

Values Curriculum:

Holiness/Kedusha

OVERVIEW	This session explores the Jewish value of <i>Kedusha</i> , holiness. Students will encounter holiness through the practice of slowing down and paying careful attention to objects in the natural world.
OBJECTIVE	To develop noticing skills and a practice of slowing down and attending to the holiness of creation.
VALUE(S)	<i>Kedusha</i> (Holiness)
STORY	"Moses and the Burning Bush" retold by Ariela Ronay-Jinich (based on Exodus 3:1-15) Included at the end of this lesson.
MATERIALS	Spot the Difference sheets, blindfolds and objects from nature, candles, and drawing materials
AT HOME CHALLENGE	Students and their families are challenged to do some noticing activities together at home and integrate a noticing practice into their everyday lives.

Materials List

Activity One

- Blindfolds (1 for every 2 participants)
- Space to be outside or natural objects collected inside

Activity Two

- Tea lights or other candle (one per table or one for every 4-5 children)
- Matches
- White and black construction paper
- Chalk, pastels, crayons
- Ripped pieces of orange/yellow/red/blue/white tissue paper
- Glue sticks

Gathering Activity

- Spot the Difference sheets (attached at the end of this lesson)
- Pencils
- Everyday objects (items easily found in the room you are learning in)
- Timer

Opening/Closing Circle

- Story: "Moses and the Burning Bush" retold by Ariela Ronay-Jinich (based on Exodus 3:1-15) included at the end of this lesson
- Tea light or other candle and matches
- Big pad of paper and markers
- At Home Challenge sheet

Gathering Activity: Spot the Difference (15 Minutes)

Children will do Spot the Difference challenges on paper and, time permitting, Spot the Difference challenges with real objects.

1. Gather children around a table with Spot the Difference sheets.
2. Have the children find the differences in the images. They may work individually or in pairs.
3. After everyone has warmed up, bring them to a table where you have assembled a collection of everyday objects (erasers, pencils, tissue box, paperclips, sunglasses, whatever is on hand) set up like a still life.
4. Have the children take one minute (time it) to look carefully at the objects.
5. Have all of the children close their eyes tight and then make one change (remove something, add something, shift the placement of something).
6. When you are ready, invite the children to open their eyes and see if they can identify what is different.
7. When they think they know, they should raise their hands and wait and not shout out their idea, until everyone has had enough time to really look.
8. Find out their guesses.
9. Play again.
10. After a couple of rounds, if there is still time and a child wants to be the one to make a change, they may take over that role.

Opening Circle (10 Minutes)

Gather everyone into a circle, bringing their Shabbat mats with them, and begin with a melody, a *niggun* or a greeting song such as *Hineh Ma Tov*.

Tell about today's theme:

- Have the children talk about their experience with noticing differences in the gathering activity. Was it easy for them or hard? What made it easy? What made it hard?
- Do you have times when paying attention is easy and times when it is hard? What makes paying attention easier and what makes it harder?
- Today we are going to practice paying attention—really careful attention. We are going to be looking for holiness.
- What do we already know about holiness?

Introduce today's Hebrew words — *Kadosh*:

- Everyone bring your hands close to your heart as if you're holding something very special and say "ka-dosh, ka-dosh, ka-dosh!"
- *Kadosh* means holy. We use the word *kadosh* to describe things, places, and moments that are special or set-apart.
- When we say *kadosh* what's the last sound we make? What do you think of when you hear the sound "shhhh?"

Story (20 Minutes)

Introduce the Story — "Moses and the Burning Bush"

- Today's story is from the Torah and it's about a person named Moses. Who remembers Moses from other stories they have heard?
- In this story about Moses, he gets very quiet inside and notices something very special, something *kadosh*. Let's find out what Moses notices.

Read the Story. Ask some good Questions.

- **Check for Understanding**
 - ◇ What was Moses doing before he noticed the burning bush?
 - ◇ What senses did Moses use in the story?
 - ◇ Why did Moses have to take off his shoes?

