

Supplies: a clear pitcher or really big clear glass with water in it; the water needs to be pretty disgusting while still being somewhat clear – so put a little bit of dirt in it, some leaves, some twigs, some rocks (and do this before class); then have a garbage bag with some “clean trash” in it that you’ll put in the pitcher during class (for example: an emptied ketchup/hot sauce packet, a candy bar wrapper, some sort of half-eaten thing like chewed-up lettuce, a crushed soda can; plastic o-rings from a six-pack of bottled drinks); 1 ball of yarn per student (the Dollar Store is a good place to go for this; if you’re worried about money, though, you can quite easily get away with 1 ball of yarn per every TWO students); a pair of scissors; one large foam ball.

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- For the opening question, I’m going to ask you a question and then we’ll go around the circle and say our names and then give our answer to the question.
- I’ll ask the question and then I’ll answer first, ok?
- Opening question: *In the story we’re going to read today, Pharaoh keeps breaking his promise to Moses about letting the Israelites free. Have you ever had someone change a plan or break a promise with you? What happened and how did it feel?*

GO AROUND THE CIRCLE

TELL

- During this Session (Patriarchs, Joseph and Moses), we’ve been talking and learning about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.
- These 5 individuals had a lot to do with the beginning of who we call the Israelites.
- By learning the stories of these 5 individuals, we are also getting the chance to learn and see how the relationship between the Israelites and God starts, struggles, and matures.
- All of these stories that we’re hearing and talking about in this Session are from the Old Testament. This means these things happened well before Jesus was born. Between 1600 to 2000 years before Jesus was born. This means some of these stories are 4000 years old!
- In last week’s story, Moses, born 400 years after Joseph, God uses a burning bush to get Moses’ attention and then tells Moses that God, through Moses, is going to set the Israelites free from the Egyptians.
- Today’s story starts with Moses meeting with Pharaoh, probably one of the other princes he, Moses, who doesn’t want to let the people of Israel go.

READ Exodus 8:1-15

Because Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go, 1 the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, "Thus says the Lord: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. 2 But because you refuse to let them go, I will plague your whole country with frogs. 3 The river shall swarm with frogs; they shall

come up into your palace, into your bedchamber and your bed, and into the houses of your officials and of your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. 4 The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your officials.' " 5 And the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron [Aaron is Moses' brother-in-law who Moses asked to have come with him] "Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, the canals, and the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.' " 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 8 Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, "Pray to the Lord to take away the frogs from me and my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." 9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "Kindly tell me when I am to pray for you and for your officials and for your people, that the frogs may be removed from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile." 10 And Pharaoh said, "Tomorrow." Moses said, "As you say! So that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God, 11 the frogs shall leave you and your houses and your officials and your people tomorrow; they shall be left only in the Nile." 12 Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh; and Moses cried out to the Lord concerning the frogs that he had brought upon Pharaoh. 13 And the Lord did as Moses requested: the frogs died in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. 14 The people gathered the frogs together in heaps, and the land stank. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that the plague of frogs had stopped, he hardened his heart, went back on what he said he would do and would not let the Israelites go.

(keep reading this to the class): This happened a total of 10 times (including the story we just read) where Moses would tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go and Pharaoh would say no. Then Moses would pray and God would send a plague on the people of Egypt. Then Pharaoh would beg Moses to stop the plague with the promise to Moses the Israelites could go. Then Moses would pray asking God to relieve the plague. After the plague was gone, Pharaoh would go back on his promise and NOT let the Israelites go. Each plague was a little bit worse, until the last one, which was by far the worst plague. Then, the first born son of each Egyptian family died. This is what finally convinces Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

The 10 plagues that afflicted Egypt were:

- All the water in Egypt turned to blood for three days (Exodus 7:14-24)
- Frogs invaded the entire country, going into people's homes, fields and courtyards. (Exodus 8:1-15)
- Vast swarms of gnats tormented people and animals. (Exodus 8:16-19)
- Vast swarms of flies through the land, spreading disease. (Exodus 8:20-32)
- Disease on the livestock - horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep and goats - but those of the Israelites were unharmed. (Exodus 9:1-7)
- Festering boils on people and animals through the land. (Exodus 9:8-12)
- Powerful hail storms that destroyed the standing crops. The hail stones were so big that any people or animals caught outside in the storm were killed. (Exodus 9:13-35)
- Locusts in such great numbers that the ground was covered with them. They devoured everything. (Exodus 10:1-20)
- Darkness over the entire land for three days - but the Israelites had light in Goshen. (Exodus 10:21-29)
- Death of the Egyptian firstborns. This is usually referred to as "The Passover." Then Pharaoh let the Israelites go. (Exodus 11:1-10, 12:1-42)

ASK

- Who decided that the Israelites could not leave Egypt? (Pharaoh did)
- Who, though, suffered the consequences/plagues because of Pharaoh's decisions? (All of Egypt)
- Does this seem fair to you? Why/why not?

