

The Friendly Seed

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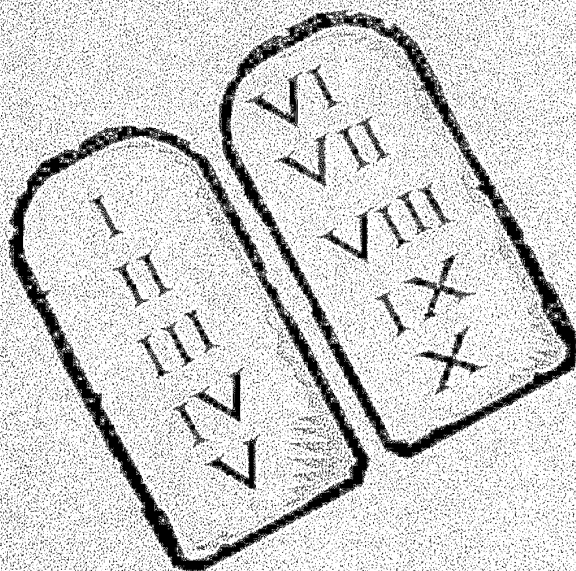
Teaching The Old Testament To Quaker Children

Eleven Lessons

Edited by Barbara Rose Caldwell

for

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Religious Education Concerns Group
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Teaching the Old Testament to Quaker Children
A General Introduction

In 1988-90 the Religious Education Committee published eleven *Friendly Seeds* on Old Testament stories. These were collected into a curriculum packet in 1990 and this is a slightly revised edition of that collection. While the stories are presented chronologically, we are emphasizing each story as an entity that can be used with or without reference to other parts of the Old Testament. Each chapter includes background material on the story, questions to ask the children, and several activity ideas. The original *Seeds* were prepared by a number of different writers so you will notice differences in style, format and emphasis among them. However, the general approach is consistent - to help elementary and middle school age children appreciate these provocative stories. Through questions and activities children will begin to understand the Old Testament as a source of wisdom and knowledge which has meaning in their own lives. The following stories are included:

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Each chapter includes specific teaching ideas. The following list suggests a general approach to teaching Bible stories:

1. Prepare by reading the story in a good annotated Bible. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, Revised Standard Version* is one excellent version. The notes provide lots of background material. Also consider the *New Revised Standard Version*.
2. With the children read or tell the story. Telling is best but if you read, choose a version which the children will understand. The *Good News Bible*, because of its modern language, is a good choice. Elementary age children can read or be read to from *The Children's Bible in 365 Stories* or de Paola's *Book of Bible Stories*. For nursery and early elementary, the *Beginner's Bible*, with

cartoon illustrations, is appropriate. There are individual Bible stories and picture books available for purchase from Friends General Conference, 1-800-966-4556, or to borrow from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library or your local library. The PYM Library will mail books to you and you may return them by mail. The phone number is (215) 241-7220; address: 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102.

3. Ask some questions. Begin with factual questions. Be sure the children understand what happened in the story before you start to explore its meaning. This is the place to introduce some interesting background information. For instance, explain the word "covenant", or describe the living conditions in Biblical times. Maps, available in Bible atlases, are of particular interest to elementary children. If the children have their own Bibles, help them find the story for themselves. Go on to questions which aim at deepening the children's understanding of the story or exploring how they feel about the story. One goal of this type of question is to help children integrate the story into their own lives. Examples of such questions are: How do you feel about Jacob's and Rebekah's deception of Isaac? Is lying ever OK? Or, If you were Ruth, would you have gone with Naomi? Why or why not?

4. Do something active with the story. Children learn by doing. The activity should reinforce whatever you've emphasized in your discussion of the story. For instance, act out the blessing of Isaac or the departure of Ruth and Naomi. Make a mural of the story of Esther. Or color the stories in *Bible Stories to Read and Color* by Araten, obtainable from FGC, 1216 Arch St., Philadelphia, PA, 19107, or call 215-561-1800 or 1-800-966-4556.

5. Some stories may take more than one week to cover. Allow some time each week for activities as well as for discussion. Review the story each week since some children may have missed the first telling.

A final note: some Quakers express discomfort with the Old Testament. These stories are stories of real human beings who behave in human ways. They lie; they get angry; they rail at God. They are not perfect. Children will relate to the humanness of these characters. Trust your children to appreciate and learn from the Bible. The danger of teaching children only about heroes with few flaws is that they fail to learn that more fallible people (Jacob is a good example) can lead God-centered lives. In our zeal to protect our children from "un-Quakerly" stories we risk throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Look especially for "Quaker" themes. For instance, the emphasis on a personal relationship with God in the stories of the patriarchs.

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JACOB

The main sections of the story of Jacob included in this chapter are:

Birth of Jacob and Esau	Genesis 25:21-26
Esau Sells his Birthright	Genesis 25:27-34
The Blessing of Isaac	Genesis 27:14-5
Journey of Jacob	Genesis 28:10-22; 29:1-14
Marriages of Jacob	Genesis 29:15-30
The Brothers Meet Again	Genesis 32:3-13; 22-31; 33:1-17

You may choose to teach only one or two of these sections, but read through the whole saga before you begin. Be sure to use a good annotated Bible such as The New Oxford Annotated Bible (RSV). Read the notes. They will fill in much of the historical and theological underpinnings of this story. As you present the stories to your children, always tell or read the story first. Then choose appropriate background information to share and questions to ask. Follow up with an activity.

This chapter has four parts:

- I. General Background
- II. Background and Questions for Each Section of the Story
- III. Activities
- IV. Bibliography

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Jacob is the third of the great patriarchs of the Hebrew tradition. He is the son of Isaac, the grandson of Abraham, and the father of Joseph. His story is part of the series of narratives which extend from Genesis, Chapter 12, the departure of Abraham, through Genesis, Chapter 50, the death of Joseph. The following passage from *A Source Book of the Bible for Teachers*, edited by Robert C. Walton, describes how these stories are a mixture of history, myth, and theological explanation:

Can we then call these narratives 'history'? It depends what we mean by history. Genesis Chapters 12-50 do not contain a record of significant public, political and social events. Very little of the political history of this period can be gleaned from them; and what there is often incidental. It is best to treat these narratives in the main as sagas. Sagas, transmitted from generation to generation by word of mouth, are stories which preserve the memory of the movements and adventures of tribal groups, and of the noteworthy deeds of tribal heroes. Sagas often concern themselves with quite trifling personal incidents, domestic intrigue, family quarrels, love and jealousy. Sagas preserve and reflect a way of life, a set of values. They mirror the way in which a community thinks about itself and its own past. As such they are of immeasurable historical value, even when they do not record historical events. In most cases there is a solid substratum of historical fact in the saga, but the task of penetrating to it is not always easy. Even when focusing upon individuals, such sagas may be retelling the fortunes and exploits of tribal groups ("The Patriarchs", Robert Davidson, p. 103).

These narratives also include explanatory (etiological) legends. For example, the founding of cults and shrines such as the one at Bethel (Genesis 28:19-31) is described within the context of these stories. The unity of the various types of material derives from the common purpose of the writers, which is "to

witness to the God of Israel's faith and the mystery of his choice of Israel to be his people." (p. 104, Davidson).

The basic theological themes of the narratives, all of which appear in the story of Jacob, are:

1. *Call or Election.* The patriarchs are called by God. They are ready to obey, but prior goodness is not required of them. Jacob is not an idealized figure but a real human being called to move God's purposes forward.
2. *Promise.* God has promised the Hebrews land and a future great nation as well as a blessing on the descendants of Abraham. The patriarchs must have faith in the promises, but God keeps the promises alive.
3. *Covenant.* The strands of call and promise come together under the word covenant. God binds himself to Abraham as his God and the God of his descendants (see Genesis 17:1-14).
4. *The Presence of God.* God appears to the patriarchs; this is called theophany. Ancient legends may be behind such appearances. For instance, Jacob's wrestling match with the angel has its origin in a legend about a demonic night assailant at the ford of Jabbok. But whatever their source, these appearances communicate the reality of people's encounters with God in their era. The "emphasis upon personal revelation and personal relationship with God seems an authentic element in the religious experience of Israel's patriarchal forefathers" (Davidson, p. 106).

Friends may be surprised to see such "Quaker" themes as call and the personal experience of God so alive in these ancient stories. Jacob and the other patriarchs are men of God (as we are men and women of God) seeking sometimes successfully, sometimes not, to live lives consistent with God's will struggling to balance their own desires with God's plan for them. Jacob literally needs to hold onto God on the bank of the river. He seeks, as we do, God's blessing and affirmation.

II. BACKGROUND AND QUESTIONS FOR EACH SECTION OF THE STORY

This chapter looks at six episodes in the life of Jacob. For each episode some background information and a series of questions to ask the children are included. Before asking questions which move away from the facts of the story itself, be sure, via questions or retelling, that the children understand what happened in the story. These questions are appropriate for children ages 8 and up. For younger children you may want to simplify the issues presented and focus primarily on the stories themselves.

Birth of Jacob and Esau: Genesis 25:21-26

God tells Rebekah that the two children struggling within her are two nations and two peoples (Genesis 25:2-3). Jacob represents the Israelites (his name is later changed to Israel); Esau represents the Edomites. The word "red" used to describe the hair on Esau's body is, in Hebrew, a play on the word Edom. Jacob is a play on the Hebrew word for "heel", i.e., he takes by the heel or supplants Esau, who by his birth order was the traditional heir.

Why is it so important to know which baby is born first? Are there places today where birth order makes a difference (mention the British monarchy)? Does your birth order (first, second, middle, etc.) make a difference to you? Do you ever wish you were born before or after a sibling? God speaks directly to Rebekah. Do you think God can speak directly to people today?

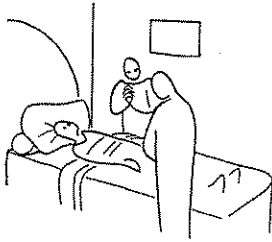
Esau Sells his Birthright: Genesis 25:27-34

The Birthright refers to the rights of the eldest son: leadership of the family and a double share of the inheritance. This double share carries with it responsibility for younger siblings and the debts of the estate. The depiction of Esau as dull and easily outwitted by Jacob, is an explanation of why Israel gained

ascendancy over Edom even though Edom was an older nation. The two men represent rival ways of life: Esau, the hunter; Jacob, the shepherd. In the long run the life of the shepherd is more complex (i.e., civilized) and it is that more settled way of life which gains ascendancy in the history of Israel.

What do you think of Jacob's method of obtaining the birthright? What does Jacob gain by buying the birthright? What responsibilities does he accept? Why do you think Esau was willing to sell the birthright? What do you think about each parent having a favorite child? Esau liked hunting and outdoor life; Jacob preferred a more sedentary life. Which life is more appealing to you? Why? Do your siblings enjoy the same things you do? How are you different from your siblings?

The Blessing of Isaac: Genesis 27:1-45



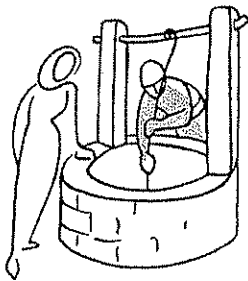
Deathbed blessings are very important in the life of ancient peoples. The blessings released a power which determined the character and destiny of the recipient. Once the blessing was given it could not be retracted. As a result Isaac can only give Esau a less potent blessing. The elements of deceit and lying are typical of many stories in which a weaker and/or younger child gains ascendancy. It is frequently the mother who helps this child. The deceit is seen as a necessary part of God's plan for Jacob. The trickster hero, of which Jacob is an example, appears in many myths. Rebekah, through her deceit, is carrying out the divine plan revealed to her at the children's birth.

What is a blessing? What does Isaac's blessing of Jacob mean? How is his blessing of Esau different? Do you think Rebekah and Jacob did the right thing? Why or why not? What is God's role in this deceit? What would you have done, if you were Rebekah, Jacob, Esau, or Isaac? How do you think Isaac felt when he realized he'd blessed the wrong son? What do you think about lying for a good purpose? What are the consequences of such actions? What were the consequences for Jacob (he had to leave at once)? Does this story shed any light on the aphorism "God helps those who help themselves"? Are there any dangers in such an attitude?

Journey of Jacob: Genesis 28:10-22; 29:1-14

Jacob's Ladder: The angels who appear to Jacob are seen as a retinue surrounding God. God renews His promise to Jacob in this dream. This story explains the origin of the shrine at Bethel, which means house of God. In this era temples were seen as places where God came down to meet the people. Jacob uses the expression, "My God" (Genesis 28:21), which demonstrates his close personal relationship to the deity, a theme in the patriarchal narratives.

The well: To provide for fair use of the well, a stone too large for one man to move covered its mouth. Jacob meets and falls in love with Rachel at the well. His being able to move the stone is a superhuman feat.



How do you think Jacob felt traveling to an unknown destination? Have you ever started a trip not knowing exactly where you were going? What do you think Jacob's dream means? Jacob speaks directly to God and God to him in the dream. Do you ever talk directly to God? Does God respond? How? What does God promise Jacob? Jacob makes a deal with God; he'll dedicate a shrine to God, if God will stay with him. Can we make deals with God? Why or why not?

Why was Jacob able to move the stone at the well? How do you think Jacob feels about Rachel? Is love empowering?

Marriages of Jacob: Genesis 29:15-30

Wives in this era were purchased. Jacob purchases his wives via work for Laban. Laban tricks him into marrying Leah first (much as Jacob tricked Isaac) so that Jacob ends up working for Laban for 14 years so he can marry Rachel too. The elder, less attractive, daughter (Leah), and the younger, prettier daughter (Rachel), are common motifs in legends much as Jacob and Esau are prototypical younger and older brothers.

Why do you think Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Leah? How do you think the daughters felt about these arrangements? About each other? What sort of relationship do Laban and Jacob have? How do you feel about the deceit in this section of the story? Is this one of the consequences of Jacob's and Rebekah's deceit? Laban is taking care of Leah via his trick. Is such trickery justifiable? Why or why not? Can you think of any modern examples of such tricks or deceptions?

The Brothers Meet Again: Genesis 32:3-13; 33:1-17

Genesis 32:1-33 recounts the struggles Jacob must undergo before he reenters the promised land. These struggles prepare him for a new relationship with Esau and with God. The angels who greet him are God's army. Jacob feels he can either win Esau over with gifts or at least save half his people via a strategic division of his retinue. Jacob's wrestling match, a very ancient story, ends with Jacob receiving a new name. This new name signifies a new self. He is no longer a "supplanter" (Genesis 25:26) but Israel (Genesis 35:10), which probably means "God rules" or "one who strives with God and wins." The divinity does not reveal His name because He would lose strength if His name was spoken by another. Jacob, who was afraid to face Esau, ends up facing God and by surviving shows he is ready for his return. He renews his relationship with God and Esau. Verse 32 explains an Israelite taboo against eating a certain thigh muscle of cattle. This is an example of an explanatory legend inserted into the larger story. Point this detail out to your class as an example of the many different elements interwoven in these stories. This section also includes the naming and founding of another holy place. The spot where Jacob wrestles with God is named Peniel, "the face of God."

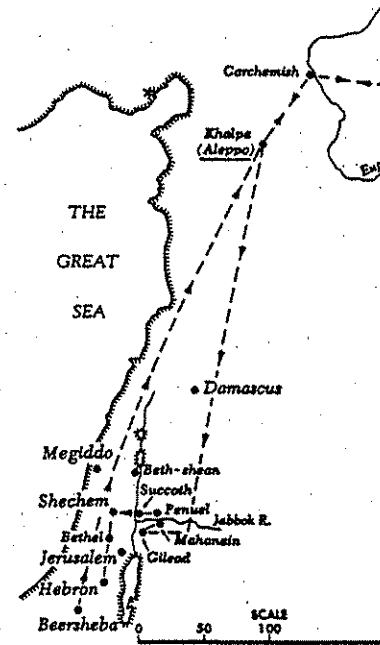
How would you feel if you were Jacob going to meet Esau after 20 years? What thoughts would you have? How do you understand his panic and fear? Why do you think Jacob has to wrestle with God? Why does he demand another blessing? How do you feel about the brothers' meeting? At first Esau refuses a gift and Jacob refuses to be escorted. Why do you think they behave in these ways? How do you think the brothers felt at the end of the story? What does the word reconciliation mean? Has Esau forgiven Jacob? What are the elements of forgiveness? Do you think Jacob is different from what he was 20 years before? If so, how and why is he different? Describe a time you learned from an experience, a time you forgave someone, a time someone forgave you. Have you ever made up with a friend with whom you were angry? How did you do it?

Is your name important to you? Do you like it? How would you feel if it was changed? Is there a name you'd prefer? Why? or why not?

III. ACTIVITIES

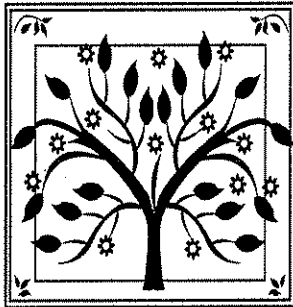
These activities can be used with more than one section of the story.

1. *Map Work.* A small map of Jacob's wanderings is printed here. You can photocopy it for your class. Supplement the map with a Bible atlas. Trace Jacob's travels. He went from Beersheba to Bethel, then across the Jordan to Haran. He came south again on his return to the Jabbok River, then across to Shechem and Bethel. His 12th son was born at Bethlehem, where his wife Rachel died. Then he went to his father's house at Beersheba. Esau moved south to the mountains of Seir and that became the home of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau. If someone in your Meeting has been to Israel, ask him/her to share photographs, slides, or verbal impressions of this land. Or use a book such as *Everyday Life in Bible Times* (National Geographic Society) to show your children pictures of the areas in which Jacob lived and traveled.



WANDERINGS OF JACOB

2. *Family Tree.* Work on a family tree of the patriarchs. If your children have Bibles they can help look up the names. Begin with Terah



(Genesis 11:31), the father of Abraham. Then proceed to Abraham and Sarah, who have two sons, Ishmael (Genesis 16:15, actually the son of Hagar), and Isaac, who marries Rebekah (Genesis 21:3). Isaac has two sons, Esau, who marries Mahalath (Genesis 28:9) and Jacob, who has four wives (two are actually maidservants of his wives), Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah. The 12 sons of Jacob become the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Their names are: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin. There is also one daughter, Dinah. (Genesis 29:31; 30:24; 35:16-18).

Children might enjoy memorizing the names of the Twelve Tribes.

Ask children if they know the names of their own grandparents. Make individual family trees. This project will take two weeks, since children will need to get information from their families. Children can make charts or posters of their own family trees as well as a class poster of Jacob's family.

3. *Mural.* You can make a mural of part of the story, for instance, Jacob's dream at Bethel, or you can make an ongoing mural which depicts successive scenes in the story. Use brown wrapping paper at least 3' by 6'. The mural will be more effective if you paint the background. Sky, trees, ground, grass, water can all be painted on with large brushes. Tempera paint and brushes with long handles work best. Be sure to let the background dry before you paint on the figures. Figures can also be prepared on separate sheets, cut out and pasted on the mural. This is an excellent mixed age activity.
4. *Drama.* Many episodes in this story are easy to dramatize. The blessing of Isaac is a good example. If you have a large group, divide into groups of four and let each group work out its own dramatization of this scene, and then perform it for the others. With a smaller group try writing a short play of the scene and then act it out for another class or for parents. Provide props: a soup bowl, a piece of fake fur for Esau's arm, headdresses (use 18" squares of cloth with

sections of nylon stockings as ties to hold the squares in place). As a variation have the children make up skits in which they change the ending. For instance, have Isaac realize that Jacob isn't Esau. Another good scene to act out is the final one, which can be dramatized in three parts: 1) Jacob and his wives decide to go home; 2) Jacob wrestles with the angel; 3) the meeting of Jacob and Esau. Again let the children create the skits themselves.

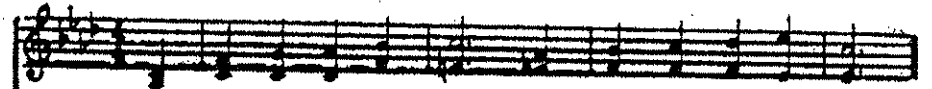
5. *Songs.* "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder" (#192) in *Worship and Song, a Friends Hymnal* and "The God of Abraham Praise," reprinted here, are appropriate to these stories.

6. *Dioramas.* Given appropriate materials, children will create wonderful dioramas, which are scenes in a box. If each child is going to make his/her own diorama, provide a shoe box for each child. Turn the box on its side and rest it in the box top. This will give the child extra space to work on. If several children will work together, use larger boxes and cut off the top so they can get into the space easily. Possible materials: paint, construction paper, glue, scissors, markers, clothespins (for people), clay, pipe cleaners, material scraps, grass, twigs, cotton balls, etc. Choose the scene you want the children to recreate or let them choose among several. If you've done the whole saga, they can create a sequential series of scenes. If you've spent some time on the differences between Jacob and Esau, make dioramas of the two life styles: hunter and shepherd.

