

“Fear vs Freedom”

A lesson about freedom in Christ
For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta
By Katie McRee

Key verses:

Exodus 3:1- 4:17, and several verses about having no fear

Objectives: To consider what we are REALLY afraid of and surrender our fears to God.

*****please note that there is video that may be upsetting for some of the younger youth. Please watch the video in the link before committing to this lesson!****

The Set up: Minimal

The Plan:

- Hook: Scary Scenes (10 mins): acting out some common fears
- Book: Fear of Failure (10 mins): thinking about how fear was keeping Moses in bondage.
- Look: Scared to DEATH (5- 10 mins): Watching a video of a super fundamentalist group that puts on a haunted house with the intention of scaring people into repentance.
- Took: Freedom from Fear Bondage (10-15 mins): a worship activity where we throw of the fears that hold us back

The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- Slips of paper with common fears written on them, can use the ones from the list of phobias (provided)
- prizes (optional)
- a way to show the video in the Look
- 3 copies of the Burning Bush script (provided)
- markers
- candles (optional)
- thin rope or yarn
- fear verses, cut into slips (provided)

(Open in prayer, announcements, and any other start of gathering traditions)

Scary Scenes (Hook, 10 mins)

Open by acting out some common fears:

- Tell the students that we are going to play a game of charades.
- You will let them draw a slip of paper out of a hat/bowl and SILENTLY act out what it says.
- Other youth can either shout out the answers, or you can call on them to answer
- Hand out prizes if you are using them

After you have finished playing, here are a few questions to consider:

- Which of those things are you afraid of?
- Which ones don't bother you at all?
- Which fears did we miss?
- Why do you think people are afraid of those things?

Say something like:

We are approaching the Halloween season, which is fun for most people because they get to dress up, go to parties, watch scary movies, go to haunted houses and things like that. Halloween is your chance to be someone different and enjoy being scared. Halloween is a holiday that capitalizes on our fears!

- Why is it fun to be scared
- At what point is it no longer fun?

Transition/Say something like:

Some people think it is fun to be a little scared, but most of us don't want to be SUPER scared! Let's take a look at someone who was completely terrified!

Fear of Failure (Book, 10 mins)

In this section, we are looking at all the fears that Moses had and gave as excuses when God called him to lead his people out of bondage. Moses was scared to death and God was NOT havin' it!

- Choose 3 people to act as readers
- Choose 5 people who can “strike a pose” to represent Moses’ hesitations/fears
- Have the 3 readers read through the Burning Bush reading at the end of the lesson
- Whenever Moses objects to God’s calling, ask the one of the “posers” to hold a pose that represents his fear/objection.
- I have underlined all of Moses’ objections so that you can’t miss them
- when you are done, you will have 5 statues that represent the 5 ways that Moses objected to God’s calling

Group Discussion:

- What do each of these statues represent?
- How did God respond to each of Moses’ concerns/fears? (you can have the statues sit down now if they would like!)
- Why did God call on Moses? (he was asking him to lead the Israelites out of bondage)
- Did God ever use fear to get Moses to do something he wanted him to do?
- Did God want Moses to live in fear?

Mini Lecture/Transition:

Moses was terrified of what God was asking him to do, and probably justifiably so, but Moses forgot that God knows what he is doing. God was so patient with Moses and addressed all of his fears... he never once let Moses’ fears overcome the plans that he had. No, God wanted his people to live in freedom, and he wasn’t going to let someone’s fears keep that from happening.

But not everyone is in agreement about how to respond to fear. In fact, some people think that fear is a useful tool in getting a desired reaction...

We are going to watch a video in just a moment, and as we watch it, I want you to ask yourself, “how would God react to this?”

Scared to DEATH (Look, 5-10 mins)

In this section, we are watching a video of a super fundamentalist group that puts on a haunted house with the intention of scaring people into repentance.

(watch the video- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXxfIktv8RQ>)

- How do you think God would react to what we just saw?
- What was your initial reaction?
- How do you think the visitors to the haunted house feel when they leave?
- Do you think that is how God would like people to feel?
- What might be a better way to tell someone about God/repentance?

Transition/Say something like:

We can probably all agree that there are SOME things in the Hell House that are sin (you should for sure not drink and drive, beat your wife, or do drugs!), but their execution in motivating people to not do these things is backwards. They are capitalizing on people's fears in order to get them to behave differently. We just learned from how God interacted with Moses that he does NOT want to capitalize on our fears in order to get a desired response from us. God knows that fear is not associated with love, and God speaks in the language of love!

