

Baby Moses

(Exodus 1 - 2)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Do you sometimes get fearful and worried? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Sometimes people are afraid of lightning and thunder. You might worry that your home would be wrecked or your family hurt. Sometimes it's worrisome when you hear people argue.

Do you think fearful thoughts come from God? No! All of us are afraid sometimes, but letting fear control us is a sin.

What can you do about fear? Today we're going to see how one person in the Bible faced a fearful situation.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we want to learn how to deal with our fears. Give us all good listening ears so that we might hear what You have to tell us this morning. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

The LORD is for me, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me? (Psalms 118:6)

Lesson

Today we begin a new series of lessons from the second book of the Bible, Exodus. It is more than 400 years after Joseph and his brothers lived in the land of Egypt.

[Teacher explain that children of Israel are also known as *Hebrews*, because they spoke the Hebrew language, as *Jews* because they practiced the Jewish religion and as *Israelites* because they were the children of Israel, or simply as *Israel*.]

Exodus 1:6-7

In time, Joseph and all of his brothers died, ending that entire generation. But their descendants, the Israelites, had many children and grandchildren. In fact, they multiplied so greatly that they became extremely powerful and filled the land.

While the Israelites were living in Egypt their population grew and grew. By now they had a new Pharaoh (*Pharaoh* is an Egyptian term for *King*) that didn't regard Joseph like the old one did; he was afraid of the Israelites who were foreigners in his country.

Sometimes people are afraid of people from another culture. If a large group of people from the Amazon moved here and set up a village and carried on with a life style that was appropriate for the jungles of South America, wouldn't you feel somewhat afraid? That's how this new Pharaoh felt.

The Israelite's lives were very different than the Egyptians. The Israelites worshiped one God; the Egyptians worshiped many gods. The Hebrews lived in tents and were shepherds and farmers; the Egyptians lived in cities and built the pyramids.

So as the Israelites increased in numbers, the Egyptians became more and more fearful of them.

Exodus 1:8-10

Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done. He said to his people, "Look, the people of Israel now outnumber us and are stronger than we are. We must make a plan to keep them from growing even more. If we don't, and if war breaks out, they will join our enemies and fight against us. Then they will escape from the country."

Pharaoh was afraid the Israelites were becoming so numerous that they would go to war against him and try to take his kingdom away. So, he made them slaves. He thought if they had to work hard, they wouldn't have the time or strength to fight against him.

Exodus 1:11-12

So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor. They forced them to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses as supply

centers for the king. But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied and spread, and the more alarmed the Egyptians became.

Even though the Egyptians tried to wear down the Israelites by working them practically to death and mistreating them, they couldn't keep the children of Israel from increasing in numbers. God had promised Abraham that He would make a great nation of his descendants and it was surely coming to pass!

Exodus 1:13-14

So the Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. They made their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their demands.

The Egyptians forced the Israelites to work long hours in the mud pits making bricks. They were watched closely by mean slave masters who forced the slaves to keep working as fast as possible. They couldn't even take a few minutes' rest! They made the Israelite's lives miserable.

Then one day Pharaoh came up with a terrible, wicked plan. He ordered the midwives to kill all the boy babies born to the Hebrews.

Exodus 1:16

"When you help the Hebrew women as they give birth, watch as they deliver. If the baby is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live."

Pharaoh was trying to kill off the Hebrew race. Is it right to take a baby's life? No! And thankfully the Hebrew midwives chose to obey God's rules over Pharaoh's.

Exodus 1:17

But because the midwives feared God, they refused to obey the king's orders. They allowed the boys to live, too.

This was a very serious matter for the midwives to go against the king. Pharaoh was the most powerful man in Egypt. Going against his command was a crime punishable by death. Do you think the

midwives were fearful? These women showed great courage and love for God by risking their lives to disobey Pharaoh's command.

Exodus 1:20

So God was good to the midwives, and the Israelites continued to multiply, growing more and more powerful.

God honored the midwives for having the courage to take a stand for what they knew was right.

In this situation disobeying the authority was proper. God does not expect us to obey those in authority when they ask us to disobey Him or his Word. We, too, need to take a bold stand for what we know is right. If we're asked to disobey God's Word, we must obey God rather than man. (Acts 5:29)

But, Pharaoh was determined to have his way...

Exodus 1:22

Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls live."

Then baby Moses was born. Let's see what his mother did...

Exodus 2:1-2

About this time, a man and woman from the tribe of Levi got married. The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three months.

That must have been hard to hide a baby for three months. I know some babies that do a lot of loud crying!

Exodus 2:3

But when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of papyrus reeds and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile River.

Moses' mother put him in a basket and floated him down the river. Can you imagine setting your baby off to drift down a river, not

knowing what would happen to him? It was a very brave thing for her to trust God to care for her baby. God wants you to face your problems with courage like Moses' mother did.

