

Exodus

— Sessions 16-24

YEAR 1

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Please check out the complete Journey through the Bible series outline.

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Extra Articles—Year 1, 2 & 3

- 978-08272-90846, \$4.00

Introduction to the Course

Journey Through the Bible is a church school curriculum series that introduces participants to the stories in the Bible in chronological order. Over a three-year period, the major people, events, and places from Genesis to Revelation are studied. At the adult level, a single resource is available for both the leader and the learners. All age levels study the same basic scripture or subject at the same time.

Course Assumptions

Every curriculum series for the church school has behind it a set of theological and educational assumptions. These assumptions shape both the content and the activities of the sessions. *Journey Through the Bible* is no exception.

About the Bible

- The Bible is not just a book, it is *the* book that records the mighty acts of God in history, witnesses to the unique revelation in Christ Jesus, and calls people to a response to and involvement in the ongoing ministry of Christ in the world.
- The Bible is the Word of God, but it is not the words of God. Within its words is housed the Word, which is changeless and eternal.
- The Bible is a book of history, but it does not claim to be objective history. Rather, it is faith history, with its primary focus on the covenantal relationship of God with people. It therefore views and interprets historical events from within the context of that faith relationship.
- The Bible is more concerned with the *why* questions of life than the *how* questions. Thus, it is not a science book. It is written from within the worldview of its writers, a worldview quite different from that of the present day. Nonetheless, it claims that God is God of all creation, that Christ's crucifixion and resurrection have cosmic implications, and that people are an

integral part of creation as well as called to be stewards of it.

Regarding Content and Process

- Adults need to be familiar with the flow of the biblical story. Regardless of whether they are new to the church or long-time members, many adults express a lack of knowledge of the chronological order of biblical events.
- Adults need to learn basic Bible skills, how to find particular books and passages, etc., and they need background information to assist them with interpretation. Therefore, the basic text for this course is the Bible. This series uses the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The secondary content is the background articles provided for each session in this resource. All participants, including the designated leader(s), use this same book.
- Adults interested in this course prefer discussion as a teaching/learning method to lectures and to creative activities. Therefore guidance will be given to facilitate meaningful conversation that will help them learn the stories and the ongoing story, discover the implications of the information in the background articles, and see the relationship to their lives.
- Participants will be encouraged to read both the Bible story and the background article for each session, but it will not be assumed that they have done so. Some adult participants will have children involved in this same course at their own age levels. These parents will be encouraged to use the suggestions made in the cover leaflets for the children for activities that can be enjoyed at home.
- Adults benefit from sharing their faith and understandings with children. Opportunities will be provided every ten to twelve sessions for participants to experience a mentoring role.
- As a unique setting in which adults learn and grow in faith, the church encourages relationships and builds community. This course will intentionally look for ways to contribute to that process.

- Because the Christian life is a call to servant ministry, adults need opportunities to help, share, and serve. As an integral part of this course, suggestions will be made periodically for such activity.
- Primary to the teaching/learning experience in the church is the conviction that the Holy Spirit is present and active when people open themselves to the biblical message and to one another. Sessions need to be filled with dialogue and relationships and to invite the participation of the Holy Spirit.

Course Organization

Sessions for each year are presented in three sections: Bible story sessions, support sessions, and special days sessions.