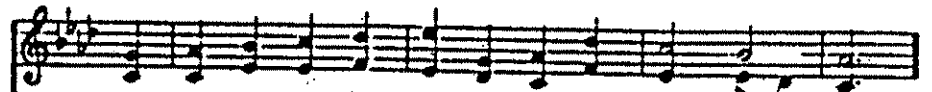
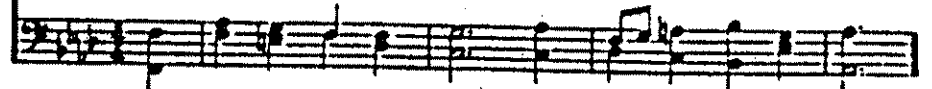
THE GOD OF ABRAHAM PRAISE

Revised Version of the Yigdal
 (Danced by Judah, c. 1400)
 Ft. Newton M. Mann, 1876-1878
 and Miss Landsberg, 1845-1878

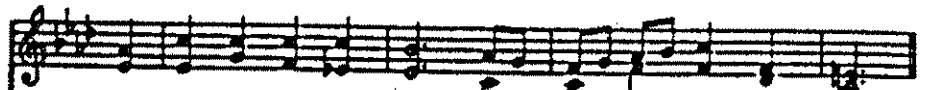
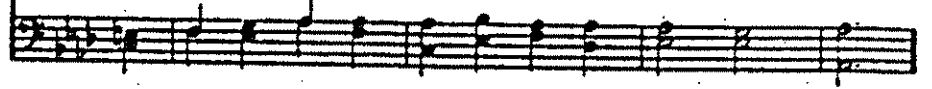
123456789
 Traditional Hebrew Melody
 Adapted by Mayer Lyon, 1751-1767



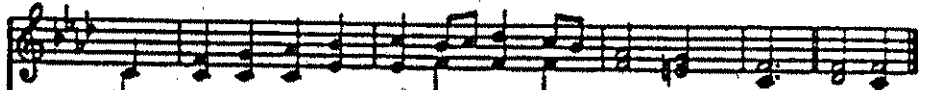
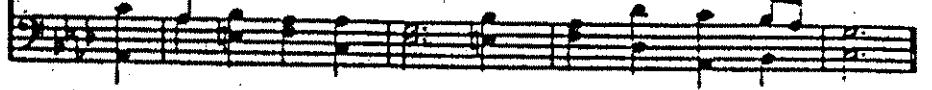
1. The God of A-braham praise, We praise that ho - ly name,
 2. God's spur - it flow - eth free, High surg - ing where it will,
 3. God hath e - ter - nal life Im - plant - ed in the soul.



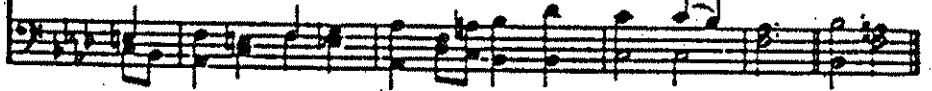
Who was, and is, and is to be, For aye the same!
 In proph-et's word God spoke of old And speak - eth still.
 God's love shall be our strength and stay, While a - ges roll.



The one e - ter - nal God, Ere aught that now ap - pears:
 Ex - tab - lished is God's law, And change-less it shall stand,
 Praise to the liv - ing God! We praise that ho - ly name!



The First, the Last; be - yond all thought through time-less years!
 Deep writ up-on the hu-man heart, On sea, or land.
 Who was, and is, and is to be, For aye the same! A - men.



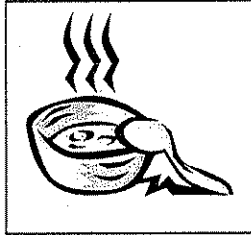
7. *Food.* Make lentil soup, which is what Jacob gives Esau in the birthright scene. Recipe:

Lentils, Monastery Style

In a large pot sauté 3-5 min:

1/4 cup olive oil
2 large onions, chopped
1 carrot, chopped

Add and sauté 1 min. more:
1/2 tsp each dried thyme
and marjoram leaves



Add:

3 cups stock or seasoned water
1 cup dry lentils, washed
salt to taste
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
1 lb. canned tomatoes
Cook in covered pot until lentils are tender,
(about 45 min.)

Have ready:

2/3 cup grated Swiss cheese

To serve: place 2 tbsp of grated cheese in each serving bowl and top with soup.

(Adapted from Frances Moore Lappe's *Diet For a Small Planet*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1975).

Share the soup plus pita bread with the class or with other classes as a lunch. Try creating an environment like the one in which Jacob and Esau lived. Make a tent out of sheets, pieces of fabric or a tarp spread out over tables or chairs. Simulate a fire using crumbled red tissue and flashlights. Sit in the tent to eat your soup. Make headdresses as described in the drama section. Food is also part of the story of the Blessing of Isaac. The descriptions are not too specific, but the children can prepare and serve a variety of Middle Eastern foods: pita bread, figs, dates, raisins, cucumber, yogurt. Pita bread can be baked, if you have time. Many cookbooks, including *Beard on Bread* by James Beard, New York: Alfred Knopf, 1975, contain recipes.

8. *Other Stories.* Share stories from other sources which pick up on the themes presented in these stories:
- Heroes who are depicted as physically weaker often use trickery to achieve their goals. A simple example is "Jack and the Beanstalk". If you have access to Native-American or African legends, many of them have "trickster" heroes.
 - Stories of direct confrontations or meetings with a god or God also occur in many cultures. For example: the stories of Leda and the Swan and Baucis and Philemon in Greek mythology.
 - Compare the story of "The Prodigal Son" in the New Testament (Luke 15:11-24) to Jacob's story. Note similarities and differences. There is a lesson on this parable in *Teaching Children About Jesus, Part I*, available from Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch St., 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 561-1700.
9. *Miscellaneous Ideas:*
- Birth Order Interviews.* Interview children about their feelings about their place as first, second, third, etc., child in a family. Ask some adults to talk about their feelings on this issue. Talk about advantages and disadvantages of one's birth order.
 - Jacob's Ladder.* Precut ladders to be pasted on blue paper. Have the children make angels out of shiny paper and paste them on the ladder. Good for ages 3-6.

- c. *Mediation or Conflict Resolution Activities.* After discussing the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau, try using the two lessons on conflict resolution in *Walking Cheerfully*, available from Friends General Conference (see address above). Several simple role plays are included in that curriculum.
- d. *Names.* Names of people and places are important parts of this story. Do some research on why your Meeting or town has the name it does. Find out from the children how they were named and who chose their names. Find out what their names mean (e.g., Irene means "peace"). Make special nametags or buttons with the children's names. Make designs using the letters of each child's name; for instance, cut the letters out of construction paper and glue them on a piece of construction paper in an interesting configuration. Make hidden word puzzles with the children's names and the key names in the story of Jacob. Older children can make these puzzles themselves, if you give them a list of words from the story.

Find the hidden names:

1. Had a dream of Angels. (Jacob)	B	E	T	H	E	L
2. Was cheated by his brother. (Esau)	R	S	T	U	V	N
3. Means house of God. (Bethel)	J	A	C	O	B	L
	Y	U	Z	A	Y	X

- e. *Blessings* Have the children write blessings as a group or individually. Blessings could be for each other, for family members, for the Meeting, for their houses or schools. Ask them to recall any blessings they know (graces, the words we say when someone sneezes) already.

IV BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Note: There are many children's Bibles available. If you use one, choose one that has good illustrations and is faithful to the original text.)

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Books available from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102, (215) 241-7220. Books may be requested by phone, will be mailed to you and may be returned by mail as well.

Priscilla Taylor-Williams and Barbara Rose Caldwell

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

Listed below are the main sections of this chapter on the story of Joseph:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Joseph - The Favorite | Genesis 37: 2-4 |
| 2. The Dreamer | Genesis 37:5-11 |
| 3. Betrayal By His Brothers | Genesis 37:12-36 |
| 4. An Egyptian Estate | Genesis 39:1-23 |
| 5. Interpreter of Dreams | Genesis 40 |
| 6. A Speaker for God | Genesis 41:1-43 |
| 7. God's Steward | Genesis 41:44-57 |
| 8. The Brothers Tested | Genesis 42, 43, 44 |
| 9. Joseph Makes Himself Known
and Sends for Jacob | Genesis 45 - 50 |

You may choose to teach only one or two of these sections, or to combine several sections together. Whichever you choose, read through the whole story before you begin. Be sure to use a good annotated Bible such as *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (RSV). As you introduce the stories to your class, always tell or read the story first. Then choose appropriate background information to share and questions to ask. Follow up with an activity.

This chapter has four parts:

- I. Historical Background
- II. Summaries, Background, and Questions
- III. Activities
- IV. Bibliography

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Joseph is the fourth of the great patriarchs of the Hebrew tradition. He is the son of Jacob, the grandson of Isaac and the great-grandson of Abraham. Of all the patriarchs, or fathers of the Hebrew people, Joseph is the best known. The story of Joseph in Egypt forms a unique literary unit in the Book of Genesis. His story begins at the age of 17 (Genesis 37:2-4), and concludes (Genesis 50) with his death.

There is much scholarly debate concerning the theory that the material in Genesis 37-50 was handed down in two differing traditions. Our focus in this chapter will not center upon the origin of Genesis 37-50 but upon its content. Regardless of its origin, the material that forms the basis of Genesis was gathered from the same source, oral tradition. This oral tradition from the distant past shows God's guiding hand in shaping the lives of the patriarchs, particularly Joseph.

Joseph was born near Haran in northern Mesopotamia during the eighteenth century B.C.E., Jacob's eleventh son. After his birth, the family moved to Canaan, where his mother, Rachel, soon died following the birth of her second son, Benjamin. Jacob had four wives but his deepest love had been for Rachel and he made no secret of it or of his extraordinary love for her firstborn, Joseph. Jacob led a semi-nomadic life, much as his forefathers had, tending livestock and cultivating small fields when the land was available.

When his older sons were grown, they assumed most of the shepherding duties. Their life was not easy, for the flocks required constant attention (*Great People of the Bible and How They Lived*, p. 58).

The theme of suffering in the story as a test of character is predominant, both for Joseph and his brothers. Though Joseph was righteous, he was not kept from suffering. He was preserved by his faith through it. In the end, Joseph could acknowledge that God meant it all for good (Genesis 50:20). Though the wicked may prosper for a time, the righteous hold fast to their integrity because there is a higher, more enduring principle of life. At times God's ways seem unfair and paradoxical, but if endured by faith they bring blessing to the faithful (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 87).

We can tie the story of Joseph into what we believe as Friends, that God speaks to us very clearly; that we are, or should be, in constant spiritual communication with him, that God's will is constantly in need of interpretation, and we should be conscious of the function of interpreter and prepare ourselves for that service. The story of Joseph clearly shows Joseph knew God was speaking to him and demonstrates his undying faith that God would always be there to help and guide him.

II. SUMMARIES, BACKGROUND, AND QUESTIONS

Joseph - The Favorite: Genesis 37:2-4

Joseph is introduced as an obedient 17-year-old son who accompanied his brothers when they were in charge of the flock. He brought back a bad report about his brothers, which angered them.

Joseph was honored by Jacob, who gave him a richly ornamented robe. This seems to signify that Jacob favored him above the rest with the intent of granting him all or a larger portion of the inheritance. *The King James* version calls the robe a coat of many colors; the *Revised Standard Version* says "long robe with sleeves"; the *New International Version* says "richly ornamented robe". It was customary at the time for only two people to wear such a garment: the sheik and his heir or successor. When Jacob gave Joseph such a garment, he was telling the brothers that the younger brother was to be head of the tribe, and as the head would have special privileges without the hard work that was their lot. When his brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than any of them, they hated him. The brothers were very close to one another in age. Between Reuben, the eldest, and Joseph, Rachel's firstborn, there was probably not much more than ten years' difference. These were ten boys ranging in age from about 27 to 18.

Questions

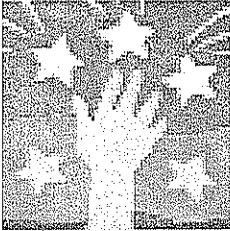
- ◇ How do you feel about "tattle-taleing" or "telling" on someone? Has anyone ever tattled on you? How did you feel?
- ◇ One of the hardest decisions a person must make is knowing when you should "tell" and when you should keep quiet. Is there ever a situation when it would be appropriate to "tell" on someone? When should you keep quiet? How does your conscience help you?
- ◇ How would you have felt had you been one of the brothers and your father had a favorite son?
- ◇ Do you think your parents have favorites?
- ◇ Do you think God has favorites?

The Dreamer: Genesis 37:5-11

Joseph has a dream and when he tells his brothers, they hate him all the more. The dream centers around the harvest. Jacob kept a small field of wheat or barley near the main camp at Hebron. Each year his sons assisted in harvesting the grain, reaping it with flint-edged scythes, then tying it into bundles, or sheaves. One day during the harvest, Joseph began to tell of his dreams. "We were binding sheaves in the field, and

lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and behold, your sheaves gathered around it, and bowed down to my sheaf." In those days, people regarded dreams as divine prophecies of future events. The brothers saw the meaning clearly enough and responded angrily (*Great People of the Bible and How They Lived*, p. 58).

Then he had another dream. The scene of the second dream was celestial. The sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to him. In ancient cultures these astronomical symbols represented rulers. The dream then symbolically anticipated the elevation of Joseph over the whole house of Jacob (Joseph's father, the sun; his mother, the moon; his eleven brothers, the stars.)

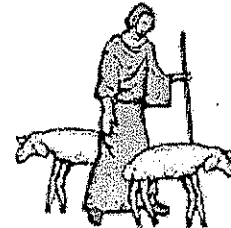


Questions

- ◇ What do you think about dreams? About Joseph's dreams?
- ◇ How must his brothers have felt about Joseph?
- ◇ Was Joseph being honest or arrogant when he told his brothers his dream?
- ◇ Why do you think people in Joseph's time regarded dreams as divine prophecies of future events?
- ◇ How would you feel now if you were one of Joseph's brothers? Angry, hurt, bitter, envious, hateful, jealous?

Betrayal: Genesis 37:12-36

Jacob's older sons were pasturing their father's flocks in Shechem, about 60 miles north of their home. Jacob sent Joseph to find out how they were. The brothers had left Shechem and traveled to Dothan. Joseph traveled to Dothan. Dothan was 20 miles northward and located on a large plain. Through this plain ran one branch of the main intercontinental highway connecting Asia Minor and Mesopotamia with Egypt. Several wells and cisterns - bottle-shaped pits - had been dug in the area to provide water for the many travelers who passed that way.



His brothers saw Joseph coming in the distance and plotted to kill him. They planned to kill the dreamer and throw him in a cistern and say an animal had killed him. Reuben didn't want to kill Joseph. He persuaded his brothers not to kill him. When Joseph came they stripped him of his robe and threw him in a dry cistern to die. Reuben then planned to rescue him later.

Judah then prompted his brothers to sell Joseph to passing Ishmaelites on their way from Gilead to Egypt. Ishmaelites were descendants of Abraham by Hagar and the Midianites descended from Abraham by Keturah. They sold Joseph for 20 shekels of silver (8 ounces) and he was taken to Egypt.

The brothers then dipped Joseph's tunic in goat's blood to deceive their father into thinking Joseph was dead and devoured by a ferocious animal. Jacob mourned greatly over the loss of his beloved son (tearing one's clothes and wearing sackcloth [coarse animal skins] were signs of grief and mourning.) Jacob refused to be comforted.

Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar.

Questions

- ◇ Have you ever had what seems to be a bad "thing" happen to you and it turns into something good? Share your experiences.
- ◇ When have you wanted to get rid of someone? or at least eliminate the competition?
- ◇ How would you imagine Joseph felt when his brothers stripped him and sold him as a slave? Look up how much 8 ounces of silver is worth today and discuss.
- ◇ Two of the brothers, Reuben and Judah, suggested alternatives to actually killing Joseph (throwing him in a pit and selling him as a slave). Though they were not quite brave enough to stand against the other brothers, they did save Joseph from death. Why is it so hard to stand alone against a group? Discuss peer pressure.
- ◇ Discuss what it must have been like for the brothers to live with the lie they told their father.

An Egyptian Estate: Genesis 39:1-23

In the previous stories, Joseph was an egocentric, spoiled youth. When we see him next, he is a man strengthened by adversity. Joseph must have had inherent qualities of greatness or the bitter fate he endured would have overwhelmed him (*Genesis for Young Seekers*, p. 85).

Joseph was taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelite traders and took him to his estate inside the city. Potiphar quickly spotted Joseph's honesty and efficiency and gave him more responsible duties, eventually promoting him to overseer of the entire estate. But this prosperity soon changed. Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph and he refused. She then lied to Potiphar saying Joseph assaulted her. Joseph was thrown into prison.

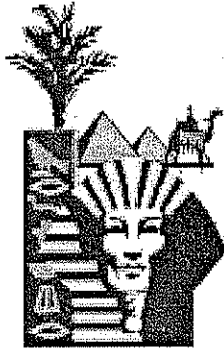
But while Joseph was in prison, the Lord was with him. He showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. The warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in prison, and he was made responsible for everything.

Questions

- ◇ Have you ever been punished for something you did not do? How did you feel? What did you do about it?
- ◇ What is a test? Why do you think God keeps testing Joseph's faith?
- ◇ Probably none of us will face such depths of injustice as Joseph, but in minor matters we shall be misjudged and receive punishment for deeds we did not do. How Joseph met such situations had a very important impact in the formation of his character. What can we learn from Joseph as Quakers?

Interpreter of Dreams: Genesis 40:1-23
A Speaker for God: Genesis 41:1-34

That Joseph had not lost faith in God's promise is proved by his willingness to interpret dreams. He is still convinced that God's revelation in his two previous dreams will be fulfilled.



The cup bearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master. The Pharaoh placed them in the same prison where Joseph was confined. The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph and he attended them. The cupbearer and the baker each had a disturbing dream on the same night. The Egyptians also took dreams seriously and believed they were communications from the Gods.

When Joseph came the next morning, he saw that they were dejected, and agreed to interpret their dreams. He understood their dreams to be from God and realized that God was beginning to work His will through two more dreams.

Joseph interpreted the two dreams.

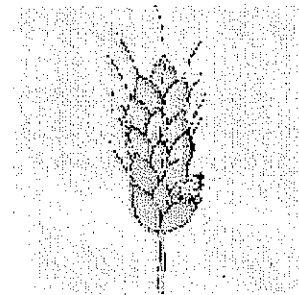
The cup bearer's dream had a favorable interpretation. His dream reflected his profession. The dream of the three vine branches of ripening grapes signified that Pharaoh would lift up the head of this man, that is, restore him to service within three days. To this, Joseph added the request that the man remember him and seek his release from prison.

The dream of the baker was not favorable. His dream also reflected his profession, but in it birds were eating the bread he was carrying in three baskets on his head. Joseph explained that Pharaoh would also lift up his head within three days, but it would be execution by hanging. The interpretations proved to be true. The cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

After two years, Pharaoh had a dream: he was standing by the Nile, when out of the river came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. Cows like to stand half-submerged in the Nile among its reeds in refuge from the heat and the flies. And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

He fell asleep again and had a second dream: seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted - thin and scorched by the east wind. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up.

The Pharaoh summoned his magicians and royal priest to interpret his dreams. They could not interpret the dreams. The cup bearer remembered Joseph and he was summoned to the palace. Joseph said the dreams meant there would be seven years of plenty in Egypt, followed by seven years of famine.



Joseph advised Pharaoh to "select a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt" and to "take the fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plenteous years... that food shall be a reserve ... against the seven years of famine ..." Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you."

The Pharaoh was so impressed by Joseph's advice he made him vizier, or prime minister, of all Egypt. Joseph wore fine clothes and was given a signet ring bearing the Pharaoh's official seal.

Questions:

- ❖ How do you explain Joseph's kindness and sympathy towards the troubles of others (cupbearer and baker)? Didn't he have enough problems of his own?
- ❖ The baker and the cupbearer were very upset because they had no one to interpret their dreams. Joseph said to them "Do not interpretations belong to God?" And then he proceeds to be God's spokesman. What possible lesson is there here for us as Quakers? [God's will in constant need of interpretation; prepare ourselves for service as interpreters.]
- ❖ Why did the cupbearer forget Joseph? Have you ever forgotten to thank someone? Explain. Has anyone ever forgotten to thank you? How did you feel? Sometimes we forget to say thank you because we become "too busy". What can we do about this?
- ❖ Why was Joseph willing to interpret the Pharaoh's dreams?

God's Steward: Genesis 41:41-57

Joseph was suddenly a man of high position. At the age of 30 he had become the second most powerful person in Egypt.

The Pharaoh's dreams were then fulfilled. The land produced abundant, even immeasurable crops for seven years, and Joseph gathered them into storage in Egyptian cities, exercising absolute authority throughout the land.

The seven good years were followed by seven years of severe famine, and the Egyptians and people of other countries came to buy grain from the storehouses throughout Egypt.

Questions

- ❖ What qualities did the Pharaoh see in Joseph that made him a good leader? What is a good steward?
- ❖ Joseph is the second most powerful person in Egypt. How does a person accept the honors of leadership and be a good steward?

The Brothers Tested: Genesis 42, 43, 44

The famine affected neighboring countries as well. In Hebron, Jacob heard there was food in Egypt and sent all of his sons but Benjamin (the youngest, and Joseph's full brother) there to buy grain. Jacob was afraid harm might come to Benjamin. Jacob did not know that it was Joseph who controlled the distribution.

Joseph was the one who sold grain to everyone. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him as the dream of Joseph's youth had foretold. As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but pretended to be a stranger.

