



The Burning Bush Handout

Session Theme: Prayer

Activity: Breathing

Scripture Story: *Exodus 3:1-15*

Video Clip: Thou Shalt
Laugh 4

Moses was keeping the flock of sheep for his wife's father, Jethro; Moses kept his flock in the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There, an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of a bush; Moses looked, and the bush was blazing, *but it was not burnt*. 3 Then Moses said, "I must stop what I'm doing and go look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not being burned up." 4 When the Lord saw that Moses had stopped to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." 5 Then God said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then God said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

7 Then the Lord said, "I have seen the hurt of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry caused by the Egyptians. Indeed, I know their hurt, 8 and I have come to you to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of Egypt to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of Canaan. 10 So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" 12 God said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." 13 But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is God's name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "Tell them, 'I am who I am.' "

Then God said, "Also, you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you. 15 The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this is my title for all generations."

NOTES:

- There's a common understanding that we are to pray to God for what we want. That *is* a good thing to do (as we discussed in the Cain and Abel story, where Cain does *not* talk to God about what's bothering him until after he kills his brother).
- But what we see in this story with Moses and God is that prayer is a conversation. And a conversation has two parts to it: Talking AND Listening.
- The Hebrew spelling for "Yahweh" uses only "breathy" vowels. The same word the Israelites used for *spirit*, they also used for *breath*. That word is *ruach*. This is why some Biblical scholars think that the name of God here is meant to symbolize breathing, that breathing and saying the name of God is the same thing.