

UNIT ONE: I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER

LESSON 5: God Reveals Himself... to Moses

CONTENTS OF LESSON:

1. God revealed himself to the people of Israel by giving a NAME by which he could be known. This showed that he was inviting them to know him and relate to him. [CCC 203]
2. God spoke to Moses from the burning bush and gave him the name by which he was to be known: 'YHWH' or 'I AM WHO I AM'. This name expresses that
 - GOD IS HOLY: He is a mystery, who is far above and beyond us.
 - HE IS PRESENT from all eternity, and is always present with us. (I AM) [CCC 207, 212, 2809]
3. Moses responded with awe and reverence to God's holiness. This is the way Peter also responded when he realized who Jesus was. [CCC 208]
 - Later, when the Israelites sinned against God, he revealed another aspect of his nature: His mercy and goodness, love and faithfulness. [CCC 210-11]
4. *We try to realize God's holiness and bow before him in reverence. We acknowledge our sinfulness before him but at the same time, trust in his mercy and love.*



REFERENCES: Exodus 3:1-15; 34:1-8; Luke 5:1-11.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts, Bibles, blackboard.

AUDIO-VISUAL (OPTIONAL): [Available on YOUTUBE]

I. STARTER:

[A few students are briefed to enact the following:]

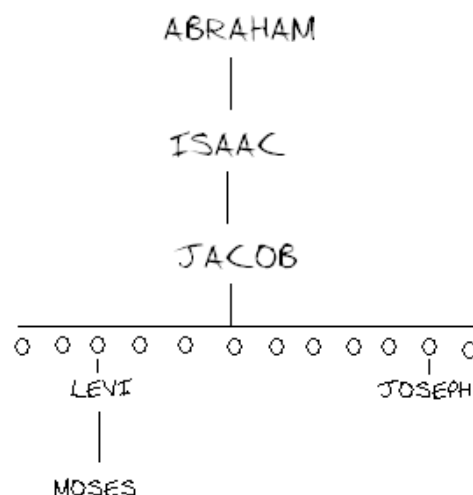
[Two girls are walking along when a boy comes up, puts out his hand and introduces himself.

One girl responds, giving her name, but the other only says 'Hi' and looks away. She doesn't give her name. The boy waits, then shrugs and walks away.]

- Why do you think the girl didn't give her name? *[She didn't want to be friends with the boy.]*
- So what does it mean when you share your name with someone? *[It means you are ready to be friends, and build up a relationship with the person.]*

II. DEVELOPMENT:

1. We learnt that God gradually revealed himself to mankind. Did God give his name to Abraham? *[No]* He gradually taught Abraham by calling him out and teaching him to have faith, but he didn't give him a name by which to call him. *[Draw a 'family tree' on the blackboard (as shown) so that the students follow better.]*



- After Abraham, God related to his son Isaac, then to his son Jacob, and then to Jacob's 12 sons, whose families became the 12 tribes of Israel.
- One famous son was Joseph. Because of him, Jacob's family landed up in Egypt, where they multiplied till there were thousands of Israelites in Egypt.
- But after 400 years of peace in Egypt, bad times came to Abraham's descendants. The Egyptian king began to ill-treat them and used them as slaves to build himself new cities. The people cried out to God to rescue them.
- This brings us to Moses, an Israelite, (descendant of Levi) but at the time living as a shepherd in the hills nearby.

[Give out the handouts. Read Exodus 3:1-15 aloud.]

- This incident is considered very important by Jews and Christians. Now at last God gives a ‘name’ for himself. Let’s try and understand what we can from this name. What does it tell us about God?

[The students look up the references and answer the questions on the left-hand side of the handout. Go over the answers, bringing out:]

1. God gave a name for himself. This shows that He was ready to be known; to be a friend to his people. (Remember the act we discussed at the beginning!)
 2. The name given was ‘I AM WHO I AM’ or ‘I AM’. It was written as YHWH in Hebrew. (Later, the Jews felt it was too holy a name to write or say, so they wrote LORD instead of YHWH.)
 3. This name tells us that God is...
 - 1) HOLY: He is a mystery, far above us. By saying, “Call me ‘I AM WHO I AM’, God was showing that we cannot really know him fully. (If someone introduced himself to you as ‘Me’ or ‘An Indian’, you would realize that he hasn’t really given his name.)
 - 2) PRESENT: God is always there and is always present with us. I AM gives this idea. He has always been in existence and will always be there forever and ever.
 4. Moses responded to God by removing his sandals and hiding his face. He realized at that moment that God was holy, someone far greater than he had ever understood.
- 2.** Let’s look at another famous moment when God revealed something more about himself.
- Moses had succeeded in bringing the people out of Egypt through many miracles God had worked. Then God called Moses up the mountain to talk to him and give him commandments to guide his people.
 - But when Moses came down he found that the people had done something terrible. They had made a god for themselves, a golden calf, and were worshipping it.
 - This was a great sin, and Moses was terribly shocked and angry. God had done so much for the people, and yet they had stopped believing in Him. He knew there was no hope for them if God gave up on them. He begged God to forgive them and not leave them. Then God spoke to him again. [Students look up the reference on the right-hand side, and fill in the blanks.]
1. THE LORD..THE LORD..A GOD MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER AND ABOUNDING IN STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS.
 - God was ready to forgive his unfaithful people. He was sad seeing that they did not trust him and had forgotten all that he had done for them, but he gave them another chance. He did not stop loving them.
 - So we realize from these readings two sides of God’s nature. Can you sum them up in 2 words? [HOLY and MERCIFUL] [These words can be written on the two ‘coins’ at the bottom.]

3. INTERIORISATION/PRAAYER:

[Students read Luke 5:1-11 quietly and reflect on the passage. They write the answer to the question. Bring out:] When Peter realized who Jesus was, he fell at Jesus’ feet and said, “Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!”

Think about God: his holiness, and how far below you are. Think about your sinfulness and unfaithfulness to him, even though he has done so much for you. But remember also his kindness, his patience, his mercy. He is ready to forgive you, if you turn back to him. Write an honest prayer.

[Students write a prayer in the space provided. If possible, they spend a few minutes in a chapel/church before the Blessed Sacrament. They could sing an appropriate hymn, acknowledging God’s holiness. E.g. Any version of the Sanctus: ‘Holy Holy Holy’]

HOME ASSIGNMENT: ⇨ Read the handout.