Bible Story Sessions

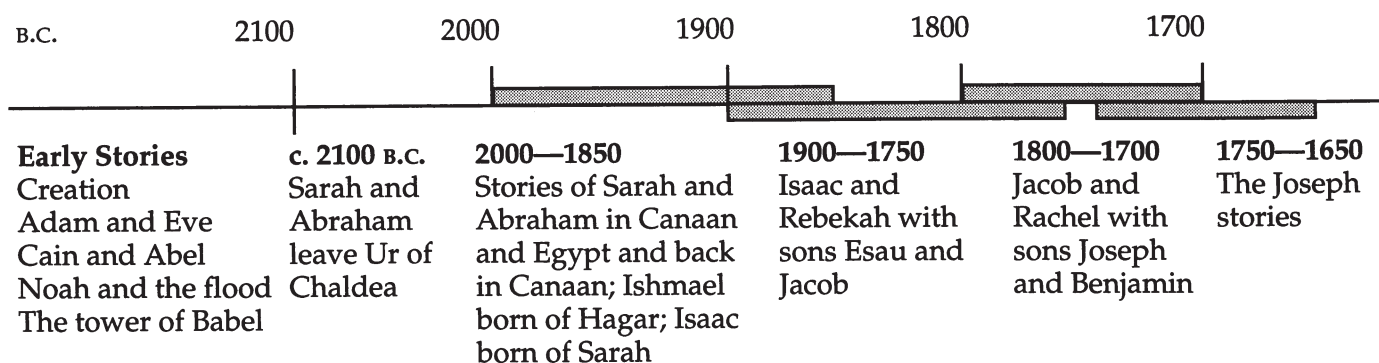
These stories make up the heart of this series and will help the participants grasp the ongoing chronology of the biblical story. After learning about two early stories about events before written history, participants begin with Sarah and Abraham and go through the Bible all the way to Paul's ministry in Rome. The series concludes with a look at the past, using the Letter to the Hebrews, and the future, using the Revelation to John.

Support Sessions

The support sessions are designed to provide learnings that are not integral to the biblical chronology, but that will help the participants see the larger picture. They *support* the purposes of the series. In addition, they look at some books of the Bible that the series would not otherwise deal with. The support sessions can be used during the summer when Sunday church school attendance tends to be sporadic. That way the group will not miss part of the ongoing chronology. They can also be used at other times, at the discretion of the teachers.

Bible Story Sessions		
36 Bible story sessions plus 3 review sessions each year; 108 Bible stories and 9 reviews		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Early Stories	Divided Kingdom	Holy Week
Sarah and Abraham	Exile in Babylon	Birth of the Church
Joseph's Saga	The Return Home	Growth of the Early Church
Exodus	The Birth of Jesus and His Preparation for Ministry	The Ministry of Paul
Settling the Promised Land	The Ministry of Jesus	Past and Future
Establishing a Kingdom		

A TIME LINE FOR YEAR ONE



Support Sessions		
12 support sessions each year		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Life in Old Testament Times	The Psalms	Life in New Testament Times
Some Other Bible Stories	Jewish Festivals	Some Other Bible Stories
What Is the Bible?		How the Bible Came to Us

Special Days Sessions

The primary focus of this series is the sweeping biblical story. Each year, however, the resources do provide session plans for four very important days in the life of the church: the first Sunday of the church school year, Christmas Sunday, Easter Sunday, and Pentecost Sunday.

As congregations begin this *Journey Through the Bible*, it will be helpful if planning is done for the whole year by all the age groups involved. One of the strengths of the series is that all age levels study the same subject or biblical passage at the same time. To preserve that characteristic, decide through joint planning when to schedule support and special days sessions. Such planning will also enable teachers to take advantage of any opportunities to experience learnings across age levels.

A Guide for Leaders/Learners

A Guide for Leaders/Learners is organized in the same three sections as the course: Bible story sessions, support sessions, and special days sessions.

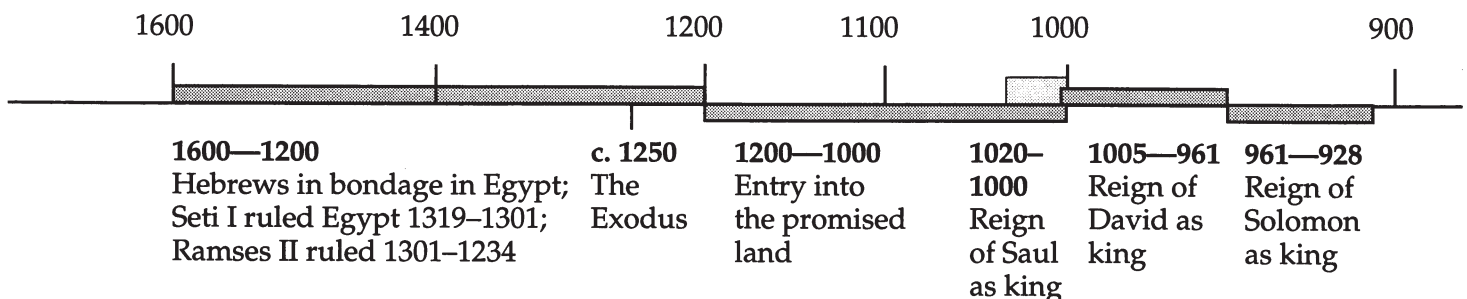
On the first page of every session the scripture that is the focus of the session is given, along with the memory verse. Under the title "Where We're Going," the session objectives are listed. Activities for the session are explained under "How We're Going to Get There" and are divided into two parts: "Hearing the story" and "Making the story your own." Instructions for the activities continue on the third page of the session plan. At the end there is a brief section called "Looking Ahead" that suggests ways to prepare for the next session.