- **Get Curious**

- ◇ What are kids wondering about the story?
- ◇ Encourage kids to wonder about WHY something happened in the story, WHAT might happen next, or HOW someone did something.
- ◇ Record these questions on the big pad of paper.
- ◇ These questions don't have to have answers—though kids are welcome to try and answer each other's questions.
- ◇ Have kids respond to each other's questions with "good question!" and a thumbs up.

- **Give one more Question to Ponder**

- ◇ I'm wondering: How long did Moses watch the bush before he started to hear God talking to him?

10 Minute Break

Activity One: Meeting Nature (25 Minutes)

Children will interact with natural objects and practice paying attention to the details.

Introduce the Activity:

We are going to play a game that will teach us to be good at noticing what is unusual and special in nature, like Moses did when he noticed a bush that was on fire but wasn't burning down.

In this game, you're also going to have the opportunity, like Moses did, to meet something from nature. However, you're not going to be able to see it. You're going to have to use your other senses—smelling, touching, and even listening—to get to know it.

If you have outdoor space with growing things in it available to you, follow these steps:

1. Take everyone to your outdoor space.
2. Once there, have everyone in the group find a partner.
3. Explain to the children that each child who wants to participate will have a turn to be blindfolded and their partner will lead them to a natural object to explore it with their hands, noses, and ears. Ensure that children agree to be blindfolded before placing a blindfold on them.
4. Ask for a volunteer to help demonstrate how to guide someone wearing a blindfold. Have the kids help you notice how you model the following rules:

- ◇ Ask permission before you touch your partner. Offer your arm so they can hold onto you just above your elbow.
 - ◇ Lead them slowly.
 - ◇ Tell them if there's a step or a turn.
5. Have everyone pledge to keep their partners safe.
 6. Place blindfolds on half of the children, and have their partners each choose a tree or bush or rock or other item in nature that is close by to their pair. They should not be walking their partners across the yard - just a few feet.
 7. Have each child lead their blindfolded partner to a natural object. Blindfolded children should explore their object with their senses:
 - ◇ What does it feel like? Wide or thin? Smooth or rough? Straight or curvy? Does it have different parts?
 - ◇ What does it smell like?
 - ◇ What does it sound like?
 8. When the blindfolded person is done meeting their object, they are led safely back to the starting point. The blindfold is taken off, and they can guess which object they met.
 9. Have the children switch roles and do the same activity.

If you have outdoor space with growing things in it available to you, follow these steps:

1. In advance, gather a box of natural objects including rocks, bark, sticks, moss, shells, or leaves.
2. Have everyone in the group find a partner.
3. Explain to the children that each child will have a turn to be blindfolded and their partner will pick a natural object from the box for them to explore it with their hands, noses, and ears.
4. Place blindfolds on half of the children, and have their partners choose a natural object from the box and bring it to their partner.
5. Once they have the object, blindfolded children should explore with their other senses:
 - ◇ What does it feel like? Wide or thin? Smooth or rough? Straight or curvy? Does it have different parts?
 - ◇ What does it smell like?
 - ◇ What does it sound like?
6. When the blindfolded person is done meeting their object, their partner takes the object away and places it on a table with the other objects.
7. The blindfold is taken off, and they can guess which object they met.
8. Have the children switch roles and do the same activity.

When everyone has had a turn, gather the children and talk about the experience.

- Were you able to recognize your object?
- Was there anything special about it that helped you remember it?
- What makes your object holy (special or unique)?

If you have time (more likely on the inside than the outside version), let everyone take a moment with their object to just be together quietly. They can observe with any of their senses and just be quiet together.

Activity Two: Live Flame Drawing (15 Minutes)

Children will observe a candle flame and draw or collage it as they pay careful attention.

Introduce the Activity:

In our story, Moses noticed the bush was on fire. When he looked more closely, he saw that the fire wasn't consuming the bush, making it burn down. Like Moses, we are going to look closely at fire and see what we notice.

