

Death of Moses



Scripture Reference: [Numbers 27:12-23](#) and [Deuteronomy 31:1-8; 32:48-52; 34:1-12](#)

Suggested Theme: Moses faithfully led the Israelites and showed Joshua how to be a godly leader. We can learn from faithful Christians in our lives too.

Memory Verse: “There has never been another prophet like Moses. The Lord knew Moses face to face.” [Deuteronomy 34:10, ICB](#)

Story Overview:

As the time of Moses’ death drew near, the Lord told him to appoint Joshua as the new leader of Israel. Moses appointed Joshua and told him and all of the people to be strong and courageous because the Lord would be with them as they entered the Promised Land. Even at the age of 120, Moses was strong and had excellent vision, so the Lord directed him to climb Mount Nebo and view all of Canaan, the Promised Land. After viewing the land, Moses died.

Background Study:

[Numbers 27:12-23](#) The Lord reminded Moses that he would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. This was because he did not honour the Lord when he struck the rock in [Numbers 20:1-13](#). God always remembers His promises. In this case, it was a promise of punishment.

Moses knew how much the Israelites needed leadership. He asked the Lord to appoint a new leader so the people would have one after he died. This section of scripture does not record an actual transfer of leadership. Moses was to be the leader as long as he lived. A new leader was just to be chosen and be ready to take over after Moses’ death. Moses was told to give him some of his authority so that the people would see that he was to be obeyed ([Numbers 27:20](#)).

Joshua was chosen by the Lord. The Lord remembered Joshua’s devotion when he had been one of the twelve spies who spied out the land forty years earlier ([Numbers 13-14](#)). Ten spies did not believe that the land could be conquered. Only two (Joshua and Caleb) had reported that the enemy was strong but that they could be conquered with the Lord on their side.

Joshua had worked beside Moses for a long time. He led soldiers in battle under Moses’ orders soon after leaving Egypt ([Exodus 17:8-13](#)). He accompanied Moses part way up Mount Sinai when Moses received the Ten Commandments ([Exodus 24:12-14](#)). He was with Moses when Moses threw down the tablets of stone upon finding the Israelites worshipping the golden calf ([Exodus 32:15-19](#)). Joshua had been Moses’s aid from a young age and often took up for Moses ([Numbers 11:26-30](#)). The people would have been very familiar with Joshua, but by laying hands on him, Moses showed all of those present that Joshua would be carrying on his work.

God spoke to Moses face to face ([Numbers 12:6-8](#)), but Joshua would be led in a less direct way. He would work closely with the High Priest. The Urim ([Numbers 27:18-21](#)) was one of the tools the priest used to cast lots and find out the Lord's will.

In [Deuteronomy 31:1-8](#) Moses publicly commissioned Joshua before the people. He told them to be strong and courageous. The Lord will go before them.

[Deuteronomy 34:1-12](#)—Even though he was 120 years old, Moses had good vision and was strong enough to climb Mount Nebo. The Lord showed him all of the Promised Land before he died. [Deuteronomy 34:10-12](#) sums up the life of a great man of God. Not a perfect man, but indeed, a great man of God. This was Moses, who was born a Hebrew but raised by an Egyptian princess, who heard the voice of the Lord from a burning bush, who was the voice of God to the Pharaoh during the Ten Plagues, who led the people through the Red Sea, who was the Lord's instrument in providing water and food in the wilderness, who received the Ten Commandments and the Law, who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, who led the people to the Promised Land. *"There has never been another prophet like Moses. The Lord knew Moses face to face."* ([Deuteronomy 34:10](#)).

Way to Introduce the Story:

Help the children find the table of contents in the Bible. This is a good time to review the fact that there are 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books. 66 in total. Notice the first five books of the Old Testament. Tell older children that this group of five books is known as the "Pentateuch." These are called the Books of Law because they contain God's Ten Commandments and other important laws. Younger children could help you count to five as you point to the names. Say them together. "Does anyone know who wrote down the words of the first five books of the bible? Moses did. Moses was a very great man of the bible. He was a leader of God's people. Moses lived to be a very old man. Today we are going to remember some of the things that Moses did in his life."