On the third page of each session of the Bible story section is a Bible background article for the story. These are written to help the participants see the place of each story in the overall story, gain background information, and make the transition from one story to the next. Because it is the practice of most biblical scholars and in the Middle East, the abbreviations B.C.E. and C.E. are used in the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible articles instead of B.C. and A.D. They mean "Before the Common Era" and "Common Era." Their use in these articles in no way removes the centrality of the birth of Christ as the pivotal date in the Roman calendar. Elsewhere the more customary B.C. and A.D. are used.

Participants will find these articles especially helpful if they read the biblical passage(s) given under "The Larger Picture" on the first page of each session and then read the article. A second reading, then, of "Today's Bible Story" will bring deeper understanding and enable the leader to make the learning experience much more significant.

At appropriate intervals amidst the Bible story sessions, there are three review sessions. These are designed to help the participants recall the stories of that particular section as well as remember the

JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE



ongoing story. By the end of the thirty-nine Bible story sessions each year, the participants should be able to recall in broad strokes the biblical story in chronological order and to continue the story as another year is added. There are no Bible background articles for these review sessions. The third page of each may be photocopied to assist the learners in their review.

Articles

There are two articles in *A Guide for Leaders/Learners, Year One*, that should be helpful. One is on the place of the Bible in this series. It was written by Michael E. Dixon, an editor at Christian Board of Publication who helped develop *Journey Through the Bible*. The other article is on the land and people of the Hebrew Bible, written by Wallace Ryan Kuroiwa, a Disciples minister and scholar.

These articles appear in the guides at all age levels. They can provide the basis for one or more training and planning meetings.

Suggestions for Using This Guide

This Guide was developed for both leaders and participants of adult classes. Because some adult classes rotate leadership among members, teaching suggestions are provided to enable shared leadership. For classes with one or two primary leaders, participants may want to read only the Bible background article and the scripture for each session, leaving the activity suggestions to their leaders.

Each class will need to decide how much of the "Bible Background," "Today's Bible Story," or "The Larger Picture" participants should read before the class session. Each session plan includes a reading of "Today's Bible Story" during the class and refers to certain paragraphs of the "Bible Background," but participants will gain a deeper understanding if they have read "The Larger Picture" and the background article before the class session. Emphasize, however, that all participants are welcome to the class even if they did not read the material. They will still learn much from the class discussion.

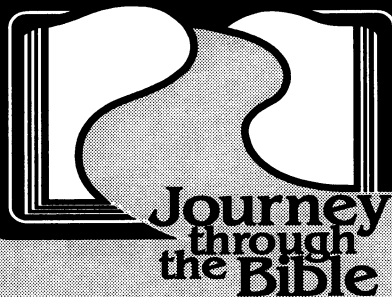
The activities encourage you to read the Bible in a variety of ways: for example, in parts, silently, in unison, as conversation, in role play, etc. You may discover that your group prefers a particular style of reading, so feel free to adapt the activities to fit your class. You may also discover that you do not have enough time for all the activities in one session. If you are trying to coordinate your schedule with other age levels and allow only one week

per session, choose the activities most helpful for your class. If you are not coordinating with other age levels, you can set your own pace and spend as much time as you like on any one session.

Supplemental Resources

It is impossible in such limited space to provide leaders all the information they need to teach this course. It is therefore important that every congregation make sure there is available a variety of supplemental resources. Here are some that are recommended.