1. Gather the children around one or more tables with one or two tea lights or candles burning in the middle of each.
2. Invite the children to take one minute (you might want to time it) first to look carefully at the flame, before they get started.
3. Now, have each child choose a white or black piece of construction paper.
4. Show them their material choices. They can either use chalk, pastels, or crayon (whichever you have) to draw the flame as they look at it. Or they can use the tissue paper and glue sticks to make a collage.
5. If it feels safe, allow the candles to continue to burn while the children create their artwork.

Closing Circle (10 Minutes)

Gather everyone into a circle with their flame drawings/collages.

Have each child share their flame image including one interesting thing that they noticed about the flame. If these flames could speak, what do you think they might say?

Review the Hebrew Words of the Day:

- Everyone bring your hands close to your heart as if you're holding something very special and say "ka-dosh, ka-dosh, ka-dosh"!

- Have the children say what *Kadosh* means (holy).

Pass out the At Home Challenge Sheet and have each child take their puzzle piece with them when they go.

Sing a goodbye song like *Shalom Chaverim* or *Oseh Shalom*.

At Home Challenge: Holiness/*Kedusha*

Today, we learned about *Kedusha*, holiness. We learned from our ancestor Moses that sometimes holiness is right there waiting for us to notice it. All we have to do is pay careful attention in order to see or experience it.

Getting to Know a Place Activity

Choose a place outside in nature to sit together with your family for about 20 minutes and accomplish one or both of the following challenges:

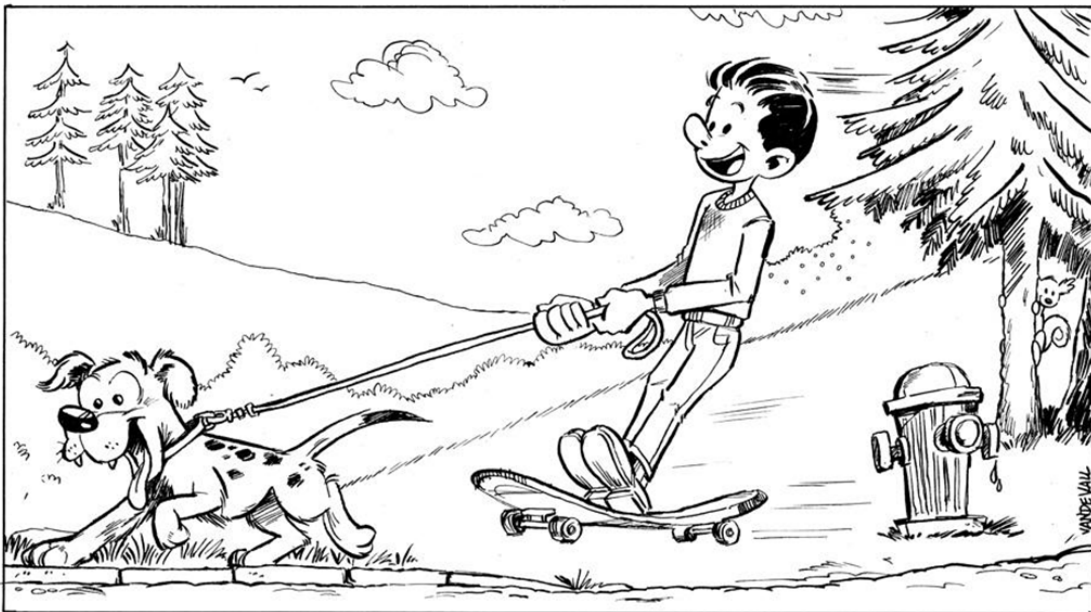
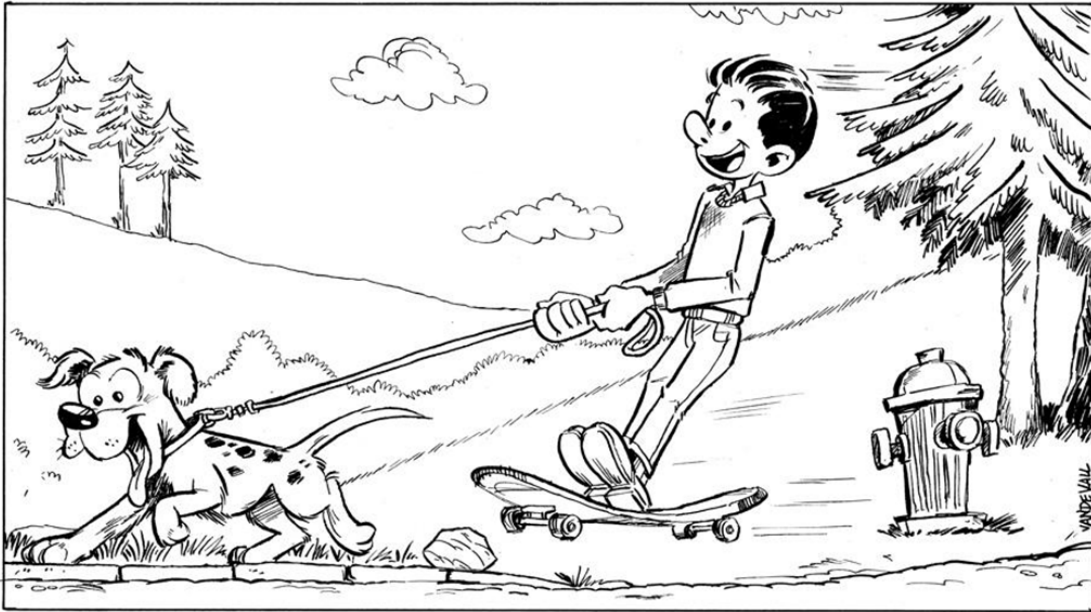
1. Hold silence for about three minutes and try to listen to as many sounds as possible around you. Count on your fingers and only count sounds you haven't heard already within the three minutes. When the three minutes are over, compare the amount of sounds you heard, and talk about what sounds you heard. Where did they come from? Can you imitate them? Did they teach you anything about this place?
2. Each person chooses a direction to look. Look carefully for 2 or 3 minutes without talking. Then in turns, while the rest of your family closes their eyes, describe what you are looking at in detail. Talk about objects, shapes, colors. Can they "see" it without looking at it?