Freedom from Fear Bondage (Took, 10-15 mins)

We are closing by talking about the things that cause us serious anxiety and fear and thinking about how they actually hold us in bondage, and that does NOT come from God. God wants us to throw off everything that hinders us, and live in the freedom of his love.

- Have them get into pairs or groups of 3. And give each group a marker
- In their small groups, have them share with each other the things that “scare them to death” What is your deepest, real fear? You may want to give them an example of yours- try to choose something that holds you back regularly, or causes you to live life in a way that is less than it could be- like the fear rejection to the fear of failure.
- Once they have shared their fear, have them write on their partner’s hand a word, phrase, or symbol that represents their deepest fear. When they are done, they will have their partner’s fear written on their hand, and vice versa.
- Bring them back into the bigger group and explain that this is going to be in interactive time of prayer and worship. They can have fun and they don’t have to be silent, but do keep in mind that what we are about to talk about is going to be our worship time
- Have them sit in a circle, fairly close together
- Optional***turn down the lights and light candles to help them understand that this is a time of worship ***

Say something like:

The things that Moses was afraid of were legitimate fears... and there were things in the Hell House that ARE scary, and in some cases were sinful... but

{As you do this next part, go around, and bind people together as you speak- bind them to their partners (that have their fears written on their hands), as well to the rest of the group- you will tying them all together essentially}

Those things can rule our lives and keep us distracted from the good things... (wrap the yarn around someone’s hands)

They tie us down... (wrap the yarn around someone’s hands)

They restrain us... (wrap)

They make us self conscious... (keep wrapping)

They make us feel alone... (wrap)

One small fear can snowball into even more fears.... (wrap... keep wrapping)

Imagine that your partner embodies your greatest fear. Now imagine that these ropes weren’t figurative, but they were literal. How would that change the way you did things? Would you be slowed down? Would you fully enjoy life? Probably not... sometimes we become so tied to our fears, that it makes getting through the day exhausting.

{STOP WRAPPING THEM UP (they should be very tangled up at this point)}

but fear was never intended to be the focus of our relationship with God! God wants us to love him and live in freedom, not in fear... especially of him!

These churches with the hell houses have good intentions- they want to bring people to Christ. And they probably have some success, but God’s story is one of hope and freedom, not of being enslaved to your fears! He doesn’t want you to accept him and follow him because you FEAR what will happen if you don’t! He wants you to accept and follow him because he will lead you to freedom!

HAND OUT THE BIBLE VERSES. Explain that, when you ask them to, you want them to slowly take turns reading the verse they were given. When you are not reading, listen carefully.

As the kids read verses, slowly untie them...

Once they have finished say something like...

We just heard 9 verses that tell us not to be afraid... which is just skimming the top! There are about 107 verses in the bible that tell us not to fear! 107 times God tries to tell us to live in the freedom of knowing that he loves us!

Yes, there are things in our lives that are sin, and we should be aware that there can be negative consequences of living in sin... but we should NOT fixate on them and allow them to direct our lives...

We should fixate on God... and allow his love to direct our lives.

Close with a simple prayer, asking God to help us throw off the bondage of fear, and live in freedom

Top 10 Most Common Fears:

1. Arachnophobia: The fear of spiders.
2. Ophidiophobia: The fear of snakes.
3. Acrophobia: The fear of heights.
4. Agoraphobia: The fear of situations in which escape is difficult.
5. Cynophobia: The fear of dogs.
6. Astraphobia: The fear of thunder and lightning.
7. Trypanophobia: The fear of injections.
8. Social Phobias: The fear of social situations.
9. Pteromerhanophobia: The fear of flying.
10. Mysophobia: The fear of germs or dirt.

The Burning Bush and Fear

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Message (MSG)- there are pieces that are edited out

Narrator: Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. He led the flock to the west end of the wilderness and came to the mountain of God, Horeb. The angel of GOD appeared to him in flames of fire blazing out of the middle of a bush. He looked. The bush was blazing away but it didn't burn up.

Moses: "What's going on here? I can't believe this! Amazing! Why doesn't the bush burn up?"

NARRATOR: GOD saw that he had stopped to look. God called to him from out of the bush,

God: "Moses! Moses!"

Moses: "Yes? I'm right here!"

