

Exodus 11-19 reader's theater and choral reading

CHARACTERS: Narrators 1 & 2, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Pharaoh, Vizier, Voice of God, Israelite 1 & 2

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 2 minutes per page

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Exodus 11-19

The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn

VOICE of GOD: I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will drive you out of here. Tell both men and women to ask their neighbors for silver and gold jewelry.

NARRATOR 2: The Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.

NARRATOR 1: Moses was highly regarded by Pharaoh's officials and the people.

VOICE OF GOD: Tell Pharaoh that about midnight I will go throughout Egypt, and every firstborn male in the land of Egypt will die.

MOSES: From the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the servant girl who is behind the millstones, as well as every firstborn of the livestock.

VOICE OF GOD: Each family must select an unblemished animal, a year-old male; you may take it from either the sheep or the goats. At twilight you will slaughter the animals, and put its blood on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses where they eat them.

MOSES: Roast the meat and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

AARON: Burn up any part of it that don't you don't eat before morning.

MOSES: Be dressed for travel with your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand as you eat.

AARON: You are to eat it in a hurry; it is the Lord's Passover.

VOICE OF GOD: I am Yahweh; I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt. When I see the blood, I will pass over you.

MOSES: The plague will not destroy us when God strikes the land of Egypt.

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AARON: We must celebrate the Passover throughout our generations.

NARRATOR 1: The people bowed down and worshiped.

NARRATOR 2: They did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron.

The Exodus

NARRATOR 1: At midnight the Lord struck every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne

NARRATOR 2: to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and every firstborn of the livestock.

MIRIAM: Listen! The loud wailing throughout Egypt is because there isn't a house without someone dead.

PHARAOH: Get up, leave my people, and go, worship Yahweh with your flocks and your herds.

EGYPTIAN 1: (*fearfully*) We're all going to die?

EGYPTIAN 2: You Israelites go and go quickly.

EGYPTIAN 1: Take our silver and gold.

EGYPTIAN 2: Here's clothing. Take anything you want; just go!

NARRATOR 1: The Lord gave the people such favor in the Egyptians' sight that they gave them what they requested.

NARRATOR 2: In this way they plundered the Egyptians.

NARRATOR 1: The Israelites traveled from Rameses to Succoth.

NARRATOR 2: The people baked the dough they had into unleavened loaves, because they could not delay and had not prepared any provisions for themselves.

MOSES: For generations to come, Passover will be in honor of the Lord.

AARON: A night vigil for all the Israelites throughout their generations.

VOICE OF GOD: Consecrate every firstborn male to Me, both man and domestic animal; it is Mine.

MOSES: Remember this day when you came out of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, for the Lord brought you out of here by the strength of His hand.

AARON: In the future, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him,

MOSES: By the strength of His hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the place of slavery by the strength of His hand.

The Route of the Exodus

NARRATOR 1: When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them along the road to the land of the Philistines, even though it was nearby.

VOICE OF GOD: The people will change their minds and return to Egypt if they face war.

AARON: God leads us toward the Red Sea along the road of the wilderness.

NARRATOR 2: The Israelites left the land of Egypt in battle formation.

MOSES: We'll bring the bones of Joseph with us.

AARON: Yes, we promised to do so.

MOSES: Joseph prophesied that God would come to our aid.

NARRATOR 1: The Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to lead them on their way during the day

NARRATOR 2: and in a pillar of fire to give them light at night, so that they could travel day or night.

MIRIAM: Notice how the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never leaves its place in front of the people?

AARON: This way we can travel by day or night.

NARRATOR 1: When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds.

VIZER: What have we done? We have released Israel from serving us.

PHARAOH: Hitch up my chariot and gather my troops, and all the chariots of Egypt with officers in each one.

NARRATOR 2: The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh and he pursued the Israelites, who were going out triumphantly.

NARRATOR 1: The terrified Israelites saw the Egyptians coming after them.

ISRAELITE 1: Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you took us to die in the wilderness?

ISRAELITE 2: What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt?

ISRAELITE 3: It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.

MOSES: Don't be afraid. Stand firm and see the Lord's salvation He will provide for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you must be quiet.

VOICE OF GOD: Break camp. Lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

NARRATOR 1: The Angel of God, the pillar of cloud, moved behind them, between the Egyptian and Israelite forces.

NARRATOR 2: Moses stretched out his hand over the sea.

NARRATOR 1: The Lord drove the sea back with a powerful east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry land.

AARON: The waters are divided. Let us go through the sea on dry ground.

MIRIAM: (*amazed*) The water is heaped up like walls on our right and left.

AARON: (*concerned*) All of Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen are pursuing us, going into the sea after us.