Noticing Holiness in the Everyday Activity

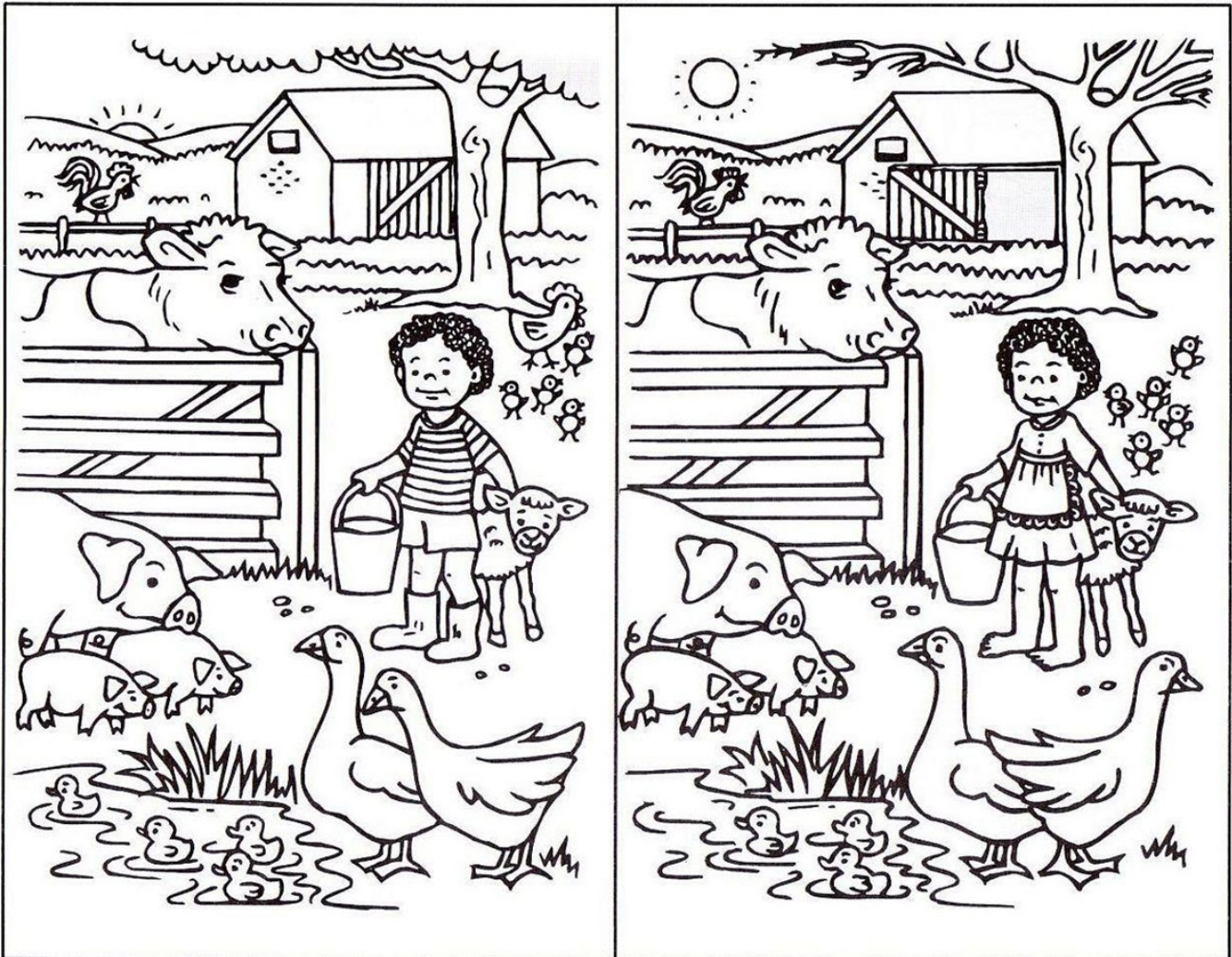
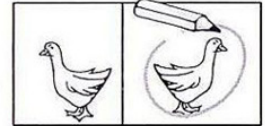
Sometimes we forget to notice the holiness, special people, objects, places, or moments that we experience in our everyday lives. Try a practice of naming 1-3 holy things each of you encountered in your day and share them as a family at the dinner table, over dessert, or at bedtime. Too hard to do every day? Take a moment on Shabbat, at Friday dinner or Saturday breakfast, and have each person name 3 holy things from the week.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!

