

“Baby Moses”
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By Marianne Brock

The children were all waiting patiently in their seats in the Sunday School room.

They were very surprised when the teacher walked in on only two legs.



“Good morning, class. I’m Pastor Hagrid, from the Presbyterian Church down the street. Pastor Ed and I are having a pulpit exchange today. He and his family are with my congregation this morning and I will be here with you. Let’s begin by taking the roll.”

“Barabas Heffelfinger?” There was no answer.

“Elizabeth Mawakasunga?” Again, no answer.

“Hamand Potato Head? Polly Potato Head?” Still nothing.

“Running Chairs?” There was a little bit of scuffling in the room, but still no one answered.

Pastor Hagrid looked up from the attendance book with a frown and asked, “Is this some kind of joke on the substitute? Why is no one answering?”



One of the children raised his hand and said, “I can’t be sure about this or anything Pastor Hagrid, but my guess would be that there are a lot of people out of town because it’s the last weekend before school starts. But, as I said, I can’t be sure, because my family is new in town and we’re looking for a church home. We heard that this one has good snacks after worship, so we’re giving it a try. And my name’s William Joseph. But don’t write it in that book because I don’t know if we’re coming back next week.”

“Thank you, William,” said Pastor Hagrid, “Who else do we have with us today? I don’t think any of you are in the book.”

There were two children who looked very much alike. The older of the two stood up and cleared his throat. “Hello, Pastor. My name is Bert and this is my sister Mary. We’re visiting our grandparents. They’re in the adult Sunday School and they said we would enjoy this class.”

His sister said, “Our grandma said the teacher was a lady with long black hair. You don’t look like a lady.”

“Shhh,” said her brother.

Pastor Hagrid looked at the last child who just smiled back at him. “Who are you young man, and what’s your story?”

“I’m Evan,” the boy said. “I’m visiting today, too. I usually go to another Lutheran church. My mom heard that one of the pastors here is ‘exceptionally handsome,’ and she wanted to check him out.”

“Interesting,” said Pastor Hagrid, “We should probably get started with the lesson. Let’s see, the Sunday School Teacher asked me to tell you the story of Moses in the bulrushes.”

Mary began to giggle quietly.

“A long time ago, the people of Israel were living in Egypt, where they were slaves. Pharaoh did not care for the Israelites and did not always treat them well. He even passed a law that said that all Israelite baby boys should be killed.”

Mary was still giggling, and even though she wasn’t making much noise, her whole body was starting to shake. That happens sometimes when we can’t laugh out loud... especially in church.

“Moses’ mother loved her little boy very much and she couldn’t bear to have him found by Pharaoh, so she wrapped him up in a basket and put him in the Nile River to float in the bulrushes.”

As soon as Pastor Hagrid had said the word “bulrushes,” Mary could no longer contain her laughter and she let out a huge blast and fell over, laughing.

“Mary, would you care to share with the rest of the class?” asked Pastor Hagrid.

“I’m so sorry, Pastor,” said Mary, “It’s just that, when I was little, I thought that Moses was set out to float in the *bowl brushes*, you know, like toilet bowl brushes? And I never understood why the Egyptians put their bowl brushes in the river OR how that would help save Baby Moses. And even though I now know that it was really *bulrushes* (which are plants that grow in the water), I just can’t get the picture of Moses and the bowl brushes out of my head and it just makes me laugh. I’m sorry. I’ll try to focus.”

“Yes. Please do,” said Pastor Hagrid.

William raised his hand and asked, “Excuse me Pastor. But if Moses’ mother loved him so much, why in the world would she have put him in a basket in the river? That’s dangerous! My mother would NEVER do that to me!”

“Good question, William. It’s not as crazy as it sounds. Moses’ mother knew that Pharaoh’s daughter would be coming by very soon and that she would find the baby and want to keep him for herself. So rather than sending Moses to die, his mother found a way for him to have a new life...”

Evan put his hand up and began to speak before Pastor Hagrid had a chance to continue. “In the story of Noah, I learned that all of the people on the earth were supposed to die in a flood, but God saved Noah and his family from the flood water. It seems to me that God likes to use water to give people a second chance. And, I think, if you go back and check the original Hebrew, you’ll find that the word for basket and ark are the same.”

“That’s true,” said Pastor Hagrid, “But we’re not talking about Noah right now. We’re talking about Moses. Let’s get back to our story. Now, Moses was in a basket in the bowl brushes, er, BULrushes when along came Pharaoh’s daughter...”

“Pastor?” said Bert, also without waiting to be called upon, “I think I remember another time when God used water to give Moses and the people new life or a second chance or whatever we’re calling it.”

“What would that be?” said Pastor Hagrid with a big sigh.

“Well, there’s that really exciting part of the story when Moses is leading the people out of Egypt – I guess he’s a lot older by that time – and Pharaoh’s army is chasing them and they get to the Red Sea and Moses raises his arms and the sea parts and all the people walk across. There are a whole lot of them in the picture in my bible -- I wish I had brought it along to show you because it’s a really cool picture. And then, when they get to the other side, God makes the sea go back together and all of the army drowns – even the horses – which I don’t think was necessary because the horses didn’t do anything wrong. But anyway, the Israelites were safe and they were able to leave Egypt and go to the Promised Land.”

“Thank you, Bert,” said the pastor, “Does anyone else have anything to add before we finish up?”

Evan raised his hand again. “I think that God STILL uses water to give people a second chance. We could never be good and clean enough on our own to be worthy of God’s love. But when we’re baptized, God calls us and claims us as His children and washes away our sins with water. The water gives us new life; we get a second chance, just like Moses got when Pharaoh’s daughter adopted him.”

The pastor looked at Evan. “Did you say you were a...”

“Pastor’s kid,” said Evan, nodding.

“Oh my, look at the time,” said Pastor Hagrid. “It’s almost time for worship. Are there any other questions?”

“Just one,” said Mary, “Will the regular Sunday School Teacher be back next week?”

Pastor Hagrid mopped the perspiration from his forehead and said, “Let’s hope ALL the regular people are back next week.”