



Weaving God's Promises

LESSON 6

The Passover and Exodus from Egypt

Summary of Today's Story

When Pharaoh refuses to free the Israelite people, God sends a series of plagues upon the Egyptians. Following the last devastating plague, which claims the life of the Egyptian firstborn, the pharaoh finally releases the Israelites.

The first Passover is observed at this time, during the night of the tenth plague. God promises that death will “pass over” the houses of the Israelites who properly observe the rituals of the Passover.

The next day, the people, led by Moses, leave Egypt and cross the Red Sea, which miraculously parts to let them pass. The water then washes over the Egyptian army that is pursuing them.

Where You'll Find Today's Story

In the Bible

We recommend the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*.

Exodus 7:14-14:31 (from the plagues to the Exodus)

In Children's Bibles

If you plan to use a children's Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers of today's story in the space below.

In Our Sunday Lectionary

Today's story is told in church at these times:

Year B:

Maundy Thursday

Great Vigil of Easter



Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

This part of the Moses story takes us to the other side of the Red Sea. It includes the ten plagues, the first Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea.

These are important events; the first Passover needs to be understood in order for us to understand how Jesus' Last Supper (when he celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples) replaces the Passover for us and how Jesus becomes the Paschal (Passover) Lamb in his sacrifice on the cross.

The *Pesach* (Passover) is one of the most important feasts of the Jewish year. Its tradition of unleavened bread and the rest of the Passover meal (the Seder) is important in our own tradition as well.

Through all of these trials, the Israelites do indeed become God's chosen people.

This is the great story of liberation for all oppressed and enslaved peoples of the world. In this story, we see clearly how God cares for those who are poor and oppressed and how God wishes for all to be free.

Now the people of God are on their way to Sinai to find the meaning of this Exodus in the Ten Commandments, the Law that God gives to them in making them God's people. In this powerful story, we see very clearly how God leads us and how *God stays with us, no matter what.*



The Episcopal Thread

The numerous references to the Exodus experience in our Easter hymns attest to the connection that we make between the freedom gained by the Israelites in crossing the Red Sea and the

freedom that we gained by Jesus' crossing from death to life in his resurrection.

Where the Paschal blood is poured,
death's dark angel sheathes his sword;
Israel's hosts triumphant go
through the wave that drowns the foe.

— Hymn 174 (*The Hymnal* 1982, New York, NY: Church Publishing, 1985)

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain
of triumphant gladness!
God hath brought his Israel
into joy from sadness;
loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke
Jacob's sons and daughters,
led them with unmoistened foot
through the Red Sea waters.

— Hymn 199/200 (*The Hymnal* 1982, New York, NY: The Church Pension Fund, 1985)

There are also many other places in our *Prayer Book* that remind us of the Exodus from Egypt. One of the canticles for Morning Prayer, Canticle 8, is the Song of Moses from Exodus 15.

The Exodus is referred to in our Baptismal Covenant in the Thanksgiving Over the Water (*BCP*, pp. 306-307). The story of the Passover is the Old Testament reading on Maundy Thursday, when we observe the institution of the Last Supper and the Eucharist by Jesus.

And the account of the Exodus, of the nine readings listed, is the only required reading of our salvation history at the Great Vigil of Easter (*BCP*, p. 289).

And again at the Easter Vigil, in what is called the *Exsultet*—the glorious chant of praise to God for the coming of light from darkness in the rising of Jesus Christ—we say:

This is the night when you brought our fathers,
the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt,

and led them through the Red Sea on dry land.
(BCP, pp. 286-287)

Finally, we make our connection to this great Passover when, at the breaking of the bread at Holy Eucharist, the priest loudly proclaims, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." This is when we recognize the connection, as this Easter hymn says:

The day of resurrection!
Earth, tell it out abroad;
the Passover of gladness,
the Passover of God.

— Hymn 210 (*The Hymnal 1982*, New York, NY:
The Church Pension Fund, 1985)



Weaving God's Beloved Community

The Israelites are liberated from slavery and escape from Pharaoh's nightmare of scarcity and towards God's dream of abundance, from a tyrant's hateful society towards God's beloved community.

Of course we too want God's promises. For people who still inhabit a society like Pharaoh's, it would entail major upheaval: liberation from their oppression, travel as a refugee from their land, and the hope of being welcomed into a new land. And for all people in every country, God's Beloved Community involves an equitable sharing of resources among all. Pharaoh's slave society exemplifies the extreme condition of inequity.

Topics that can be discussed with children:

Pretend a new child has just come into your classroom. What can you do to make the new student feel welcome?

If you see somebody at lunch who doesn't have any food, what in your lunchbox or lunch tray would

you be willing to share, so that they have enough to eat?



Gathering

As the children come into the room, have them do a simple activity that relates to

today's lesson.

Younger children could make simple props for today's storytelling time. Provide balloon sticks or craft sticks and blue streamers or ribbons of different hues to make "Red Sea waves" (similar to the "burning bushes" the children may have made in Lesson 5). Help the children cut several strips of streamers about 2' long and staple or tape them to one end of a stick. When you tell the story of the Red Sea crossing, the children can make "waves" with the ribbons.

For older children, you might provide puzzle sheets related to today's story. (You'll find an online resource for creating puzzles on page 2 in the Appendix, also found on the Website.) Or you might simply allow the children a brief fellowship time, giving them an opportunity to visit with each other and build community.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather together and say a simple opening prayer. For this lesson, you might read the Song of Moses (Canticle 8), found on page 85 in *The Book of Common Prayer*.



Telling the Story

Read aloud today's story from a children's Bible, showing the pictures, tell the story in your own words, or read from the versions of the story we provide, found on pages 8-18. (You will find both a rhymed version and a prose version of today's story.)

There are three parts to this story: the plagues, the Passover and the Red Sea crossing. You may first want to review the previous lesson, which is the first part of this great story of Moses leading his people to freedom from slavery in Egypt.

There is a lot of fear in this story—and also a lot of trust. Dramatize your storytelling to bring out these emotive elements.

This story is riveting on its own. However, if you want to add to the excitement, try one or more of these suggestions:

- If children made story props during today's Gathering, invite them to use them when you tell the story of the Red Sea crossing.
- Invite the children to act out the story as you tell it, being the people who experience the plagues (as Egyptians or as Israelites), eating the meal as they wait for the tenth plague to strike the firstborn of Egypt, and crossing the parted Red Sea with the Egyptian army close behind them.
- Have children accompany you with appropriate sound effects or motions, such as Moses raising his arms wide or Pharaoh raising his fist in the air.
- Tell the story interactively. Instruct the children to listen for key words as you read or tell the story and then to respond as follows when they hear these words:

<i>Moses</i>	Come, my people!
<i>God</i>	I will save you.
<i>Pharaoh</i>	Come back here!
<i>People</i>	Moses, help us!
<i>Army</i>	We will rock you!
<i>Chariots</i>	Make the sound of chariot wheels

Let the children hear the story without analyzing it for them or asking them to explore its meaning. For now, simply let the story sink into their minds and hearts. Later, while having snacks, you can bring up the story again and invite the children to talk about it.



Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your classroom.

Materials

- small table with a cloth to cover it
- 2 candles or a single large Christ candle
- matches
- Bible
- cross
- optional:* flowers (real, fake or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Read one or two verses from today's scripture to help the children connect the story that they just heard with the Bible. If working with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

For younger children: Exodus 13:9-10; or Exodus 14:21-22

For older children: 12:1-11; Exodus 12:24-27; Exodus 13:9-10; or Exodus 14:19-29

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the book of Exodus:
(*Read the selected passage.*)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Ask for prayers of thanksgiving to God for God's work in our lives during the past week. It is important for the children to recognize God's hand in our daily lives and to connect our doings with God's work through us.
- Welcome prayers for anyone in need, whether they be prayers for themselves, for family or friends, or for those in the community, the nation or the world. Prayers for others help children look beyond themselves and ask for God's guidance and blessings in the larger world.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special occasions.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.



Sharing

Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as this one

from our Prayer Book:

- Blessed are you, O Lord God, King of the Universe, for you give us food to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, p. 835)

Or share a favorite grace that you or one of the children say at home.

This is a good time, while sharing a snack, to begin discussing the story of Moses and the Israelites' escape from Egypt. Talk about miracles may dominate this conversation, for God came forth with many.

Share this story:

When God sent the Red Sea to close in upon the Egyptians and the Israelites were then truly free, the angels cheered for the liberation of the Israelites. Then they turned around and saw God crying. "Why?" they asked. God answered, "Because the Egyptians are my children, too, and I loved them."



Activities: Arts, Crafts, Games, Drama, etc.

After the Sharing, begin an activity to supplement and enhance today’s story. While the children are doing an activity, talk about the story so they make the connection.

Suggested story-related activities are provided at the end of this lesson. In addition, dramatization of the story would be an excellent activity for this lesson. You’ll find several suggestions of ways to act out a story on page 6 in the Appendix.

If the children started the Story Mural in Lesson 5, today they should add pictures that tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. You will find complete directions for the Story Mural on page 36 in the Activity section at the end of Lesson 5.

Additional activity ideas can be found on pages 3-6 in the Appendix where we’ve provided suggestions and directions for a variety of general activities that can be adapted to any lesson. Also included are outreach and service projects that can be done at any time.



THREADS Take-Home Paper

At the end of this lesson you will find a two-page take-home paper for families called *Threads*. *Threads* provides parents with a briefer version of the information on scripture and Episcopal faith found in the introduction to the lesson, as well as multiple suggestions for household activities and prayer. Parents can use *Threads* to continue each child’s classroom experience at home throughout the week. We suggest duplicating and distributing these two pages to children and/or their parents at the end of each lesson.

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS WEEK’S SESSION



Memorization

By now, intermediate children should begin to know the books of the Bible, especially the books of the Old Testament. Next week, we will be asking them to begin learning the Ten Commandments. These memorized verses or information constitute the backbone of our Bible knowledge, so they should be learned and remembered.

Suggestions for ways to help the children with their memorization can be found on page 15 in the Appendix, also found on the Website.



Weaving Our Faith

As the class draws to a close, help the children weave the different strands of today's story together with their own experiences, ideas and thoughts.

Ask questions such as:

- What was today's story about?
- What did we learn?
- What important things did God do?
- What did we learn about God in this story?

To help the children recall the main points of the lesson, you may prompt them with the key words, such as:

- *Passover*
- *freedom*
- *Red Sea*



Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes with God's love and blessing. The prayer can be very simple and straightforward, like this one:

- Thank you, Lord, for your love and mercy that you show us, your people. Thank you for guiding us and showing us how to live more closely with you by giving us your Ten Commandments. Please stay with us as we return to our homes, loving you and loving our neighbors as ourselves. We ask this in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

End the class with a dismissal that is used in church, such as:

- The peace of the Lord be always with you.

The children respond:

- And also with you.



Weaving God's Promises

THE EXODUS: ESCAPE FROM EGYPT

(Rhymed Version)

This is the brown and billowy sand
That covers the great Egyptian land.

This is the sun, like fire hanging low,
That bakes the sand to a sizzling glow,
The sweeping brown and billowy sand
That covers the great Egyptian land.

These are Egyptians, haughty and grim,
Whose pyramids lie in the sun, so dim,
The sun like a fiery ball hanging low
That bakes the sand to a sizzling glow,
The sweeping brown and billowy sand
That covers the great Egyptian land.

These are the Hebrew slaves, downtrodden but proud;
They build the pyramids touching the clouds
For the Egyptians so haughty and grim
Whose pyramids lie in the sun, so dim,
The sun like a fiery ball hanging low
That bakes the sand to a sizzling glow,
The sweeping brown and billowy sand
That covers the great Egyptian land.

This is the Pharaoh, ruler of might,
Who makes the Hebrews work all day and night;
The Hebrew slaves, downtrodden but proud,

Who build the pyramids touching the clouds
For the Egyptians so haughty and grim
Whose pyramids lie in the sun, so dim,
The sun like a fiery ball hanging low
That bakes the sand to a sizzling glow,
The sweeping brown and billowy sand
That covers the great Egyptian land.

This is Moses, chosen by God
To free God's people from the Pharaoh's rod,
The Pharaoh, ruling the Hebrews with might
By making them work all day and night;
The Hebrew slaves, downtrodden but proud,
Who build the pyramids touching the clouds,
For the Egyptians so haughty and grim
Whose pyramids lie in the sun, so dim,
The sun like a fiery ball hanging low,
That bakes the sand to a sizzling glow,
The sweeping brown and billowy sand
That covers the great Egyptian land.

This is a bush, burning bright with great noise,
That speaks to Moses with God's own voice.
The voice tells Moses he's chosen by God
To free God's people from the Pharaoh's rod,
The Pharaoh, who rules the Hebrews with might
By making them work all day and night,
Poor Hebrews, the slaves downtrodden but proud,
Who build the pyramids touching the clouds,
For the Egyptians so haughty and grim,
Whose pyramids lie in the sun, so dim,
The sun like a fiery ball hanging low,
That bakes the sand to a sizzling glow,
The sweeping brown and billowy sand

That covers the great Egyptian land.

Moses says: LET MY PEOPLE GO!

And Pharaoh answers: NEVER!

These are the plagues that God sent to the land
To move Pharaoh's heart and soften his stand.

The first plague: Water, turned into blood.

The second plague: Frogs, frogs like a flood.

The third plague: Gnats, in their food and their clothes.

The fourth plague: Flies all around them, from their head to their toes.

The fifth plague: The Egyptian's animals—all dead.

The sixth plague: Hail, falling like lead.

The seventh plague: Locusts, millions that fall.

The eighth plague: Darkness, that blinded them all.

The ninth plague: The people, covered with sores.

The Egyptian people could stand it no more.

The people then plead, "Let them go, let them go!"

But still the Pharaoh tells Moses "No!"