Joseph accused his brothers of being spies who had come to Egypt to see how well fortified it was. The brothers protested, saying they were ten of the twelve sons of one man - one (Joseph), they told him, was dead, and Benjamin, the youngest, had remained at home - and they had come to Egypt for no other purpose than to buy food. Joseph then said there was only one way for them to prove they weren't spies. He

arranged that one of them, Simeon, was to be held as a hostage in Egypt, and the others were to go home, get Benjamin, and return with him to Egypt. If they returned with Benjamin, Joseph told his brothers, he would know they were acting on good faith and weren't spies.

After a time the brothers did bring Benjamin to Egypt with them. When Joseph saw Benjamin, he was so moved he left the room and went into his chamber to weep. Then he came back, and, still not telling his brothers who he was, gave them a feast. While the brothers were eating, Joseph secretly bade one of the servants hide his silver cup in Benjamin's sack (the brothers had all brought sacks to take home food from Egypt). The brothers left and Joseph sent his steward after them to find the brother that had stolen the cup. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack and they were all brought back to the house. This test would show Joseph what manner of men his brothers were. He must test them to learn the truth.

Joseph said only the guilty one will become my slave and the rest of you may return home. The brothers would not leave without Benjamin. Judah interceded for Benjamin and pleaded with Joseph to keep him instead and let Benjamin return to his aged father. It would surely kill his father if they returned without his youngest and favorite son.

Then Joseph knew his brothers had changed.

Questions

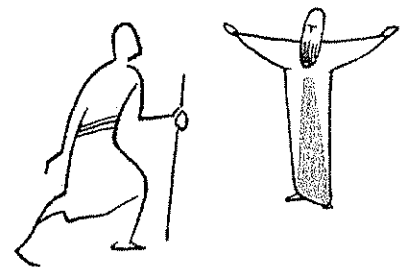
- ◇ Why did Joseph feel he had to "test" his brothers? Should Joseph have forgiven his brothers?
- ◇ What would have happened if he had not tested his brothers? Would he have felt doubt, could he ever trust them? Do you think Joseph could have forgiven them? Why?
- ◇ What does treachery and lack of integrity do to a relationship?
- ◇ Have you ever been "tricked" by someone? How did you feel? Why was it then hard to trust that person?
- ◇ Why do you feel the brothers have changed? Give examples.

Joseph Makes Himself Known and Sends for Jacob: Genesis 45

With a burst of emotion Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. They were stunned by the news, unable to speak for fear that Joseph might kill them.

Joseph said to his brothers "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt. And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. So then it was not you who sent me here, but God."

When Joseph had finished speaking he embraced each brother. Then he sent up to Canaan for his father, and when Jacob had come to Egypt the Pharaoh gave him and his sons a part of the country called the Land of Goshen in which to live.



Questions

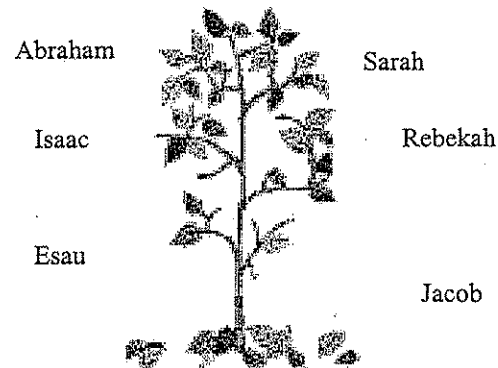
- ◇ Which is worse, to do wrong or to be found out? Why?
- ◇ Why were the brothers so afraid?
- ◇ Do you think Joseph should have revealed himself to his brothers sooner? Why?
- ◇ Romans 8:28 says "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purposes." How does this verse relate to Joseph?
- ◇ What can we learn from the story of Joseph and his brothers?

III. ACTIVITIES

These activities can be used throughout the unit.

1. *Family Tree*

Work on a family tree of the patriarchs:



Use a Bible or other reference books to help you. Have the children make their own family trees.

2. *Map Work*

Make relief maps of the area in which Jacob lived. Mix equal parts of flour and salt, then add enough water to make the mixture smooth. Work on heavy cardboard or plywood. Paint and label map when finished. Or locate the twelve tribes of Israel on a map.

3. *Make Coats of Many Colors* (*Bible Crafts*, Joyce Becker, p. 56)Wallpaper-patched coat

Cut holes large enough for a child's head and arms to go through in a large paper bag, open side down. Using pinking shears or scissors, cut out patches of wallpaper from discontinued books. Glue the patches to the bag. Colored tissue or construction paper may be substituted for wallpaper.

Iron-on Patch Coat

With scissors or pinking shears, cut shapes out of assorted colored patches of iron-on material (available in fabric stores). Arrange the shapes on an old, large shirt. Press into place with a warm iron according to the directions on the iron-on package.

Painted Coat

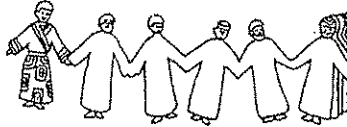
After placing newspapers on your work surface, take a pencil and draw different shapes on a large, unpatterned, old bath towel. Color in the design with permanent felt-tip marking pens, acrylic paints or liquid embroidery. Wear the coat like a cloak.

Stenciled Coat

Make a stencil by drawing a shape on cardboard and cutting away the inside. Place the stencil on an old, unpatterned bathrobe or shirt. Using fabric spray paint (craft store), lightly spray over the

stencil. Carefully lift off the stencil. Repeat the design by wiping the ink from the stencil, placing it on another area of the bathrobe and spraying again. Use different colors. Let dry.

4. *Cut-Out Dolls of Joseph and His Brothers* (*Bible Crafts*, Joyce Becker, p. 59)



Materials:

1 - 36" x 7" (90 cm x 18 cm) sheet of unpatterned paper or a large brown paper bag cut to this size

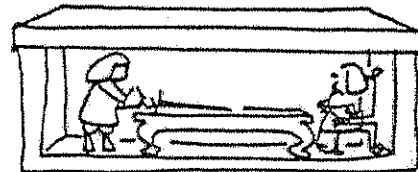
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Colored markers (optional)
- Scraps of yarn or ribbon
- White glue
- Black marker

Directions:

- (1) Measure the 36" (90 cm) wide paper into twelve equal sections. Mark them by eleven ruled lines. Fold the paper on the lines, accordion style.
- (2) On the first section, draw a picture of Joseph wearing his coat of many colors. Make his hands reach to the folded edges of the paper.
- (3) Stack the sections (figure A). Cut out Joseph, cutting through all the layers of paper. Be careful not to cut his hands through the folds. Unfold the paper so that the brothers are holding hands.
- (4) Using the pencil, make each of the eleven plain "figures" into a brother wearing an ordinary robe.
- (5) Trace around all the pencil lines with the marking pen.
- (6) Decorate Joseph's coat by gluing on scraps of yarn or ribbon. Optional: Decorate Joseph's coat using colored markers.

5. *Dioramas*

Create scenes in a box (shoe box or larger box). There are many episodes in the story that would make wonderful dioramas (Joseph being sold as a slave, Jacob giving Joseph his robe, any of Joseph's dreams). Children can work alone or with a partner. Provide materials such as magic markers, glue, construction paper, material, pipe cleaners, clay, scissors, etc. Let them use their imaginations!



6. *Skits*:

There are many parts in the story of Joseph that would make fun and interesting skits. Have the children perform skits for the younger children.

7. *Paper Mosaic of the Tribes of Israel*





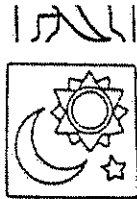





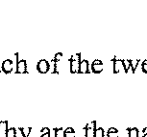

Joseph and his brothers formed the 12 tribes of Israel. The land of Canaan was divided, and each portion was settled by a different tribe. Each tribe is known by a special sign or symbol. (*Bible Crafts*, Joyce Becker, p. 65, 66)

Materials needed for paper mosaic:

- ☞ 1 large poster board, about 12" x 18" (30.5 cm. x 46 cm.), any color
- ☞ colored paper; different colors (variety pack)
- ☞ glue-on picture hanger
- ☞ pencil, scissors, white glue

Directions:

1. With the pencil, draw the symbols shown below on the poster board
2. Cut the colored paper into small odd-shaped pieces. Arrange them on the drawing, leaving small spaces between each piece.
3. Glue the pieces down one by one. Let dry.
4. Glue the picture hanger to the back of the poster board and hang.

<p>REUBEN Mandrakes on red background</p> 	<p>NAPHTALI Leaping doe on wine-red background</p> 
<p>SIMEON Sword over Shechem on green background</p> 	<p>GAD Horsemen on gray background</p> 
<p>JUDAH Lion on sky-blue background</p> 	<p>ASHER Olive tree on golden background</p> 
<p>ISSACHAR Sun, Moon, and star, on dark-blue background</p> 	<p>EPHRAIM Ox on black background</p> 
<p>ZEBULUN Ship on white background</p> 	<p>MANASSEH Vine on black background</p> 
<p>DAN Snake on sapphire background</p> 	<p>BENJAMIN Wolf on variegated background</p> 

Alternative: Make flags for each of the twelve tribes.

Advanced research project: Why are the names of the twelve tribes not the same as Jacob's twelve sons? What happened to Joseph and Levi? See especially Genesis 49 in an annotated Bible.

8. *Bake bread* using wheat or another grain.

Joseph stored grain for seven years; grain was literally the "staff of life" in ancient times. If making a wheat bread, try to show children what wheat looks like raw. If you have farms in your area, they may grow wheat. Use E. W. Heaton's book, *Everyday Life In Old Testament Times*, and explain how grain was harvested, threshed, and stored.

Irish Soda Bread – (*recipie by Cookie Caldwell*)

4 c flour
4 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
3/4 tsp. salt
3/4 cup sugar
3 c buttermilk
or:
1 c powdered milk and
3 T vinegar in 3 c water



Sift first four ingredients. Add sugar; stir in buttermilk until just moistened (1 cup of raisins may be added if desired). Turn into 10" or larger (not smaller) round greased and floured pan. Bake at 350° F for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

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Barbara Kirschner

MOSES - PART I

In this chapter we present the story of Moses' early life and the beginning of his mission to bring his people out of Egypt into Canaan. It is the first of four chapters on Moses. The main sections covered in this chapter are:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| I. The changing status of the Israelites in Egypt - | Exodus 1:1-22 |
| II. Moses' birth and adoption by Pharaoh's daughter - | Exodus 2:1-10 |
| III. The murder of the Egyptian task master and Moses' exile - | Exodus 2:11-25 |
| IV. Moses hears the Lord at the burning bush - | Exodus 3 and 4:1-17 |
| V. Moses' return to Egypt and the Israelites - | Exodus 4:18-31 |

As you present the stories to your children, always tell or read the story first and be sure the events are clear to them. Then choose the appropriate background information to share and questions to ask. Follow up with an activity. At the end of the chapter is a general Bibliography. Use a good annotated Bible such as the Oxford Revised Standard Version; the notes are invaluable.

Each of the above sections has three parts:

- Background
- Discussion Questions
- Activities

I. THE CHANGING STATUS OF THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT - EXODUS 1:1-22

Background:



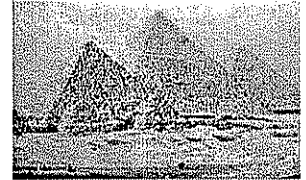
At the point in history in which this story takes place Egypt had conquered the lands north of the Euphrates. To maintain control of her border and the buffer state of Canaan, the Egyptians moved their capital from Thebes down the Nile into the eastern delta country. This happened during the reign of Seti I and Rameses II. Scholars generally agree that the Pharaoh during the events in Exodus was Rameses II. Rameses II was a builder and took care to fortify the wall of forts stretching from the Mediterranean to Lake Timash. He then rebuilt and enlarged the cities of Pithom and Raamses, into supply cities. The Israelites living in the section of the Delta known as Goshen became the forced labor used to build these two cities. The presence of the Hebrews on the frontier was considered a security risk in spite of their slavery. The Pharaoh took measures to control their population, which were unsuccessful.

Questions for Discussion (Note – This section is probably best explored with older elementary aged children and up):

- ◇ Why would the Pharaoh use the Israelites as slaves for his work?
- ◇ What is a midwife?
- ◇ What do you think about what the midwives did? How do you feel about the Pharaoh's actions?
- ◇ If you had been an Israeli midwife what do you think you would have done?

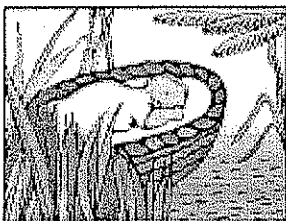
Activities:

1. Review on the map at the end of this chapter the changes made in Egypt and the reasons for these changes
2. Spend some time learning a little about Egyptian life. Some sources of information are: *Pyramids* by David Macaulay and *Life Under the Pharaohs* by Leonard Cottrell. The Macaulay book will be available in most libraries and is in print.



II. MOSES' BIRTH AND ADOPTION BY PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER- EXODUS 2:1-10

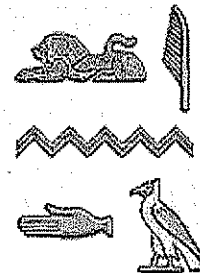
Background:



The story of Moses in the bulrushes is similar to an earlier legend of Sargon of Agade (2600 B.C.E.), who is said to have been saved from danger while an infant by being put in a basket of rushes sealed with pitch, and sent to drift in a river. While some people argue that this weakens the story of Moses, many scholars feel that the fact that the legend of another national hero was adopted as a birth story is an indication of how important Moses' story was felt to be.

The name "Moses" has both a Hebrew (Semitic) meaning and an Egyptian meaning. The Semitic root means "bring or take out, remove, and extract". The Egyptian interpretation would be "boy or son". For example, a number of Pharaohs were called Ahmose or Thutmose.

While the Bible tells us little about Moses' early life, much can be surmised from the phrase that he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). "In this privileged station he would have studied at the scribe school, joined the hunt in the desert and marsh, listened to girl harpists at dinner parties, practiced archery and chariot driving." (*Everyday Life in Bible Times*, National Geographic Society, p. 132.) Surviving Egyptian texts give us information about the thoughts and actions of elite Egyptians in Moses' time. Schoolmasters praised the life of the scribe, scorning what they considered lesser crafts. As a student Moses would have had to copy and learn the writing script which the Egyptians called "speech of the gods". The Greeks later called it hieroglyphika grammata or "sacred carved letters", hence the word hieroglyphic. Hieroglyphic was the only proper writing for temples or tombs but scribes derived a cursive form for everyday communication and record keeping. Documents were dated by reign and regal year. The civil calendar had a 365-day year consisting of twelve equal months with five days tacked on at the end.



Questions for Discussion:

- ◇ What do you think about what Pharaoh's daughter did?
- ◇ Do you think that she knew the baby was a Hebrew baby when she first took him out of the water?
- ◇ What do you think Moses' older sister was thinking?
- ◇ What would it have been like to have been Moses' mother?
- ◇ Do you have any ideas about what Moses' life was like as he grew up?
- ◇ Do you think anyone ever told him who his real mother was?
- ◇ Who would have told him and why?
- ◇ As the story goes on it is clear that Moses knew he was a Hebrew; how did he know?

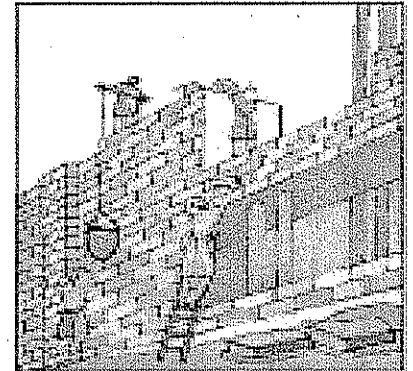
Activities:

1. Make a diorama of Moses being put into the river and discovered. Use clay or clothespin figures in a shoebox or on a piece of wood or a microwave plate.
2. Make walnut shell babies. Glue a ½ inch wooden bead or piece of clay at one end of a walnut shell. With a marker make a face on the bead. Glue a small amount of batting or cotton into the rest of the shell. Cover this with a small square of cloth so that it looks like a blanket covering a baby. (*Credit for this idea to Louise Nowell, Media Meeting, and Solveig Cherim and Merrill Dutton, Providence Meeting*).
3. Discuss adoption. Some of the children or adults in First-day School may have been adopted. Find out ahead of time if they are willing to discuss this from a personal viewpoint. Since this might be a sensitive topic, reading a related story will help open the subject. Your local children's librarian will have good suggestions. Consider using *We Don't Look Like Our Mom and Dad*, by Harriet Langsam Sobol, Coward-McCann, Inc., New York, 1984.
4. Another discussion topic is the meaning of names. There are many books which give the meaning of names and children could both look up their names and ask their parents why they chose to name them the way they did. Ask about pets' names. How were those chosen?
5. Activities related to the above discussion ideas are:
 - a. Make mini-albums of pictures of each child's infancy including anecdotes about their infancy. Children who cannot write could tape or dictate these anecdotes.
 - b. Older children can make family trees.
6. The story of Moses in the bulrushes is fun to tell. Children can learn to tell this story (or act it out). Some guidelines for storytelling developed by storyteller Bobbi Kelly are as follows:
 - ❖ Have a definitive version of the story down on paper. (either copy a version, write one together as a class, or write individual versions. Drawing pictures of the events in their correct sequence is helpful).
 - ❖ Read the story over and over to learn its essence; do not worry about memorizing the exact words.
 - ❖ Do learn a first and last sentence to get you started and to help you end the story. Tell the story to yourself as you go to sleep at night.
 - ❖ Tell the story to a friend.

III. THE MURDER OF THE EGYPTIAN TASKMASTER AND MOSES' EXILE - EXODUS 2:11-25

Background:

"We have little information of the Hebrews' daily life in Goshen. But we do know a great deal about the labor gangs who built the tomb up river at Thebes. They lived under the eyes of guards in a walled village - a hot little place with tight-packed adobe houses and hardly any light or air. Their staples were bread and beer, both made from grain." (*Everyday Life in Bible Times*, National Geographic Society, p. 122,). We know that the Hebrews labored making and laying bricks and in the fields. The bricks were made by combining wet mud with straw and leaving the mix to dry in forms. The chief crops at the time were wheat and barley. Even after the Hebrews escaped they would recall the bounty of the Delta (Numbers 11:5).



When Moses saw first-hand the cruelty of the Egyptians and killed the Egyptian overseer he seemed at first to think that his crime would go unnoticed; he may even have thought it would bring him closer to his fellow Hebrews. Once he realized that people knew what he had done he fled to avoid Pharaoh's wrath. Moses fled eastward to the mountains of Midian, with which he had a remote family connection: Keturah, Abraham's second wife, was the mother of Midian (Genesis 25), and therefore the Midianites, like the Hebrews, were descendants of Abraham. As the story goes Moses became well integrated into the household at Midian and married there.

Questions for Discussion (Note -- This section is probably best explored with older children):

- ❖ Why do you think Moses killed the Egyptian taskmaster instead of finding another way to stop him? Do you think Moses meant to kill him?
- ❖ What effect do you think this death had on the Egyptians who knew the taskmaster? What effect did this have on the Hebrews who saw the incident?
- ❖ How do you think Moses felt about what happened?
- ❖ Later God gives Moses a set of commandments to follow; one of them is "Thou shall not kill". Why did God choose to give this commandment to someone who had killed another? How do you think Moses felt when he heard the commandment?
- ❖ Where does the concept of "forgiveness" fit into this story? Can you think of a time when you were asked to forgive someone and you didn't think you could? Can you think of a time when you were able to forgive someone? What made it possible to forgive them?
- ❖ What do you think it was like to leave home feeling you could never come back? Have you ever run away? What made you return? What was it like to come home?
- ❖ When Moses was at the well at Midian he again tried to correct an unfair situation; what are ways to change situations like this?
- ❖ Have you ever had a guest stay at your house a long time, or have you stayed at someone else's house for a long period? What was it like? How easy/difficult is it to fit in and adjust to another life style?

Activities:

1. The incident with the Egyptian taskmaster makes an effective role play. Introduce the general situation *before* the class reviews what really happened. Such a role play is also a good springboard for a values clarification exercise. Many students may feel that there are situations where force is appropriate. Worship-sharing is a helpful way to explore values. (See Activities section under "Burning Bush".)
2. Invite someone from the Friends Conflict Resolution Programs (215-241-7234) to share techniques with the class. Some ideas can also be found in the article "Conflict Resolution: A place in the classroom" by Sandi Dittrich, in the April 15, 1987, issue of *Friends Journal*. The Yearly Meeting Library can supply copies (215-241-7220) as well.
3. Friends often use the phrase "speak truth to power". The section on "David and Goliath" (p. 89) has many suggestions of activities to use that explore this phrase.
 - a. One idea is to create a "Peace Newspaper"
 - b. There are several movies which apply to this topic. Watching one with your class and discussing it are effective ways to focus on the issues involved in "speaking Truth to power". A few suggestions for older children are: *Gandhi*, *Do the Right Thing*, and *Romero*, all available at video stores.

IV MOSES HEARS THE LORD AT THE BURNING BUSH - EXODUS 3, 4:1-7

Background:

This section is complex not only because it has layers of historical implications for both Judaism and Christianity but also because of the many theological values embedded in it. Chapter 2:23-25 and Chapter 3 suggest that while God may work in "mysterious" ways, He listens to our prayers. This passage also embodies a Judaic approach to prayer. Note the similarities to the Gathered Meeting.

