

## Exodus reader's theater

CHARACTERS: Voice of God (48), Moses (61), Pharaoh (30), Jochebed (4), Shiprah (2), Puah (2), Advisor 1 (11), Advisor 2 (17), Miriam (34), Pharaoh's Daughter (5), Israelite Foreman 1 (4), Israelite Foreman 2 (3), Egyptian overseer (3), Hebrew 1 (2), Hebrew 2 (1), Aaron (23), Narrator (25), Zipporah (4)

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 2 minutes/page

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Exodus, Hebrews 11:23

### Israel Oppressed in Egypt (chapter 1)

PHARAOH: (to advisors) Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and powerful than we are.

ADVISOR 1: True. They have increased rapidly.

ADVISOR 2: Multiplied so much the land is filled with them.

PHARAOH: Let us deal shrewdly with them; otherwise they will multiply further, and if war breaks out, they may join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country.

ADVISOR 1: They wouldn't do that. They are Joseph's relatives.

PHARAOH: I don't know this Joseph. You advisors assign taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor.

ADVISOR 2: Great idea. We can assign them difficult labor in brick and mortar and in all kinds of fieldwork

PHARAOH: They can build Pithom and Rameses as supply cities for me, the Pharaoh.

ADVISOR 1: (*sadly, as an aside*) Time passed. Despite all the work ruthlessly imposed on them which made their lives bitter, the more the Israelites, also known as Hebrews, multiplied.

PHARAOH: This isn't working. Those Israelites keep spreading and growing in number. I dread them.

ADVISOR 2: Stop them from having children.

PHARAOH: Send for the Hebrew midwives Shiprah and Puah.

ADVISOR 2: Here they are.

PHARAOH: When you help the Hebrew women give birth, kill the sons. If it's a daughter, she may live.

PUAH: (*confidentially to SHIPRAH*) I fear God and will not do this.

SHIPRAH: (*confidentially to PUAH*) I agree.

NARRATOR: The Hebrew midwives did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live.

ADVISOR 1: Great Pharaoh, these Israelites continue to multiply and are very numerous.

PHARAOH: Summon the midwives again. (to SHIPRAH and PUAH) Why have you done this and let the boys live?

SHIPRAH: The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women.

PUAH: They are vigorous and give birth before a midwife can get to them.

PHARAOH: Hear me all Egyptians and Israelite scum. You must throw every son born to the Hebrews into the Nile, but let every daughter live.

NARRATOR: God was good to the midwives, Since the midwives feared God, He gave them families.

### Moses' Birth and Adoption (chapter 2)

NARRATOR: Now a man from the family of Levi married a Levite woman.

JOCHEBED: I have given birth to a beautiful son. I cannot kill him. I will hide him.

MIRIAM: Don't you fear the king's edict?

JOCHEBED: No, he is no ordinary child, and I am not afraid.

MIRIAM: We can no longer hide baby, mother. What will we do?

JOCHEBED: Get me a papyrus basket. I will coat it with asphalt and pitch, then place the child in it. When I set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile, Miriam, you must stand at a distance in order to see what happens to him.

NARRATOR: Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe at the Nile while her servant girls walked along the riverbank. JOCHEBED: PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER: Servant, fetch that basket among the reeds.

NARRATOR: When she opened it, she saw the child—a little boy, crying.

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER: This is one of the Hebrew boys. (*compassionately*) I feel sorry for him.

MIRIAM: Should I go and call a woman from the Hebrews to nurse the boy for you?

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER: Go.

MIRIAM: Mama, Pharaoh's daughter is adopting my brother! She wants to see you.

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER: Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages.

NARRATOR: So Jochebed took the boy and nursed him. When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter.

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER: I name this child Moses because I drew him out of the water. He is now my son.

### Moses in Midian

NARRATOR: Years later, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his own people and observed their forced labor.

HEBREW 1: Ow! Ow!

MOSES: You! Egyptian! Stop beating that Hebrew.

NARRATOR: Looking all around and seeing no one, he struck the Egyptian dead and hid him in the sand. The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting.

MOSES: Why are you attacking your neighbor?

HEBREW 2: Who made you a leader and judge over us? Are you planning to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?

MOSES: (aside to audience) What I did is certainly known.

PHARAOH: Find Moses and kill him!

NARRATOR: Moses fled from Pharaoh to Midian, and sat down by a well where seven sisters were watering their flocks.

SHEPHERD 1: Get away from this well.