The tenth plague fall on the Egyptian sons.

The firstborn were dead when the night is done.

This is the Pharaoh, mourning and crying.

He just buried his son. His heart is dying.

"Go," he says. "Go quickly! You're free!

Worship God, pray for us, and let us be."

These are the Hebrews, free people now,

Leaving Egypt with their sheep and their cows,

Led by Moses, who was chosen by God

To free God's people from the Pharaoh's rod;

The Pharaoh, no longer willing to fight

To make the Hebrews work for him day and night.

The Hebrews are not slaves but God's chosen and proud,

They'll build their own promised land under the clouds,
Leaving the Egyptians so haughty and grim,
With their pyramids in the sun, so dim,
The sun like a fiery ball hanging low,
That bakes the sand to a sizzling glow,
The sweeping brown and billowy sand
That covers the great Egyptian land.

This is the deep water of the great Red Sea.
Past the waters, the Hebrews will surely be free.

But wait! They can't cross—it's too deep and too wide,
And here comes Pharaoh's army, in chariots they ride.
"Help us!" The Hebrews to Moses all cry.
"Between the Egyptians and the Red Sea, we'll surely die!"

This is Moses, with his arms spread wide.
And lo! The waters rise up and divide!
The Hebrews, free and praising God now,
Leaving Egypt with their sheep and their cows,
Led by Moses, who was chosen by God
To free God's people from the Pharaoh's rod;
The Pharaoh, who had ruled the people with might
By making them work all day and all night.
The Hebrews are not slaves, but God's chosen and proud;
They'll build their own promised land under the clouds,
Leaving the Egyptians so haughty and grim,
Whose pyramids lie in the sun, so dim,
The sun like a fiery ball hanging low,
That bakes the sand to a sizzling glow,
The sweeping brown and billowy sand
That covers the great Egyptian land.

This is Pharaoh's army watching the Red Sea divide
As the Hebrews step safely to the other side.
They enter the sea, getting ready to chase them,
When Moses makes the waters come together again.
The horses and riders are thrown into the sea!
God has saved his people! His people are free!
God has found us and saved us! With love God came.
Sing to the Lord! Praise to God's name!

EXODUS 7:14-14:31

(Prose Version)

Pharaoh says No

God's people, the Hebrews, are still slaves in the land of Egypt. The Pharaoh will not set them free, even when Moses asks again and again: "Let my people go!" Finally, the time has come for the people to be free.

Moses is God's messenger, to talk to Pharaoh. Because Moses thinks he is a bad speaker, God lets Aaron, Moses' brother, do most of the talking. God tells them what to say and do. Together, Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh's palace. God is with them.

First, Aaron throws his stick down onto the ground and it turns into a snake. Maybe Pharaoh will see this trick and be afraid, and then let the people go. But then Pharaoh calls his own magicians, and they turn their sticks into snakes. Aaron's snake then swallows up the other snakes. But Pharaoh just sits on his throne and holds his head up.

"Now will you let my people go?" says Moses. "No!" says Pharaoh.

God plagues the Egyptians

So God makes ten bad things happen to Egypt. They are called "The Ten Plagues" because a plague is a very bad sickness or evil. First, Moses tells Pharaoh what God is about to do, saying "God says, 'Let my people go.' If you do not, God will make you miserable by sending a plague to you."

The first plague happens to the water. God turns all of Egypt's water into blood. The water in their pools, their ponds and lakes, their bottles and water pitchers all turn into blood. The people cannot drink. The fish in the river die, and the river stinks. There is blood, blood everywhere—every place where there was water.

The Pharaoh says, "I don't care. Your people stay here as my slaves."

Then God sends frogs—not just a few frogs, but thousands of frogs, millions

of frogs, frogs *everywhere*. There are frogs in the river and frogs in the bedrooms and frogs in bed. There are frogs in the kitchens and in the cooking pots. When people open their oven, they find it full of frogs. When they go to bed, they find frogs on their pillows. When they walk, they step all over frogs.

At first the Pharaoh says, “Take away these icky frogs and I will let the people go.” Suddenly, all of the frogs die where they are—in the houses and yards, in the fields and the river. The whole land stinks of dead frog. But as soon as the frogs are gone, he changes his mind.

Moses says, “*Now* will you let my people go?” “No!” says Pharaoh.

Then God sends gnats, teeny flying insects—the third plague. This is how God does it. Aaron takes his stick and hits the dust and all of the dust in Egypt turns into gnats. The gnats land on the people and on the animals. Like dust, they cover everyone and everything. The whole land is one big swarm of gnats. But still...

Moses says, “*Now* will you let my people go?” “No!” says Pharaoh.

Then God sends flies, a gazillion flies—the fourth plague. The flies get into everything—into people’s clothes, into their backpacks, into their water jars. When someone opens their mouth, a fly flies in. When someone wakes up in the morning, there are flies all over their blanket. When someone puts on their shoes, they step on the flies in the shoes. The flies cover the land like a giant black cloud. But the flies do not go where God’s people the Hebrews live. They go only to the Egyptian houses. Pharaoh promises to let the people go if Moses will get rid of the flies. But when the flies are all gone, it happens again.

Moses says, “*Now* will you let my people go?” “No!” says Pharaoh.

So then God sends the fifth plague, a dreadful sickness to all of the Egyptian animals, so all of the animals die. All of the animals that belong to the Egyptians—the horses and donkeys, the camels, pigs, sheep, dogs and cats—one day they are alive and the next day they are dead. But the animals that belong to God’s people the Israelites are still alive. This time, God does not take back the plague. The animals can’t come back to life again, once they are dead.

But still...

Moses says, “*Now* will you let my people go?” “No!” says Pharaoh.

The sixth plague hits the Egyptian people. Moses and Aaron pick up a handful of ashes and throw the ashes into the air. The ashes take to the air and scatter all over Egypt and land on the Egyptian people. The ashes turn into painful sores all over the people and their animals. They cannot stand up or sit down. They hurt all over, all the time. The sores ooze and bleed and the people beg the Pharaoh, “Please, for our sake, let those people go! Take these sores away from us!” But what did the Pharaoh do?

Moses says, “*Now* will you let my people go?” “No!” says Pharaoh.

The seventh plague is a scary one. God makes the earth dangerous. Moses stretches out his hand toward the sky, and all of a sudden, hail begins to fall from the sky. Thunder booms and lightning crashes down, and the hail looks like balls of fire coming down all over the land. The hail is so thick and the balls are so big that when they land in the fields, they hurt or kill every person and animal who is outside. Every plant and tree falls down and dies. Now there is nothing left alive on the Egyptian land. But in the places where God’s people the Israelites live, there is no hail, only sweet sunshine.

Moses says, “*Now* will you let my people go?” “No!” says Pharaoh.

Then God calls forth billions of locusts, creeping and then flying over the land. The green and brown locusts eat everything. Whatever is left that the flies and gnats and animal sickness and the hail did not kill, the locusts finish off. They eat every single tree and plant that grows in Egypt. They crawl into every Egyptian house. When they fly in a cloud, the sky is black with locusts. When the locusts are finished and the sky is light again, the land is empty. Gone are the animals—eaten. Gone are the crops—eaten. Gone are the trees—eaten.