Where does courage come from? Courage comes from knowing that God is with you and that He is in control of everything.

When you have a fearful problem to face you need to:

- Think about God's love for you and how He controls everything
- Ask God to help you be brave and do what He tells you.

God tells us: "*The LORD is for me, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?*" (Psalms 118:6)

Moses' mother had courage and trusted God to care for her baby; Moses' big sister, Miriam, was concerned about the welfare of her baby brother, too.

Exodus 2:4

The baby's sister then stood at a distance, watching to see what would happen to him.

God did have a plan for Moses....

Exodus 2:5-6

Soon Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the river, and her attendants walked along the riverbank. When the princess saw the basket among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it for her. When the princess opened it, she saw the baby. The little boy was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This must be one of the Hebrew children," she said.

So the Princess of Egypt found Moses and love filled her heart for him. She felt sorry for the crying baby.

Exodus 2:7

Then the baby's sister approached the princess. "Should I go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" she asked.

I'll bet that Miriam was fearful when she approached the princess. But she swallowed her fear and took courage.

Let's see how God honored her bravery...

Exodus 2:8-9

"Yes, do!" the princess replied. So the girl went and called the baby's mother. "Take this baby and nurse him for me," the princess told the baby's mother. "I will pay you for your help." So the woman took her baby home and nursed him.

God rewarded Moses' mother's courage by allowing her the joy of safely caring for her own baby! While Moses was a little boy, his mother taught him to love God.

God's plan always works out in amazing ways. How could Moses' mother know when she set him adrift on the river how things would end up? She faced her problem with courage!

The problem looked hopeless to Moses' mother. But God used her courageous act of saving and hiding her baby to begin His plan to rescue his people from Egypt.

Exodus 2:10

Later, when the boy was older, his mother brought him back to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her own son. The princess named him Moses, for she explained, "I lifted him out of the water."

This is how Moses, who was a Hebrew by birth, was brought up in the household of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. But he never forgot that his mother taught him to love and obey God.

Closing Prayer

Lord, You want us to face our fears with courage. Please help us to learn how to think and act in a calm, brave way when we get afraid. Help us to have courage like the midwives had. Help us to swallow our fear, like Miriam did, and to face our problems with courage, like

Moses' mother. We always want to remember that You have given us power to overcome our fears. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Make a Poster:

Copy the example on the next page on card stock for the children to decorate and take home as a reminder. Recommend that the children put it someplace where they can read it each day then when they come to Sunday school next week, they can share how God gave them courage to face a difficult problem in their life.

Game Center

Let the children work on the *Baby Moses* word search or send it home as a "take home" paper.

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What brought the children of Israel to Egypt to live? (A famine.)
2. What book in the Bible is the story of Moses? (Exodus)
3. Why was Pharaoh afraid of the Israelites? (They were increasing in numbers and they were foreigners in his country — culturally different. He was afraid they would organize and threaten his kingdom.)
4. How did Pharaoh try to kill the Israelite's spirit and stop their growth? (He made them slaves and forced them to build cities.)
5. What is a slave and do they have rights? (Someone who is under the control of someone else.)
6. What kind of slave masters did Pharaoh have in Egypt? (Ruthless; they tried to keep the slaves working as fast as possible.)

7. What is a midwife? (A woman who helps a mother give birth.)
8. Why did Pharaoh ask the Hebrew midwives to kill all the new born baby boys? (He hoped to kill off the Hebrew race.)
9. What are some other terms for the children of Israel? (Israelite, Jew, and Hebrew.)
10. If someone in authority told you to do something that is against God's law, what would you do? What if they threatened to kill you if you didn't do as they asked? (Teacher, let the child respond.)
11. What did Moses' mother do when she could no longer hide baby Moses? (She put him in a basket and floated him down the river.)
12. Where does courage come from? (Knowing that God is with you and that He is in control of everything.)
13. When you have a fearful problem to face what should you do? (1, think about God's love for you and how He controls everything. And, 2, ask God to help you be brave and do what He tells you.)
14. What happened to Moses after his mother set him to float down the river? (The princess came down to bathe at the river and found him. She felt sorry for the crying baby. Then Miriam came and suggested that she go find a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby.)

When you have a fearful problem to face,

- ♦ Think about God's love for you and how He controls everything.
- ♦ Ask God to help you be brave and do what He tells you.

Baby Moses

The ancient Egyptian writing is called hieroglyphics. Pictures and symbols were used to represent words.

Use the picture code below to find out why the Egyptian princess gave the name "Moses" to the baby she found. Read down the columns—not across the rows.

A large rectangular box containing a grid of 48 hieroglyphs arranged in 6 rows and 8 columns. The hieroglyphs correspond to the letters M, O, R, S, T, U, W, X. Above the grid are three rows of letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, H, H. To the right of the grid are three rows of letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, H, H.

Three horizontal dashed lines for writing practice.