

General Church Education



Family Lesson: Exodus 3

The Burning Bush

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Family Lesson 2 - B

The Burning Bush
Exodus 3

Family Talk:
THE BURNING BUSH

Moses was born in the land of Egypt. His parents were Hebrew slaves. Because the Egyptians feared the rapid growth of the Hebrews, Moses had been hidden in a basket in the reeds of the Nile River to save his life.

Here he had been found by a princess of Egypt, and for forty years was raised in the Court of Egypt. Moses seemed to know that he himself was really a Hebrew and not an Egyptian, for he killed an Egyptian whom he found beating a Hebrew slave.

Fearing the anger of Pharaoh over this killing, Moses then fled to the great desert area east and southeast of Canaan, called Midian. Here he stayed with a kindly Midianite priest named Jethro, and married one of his seven daughters, Zipporah.

Moses worked for Jethro as a shepherd for forty years. So he was close to eighty years old when the miracle of the burning bush took place and totally changed his life.

Moses had led Jethro's flocks to the wild and lonely area at the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula where stand the mountains of Horeb. Here Moses saw a bush on fire but not burning up. This was so surprising that he went closer to see it, and then heard a voice calling his name from the flames.

Moses was told by the voice not to come near the bush until he had first taken his sandals off of his feet, for the voice said, "**the place where you stand is holy ground**" (*Exodus 3:5*).

After Moses had obeyed, the voice then told him that it was God speaking to him, and He wanted Moses to go to Egypt to lead the Children of Israel out of slavery. He told Moses His name is "**I AM WHO I AM**" (*Exodus 3:14*). And then later He defined His name further as being JEHOVAH (refer *Arcana Coelestia* 6889).

We know that Moses did go to Egypt, and, after many troubles and plagues, led his people forth into the wilderness. He could not possibly imagine that two years after seeing the burning bush and speaking to God he would come back to this very area, to Mt. Sinai, and receive the Lord's Commandments.

This story of Moses' first instruction about the Lord contains some amazing representations from ancient times. Moses did not understand these representations. He knew very little about the Lord, and practically nothing about the Word, the life after death, true marriage love, and such religious subjects.

A representation is something that stands in place of something else. Representations are often used in the Word. Some love, affection, thought, or delight that exists in heaven is *re-presented* or *re-shown* through some mineral, vegetable, or animal form on earth.

In the story of the burning bush we find one of the most ancient and frequent of all representations, namely that fire represents the heat and light of the Lord's love (*Arcana Coelestia* 6826). Wherever fire is used in a good way, whether in the spiritual sun that gives heat and light to the angels, or the natural sun that gives heat and light to us, or the light of the seven branched candlestick, or the fire that never went out on the altar of burnt offering, it always describes the qualities of the Lords love.

In this story it seems strange that the fire, the Lord's love, was in the middle of a bramble bush. And yet, here is a beautiful teaching. For the New Word tells us that the bramble bush means the stories of the Word that we learn and put in our memory (*Arcana Coelestia* 6832). And so what we are being taught in this story about Moses is, that even though we may not know much about the Lord, we can see and feel His love speaking through the stories of the Word. Nor is this limited to just one or two stories, but is true of all the different parts of the Word. Each part has the secret presence of the Lord's love hiding within. The name for this Divine love is "**I AM**," because it is that which creates everything, sustains everything, gives everything life, protects everything, and instructs us as to what is true.

It is no wonder that Moses was told to put off his sandals before he approached the Lord, for the Lord's love is holy and pure, and we cannot really think of Him unless we are willing for a time to put off the pleasures, activities, and thoughts of our busy life. These are called our sensuous externals and are meant by our shoes or sandals (*AC* 6844).

We need to remember this when we are trying to think or pray to the Lord. We need to remember it when we are getting ready for worship in our homes, our schools, and our churches.

