



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 1: Seen and Heard

Suggested Week of Use: December 1, 2024

Core Passage: Exodus 2:23-25; 3:7-15

News Story Summary

When Hurricane Helene roared through the small town of Burnsville, North Carolina on September 27, Nan Collins watched helplessly as the floodwaters (20 feet above normal) swept the family's camper down the river. To her horror, she saw that her cat, named Ricardo Blanco, was on top of it. She then watched as the camper bumped into a house (also afloat) and knocked Ricardo into the river. The Collins family searched seven days for the missing cat, but their task was made much more difficult without phones or internet. Nan was sure the cat was gone for good. But on the eighth day, her son heard a weak "meow" coming from their roof as he was sifting through debris strewn over their property. Ricardo Blanco had found his way home.

For more about this story, search "Ricardo Blanco Cat." (Note: There is a soccer player with the same name, so specify "cat" in the search.)

Engage

To replace the "Engage" activity, invite adults to share stories of searching for a missing pet. Ask: *What methods did you use to try to find your pet? If you were successful, how did it happen?* Summarize the news story about Ricardo Blanco's disappearance and discovery. Share that this session highlights how God recognized the plight of His people and responded with a plan to bring them back to Him. Note that, like the cat, they cried out and were heard. Encourage the group to think about how God hears the cries of His people and to consider crying out to Him about their own needs.

Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activity, remind the group of Ricardo, the "miracle" cat. Emphasize that the Collins family may never have recovered the cat had they not heard its cries. Encourage group members to share anything they have been tempted to give up praying about. Remind them that just as Nan Collins' son heard the cries of Ricardo Blanco, God heard the cries of the enslaved Israelites in Egypt. Encourage them not to give up crying out to God. Close in prayer, providing adults with a few minutes for silent cries to God.