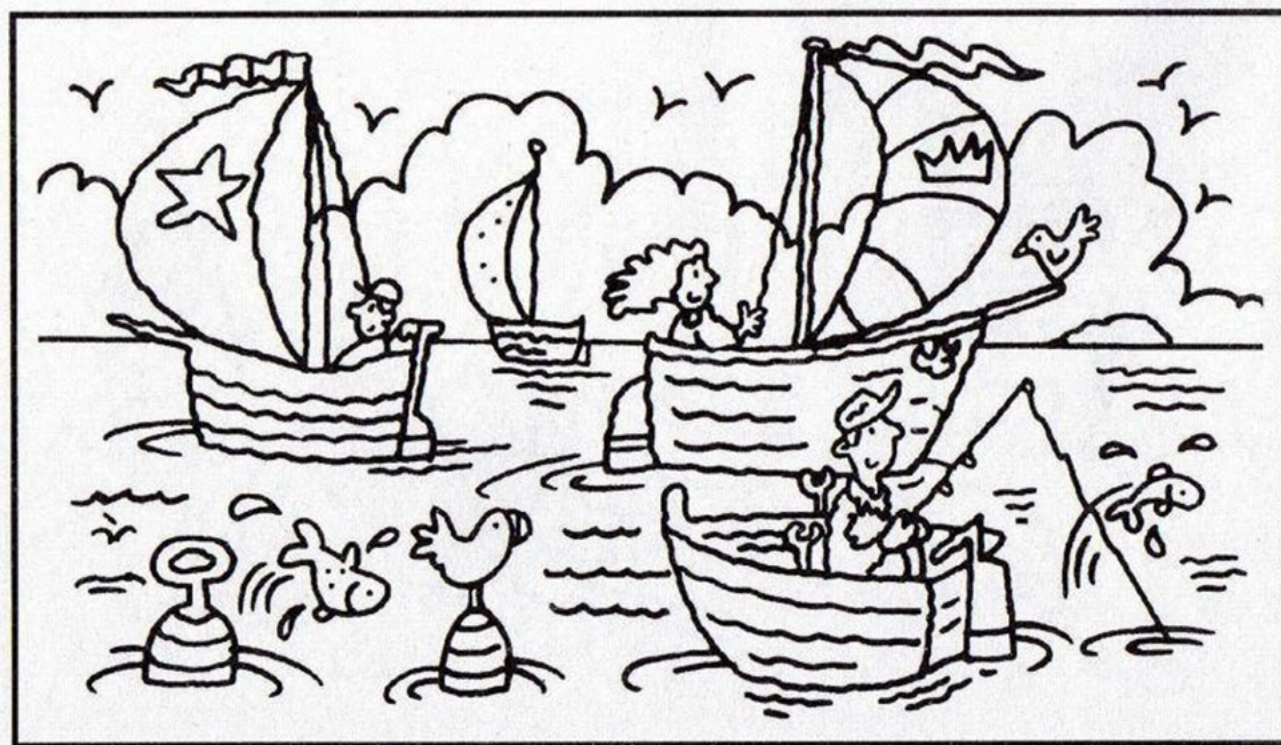
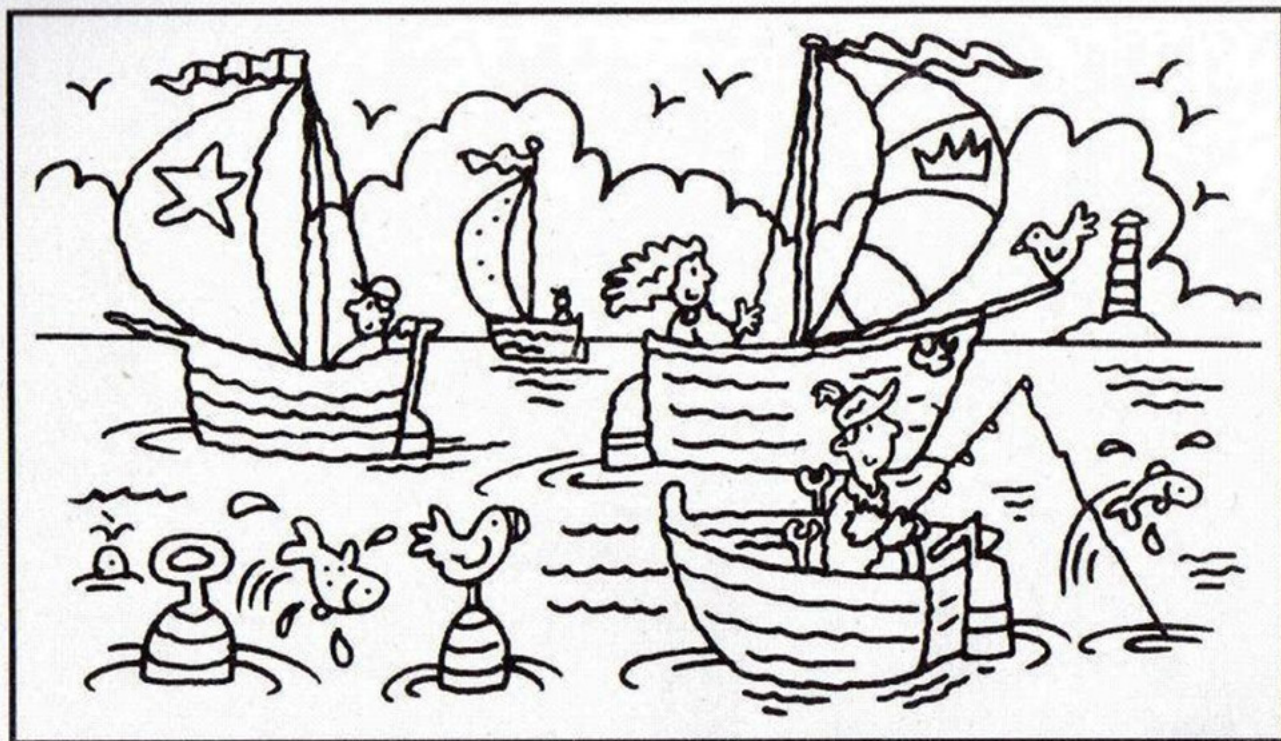
Find 10 differences between the 2 pictures!