The Lord wants us to find His love. He wants us, like Moses, to learn of Him, and to serve Him faithfully, that He may lead each and every one of us out of the bondage of Egypt, to the life of the promised land, which is heaven. *Amen*

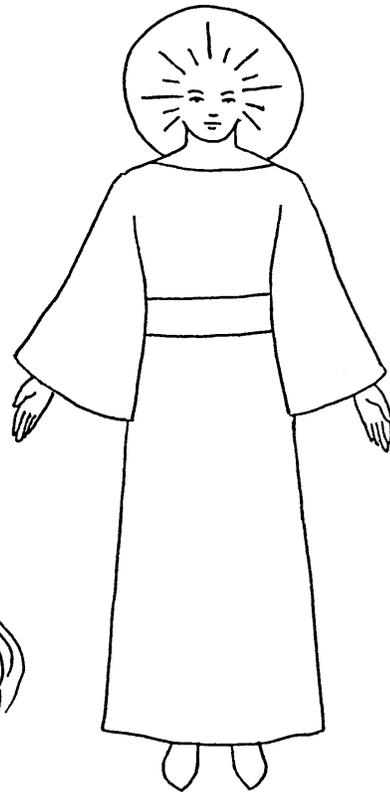
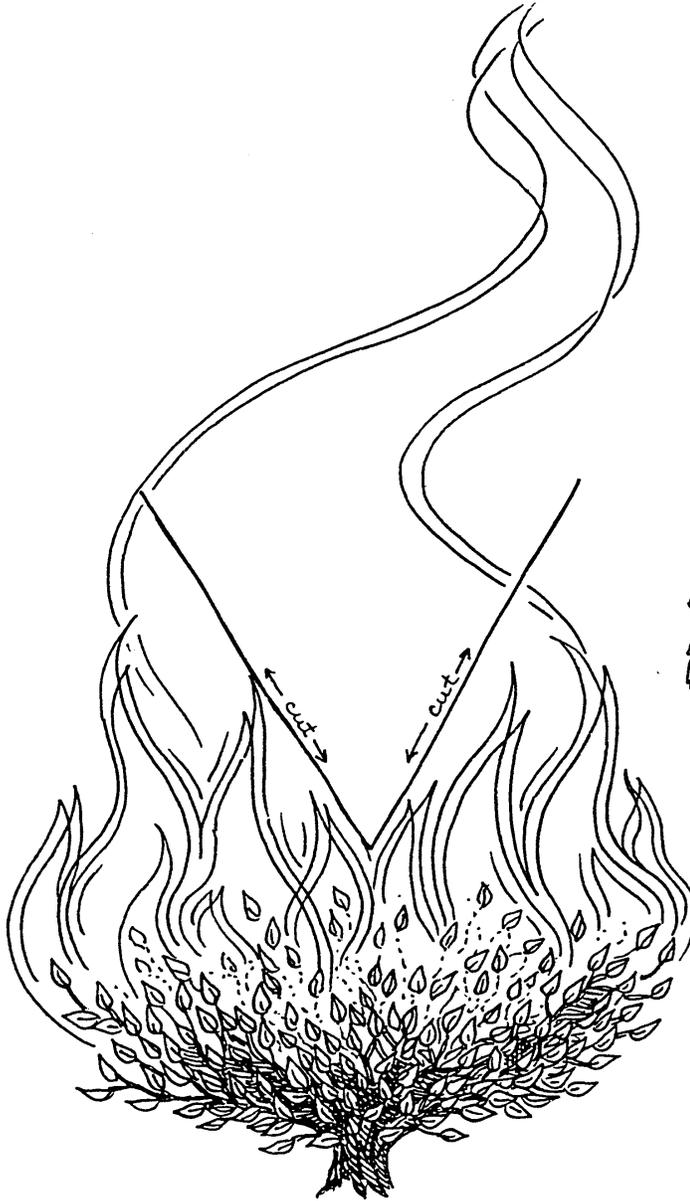


The Burning Bush

Exodus 3

LEVEL 1 - THE ANGEL AND THE BUSH

Color the burning bush. Color the angel. Cut out the angel. Cut out the "V". Put the angel in the bush.



**Did you know that
the angel was
really the Lord?**

The Burning Bush

Exodus 3

LEVEL 2 – A SPECIAL NAME FOR THE LORD

MATERIALS NEEDED

Construction paper
Markers or Crayons
Scissors and Glue

A Special Name for the Lord

Slavery in Israel



After Joseph died the Children of Israel, who were also called the Hebrews, were treated badly by the Egyptians. They could not go back to the land of Canaan. They had to work hard and do whatever the Egyptians told them to do.

The Lord knew the Children of Israel were suffering. He knew they needed help. The Lord loves all people and wants to help them. The Lord knew Moses was a good leader and that He could use Moses to help the Hebrews.