MOSES: Don't worry. The Lord is throwing them into confusion.

MIRIAM: He's causing their chariot wheels to swerve and drive with difficulty.

EGYPTIAN: (*fearful*) Let's get away from Israel, because Yahweh is fighting for them against Egypt!

VOICE OF GOD: Moses, stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back on the Egyptians, on their chariots and horsemen.

NARRATOR 1: So Moses obeyed. The sea returned to its normal depth.

NARRATOR 2: While the Egyptians were trying to escape from it, the Lord threw them into the sea.

MIRIAM: Look! The water is drowning the chariots and horsemen, the entire army of Pharaoh.

AARON: None of them survived.

MIRIAM: But we walked through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall.

MOSES: The Lord saved us from the power of the Egyptians.

MIRIAM: See all the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

ISRAELITE 1: What great power the Lord used against the Egyptians.

ISRAELITE 2: We fear the Lord and believe in Him.

ISRAELITE 1: and in His servant Moses.

Israel's Song choral reading

NARRATOR 1: Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord.

MOSES: I will sing to the Lord,

AARON: for He is highly exalted;

ALL: He has thrown the horse and its rider into the sea.

MOSES: The Lord is my strength and my song;

AARON: He has become my salvation.

ALL This is my God, and I will praise Him,
my father's God, and I will exalt Him.

MOSES: The Lord is a warrior;

AARON: Yahweh is His name.

ALL: He threw Pharaoh's chariots and his army into the sea;

MOSES: Lord, Your right hand is glorious in power.

AARON: Lord, Your right hand shattered the enemy.

ALL: You overthrew Your adversaries by Your great majesty.

MIRIAM: The waters heaped up at the blast of Your nostrils;

ALL: the currents stood firm like a dam.

MIRIAM: The watery depths congealed in the heart of the sea.

ALL: Lord, who is like You among the gods?

Who is like You, glorious in holiness,

MIRIAM: revered with praises, performing wonders?

ALL: You will lead the people You have redeemed with Your faithful love;

MOSES: You will guide them to Your holy dwelling with Your strength.

ALL: The Lord will reign forever and ever!

NARRATOR 2: Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand.

NARRATOR 1: All the women followed her with their tambourines and danced.

MIRIAM: Sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted;

ALL: He has thrown the horse and its rider into the sea.

Water Provided

NARRATOR 2: Moses led Israel on from the Red Sea into the wilderness without finding water for three days.

ISRAELITE 1: Finally, some water.

ISRAELITE 2: We can't drink the water at here at Marah because it is bitter.

ISRAELITE 1: (*grumbling*) What are we going to drink?

MOSES: Let me pray to the Lord.

VOICE OF GOD: Throw that tree into the water and it will be drinkable.

MOSES: If you will carefully obey the Lord your God, do what is right in His eyes, pay attention to His commands, and keep all His statutes, God will not inflict any illnesses on you that he inflicted on the Egyptians.

VOICE OF GOD: I am Yahweh who heals you.

NARRATOR 1: They camped at Elim, where there were springs of water and date palms.

Manna and Quail Provided

NARRATOR 2: The entire Israelite community came to the Wilderness of Sin.

ISRAELITE 1: (*grumbling*) If only we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat and ate all the bread we wanted.

ISRAELITE 2: Instead, you brought us into this wilderness to make this whole assembly die of hunger!

VOICE OF GOD: I am going to rain bread from heaven for you. I will test them to see whether or not they will follow My instructions.

MOSES: This evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

AARON: In the morning you will see the Lord's glory because He has heard your complaints about Him. F

MOSES: Lord will give you meat to eat this evening and more than enough bread in the morning.

AARON: He has heard the complaints that you are raising against Him.

MOSES: Your complaints are not against us but against the Lord.

MIRIAM: Look toward the wilderness, and see the Lord's glory appear in that cloud.

VOICE OF GOD: I have heard the complaints of the Israelites.

MOSES: At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will eat bread until you are full.

VOICE OF GOD: Then you will know that I am Yahweh your God.

NARRATOR 1: So at evening quail came and covered the camp.

NARRATOR 2: In the morning there was a layer of dew all around the camp.

NARRATOR 1: When the layer of dew evaporated, there were fine flakes on the desert surface, as fine as frost on the ground.

ISRAELITE 1: What is this white stuff? It looks like coriander seed.

ISRAELITE 2: I don't know. It tastes like wafers made with honey.

MOSES: It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. Gather two quarts per individual.

NARRATOR 1: So the Israelites did this. Some gathered a lot, some a little.

NARRATOR 2: When they measured it by quarts, the person who gathered a lot had no surplus,

ISRAELITE 1: I only gathered a little but have no shortage.

