

Role Play Script: The Sin Of Moses

For use with Num. 20:1-14 and Deut. 34:1-5 | www.Jeanfurgal.org

Picture the scene. This role play describes an event in the story of the Israelites' 40 years of wandering in the Sinai desert. The date is sometime between 1350 B.C. and 1250 B.C. It was during those years that Yahweh began teaching the Israelites how to be His People.

Then read the bible story aloud. These texts are located on page 5-6.

1. As you direct each scene, first do a walk-through.
2. After the walk-through, ask your actors to perform the scene.

Scene 1 – The People Protest

Moses and Aaron are seated together.

Israelites approach Moses in twos and threes. Practice aggressive postures: shaking fists, hands on hips, etc.

Each actor in the role play assaults Moses with a complaint. Moses sympathizes. He tells each he will ask Yahweh for help.

Scene 2 – Telling God The Problem

Moses and Aaron move to stage center and stop alongside God's tent.

Yahweh is out of site behind the teacher's desk. All of Yahweh's line are spoken through the cardboard megaphone.

Moses and Aaron relay the complaints of the people to God. Aaron should do most of the talking.

Yahweh expresses concern and instructs Moses to take the staff, call the people together, then command the rock to give forth a generous stream of water.

Scene 3 – Moses Boasts Before The People

Moses calls to the Israelites and asks them to gather before him. Aaron is at his side. Group the Israelites stage left as they arrive. Instruct each Israelite to think of three comments to say:

First, a sarcastic comment when the water does not flow.
Second, an exclamation of joy for the water.
Third, an expression of gratitude to Moses for the water.

Moses walks tall and throws out his chest as he faces the Hebrews. As he brags, ask Moses to emphasize the words, “rebels,” and “we.”

Moses

“Listen, you *rebels*, must *we* bring water out of this rock for you?”

Moses approaches the rock drawn on the blackboard and strikes it.

Nothing happens.

The crowd is silent for a moment. Then the people start to jeer and deliver their sarcastic remarks.

Moses strikes the rock again, harder.

Teacher tapes the blue paper, cut in the shape of a stream, to the rock on the blackboard.

Israelites rush to the 'water.'

They fill their cups with pretend water.
Some drink right away.
Some pour it over their heads.
Playfully, they splash 'water' on one another.

Then, to each other, the people express their joy for the water.

Finally, as they return to their tents, they stop before Moses, bow to him, and thank him profusely.

Moses and Aaron are all smiles. They enact a dramatic high-five.

Scene 4 – God Admonishes Moses

Moses and Aaron are standing near the rock when God calls to Moses.

God:

(Speaks from behind the desk in a stern voice.)

Moses, why did you boast that you would cause the rock to give water? Why did you strike the rock? What command did I give you?

Moses:

(Thinks, scratches his head.)

My Lord, You told me to tell the rock to give water.

God:

Yes, Moses. I told you to speak to the rock, not to strike it.

Moses:

Ohhh... I don't know why I struck the rock, Lord. *(Pause.)*

Remember years ago at Rephidim when we had no water? You told me to strike a certain rock with my staff. Maybe I did the same here.

God:

Who made the water come from the rock? Did you think your striking it would cause water to flow? Who is the servant, and Who is the Lord?

Moses:

Oh, my Lord, I was so angry! The people were shouting insults and I did not think. Lord, I am a strong willed man and sometimes I act impulsively. *(Pause.)* My Lord, *(Pause.)* You made me that way.

God:

That is true. But Moses, I also made you capable of controlling your emotions. And, you failed to do so. The leader of My Kingdom on earth cannot allow his anger to separate himself from Me.

Moses:

My Lord, I do not know why You are so upset. What difference does it make if I spoke to the rock or if I struck it?

God:

Because of your boast, because you struck the rock so vigorously, My People believe the water came from your power. Now, they bow to you, not Me.

Moses:

Oh, My Lord, I am sorry. Please forgive me.

God:

I accept your apology. But acting as if you are God is a serious sin. And so, with great regret, I must say to you: you will not lead My People into the Promised Land.

Moses:

(Shocked.)

My Lord, that is too harsh! For 80 years I have served You faithfully. How can You deny me this reward?

God:

Yes, you have served Me well, Moses. But today, not only did you strike the rock, you also resorted to name-calling. That is when I realized your time as the leader of My People has ended.

Moses:

(Does not realize what he did.)

Name-calling...?

(Moses shakes his head.)

God:

Yes. Today you called My People 'rebels.'

(God pauses. Then, thoughtfully:)

You are an impulsive man Moses, but you are also a very good and loyal man. You deserve a rich reward. I will do this much: there is a mountain near the border. We will go to the top of Mount Nebo together. From there, you will see the Promised Land.

...But another man, Joshua, will lead My People into the Promised Land. Will you be content with that?

Moses:

Yes Lord. That will satisfy me.

God:

Tomorrow then. Come to Me at dawn.

Moses:

Yes, Lord.

(Moses bows, walks to his tent and sits down.)

The Israelites Complain Again

20 Then the entire community of Israel entered the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. Miriam died and was buried there.

² And there was no water for the community, and so they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron. ³ The people contended with Moses, saying, "If only we had died when our brothers died before the Lord! ⁴ Why have you brought up the Lord's community into this wilderness? So that we and our cattle should die here? ⁵ Why have you brought us up from Egypt only to bring us to this dreadful place? It is no place for grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink!"

Moses Responds

⁶ So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance to the tent of meeting. They then threw themselves down with their faces to the ground, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. ⁷ Then the Lord spoke to Moses: ⁸ "Take the staff and assemble the community, you and Aaron your brother, and then speak to the rock before their eyes. It will pour forth its water, and you will bring water out of the rock for them, and so you will give the community and their beasts water to drink."

⁹ So Moses took the staff from before the Lord, just as he commanded him. ¹⁰ Then Moses and Aaron gathered the community together in front of the rock, and he said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring water out of this rock for you?" ¹¹ Then Moses raised his hand, and struck the rock twice with his staff. And water came out abundantly. So the community drank, and their beasts drank too.

The Lord's Judgment

¹² Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust me enough to show me as holy before the Israelites, therefore you will not bring this community into the land I have given them."

The Death of Moses

34 Then Moses ascended from the deserts of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. The Lord showed him the whole land—Gilead to Dan,² and all of Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the distant sea,³ the Negev, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of the date palm trees, as far as Zoar.⁴ Then the Lord said to him, “This is the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have let you see it, but you will not cross over there.”⁵ So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab as the Lord had said.