The Baby Moses

Moses was saved as a baby in the ark made of bulrushes. He grew up in Pharaoh's palace since he was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter.



Moses Runs Away from Egypt

When Moses grew up he tried to help a Hebrew. He saw that an Egyptian was beating the Hebrew and Moses killed the Egyptian.

Moses had to run away from Egypt because the Pharaoh was angry at him for killing the Egyptian. He ran away to Midian where he lived with a priest named Jethro and married Jethro's daughter.



The Burning Bush

Moses was taking care of Jethro's flocks of sheep when he saw a bush burning. He was amazed at the sight because the bush was on fire, but it did not burn up.

Moses saw the Angel of God in the bush and then he heard God call him from the bush. Moses listened to the Lord. The Lord told Moses that He would save the Hebrews and lead them to a new land. The Lord chose Moses to be the leader.

A Special Name for the Lord

When Moses asked the Lord what name the Hebrews should call the Lord, the Lord said,

"I AM WHO I AM."

This may seem like a strange name, but this name has a special meaning. It means that the Lord always was; it means the Lord made everything; and it means that the Lord comes to the world to teach and save all people.

PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS

Color a piece of construction paper with the colors of flames of fire — **red, orange, yellow, and a little blue.** Fill in the whole page with color. Cut flame shapes out of the paper you just colored. Glue these flame shapes onto the bush in the picture with the Angel of God in the midst of the bush (page 2). Do not cover up all of the Angel of God with flames. The bush burned but it did not burn up.

Read the name of the Lord that is below your burning bush, and try to remember what that name means.



**And God said to Moses,
'I AM WHO I AM'**
Exodus 3:14

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LEVEL 3 – TEXT FIND

THE BURNING BUSH

You see below a list of people, places, things, and parts of sentences. They are all in the story of the Burning Bush in Exodus, chapter 3.

Open your copy of the Word to this chapter.

Next to each word or phrase write down the number of the verse in which you found it.

1. Moses hid his face _____
2. Pharaoh _____
3. out of Egypt _____
4. sandals _____
5. I AM has sent Me to you _____
6. this is My name forever _____
7. bush burned with fire _____
8. land flowing with milk and honey _____
9. I AM WHO I AM _____
10. feet _____
11. the bush was not consumed _____
12. what is His name? _____
13. Angel of the Lord _____
14. Moses, Moses! _____
15. Children of Israel _____
16. holy ground _____
17. the Lord God of the Hebrews _____
18. why the bush does not burn _____



The Burning Bush

Exodus 3

LEVEL 4 – JOURNEYS

The story of the Burning Bush is the beginning of the most famous journey of all time — the journey of the Children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt to the land of Canaan.

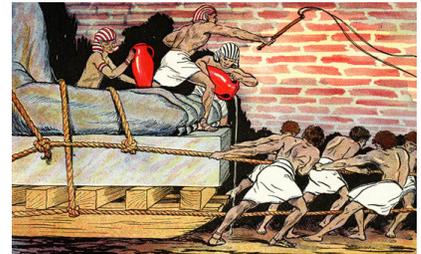
*Use a colored pencil or marker to trace the steps of this journey on the map on page 2:
Then complete page 3.*

1. Canaan to Egypt

In the time of famine the Children of Israel moved down to Egypt where there was plenty of food. Food had been gathered under Joseph in response to Pharaoh's dream.

2. Slavery

The Children of Israel stayed in Egypt even after the famine. At first they lived a privileged life because Joseph was a friend of Pharaoh. Later, the new Pharaoh “knew not Joseph,” and eventually the people were made slaves.



Moses was born in Egypt to an Israelite family but was raised by Pharaoh's daughter. For the first 40 years of his life he was privileged to learn all the knowledge Egypt had gathered. But one day he defended a fellow Israelite, and killed an Egyptian.

3. Egypt to Midian



Moses had to escape Egypt for his life. He traveled to Midian, where he lived with a priest and married his daughter. For the next 40 years of his life he lived in Midian.

Then one day he saw a bush flaming with fire but not being burned up. Here the Lord asked him to take on the huge responsibility of leading the Israelites out of Egypt back to the land of Canaan, which He had promised Abraham would be their homeland.