"It has been frequently pointed out that our prayers in the synagogue are meant to be community prayers ... The prayers are not meant primarily to give expression to our own personal feelings. How can millions of Jews feel alike every time they recite the prescribed daily prayers? Instead, prayers are meant to convey to us certain fundamental truths and to prepare us for the trials and complex temptations of daily life ... In the synagogue the individual ego is merged in the united chorus of Israel ... As each worshiper adds his fervor to that of his neighbor, he receives in turn the inspiration of his neighbor to add to his own devotion. There is that devotional give and take between him and every member of the congregation - that unflinching sense of intimate brotherhood."

(A Book of Jewish Concepts by Philip Birnbaum, pp.657-658)

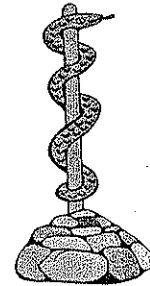
Chapter 3 goes on to explain the Lord's response to Israel's need. The fact that an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in flame is significant to Moses because fire was a form of divine appearance. Notice that God comes to Moses more by way of invitation than as something unavoidable. It is possible that if Moses had chosen to ignore the burning bush and walked by it, God might have been more persuasive. There is, however, a theological eloquence to God providing a sign which a person must accept of his or her own free will.



Moses removes his sandals before going closer to the bush as was the custom before entering a holy place. He was afraid to look at the vision of God veiled in the fire because such holiness was considered a mysterious power that could threaten his existence.

Several significant events happen at this point. As Moses expresses his heartfelt humility at his inadequacy for the task presented to him, God struggles not only to reassure Moses, but to provide him with tangible support. It is clear that Moses must agree to be God's emissary; he can't be forced. It is also clear that God will be with Moses (and tacitly with any of us) as he attempts the Lord's work.

One of the specific ways in which God tries to support Moses appears in the rod narrative. This "trick" reflects the kind of superstitious magic which flourished in Egypt. Serpent magic was quite ancient even in Moses' day. The particular trick whose sign was reversed by God involves hypnotizing a snake so that it is rigid and can be picked up by the tail. Throughout the Bible we come across the use of "miracles" by God. It is tempting to reject them based on our current scientific knowledge, which tells us either that the event has a natural explanation and is therefore not impressive or that the event is unlikely and therefore not real. "But what really matters is that these events 'awakened a sense of God's presence - made God real ...' (Alan Dale, *A Source Book of the Bible for Teachers*, pp. 265-266.) Put aside the fear that you are teaching superstition; you are teaching that faith is powerful and that God is present in our lives." (from "Miracles of Nature" in *Teaching Children About Jesus, Part II.*)



Another important event in this section is the introduction of the name Jehovah as God's name. The Hebrew consonants are YHWH, which are traditionally read as Jehovah, but probably pronounced Yahweh. YHWH is treated as a verbal form derived from "to be" and formulated in the first person since God is the speaker. "Actually YHWH is a third person form and may mean "He causes to be". The name does not indicate God's eternal being but his action and presence in historical affairs." (Oxford Annotated Bible) This interpretation is readily appreciated by Friends as we have always felt that God is continually revealing His/Her presence.

Questions for Discussion:

Because of the complex nature of this section the questions are divided into those appropriate for mixed ages and intergenerational groups and those appropriate for older ages.

Younger ages:

- ◇ In the story God talks to Moses in order to answer the prayers of the Israelites. If you were one of the Hebrew slaves praying, what kind of answer would you have expected to your prayers? What do you think about the way God responded? Have you ever prayed to God and wondered about the way things worked out?
- ◇ What would you do if you saw a bush that was on fire, but did not seem to be burning?
- ◇ Do you think you would be afraid if you heard a voice talk to you? What would you think it was?
- ◇ God seems to have spent a long time talking to Moses about how he could help and convincing Moses that he was the right person for the job. Have you ever had a hard time doing something that you knew you should do but didn't think you could do? What was it like? How did it work out?

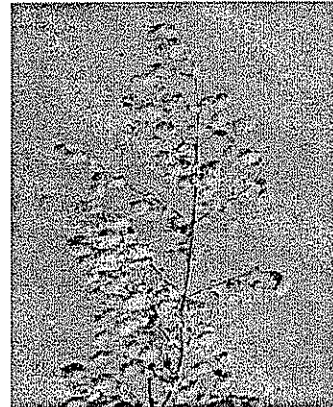
Older Children:

- ◇ Why do you think God answered the prayers of the Israelites in this way and didn't just miraculously change the situation?
- ◇ Have you ever heard of the concept of Free Will? What do you think it might mean? What does it have to do with this story?
- ◇ Have you ever felt confronted by God's presence? Did you ignore it or respond to it? How did it feel?
- ◇ What do you think of the "miracles" God shows Moses? How do you think a similar situation would be handled in today's world?
- ◇ Could these events take place today?
- ◇ Why is naming God in a special way important?

Activities (these are grouped into age appropriate sections):

Younger children:

1. Create "burning bush" collages using torn or colored tissue paper and foil. Brush the paper onto watercolor-weight paper with Elmer's glue that has been thinned (about 50/50) with water. Cooking or craft stores often sell foil candy wrappers which add extra "pizzazz".
2. Different plants have been suggested as the burning bush. One of these, *Dictamnus*, could be planted in the Meetinghouse garden. They have the added attraction of producing a flammable gas which can briefly be ignited without harming the plant. According to Milaeger's Gardens catalogue (available for \$1.00, 4838 Douglas Ave., Racine, WI, 53402-2498; 414-639-2040) the way to accomplish this is to wait for a calm, warm evening in early summer when the plant is blooming and the gas is emitted. Hold a match (lit) close to the stem (not individual blossoms).
3. Look through the Bible (or other resource) to find the many names and metaphors of God. Using this make a banner with the names (e.g., Jehovah, Yahweh).



Older Children:

1. Practice Worship Sharing with some of the above questions. The guidelines are simple but must be strictly adhered to. Go in turn around the group; no one has to speak and everyone should feel free to pass; when someone does speak no one is to comment on the statement. Begin with a few minutes of silence. Either the adult leader or one of the class who will not find it too difficult to express deeper feelings goes first.
2. Moses suddenly finds himself in the presence of God, but for many of us the awareness of being in God's presence comes only after a great deal of searching. Humans have developed many ways of searching for God and this is a good opportunity to explore some of them. Meditation and centering exercises for young people are available in several books. Writing prayers is another useful exercise. A particularly useful book for an exploration of prayer is *The World in Tune* by Elizabeth Gray Vining, Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, PA, 19086 (215-566-4514), 1977.

3. Try drawing a picture or making a collage of what each person thinks God "looks like". Share and explain your pictures with the rest of the group.
4. Create a game called "Is it or Isn't it a miracle." If you just give the class the title and let them come up with the game structure a lot of interesting ideas will emerge.
5. One of the concepts inherent in this section of Moses' story is that of being "called". The chapter, "The Calling and Mission of the Disciples" in *Teaching Children About Jesus, Part I*, explores this idea in some depth. Order from Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch St., 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 561-1700.

IV. MOSES' RETURN TO EGYPT AND THE ISRAELITES-EXODUS

4:18-31

Background:

The *Oxford Annotated Bible* has several comments to make about these verses. Concerning Exodus 4:23, the commentary is "... being the first-born son among the nations is a pre-eminent rank based upon divine adoption or election." Such a notion clashes with our democratic principles and a lively discussion among the older students might follow after reading this passage.

The next verses, 4:24-26, reflect many ancient ideas. The first is the belief in demonic attack and that such an attack can be warded off by "the timely performance of certain rites". The reference to circumcision reflects the fact circumcision was originally a puberty or marriage rite. The assumption is that the "circumcision of the infant son was efficacious for Moses, who was evidently uncircumcised." Because this verse reflects such ancient and somewhat confusing ideas it is not included in the discussion questions or the activities.

The rest of Chapter 4 contains the crucial verses the questions and activities are designed to explore. The themes are: prayers are answered, and friendship. The focus will be on friendship.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is a friend?
2. How do you know when someone is not your friend?
3. How do you know someone is your friend?
4. What is the most important thing your friends do for you?
5. What is the most important thing you do for your friends?
6. Do you have different kinds of friends? (please explain)
7. How do you think Aaron felt about doing all that Moses (and God) asked of him?
8. How do you think Moses felt about Aaron?
9. Do you ever fight with your friends? How do you make up?
10. Have you ever "given up" on a friendship? Why?
11. Do you think Moses and Aaron ever fought? Why?
12. Have you ever heard of having a Spiritual Friend? What do you think that means?
13. Are your parents your friends, or something different?
14. Do you have any friends that are a different age from you? Are these friendships different?
15. What is different about being a "best friend"?
16. Is God your friend?

Activities

1. Braid friendship bracelets. (See Moses, Part IV, p. 54.) Learning to braid is an intriguing skill for younger children, but may require larger yarn than the traditional embroidery thread.

2. Make a picture album of friends.
3. Make a file of ideas about how to make up after a fight. Draw pictures to go with it. Before doing this the theme of anger could be explored in a worship-sharing circle using the phrases, "When I'm mad, I ..." or "What makes me mad is ..."
4. Write a "positive poem" tribute to one of your favorite friends: write your friend's name vertically on art or writing paper. Each letter is then used to begin a line of poetry. Each line should say something nice about the person chosen for the positive poem. Rhyme is not necessary, nor is any particular syllable count.

An example for the name Katie:

Kind and happy Katie

Always has a smile.

Twinkling eyes

Inspires us

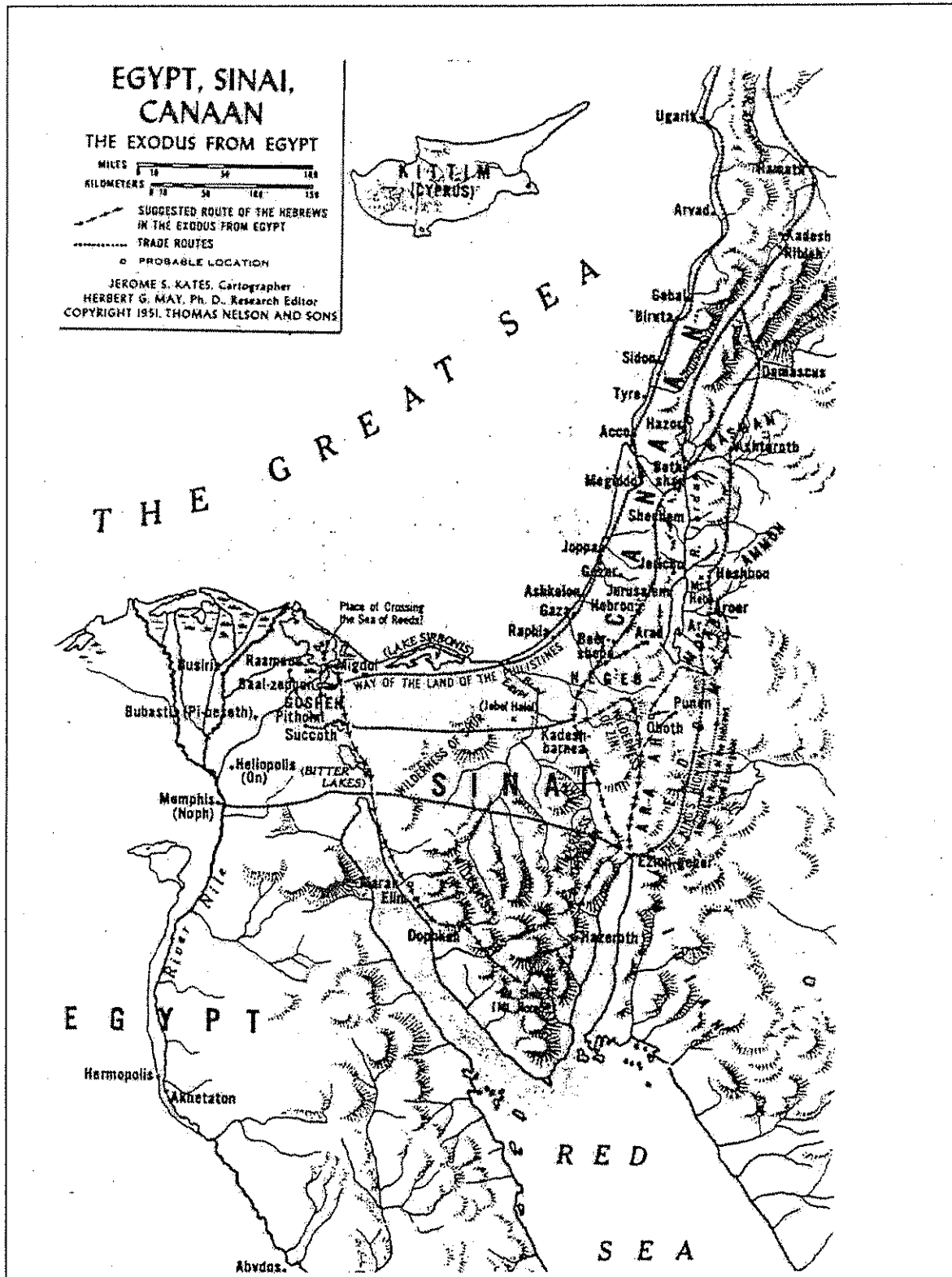
Everywhere we go

5. Make a meal for a friend, or think of a special gift to make for a friend and spend one First Day session making it.

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Priscilla Taylor-Williams



From: *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*. Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1959

MOSES - PART II

This is the second of four chapters on the story of Moses. The second part of Moses' life is found in the Book of Exodus, Chapters 6-18, and can be broken into five parts:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| I. | Moses before Pharaoh - | Exodus 5:1-7:13 |
| II. | The Plagues - | Exodus 7:14-11:10 |
| III. | Deliverance - | Exodus 12:1-13:22 |
| IV. | Rescue at the Red Sea - | Exodus 14:1-15:21 |
| V. | Desert Wanderings - | Exodus 15:22-18 |
| VI. | Bibliography | |

For each section there is background as well as activities and questions for a variety of ages. Choose the ones that best suit the ages of the children in your group. Some of the larger group activities can be adapted for use with a wider age range. The material can be made into several lessons or, by just highlighting some events, can be condensed.

INTRODUCTION

The book of Exodus in the Bible is the chronicle of the history of the Hebrews as they became "a free nation under God" (Abingdon Handbook, p. 97). It tells how God delivered them from slavery and bound them to him with the covenant established with Abraham. God furthered his omnipotence with the Hebrews through the construction of the tabernacle and the laws pertaining to it and the lives of his followers.

Throughout the story, God's presence and power dominates - but he uses Moses, the reluctant leader, as the chief human tool to carry out his work. The *revealing* of God to Moses and to his people is central to the story. He does it so that all people shall *know* who he is, what his powers are, and how he cares for his people. The term "know" connotes more than just knowledge - it is a deep caring on both sides: God *knows* his people suffer and the Hebrews come to *know* God by his words through Moses and his powerful acts also through Moses. This *knowing* of the true God also comes to the Egyptians as they see his acts demonstrated

I. MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH - EXODUS 5:1 - 7:13

Background:

The Egypt of Moses' time (probably in the 13th century B.C.E.), was primarily a narrow strip of fertile land along the Nile about 600 miles long. It was literally "the gift of the River" (*Everyday Life in Bible Times*) for it took an annual summer flooding to enrich the soil. People had settled there for thousands of years. Today in this area much of the way of life is still dependent on the waters of the Nile.

The Pharaoh in the story was probably Rameses II, who even according to Egyptian texts was both vain and powerful. He conscripted many laborers to build his new capital city and other grand cities in the Delta area. The capital was described this way: "Snarling human-headed lions of black granite and sphinxes in roseate granite confronted each other all along the narrow basalt paved alleys, while crouching lions kept watch in front of the gates. The palace blazed with gold, lapis lazuli, and turquoise, and the whole scene was gay with flowers." (*Everyday Life in Bible Times*)

Moses and Aaron go before Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1-9 and ask him to "let my people go." This first asking is so that they can make a pilgrimage out into the desert to a sacred place. Pharaoh ignores this "god" of whom he knows nothing.

After Pharaoh's first refusal to allow the people to go he sets a harder task before the Hebrews. They are not to be given the straw to make their bricks; instead they will have to gather it and still make the same number of bricks as before. The taskmasters on the job are Egyptian but the foremen are other Hebrews, who now must enforce the work order. The straw was an important part of the brick making process, making the bricks stronger and more plastic as it decayed.

Moses despairs at the increased hardship of the people, and asks God "why didn't thou ever send me?" (Exodus 5:22-23). Moses is answered by God in a significant way (Exodus 6:2-13). The divine name Yahweh is here revealed to Moses. "I am the Lord" is the Revised Standard Version statement. God is now to fulfill the covenant he had made with Abraham. God promises to redeem his people (meaning to reclaim his property.) He will establish his order against the chaos of Pharaoh. The drama of the story now increases as God sets himself against Pharaoh. Moses is now to demand complete liberation from Pharaoh, but he still fears rejection from Pharaoh. At this point in the story God reminds Moses that Aaron will help him. (The section on genealogy (Exodus 6:14-25) was probably written in later to help establish Aaron as the only legitimate family of priests.) In Chapter 7 Moses and Aaron are told by God to perform miracles, but that Pharaoh won't listen. Their first victory over Pharaoh's magicians comes as they both turn staffs into serpents but Aaron's serpent swallows up that of the Egyptian magicians. As God had told Moses, Pharaoh would not listen.

Remember that the God-King, Pharaoh, was a hugely powerful ruler and the Egyptian culture was powerful and rich in its theology, economics, education, technology, and social structure. This was no small village chief that Moses and his God were confronting!

Questions for Discussion:

- ❖ A large slave population was required to support the Egyptian way of life. Discuss with the children what it means to be a slave.
- ❖ Read Exodus 5:1-6, which tells of Moses' and Aaron's first appeal to Pharaoh to allow the Hebrews to leave on the pretext of going just for a pilgrimage feast at a desert shrine. What is Pharaoh's attitude toward God? That is, does Pharaoh question God's existence or does he just ignore him? (This ignoring of God sets up the drama which will be played out until the actual departure.)
- ❖ Why did Moses feel bad after Pharaoh's refusal?
- ❖ How have you felt when you thought to do good and instead things got worse?
- ❖ Did Moses feel inadequate for the job at hand?
- ❖ Have you ever felt that you could not do what has been asked of you?
- ❖ How does God answer Moses' appeal to him? (Exodus 6:20-13)
- ❖ What were the injustices suffered by the Hebrews? What reasons did they have for wanting to leave?
- ❖ Do you think it was hard for Moses to go to Pharaoh at this point knowing that "Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them."? What does it say about Moses' faith in God?

Activities:

1. Use Egyptian art or a source such as *Everyday Life in Bible Times*, National Geographic Society, to set the stage for your class, showing the grandeur and power of the Egyptians. This book has three chapters on Moses with wonderful illustrations, maps, and photos.

In the story the divine name of Yahweh is revealed to Moses. It is used because God's covenant with Abraham is now to be fulfilled. It means "I Am Who I Am." The Hebrews believed that God is too great to be captured in one image, form, or even name. Throughout the Bible many words describe God in the rich fullness of his splendor. Some other names used are:

Elohim: a feminine plural for God suggesting the idea that all that is holy is contained by one being

El Shaddai: the Almighty - meaning the absolute power of God

A song of Moses describes God as the Rock.

With the class, find the following Bible verses to see other descriptions of God:

Psalm 23:1

Isaiah 44:15

Matthew 6:9

Luke 15:8-10

John 1:1

John 4:24

1 John 4:8

Which of these ideas has the most meaning to you?

(From *Christian Education: Shared Approaches, God's People, Part I*, United Church Press)

Have the children choose one word for God and use it as the basis for a picture, or else make a single mural with all the names included.

2. Use the pictures available from Reader's Digest *Great People of the Bible and How They Lived*⁴ to show the brick making steps. The art of the Egyptians depicts the steps in the tomb at Thebes.
 - a) Water drawn from a pool
 - b) Clay kneaded with short hoes.
 - c) Poured into brick molds under the eye of the Egyptian taskmaster.
 - d) Stacked in sun to dry.

Have the children make bricks out of potter's clay. Try making some with straw and some without.

3. Act out the scene in which the staffs are turned into serpents. The children can make staffs and snakes out of cardboard.

II. - THE PLAGUES - EXODUS 7:14-11:10

The drama of this part of the story can be felt in a good retelling of the story or through reading it aloud from a children's Bible.

In telling Moses that he should appeal to Pharaoh for the Hebrews' release, God said that only God's mighty acts would overcome the Pharaoh's power. This theme of conflict between God through Moses and Pharaoh now takes place with a series of ten plagues sent as miracles from God. Pharaoh seems to set out a series of compromises to get his own way, but Moses (and we) already know that the obduracy of Pharaoh will be in vain and that the last fatal judgment will break his will.

It is interesting to note that the first nine plagues sent are all natural phenomena, some of which are specially characteristic of Egypt. They are not, however, in their intensity, scope, and sequence

explainable as natural disasters, and show the reality and power of God as well as the weakness of the Egyptians against him.