MOSES: Don't let any of it remain until morning.

ISRAELITE 2: I'm not listening to Moses. I'll leave some if I want.

NARRATOR 1: By morning it bred worms and smelled.

MOSES: On the Sabbath to the Lord you won't find mana in the field.

AARON: Therefore, on the sixth day He will give you two days' worth of bread.

ISRAELITE 1: We will rest on the seventh day.

VOICE OF GOD: Two quarts of mana are to be preserved throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.

Water from the Rock

VOICE OF GOD: Camp at Rephidim.

ISRAELITE 1: But there is no water for the people to drink.

ISRAELITE 2: *(complaining to Moses)* Give us water to drink.

MOSES: Why are you complaining to me? Why are you testing the Lord?

ISRAELITE 2: Why did you ever bring us out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?

MOSES: Lord, what should I do with these people? In a little while they will stone me!

VOICE OF GOD: I am going to stand there in front of you on the rock at Horeb; when you hit the rock with your staff, water will come out of it and the people will drink.

The Amalekites Attack

MIRIAM: Moses, the Amalekites are coming to attack us.

MOSES: (to Joshua) Select some men for us and go fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the hilltop with God's staff in my hand.

MIRIAM: Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

ISRAELITE 1: While Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, but whenever he put his hand down, Amalek prevailed.

MIRIAM: When Moses' hands grew heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat down on it.

ISRAELITE 1: Then Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other so that his hands remained steady until the sun went down.

MIRIAM: So Joshua defeated Amalek and his army.

ISRAELITE 1: Moses built an altar and named it, "The Lord Is My Banner."

MIRIAM: Moses, your father-in-law, your wife and sons, have arrived.

MOSES: How have you been? Come into my tent and I will tell you all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and how He has delivered us from all our hardships.

JETHRO: Praise the Lord, who rescued you from Pharaoh.

MOSES: He has snatched the people from the power of the Egyptians.

JETHRO: Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods, because He did wonders when the Egyptians acted arrogantly against Israel.

MIRIAM: The next day Moses sat down to judge the people, and they stood around Moses from morning until evening.

JETHRO: Why are you alone sitting as judge, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?

MOSES: Because the people come to me to inquire of God. Whenever they have a dispute, it comes to me.

AARON: Moses makes a decision between one man and another.

MOSES: I teach them God's statutes and laws.

JETHRO: What you're doing is not good. You will certainly wear out both yourself and these people who are with you, because the task is too heavy for you. You can't do it alone.

MOSES: What do you suggest?

JETHRO: You be the one to represent the people before God and bring their cases to Him. Instruct them about the statutes and laws.

MOSES: I still teach them the way to live and what they must do.

JETHRO: Select from all the people able men, God-fearing, trustworthy, and hating bribes. They should judge the minor cases but bring you every important case.

MOSES: That would lighten my load.

JETHRO: If you do this, and God so directs you, you will be able to endure, and also all these people will be able to go home satisfied.

MIRIAM: Then Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, and he journeyed to his own land.

Israel at Sinai

NARRATOR: Moses met with God on the mountain in the Wilderness of Sinai.

VOICE OF GOD: Moses, tell my message to the Israelites.

AARON: Moses is back and wants us to gather to hear the message from God.

MOSES: You have seen what God did to the Egyptians and how He carried us on eagles' wings and brought us to him.

ALL: We have.

MOSES: If we listen to Him, and carefully keep His covenant, we will be His own possession out of all the peoples.

ALL: Even though all the earth is God's.

MOSES: We will be His kingdom of priests and His holy nation.

ALL: We will do all that the Lord has spoken.

VOICE OF GOD: I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear when I speak with you and will always believe you.

MOSES: Consecrate yourselves today and tomorrow.

AARON: Wash your clothes for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai.

MOSES: Be careful that you don't go up on the mountain or touch its base.

AARON: Anyone who touches the mountain before the horn is blown will be put to death.

NARRATOR 1: On the third day, when morning came, there was thunder and lightning, and a thick cloud on the mountain.

NARRATOR 2: The loud trumpet sound made all the people in the camp shudder.

MIRIAM: (*In awe*) Mount Sinai is completely enveloped in smoke because the Lord has come down on it in fire.

ISRAELITE 1: The smoke goes up like the smoke of a furnace.

ISRAELITE 2: See how violently the whole mountain shakes!

MIRIAM: The Lord comes down on the top of Mount Sinai.

VOICE OF GOD: Moses, come up the mountain. Warn the people not to break through to see the Lord; otherwise many of them will die.

MOSES: We put a boundary around the mountain and consider it holy.

VOICE OF GOD: Come back with Aaron.

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