“Take these things away from us!” says Pharaoh. But when God sends a great wind to blow the locusts away, Pharaoh changes his mind again.

Moses says, “*Now* will you let my people go?” “No!” says Pharaoh.

The ninth plague makes the people very afraid. God sends deep, deep darkness. For three days, the people cannot see in front of them. They don't know where they are or where they are going. They can't find their food to cook, or their animals to feed, or their beds to sleep in. They can't find each other to hug. But if they could look toward where God's people the Israelites live, they would see that those people have light, and plenty of it. The Egyptian people are scared, too scared to move. What if they walk into...but *no!* I don't want to think about it! Again, Pharaoh promises to let the people go, but changes his mind again.

Moses says, “*Now* will you let my people go?” “No!” says Pharaoh.

The Passover

Now it is time for the tenth and last plague. Moses warns Pharaoh that this last plague will be a deadly one. He even tells Pharaoh what will happen. “God says that at midnight, God will walk through Egypt, and the finger of God will touch every Egyptian household. Every firstborn will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on the throne to the firstborn of Pharaoh's maid, to the firstborn of all the animals. You are warned!” And then, Moses angrily walked out. But yet again, Pharaoh would not move.

Moses then goes to God's people the Israelites. He tells them to be ready for this night, for it will be a deadly night for anyone who is not ready. This is what the people have to do:

First each family takes a lamb and kills it. They take some of the blood from the lamb and spread it over the doorposts. This will tell the angel of God that the angel should not go into this house but to pass it by. Then the family will cook the lamb and eat it. “This is how to eat this supper: Put on your traveling clothes and your sandals, hold your staff in your hand, and eat it in a hurry, because after this night, you will leave Egypt in a hurry.” God then says, “This is the Passover of the Lord, because I will pass through the land of Egypt tonight and strike down every firstborn in that land. But I will pass over the houses where you live when I see the blood on your doorposts. You will be safe.” So the people do as God commands. And because this is such an important event, they

still do it every year to remember this night, and this remembrance is called the Passover.

And then they also make bread. But the bread has no yeast, so it is flat. The flat bread, called “unleavened bread,” shows that the people will leave Egypt in such a hurry that the bread they are making has no time to rise.

So the people do as God tells them, and they bow down and worship God, as they wait for this long, dark night to come.

The Tenth Plague Does It

At midnight, the finger of God descends upon Egypt. It kills all of the firstborn—the firstborn of Pharaoh, the firstborn of the prisoner in jail, the firstborn of every cow and horse in the land. Pharaoh gets up in the night and sees his son dead. The Egyptian people get up in the night and see their firstborn children dead.

A loud cry goes up in the night. There is not a house without someone dead.

Pharaoh has had enough. “Go!” he says. “Take your people, your animals, your things, and go away! Get away from me and my people!”

God’s people the Israelites are ready. They had their clothes on and their sandals on. They are all packed. They have eaten their Passover meal. They get up in the morning and gather together, and Moses leads them out of Egypt. They never look back.

As they leave, God goes in front of them. God is in a pillar of cloud by day, leading them along the way. At night, God is in a pillar of fire, giving them light. In this way, they can travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, with the Lord inside, are there with them always. God is with them.

Crossing the Red Sea

After a while, the people come to the Red Sea. They cannot cross it, for the waters are deep. They camp next to the sea.

Meanwhile, Pharaoh changes his mind. He sends his army of soldiers after the Israelites, to drive them back to Egypt or to kill them.

The people at the shore of the Red Sea look back and see the army of Egyptian soldiers with their horses and their chariots. “Help us!” they cry to Moses. “The soldiers will kill us, or the sea will drown us!”

But Moses says, “Do not be afraid. God will save you!”

Then God tells Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea. When Moses does this, God sends a strong wind that blows all night long. The wind drives the water back, so there is dry land. The people go into the sea on dry land! The water turns into a wall next to them, on their left and on their right. But they are dry and safe, just as God promised.

The Egyptian soldiers see the people walking on dry land over the sea. They get on their horses and chariots to chase the people. When they get onto the dry land that was the sea, God tells Moses, “Now stretch out your hand over the sea again.” When Moses does this, the walls of water come together again over the soldiers, and they all drown. Thus are God’s people freed from the Egyptians and saved by God.



Weaving God's Promises

BOWL OF JELLO for **Preschool, Primary**

When prompted, children jiggle like Jello, adding some fun to today's story.

Directions:

Invite the children to join in this fun activity:

1. While you tell or re-tell the story of Moses parting the Red Sea, have the children stand up in the middle of the room and pretend that they are a bowl of Jello packed by the Israelites on their way out of Egypt. Give the children these instructions:
 - When I raise my hand in the air wiggle like a bowl of Jello.
 - When I lower my hand, stop.
 - How high I raise my hand tells you how hard to jiggle.
2. As you read today's story prompt the children to:
 - Jiggle a little when the people walk out of Egypt.
 - Jiggle harder as the people bounce across the Red Sea.
 - Jiggle fast and hard when the people begin to run from the Egyptian army who are chasing them.
 - Stop (to watch) when the waters of the sea close in on the Egyptian army.



Weaving God's Promises

JUMP ACROSS THE RED SEA for Primary, Elementary

The Israelites didn't know whether to cross the sea or to wait on the shore for the Egyptians to come take them back to Egypt. Children play this game and find out what they might do.

Play this game in a room with plenty of space or use your church hallway.

Directions:

Invite children to play the Jump Across the Red Sea game:

1. Mark a line running across the middle of the room or hallway. Have children all stand on one side of this line. This is the boundary between the sea and the shore.
2. Tell the children:
 - When I say "Cross the sea," everyone needs to jump to the other side of this line.
 - When I say "To the shore," jump back to this side.
 - But if I say anything other than "Cross the sea" or "To the shore," you shouldn't obey.
3. Keep the pace fast and vary your commands by saying "Cross the shore" or "On the shore" or "To the sea."



Weaving God's Promises

CROSSING THE RED SEA for Primary, Elementary

Children make three-dimensional pictures of people and animals crossing the Red Sea.

Materials:

blue construction paper
brown construction paper or sandpaper
copies of *People and Animal Patterns* (p. 22)
crayons
scissors

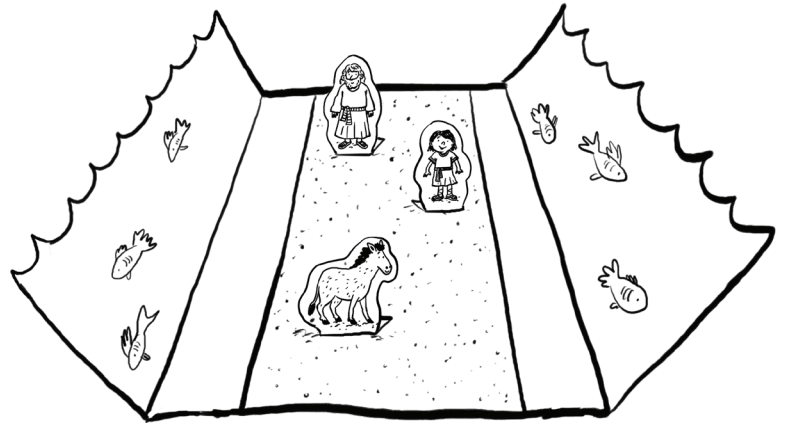
Preparation:

Make copies of the copies of *People and Animal Patterns*.