Plague 1: Exodus 7:14-25

Moses was told to stretch his rod over the Nile and it turned to blood. The water became undrinkable and the fish died. This corresponds to a disastrously abnormal high annual flood bringing a great deal of red earth and bacteria to the Delta. The Nile, source of all drinking water, was further fouled by the dying fish.

Plague 2: Exodus 8:1-15

Seven days later, as promised by God, swarms of frogs appeared and died, creating a further pollution of the shore and inland fields and houses as the frogs moved away from the river. The frogs were even in the ovens, open clay cylinders heated from the outside with the bread baked on hot pebbles. Pharaoh begins his bargaining with Moses, first agreeing to freedom and then, after the frogs' removal, denying it.

Plague 3: Exodus 8:16-19

The gnats (or mosquitoes or lice as some sources suggest) descend in abnormally high numbers, probably encouraged by the favorable breeding conditions brought on by the flooding. It is significant that Pharaoh's magicians fail to produce a similar miracle and declare it done by "the finger of God."

Plague 4: Exodus 8:20-32

The flies appear and cover the Egyptians' land, but not Goshen, where the Hebrews lived. The removal of the flies by God is even a greater miracle than their appearance, emphasizing the improbability of its being a natural occurrence. Pharaoh relents but again denies freedom once the plague is lifted.

Plague 5: Exodus 9:1-7

The disease among the Egyptian cattle in the field may indicate infection carried by the dead frogs. The Hebrews' cattle in their stalls would not have been affected.

Plague 6: Exodus 9:8-12

The boils could have been caused by the flies of Plague 4. There also could be a connection between the ashes and the hot desert

wind called the sirocco which brought fine sand particles - enough to darken the sun and cause skin irritation. The magicians suffered from this plague and at this point disappear from the story.

Plague 7: Exodus 9:13-35

This plague begins with a long severe warning from Moses, and some of the Egyptian servants (probably members of court) are impressed. The heavy hail with thunder and lightning would have been rare. It ruined the barley and flax, but not the wheat and spelt, which were not yet grown. Again Goshen is spared, emphasizing God's power. Pharaoh begins to admit that he is wrong, but once again hardens his heart when the plague is lifted.

Plague 8: Exodus 10:1-20

Locusts are the grimmest of all natural disasters in the Near East because they are so impossible to control. God tells Moses to tell the story to his sons and grandsons. Pharaoh's court urges him to release the Hebrews but Pharaoh says only the men can go on the feast pilgrimage. Again the abnormal flood probably provided favorable conditions for the swarms of locusts borne on an east wind, which would destroy the now grown wheat. The sea wind from the west would blow them up the Nile Valley to the Red Sea. "Not a single locust left" emphasizes the miracle. Pharaoh remains obdurate.

Plague 9: Exodus 10:21-29

This foretells of the ultimate disaster as seen by the Egyptians: the enemy of their sun god Re. All the red sand brought by the flood would be whirled up over the land making it dark. (Pharaoh was Re in the flesh) was the serpent of chaotic darkness. The thick "darkness to be felt" was a khamsin dust storm - but of no ordinary sort. It would have probably been much less severe in Goshen. The drama heightens as Pharaoh makes his final negotiation offer: the Hebrews may go - without their herds and flocks. This would not allow them to make

appropriate sacrifices. Moses warns of the final plague in Exodus 11:1-10 and leaves as angry as Pharaoh.

Questions for Discussion:

- ❖ Look at Pharaoh's attitude in light of modern times. If he let the Hebrews leave there would be a huge labor force gone, and very severe economic outcomes. Imagine and discuss what all this might mean to the Egyptian people. How would they view Pharaoh?
- ❖ Quakers have historically been led to "speak truth to power." Remember the story of Mary Fisher and the Sultan of Turkey found in *Candles in the Dark*. Draw some parallels.
- ❖ How would you feel "speaking truth to power"?

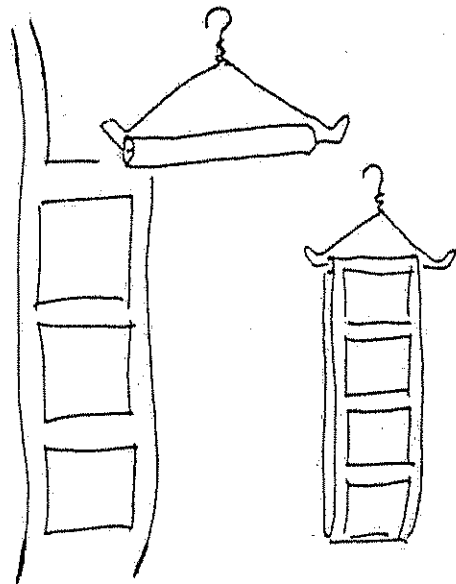
Activities:

1. Make a roll-around picture book to depict the part of the story where Moses is before Pharaoh. Possible scenes are: the plagues, Pharaoh's obstinate attitude, Moses and Aaron turning the rod into a snake, the magicians. This can be done at any point in the story using highlights from all or any part of Moses' life.

Materials:

A metal coat hanger, paper towel tube, tape, 18 x 24" paper, art materials for drawing, 5 x 7" papers

- a. Cut tube lengthwise and put around bottom of hanger. Tape cut closed and bend up hanger ends to keep tube in place.
- b. Cut 18 x 24" paper into 2 strips 9 x 24" and tape together to make one long strip. Paste or tape on pictures drawn on 5 x 7" papers leaving a border around each one.
- c. Put around tube and tape. Roll story around.



2. The experience of the Hebrews in Egypt is recalled by the pre-Civil-War black slaves in America. The themes of bondage, burden, and longing for freedom appear in the American folk songs of slaves - spirituals. Listen to, sing, or read "Go Down, Moses". Song and music can be found in *Songs of the Spirit*. Included at the end of this chapter is a version with many verses. This, like other spirituals, should be sung with fervor and understanding of the black slave's condition. When the slaves sang this song the word Moses referred to Harriet Tubman.

3. News reporting - Create newspaper headlines and stories telling of the plagues. Interview the Egyptian "man in the street" asking his reaction to the plagues, Pharaoh's denial of freedom to the Hebrews, his thoughts, etc. Use as the basis for a TV newsroom skit to put on before the rest of the First-day School.
4. Create a picket sign that the Hebrews could have used to demonstrate for their freedom from the Egyptian rulers. Use rulers or yardsticks and small or large poster board and markers to create the signs. (From *Arts and Crafts for the Bible, Old Testament*, p. 25.)
5. Play a simulation game, "To Stay or Go" (from *Moses & the Exodus: 4 Simulated Activities*, by Jack Schaupp and Donald L. Griggs).

III. - DELIVERANCE - EXODUS 12:1 - 13:6

After the first nine natural disaster type plagues, Moses warns Pharaoh of the last and worst plague. Pharaoh had surely seen the unrelenting and increasing severity of each announced plague and had had ample opportunity to avoid the inevitable outcome. The plagues are the most explicit sign of God's power and the last one will show his total control over events. In Exodus 12:1-28, God tells Moses what the Hebrews are to do to be spared the death of the first born which shall fall on the Egyptians. The ritual is described in detail with the sacrificing of the lamb and the sprinkling of blood on the doorposts. This was a custom of desert dwellers to ward off evil spirits. The unleavened bread and bitter herbs which are specified also were typical desert food. These three take on special significance because they will forever remind the Hebrews of their deliverance by God's power, their hurried departure, and the bitterness of their bondage. The girding of loins means that their long robes are tucked up into a belt and their sandals are on to reflect their readiness for leaving. The unleavened bread is symbolically important as it will be a "pure" new bread - that is, not having used the little piece of old dough starter that would normally be used in leavened bread making. The drama of the story is again heightened, as the people are to stay inside overnight while the destroyer is working. In Exodus 12:29-36 the last plague occurs - at midnight - and at last Pharaoh unconditionally lets the people go. The story is fulfilled in the final disaster.

The Hebrews depart in a large group. Exodus 12 gives further Passover regulations. Exodus 13 sets out the sanctifying of the first born and sets the time for eating unleavened bread. In Exodus 12:25, Moses tells the Hebrews of the Promised Land where they shall forever remember this event.

As the people leave God leads them along a path that will take them to the Red Sea and the wilderness, rather than through areas where war was likely. The route they took was most likely an alternate caravan route and went through the wilderness. The people are guided continually by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. It is now the job of Moses, the deliverer, to become a leader of a huge number of ex-slaves whom he will keep together for years through a wilderness beset with hardships and terrors.

Questions for Discussion:

- ◇ Many customs and rituals whether religious, cultural, or just unique to one family are based on the theme of remembering what or who has gone before. Can you think of an occasion that you celebrate or remember in a significant way - that is religious in nature? (Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter). What are some remembering celebrations that our country has? (Fourth of July). Other countries? How about within your own family? (Example: we make doughnuts on Shrove Tuesday because our German great-grandmother did.) What kinds of things do we do at any of these celebrations that are traditional? How often are special foods associated with these celebrations?

- ◇ How do we as Quakers remember what God has done for us when we do not have rituals in the ways that other religions do?

Activities:

1. Make matzoh, which is the unleavened bread eaten by Jews during Passover to remind them of their hurried departure from Egypt. (See recipe at end of the Seder activity.) If desired, purchase matzoh and serve to class if unable to prepare it.
2. Make a picture of the Hebrews following the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Cotton balls or quilt batting can be glued on for the cloud. Orange or yellow cellophane wrap can be the fire. Use light blue paper for day scene and dark blue or black for the night.
3. Hold a Passover
 Passover was the first of the three great festivals held annually by the Hebrews in spring. At this feast the people gave thanks to God for their escape from slavery in Egypt and remembered their covenant with God. The feast or seder was a solemn occasion and consisted of a lamb killed and roasted. All was to be eaten so that it was kept sacred. Bitter herbs like lettuce, cress, and others not familiar to us today were eaten as a reminder of the bitterness and harshness of their slavery. A mixture of ground dates, figs, raisins, and vinegar was to remind them of the mortar for the bricks they had made as slaves. Matzoh, unleavened bread, was eaten to remember the people's hurried flight from Pharaoh without allowing their bread to rise. No leavened bread was eaten during the entire week of Passover. Four cups of wine were drunk between the answers to four questions asked by the youngest boy of the oldest man. The questions ask why this night was different from all other nights. The faith of the people was strengthened as they listened to the answers and partook of the feast.

An activity which can be done with an entire Meeting, First-day School, or one or two classes is to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread - the Passover Seder. This project will take about four weeks of preparation.

A suggested schedule for holding a Passover seder as a First-day School project:

Week 1: It is important to have children understand why you are doing this and what is important about it to Jews. Learn "Go Down Moses" to sing at the seder. Introduce the exodus story and its significance. Invite any Meeting members or parents who wish to attend on Week 4 to sign up.

Week 2: Go over the ritual and names of each part of the ritual. Explain what each part means and why the particular food is eaten. Prepare Haggadah (the program for the seder. Small children may make decorated construction paper placemats. Assign parts of mother, father, smallest child(ren).

Week 3: Prepare matzoh and the haroshes (except for the fresh chopped apples - ask for chopped apples to be brought in next week) - recipes below. Remind children to bring a soft pillow.

Week 4: Mix apples into haroshes. Set tables. Put out platters or bowls of the ritual foods, pitchers of grape juice, and the Haggadahs within reach of all.

If possible have a person of Jewish background share stories of childhood seders while the last minute preparation is done. This sets an anticipatory but relaxed tone.

Celebrate the Seder.

Background: For younger children tell the Passover story or read from a Children's Bible account. Adults and older children can read Exodus 12:1-42 for the Passover meaning and ritual. Mark 14:12-26 tells of the Last Supper which was the Passover Seder for Jesus and his disciples.

Resources: These two books explain in *detail* the rituals for a Seder:

Passover Seder for Christian Families, Sam Macintosh, published by Resource Publications, Inc., San Jose, CA, 1984.

Passover - The Festival of Freedom, Sophia N. Cedarbaum, published by Union of American Hebrew Congregations, New York, 1960.

Below is a synthesis of these two books for a Seder in First-day School. There are both quotations and liberties taken with each text. Further modifications may be necessary to fit the needs of individual groups.

A First-day School Seder

Preparation: Have class take family parts of father, mother, children, with one or two designated as the youngest.

Prepare table with the following:

1. Flowers and candles
2. Plate of matzoh covered with cloth
3. Parsley
4. Dish of salt water
5. Dish of four bitter herbs (endive, radish, scallion, horseradish)
6. Pitcher of grape juice for the wine
7. Dish of haroshes (recipe follows).
8. Roasted lamb or lamb bone

At each guest's place - a plate, fork, napkin and glass; a page of parts read in unison, and a pillow if possible.

At the mother's place - long matches and mother's blessing written out.

The father's place should have his prayer and a basin of water and towel.

The Ritual and Explanation

Part 1:

Mother lights the candles and says, "Blessed are you O Lord our God, ruler of the universe for giving us festivals and seasons for rejoicing, and for bringing us to this time of year, this springtime, the season of our freedom."

Part 2:

Father says the following prayer (Kiddush) and then all drink the wine or juice.

"Blessed are you, Lord, our God, ruler of the universe, for bringing us together this night to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread.

We celebrate springtime.

We celebrate the going out from Egypt.

We celebrate our freedom.

We celebrate our maturity, our adulthood.

We celebrate our lives, whose fullness is yours.

And so we praise your holy name.

Blessed are you O Lord Our God, King of the World, who creates the fruit of the vine."

Part 3:

Father uses the basin and towel to wash the hands of all present. He explains: "We eat the green vegetable (parsley) as a welcome to spring and as an affirmation of life - of all human life, including its tears and sorrows."

All take parsley, dip it in salt water and say the blessing:

"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the World, who creates the fruit of the earth."

All eat.

Part 4:

This begins the Haggadah - the recitation of the Passover story.

The father uncovers the matzoh and holds up a piece. He says, "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of

Egypt! All who are hungry, let them come eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate this Passover with us."

A piece of matzoh is placed aside wrapped in the napkin and at some point is hidden by the father in the room to be found later (Part 13). It is called the Afikomen.

Part 5:

The youngest child now asks the following questions.

1. Why is this night different from all other nights?
2. Why do we eat matzoh tonight?
3. Why do we eat bitter herbs?
4. Why do we dip the herbs?
5. Why do we sit on pillows tonight?

Part 6:

The reply - The father reads the story of Passover.

Many years ago, the Jewish people were slaves. They were owned by the Pharaohs, the rulers of Egypt. The Pharaohs liked to build big cities with palaces and pyramids. The slaves had to do this work. They worked for long hours in the blazing sun. They were treated very cruelly. They were whipped and were made to work much faster and harder. Then God sent Moses to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt. Moses came to the Pharaoh and said, "Let my people go out of Egypt." Pharaoh did not want to lose his slaves, but at last he agreed. Then he changed his mind. He broke his promise many times before he let the Jews leave Egypt.

Part 7:

(See Exodus 12:1-42 and Exodus 13:17 - 15:5)
The Bible story may be read

Part 8:

Sing or say the litany together: "If God had brought us out of Egypt it would have been enough."

The father says, "How much more so do we have to be thankful for the manifold and unbounded blessings of the All Present God!"

Part 9:

Psalm 136 can be sung or read.

Part 10:

Explaining the ritual foods as each is raised high.

a. The lamb or bone - The father says, "What is the reason for this Passover lamb we eat? It is because the Holy One passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt as it is written in the Bible - 'And you shall say it is the Passover offering for the Eternal One who passed over the houses of the children of Israel when he smote the Egyptians'"

b. The matzoh - Father says, "What is the reason we eat matzoh? It is because there was not enough time for the dough of our ancestors in Egypt to be leavened. They were thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry."

c. The bitter herbs - "What is the meaning of the bitter herbs? They are eaten to recall that the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers in Egypt."

d. The haroshes - "It represents the mortar used with the bricks in Egypt."

Part 11:

Praise. The father says, "Therefore it is our duty to thank him, and to praise him. In song and prayer, to glorify and extol the One who performed all these wonders for our fathers and for us.

He brought us out
 from slavery to freedom,
 from anguish to joy,
 from sorrow to festivity,
 from darkness to a great light!
 All sing "Go Down, Moses"

Part 12:

Eating. Each ritual food is blessed and eaten by all. All say: "Blessed are you, Lord, our God, ruler of the universe, who has made us holy by your commandments" (finish with each ending below).

a. *Creator of the fruit of the vine.* (drink wine or juice)

b. and commanded us to eat matzoth. (eat matzoth)

c. and have commanded us to eat bitter herbs. (bitter herbs are dipped in haroshes and eaten).

Part 13:

The treasure hunt. The piece of matzoth saved has been hidden and now the children may search for it. All get a piece to eat.

Part 14:

The door is left open for Elijah to enter during the prayer and is closed afterward.

Recipes are from *Passover Seder for Christian Families*:

Haroshes - for 12

10 cups chopped apples
Red wine to cover
2 cups applesauce
2 cups raisins
2 cups chopped walnuts
4 T. cinnamon
5 T. honey

Mix well and chill several hours

Homemade Matzoh for 12

4 cups flour
1 T. salt
2 T. cold butter or margarine
1 cups cold water

Mix flour, salt, and butter until it looks like coarse meal. Add water and knead 10 minutes. Roll very thin. Cut into 5" circles (coffee can is good) Place on greased cookie sheets and place a second sheet directly on top to prevent curling. Bake at 375 F 20 minutes.

IV. RESCUE AT THE RED SEA : EXODUS 14-15:21

This section of the story contains a grand climax and the theme of deliverance dominates as another great act of divine might of God and the mercy he shows to his people. Many scholars have debated the location of the Red Sea. One of the most likely theories is that it was a salt marsh at Bardawil, an area separated from the Great Sea (Mediterranean) by a narrow sandpit - generally a dry salt crust capable of bearing men and light animals, but subject to occasional flooding. The name may have meant "Reed" Sea.

Pharaoh, after allowing the Hebrews to leave, once again has a change of heart and sends his army to capture them. The Hebrews are in great fear as they watch the chariots and men approach, and they

Part 15:

The Blessing. All say, "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the World, who gives food to all."

Part 16:

Ending prayer - said by adults "Now we come to the end of our Seder service. As we celebrate this Festival tonight, so may we celebrate it, all of us together, next year again, in joy, in peace, and in freedom."

lament having left Egypt at all. This is the first of many such murmurings that Moses must deal with as they travel to the Promised Land. God reveals his power again to the Hebrews by moving in the pillar of cloud from *before* them to a position *between* them and the advancing Egyptians. The drying of the ground allowing the Hebrews to cross could have been caused by a sirocco (dry desert wind). The panicking Egyptians are caught (by lightning, thunder, and rain?) and their heavy equipment is bogged down. The "walls" of water parting and then returning covering the Egyptians may be poetic but it is no less a miracle in this desert area to have such storms overtake the Egyptians just when the Hebrews needed it most. The miracle confirms the faith of Israel in God and his prophet, Moses (14:31). The deliverance is celebrated as a mighty act of mercy demonstrated by God - they who were unworthy and helpless were rescued from their enslavement, made free, and given a promised land to build their nation - all by God. This is celebrated in the song in Chapter 15:1-21. Miriam's timbrel in verse 21 is like a tambourine without the jingles that was used to accompany dancing.

Activities:

1. Follow the route that the Exodus took on a map. One is included at the end of this lesson. You may copy this map for your children. Fill in the names of the important places along the route. Remember that this is a general idea of how the Hebrews went since scholars cannot be positive of exact locations. (The numbers refer to those on the map):
 - (1) Goshen - land east of Nile River in Egypt where the Hebrews lived.
 - (2) Nile River
 - (3) Egypt
 - (4) Raamses - Capital city that was built by the command of Pharaoh Rameses II with the Hebrews' physical labor.
 - (5) Succoth - a town to the south with fortresses
 - (6) Red or Reed Sea - marshy lake area connecting the Gulf of Suez with the Mediterranean Sea
 - (7) Gulf of Suez
 - (8) The Great Sea - the Mediterranean
 - (9) Wilderness of Shur or Elam - northern desert area in Sinai Peninsula
 - (10) Marah - a place in Shur, where there was a bitter spring of water that Moses sweetened for the people.
 - (11) Elim - an oasis where there were palm trees and springs where the people rested for several weeks.
 - (12) Wilderness of Zin (or Sin) where food was scarce and God provided manna and quail.
 - (13) Rephidim - where again there was no water and Moses brought water from a rock. They battled the Amalekites here.
 - (14) Mt. Sinai - where God spoke to Moses giving him the Ten Commandments. The Ark of the Covenant was prepared here.
 - (15) Kadesh Barnea - Moses sent in spies to Promised Land and the people tried to enter against God's will.
 - (16) Edom
 - (17) Moab
 - (18) Mt. Nebo - where Moses died
 - (19) Jordan River - where the Hebrews crossed into the Promised Land
 - (20) Gilgal - city where the Hebrews began the conquest of Canaan
 - (21) Jericho - site of spectacular victory of Hebrews under Joshua.

2. Make tambourines using paper plates:

Materials:

Two paper plates or foil pie pans; crayons, paint, ribbon or yarn, crepe paper and construction paper; dried beans, macaroni or pebbles; masking tape; glue.



