



Use Week of:

Unit 5 • Session 2

Jethro Helped Moses

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Exodus 18

STORY POINT: Moses needed help to lead God's people.

KEY PASSAGE:

Matthew 22:37

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

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TEACH THE STORY
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EXPERIENCE THE STORY
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LEADER Bible Study

Moses and the Israelites had experienced a harrowing journey from Egypt into the wilderness. They made their way toward Midian, a land familiar to Moses. As a young man, Moses had fled from Egypt to Midian after he killed an Egyptian. (See Ex. 2:11-15.) Exodus 2 describes Moses' first interaction with Jethro (also referred to as Reuel, Ex. 2:18), the priest of Midian. Moses rescued Jethro's seven daughters from some shepherds at a well and drew water for their sheep. Jethro invited Moses to dinner. Moses stayed with Jethro and married his daughter Zipporah.

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Moses and Zipporah had two sons. Moses' family had been staying with Jethro, and now they were coming to meet with Moses in the wilderness—at the same place where God had spoken to Moses through the burning bush. Moses told Jethro about all the good things God had done for Israel, and Jethro rejoiced.

As the leader of God's people, Moses had the job of judging the people. Anyone who had any reason to complain stood around Moses all day, waiting to present their case. Jethro observed Moses' long and lonely work, and he confronted Moses about it. Judging all the people was too much responsibility for one person.

Jethro gave Moses advice about leading the people. Simply, don't lead alone. He encouraged Moses to choose trustworthy men to act as judges over smaller groups of people. These men would judge the minor cases and bring the major cases to Moses. Then Moses would not have to work so much, and the people would not have to wait so long to solve their problems. Moses followed his father-in-law's advice.

God does not intend for anyone to lead alone. He desires unity among believers and provided the church body so we can work together to accomplish His plan. As you teach this week, emphasize to preschoolers the importance of cooperation and humility in wisely carrying out God's mission of making Jesus known.

The BIBLE Story

Jethro Helped Moses

Exodus 18

Moses and the Israelites were camping in the wilderness near the mountain of God. **Moses' wife's father, Jethro**, lived nearby. He had **heard about the Israelites' escape from Egypt**. Moses' family was staying with Jethro, **and they all came to the wilderness to see Moses.**



Jethro sent a message to Moses. "I'm coming to see you," he said. "Your wife and sons are with me."

Moses welcomed Jethro and invited him into his tent. He **told Jethro about everything God had done for the Israelites**—how God had punished the Egyptians and stopped their evil king, and how God provided for His people and kept them safe. **Jethro praised God!**

The next day, Moses sat down to listen to the people who had problems and tell them what to do. The people stood around all day, waiting for their turn to talk to Moses. Jethro asked

Moses, "Why are you the only one judging the people?"

Moses said, "The people want answers. I listen to their problems and tell them what God's laws are."

“This is not good,” Jethro said. **“This job is too big for one person.”**

Then Jethro gave Moses some advice: **“You can be the person who speaks to God for the Israelites. Teach the people God’s laws. Show them how to live. Tell them what God wants them to do. But choose good men from all the people to be leaders too.** They can judge the people’s less important cases and bring the most important ones to you. **This way, you won’t get worn out from doing everything by yourself, and the people will be happy because they don’t have to stand around all day to get an answer.”**

So Moses took Jethro’s advice. He **chose men from all of Israel and made them leaders over the people. They judged the smaller cases and brought the big cases to Moses.** Then Jethro returned to his own land.

Christ Connection: Moses needed others to help him lead God’s people and teach them God’s laws. God does not want Jesus’ followers to be alone. He gives us friends of faith who can help us love God, obey God, and tell others about Him.

Bible Storytelling Tips

• Enlist actors:

Invite two men to visit your class in Bible times clothing. Ask them to pretend to be Jethro and Moses and tell the story as dialogue.

• Use a tent:

Set up a tent in front of the class. Invite children to sit by the tent as they listen to the Bible story. The tent may be a pop-up tent or a table with a blanket over it. If the tent is large enough, tell the Bible story inside the tent.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jethro Helped Moses

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

Welcome time

- "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "I Need Help" activity page, 1 per child
- markers or crayons

Guide preschoolers to look at the pictures on the left and draw a line connecting each item to where it belongs.