MOSES: No! You get away. They w here first. (to Zipporah) I will water your sheep.

JETHRO: My daughters, why have you come back so quickly today?

ZIPPORAH: An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock.

JETHRO: So where is he? Why then did you leave the man behind? Invite him to eat dinner.

NARRATOR: Moses agreed to stay with the man, married Zipporah and had a son.

MOSES: I name you Gershom, for I have been a foreigner in a foreign land.

### Deliverance begins (chapters 2 & 3)

NARRATOR: After a long time, the king of Egypt died.

MIRIAM: We Israelites groaned because of our difficult labor.

AARON: We cried out to God and He heard us.

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ZIPPORAH: Meanwhile, Moses led the flock to Horeb, the mountain of God.

MOSES: (aside to audience) Look, a bush that burns but is not consumed by the flames. I must investigate.

VOICE OF GOD: Moses, Moses!

MOSES: Here I am!

VOICE OF GOD: Do not come closer. Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.

MOSES: Yes, Lord.

VOICE OF GOD: I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

MOSES: (aside to audience as he covers his face) I am afraid to look at God.

VOICE OF GOD: I have observed the misery of My people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors, and I know about their sufferings. I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to Canaan, a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you may lead My people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

MOSES: Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

VOICE OF GOD: I will certainly be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I have sent you: when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will all worship God at this mountain.

MOSES: If I go to the Israelites and say to them: The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what should I tell them?

VOICE OF GOD: I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say: I AM has sent me to you. Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever; this is how I am to be remembered in every generation.

MOSES: Yahweh.

VOICE OF GOD: Tell them Yahweh has paid close attention to what has been done in Egypt. I will bring you up from the misery of Egypt to Canaan. Then you, along with the elders of Israel, must go to the king of Egypt and say to him:

ALL: Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Now please let us go on a three-day trip into the wilderness so that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God.

VOICE OF GOD: However, I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go,

ALL: unless he is forced by a strong hand.

VOICE OF GOD: I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles.

ALL: After that, he will let you go.

VOICE OF GOD: I will give these people such favor in the sight of the Egyptians that when you go, you will not go empty-handed.

ALL: Each woman will ask her neighbor and any woman staying in her house for silver and gold jewelry, and clothing,

VOICE OF GOD: and you will put them on your sons and daughters. So you will plunder the Egyptians.

#### Miraculous Signs for Moses (chapter 4)

MOSES: What if they won't believe me and will not obey me but say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'?

VOICE OF GOD: What is that in your hand?

MOSES: A staff.

VOICE OF GOD: Throw it on the ground.

MOSES: (startled and running from it) It's a snake!

VOICE OF GOD: Stretch out your hand and grab it by the tail.

NARRATOR: Moses stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand.

VOICE OF GOD: This will take place so they will believe that Yahweh, the God of their fathers, has appeared to you.

MOSES: But ...

VOICE OF GOD: Put your hand inside your cloak.

MOSES: (puts hand in and pulls it out) My hand is diseased, white as snow.

VOICE OF GOD: Put your hand back inside your cloak.

MOSES: (putting hand in and taking it out) Now it is like the rest of my skin.

VOICE OF GOD: If they will not believe you and will not respond to the evidence of the first sign, they may believe the evidence of the second sign.

MOSES: What if they don't believe either sign?

VOICE OF GOD: Take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the Nile will become blood when it hits the ground.

MOSES: Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent—either in the past or recently or since You have been speaking to Your servant—because I am slow and hesitant in speech.

VOICE OF GOD: Who made the human mouth? Who makes him mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say.

MOSES: (begging) Please, Lord, send someone else.

VOG (with burning anger) Isn't Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, he is on his way now to meet you. He will rejoice when he sees you.

MOSES: My brother Aaron

VOICE OF GOD: You will speak with him and tell him what to say. I will help both you and him to speak and will teach you both what to do.

MOSES: He will speak to the people for me

VOICE OF GOD: He will be your spokesman, and you will serve as God to him. And take this staff in your hand that you will perform the signs with.

### Moses' Return to Egypt

ZIPPORAH: Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro.

MOSES: Please let me return to my relatives in Egypt and see if they are still living.

JETHRO: Go in peace.

VOICE OF GOD: Return to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.

ZIPPORAH: Moses put me and our son on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt with God's staff in his hand.

VOICE OF GOD: When you go back to Egypt, make sure you do all the wonders before Pharaoh that I have put within your power.

MOSES: Yes, Lord.