4. Midian to Egypt

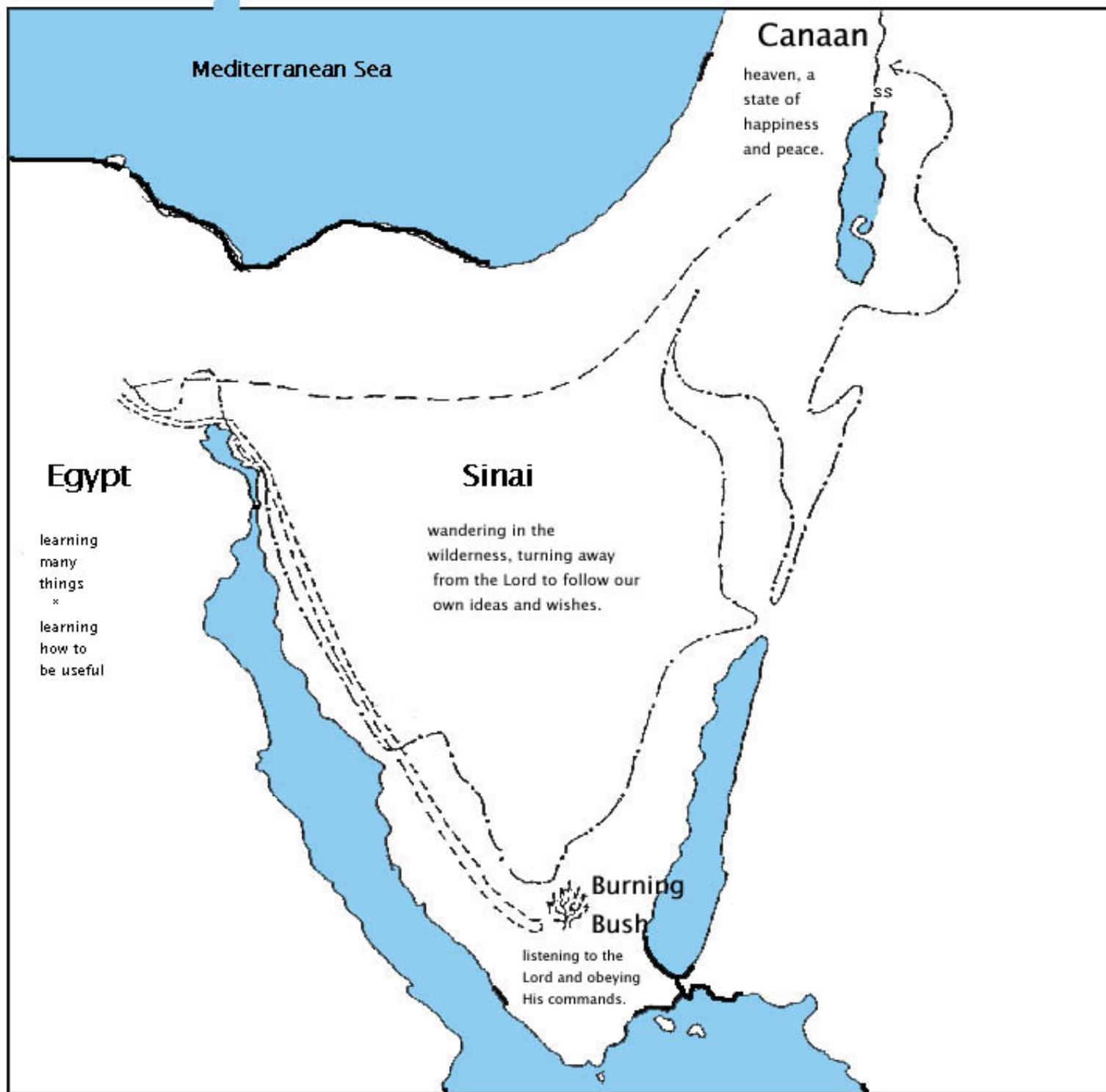
Moses did as the Lord asked him, and went back to Egypt to free his people.

5. Egypt to Sinai Desert

Once they had left Egypt, it took another 40 years of wandering in the Sinai Desert before they reached Canaan.

6. Entering the Land of Canaan

When they finally reached the Jordan River, Moses died, leaving Joshua to lead the people across the river and into the Land of Canaan.



- _____ Joseph and his brothers move to Egypt
- Moses sojourns to Midian, and his return to Egypt
- The Children of Israel leave Egypt and journey to Canaan

Application

The story of the journey of the Children of Israel from Egypt to the Land of Canaan is a picture of the journey of our life to heaven.

