



LONG STORY SHORT

A Year through the Bible

Reflection Guide

New Commands & New Covenant: Exodus 19–40 Exploring the Story, Chapter 5

Now that God has rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, God begins to fashion a people to receive the promise God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through the covenant—and all the laws that go with it—God makes with Israel on Mt. Sinai, God begins the formation of a people who will display for the whole world the blessings of being in covenant with God.

MONDAY

Read: Exodus 19

Reflect: This chapter (especially 19:4-6) links the story of Israel's escape from slavery to the covenant God will make with the Israelites. It tells the history of Israel and the identity Israel will have in the future. What do you think it means when God says the Israelites will be a "kingdom of priests" and God's "holy nation"? What might a "kingdom of priests" and a "holy nation" look like in your community?

Respond: Reflect on what it might mean for you to live as God's treasured possession. In prayer, take comfort and rest in your status as God's treasured possession.

TUESDAY

Read: Exodus 20:1–21; 22:21–27; 23:1–13, 20–32

Reflect: The covenant God makes with the Israelites includes the responsibility of keeping the Law, consisting of the Ten Commandments and other regulations that governed every aspect of Israel's life. Why do you think God gave the Law to Israel? As you read these laws, about what does God seem to be most concerned? What, if anything, do these laws reveal to you about God's character?

Respond: Memorize the Ten Commandments (20:1–17). Thank God for the gift of the Law and that God is concerned with every aspect of our lives.

WEDNESDAY

Read: Exodus 24

Reflect: After the people promise to obey the Law, Moses consecrates Israel, setting them apart as a special people who will display to the world God's goodness and love. Moses and the Elders meet with God on Mt. Sinai and enjoy intimacy with God. How, if at all do you try to discern the will of God? What challenges, if any, do you face in obeying God's will? How, if at all, do you think obedience and intimacy with God are related?

Respond: In prayer, ask for clarity in discerning God's will and the discipline to obey God's will

THURSDAY

Read: Exodus 25:1–22; 31

Reflect: Today's readings bookend the detailed instructions for building the "Tabernacle," a mobile dwelling place for God among the people of Israel. Read 25:21–22. What, if anything, do you think is significant about the covenant God makes with Israel being the place God meets with the people? Where, if at all, do you most easily detect God's presence?

Respond: Reflect on God's desire to dwell among the Israelites. What does this tell you about who God is? What does this tell you about who you are?

FRIDAY

Read: Exodus 32–33

Reflect: Once again, the promise is threatened—this time by idolatry, worshipping other gods. Almost as soon as Israel promises to obey the covenant, Israel begins worshipping a golden calf. Moses begs God to forgive them, invoking the promise God had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What, if anything, tempts you to place your faith in something other than God? Reflect on the relationship between God and Moses, particularly in 33:11 and 33:17. How, if at all, would your life be different if you lived confident that you could "speak to God as a friend" and that God "knows you by name"?

Respond: If you knew you could speak to God as one speaks to a friend, how would your prayers change? Today, talk to God as you would to an old friend. Take note of what is different and what stays the same.

SATURDAY

Read: Exodus 34

Reflect: After the Golden Calf incident and Moses' intervention, God renews the covenant with Israel. When Moses returns from Mt. Sinai, his face shines because he had been speaking with God. Are there certain activities, times, or places that make it easier or more difficult for you to detect God's presence? What differences, if any, do you notice in yourself when you have regularly been in God's presence?

Respond: Reflect on your faith journey. How have you changed as you have progressed in your journey?

SUNDAY

Read: Exodus 40

Reflect: The climax of the book of Exodus comes at the end, when Moses has completed the Tabernacle, the glory of God descends, and God dwells among the people. Israel would follow the cloud throughout their time in the wilderness; where the cloud went, so did Israel. Do you find it easy or difficult to know where God is leading you? How, if at all, do you try to discern God's call?

Respond: In prayer, ask God for the ability to discern God's will and the courage to follow where God is leading you.