VOICE OF GOD: I will harden his heart so that he won't let the people go. Then you will say to Pharaoh:

MOSES: This is what Yahweh says: Israel is My firstborn son.

VOICE OF GOD: I told you: Let My son go so that he may worship Me, but you refused to let him go. Now I will kill your firstborn son!

NARRATOR: Moses told Aaron everything the Lord had sent him to say, and about all the signs.

AARON: Let us assemble the elders of the Israelites.

EE: We and all the people believe you.

EE2: Praise the Lord that had paid attention to our misery.

NARRATOR: They bowed down and worshiped.

### Moses Confronts Pharaoh (chapter 5)

AARON: (to Pharaoh) This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: Let My people go, so that they may hold a festival for Me in the wilderness.

PHARAOH: Who is Yahweh that I should obey Him by letting Israel go? I do not know anything about Yahweh, and besides, I will not let Israel go.

MOSES: The God of the Hebrews has met with us.

AARON: Please let us go on a three-day trip into the wilderness so that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God,

PHARAOH: Moses and Aaron, why are you causing the people to neglect their work? Get to your work!

AARON: God may strike us with plague or sword if you do not let us go.

PHARAOH: Look, the people of the land are so numerous, and you would stop them from working.

ADVISOR 2: Pharaoh call for the overseers of the people as well as their foremen.

PHARAOH: Good idea. (to overseers) Don't continue to supply the people with straw for making bricks, as before. They must go and gather straw for themselves.

EGYPTIAN OVERSEER: Should we reduce the quota of bricks each one is required to make?

PHARAOH: No, require the same quota of bricks from them as they were making before; do not reduce it. For they are slackers—that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'

ADVISOR 2: Impose heavier work on the men.

PHARAOH: Then they will be occupied with it and not pay attention to deceptive words.

EGYPTIAN OVERSEER: (to the people) This is what Pharaoh says: 'I am not giving you straw. Go get straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but there will be no reduction at all in your workload.'

NARRATOR: So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw.

EGYPTIAN OVERSEER: Finish your assigned work each day, just as you did when straw was provided.

NARRATOR: Then the Israelite foremen were beaten.

EGYPTIAN OVERSEER: Why haven't you finished making your prescribed number of bricks yesterday or today, as you did before?"

ISRAELITE FOREMAN: (to Pharaoh) Why are you treating your servants this way?

ISRAELITE FOREMAN 2: No straw has been given to your servants, yet they say to us, 'Make bricks!'

ISRAELITE FOREMAN: Look, your servants are being beaten, but it is your own people who are at fault.

PHARAOH: (snarling) You are slackers. Slackers! That is why you are saying, 'Let us go sacrifice to the Lord.' Now get to work. No straw will be given to you, but you must produce the same quantity of bricks.

ISRAELITE FOREMAN 2: We are in big trouble.

ISRAELITE FOREMAN: (*confronting MOSES: and AARON*) May the Lord take note of you and judge because you have made us reek in front of Pharaoh and his officials.

ISRAELITE FOREMAN 2: You all but put a sword in their hand to kill us!

MOSES: (*humbly with grief*) Lord, why have You caused trouble for this people? And why did You ever send me? Ever since I went in to Pharaoh to speak in Your name he has caused trouble for this people, and You haven't delivered Your people at all.

VOICE OF GOD: Now you are going to see what I will do to Pharaoh: he will let them go, even drive them out, because of My strong hand.

### God Promises Freedom (chapters 6-7)

VOICE OF GOD: I am Yahweh. I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are forcing to work as slaves, and I have remembered My covenant.

VOICE OF GOD: I am Yahweh, and I will deliver you from the forced labor of the Egyptians and free you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am Yahweh your God, who delivered you from the forced labor of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession. I am Yahweh.

AARON: Moses told this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their broken spirit and hard labor.

VOICE OF GOD: Go and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go from his land.

MOSES: If the Israelites will not listen to me, then how will Pharaoh listen to me, since I am such a poor speaker?

VOICE OF GOD: I am Yahweh; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt everything I am telling you.

MOSES: How will Pharaoh listen to me, a poor speaker?

VOICE OF GOD: See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother will be your prophet. You must say whatever I command you; then Aaron your brother must declare it to Pharaoh so that he will let the Israelites go from his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 Pharaoh will not listen to you, but I will put My hand on Egypt and bring the divisions of My people the Israelites out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh when I stretch out My hand against Egypt, and bring out the Israelites from among them.