- *The Concise Concordance to the New Revised Standard Version* edited by John Kohlenberger III, Oxford Press. It helps find important words in the Bible.
- *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible* edited by Watson E. Mills, Mercer University Press. It offers information on 1500 biblical subjects.
- *Holman Concise Bible Atlas*, Holman Publishers. It provides maps of Bible lands at various periods of history.
- *A Guide to Pronouncing Biblical Names* by T.S.K. Scott-Craig, Morehouse Publishing. Here are preferred and permissible pronunciations of some three thousand names, mainly of people and places.
- *Bible Study Maps*, Abingdon Press. This set of five 11x14" maps includes: Early Bible Lands, Egypt to Canaan, Old Testament Palestine, New Testament Palestine, and the Roman Empire.

**Today's Bible Story**

A baby is rescued
Exodus 1:8–22; 2:1–21

The Larger Picture

Exodus 1:1–2:21

The Memory Verse

"By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth, because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

(Hebrews 11:23)



The Birth of Moses

Where We're Going

During this session participants will:

- find the links between today's story and Genesis
- discuss the dynamics of violence
- reflect on the role of women in the story

How We're Going to Get There

Hearing the story

Remembering the cast

1 The book of Exodus begins with a recap of the situation at the end of Genesis. *Without opening Bibles, which of Jacob's twelve sons can you recall?* Check your group's list against Exodus 1:2–5.

Say the names of the brothers aloud, in unison. If you have trouble wrapping your tongues around certain names, practice them a few more times. Many people have trouble pronouncing biblical names. If pronunciation concerns you, check a dictionary or Bible pronunciation guide. (See the list of supplemental resources in the introduction.) But don't let names interfere with reading. Do the best you can and keep going.

Reading out loud

2 Read Exodus 1:1–2:22 in scenes. If you have enough readers, use a different narrator for each scene (1:1–7, 8–14, 15–22; 2:1–10, 11–14, 15–21). Assign the character parts to various readers: king/Pharaoh, midwives, Pharaoh's daughter, Moses' sister, Moses, Hebrew slave, Reuel, Reuel's daughters. If needed, some readers can double as a character and a scene narrator.

Finding links to Genesis

3 Exodus 1:7 jumps several centuries from Joseph's time to Moses' time. (See the "Bible Background" for more information on dates.) Yet the very language of "fruitfulness" and "multiplying" reminds us of promises in Genesis. Recall that stories in Genesis repeated phrases or patterns. Several stories, for example, involved a meeting at a well that led to marriage. *What familiar phrases and patterns can you find in today's story from Exodus that relate to Genesis?*

Making the story your own

Discussing the dynamics of violence

4 The “Bible Background” (paragraphs 1-2 and 6-9, page 54) identifies violence as a new feature of the Exodus stories, compared to Genesis. *What acts of violence occur in Exodus 1—2? Include general acts (slave labor) as well as specific ones (Moses’ killings). Also notice what precedes and gives rise to each act of violence. Could “violence begets violence” be a motto for these chapters?*

Also notice the role that fear plays in the stories. (Sometimes the word *fear* is used, while other times—as with Pharaoh’s fear of rebellion—it isn’t named as such.) *How does fear contribute to violence? Does the midwives’ “fear” of God (1:21) belong in the same category as the other fears, or does it seem to mean something more like “reverence for”?*

Discuss: *How do violence and fear feed upon one another in our own society? Name situations in your own community. Some people believe that violence must be stopped by force. Others believe this just feeds the cycle, and that we need to answer violence with peace (Luke 6:27–31). Most people have mixed feelings. Talk about your own convictions. This conversation may challenge your ability to listen respectfully to one another! Remember: No one likes being a victim of violence. Probably no one likes the idea of being an oppressor, either. The disagreement is not over whether violence and exploitation are bad, but how they can best be stopped.*

In what ways can Christian faith help root out violence? How can your congregation help make this happen?

Reflecting on the role of women

5 The “Bible Background” closes with a note on the major role that women play in today’s scripture. In today’s story, women repeatedly counteract the forces of death and work to ensure life. *How many women are involved in this? What do they do? Moses uses force to counteract violence. How do the women try to defeat it?*

Today’s story makes an interesting contrast with a couple of stories about Sarah and her Egyptian slave Hagar (Genesis 16 and 21:8–20). Thinking that she herself is too old to have a child, Sarah asks Abraham to father a child with Hagar. But then the Hebrew woman grows jealous and afflicts the Egyptian slave, who escapes into the wilderness and has a conversation with God at a well. Hagar returns to Sarah, but later after Isaac is born Sarah again drives

the Egyptian and her child (Ishmael) into the wilderness where God saves them.