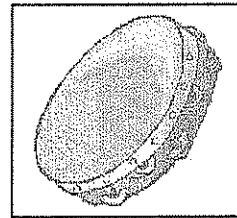
Procedure:

1. Put a handful of dried beans or macaroni on one plate.
2. Lay the other plate face down over the first plate and tape around the edges (or punch holes and "sew" the sides together with yarn or ribbon)
3. Add crepe paper ruffles or streamers and shake the instrument.

Use tambourines to beat out the rhythm to this poem by Langston Hughes:

Tambourines

Tambourines!	And a gospel song:
Tambourines!	Life is short
Tambourines!	BUT GOD IS LONG!
To the glory of God!	Tambourines!
Tambourines!	Tambourines!
To glory!	Tambourines!
A gospel shout	To glory!



(Langston Hughes)

V. DESERT WANDERINGS - EXODUS 15:22-18

The major theme of this section of the Exodus is that the Hebrews continue murmuring their misgivings about leaving Egypt and their continual loss of faith. They go into the wilderness and their food and water are gone. It is a miserable present with an uncertain future ahead and they remember that even in their slavery they had food and drink. They come to a bitter spring at Marah (Exodus 15:22-27) and when Moses is commanded to throw a branch into the water it becomes sweet. It shows God as a healer to his people. They come to Elim, an oasis, and then depart again for the desert - the Wilderness of Sin (or Zin). It is a land of jagged rocks and it is small wonder that the Hebrews murmur again. When they become hungry God tells Moses he will provide daily "bread from heaven" and meat also. This he does in the form of a flock of quail at evening which are easily netted.

In the morning white flakes appear on the ground. The Hebrews ask "What is it?" - "manna" - and that is how it is named. It probably is from the tamarisk tree which during the spring has its bark pierced by insects to drink the sap, exuding a clear liquid which dries as a thin sugary glob. Although God promises to provide it daily and commands that none be saved until the next day, some Hebrews do save it, and it spoils. They again show little faith in their God.

It is during Exodus 16:22-30 that the Sabbath is set aside as holy by the command from God to gather double on the sixth day and none on the 7th. Also the held-over manna does not spoil on the seventh day.

Again, some people have no faith and go out on the seventh day and find none. The people eat manna for 40 years as they wander through the desert on the way to the Promised Land. At Rephidim there is no water, the people grumble, and God commands Moses to strike the rock with his rod. Water appears. It is during Exodus 17:8-14 that Joshua appears as a warrior. The rod and serpent mentioned may have been a standard (banner) of God with Moses still seen as the intermediary between God and his people. During the battle with Amalek, as long as Moses holds his rod up, the battle goes to Joshua but as he tires and his hand lowers, the battle goes to Amalek. Aaron and another hold his hands up - one on each side until Joshua wins. In Chapter 18 Moses meets Jethro and tells him of the deliverance and wanderings. They share a special fellowship meal before God. The story includes the institution of the priestly oracle to determine divine will. Moses becomes a priest to decide important cases, authorizing others to hear the more everyday matters. Thus ends the segment of Moses' life as the chosen human instrument of deliverance of the Hebrews by God. In the next section he will continue as God's instrument in the institution of a nation of God's chosen people.

Questions for Discussion

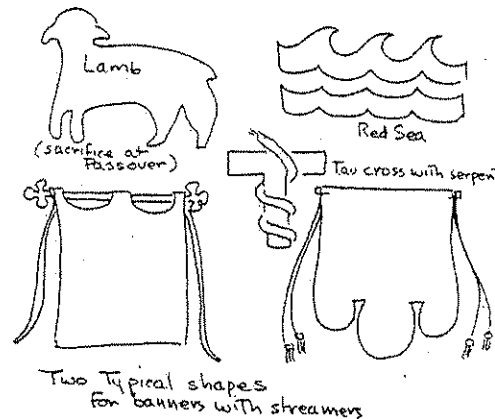
- ◇ What qualities did Moses have that made him a leader?
- ◇ What things happening today require the leadership of someone like Moses?
- ◇ Are only important people called by God to do his work?
- ◇ What work does God call us to do?
- ◇ How do we know what God wants us to do?
- ◇ In the wilderness the children of Israel could not have enough faith in God to sustain them. They kept more manna than God told them - and it spoiled overnight. Why was it so hard for them to believe God would provide? Is it hard for us today to have faith in God? What makes it hard?
- ◇ Can you think of a time when you did not believe another person - and it turned out to be true? For example - your dad tells you that after several trial runs on your new bike, with him holding onto you, that you now can do it yourself - alone. You doubt it, but then you try and in fact ride - alone!
- ◇ How did you feel *before* you tried it alone?
- ◇ How about after?
- ◇ For personal reflection: What does this suggest about faith in yourself? In others? In God?
- ◇ Have you ever felt your faith in God wavering? What caused it? Did you regain faith? Why?

Activities:

1. Make a diorama of some of the events of the story, such as:
 - a. Moses before Pharaoh turning his staff into a snake
 - b. One of the plagues
 - c. The rescue at the Red Sea
 - d. The pillar of fire and cloud
 - e. The manna or quails from God
 - f. The battle with Amalek as Moses lifts his hands supported by Aaron and Hur.

If you have a large class, small groups can make each scene. This is an excellent mixed-age activity. Provide a wide variety of craft supplies; the children will make good use of them.

2. Ancient stone cuttings show rigid standards as early as 3500 B.C.E., sometimes with streamers. Make a banner depicting symbols from the story. Use these examples or others: Use an old bath towel or felt with yarn and additional felt to make cutouts; ribbon or fabric strip streamers, dowel for rod to hold.



(From *Banners and Flags*, Margot Carter Blair and Cathleen Ryan, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, N.Y., 1977).

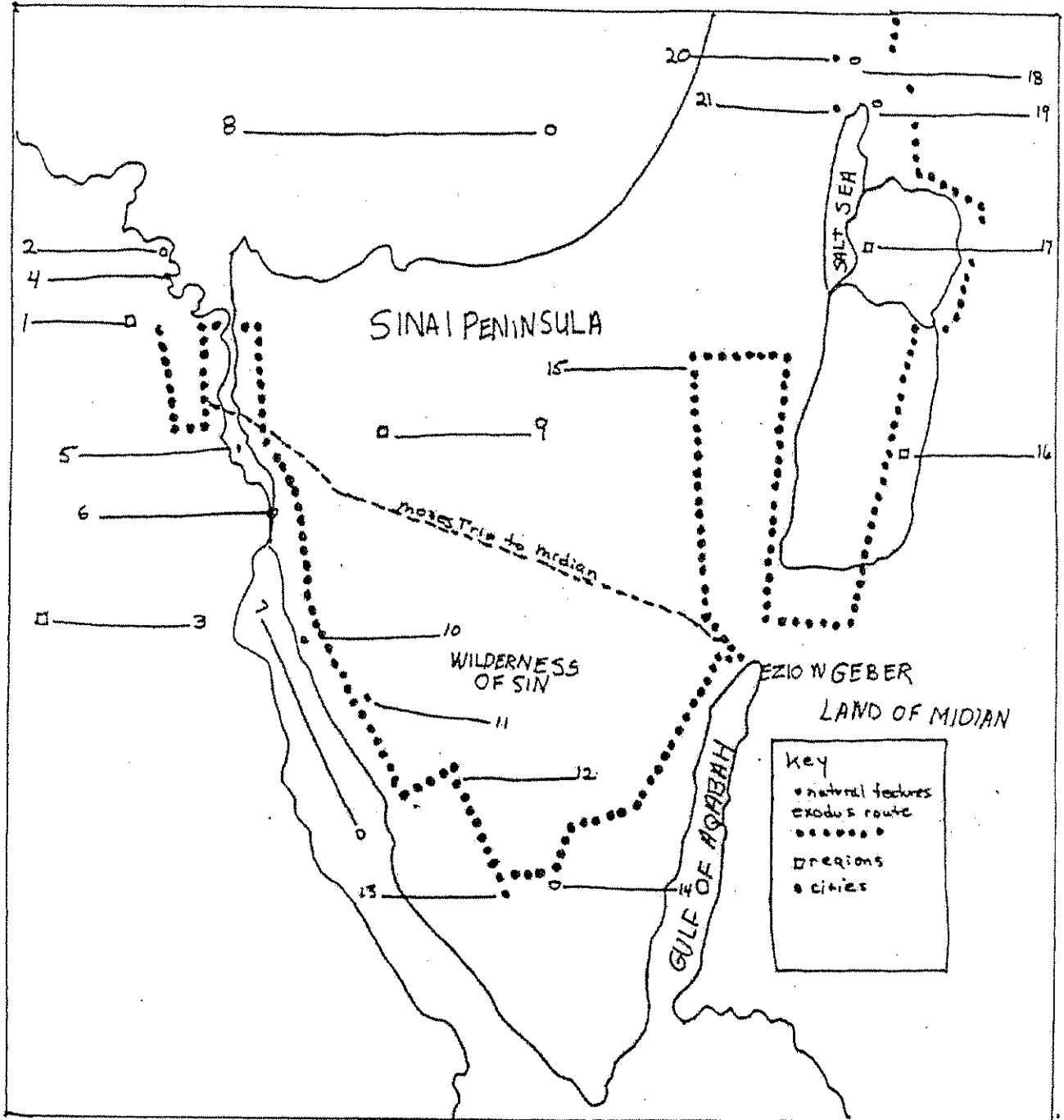
3. Make a mural of the story from Moses before Pharaoh through the plagues to the Red Sea deliverance to the battle of Amalek. Have some samples of Egyptian paintings for inspiration and style. This can be done by classes or individuals working on small pieces and then attaching the pictures in order. This can be done intergenerationally as well, pairing children with adults. Be sure to display it prominently and give adequate sharing time to each portion.

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Lynne Brick

Map of the Exodus



(Adapted from : Christian Education: Shared Approaches God's People, Part I, United Church Press)

Go Down, Moses.

1. When Is - rael was in E - gypt's land: Let my peo - ple go; Op -
 2. Thus saith the Lord, bold Mo - ses said, Let my peo - ple go; If

pressed so hard they could not stand, Let my peo - ple go. Go down, Mo - ses,
 not, I'll smite your first-born dead, Let my peo - ple go. Go down, Mo - ses,

'Way down in E - gypt land, Tell ole Pha - raoh, Let my peo - ple go.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 No more shall they in bondage toil,
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil. | 11 Pharaoh said he would go across,
But Pharaoh and his host were lost. |
| 4 When Israel out of Egypt came,
And left the proud oppressive land. | 12 O Moses the cloud shall clear the way,
A fire by night, a shade by day. |
| 5 O, 'twas a dark and dismal night,
When Moses led the Israelites. | 13 You'll not get lost in the wilderness,
With a lighted candle in your breast. |
| 6 'Twas good old Moses and Aaron, too,
'Twas they that led the armies through. | 14 Jordan shall stand up like a wall,
And the walls of Jericho shall fall. |
| 7 The Lord told Moses what to do,
To lead the children of Israel through. | 15 Your foes shall not before you stand,
And you'll possess fair Canaan's land. |
| 8 O come along Moses, you'll not get lost,
Stretch out your rod and come across. | 16 'Twas just about in harvest-time,
When Joshua led his host divine. |
| 9 As Israel stood by the water side,
At the command of God it did divide. | 17 O let us all from bondage flee,
And let us all in Christ be free. |
| 10 When they had reached the other shore,
They sang the song of triumph o'er. | 18 We need not always weep and moan,
And wear these slavery chains forlorn. |

* From *Southland Spirituals*, No. 17. Copyright, 1936, by Homer Rodcheaver, Hall-Mack Company. Used by special permission of the publisher.

MOSES - PART III

This is the third of four chapters on the story of Moses. The third part of Moses' life is found in the Book of Exodus, chapters 19-31, and can be broken into three parts:

- I. The Covenant (Exodus 19:1-25)
- II. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20-24)
- III. Instructions for Building the Tabernacle and Ark (Exodus 25-31)

For each section there is background as well as questions for a variety of ages. Activities are in a separate section at the end. Choose the ones that best suit the ages of the children in your group. Some of the larger group activities can be adapted for use with a wider age range. The material can be made into several lessons or, by just highlighting some events, it can be condensed.

INTRODUCTION

Moses' journey through the wilderness was not easy. There were many hardships and his people began to murmur. They were concerned over the basic needs of life and complained for lack of food and water. Yet, in spite of their murmurings, God supplied the Hebrews with water to drink, food to eat and victory over the Amalekites. God's presence and power dominate the journey and Moses, acting as God's human tool, carries out his work and delivers the Hebrews to Mount Sinai.

Mount Sinai was the mountain to which Moses had been leading the Hebrews as commanded by God:

"But I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain." (Exodus 3:12)

At Sinai the Hebrews began their experience as a community of God's people.

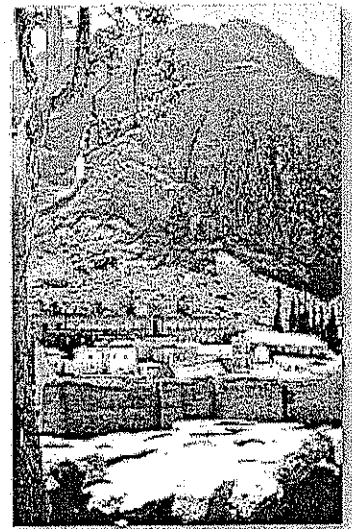
I. THE COVENANT

A. Background:

Exodus 19:1-2 - Exactly three months after the Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites entered the Desert of Sinai and camped by Mount Sinai. The term "desert" does not always mean a dry wasteland but sometimes uninhabited grazing country.

Exodus 19:3-6 - As the Israelites were camped by Sinai, Moses went on the mountain and there God spoke to him about the covenant. God compared his delivering the people out of Egypt, across the Red (Reed) Sea, and to Sinai to his carrying them "on eagles' wings."

Exodus 19:5-6 - God told Moses he would give Israel an exalted position among the nations if they would accept God's covenant. If they accepted and obeyed the covenant, God would make Israel his treasured possession. Also they would become a kingdom of priests.



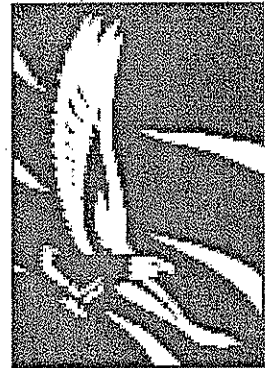
Exodus 19:7-25 - Moses then informed the elders and the people of God's covenant. The people responded by promising to obey his laws. God then told Moses to have the people purify themselves for worship. The purification lasted three days.

Exodus 19:16-25 - On the third day of preparation, God descended to Sinai in a display of power and majesty. There was thunder and lightning and a thick cloud upon the mount. A very loud trumpet blast was heard. The people trembled. Only Moses and Aaron were permitted on the mountain; the priests and the people were to stand before it.

B. Questions:

A helpful image for understanding the meaning of the covenant to the Hebrews is found in the reference to "eagles' wings" in Exodus 19:4. The picture of an eagle teaching its young to fly expresses vividly God's relationship with his people:

- a. The parent eagle stirs up the nest, preparing the young to leave its safekeeping.
- b. The parent eagle hovers over the nest, making the young eagles restless and ready to fly.
- c. The parent takes up a young bird on its wings.
- d. It releases the young bird in midair to try its wings. If it starts to fall, the parent eagle swoops down beneath the young bird and bears it up on eagle's wings.
- e. The young bird learns to fly alone and follows the gyrating pattern of the parent eagle's flight.



(God's Restless Servants, p. 31-32)

Using the image of the parent eagle, how did God stir up the nest for the Hebrews? (By calling Moses and making the Hebrews restless with their life of oppression in Egypt.)

- ❖ How did God carry the Hebrews "on eagles' wings"? (God took the Hebrews up and bore them out of Egypt and across the Sea of Reeds. They started their faithless murmurings against Moses and God in the wilderness. God swooped down again and again bringing them to Mount Sinai. God invited the young Israel to follow the pattern of his life, to fly in his ways.)
- ❖ How do you think Moses felt when he went up the mountain to speak to God?
- ❖ Do you think he really wanted to go? If you think maybe he didn't really want to go, why did he go? Did Moses have a choice, to go or not to go? Are you ever afraid to do something when you're not sure what's going to happen or what to expect? Give an example. Have you ever felt called by God to do something? If you are called, do you have a choice?
- ❖ What questions do you think Moses asked himself before he climbed the mountain to speak to God? For example:
 - What does God want to teach his people?
 - How does God want his people to behave?
 - How can I help them know?

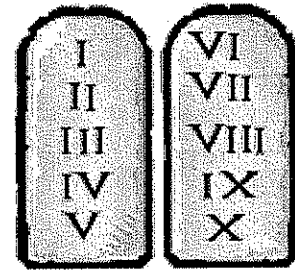
- ❖ What is a covenant? It is not a word we hear often today. We are accustomed to entering into contracts but not covenants. How are they different? (A covenant is based on trust, while a contract is based on legally defined responsibilities.) Use a dictionary to help you.
- ❖ God bases the understanding of the covenant on what he has done for the Hebrews. Reread Exodus 19:3-6; what did God do for the Hebrews?
- ❖ The ultimate goal of the Hebrews' journey was to bring them as a people unto God himself. Why do you think God chose Moses and his people to be "my own possession among all peoples"?

II: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

A: Background

Because God acted to save the people of Israel and entered into covenant with them, the people promised to obey the requirements that the covenant laid upon them, the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments were not primarily statements of belief, and they were not definitive rules of behavior for all time. Rather, they were instruments for regulating the life of a community of people, the Hebrews. In the covenant relationship Israel has responsibilities: to keep the relationship whole and to witness to others about the nature of life with God.



To understand the Ten Commandments as they functioned in the life of the community of Israel, it helps to divide them into two groups:

1. The first four commandments are concerned with the relationship of people with God.
2. The last six are concerned with the relationship of people with one another in the community.

Exodus 20:2 - "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This introduction sets the context in which the commandments had their meaning. It states the reason the Hebrews were to obey them.

Exodus 20:3-17

1. *You shall have no other gods before me.* This commandment underlines the exclusive claim that God made on the life and loyalty of the Hebrews.
2. *You shall not make for yourself a graven image.* A strong prohibition against making images to represent God.
3. *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.* God's name was not to be used in conjunction with anything unreal or untrue.
4. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*
5. *Honor your father and your mother.* Gave stability to the role of family in the nomadic tribal life.
6. *You shall not kill.* It applies to unauthorized murder. The Hebrews did not apply this commandment to enemies.
7. *You shall not commit adultery.* Was intended to protect the sacredness of marriage.
8. *You shall not steal.* Guarded property of others.

9. *You shall not bear false witness.* Protected the judicial system.
10. *You shall not covet.* Warned against envy that could destroy the fabric of community life.

The people promised to obey the covenant. Their obedience was to the covenant relationship in general, however, and not to a set of rules. The laws became the means by which the Hebrews expressed the meaning of living in covenant with the God who saved them.

Exodus 20:21-23:33 - The covenant code

God elaborated on the Commandments; their civil and religious implications for the nation.

Exodus 24 - The covenant is sealed

This chapter describes the ceremony by which God's covenant with the Hebrews was formally sealed. Moses erected an altar and set up twelve pillars to symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel.

In Old Testament times a covenant could be sealed in one of several ways:

1. Cutting the wrist and intermingling the blood of the two parties
2. By establishing a third party to witness the covenant relationship
3. By sacrificing an animal whose blood bound the covenanting parties to each other
4. By sharing in a common meal in confirmation of the covenant

(God's Restless Servant, p. 32)

The covenant at Sinai was sealed with an animal sacrifice. Moses built an altar and killed the sacrificial animal. Half the blood of the sacrifice was dashed against the altar in token of God's participation in the covenant. Moses read the requirements of the covenant, the people gave their assent, and Moses threw the other half of the blood on the people as a symbolic representation of their participation in the covenant. Finally, at the top of Mount Sinai, Moses and the Hebrew elders ate a sacred meal.

B. Questions

At Sinai the Hebrews began their experience as a community of God's people.

- ◇ What makes a community?
- ◇ What is a community of "God's people"?
- ◇ What does community mean for us? How does community affect our lives? Is community important? Do we need a community?
- ◇ Why was it important for the Hebrews to become a community?
- ◇ Why were the Ten Commandments important in the daily lives of the Hebrews? Did they need these commandments? Explain: In other religions the gods were fickle and often immoral. Religion had little to do with moral life.
- ◇ Which statement do you agree with and why?
 - a) I think the Ten Commandments are a pattern for responsible group living.
 - b) I think the Ten Commandments are strict rules of conduct
- ◇ Do the Ten Commandments have a positive or negative intent?
- ◇ The Commandments are concerned with how to love God and one's neighbor, but they are stated primarily as prohibitions. How do the students feel about this?