Look at the map again, this time reading the correspondences for each stage of the journey. Then complete this page.

1. The Children of Israel are in Egypt:



The Children of Israel were slaves in Egypt. We also begin our journey in “Egypt.” At first we are like slaves, because we begin by being stuck in _____

But being in “Egypt” can also be a useful time. We can begin to learn how to _____

2. Moses learns to listen to the Lord at the burning bush in Midian:

The Children of Israel needed a leader to start them on their journey. We also need a leader. We can go forward on our journey to heaven if we submit ourselves to the guidance and direction of our leader, who is _____.



We can bring the Lord into our life by being _____ and _____ to the Lord’s teachings in His Word.



3. The Children of Israel wandered in the wilderness of Sinai for forty years:

The Children of Israel found it very difficult to always obey and follow the Lord. They kept returning to their own willful ways. We also are often diverted from the path of our journey by _____

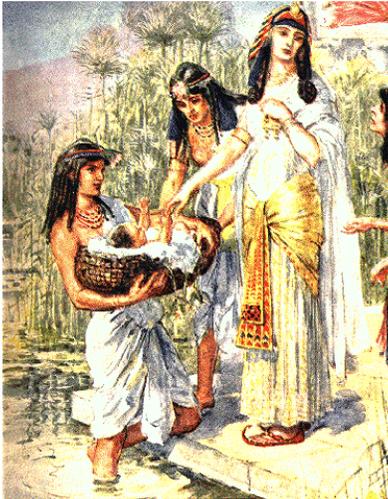
4. The Children of Israel eventually reached the Promised Land of Canaan:

As we learn to follow the Lord in all things, and to love the Lord and the neighbor more than ourselves, we achieve a state of _____

*We have arrived at our destination
– a kingdom of love and usefulness –
the Kingdom of Heaven.*

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LEVEL 5 – MOSES' LIFE

We know from the Word, as well as from the books of Acts, that Moses' life was divided into three periods of 40 years each.

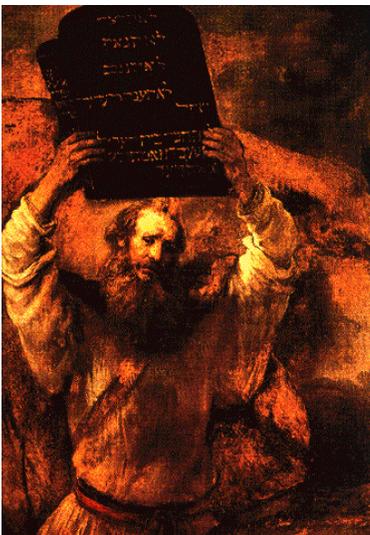
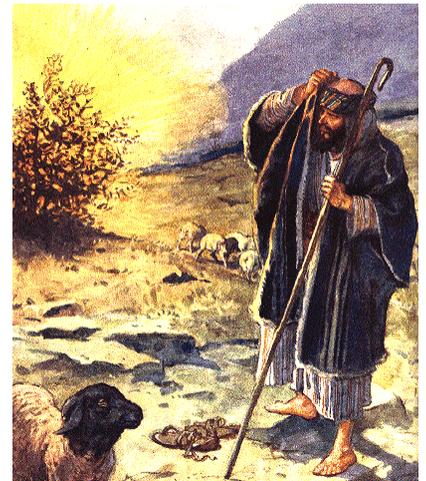


The First 40 Years

During the first 40 years Moses was saved from death, and secretly raised in the very court of Pharaoh. During this time the Hebrew people came into severe conditions of slavery. Moses never experienced this slavery. After killing an Egyptian taskmaster, he fled to Midian.

The Second 40 Years

The second 40-year period of his life was spent in Midian, where Moses lived with the family of Jethro, a Midianite priest, and married the eldest of his seven daughters. Of this period, the most dramatic incident is the Lord revealing Himself to Moses through the burning bush, and instructing him to return to Egypt to lead His people from bondage.



The Third 40 Years

The third 40-year period begins with Moses appearing before the Court of Pharaoh. The story then moves through the plagues, the Exodus, and the wandering in the wilderness of Sinai. About the end of the second year, when Moses was some 82 years of age, he received the Commandments from God on Mt. Sinai, as well as directions for building the Tabernacle.