Compare the stories:

<u>Genesis</u>	<u>Exodus</u>
Hebrews oppress Egyptian	Egyptian oppresses Hebrews
Egyptian meets God in wilderness	Hebrews go to meet God in wilderness
Women become enemies over baby	Women band together to save baby

Where are Hagar and Sarah—women set against one another—in today’s world? Where are today’s women of Exodus—refusing to kill, cooperating to save lives? How are men helping them?

Praying together

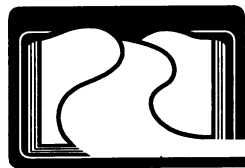
6 If you did “A little bit extra,” use the litany for a closing worship. If not, hold hands in a circle. Let each person offer a sentence prayer concerning some specific kind of violence in our own world. After each person’s prayer, have the whole group recite Matthew 5:9—“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

A little bit extra

• **Writing a litany in honor of women.** Write a litany (a prayer to be read in parts) remembering the women of Exodus 1—2 and giving thanks for their acts. (This is not meant to imply that men can’t be lifesavers. But usually we talk a lot about Moses, and not very much about the women. This litany reminds us of the less well-known part of the story.) Write the litany on a chalkboard or newsprint, or photocopy the litany so all may participate. You may want to include something about the modern women peacemakers you have discussed. You may also want to use symbolic actions (pretending to cradle a baby) or objects (a reed basket) along with the words. Use your litany as a closing worship for the session.

Looking Ahead

Next week’s session raises the issue of inclusive God-language (saying “our Mother” as well as “our Father”). Listen to the language used in your congregation. Is it heavily masculine? Does it include feminine terms? Does it avoid both masculine and feminine terms?



Bible Background

¹The story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has been marked by relatively little violence. There are struggles, there is betrayal, and there are human tragedies and misdeeds, but on the whole, murder and other violent acts have little place in the story of Israel's beginnings.

²All that changes with the opening of the book of Exodus. The entire generation of Jacob and his sons and daughters has now died, and their descendants have prospered and grown very numerous in the land of Egypt. Then there comes a Pharaoh to the throne of Egypt who has no recollection of Joseph and what he did for the state. This Pharaoh is fearful that these Israelites will soon outnumber the Egyptians and join the enemies of Egypt in the event of war. The Israelites are pressed into slavelike labor in Pharaoh's supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, in the eastern delta region. The oppression begins, but the people continue to grow in numbers despite the oppression.

³Who was this Pharaoh? Although a good deal is known about Egyptian history during the period of the Late Kingdom (about 1500 B.C.E. to shortly after 1200 B.C.E.), we still do not know with any certainty who this Pharaoh was. Egyptian records give no clues. The two most often proposed periods for the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan are the last half of the fifteenth century B.C.E. and the end of the thirteenth century B.C.E. The first fits best the biblical dating. In Exodus 12:40–41, we are told that the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years, and in 1 Kings 6:1 we learn that Solomon began to build the temple in Jerusalem 480 years after the departure from Egypt. Solomon's work on the temple belongs to about the middle of the tenth century B.C.E., which would place Joshua's entrance into Canaan at about 1400 B.C.E. and the Exodus from Egypt forty years earlier.

⁴But archaeological evidence shows that a number of cities in Canaan were destroyed toward the end of the thirteenth century. That, of course, does not prove that it was the Israelites who destroyed the cities. However, the earliest nonbiblical inscription that refers to the people of Israel also comes from around the same period, about 1220 B.C.E. This is an Egyptian reference, listing the Israelites as a distinct people in the Palestine region.

⁵That evidence seems to be the more reliable. Authorities often conclude, therefore, that the Pha-

raoh who oppressed the Israelites was Seti I (1319–1301 B.C.E.), and the Pharaoh who ruled at the time the Israelites actually left Egypt was Ramses II (1301–1234 B.C.E.).