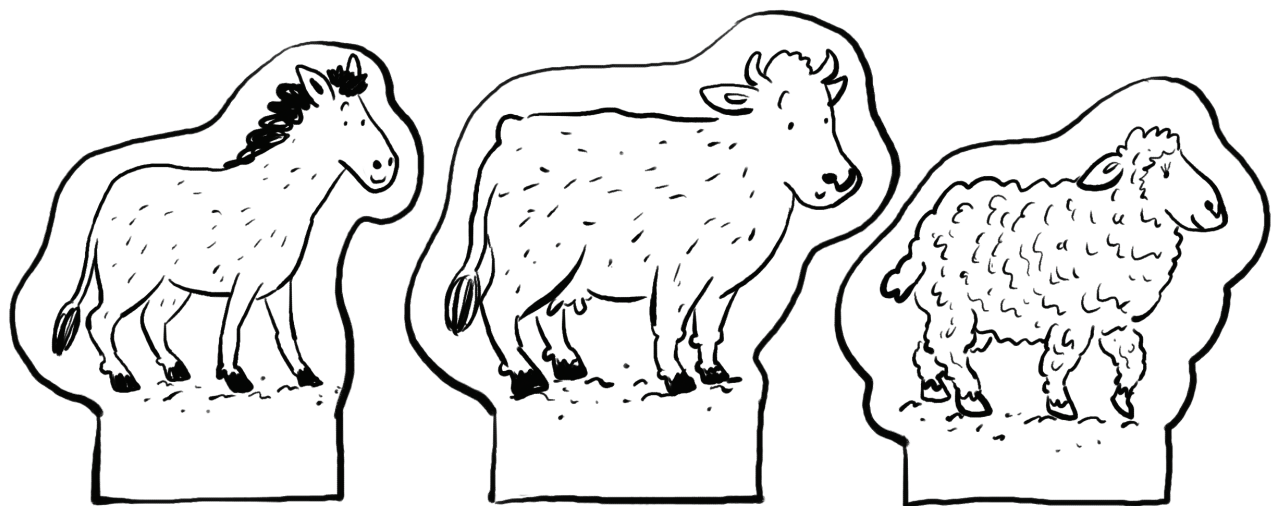
Directions:

Pass out the copies of *People and Animal Patterns* and invite each child to make a Red Sea picture. Give the children these directions:

1. Cut out the copies of *People and Animal Patterns* and color them.
2. Fold the blue construction paper on each end to make the waves of the Red Sea. Cut a wavy pattern on the top edge of the waves.
3. Glue the fish patterns on the sides of the waves.
4. Cut brown construction paper or sandpaper into a strip 9" x 3" to make the sand on the bottom of the sea. Glue this to the bottom of the blue paper, in the center.
5. Fold back the tabs of the people and animals and glue them to the brown paper, showing the people and animals crossing the sea.



PEOPLE AND ANIMAL PATTERNS





Weaving God's Promises

CROSSING THE RED SEA for Preschool

Children make collages of people and animals crossing the Red Sea.

Materials:

- blue and brown construction paper, 9" x 12"
- scissors
- pictures of people and animals from magazines *or* copies of *People and Animal Patterns* (p. 24)

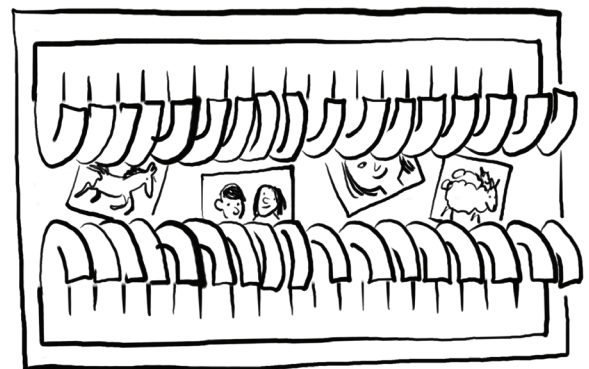
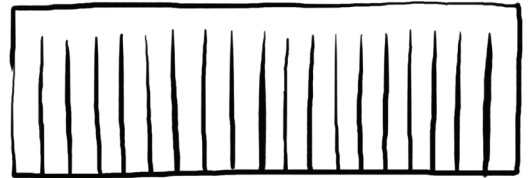
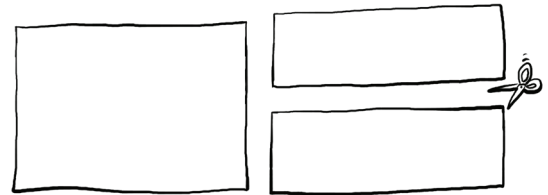
Preparation:

Cut the blue paper into 9" x 6" strips, two for each child. Cut slits along one side and curl to represent the rolling waves of the Red Sea as it parted.

Directions:

Give each of the children one piece of brown paper and two strips of curled blue paper and invite each child to make a Red Sea collage:

1. Have the children glue the strips of blue paper onto the brown paper to make the waves. Make sure the children leave room between the blue waves to add pictures of people.
2. Help the children cut out pictures of people from magazines *or* from the *People and Animal Patterns*.
3. Then have the children glue the pictures between the waves.



PEOPLE AND ANIMAL PATTERNS





Weaving God's Promises

TAMBOURINES for Primary, Elementary

Miriam picked up a tambourine and all the women followed with tambourines and dancing. Children make their own tambourines with paper plates, beans and bells.

