

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

26 THE BURNING BUSH

Bible Base: Exodus 3: 1 - 4: 17

Key Christian Belief: In a broken world, God can use us to make a difference.

Aim: To help the children understand that God wants us to do what we can to help those who are suffering.

You Will Need:

- the attached PowerPoint presentation

Introduction

Show the first three pictures from the PowerPoint and ask if the children know who these characters are. Give clues as necessary. (Kung Fu Panda; Shrek and Flik from A Bug's Life.) Now ask what they have in common? Help the children to realise that they are all unlikely heroes. (Kung Fu Panda doesn't have what it takes to fight Tai Lung; Flik does his best to battle the grasshoppers but only succeeds in making things worse; at first Shrek only wants to be left alone and doesn't want to be involved.)

Introduce the fourth character and ask if the children know who this is. It is Moses - and today we are going to hear what an unlikely hero he was.

Bible Story

Moses was the son of Hebrew slaves - but he was brought up in a palace, as the son of a princess. He was the baby we heard about last time. The princess called him Moses.

As Moses grew up, he had the best of everything - just as you would expect growing up in a palace. However, he never forgot who he really was and every time he saw the Egyptians mistreating one of his people, the Hebrews, it made his blood boil.

One day he saw an Egyptian about to beat one of his people and he could stand it no longer. Thinking no one was watching, he took his knife, stuck it into the Egyptian and killed him. Then he quickly buried his body in the sand.

Next day he saw two of his own people arguing and went over to help them sort it out. 'Are you going to kill us too - like you killed that Egyptian yesterday?' they said. Moses panicked. Now he knew his secret was out and if Pharaoh got to hear about it he would be in big trouble.

He'd thought he was helping his people but even they were scared of him now. What a mess he had made of things. He was in trouble with Pharaoh and his own people didn't want him. He decided to run away from Egypt and never come back.

Eventually, Moses arrived in the land of Midian, where he settled down and got married. He took a job looking after his father-in-law's sheep and forgot all about Egypt and what was happening to his people there.

One day as he was tending the sheep out in the desert he saw something strange out of the corner of his eye. He turned round to look and sure enough there was a bush that looked as if it was on fire (nothing unusual about that) but it wasn't getting burnt.

He went to take a closer look when he heard a voice that seemed to come from the bush. 'Moses' the voice called. 'Take off your shoes - you are standing on holy ground.' Moses took off his shoes and hid his face. He knew it was God speaking to him.

'I have seen the suffering of my people in Egypt. I have seen how cruel their masters are to them and how hard they have to work.'

'That's great' thought Moses. 'I'm glad somebody has seen what is going on.'

'I have heard their cries for help' the voice went on.

'That's great' thought Moses. 'I'm glad somebody has heard them.'

'And now I have come down to help them.'

'That's great' thought Moses. 'At last they have somebody to help them.'

'Now' said the voice. 'I want you to go and tell King Pharaoh to let my people go. Then I want you to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.'

Moses stared at the bush in disbelief and for a long time he could say nothing. Finally he managed to speak. 'Me? You want me to go and talk to King Pharaoh? No way. I'm not doing that! Pharaoh would never listen to me. And my people won't listen to me either. The last time I tried to help them I only made a mess of things. I'm glad you've come down to help but you can count me out. I'm not getting involved.'

'Moses - I will be with you. Sure it will be hard, and Pharaoh won't listen to you at first. But I will show him who is really in charge and eventually he will listen to you and will let my people go. I will take you out of Egypt and lead you to the land I promised your ancestors I would give you and help you settle there. It is a rich and fertile land, full of good things. Now go to your people and tell them what I have told you to do.'

'But what if they ask who sent me? There are lots of gods in Egypt - how will they know it is you who has sent me?'

'If they want to know who is sending you, just say 'I am.'

'But what if they still don't believe me?'

'What's that you have in your hand, there, Moses?' asked God.

'It's a big stick' said Moses.

'Throw it on the ground' said God. And when Moses did so it turned into a snake.

'Now pick the snake up by its tail' said God. And when Moses did so it turned back into a stick again. 'When you go to your people take your stick with you and do exactly what you have just done. Then they'll believe you.'

'But I wouldn't know what to say' Moses objected. 'I'm not a very good speaker...I get my words mixed up...I'm no good at explaining things...Nobody ever understands me...'

‘Moses’ interrupted God. ‘You’re doing a pretty good job of speaking right now.’

‘Er...yes...well...’

‘Now are you going to do this or not?’

‘I’m too scared.’

‘All right - I’ll send your brother Aaron with you. He is a good speaker and he will speak for you. He is on his way to meet you right now.’

By this time Moses had run out of excuses. So, somewhat reluctantly, he went off to meet his brother Aaron and together they set off to tell their leaders what God had told them to do.

Next time we will hear how Moses and Aaron get on when they go to meet king Pharaoh.

Exploring Christian Belief

Moses is an unlikely hero, isn’t he? Like Kung Fu Panda he doesn’t think he has what it would take to do the job. Like Flick, he has tried to help his people before but only made a mess of it. Like Shrek, he doesn’t want to be involved.

But God has other ideas. Moses is the one that God has chosen to lead His people out of Egypt and God has been preparing him for this since his birth.

Moses did care about his people. He was happy to hear that God had been watching out for them and had seen what they were going through. He was happy to hear that God had been listening and had heard their cries for help. He was happy to hear that God had come down to help them.

But as soon as God told him that He wanted him to be involved in his rescue plan, Moses wasn’t quite so happy and he began to make all sorts of excuses to explain why he couldn’t possibly do what God was asking him to do.

As we saw last time, there are many people in our world today who are suffering. It is good to know that God sees what is happening to them, that He hears their cries for help and that He is ready to help them. But Christians believe that God’s rescue plan involves us. He wants us to be the ones to speak up for them, to share what we have with them and to do all we can to help them.

And as with Moses, if we are ready to do that, God promises to be with us and to help us make a difference. We may not think we are up to the job. We may not even want to get involved but God’s plan is to use us to be the heroes in His rescue plan. He wants to use us to make a difference. And with God’s help we can!

Reflection and Prayer

Invite the children to think of anyone they know who is going through a hard time and to think of one thing they could do to help. Ask God to help them make a real difference to the people they have thought of this week.