SAY • Do you ever help put things away at home? I'm sure your family is glad for your help. We can help at home, church, and really anywhere! In today's Bible story, Moses needed help. Listen to our Bible story to hear what Moses needed help with.

Play "Follow Moses"

Play follow-the-leader, but call the leader *Moses*. Form a single file line behind *Moses*. *Moses* will walk around the room performing actions for the rest of the group to mimic. After a short amount of time, let *Moses* choose a new leader. Call this child *Moses' helper*. Play again with multiple helpers as time allows.

SAY • God chose Moses to be the leader of the Israelite

**LOW
PREP**

people. People who had problems would come to Moses, and Moses would tell them what to do. Moses' relative Jethro came to visit Moses. Jethro helped Moses figure out a better way to lead God's people. Listen to our Bible story to hear the advice Jethro gave Moses.

Pretend to go camping

Set out camping supplies: sleeping bags, backpacks, a frying pan, flashlights, and empty cardboard tubes to serve as logs. Provide a small indoor tent or put a blanket over a table. Invite preschoolers to play out going camping. Talk about the children's experiences camping with their families.

SAY • The Bible Book of Exodus tells us about the Israelites leaving Egypt and going to the promised land. They camped in the wilderness for many years. Moses had visitors to his tent. His wife's father was named Jethro. When Jethro came to visit Moses, he saw how hard Moses was working and knew that **Moses needed help to lead God's people**. Listen to hear what Jethro told Moses in our Bible story.

• camping supplies (small tent or blanket, sleeping bags, backpacks, frying pan, flashlights, empty cardboard tubes to serve as logs)

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite all the children to sit on the floor. Take one child's hand to help her stand up. Lead her to take another child's hand to help him up. Continue until every child has been helped up to move to Bible study.

• countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Exodus 18 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Our Bible story today is from the Book of Exodus.

Exodus is the second book of the Bible. The Bible is the most important book there is because it is God's Word. God's Word is true.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Tell or watch the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Jethro Helped Moses" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • Jethro helped Moses see that the job of listening to everyone's problems was too hard for one person to do on his own. **Moses needed help to lead God's people** and teach them God's laws. Jethro told Moses to choose good men to help. God does not want Jesus' followers to be alone either. God gives us friends to help us. They help us love God, obey God, and tell others about Him.

Practice the key passage

Cut out the key passage marker and place it at Matthew 22:37. Invite a volunteer to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Review the actions you chose for the key passage. Encourage the girls to say the key passage together. Repeat, encouraging the boys to say it. Then encourage everyone to say it together.

- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "Your Heart, Soul, and Mind" song
- "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" song

SAY • What is your soul? Your soul is all of you. Your soul can love God and love other people. God wants us to love Him with everything we are. I am glad we have teachers and friends who help us learn to love God! Sing the key passage song, "Your Heart, Soul, and Mind," and the theme song "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah."

Learn the big picture question and answer

SAY • Our big picture question is, *What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.* God loves people. God does not want Jesus' followers to be alone. He gives us friends of faith who can help us love God, obey God, and tell others about Him.

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

Arrange for a guest whose life was changed because someone shared the gospel or invited him or her to church. Ask the guest to share his or her story with preschoolers.

- guest

SAY • Last week we heard about Frank. Frank's life was changed because someone in his neighborhood loved him enough to tell him about Jesus. Sharing the gospel is the best way to love our neighbors. Introduce the guest speaker.

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



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LOW PREP

- blocks, 24
- masking tape

Build towers

Divide 24 blocks into two piles. Make two masking tape X's on the floor across the room from the blocks. Choose a child to bring one set of blocks across the room and build a tower with them on one X. Then choose four children to work together to bring the other set of blocks and build a tower on the other X. Ask children to predict which tower will be completed first. After the children finish the two towers, check the predictions.