⁶But the date is not the most important point. The story tells of Moses' entering the world at a time of horrible and senseless violence. Pharaoh even goes against his own interests by working his slaves to death and then ordering that all male children be killed at birth. The midwives to whom Pharaoh gives this instruction are God-fearing women, we are told. The midwives trick Pharaoh into believing that they cannot carry out his orders, because the Hebrew women bear their children without the need of a midwife. Actually, they simply refuse to carry out Pharaoh's orders.

⁷Moses is born in this setting. His mother simply refuses to have him put to death. She makes a basket for him and places him in the water at the shore of the Nile river, hoping for his adoption by some Egyptian family. Moses' older sister Miriam watches at a distance. And as we know, Pharaoh's daughter comes to the river to bathe, sees the child, and adopts him, taking him to the palace and also enlisting his mother to be his wet nurse and care for the baby's needs.

⁸The story passes in silence the years of Moses' growing up, his education, and what sort of young man he was. We meet him next when he sees an act of violence and cannot help but intervene to stop it. The Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew had to be stopped. Moses struck him down, first looking around to see if anyone was watching. When Moses saw that he had killed the cruel Egyptian, he buried him in the sand. Again, the very next day, Moses intervened to stop a violent fight between two Hebrews. As he did so, one of them indicated that Moses' killing of the Egyptian was being talked about, so he left Egypt, running for his life into the wilderness to the east and south of the delta region.

⁹Moses arrives in the land of Midian, somewhere in the Sinai Peninsula, and stops by a well. There too he intervenes to prevent cruel shepherds from driving away the women who also wished to water their flocks. Moses even watered the flocks for the women, something quite unusual in that time. And the father of the girls he helped, who was priest of Midian, invited Moses in, gave him a place to live, and arranged for Moses to marry one of his daughters.

¹⁰One remarkable fact stands out in these stories: women are at the heart of the events: the midwives, Moses' mother and sister, Pharaoh's daughter, and later on (Exodus 4:24–26), Moses' wife Zipporah. The women take risks, show great courage, and are central to the future of the people of God.

The Calling of Moses

Where We're Going

During this session participants will:

- reflect on the significance of God's name
- talk about responses to God's call

How We're Going to Get There

Hearing the story

Reading the story aloud

1 Today we're going to read Exodus 3:1—4:17 in parts—one speaker at a time. Start by reading only the narration. (Skip phrases such as "Then Moses said," and "He said further." This leaves narrator statements in 3:1–2, 4, 6, and 4:3–4, 6–7.) Since no speaking parts are read, this activity is like watching a silent film of the scene. *How would you feel if you saw the events in this story happening?*

Now read God's lines aloud. God has a lot to say! *What impression do you get of God? How would you feel if God said these things to you?*

Finally, read all of Moses' lines (3:3–4, 11, 13 and 4:1–2, 10, and 13). *How does Moses come off? Do you like him? Do you identify with him?*

What does the distribution of parts (who speaks and how much) say about the characters?

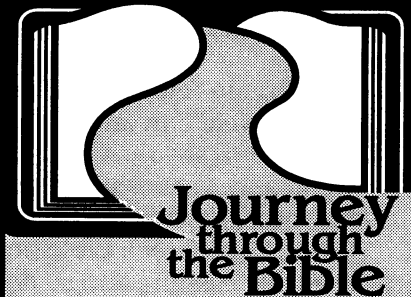
Making the story your own

Understanding God's name

2 What is God's name? Most people today would say, "God"! But ancient people tended to worship many gods, each of whom then had a name. If a god talked to you out of a burning bush, you would want to know *which* god.

Several things are at stake when Moses asks God's name. Moses' last encounter with an Israelite (Exodus 2:14) wasn't very encouraging. Knowing God's name will help his credibility. (If God won't tell, Moses is off the hook.) Also, as the "Bible Background" explains (paragraphs 6–7), the ancients believed you could use a god's name for blessings and curses. Later, God will issue a special commandment about God's name (Exodus 20:7). For now, revealing it is a sign of trust and commitment.

It's a bit confusing that in the NRSV and most other English translations, God never does give a regular name, but only a title, "the LORD." Beneath this title lies a name written with the Hebrew conso-



Today's Bible Story

Moses at the burning bush

Exodus 3:1—4:17

The Larger Picture

Exodus 2:23—4:17

The Memory Verse

"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

(Exodus 3:6b)