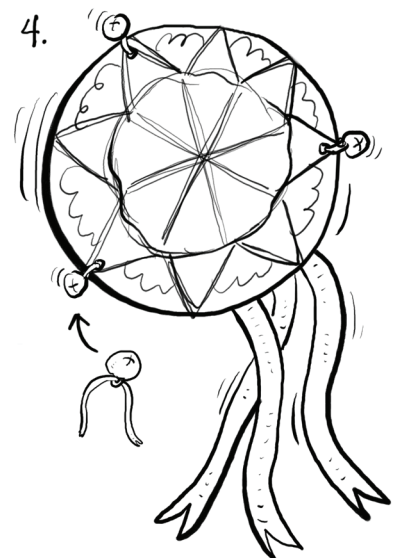
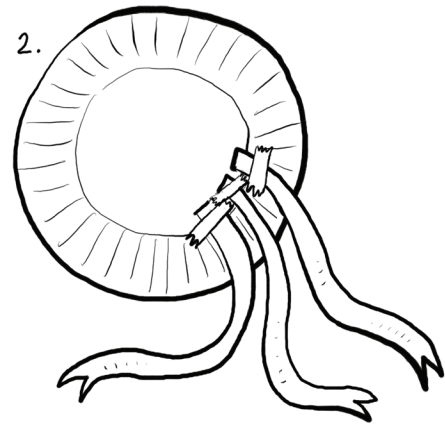
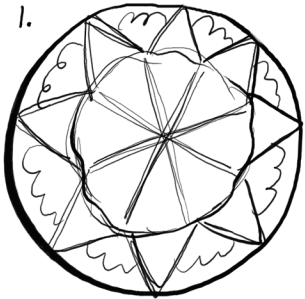
Materials:

- heavy paper plates
- colorful streamers, cut in 12" lengths
- crayons or markers
- dried beans
- tape or stapler
- hole punch
- optional:* small bells
- optional:* thin ribbon

Directions:

Give each of the children two paper plates and invite each child to make a tambourine. Give the children these directions:

1. Color the paper plates, using crayons or markers.
2. Tape 3-5 streamers to the *inside* of one of the plates, near the rim.
3. Tape or staple the plates together, with some beans inside to make noise.
4. Punch 3-5 holes near the rim of the plates. Thread ribbon through a bell and tie the bell to the hole. Do this for each hole.





Weaving God's Promises

THE FOUR QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE PASSOVER MEAL

Question 1: On all other nights we eat all kinds of breads and crackers. Why do we eat only matzoh on Pesach?

Matzoh reminds us that when the Jews left the slavery of Egypt they had no time to bake their bread. They took the raw dough on their journey and baked it in the hot desert sun into hard crackers called matzoh.

Question 2: On all other nights we eat many kinds of vegetables and herbs. Why do we eat bitter herbs, maror, at our Seder?

Maror reminds us of the bitter and cruel way the Pharaoh treated the Jewish people when they were slaves in Egypt.

Question 3: On all other nights we don't usually dip one food into another. At our Seder we dip the parsley in salt water and the bitter herbs in Charoset. Why do we dip our foods twice tonight?

We dip bitter herbs into Charoset to remind us how hard the Jewish slaves worked in Egypt. The chopped apples and nuts look like the clay used to make the bricks used in building the Pharaoh's buildings.

We dip parsley into salt water. The parsley reminds us that spring is here and new life will grow. The salt water reminds us of the tears of the Jewish slaves.

Question 4: On all other nights we eat sitting up straight. Why do we lean on a pillow tonight?

We lean on a pillow to be comfortable and to remind us that once we were slaves, but now we are free.



Weaving God's Promises

PASSOVER RELAY for Elementary

The Hebrew slaves are in a hurry! Children play this game-in-a-rush that reminds us of the tension and the rush of that first Passover night in Egypt.

Materials:

- one bag for each child
- balls
- 2 stacks of paper
- 2 piles of large rubber bands
- chairs or cones

Directions:

Invite children to play the Passover Relay game:

1. Divide the class into two teams. If the teams are unevenly divided, simply have the first player on the short-handed team go twice.
2. Each team will need three stations. Lay out identical relay items in each team's station, as follows:
 - station 1 bags and balls
 - station 2 paper and rubber bands (these will be the sandals)
 - station 3 chairs or cones arranged to create an obstacle course
3. Have the players of each team line up one behind the other.
4. On your signal, the first player runs to station 1 and packs the bag with the balls.
5. The player then runs to station 2, carrying the packed bag, puts a piece of paper under each foot, then slips a rubber band under the paper and around each foot to hold the paper in place. (These are the sandals.) After the sandals are in place, the player says, "Hurry, hurry, hurry!"
6. Next, the player runs through the obstacle course.
7. Finally, the player runs back to the starting line and tags the next player in line, who repeats the actions.
8. The first team to finish the entire relay wins.



Weaving God's Promises

TRAVELING PASSPORTS for Preschool

With 600,000 men (Exodus 12:37) plus women and children, we need some way to ID everybody! With your help, children make passports for themselves.

Materials

poster board or cardboard
instant print camera and film or digital camera and photo printer
colorful yarn
scissors
markers
glue
hole punch

Preparation:

Cut a piece of poster board about 2" square, one for each child. Also cut a length of yarn about 24" long for each child.

Directions:

Invite each child to make a passport:

1. Take a photo of each child and print it.
2. Cut the children's photos to fit the squares of poster board and have each child glue his or her photo onto a square.
3. Punch a hole at the top of each passport photo.
4. Have each child thread a piece of yarn through the hole of his or her photo and tie the ends to make a passport necklace.

Variation:

You can give the children several squares and have them glue on photos of their friends, family or pets—or have them draw pictures on the squares. The children can add these pictures to their necklaces.



Weaving God's Promises

RED SEA SCENES for Primary

Children make scenes of the Red Sea with waters that “part.”

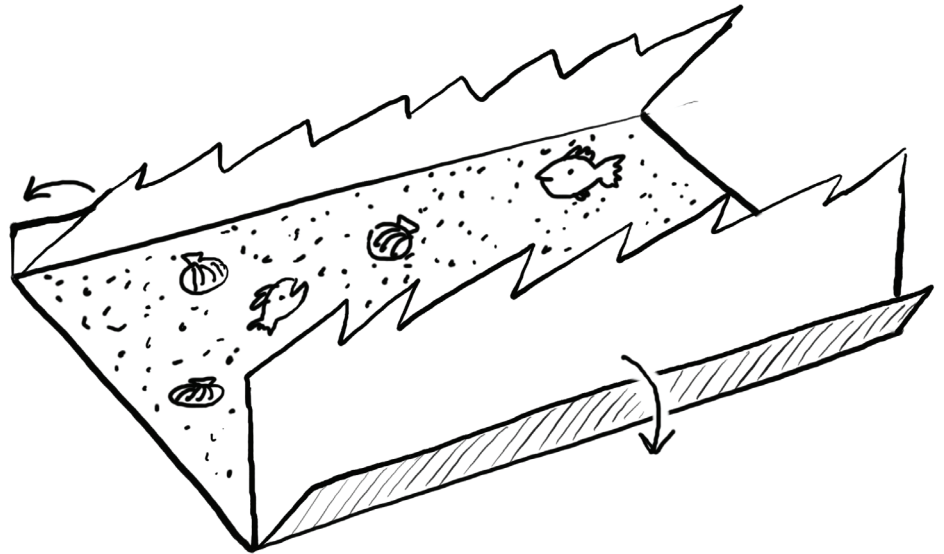
Materials:

brown construction paper
blue construction paper
scissors
tape
glue
sandpaper
other construction paper
optional: small seashells

Directions:

Invite each child to make a Red Sea scene. Give the children these directions:

1. Cut the blue paper lengthwise down the middle in a wavy or zigzag pattern.
2. Fit the two blue halves together again and lay them on top of the brown paper.
3. Tape together the long sides of the blue and brown paper. Be careful not to tape the zigzag part or the short ends. The blue paper should open up like a double door.
4. Fold up a section about $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide along each long side of the paper. (Make the waters “part” by pressing down on the folded edges.)
5. Cut a piece of sandpaper the size of the brown paper, open up the blue paper and glue the sandpaper to the brown “sea floor” that is beneath the blue paper.
6. Glue small seashells on the sandpaper. You can also draw and cut out small fish and stones and glue these to the sandpaper.





