



There are a ton of ways to use this resource. You're sure to find the way that's right for you.

Option One

- Read all the devotions live on your Instagram story.
- Use the graphics as desired.
- Distribute the read-along booklet if desired.

Option Two

- Recruit people to record themselves reading the devotions and send them to you. Then, post them to your story each day (volunteers can be adults, students, other minister – you name it!)
- Use the graphics as desired.
- Distribute the read-along booklet if desired.

Option Three

- Distribute the read-along booklet ahead of time.
- Then, simply use the graphics for each day to remind students what that day's devotion is about.

Option Four

- Email or post the devotions to a blog
- Then, simply use the graphics for each day to remind students what that day's devotion is about.

These devotions are also great one-off lessons you can use for email or newsletter devotion.

The goal of for your students to finish this series with a good understanding of the overall timeline of the Old Testament and the themes that carry into the gospel of Jesus.



“So now, go (Moses). I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt...This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Exodus 3:10, 14

One of the biggest mysteries in the Bible is the name of God. If you pay attention to the letters in your Bible, you’ll notice that the name of God is written in different ways. Sometimes you will see it as LORD with all uppercase letters. The Old Testament is written in Hebrew, and whenever you see all uppercase letters, the Hebrew word is actually Yahweh. Or to be more specific, the four letters YHWH.

In Exodus 3, Moses was called by God to rescue the Israelites from Egypt. Before he left on his mission, Moses asked for a name. He wanted to know what to tell the people of Israel about the God who would come to rescue them. What’s funny is that God sort of gave Moses a non-answer. He said, “I am who I am” or some translate it “I will be who I will be.” It seems like a bit of a smart-aleck response, but there’s a good reason for this.

At that time, people used the names of gods like magical spells. They would call on the name of a god in order to do their bidding. Also, a god’s name usually had something to do with what the god did. When Moses asked for God’s name, he was trying to figure out if He was the God of the sun or the desert or the storms. He tried to put the real living God in the right category.

God's answer resisted being put into a box. He’s way bigger than the sun or storms. God will be whatever God wants to be. We cannot control God or define God. We can’t even fathom the depth, the height, or the breadth of God’s power. We can only hope to know some little piece of God through our relationship with the Son of God.

For centuries, Jews have marveled at the power in God’s name so much so that they never say the word Yahweh. Instead, they use euphemisms such as words like “Adona” meaning “Lord” or “hashem” which just means “the

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name.” There is so much power and beauty in the name of God. It is important to take time to meditate on it and be lost in wonder.

EXODUS & WANDERING

Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. Exodus 12:17

Moses was sent by God to pharaoh, king of Egypt, to negotiate the release of the Hebrew slaves. Pharaoh wasn't keen on releasing the slaves, so God sent horrible plagues to help change the pharaoh's mind. The last of these plagues was the death of the firstborn children in Egypt. It was a very dark and scary time for the Egyptians and the Israelites. To distinguish themselves from the Egyptians, the Israelites were instructed to celebrate a particular kind of meal. This meal came to be known as Passover, because the plague passed over the house of anyone who celebrated it.

It may seem strange to celebrate a feast during the middle of a plague. It's like having Thanksgiving dinner in the middle of a hurricane. However, the Jewish people continued to celebrate the festival of Passover every year as a way to remember how God rescued them from Egypt. They take time to tell the story, and retell the story, so even the youngest members of the family may know it by heart. Even during the Holocaust, Jews found ways to celebrate Passover in concentration camps. They marked out calendars on the walls of their barracks so they could know the right day. They stored up precious quantities of flour so they could bake the right bread. They celebrated in secret, knowing if they were caught, they would surely be executed.

About 1300 years after the Israelites' departure from Egypt, a Jewish Rabbi named Jesus sat down to celebrate the Passover with His disciples for the last time. They baked the same bread, ate the same food, and drank the same wine, in the same way as their ancestors. Nevertheless, when they finished their meal, the festival of Passover would be forever changed. It would become the sacrament of communion.

Passover and Communion both prompt us to remember God's salvation and give thanks. Fewer obstacles stand between us and the celebration of our Redeemer than did for the Jewish people during the Exodus or under Nazi Germany. Today, make space to remember, celebrate, and give thanks for God's gift of salvation.

EXODUS & WANDERING

*And God spoke all these words: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. “You shall have no other gods before me. **Exodus 20:1-3***

Take a moment to think of your favorite board game or maybe your favorite sport. There are probably a lot of rules involved, and it takes some time to learn all of them. If you had to pick the number one rule, the most important rule, what would it be? For a sport like soccer, it’s pretty clear what the number one rule is: don’t use your hands. If you’ve ever taken part in the role-playing game Dungeons and Dragons, then you know the number one rule is the Dungeon Master is always right.

Not every game or sport is that simple, and these two examples are really deceptive. Things are always a lot more complicated than that.

After the Israelites were rescued from slavery in Egypt, God led them into the desert beyond the Red Sea. These people had spent generations as slaves in Egypt, and now they were in unfamiliar territory. God decided to set down some ground rules for their relationship. Most important among these ground rules were the Ten Commandments, and the number one commandment was “you shall have no other Gods before me.” The rest of God’s laws flow from this commandment because if you put God first, then you will put the things God cares about first.

At that time, most people believed in lots of different gods and these gods were in charge of different things. Ancient peoples would worship the god that cared about what was most important to them. If you were a farmer, you would worship the gods in charge of the harvest. If you were a sailor, you might worship a god that would give you calm seas.

The way the God of Israel works is the exact opposite. The Israelites didn’t choose God. God chose them and rescued them from slavery. Moreover, the Israelites were called to put God and the things He cared about first. The same is true for us today. God wants to be our priority and He wants us to order our lives according to what Jesus thinks is important. It turns out the thing that God cares about most is for us to love one another. How can we better order our priorities to be in line with God’s priorities?

EXODUS & WANDERING

This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” **Numbers 6:23-26**

The story of the Exodus does not stop with the book of Exodus. God spent a lot of time with the Israelites wandering in the desert helping to build up their faith. There were a lot of instructions about how worship should be run and different laws that the Israelites should follow. In the Book of Numbers, we find a beautiful passage sometimes referred to as the “priestly blessing.” God instructed the priests, the people who are supposed to lead worship, to offer a very specific benediction as part of worship.

This blessing was supposed to cultivate a sense of peace, or in Hebrew *Shalom*, for the people, and it is still used frequently in worship today, both in Christian and Jewish settings. What’s interesting about this blessing is that historically it was accompanied by a specific hand gesture called the [*Shefa Tal*](#). It is made with two hands pointing up and connected at the thumbs with a large space in between the middle and ring finger on each hand.

You might have even seen this hand gesture before. Actor Leonard Nimoy was raised as an Orthodox Jew, and saw this gesture performed in worship accompanied by the priestly blessing. When he was awarded the role of Spock on Star Trek, he decided to work this gesture into the famous “live long and prosper” greeting known as the Vulcan salute, using a modified version with only one hand.

What we do with our hands in worship is actually pretty important. Our body language is an extension of our heart. Some people raise their hands in worship as a symbol of joy, some people pray with hands clench to represent humility. Traditionally, people in the church have held their hands open and flat out in front of them, ready to receive God’s goodness, whenever a blessing or benediction is being offered. As you spend time in prayer today, consider stretching out your open hands, eager to receive the which God wants to give you.