TELL

- Whether it is fair or not, our decisions often affect those who are around us.
- One modern day example of how other people's decisions affect others is pollution.
- When other people pollute, it affects all of us.
- For example...

Demonstration Activity

- I have here a big glass/pitcher of dirty water [hold it up in front of the students.]
- I was going fishing the other day and I got really thirsty so I dipped this glass/pitcher into the water for a drink.
- And then I thought y'all might want some, too, so I brought some extra along with me.
- Oh, and I almost forgot! As I was walking along the bank/side of the river, I saw some trash and I thought to myself, "I'm pretty sure whoever threw that there was just aiming for the water, but missed. So I'll just put it where it belongs...in this water!"
- [Pull some trash out of your garbage bag and put it in the pitcher of dirty water. Then stir it with a spoon]
- It sure looks good! [Act like you are taking a drink. Smack your lips. Wipe'em with your sleeve. Sigh contentedly.]
- Anyone want some?
- NO?!? What do you mean "No?" WHY!?!

TELL

- When we make decisions, those decisions affect the people around us.
- In the case of Pharaoh, because he was choosing to not listen to God, that decision affected his whole country and that's why all the people of Egypt experienced the plagues.
- It would have been better for the people if Pharaoh had listened to God, though, don't you think?
- But Pharaoh didn't, because he thought he was in charge.
- And that's the same thing that keeps us from paying attention to and listening to God a lot of times: We think we are in charge. But as we can see with Pharaoh, that didn't work out so well and the same is true for us, too – thinking we are in charge instead of letting God be in charge doesn't work out so well for us or those around us.
- Next, we're going to do another activity that helps us see how one decision made by one person can affect the people surrounding that one person.

EXPLAIN One Big Yarn ACTIVITY

- Get into a circle
- I'm going to give each of you a ball of yarn
- Once everyone has a ball of yarn, take the end of it and hold it in one hand,
- now take the ball and wrap the yarn around your waist one time.

- Once you've done that, then I want you to take your ball of yarn and throw it UNDERHAND, to someone else in the circle.
- Make sure the person you are throwing to is looking at you and that they know that you are throwing the yarn to them. THIS MEANS YOU CAN'T ALL THROW YOUR BALL OF YARN AT THE SAME TIME!!!
- If I see you throwing a ball of yarn overhand you will be told to sit down and you will not participate in the rest of this activity. Is this understood? [Wait for a yes from everyone].
- Okay, once you catch a ball of yarn, wrap it one time around your waist and then throw the ball of yarn UNDERHAND to someone else in the circle.
- Then wrap it around your waist and throw the ball of yarn to another person and so on.
- Keep doing this until I tell you to stop. Any questions? Okay, begin!

DO One Big Yarn ACTIVITY

NOTE: After 5 minutes or so have passed or the balls of yarn have been all used up, tell them to stop.

TELL

- Alright, now that we're all webbed together, I need a volunteer. [pick a volunteer]
- Volunteer, I need to you to walk over there [point] and pick up another ball of yarn.
- [everyone gets pulled along. Stop the volunteer pretty quickly before things get out of hand]
- Now I need another volunteer...[pick a volunteer]
- Volunteer, I want you to bounce your hand on the yarn in front of you.
- Is there anyone who feels that?
- Now I'm going to put a large foam ball on the web of yarn. Can you move the ball around the circle without touching it with your hands?

DO Foam Ball Exercise

- So did you find yourself getting pulled around from time to time?
- Did you wish that you weren't so tied up sometimes?
- That's how it was for the Israelites and the Egyptians. They were so tied up with each other, they couldn't just separate themselves. 400 years of being stuck together takes some work to undo.
- So in some ways, the plagues helped the Egyptians and the Israelites see how being connected in the ways that they were wasn't so good.
- And God showed them a way out.
- God provided them a pair of scissors named Moses.
- [produce a pair of scissors]
- And the Israelites were eventually freed from their slavery.
- [cut them all loose]

CLEAN UP

CLOSING PRAYER