Weaving God's Promises

SOUND EFFECTS for Elementary, Intermediate

Children act out and record today's story.

Materials:

- cell phone
- sound effect props
- Bible story of Israelites in Egypt, beginning with Moses
- costumes

Directions:

Invite the children to participate in this drama:

1. Help the class decide what scenes will be played.
2. Have the children decide what sounds will be needed for each scene. Help them gather the items needed to make the sounds.
3. Assign the parts of *Moses*, *Pharaoh* and other characters and have the players find costumes for their parts. Assign the sound effects to the remaining children.
4. Give the children a few minutes to rehearse the story, then begin. You can read the story while the children act it out or have the children simply act it out. You can even try a silent production with only the sound effects!
5. Record the performance and play it back!



Weaving God's Promises

ONE-MINUTE PHOTO SHOOT for Intermediate

Children pose for a scene from today's story—with only 1 minute to find a costume and props.

Materials:

- costumes and props, if desired
- Bible story
- instant print camera and film or digital camera and photo printer

Directions:

Set out the costumes and props and invite the children to participate in this fast-paced activity:

1. Decide with the class which scenes they will want to photograph. Assign the parts and ask for a volunteer to be the photographer.
2. Read the story up to the scene to be photographed, while the students listen. You can then summarize the story scene in a single sentence.
3. Then say, "Action!" The players have exactly 1 minute to find their costumes and props and get into place. At the 1-minute mark, they freeze and the camera person takes a picture. To make it even more frenzied, allow the players only 30 seconds!
4. When the photo has been taken and the children have put their costumes and props back, resume the story. At the next chosen scene, again shout "Action" and get another photo. Repeat until the end of the story.
5. Put the photos up on the wall in the classroom or have the children make a picture book of the Exodus story.



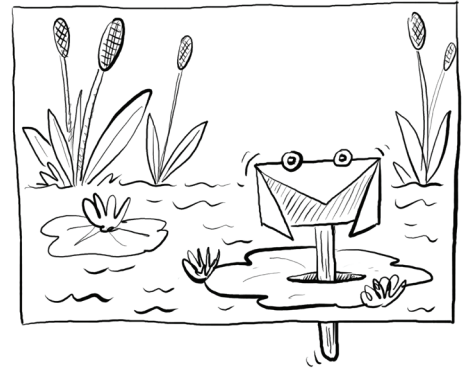
Weaving God's Promises

PLAGUE OF FROGS for Primary, Elementary

Children create pictures of the Nile River complete with hopping frogs.

Materials:

- green construction paper
- poster board or construction paper, or manila file folder
- craft stick
- transparent tape
- 2 white paper reinforcers (round stickers with holes, to reinforce hole-punched paper holes)
- crayons or markers
- scissors



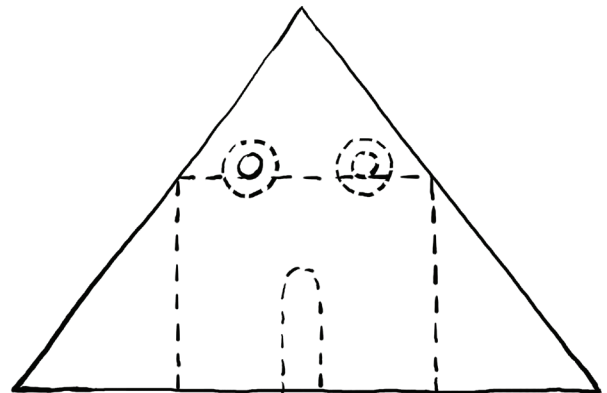
Preparation:

Cut the green paper into 4" x 4" squares, then cut the squares in half diagonally, making two triangles. Make one triangle for each child.

Directions:

Distribute the green triangles and invite each child to make a Nile River scene. Give the children these directions:

1. Fold the top of the triangle down and the sides toward the middle. See the illustration.
2. Glue two white paper reinforcers at the top fold to make the frog's eyes.
3. Tape a craft stick to the back of the frog.
4. On a piece of poster board, construction paper or manila folder, draw a picture of the Nile River with lily pads, reeds and water.
5. On one of the lily pads, cut a small slit from side to side, where the frog will be sitting.
6. Thread the craft stick through the slit. (Make the frog hop by moving the stick up and down.)





Weaving God's Promises

ESCAPE FROM PHARAOH'S ARMY for Preschool

Children play the parts of *Moses*, the *Hebrews* and *soldiers* of Pharaoh's army in this game based on the crossing of the Red Sea.

Materials:

- 2 long pieces of rope
- large paper plates

Directions:

Invite children to play the Escape from Pharaoh's Army game:

1. Explain to the children that the ropes are the walls of water of the *Red Sea* that Moses parted.
2. Invite three children to help you hold the ropes. (You and the three children will each hold an end.) Hold the ropes waist high, close together and parallel to each other.
3. Pick one child to be *Moses*, who will lead the children through the *Red Sea*. Pick a few children to be *soldiers* of Pharaoh's army. The rest will be the *Hebrew people* following *Moses*. Give each *soldier* a shield (paper plate).
4. Have the children stand at one end of the *Red Sea* (rope) in this order: *Moses*, *Hebrew people*, *soldiers*.
5. At your signal, *Moses* moves to the end of the rope. The rope holders step apart, moving the ropes away from each other to part the *Red Sea*. *Moses* then runs through the ropes, with the *Hebrew people* and *soldiers* following.
6. When the *soldiers* try to cross the *Red Sea* (to pass between the ropes), the rope holders bring the ropes together to catch the *soldiers*.
7. Invite the children to switch parts and play the game again.



Weaving God's Promises

MAKING MATZOH AND EGGS

for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Invite the children to help make these Passover foods.

Along with the ingredients you'll need:

- pot
- 2 mixing bowls
- mixing spoons
- measuring cups
- fork
- baking sheet
- rolling pin
- paper plates
- waxed paper

Matzoh

Matzoh is made without yeast, according to tradition, because the Hebrews did not have time for their bread to rise before leaving their homes in a hurry. They needed to have their sandals on, their staffs in their hands and their food ready.

Ingredients (for 8 servings):

- 2 cups whole wheat flour, plus extra for dusting hands
- 1/2-3/4 cup water
- oil

Directions:

1. In one bowl, mix the flour with the water to make the matzoh dough. Dust lightly with flour.
2. Divide the dough into as many pieces as there are children and give each child a piece to work with.
3. Ask the children to flour their hands then knead the dough for 3-5 minutes.
4. Help the children roll the dough flat with a rolling pin. The dough should be rolled to about 1/8" thick.
5. Place the flattened dough on a greased baking sheet and prick it with a fork, then sprinkle with salt.