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



Can you spot the 10 differences between these two pictures?



“Moses and the Burning Bush” (retold by Ariela Ronay-Jinich)

A long time ago, Jews were slaves in Egypt. They worked hard and long hours and their lives were bitter. Near Egypt, in the land of Midian, lived a young man named Moses, and he was a shepherd. He liked being a shepherd, spending all day outside, taking care of sheep. It was his job to help the sheep to find fresh pasture to graze on, and the places where there was water to quench their thirst. Moses had to pay close attention to what was happening around him.

He also had to make sure no sheep would wander off, and had to watch the shape of clouds and the movement of the wind so he knew what kind of weather to expect and how to stay dry and safe with his flock. Sometimes the wilderness was so quiet that Moses could hear his own breathing, or his heartbeat, or the thoughts in his mind.

One day while caring for his sheep around the wilderness of Horeb, he noticed something out of the corner of his eye. It seemed normal, but when we looked at it again, he noticed just how strange it was.

(Light the tealight or candle in the middle of the circle.)

It was a bush—that was normal—and the bush was on fire—that also normally happened in the heat—but the bush wasn't being burned down. The bush was on fire but it wasn't being burned by the fire.

“Wow—weird!” thought Moses. Moses had a lot of other things to do, like make sure the sheep were staying with the flock, and find other places to pasture, but he thought “I just have to turn around and look at this wonderful sight! Why is the bush not being burnt? It's on fire!”

Just as he was getting closer to take a better look, Moses heard his name being called “Moses!” He looked around but saw no one. “Moses,” he heard again. “Here I am!” he said, wondering who this was and how they might know his name. As he got closer, he again heard a voice calling to him. “Moses, take your shoes off because the ground you are walking on is holy. This place is SPECIAL!”

Moses took off his sandals.

Then he heard the voice say, “I am the God of the Jewish people. They are slaves in Egypt. I heard their cries. They work so hard. I helped Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, your ancestors. Now I'm going to help the Jews who are in Egypt. I want you to go back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let the children of Israel leave.”

Moses heard what this voice said and felt nervous. “Go back to Egypt?” he thought. You see, Moses wasn't always a shepherd. He had grown up in the palace but had to run away one day. However, his time there was enough for him to notice the hardship the Jews endured.

He didn't want to go back. Would he have to live in Pharaoh's palace or become a slave? And how special was he to stand up to a person as powerful as Pharaoh? How could he help the Jewish people in such a big way?

“I will help you, Moses, don't get all worried like that.” said the voice. “Throw down your walking stick.” Moses threw down the stick he used to walk across the dry land guiding and caring for sheep. As soon as it hit the ground, the stick became a snake. Moses jumped back. He was afraid. “Hold the snake's tail,” said the voice. As soon as Moses did that, the snake became a stick again.

That's a fancy trick, thought Moses, and that might impress Pharaoh, but that didn't make him feel entirely confident that he could lead a Jewish freedom movement in the face of a powerful ruler like Pharaoh.

Moses put his shoes back on. It would be hard to leave Midian, the vast stretches of land, and his moments of quiet while caring for the sheep. With a big job ahead of him, he looked around across the landscape, and at all the bushes on all the mountains. If I hadn't noticed this one, thought Moses, maybe I would have never heard the voice of God, or received these gifts of magic, or my new job in life to help the Jewish people.

"Wow, I'm glad I stopped to look at THAT bush," thought Moses. "I almost walked right by it!"

Moses picked up his walking stick and gathered his sheep before the sunset, his eyes and ears now open wider to the incredible world around him.