

Review the last stories a bit, focusing more on the most recent story, Passover.

- What patterns do you notice about God in these stories?
- How has God continued to keep his promises through the story of Joseph?
- What did God call himself in the story of Moses and what does that tell us about him?
- What does Passover mean?

Tell the Story *(Don't just read it—know it and bring it to life!)*

It wasn't long after the Israelites left Egypt that they began complaining again to Moses. They complained about not having enough to eat and not having water to drink. They kept nagging at him, "Why did you make us leave Egypt? We had plenty to eat and drink there. Did you lead us into the wilderness to die?"

Moses cried out to God, "What am I going to do with these people? They're about to kill me!"

So each time the Israelites ran out of food or water God provided for them through a miracle; he sent birds to their camp for them to eat, he covered the ground with a flaky bread-like food, and he even made water pour out of a rock for them to drink!

Two months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites set up camp at the bottom of Mount Sinai. Moses climbed up the mountain so he could meet with God.

There, God spoke to him saying, "Tell my people this, 'You saw how I carried you on eagles' wings and rescued you from Egypt. Now if you obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured people—a kingdom of priests— set apart to represent me.'"

When Moses came down the mountain he told the people what God said. They all agreed, "We will do everything that God asks us to do."

Then God told Moses, "Gather the Israelites at the bottom of the mountain so I can speak to them. As the people gathered, God warned them, "Do not climb the mountain or even touch the edge or you will be put to death."

Right then, a powerful storm rolled in and a dark cloud covered the mountain. Then God spoke to them from a blazing fire on top of the mountain giving these commands: "I am your God who rescued you from slavery in Egypt. Put me above everything else. Do not worship other things. Do not misuse or disrespect my name. Remember to set aside a day each week to rest and worship me. Honor your parents. Don't murder or steal or lie. Do not sleep with anyone but your husband or wife—be faithful. Don't lust after what others have—be satisfied with what I give you."

As God spoke, the people trembled with fear and moved away from the mountain! Moses told them, "Don't be afraid, God is showing you his awesome power. From now on let your fear of him keep you from sinning!"

As the people stood in the distance, Moses climbed back up into the dark clouds where God was. Up on the mountain God gave Moses more instructions, called laws, to give to Israel. These laws gave specific details about things like... How to treat neighbors and enemies, how to handle conflicts, what is fair punishment, when to work and rest, when to celebrate and worship, and what offerings are acceptable to God.

Another time Moses went up on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights with his helper Joshua. And God gave Moses two stone tablets. On these tablets were the details of the covenant written by God's finger!

While Moses was away on the mountain, the people went to his brother Aaron and said, "We don't know what happened to Moses. Make us a god that we can see who will lead us!"

So Aaron created an idol in the shape of a golden calf and put it on an altar for them to worship. He told them, "Here is the god that saved you from Egypt!" The next day the people had a wild party as they worshipped the gold calf.

When God saw how the Israelites were acting he said to Moses, "I have seen enough of these peoples' stubbornness and rebellion. I am going to destroy all of them with fire and create a new nation from your children."

But Moses begged God not to kill them, and God withdrew his threat allowing them to live.

When Moses returned to camp and saw the people worshipping the calf, he was so angry that he smashed the stone tablets on the ground! Then he took the calf, ground it up into powder, mixed it with water, and made the people drink it! The next day Moses returned to the mountain to ask God to forgive his people.

God responded, "Whoever has sinned against me must be punished." And God sent a plague to punish those who had worshipped the calf. About 3,000 of the Israelites died from this plague. (pause)

Soon after that God also said to Moses, "I am full of mercy and grace. I am slow to get angry and full of love and faithfulness. I show my love by forgiving rebellion and sin, but I will not let sin go unpunished. This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel: I will show my awesome power through you and remove those who oppose you, but you must always listen to me and obey my commands."

Moses met with God for another 40 days and 40 nights. And God wrote on a new set of tablets the details of how to live in the covenant. Moses gave these tablets to the people of Israel so that they could follow them and live in his ways and enjoy his blessings.

Retell the Story

This may seem redundant, but it helps you remember and own the story. You will want to help them retell the story by giving them leading questions like: *So, where did the story begin? What were some of the instructions and laws that God told Moses to share with the people? Why was Moses so upset with the people when he came down off the mountain?*

Dialogue

These questions are a good start to draw out observations about the story.

- **What is a covenant?** *A promise*

- **What was the covenant that God was talking about? Who was it given to first?**

- **Do you think the Israelites could keep their side of the covenant? How?**

- **Would God remove his covenant if they did not obey him?**
 - » *Partially—he may not bless them and protect them, but ultimately he chooses to save them to show how great he is, not always basing this on how sinless they are.*

- **What is the purpose of the Commandments and Laws? Why do you think God is so specific about these things?**

- **Which of these commandments do you think is the hardest to keep?**
 - (You may want to ask some specific questions about each of the commandments)*

- **What do God's Commandments and Laws show us about him?**

- **What happens when we follow in God's ways? Where have you seen this in the stories?**
 - » *God's people must live a certain way to reflect the character of the holy God.*

Application (Optional questions that also work well in smaller groups)

- What questions do you have about the story?
- What will you remember most about this story?
- How does this story make a difference in your life?
- How do you figure out the right way to live? What happens when we are left to figure this out for ourselves?
- What rules do you have a hard time following? Why?
- When are rules good or helpful?

Scripture Memory Verses

For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath. Deuteronomy 4:31

Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess. Deuteronomy 5:33

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Deuteronomy 6:5