6. Bake for 8-10 minutes at 450 degrees. For soft matzoh, remove immediately from the oven when done. For crisp matzoh, leave it in the turned-off oven until cool.
7. Serve and enjoy!

Hard-Boiled Eggs

The hard-boiled eggs are a symbol of spring, when the Passover meal takes place. The salt water is a reminder of the tears of the Hebrew slaves. Usually it would be bitter herbs such as parsley which is dipped into the salt water.

Ingredients:

8 hard-boiled eggs, cooled
salt
water

Directions:

1. Mix salt with water in a small bowl.
2. Invite the children to shell the eggs then dip them into the salt water.
3. Serve and enjoy.



Weaving God's Promises

MAKING HAROSET for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Invite the children to make this Passover snack. For a participatory experience, let every child either add an ingredient or help mix.

Haroset, traditionally made with chopped walnuts, wine, cinnamon and apples, represents the mortar or clay that the Hebrew slaves used to make the Pharaoh's bricks. Here we use grape juice instead of wine.

Along with the ingredients you'll need:

- chopping board
- measuring cups
- measuring spoons
- mixing bowl
- mixing spoons
- small paper cups or bowls
- plastic spoons
- knives

Haroset

Ingredients (for 8 servings):

- 2 apples
- ½ cup chopped walnuts (*Please do not use peanuts.*)
- ½-¾ cup grape juice
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup raisins

Directions:

1. Core the apples and chop them into small diced pieces. Place the apples in a bowl.
2. Add nuts, cinnamon, raisins and grape juice and mix well.
3. Pour into the cups or bowls and serve.

LESSON 6: PASSOVER AND EXODUS FROM EGYPT



We Believe . . .

The numerous references to the Exodus experience in our hymnals and in the *Book of Common Prayer* attest to the connection that we make between the freedom gained by the Israelites in crossing the Red Sea and the freedom that we gained by Jesus' crossing from death to life in his resurrection. For example, the Exodus shows up in our Baptismal Covenant (*BCP*, pp. 306-307), the story of the Passover is the Old Testament reading on Maundy Thursday, and the account of the Exodus, of the nine readings listed, is the only required reading of our salvation history at the Great Vigil of Easter (*BCP*, p. 289).

Finally, we make our connection to this great Passover when, at the breaking of the bread at Holy Eucharist, the priest loudly proclaims, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

Words of Faith

Passover—the time when God "passed over" the homes of the Israelites, sparing their firstborn; the Jewish celebration of deliverance from slavery in Egypt



Freedom—no longer living in slavery

Red Sea—the body of water the Israelites crossed as they escaped

from Pharaoh's army

In this powerful story, we see very clearly how God leads us and how God stays with us, no matter what.

Today's Story:



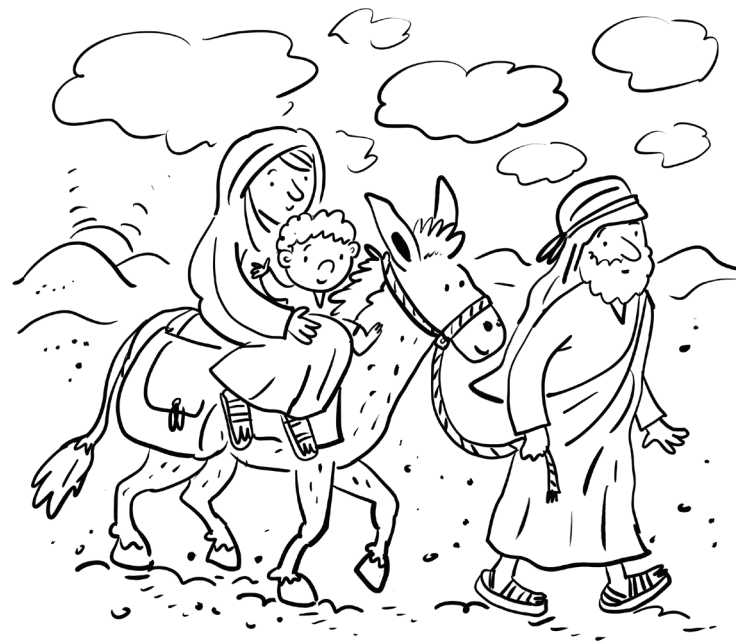
Exodus 7:14-14:31

This part of the Moses story takes us to the other side of the Red Sea. It includes the ten plagues, the first Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea. These are important events; the first Passover needs to be understood in order for us to understand how Jesus' Last Supper (when he celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples) replaces the Passover for us and how Jesus becomes the Paschal (Passover) Lamb in his sacrifice on the cross.

The *Pesach* (Passover) is one of the most important feasts of the Jewish year. Its tradition of unleavened bread and the rest of the Passover meal (the Seder) is important in our own tradition as well, as this is the meal Jesus was most likely sharing with his friends during what we call "The Last Supper".

This is the great story of liberation for all oppressed and enslaved peoples of the world. In this story, we see clearly how God cares for those who are poor and oppressed and how God wishes for all to be free.

Now the people of God are on their way to Sinai to find the meaning of this Exodus in the Ten Commandments, the Law that God gives to them in making them God's people.





Sharing

Read the story of the Exodus from a children's Bible, showing the pictures, or from your family Bible. Note that there are three parts to this story: the plagues, the Passover and the Red Sea crossing. You may want to tell each story individually.

There is a lot of fear in this story—and also a lot of trust. To bring out these emotive elements, invite family members to act out the story as you tell it, playing the people who experience the plagues (as Egyptians or as Israelites), eating the meal as they wait for the tenth plague, and crossing the parted Red Sea with the Egyptian army close behind them.

Reinforce the idea that God's protective, guiding hand continues to be with God's people, as it continues to be with us.



Weaving God's Promises

This Week at Home



- **Talk about how you would pack for a trip as a family.** What would you pack? How quickly or slowly would you pack what you need? The Israelites were told by God to pack and leave quickly. What emotions would having to gather your belongings and leave quickly evoke in you? How does this help you better understand the power and drama of the Exodus story?
- **Explore the plagues.** What do you think is the scariest plague that the Egyptians had to face? Which plague would make you say to Moses, "Stop! No more"? Share with each other your thoughts, and why you pick that particular plague to be your worst nightmare. Follow up with a discussion of how God does not destroy people but rather loves them, even the Egyptians, for it was Pharaoh's evil that destroyed his own people.
- **As a household, choose and research an area of the world where people are enslaved and in need of deliverance.** Identify the place on a map. Learn about the people. How are they being helped? Is there a way you can help those who are trying to help?
- **List the freedoms that you and your household members value.** You could create a poster that both lists and illustrates these. When you gather for meals, review the list and offer prayers of thanksgiving for each of these freedoms. Add others as you think of them.



Household Prayer

O God, with your mighty arm you led your people out of Egypt. We thank you for taking care of us and for watching over us as you watched over the Israelites. Bless us and keep us, now and always. *Amen.*