SAY • You all worked very hard! [*Motion to child who worked alone.*] You ran back and forth to get all your blocks! Why do you think the other team finished first? Four people carried all their blocks in one trip. They helped one another. Moses was trying to judge all the people himself. **Moses needed help to lead God's people.** God does not want Jesus' followers to be alone. He gives us friends of faith who can help us love God, obey God, and tell others about Him.

Play a judge game

- "Be the Judge" printable
- scissors (adult use)
- basket

Print the "Be the Judge" printable and cut apart the cards. Fold the cards and put them in a basket. Choose one child to be the *Judge*. Direct her to stand at the front of the room. Suggest that other children be her *helpers*. Allow a child to

choose a card from the basket. Read aloud the scenario on the card. Encourage the *helpers* to suggest ways to respond. Let the *Judge* choose the best answer. Then choose a new *Judge*. Play again as time allows.

SAY • We have been pretending to be a judge and her helpers. Sometimes it is hard to know how to solve some problems. Moses taught the people God's laws, showed them how to live, and told them what God wanted them to do. **Moses needed help to lead God's people.** We need help too. God gives us friends of faith who can help us know God's Word and how to obey Him.

Make a friendship wreath

Lightly draw a large circle on poster board or a large sheet of paper. Invite children to choose a paint color. Paint a child's hand with the color of his choice. Then press his hand onto the poster board around the circle. Overlap handprints and leave the center of the circle empty. Wipe hands as soon as children finish their handprints. *Write God gives us friends to help us!* in the middle of the wreath. Trim the outer edge of the wreath to hang it in your room or on your door.

- poster board or large sheet of paper
- pencil
- washable paint
- paintbrushes
- wipes
- marker
- scissors (adult use)

SAY • We worked together to make a pretty wreath for our door. Who used the red paint? Who used the green? Who used the blue? The wreath is pretty because we used different colors. If one person had done the whole wreath with red handprints, would it have looked the same? No. The people who made red handprints needed the blue and green handprint people to help. In our Bible story, **Moses needed help to lead God's people.**

- muffin tin
- baking cups, 12
- large button
- marker

Play a button toss game

Write the following helper names on 12 baking cups: *mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, brother, sister, friend, teacher, doctor, babysitter, mail carrier, and garbage collector*. Place one baking cup in each section of a muffin tin. Encourage a child to toss a large button into the muffin tin. Read the label in the cup in which the button lands. Ask the child to name a way that person helps him. Encourage the child to also name a way that he can help the person named.

SAY • Families and friends often help one another! You have named lots of ways that people help you. Can you help each other remember the answer to our big picture question? ***What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.*** One way that God shows how much He loves us is by giving us people to help us!

- paper
- markers

Option: Take a picture of each preschooler's artwork or jot down their plan on who and how to help. Send the information to parents during the week, encouraging them to help their child follow through. Plan time next week for preschoolers who wish to share their experience to do so.



Draw helping pictures

Brainstorm with preschoolers ways they can help people in their community. Begin by helping them think through the people they see regularly. Then help them think of how they can help each person. Suggest a preschooler choose one person and one way he or she can help that person. Lead preschoolers to draw a picture of them completing the task. Encourage preschoolers to share their artwork with their family. Challenge preschoolers to complete the task this week and tell that person about Jesus.

SAY • Helping others is important. The greatest way we can help someone is to tell them the good news about Jesus. Let's pray that God will help us love the people in our drawings and that He will lead us to help them and give us the opportunity to tell them about His Son, Jesus.

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Ask preschoolers to help you serve snack. Choose one preschooler to pass out napkins. Choose another to hand out cups. Choose another to pass out snack items. Choose another to help clean up. **Moses needed help to lead God's people.** Thank you for helping me give snack to our class!

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What did Moses tell Jethro? (*about everything God had done for the Israelites*)
2. How did Moses help the people who had problems? (*He listened to them and told them what to do.*)
3. What did Jethro say about Moses helping the people with problems? (*The job is too big for one person.*)
4. What did Jethro tell Moses to do? (*Choose good men to be leaders and help you.*)
5. What did Moses do? (*He chose men to be leaders to judge the small cases.*)
6. ***What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Your Heart, Soul, and Mind" song
- "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers