

# “LOOKING FOOLISH”

(Moses)

For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

By Sally Ulrey

## Key verses: Exodus 3:5 (and others)

**Objective: To realize that if God asks us to do something, God is going to take care of us as we do it, and to practice stepping out in faith by “loving foolishly”.**

**The Set up:** Minimal

### The Plan:

- **Hook:** Trying Not to Look Stupid (10 mins)
  - Option: play a clip from comedian Brian Regan about trying not to look stupid.
  - Option: play a game of Simon Says (or something similar), where you can give ridiculous directions
  - Have them tell a partner about a time when they made a social faux pas
- **Book:** “Go tell Pharaoh,” Exodus (20 mins)
  - Look at the list of all the weird things God told Moses to do, and then look at the list of results. The point is that if God asks us to do something, God is going to take care of us as we do it.
- **Look:** At the Risk of Looking Foolish (20 mins)
  - Mini-Debate. Divide youth into two sides to debate whether obedience is worth it.
  - Small Groups. Discussion about obedience (love God, love neighbor) and how it might cost us looking foolish sometimes
- **Took:** Making a Difference (10 mins)
  - Scripture & Prayer

### The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- Bibles (or Scripture verses printed)
- AV stuff for audio clip (optional)
- Copies of small group questions if needed
- Whiteboard/Flip Chart & something to write with
- Notecards & Pens

## **Trying Not to Look Stupid** (Hook, 10 mins)

In this section, we'll talk about how it's human nature to AVOID looking foolish in front of others, and later we'll look at how sometimes doing what God asks causes us to look foolish, but it makes a difference, so it's a risk we can take, because the reward outweighs the risk. The main learning point of the lesson is that if God asks us to do it, God will take care of us as we do it.

- (Optional): Play audio clip of comedian Brian Regan, about making social faux pas and "looking stupid." Click the link. You'll want to play until 2:22 (if you want to play more than that, just preview it first to make sure it stays on the topic. Another good stopping point is at 3:50. This will open up discussions about times when youth have felt dumb or made a social faux pas, which we generally try to avoid.) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxhRa\\_IC5gs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxhRa_IC5gs)
- (Optional): Play a game of Simon Says (or something similar) for a few minutes, where you can give them ridiculous directions that don't make any sense and make them look silly (e.g. cross your eyes and spin in a circle, wiggle their arms like octopus tentacles, etc.)
- Have the youth tell a partner about a time when they made a social faux pas and felt dumb/silly. (This is "challenge by choice;" we're not trying to embarrass anybody, just have some fun...we've all been there...)

**Transition:** We have all done something in life where we made a social faux pas or felt dumb or silly. It's human nature to avoid those times, even if we can laugh it off later. Sometimes the things God asks us to do might go against the social norms, maybe might even make us feel stupid or look foolish. But the rewards outweigh the risks, meaning that following God (even if it looks silly) leads to an outcome that is worth it. Let's take Moses for an example.

## **“Go tell Pharaoh”** (Book, 20 mins)

In this section, we will list all the weird things God told Moses to do, which sound silly, and they would DEFINITELY make Moses look foolish if God didn't show up. Then we'll look at the results of that obedience. The point is that the reward of obedience far outweighs the risk of looking foolish.

- Put the youth in partners, and assign them the different Scripture passages.
- Tell them to find the command...what did God tell Moses(/Aaron) to do?
- Then tell them to find the result...what happened when they did what God told them?
- When the pairs have finished looking over their passages, make a list on the whiteboard/flip chart. Write “Command” on the left side and “Result” on the right.
- Have each pair first identify the command.
- At the end of going through all the commands listed, note that these are all very easy things to do, but they might look silly. I mean, for most of them, God is telling Moses to play with a stick. But it's not HARD.
- Have each pair then go back and identify the result.
- Have the youth make some observations about the commands and the results (e.g., the results were way better than what normally happens when you do those things that are commanded; the rewards outweigh the risks...if nothing happened, you'd look silly, but if you do it, you potentially get something really awesome out of it; they don't make any logical sense...wood doesn't heal bitter water)

Here are the Scriptures to assign (all from Exodus):

- 3:5-6
- 3:10-12
- 4:1-5
- 4:6-8
- 7:19
- 8:16-19
- 9:8-12
- 9:22-24
- 10:21-23
- 12:21-23
- 14:16, 21-22
- 15:22-25
- 17:1, 6

### **Mini Lecture:**

Here's some things we learn from this:

1. Obedience is not HARD (it's easy to pick up a stick), but does require bravery/courage
2. What God asks us to do doesn't always require logic, it just takes trust
3. We might look foolish, but the results change the world

**Transition:** So the question is...is it worth it? Is the risk of looking foolish worth the result of changing the world? Let's explore that.

*“Looking Foolish” (Moses) by Sally Ulrey  
for the Diocese of Atlanta*

## Scripture Passages For Teacher Reference

Assign the Scripture Passages to partners. They need to come up with

1. The command God gives to Moses (/Aaron)
2. The result of obeying that command

Here is a cheat chart for your purposes (passages are all from Exodus)

Passage	Command	Result
3:5-6	Take off your sandals	Get to learn more things about who God is
3:10-12	Go to Pharaoh and tell him...	(Well, it gets worse, but then)...FREEDOM, God will be with
4:1-5	Throw your staff on the ground	Snake, sign to them
4:6-8	Put your hand in your cloak	Leprous then healed
7:19	Take your staff, stretch out your hand	Water became blood
8:16-19	Hit the dust with staff	Gnats
9:8-12	Throw soot in the air	Boils
9:22-24	Stretch out hand to sky	Hail
10:21-23	Stretch out hand to sky	Darkness
12:21-23	Kill lamb, catch blood, use hyssop, paint on blood	Passover (saved from destruction)
14:16, 21-22	Raise staff to the sea	Parting Red Sea
15:22-25	Throw in a piece of wood	Water fit to drink
17:1, 6	Strike the rock	Water came out

## **At the Risk of Looking Foolish** (Look, 20 mins total, 10 mins for debate, 10 mins for discussion)

In this part, youth will do a silly mock debate using evidence from the passages about whether obedience is worth it...whether the risk (looking foolish) is worth the reward (change the world). Then, they'll apply those ideas to their own lives using small group discussion questions.

If you're running short on time, you can skip the debate part, and use the small group discussion to address whether the rewards are worth the risks.

### **Debate (10 mins)**

- Divide youth into two equal "sides"
- Assign which side gets to "debate" which position.
  - USING THE BIBLE STORIES ONLY (for both sides), one side will list reasons why it's not worth it to obey...reasons why looking foolish is riskier than the outcome. They should title their list "Why obedience makes you look foolish." (Encourage them to have fun with this list...like "if you wave a stick at a world leader, they might put you in a facility or jail" or "you will look like a child throwing a tantrum if your only plan is to throw your stick on the ground." Give them these as examples if they need some)
  - The other side will list reasons why it IS worth it to obey...how the results outweigh looking foolish. They should title their list "Why Obedience is Worth Possibly Looking Foolish" (like "If you can save a whole people group just by waving around a stick, why would you not do that?")
  - Tell them they only have 5 mins to create their lists
- Allow youth to share their lists.

### **Discussion Questions (10 mins)**

(These can either be done with the entire group while you facilitate, or the questions can be printed up ahead of time as handouts or projected, and they can do this in small groups)

1. Just like God's commands to Moses (throw a piece of wood in, stretch out your stick), God's commands to us are pretty simple, too. He commands us to love God, and love our neighbors. How can this make us look foolish?
2. How can following God's commands (love God, love neighbor) change the world?
3. Just because God's commands to love others might be simple, that doesn't mean they don't require bravery/courage. How does loving others require courage?
4. How does the reward (changing the world) outweigh the cost (looking foolish) when it comes to loving others?
5. Who are the ones we need to love that would require looking the most foolish? Who in society? Who in your own circles?
6. Have you ever felt "I am just one small person. How can I make a difference in the world?" What does Moses teach us about that?

Transition: If you ever have felt "I'm just one small person...how can I make a difference in the world?" then remember Moses. Moses changed history and saved a people group, and mostly all he did was play with a stick. Obedience makes a difference, because GOD. That kinda takes the pressure off us, right? God has the hard part. We do our part (love); God does the rest. It's simple but takes courage. So are we willing to do our part, even if it looks foolish? I hope so!

*"Looking Foolish" (Moses) by Sally Ulrey  
for the Diocese of Atlanta*

## **Making a Difference** (Took, 10 mins)

This is the at-home challenge. Their job is to take the Scripture verse with them, which will encourage and remind them to “love foolishly” toward someone this week.

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 (or just 18 & 25 if time is short)
- Have the youth write verse 25 on a notecard.
- On the back of the notecard have the write “Love Foolishly” and one way they will love in a way that takes courage and might make them look foolish to others.

### **1 Corinthians 1:18-25 (NIV)**

***<sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written:***

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;  
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”<sup>[c]</sup>*

***<sup>20</sup> Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.***

**Close in prayer**, thanking God that He has the hard part, and our part in changing the world is simple, and asking for courage to love even if it looks foolish, and asking for God to show up when we step out in faith.