⁵ **God:** "Don't come any closer. Remove your sandals from your feet. You're standing on holy ground." ... "I am the God of your father: The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob."

Narrator: Moses hid his face, afraid to look at God.

⁷⁻⁸ **GOD:** "I've taken a good, long look at the affliction of my people in Egypt. I've heard their cries for deliverance from their slave masters; I know all about their pain. And now I have come down to help them, pry them loose from the grip of Egypt, get them out of that country and bring them to a good land with wide-open spaces, a land lush with milk and honey, the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

"The Israelite cry for help has come to me, and I've seen for myself how cruelly they're being treated by the Egyptians. It's time for you to go back: I'm sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the People of Israel, out of Egypt."

¹¹ **Moses:** "But why me? What makes you think that I could ever go to Pharaoh and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

God: "I'll be with you," "And this will be the proof that I am the one who sent you: When you have brought my people out of Egypt, you will worship God right here at this very mountain."

Moses: "Suppose I go to the People of Israel and I tell them, 'The God of your fathers sent me to you'; and they ask me, 'What is his name?' What do I tell them?"

¹⁴ **God:** "I-AM-WHO-I-AM. Tell the People of Israel, 'I-AM sent me to you.'"

"This is what you're to say to the Israelites: 'GOD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob sent me to you.' This has always been my name, and this is how I always will be known.

"Now be on your way. Gather the leaders of Israel."

¹⁸ "Believe me, they will listen to you. Then you and the leaders of Israel will go to the king of Egypt and say to him: 'GOD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness where we will worship GOD—our God.'

¹⁹⁻²² "I know that the king of Egypt won't let you go unless forced to, so I'll intervene and hit Egypt where it hurts—oh, my miracles will send them reeling!—after which they'll be glad to send you off. I'll

see to it that this people get a hearty send-off by the Egyptians—when you leave, you won't leave empty-handed! Each woman will ask her neighbor and any guests in her house for objects of silver and gold, for jewelry and extra clothes; you'll put them on your sons and daughters. Oh, you'll clean the Egyptians out!"

Moses: "They won't trust me. They won't listen to a word I say. They're going to say, 'God? Appear to him? Hardly!'"

God: "What's that in your hand?"

Moses: "A staff."

God: Throw it on the ground."

Narrator: He threw it. It became a snake; Moses jumped back—fast!

⁴⁻⁵ **God:** "Reach out and grab it by the tail."

Narrator: He reached out and grabbed it—and he was holding his staff again.

God: "That's so they will trust that God appeared to you, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

"Put your hand inside your shirt."

Narrator: He slipped his hand under his shirt, then took it out. His hand had turned leprous, like snow.

God: "Put your hand back under your shirt."

Narrator: He did it, then took it back out—as healthy as before.

God: So if they don't trust you and aren't convinced by the first sign, the second sign should do it. But if it doesn't, if even after these two signs they don't trust you and listen to your message, take some water out of the Nile and pour it out on the dry land; the Nile water that you pour out will turn to blood when it hits the ground."

Narrator: Moses raised another objection to God:

Moses: "Master, please, I don't talk well. I've never been good with words, neither before nor after you spoke to me. I stutter and stammer."

God: "And who do you think made the human mouth? And who makes some mute, some deaf, some sighted, some blind? Isn't it I, God? So, get going. I'll be right there with you—with your mouth! I'll be right there to teach you what to say."

Moses: "Oh, Master, please! Send somebody else!"

Narrator: ¹⁴⁻¹⁷ God got angry with Moses:

God: "Don't you have a brother, Aaron the Levite? He's good with words, I know he is. He speaks very well. In fact, at this very moment he's on his way to meet you. When he sees you he's going to be glad. You'll speak to him and tell him what to say. I'll be right there with you as you speak and with him as he speaks, teaching you step by step. He will speak to the people for you. He'll act as your mouth, but you'll decide what comes out of it. Now take this staff in your hand; you'll use it to do the signs."

Fear Verses:

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:7

⁶ Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Deuteronomy 31:6

“Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished.

1 Chronicles 28:20

So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
(Isaiah 41:13)

But now, this is what the Lord says—
he who created you, Jacob,
he who formed you, Israel:
“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
(Isaiah 43:1)

Do not be afraid be glad and rejoice.
Surely the Lord has done great things!
(Joel 2:21)

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.
Luke 12:32)

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.
(Rev.1:17).

don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:31)

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