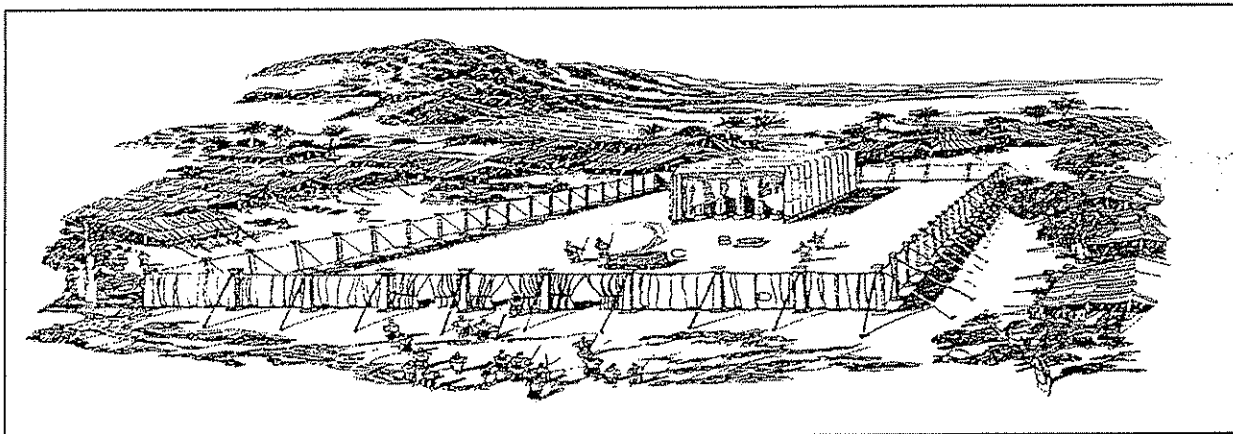
- ◇ Why didn't God fashion all the commandments to deal just with the Hebrews' relationship with God? Why did he include six commandments dealing with their relationships with others?
- ◇ The Ten Commandments are tremendously significant in the Hebrew-Christian tradition. Why are they so significant? Why are they more than just a set of rules - or are they?
- ◇ How do the students feel about the Ten Commandments as guidelines for us today?
- ◇ Look up the two commandments quoted by Jesus (Matthew 22:37-40). How do these relate to the Ten Commandments?
- ◇ Discuss the similarity in purpose between the Ten Commandments and Quaker testimonies. Do the testimonies cover similar areas? Use *Faith and Practice*. Name some of the testimonies (peace, simplicity, etc.) Just as God invited the young Israel to follow the pattern of his life, to fly in his ways, do you know people who use these testimonies as a pattern for their lives? Talk about some of these people. How do they follow the "pattern of his life"? How are they putting their beliefs into action? How are they expressing their faith in living relationships?
- ◇ Why not let the Hebrews worship other Gods? What is a graven image? Why were they prohibited in the Ten Commandments? Explain that this was a very new idea. Among the neighbors of Israel, stone and metal images of gods and goddesses abounded.

III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR BUILDING THE TABERNACLE - ARK

A. Background

The tabernacle was important to Israel's national life; it symbolized God's dwelling among his people (Exodus 25:8; 29:45) and was the place where he could meet with the leaders (Exodus 29:42) and the people (Exodus 29:43). God's glory was manifest in the tabernacle.

The tabernacle was referred to by several names: sanctuary, tent, and Tent of Meeting. (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 46)



So that the Lord "might dwell in their midst", he gave Moses detailed instructions as to how the Israelites should build him a portable sanctuary. After three months the structure was finished. The heart of the sanctuary was the tabernacle (A) which housed the ark of the

covenant, a chest containing the stone tablets of the law. Directly in front of the tabernacle was a bronze laver (B) for priests' ablutions during the ceremonies. Next came the altar (C) for burnt offerings. Linen curtains (D) on poles formed the courtyard.

(Great People of the Bible and How They Lived, p. 83)

Exodus 25:1-9 - The Lord described to Moses the materials to be assembled for building the tabernacle. The Israelites were to bring a voluntary offering.

Materials:

Metals to be used in the construction were gold, silver and bronze.

Three colors of yarn and also linen.

Goat hair, ram skins and hides of sea cows. A sea cow was a herbivorous mammal native to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba.

The wood of acacia trees - common in the Sinai Peninsula and good for construction purposes.

Other items to be brought include olive oil, spices, and precious stones.

Exodus 25:10-22	Building of the Ark
Exodus 25:23-30	The Table
Exodus 25:31-40	The Lampstand
Exodus 26:1-37	The Tabernacle
Exodus 27:1-8	The Altar of Burnt Offering
Exodus 27:9-19	The Courtyard
Exodus 27:20-21	Oil for the Lampstand
Exodus 28-29	Instructions Concerning the Priesthood; Priestly Garments
Exodus 29	Consecration of the Priests
Exodus 30-31	The Instructions Concerning the Tabernacle Service

For many weeks all the Israelites worked to build the movable dwelling place for their Lord. Women wove yards of fine linen and goat hair. Men hammered utensils out of gold, silver and bronze and sawed acacia wood for tent poles. Soon the sanctuary began to take shape. It stood at the center of a courtyard, which was enclosed by a high wall of linen curtains embroidered with purple, blue and red. Before the sanctuary stood the stone altar for sacrifice and a bronze laver where the priests could wash. The sanctuary, or tabernacle, itself was a colorful linen tent, embroidered with cherubim and protected by another tent of goat hair. Inside, the tabernacle was divided by a veil of fine, embroidered linen. In the outer room stood a gold lamp stand, a table and an altar for incense. In the inner room stood the ark of the covenant, a small wooden chest decorated with cherubim and containing the Ten Commandments, which symbolized the covenant and the vows the people of Israel had made.

When the sanctuary was completed, Moses sacrificed a lamb and bull on the altar and filled the bronze laver with water. Thereafter, Moses was forbidden to enter the sanctuary because God had chosen Aaron and his descendants to be his sole high priests. Only then, dressed in fine purple linen robes decorated with gold, jewels and semiprecious stones, were allowed to perform the sacred rituals of offering and sacrifice inside the sanctuary.

(Great People of the Bible & How They Lived, p. 82)

B. Questions:

- ❖ Why do you think God instructed Moses to build a tabernacle?
- ❖ Why did the Hebrews go to all the work of building the tabernacle in the desert? Why not just wait until they got to where they were going and build a permanent tabernacle?
- ❖ Why was God so specific about how he wanted the tabernacle built?

- ◇ Can you imagine what it would be like to build this structure and not be able to go to the store for any of the materials? What problems do you think the Hebrews had? How long did it take to build the structure? What did they do when they traveled? Where did the tabernacle go?
- ◇ How do you think the Hebrews felt when the tabernacle was completed? How does working together help build community? Can the students relate this to an experience they've had?

Activities:

1. Study the eagle - how does it relate to its young? See if you can find pictures of it taking care of its young and teaching them to fly. Relate the image of the eagle to God and the Hebrews.
2. From self-hardening clay or salt-flour-water clay, model either two tablets or one small tablet for each commandment. Write the commandments on the tablets. If the individual tablets are made, add holes to the top of each so later they can be strung together with leather thongs or cord.

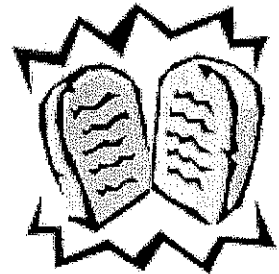
Recipe for clay:

- 1½ cup flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 1 cup warm water



Mix dry ingredients. Add water gradually, kneading it as you go. If dough is sticky, dust with flour. If dough is stiff, add water.

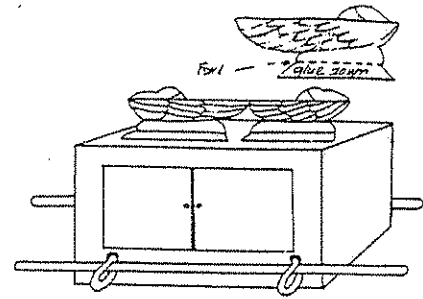
A simpler idea: cut tablets out of gray cardboard and then write the Commandments on white paper which you paste onto the cardboard. Connect the tablets with overlapping strips of tape. Consider memorizing the Commandments.



3. There are famous pictures and statues of Moses. Gather as many as you can. Have the students study them. Note the similarities and differences. How does Moses feel? Look at his expression. How would you depict Moses?
4. Make individual dioramas or one large diorama depicting the Hebrew people camped at the bottom of Mount Sinai or Moses meeting with God on Mount Sinai and receiving the Ten Commandments.

5. Make an Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant was a box 2-1/2 by 1-1/2 cubits (about 43" by 26" or 109 x 66 cm) covered with gold inside and out, with a "mercy seat" flanked by two cherubim (winged creatures sometimes with human or animal heads and animal or bird feet). It had four rings on the sides so that it could be carried about on long poles. It was holy and must never be touched by human hands. The Ark is described in Exodus 25. The Hebrews of course made no images of God, so the Ark became a symbol of God's presence in their midst. The mercy seat suggested the throne of God who was carried through the heavens by the cherubim. The Ark was prepared as a receptacle for the tablets of the law, and it was carried with the people whenever they moved from place to place as a reminder of God present with them.

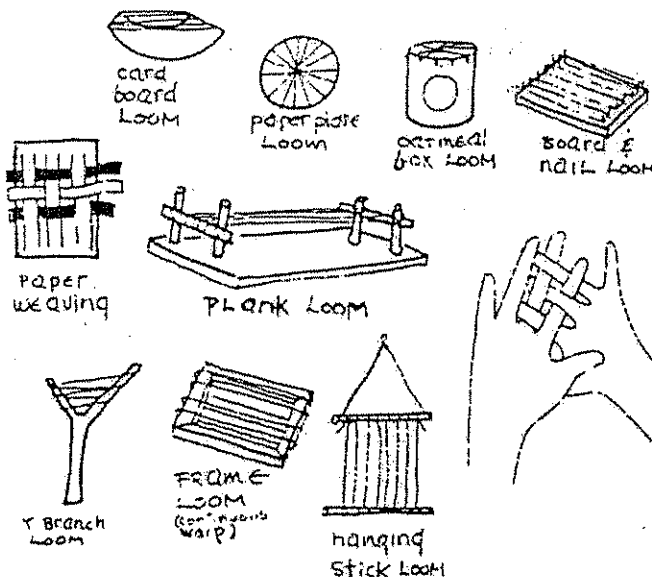
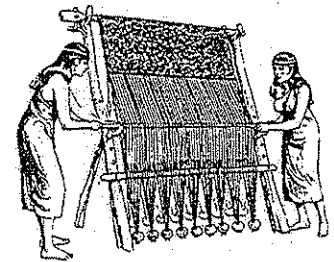


To make an Ark, use any large box or carton. Paint it gold, or cover it with gold foil. You can insert knotted rope rings in the sides through which broomstick carrying poles can be inserted. The cherubim could be drawn and cut out of poster board. If you make them in two thicknesses, they can be stapled together at the top and spread apart at the bottom, so they stand more securely on top of the box. You may want to cut doors in the side of the box so that your tablets of the law can be inserted.

(Living the Word "God's People, Part One", p. 30)

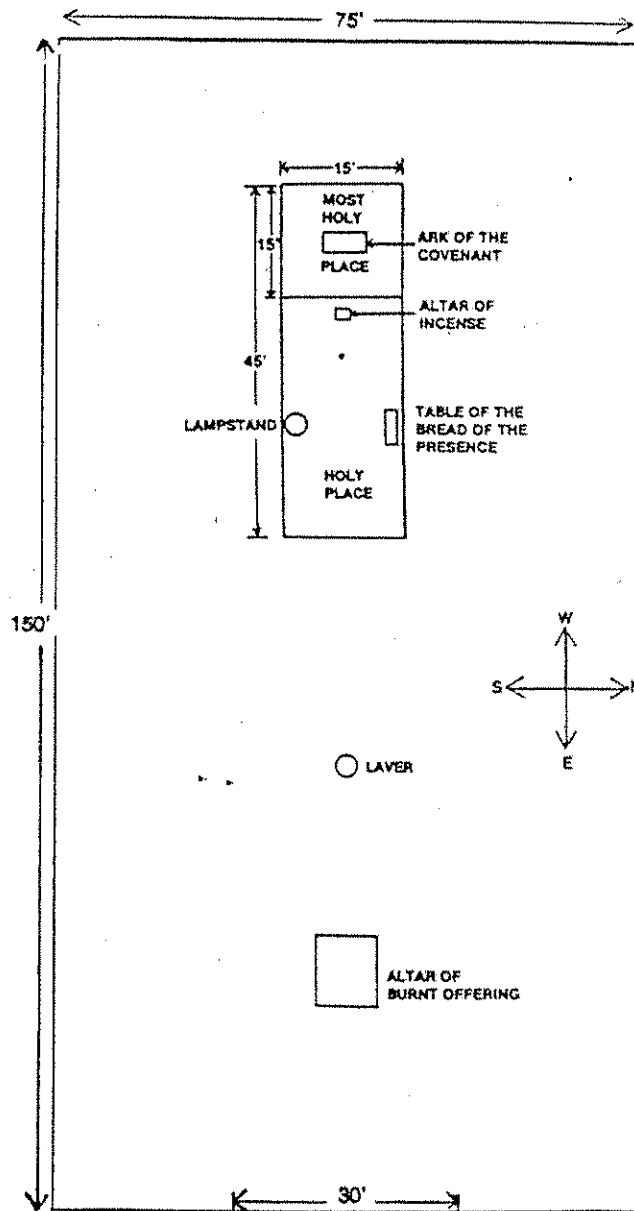
6. Have the students draw or build a tabernacle. Identify the different parts and discuss their function in the sanctuary. (see page 55.)

7. Weaving was a very important skill in the building of the tabernacle. The cloth for the tents and curtains was woven by the women. If you have a loom, show the children how to weave. Weave a small banner and hang it on a dowel. If you can't find a real loom, try one of these techniques:



Note: All round-loom weaving must have an odd number of strings.

8. Here is a layout of the sanctuary. Find a large space or go outside and lay out the sanctuary. See just how big it is.



PLAN OF THE TABERNACLE

9. It is 1996 and Moses will climb Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from God. List what you think the Ten Commandments would be.

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Barbara Kirschner

MOSES-PART IV

This chapter focuses on Exodus Chapter 32 through to the end of Deuteronomy, emphasizing the outstanding incidents of Moses' journey with deviation into the spiritual and secular laws only when they serve to enhance our understanding of the story. The following episodes depict the path of the journey from Sinai to Canaan and illuminate the teaching of God as it comes through Moses. The quotes following each title summarize the story.

- A. Incident of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32)
"What has happened to this man Moses ... make us a god to lead us." (Exodus 32:1)
- B. The Lord's Dazzling Presence (Exodus 33 & 34)
"I will put you in an opening in the rock" (Exodus 33:22)
- C. Priesthood, Sacrifices & Atonement (Leviticus 1-17)
Origin of the term "scapegoat" (Leviticus 16:20-28)
- D. More complaints and a Committee to help with them (Numbers 11)
"Would that all the Lord's people were prophets" (Numbers 11:29)
- E. The Spies Survey Canaan (Numbers 13 & 14)
"The Lord is with us so don't be afraid" (Numbers 14:9)
- F. Rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16)
"This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do all these things and that it is not by my own choice that I have done them" (Numbers 16:28)
- G. Aaron's Walking Stick (Numbers 17)
"It is to be kept as a warning that they will die unless the complaining stops." (Numbers 17:10)
- H. Moses himself becomes frustrated and impatient (Numbers 20)
"Speak to that rock over there and water will gush out of it." (Numbers 20:8)
- I. The King of Moab sends for Balaam (Numbers 22-25)
"Whoever blesses Israel will be blessed and whoever curses Israel will be cursed" (Numbers 24:9)
- J. Death of Moses (Deuteronomy 34)
"Choose life, love the Lord your God, obey him and be faithful to him..." (Deuteronomy 30:19, 20)

I. THEMES IN THE STORY

The story of Moses has been described as a mixture of history, theological interpretation and legend. And it is difficult to disentangle the three. (*Harpers Bible Commentary*, William Neil, p. 68.) There is a large gap between the time when Moses might have lived, around the thirteenth century B.C.E., and when the books of the Bible that include his story were actually written, somewhere between the tenth and fifth century B.C.E. (*Encyclopedia of Religion*, Mircea Eliade, pp. 115-116.) But regardless of whether Moses really existed or whether we can embrace and admire some of the strange and violent customs of Moses' people, the story of Moses is filled with themes which are inspiring and relevant today.

Themes

1. *Keep the Covenant* This is a theme that begins with Abraham and Isaac. God has chosen the Israelites as his people. He promises to guide them and deliver them to a land where they will prosper. But the Israelites must obey the commandments God gives to Moses. If they do not, they will be punished.
2. *Pray to God for Guidance* - Moses sets a great example to us all. He is a humble character. Over and over again Moses and Aaron his brother bow down with their faces to the ground. William

Law has said that "The spirit of prayer is the opener of all that is good within us and the receiver of all that is good within us." (*Interpreters Bible*, William Law. pp. 1070-1071). "No other nation, no matter how great, has a god who is so near when they need him as the Lord our God is to us." (Deuteronomy 4:7)

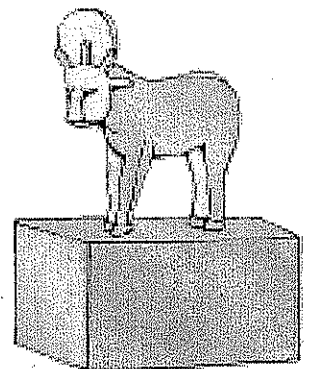
3. *Trust in God* - The whole time the Israelites are wandering in the wilderness their clothes never wear out and their feet are never swollen. In spite of their doubt and lack of faith the Israelites are always provided for; they receive quails for meat, manna for bread and water from a rock. When God instructs Moses to make Aaron and the Levites a priesthood he states clearly "I, the Lord, am all you need." (Numbers 18:20)
4. *The Lord our God is a Living Presence* - As the Israelites journey to the promised land they are guided by the cloud over the tent of the Lord's Presence. In the nighttime the cloud appears as a fire burning. When the cloud lifts in the day it is the signal for the Israelites to break camp. "He let you hear his voice from heaven so that he could instruct you; and here on earth he let you see his holy fire, and he spoke to you from it." Deuteronomy 4:36. "The Lord is God in heaven and on earth." (Deuteronomy 4:39)
5. *I Am Responsible for My Brother* - Again Moses sets a great example. Moses thinks of his people before himself. When God is angry with the Israelites and threatens not to guide them to the promised land, Moses says "Please forgive their sins; but if you won't, then remove my name from the book in which you have written the names of your people." Exodus 32:32. God commands Moses to "love thy neighbor as thyself" Leviticus 19:18. "Make sure that there is no one here today who hears these solemn demands and yet convinces himself that all will be well with him, even if he stubbornly goes his own way. That would destroy all of you, good and evil alike." Deuteronomy 29:19. "There will always be some Israelites who are poor and in need, and so I command you to be generous to them." (Deuteronomy 15:11)

Each of these themes is meaningful to us today although our interpretation and understanding of these themes has evolved and changed according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and according to our knowledge of truth which God has imprinted in our own hearts.

II. BACKGROUND AND QUESTIONS FOR EACH INCIDENT CHOSEN FROM THE JOURNEY

A. *Incident of the Golden Calf* (Exodus 32)

Moses was up on Mt. Sinai for a long time receiving the ten commandments. The Israelites grew impatient for their leader to return. And so they began to think, "What has happened to this man Moses ... make us a god to lead us." Exodus 32:1. When Moses finally did come down with the tablets he found his people dancing around a golden calf made from their own jewelry. Even Aaron, who was in charge, was at a loss to explain what had happened. The incident of the Golden Calf probably did not occur but was included by the authors as a theological teaching to warn against idolatry and pagan religion and to encourage keeping the covenant. (*Harpers Bible Commentary*, William Neil, p. 107.)



- ◇ How do you feel about Aaron's helplessness to explain what had happened? Have you ever experienced peer pressure that made you act in a way you really knew to be wrong?
- ◇ Idolatry means the worship of a physical object as a god. Can you relate the Quakers' preference for simplicity in their lives with this story? Where do Quakers look for God? How does simplicity aid us in finding God?

B. *The Lord's Dazzling Presence* (Exodus 33 & 34)

Moses regained God's trust for his people and God promised to continue to lead the people to the promised land. Then Moses requested "Please let me see the dazzling light of your presence" and God replied, "I will make all my splendor pass before you and in your presence I will pronounce my sacred name." Exodus 33:18. "I am the Lord and I show compassion and pity on those I choose." Exodus 33:19. Then God put Moses in the cleft of a rock to protect him from His overwhelming presence so that Moses saw only God's back, not His face, as God passed by.



- ◇ Is there any way that you feel God's presence in your life?
- ◇ Can you relate to the term "dazzling"?
- ◇ How would you describe the face of someone who is full of love and happiness?
- ◇ What words do you use to describe God?

C. *Priesthood, Sacrifice and Atonement* (Leviticus 1-17)

Leviticus describes in detail the duty of priests. Priests must belong to the tribe of Levi. Their duties include caring for the temple and overseeing all manner of sacrifices which were customary at the time.



"The life of every living thing is in the blood and that is why the Lord has commanded that all blood be poured out on the altar to take away the peoples sins". Leviticus 17:11. At the Day of Atonement Moses' brother and high priest, Aaron, made a sin offering for the people and for himself. Two goats were chosen, one for God and one for the devil, or Azzazel. The one for the devil would be offered live. Aaron would put both hands on the head of the goat, name all the evils, sins, and rebellions of Israel and so transfer them to the goat's head. Then the goat would be sent off into the desert to take away the sins of the people. Today we use the term "scapegoat" to mean the one that bears the blame for others. Performing a sacrifice was an action to express a feeling of penitence and gratitude. Eating the sacrifice after it was cooked was considered sharing a meal in God's presence. (*Creating the Old Testament*, Jean Syswerda, p. 58.) The Hebrews were attempting to make a bridge between themselves and God. (*Harpers Bible Commentary*, p. 101). All of life was considered an act of worship.

