israelites are in slavery to Egypt	We are all in slavery to sin (if we don't know Jesus)	Romans 3 v 10
Exodus 2 v 1	An Israelite	An Israelite (Jew)	Matthew 1 v 1
Exodus 1 v 22	Pharaoh ordered that all the baby boys be killed	Herod ordered that all the baby boys be killed	Matthew 2 v 13
Exodus 2 v 8	Rescued – lived with his mother then in the palace. God protected him.	Rescued – the angel told Joseph to leave, and the family went to Egypt for asylum. God protected him.	Matthew 2 v 14
Exodus 2 v 12	Sinner	Sinless	2 Corinthians 5 v 21
Exodus 3 v 10	God sends Moses	God (the Father) has sent Jesus (the Son)	Luke 3 v 22
Exodus 4 v 13	Asks God to send someone else	Knows what he must do and does it	Luke 9 v 22

16. Why do you think God chose Moses to do his work?

Encourage a discussion around Moses' character – he had nothing to offer God, he wasn't keen to go, and he had a decidedly dodgy criminal record. God can use anyone – including the people in the room with you right now, and they need to hear that!

How can I live according to these truths in my life?

20 minutes

*1. Read Romans 5 v 3-5. Can you think of a time when something good has come out of something bad, or a way that your character has grown through suffering?

Careful, if someone starts taking the discussion down a negative path, move on to the next question quickly. You don't want the group to leave the study thinking about times they have suffered, rather about ways they have grown / lessons they have learnt through suffering. (The Romans reference refers primarily to suffering through persecution, but the principle of character growth still applies to other sorts of suffering).

*2. How has your character changed or grown as you've spent time getting to know God better? Do you sense that God is preparing you for something during your time in prison?

Again, take care, and be discerning. Remember the prevalence of mental illness / emotional issues in the group and the risk that they are misinterpreting God's word or will.

3. Think about what you learnt about Moses standing before the burning bush. Do you trust yourself or God to deal with the difficult situations in your life? Who do you think is the best person to trust in these situations?

Encourage bringing everything to God in prayer and trusting God to bring you through whatever is happening.

Check out – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.

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8. Forty years have pass until we meet Moses again in Exodus 3, at the age of 80. What's he up to, what does he find and who else is there? (v 1-4)
9. What does God say to Moses in Exodus 3 v 5-6 and why?
10. Read Exodus 3 v 7-8 and v10. What has God heard and seen, what is his response and why?
11. Why do you think God didn't act sooner? Why has he left the Israelites in slavery to Egypt for 40 years and why has Moses been pottering around the desert for 40 years?
12. Moses asks God two questions in v 11-15. What are the questions, and what are the answers?
13. In Chapter 4, God tells Moses that he will be with him. What does Moses say to God in 4 v 13 and why?
14. How did the people respond to Moses' and Aaron's message in 4 v 29-31?
15. Can you think of any similarities or differences between what you have learnt so far about Moses' life and Jesus'?
16. Why do you think God chose Moses to do his work?

How can I live according to these truths in my life?

1. Read Romans 5 v 3-5. Can you think of a time when something good has come out of something bad, or a way that your character has grown through suffering?

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