The Story:

Joshua was a good helper to Moses. He had been with Moses since God led His people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. Joshua had climbed part of the way up Mount Sinai with Moses and waited for him when God gave him the Ten Commandments. Joshua had been one of the twelve spies Moses sent into the Land to see what it was like. Joshua always had faith that God would take care of His people.

Moses was now a very old man—120 years old. Even though he was still strong, he knew it was time for a new leader. He called all of the people together.

"The Lord wanted us to enter the Promised Land forty years ago, but we did not have enough faith. Only Joshua and Caleb believed that the Lord would help us. The time is coming soon to enter the Land. You must all have courage because the Lord will be with you. The Lord has told me that I will not enter the land."

(Do you remember how Moses did not honour and obey the Lord? Remember how he hit the rock instead of speaking to it, as the Lord said? That is why he could not enter the Promised Land.)

Moses continued to talk to the people, "Now is the time to appoint a new leader. He will be the one to take you into the Promised Land. Joshua will be your new leader." Moses also encouraged Joshua to have courage and to be a good leader. Moses told the people to always obey the Lord.

After Moses talked to the people, the Lord told him to climb Mount Nebo. Mount Nebo was very high, and Moses could look out and see the Jordan River. He could see the Promised Land on the other side of the river. Many old people cannot see well, but Moses had very good eyesight. He must have been very happy

to see the land the Lord promised His people. The Lord must have loved him very much to show him the land.

Moses never went inside the Promised Land. After viewing it, he died. The Bible says that the Lord buried Moses, and no one knew where his grave was. The people were very sad to lose this great leader. They knew that Joshua would be a good leader, but they remembered all of the wonderful things that Moses had done. Moses was a great man of God. (Read [Deuteronomy 34:10-12](#) straight from the Bible: “Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.”)

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow.](#) Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story, while reflection questions encourage them to internalize its meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child’s spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

Review:

1. After Moses, who was the new leader of God’s people? (Joshua)
2. Did Moses enter the Promised Land? (No)
3. Why did the Lord tell Moses to climb Mount Nebo? (So he could view the Promised Land)
4. What are the names of the five books of the Bible written by Moses? (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy)
5. What are some of the ways God used Moses as a leader? (leading the people out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, sending the Ten Plagues, receiving the Law and the Ten Commandments, asking God for water and food while in the desert, etc.)
6. Why was it important that Moses appoint another leader for the people?

Reflection:

1. What do you think the Promised Land (Canaan) looked like from tall Mount Nebo?
2. What made Moses a good leader?
3. How would you feel if you were Joshua and had to lead a large nation like Israel after the past leader died?
4. Why do you think God chose Joshua to be the next leader of Israel?
5. Moses had to do many hard things while he was leading the Israelites. What do you think was the hardest thing Moses did while leading Israel?

6. Do you know any leaders you respect? Why are they a good leader?
7. Do you think you are a leader? How do you think you could grow into a more godly leader?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

Song Suggestions:

- [My God is So Big Song](#)
- [I'm in the Lord's Army Song](#) (Moses was in the Lord's Army)
- [B-I-B-L-E](#)
- [Books of the Old Testament](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- [How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.](#)
- [Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.](#)

Activities:

- Obtain a poster like the ones doctors use for vision tests (or you can make one yourself). Let the children test their vision to see if theirs is good like Moses' was.
- Play "Follow the Leader" and then discuss that Moses was a leader of God's people.
- Collect a number of items that represent different events in the life of Moses (examples: basket, water—as if from the Nile, leaves from a bush, any items from the plagues, etc.) Place all of these items on the table and let the children take turns picking them up and talking about that part of Moses' life. Alternatively, place them in a box or pillowcase and let them draw them out.
- Older children can make up a job description for a good leader for the Israelites. Examples: "A leader must be honest, dependable, a hard worker, etc." Discuss how Moses and then Joshua qualify for the position.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable "God's Story" printable reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Crafts:

- Draw or enlarge a silhouette of Moses. As the children say things concerning the life of Moses, then write those in the silhouette (examples: basket, Miriam, burning bush, Red Sea, Ten Commandments, good vision, etc.)

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. [Free printables for this story.](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page Death of Moses & puzzle worksheets \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page Joshua & puzzle worksheets \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page of Joshua leading the people \(Bible-Printables\)](#)
- [Other: Map showing Egypt \(Bible-Printables\)](#)

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Date

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