NARRATOR: So Moses and Aaron did this; they did just as the Lord commanded them.

MIRIAM: Moses was 80 years old and Aaron 83 when they spoke to Pharaoh.

VOICE OF GOD: When Pharaoh tells you, 'Perform a miracle,' tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh. It will become a serpent.'

MIRIAM: So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord had commanded. Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a serpent.

PHARAOH: You magicians of Egypt, how is this done?

MAGI: We can do the same by our occult practices.

MIRIAM: Each one threw down his staff, and it became a serpent.

MAGI: (*alarmed*) Aaron's staff has swallowed our staffs!

NARRATOR: However, Pharaoh's heart hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

### The First Plague: Water Turned to Blood (chapters 7-

VOICE OF GOD: Pharaoh's heart is hard: he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning. When you see him walking out to the water, stand ready to meet him by the bank of the Nile. Take in your hand the staff that turned into a snake.

MOSES: (*to PHARAOH*) Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to tell you: Let My people go, so that they may worship Me in the wilderness, but so far you have not listened.

AARON: This is what Yahweh says: Here is how you will know that I am Yahweh. Watch. I will strike the water in the Nile with the staff in my hand, and it will turn to blood.

MOSES: The fish in the Nile will die, the river will stink, and the Egyptians will be unable to drink water from it.

VOICE OF GOD: *(to Moses)* Tell Aaron: Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—over their rivers, canals, ponds, and all their water reservoirs—and they will become blood. There will be blood throughout the land of Egypt, even in wooden and stone containers.

MIRIAM: Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded; in the sight of Pharaoh and his officials.

MOSES: Aaron raised the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile was turned to blood.

PHARAOH: *(alarmed)* The fish in the Nile are dead!

ADVISOR 2: The river smells so bad the Egyptians cannot drink water from it.

MIRIAM: There was blood throughout the land of Egypt.

MAGI: Look, your majesty. We Magicians can do the same thing by our occult practices.

NARRATOR: So Pharaoh's heart hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

MIRIAM: Pharaoh turned around, went into his palace, and didn't even take this to heart.

ADVISOR 2: You Egyptians must dig around the Nile for water to drink because you cannot drink the water from the river.

NARRATOR: Seven days passed after the Lord struck the Nile.

### The Second Plague: Frogs

VOICE OF GOD: Go in to Pharaoh and tell him: This is what Yahweh says: Let My people go, so that they may worship Me. But if you refuse to let them go, then I will plague all your territory with frogs. The Nile will swarm with frogs; they will come up and go into your palace, into your bedroom and on your bed, into the houses of your officials and your people, and into your ovens and kneading bowls. The frogs will come up on you, your people, and all your officials.

MOSES: *(to Aaron)* Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, canals, and ponds, and cause the frogs to come up onto the land of Egypt.

MIRIAM: When Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

MAGI: We can do the same thing by their occult practices.

ADVISOR 2: The magicians have also brought frogs up onto the land of Egypt.

PHARAOH: Ask Yahweh to remove the frogs from me and my people. Then I will let the people go and they can sacrifice to Yahweh.

MOSES: You make the choice rather than me. When should I ask on behalf of you, your officials, and your people, that the frogs be taken away from you and your houses, and remain only in the Nile?

PHARAOH: Tomorrow.

MOSES: As you have said, so you may know there is no one like Yahweh our God, the frogs will go away from you, your houses, your officials, and your people. The frogs will remain only in the Nile.

MIRIAM: After Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the Lord for help concerning the frogs that He had brought against Pharaoh.

NARRATOR: The Lord did as Moses had said: the frogs in the houses, courtyards, and fields died.

MIRIAM: They piled them in countless heaps, and there was a terrible odor in the land.

NARRATOR: But when Pharaoh saw there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

### The Third Plague: Gnats

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VOICE OF GOD: Tell Aaron: Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, and it will become gnats throughout the land of Egypt.

MIRIAM: Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and when he struck the dust of the earth, gnats were on man and beast.

NARRATOR: All the dust of the earth became gnats throughout the land of Egypt.

MIRIAM: The magicians tried to produce gnats using their occult practices, but they could not.

NARRATOR: The gnats remained on man and beast.

MAGI: *(defeated)* This is the finger of God.

MIRIAM: But Pharaoh's heart hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

### The Fourth Plague: Swarms of Flies

VOICE OF GOD: Get up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh when you see him going out to the water.

MOSES: This is what Yahweh says: Let My people go, so that they may worship Me.

