



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE—YOUTH

Year 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 3—Exodus

Lesson 1: The Story of Israel's Oppression—Exodus 1

ENCOUNTER 1—Community Discussion

Read Exodus 1 together out loud as a group. Encourage each person to journal through the passage using these questions. After allowing sufficient time for reflection, invite the group to share their thoughts.

How is this God's story?

How is this others' story?

How is this my story?

How is this the world's story?

ENCOUNTER 2—Community Discussion

(Read the biblical reflection included with this lesson. The questions are designed for your group to enter into a meaningful dialogue about the Word. The bulleted teaching points are taken from the reflection and correspond to the questions.)

GOD'S STORY

Have you ever seen someone being oppressed? Explain.

- Oppression can happen internationally, from a whole demographic or at individuals.

How have you seen others react because a person or group of people was a perceived threat to them?

- People can feel threatened in any position of power, including the workplace or in a school.

From the situations discussed, what are ways that those oppressed have thrived despite their situation?

- In recent years, the Church in oppressed nations has actually grown and leads others in terms of size, even though it is largely underground.
- Oppression can bring people closer together and help them stand up for what they know is right.

OUR STORY

Do you think the Israelites wanted to revolt against Pharaoh's oppression? Why do you think they didn't?

- The Israelites were growing to outnumber the size of the Egyptians, but they didn't have the resources the Egyptians had.

Have you ever felt like you were hated or persecuted for Christ's sake? How are you blessed if you are persecuted?

- Jesus said "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:10 from NRSV).
- Your persecution may cause others to take note of Jesus in a way they otherwise wouldn't.

OTHERS' STORY

Think of instances in history where people did something to help the oppressed?

- People hid Jews from the Nazis during World War II.
- The Underground Railroad, a vast network of safe houses and secret routes, helped fugitive slaves in the United States escape to the North and to Canada.

Why do you think someone would stand up for another group and risk their own life?

- There is often great risk in going against the group or standing up for what is right, even if it means breaking the law.
- History is also full of stories of people who risked their lives for others because they saw an injustice and chose to do something about it instead of ignoring it.

What makes a person strong enough to go against something they were told to do? Did they fear for their own life and family?

- There are some situations in culture that we shouldn't stand up for but are pressured to, especially if they violate God's commands.
- The apostle Paul spoke about one benefit of being single would be that you would be more freed up for ministry and to focus on "the Lord's affairs" (1 Corinthians 7:32).

THE WORLD'S STORY

What are you doing to become aware of the injustices in the world?

- The oppression of others can be "sensationalized" or made popular, but it's easy to turn a blind eye to a problem on the other side of the globe.
- Think, locally, nationally and internationally. Oppression is a world away, and yet right next door.
- Places to look for oppression can include schools, workplaces, social circles, and so on.

What is your reaction to another's injustice?

- You can't do everything, but don't let that stop you from doing something.
- Churches tend to take on unique relationships with missionaries and relief agencies, usually through relationships with people within their congregation who are tied to the ministry.

PRAYER

(Lead your group in corporate prayer)

*I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
I will be glad and rejoice in you;
I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.*

*My enemies turn back;
they stumble and perish before you.
For you have upheld my right and my cause,
sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.
You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.*

*Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies,
you have uprooted their cities;
even the memory of them has perished.*

*The Lord reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.
He rules the world in righteousness
and judges the peoples with equity.
The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.
Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.*

*Sing the praises of the Lord, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done.
For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.*

*Lord, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,
that I may declare your praises
in the gates of Daughter Zion,
and there rejoice in your salvation.*

*The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.
The Lord is known by his acts of justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.
The wicked go down to the realm of the dead,
all the nations that forget God.
But God will never forget the needy;
the hope of the afflicted will never perish.*

*Arise, Lord, do not let mortals triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence.
Strike them with terror, Lord;
let the nations know they are only mortal.*

(Psalm 9)

WEEKLY PRACTICE

(Read the weekly practice out loud, and challenge your group to practice *missio* beyond today.)

Often when oppression comes, we feel powerless to overcome it, or to help others overcome. Remember that Jesus said to pray for those who persecute you. Taking the high road and staying faithful to God, even while enduring oppression, is held in high importance in God's sight.

Here are some key steps to follow when you experience oppression:

- Pray for those involved, the oppressed and the oppressors; remember hurt people, hurt people.
- Pray for deliverance; deliverance comes from God, not by our own deeds.
- Share with others. Evil fears the light, bringing issues into the open with others will help strip the perceived power from those who oppress.

Most of all cling to Jesus, find refuge in Him, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

BECOMING MY STORY

(Encourage the group to spend time this week in God's Word, allowing it to penetrate their heart and life.)

Genesis 50

Hebrews 11

Spend time this week reading and journaling through the above scriptures. In the context of Exodus 1, consider the following questions:

How is what's happening around you affecting what's happening in you?

How is what's happening in you affecting what's happening around you?

Consider other passages you might know related to Exodus 1 and read them this week, journaling as you go.