AARON: But if you will not let My people go, then I will send swarms of flies against you, your officials, your people, and your houses.

MOSES: The Egyptians' houses will swarm with flies, and so will the land where they live.

VOICE OF GOD: But on that day I will give special treatment to the land of Goshen, where My people are living; no flies will be there. This way you will know that I, Yahweh, am in the land. I will make a distinction between My people and your people.

MOSES: This sign will take place tomorrow.

NARRATOR: And the Lord did this. Thick swarms of flies went into Pharaoh's palace and his officials' houses.

MIRIAM: Throughout Egypt the land was ruined because of the swarms of flies.

PHARAOH: *(to Moses and Aaron)* Go sacrifice to your God within the country.

Z; It would not be right to do that, because the Egyptians might stone us for sacrificing to the Lord our God what detestable to them We must go a distance of three days into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as He instructs us.

PHARAOH: I will let you go and sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness, but don't go very far. Make an appeal for me.

MOSES: As soon as I leave you, I will appeal to the Lord, and tomorrow the swarms of flies will depart from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. But Pharaoh must not act deceptively again by refusing to let the people go and sacrifice to the Lord.

AARON: Moses left Pharaoh's presence and appealed to the Lord.

MIRIAM: The Lord did as Moses had said: He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people; not one was left.

AARON: But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also and did not let the people go.

### The Fifth Plague: Death of Livestock

VOICE of GOD: Go in to Pharaoh and say to him: This is what Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let My people go, so that they may worship Me.



MOSES: *(to Pharaoh)* But if you refuse to let them go and keep holding them, then the Lord's hand will bring a severe plague against your livestock in the field—the horses, donkeys, camels, herds, and flocks.

HEBREW 1: But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that the Israelites own will die.

MOSES: Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.

MIRIAM: The next day all the Egyptian livestock died, but none among the Israelite livestock died.

PHARAOH: Go and see if it is true that not a single one of the Israelite livestock was dead.

ADVISOR 2: It is my Lord.

NARRATOR: But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

### The Sixth Plague: Boils

VOICE OF GOD: Take handfuls of furnace soot, and Moses is to throw it toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

MIRIAM: Moses did so.

MOSES: This soot will become fine dust over the entire land of Egypt.

AARON: It will become festering boils on man and beast throughout the land of Egypt.

MIRIAM: The boils were so bad the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils.

MOSES: *(to audience sadly)* But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he did not listen to us.

### The Seventh Plague: Hail

VOICE OF GOD: Get up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh.

MOSES: This is what Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews says: Let My people go, so that they may worship Me.

VOICE OF GOD: Otherwise, I am going to send all My plagues against you, your officials, and your people. Then you will know there is no one like Me in all the earth.

AARON: By now God could have stretched out his hand, struck you and your people with a plague, and you would have been obliterated from the earth.

VOICE OF GOD: However, I have let you live for this purpose: to show you My power and to make My name known in all the earth.

MOSES: You are still acting arrogantly against God's people by not letting them go.

VOICE OF GOD: Tomorrow at this time I will rain down the worst hail that has ever occurred in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.

AARON: Therefore give orders to bring your livestock and all that you have in the field into shelters.

MOSES: Every person and animal that is in the field and not brought inside will die when the hail falls on them.

ADVISOR 1: Those of us who feared the word of the Lord will have our servants and livestock flee to shelters.

ADVISOR 2: Ridiculous! I don't take the Lord's word seriously. I'll leave my servants and livestock in the field.

VOICE OF GOD: Moses, stretch out your hand toward heaven and let there be hail throughout the land of Egypt—on man and beast and every plant of the field in the land of Egypt.

MIRIAM: So Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail.

AARON: Lightning struck the earth, and the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt.

MM The hail, with lightning flashing through it, was so severe that nothing like it had occurred in the land of Egypt since it had become a nation.

ADVISOR 1: Throughout the land of Egypt, the hail struck down everything in the field, both man and beast.

MIRIAM: The hail beat down every plant of the field and shattered every tree in the field.

ADVISOR 2: (*irritated*) The only place it didn't hail was in the land of Goshen where the Israelites were.

ADVISOR 1: Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron.

PHARAOH: I have sinned this time. Yahweh is the Righteous One, and I and my people are the guilty ones. 28 Make an appeal to Yahweh.

ADVISOR 2: (*aside to PHARAOH*) There has been enough of God's thunder and hail.

PHARAOH: I will let you go; you don't need to stay any longer.

MOSES: When I have left the city, I will extend my hands to Yahweh. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know the earth belongs to Yahweh.

AARON: But as for you and your officials,

MOSES: I know that you still do not fear Yahweh our God.

ADVISOR 2: The flax and the barley were destroyed because the barley was ripe and the flax was budding.

ADVISOR 1: But the wheat and the spelt were not destroyed since they are later crops.

MIRIAM: Moses went out from Pharaoh and the city, and extended his hands to the Lord.

AARON: Then the thunder and hail ceased, and rain no longer poured down on the land.

PHARAOH: Good. The rain, hail, and thunder have ceased.

ADVISOR 1: Pharaoh sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his officials.

MOSES: So Pharaoh's heart hardened, and he did not let the Israelites go, as the Lord had said through me.

### The Eighth Plague: Locusts

VOICE OF GOD: Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may do these miraculous signs of Mine among them, and so that you may tell your son and grandson how severely I dealt with the Egyptians and performed miraculous signs among them, and you will know that I am Yahweh.

MOSES: (*to Pharaoh*) This is what Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, says: How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?

AARON: Let My people go, that they may worship Me.

MOSES: But if you refuse to let My people go, then tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory.

AARON: They will cover the surface of the land so that no one will be able to see the land.

MOSES: You will eat the remainder left to you that escaped the hail; they will eat every tree you have growing in the fields.

AARON: They will fill your houses, all your officials' houses, and the houses of all the Egyptian.

MOSES: Something your fathers and ancestors never saw since the time they occupied the land until today.

MIRIAM: Then Moses turned and left Pharaoh's presence.

ADVISOR 1: (*to Pharaoh*) How long must this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, so that they may worship Yahweh their God.

ADVISOR 2: Don't you realize yet that Egypt is devastated?

PHARAOH: Bring Moses and Aaron back (*to MOSES: and Aaron*) Go, worship Yahweh your God, but exactly who will be going?

MOSES: We will go with our young and our old; we will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds because we must hold Yahweh's festival.

PHARAOH: May Yahweh be with you if I ever let you and your families go!

ADVISOR 2: Look out—they are planning evil.

PHARAOH: No, only the men may go and worship Yahweh, for that is what you have been asking for. (*to ADVISOR 2*) Drive them from my presence.

VOICE OF GOD: Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt and the locusts will come up over it and eat every plant in the land, everything that the hail left.

MIRIAM: So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord sent an east wind over the land all that day and through the night.

AARON: By morning the east wind had brought in the locusts.

MIRIAM: The locusts went up over the entire land of Egypt and settled on the whole territory of Egypt.

ADVISOR 1: Never before had there been such a large number of locusts,

MOSES: and there never will be again.

AARON: They covered the surface of the whole land so that the land was black,

MIRIAM: and they consumed all the plants on the ground and all the fruit on the trees that the hail had left.

MOSES: Nothing green was left on the trees or the plants in the field throughout the land of Egypt.

PHARAOH: (*to ADVISOR 2*) Quickly! Bring me Moses and Aaron (*to MOSES and AARON*) I have sinned against Yahweh your God and against you. Please forgive my sin once more and make an appeal to Yahweh your God, so that He will take this death away from me.

MIRIAM: Moses left Pharaoh's presence and appealed to the Lord.

AARON: Then the Lord changed the wind to a strong west wind, and it carried off the locusts and blew them into the Red Sea.

A1: Not a single locust was left in all the territory of Egypt.

MIRIAM: But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the Israelites go.

### The Ninth Plague: Darkness

VOICE OF GOD: Stretch out your hand toward heaven, and there will be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness that can be felt.

MIRIAM: So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days.

ADVISOR 2: Pharaoh, they have struck Ra, our sun god!

MIRIAM: One person could not see another, and for three days they did not move from where they were.

MOSES: Yet all the Israelites had light where they lived.

PHARAOH: (*to Moses*) Go, worship Yahweh. Even your families may go with you; only your flocks and herds must stay behind.

MOSES: You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings to prepare for Yahweh our God.

AARON: Even our livestock must go with us; not a hoof will be left behind because we will take some of them to worship Yahweh our God.

MOSES: We will not know what we will use to worship Yahweh until we get there.

MIRIAM: But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was unwilling to let them go.

PHARAOH: Leave me! Make sure you never see my face again, for on the day you see my face, you will die.

MOSES: As you have said; I will never see your face again.