- ◇ How do Quakers attempt to bridge with God?
- ◇ What does it mean for the whole of life to be considered an act of worship? We believe there is that of God in everyone. We seek God's will in silence and attempt to serve others according to our gifts. Is that a life of worship?

D. *More Complaints and a Committee to Help with Them* (Numbers 11)

While the Israelites traveled toward Canaan they often began complaining. "In Egypt we used to eat all the fish we wanted ... But now our strength is gone. There is nothing at all to eat ... nothing but this manna day after day" (Numbers 11:5-6). Moses was bewildered and asked God for help. God instructed him to choose helpers to handle the complaints. "Assemble seventy respected men ... I will take some of the spirit I've given you and give it to them" (Numbers 11:16 & 17). Joshua, Moses' helper, heard two of those chosen suddenly speaking like prophets. He thought Moses would be jealous of others having the spirit of God like he had. But Moses set him straight. "I wish that the Lord would give his spirit to all the people and make all of them shout like prophets." (Numbers 11:29).

- ◇ How does the Quaker belief "there's that of God in everyone" relate to this story?
- ◇ Do you consider silence and prayer when you are in need of help?

E. *The Spies Survey Canaan* (Numbers 13 and 14)

When the Israelites were getting near the land of Canaan Moses sent out some spies to survey the land. "Find out what kind of country it is, how many people live there, and how strong they are." (Numbers 13:18). The spies did as they were told and discovered a very fertile land. But they were afraid of the people they found there, because they were powerful and lived in fortified cities. Caleb and Joshua wanted to take the land. They said "The land we explored is excellent. If the Lord is pleased with us he will take us there and give us that rich and fertile land. Do not rebel against the Lord and don't be afraid of the people who live there. The Lord is with us and has defeated the gods who protected them so don't be afraid." (Numbers 14:7-9). But the people did not trust God and refused to go.

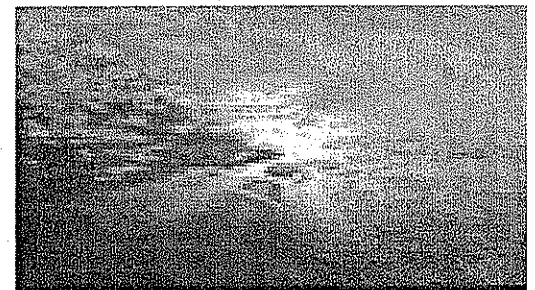
- ◇ What does it mean to trust in God?
- ◇ Can you understand why the Israelites were afraid?
- ◇ What does the phrase, "a leap of faith" mean to you?

Consider the following quote for discussion: "We too are on a pilgrimage, a new Exodus. Let us not shrink from the dangers that may lie ahead, but rather go forward putting our trust in God. For if we cling to the security of the present, or look back longingly to the security of the past as did the Israelites, we too shall be denied entrance into the promised land, which for us is the presence of God."

(*Harpers Bible Commentary*, p. 130.)

F. *Rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram* (Numbers 16)

Korah, a Levite, and Dathan and Abiram, members of the tribe of Reuben, were jealous of Moses. They said, "You have gone too far. All the members of the community belong to the Lord and the Lord is with all of us. Why then, Moses, do you set yourself above the Lord's community?" (Numbers 16:3). Moses prayed for guidance from God. He told the jealous ones to assemble to make offering to God. The dazzling light of the Lord's presence appeared and told Moses to step away from the jealous rebels. Moses said "This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do all these things and that it is not by my own choice that I have done them." (Numbers 16:28). He said if the men were to die naturally it would mean that God was not behind Moses. But if something extraordinary were to happen then Israel would know that it was God who guided and directed Moses. And the earth opened up and swallowed the rebels live.



- ❖ Moses was like an instrument of God. Through Moses the people learned what God wanted to teach them. Have you ever felt you were serving God's purpose, or that God was working through you, speaking the truth?
- ❖ How do we know what God intends for us to do in our lives?

G. *Aaron's Walking Stick* (Numbers 17)

Even after Korah, Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up, more people complained against Moses and Aaron. "You have killed some of the Lord's people." (Numbers 16:41). God told Moses to gather twelve walking sticks from the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel. God told Moses to put the sticks in front of the covenant box in the tent of the Lord's presence and the one that sprouted would be the one that belonged to the leader God had chosen. Aaron's walking stick budded, blossomed and produced ripe almonds. And God said "Put Aaron's stick back in front of the Covenant Box. It is to be kept as a warning to the rebel Israelites that they will die unless their complaining stops." (Numbers 17:10)



- ❖ The Israelites believed that when things went badly for them they were being punished for their sins. (*Harpers Bible Commentary*, p. 113.) Do you feel that God punishes us when we do wrong? How?
- ❖ "I, the Lord, am a God who is full of compassion and pity, who is not easily angered and who shows great love and faithfulness. I keep my promise for thousands of generations and forgive evil and sin; but I will not fail to punish children and grandchildren to the fourth generation for the sins of their parents." (Exodus 34:6-7)
- ❖ Have you ever been punished and then forgiven? Was there value in the punishment?

H. *Moses Himself Becomes Frustrated and Impatient* (Numbers 20)

While the people were in the wilderness of Zin they began to complain again because there was no water. Moses and Aaron prayed to God for guidance and God directed Moses "Speak to that rock over there and water will gush out of it." (Numbers 20:18). But Moses' frustration with his people overcame him and he said, "Listen, you rebels! Do we have to get water out of this rock for you?" (Numbers 20:10). Then he raised Aaron's stick and struck the rock twice with it. The water came forth. But God reprimanded Moses and Aaron. "Because you did not have enough faith to acknowledge my Holy power before the people of Israel you will not lead them into the land I promised to give them" (Numbers 20:12).

- ❖ What kept Moses from doing exactly as God had told him to do?
- ❖ Can negative emotions interfere with the truth?

I. *The King of Moab Sends for Balaam* (Numbers 22-25)

As the Israelites got closer to their promised land they began to conquer the people in their path. The Moabites were afraid and sent for a seer, asking him to curse the Israelites. But the seer, Balaam, would not curse the Israelites. "But now what power do I have? I can say only what God tells me to say." (Numbers 22:38). And he reiterated what God had always promised; that the Israelites were the chosen nation, "a nation that lives alone" (Numbers 23:9), and that God would keep his promise to lead the people to prosperity. "God has brought them out of Egypt; he fights for them like a wild ox". (Numbers

23:22). "Whoever blesses Israel will be blessed, and whoever curses Israel will be cursed." (Numbers 24:9)

It has been said that curses rupture relationships and blessings heal rifts. (*Creating the Old Testament*, pp. 66.) The words of the famous blessing in Numbers are comforting and healing. "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you, the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

- ◇ How do you feel blessed in your life?
- ◇ Curses and blessings are words. Do you value any particular words as inspiration or guidelines in your life?

Consider these words for discussion: "And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy god." (Micah 6:8)

J. *Death of Moses* (Deuteronomy 34)

Because Moses dishonored God at Meribah he would never reach the promised land, but would die looking over at it from Mt. Nebo in the Abarim mountains. And so it happened that Moses died at the age of one hundred and twenty. But before he died he reviewed the commandments with his people. And the one he emphasized was this: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5). He told the people to make things to remind themselves of the commandments and the covenant with God. "Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. Write them on the door posts of your houses and on your gates (Deuteronomy 11:18-21). Moses said that God had tested his people by making them go hungry and then providing them with food. He did this to remind them that "man must not depend on bread alone to sustain him, but on everything that the Lord says" (Deuteronomy 8:3). He warned the people not to become proud. "You must never think that you have made yourselves wealthy by your own power and strength. Remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the power to become rich" (Deuteronomy 8:17-18). He reminded them to treat their fellow-man kindly. "God does not show partiality and he does not accept bribes. He makes sure the orphans and widows are treated fairly; he loves the foreigners who live with our people and gives them food and clothes" (Deuteronomy 10:17 & 18). Moses warned the people that they would go astray. He said if you "turn back to the Lord and with all your heart obey his commands that I am giving you today then the Lord your God will have mercy on you" (Deuteronomy 30:2-3). "Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God ... you will prosper and become a nation of many people" (Deuteronomy 30:16). "Choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19). "These teachings are not empty words; they are your very life" (Deuteronomy 32:47).

- ◇ What does it mean to choose life?
- ◇ Do you ever feel that you have been tested in your faith or in your beliefs?
- ◇ Can you think of a time when you might have been too proud? How did you realize it?
- ◇ Moses speaks of the power that comes from God. Where do you think your power comes from?
- ◇ Moses assured us that God would have mercy on us when we went astray. Consider the saying "There, but for the grace of God, go I." What does this mean to you?

III. ACTIVITIES

1. In the book of Numbers, Chapter 33, Moses reviews in detail the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan. In a good Bible atlas, see how many of the towns Moses mentions you can find. Make a map including them. Draw any symbols on the map to remind you what took place at a particular town. Or create a "tour guide" of the Exodus. The children can write descriptions of what happened at each site and then do illustrations. ("See the world-renowned golden calf! Hurry, hurry, hurry, before Moses comes back down that mountain!")
2. Learn the hymn, "Rock of Ages." (see p. 68) Its author must have been inspired by the story of Moses asking God to reveal himself.
3. Prayer Exercises: "The place of prayer is a precious habitation ... I saw this habitation to be safe, to be inwardly quiet, when there was great stirrings and commotions in the world." *The Journal and Essays of John Woolman*, ed. Amelia Mott Gummere, pp. 286-287.

Do you have any favorite prayers, prayers that have helped you? Look through books of prayers. Pick out a prayer that strikes you. Copy it and illustrate it. You could memorize it. The following collections of prayers are nice, but choose your own favorites as well:



Here A Little Child I Stand by Satomi Ichikawa.



The Golden Books Treasury of Prayers from Around the World by Esther Wilkin.

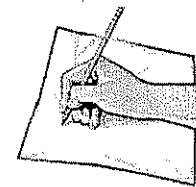


The Lord Is My Shepherd, a Golden Book.

Memorize the famous blessing in Numbers 6:24-26. Write your own blessing - individually or as a group.

*"I pray that the Lord will bless and protect you,
And that he will show you mercy and kindness.
May the Lord be good to you and give you peace". (Numbers 6:24-26)*

4. Praying our experiences in a journal. Moses turned to God in prayer constantly. Prayer is certainly a part of Meeting for Worship for many Quakers. Joseph Schmidt wrote a book called *Praying our Experiences*. This presents an alternative to repetition of a prayer formula. Schmidt suggests keeping a journal where we reflect on all our experiences and look for God's word in them. He suggests "unfolding our memories and feelings in the presence of the Lord to see what our day to day living might be telling us and to what it might be calling us." (*Praying our Experiences*, Joseph F. Schmidt, pp. 9-10.) Have the children record some daily experiences and see how these can be translated into prayers. The children can make simple journals out of construction paper and lined paper. After hole-punching the covers, use yarn or brads to hold the journals together.
5. A Game of Trust. Play musical laps, a game where you trust in the person behind you to be there. It is found in *Manual on Nonviolence for Children*, Stephanie Judson, p. 132.



Musical Laps: This is a cooperative version of Musical Chairs. The whole group forms a circle, all facing in one direction, close together, each with hands on the waist of the person ahead. When the music starts, everyone begins to walk forward. When the music stops, everyone sits down in the lap of the person to the rear. If the whole group succeeds in sitting in laps without anyone falling to the floor, the *group* wins. If people fall down, *gravity* wins. Works best with more than ten people, about the same size.

6. Try dramatizing a part of this story. Or assign different scenes to small groups and then do the scenes in order. No need to prewrite the scenes; just be sure each group has a clear grasp of the scene they'll be presenting.
7. Idols - talk about idols. What does it mean to idolize something? Have the children brainstorm things they "worship" or see others "worship," (e.g., money, status, popularity). Using clay, make idols which represent some of these and then destroy them. Then try to depict God or the sense of God using clay. This might be a time to share some powerful religious art and discuss why Friends have rejected the use of such things as icons, statues, altars, etc.
8. Discuss which of the Ten Commandments the Israelites had broken at the end of each section above. Then ask for sharing about which of the Ten Commandments they are most tempted to break. You may want to refer back to *Moses, Part III* for more on the Ten Commandments.

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Carol Spears

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Isa. 26:4; John 19:34

Augustus M. Toplady, 1776; alt.

1 Rock of a - ges, cleft for me, let me hide; my shel-ter be!
 2 Not the la - bors of my hands can ful - fill your law's de - mands;
 3 Noth-ing in my hand I bring, sim - ply to your cross I cling;
 4 While I draw this fleet-ing breath, when my eyes shall close in death,

Let the wat - er and the blood, from your wound-ed side which flowed,
 Could my zeal no re - spite know, could my tears for - ev - er flow,
 Na - ked, come to you for dress; help-less, look to you for grace;
 When I soar to worlds un - known, meet you at your judg-ment throne,

Be of sin the dou-ble cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power.
 All for sin could not a - tone; you must save, and you a - lone.
 Stained, I to the foun-tain fly; wash me, Sav - ior, or I die!
 Rock of a - ges, cleft for me, let me hide; my shel-ter be!

Augustus Toplady first published this poem as part of an extensive article in which he likened the English national debt to the burden of sin. The present form is a hybrid of the original and revisions in 1815 by Thomas Cotterill.

Tune: TOPLADY 7.7.7.7.7.
 Thomas Hastings, 1830
 Alternate tune: REDHEAD NO. 76

JOSHUA

The story of Joshua has been divided here into the following major sections describing the Conquest of Canaan. Included in each section is a subsection which tells of a story or detail that helps us to understand how the Israelites view their relationship to God:

God Commands Joshua to Go to the Promised Land	Joshua 1:1-9
Rahab is Spared	Joshua 2:1-24
The Crossing of the Jordan	Joshua 3:1-4:24
Circumcision at Gilgal	Joshua 5:2-8
Joshua's Encounter with the Angelic Commander	Joshua 5:13-15
The Fall of Jericho	Joshua 6:1-27
Achan's Deception	Joshua 7:1-26
The Taking of Ai	Joshua 8:1-30
Deception of the Gibeonites	Joshua 9:3-27
The Ammonite Conquest	Joshua 10:1-27
Division of the Lands	Joshua 13:1-21:43
Joshua's Final Address	Joshua 24:1-28

You may choose to teach only one or two of these sections, but read through the whole saga before you begin. Be sure to use a good annotated Bible such as *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (RSV). The notes give much background information to the stories.

As you present the stories to your children, always tell or read the story first. Then choose the appropriate background information to share and questions to ask. Follow up with an activity.

This chapter has five parts:

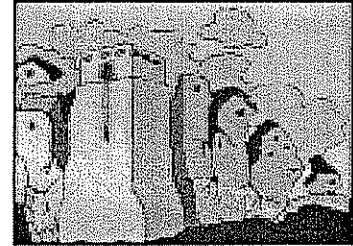
- I. General Background
- II. Themes in the Story
- III. Background and Questions for each section of the story
- IV. Activities
- V. Bibliography

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Joshua was God's appointed successor to Moses. Before Joshua God had promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit a land of their own. At God's direction Moses delivered the descendants of Abraham from slavery in Egypt and guided them to become more strong and united as they wandered in

the desert. Moses died and Joshua was chosen to lead the conquest and occupation of the promised land of Canaan.

Joshua begins the section of the Bible known to the Jews as the Prophets. In his book *Harpers Bible Commentary*, William Neil provides a great deal of illumination and perspective on the story of Joshua. He describes how Joshua is referred to as a historical book of the Bible but goes on to explain that the authors of Joshua "interpret history rather than record history." They are "not much interested in wars and battles, political changes and economical trends for their own sake, but only if they illustrate some religious truth or can be shown in some way to be the hand of God at work." In fact, the book of Joshua is a composite, "or foreshortened version" of a period in history which lasted a couple of centuries. The Israelites began in Canaan as an "ill-armed" group of nomads and came to possess an expansive kingdom under the reign of Saul and David.



"Joshua", William Neil, pp. 142-146.

Jacques Musset in the *Collins Bible Handbook* writes a great summary of Joshua. He says, "the authors of the Book of Joshua did not intend it to be an accurate historical record, but rather a testimony to Joshua's faithfulness to the law of Moses, and a reaffirmation of God's continuing presence amongst the Israelites."

"Settlers In Canaan", Jacques Musset, p. 178.

II. THEMES IN THE STORY

There are several predominant themes which occur and reoccur in Joshua. They will be evident as we examine the major sections of the story.

One theme encourages *keeping the covenant*. The covenant between the Israelites and God was like a contract where God promised prosperity for all who would follow the laws of Moses. Violation of the covenant was likely to bring calamity and misfortune.

Another theme proclaims "*the living God is among you*." Joshua 3:10. The flooding Jordan River dries up. The fortified walls of Jericho fall. The moon and the sun stand still and hailstones tilt the outcome of a battle.

Choose faithfulness to God first and above all else. Rahab, a prostitute and innkeeper living in Jericho, is saved because she chooses to be faithful to Israel's God rather than her king or her people. Even the Gibeonites are saved by proclaiming themselves followers of Israel's God.

Finally God has *chosen* the Israelites as his own people. "God offers his people a rich and full heritage of life in the right relationship to himself".

Harpers Bible Commentary, William Neil, p. 150

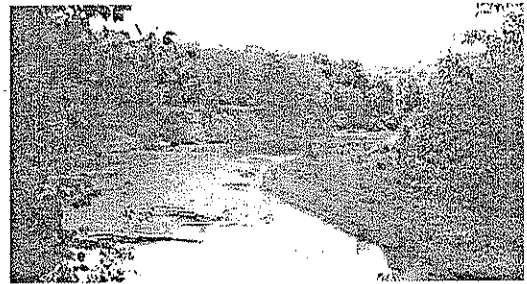
Each of these themes is meaningful to us today although our interpretation and understanding of these themes has evolved and changed according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and according to our knowledge of truth which God has imprinted in our own hearts.

III. BACKGROUND AND QUESTIONS FOR EACH SECTION OF THE STORY

This chapter looks at six episodes in the story of Joshua. For each episode we include some background information and a series of questions to ask the children. Before asking questions which move away from the facts of the story itself, be sure, via questions or retelling, that the children understand what happened in the story. These questions are appropriate for children ages 8 and up. For younger children you may want to simplify the issues presented and focus primarily on the stories themselves.

God Commands Joshua to go to the Promised Land Joshua 1:1-9
Rahab is Spared Joshua 2:1-24

God tells Joshua that he has given him the promised land from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean and all that is necessary is that Joshua and his people observe the terms of the covenant. The covenant is made up of the Ten Commandments of Moses. The greatest of these is 'to love your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength.' Deuteronomy 6:5. The terms promise prosperity to all who follow the laws.



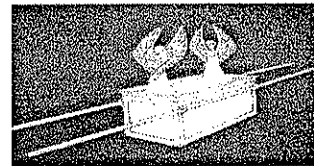
In preparation for the journey across to Canaan Joshua sends some spies ahead to survey the situation. The spies meet up with Rahab, who hides them from a suspicious king. She proclaims that "The Lord your God is he who is God in heaven above and on earth beneath". Joshua 2:1

The Israelites' covenant with God was a formal and specific agreement. Could you describe a private, internal covenant that you might feel with God? Any values you try to uphold in order to open the way to knowing God? This is the way someone has described how the covenant of the future will be. "The covenant will become part of the nature of each individual so that obedience is guaranteed."

- ◇ What do Quakers say about the nature of the individual? (There is that of God in everyone.)
- ◇ How do Quakers try to attune themselves to that nature?
- ◇ What do you think of Rahab's response to Joshua's spies within the city? Do you think she did the right thing? Was it easy?
- ◇ Did you ever have an experience where you chose what you felt to be the truth even though it was not what your friends expected or wanted?

Joshua Crosses the Jordan Joshua 3:1 - 4:24
Circumcision at Gilgal Joshua 5:2-15

Joshua tells the people they will know where to go by following the Levitical priests carrying the "ark of the covenant". The ark of the covenant is a small coffer in which are placed the tablets of witness (laws of Moses); it is the memorial of the covenant and the sign of the presence of God in Israel. The people and the priests step right into the raging Jordan River. The waters "pile up" or stop and everyone crosses safely. Afterwards a memorial of stones is collected in a mound to remind future generations of what happened here. The people celebrate the Passover and all those born during the time of wandering in the desert are circumcised. Circumcision was a symbol of God's covenant relationship with his people.



Can you think of a leap of faith and trust comparable to the Israelites' stepping into the river? Maybe you've read of someone who had enormous faith. (Jesus tempted by the devil)

- ◇ The Israelites observed many rituals and ceremonies in their day-to-day living. Can you think of ceremonies that we or our friends observe today?
- ◇ Why do people perform rituals and ceremonies?
- ◇ Why do you think Quakers prefer not to observe outward ritual and ceremony in their religion?
- ◇ If we want to renew our covenant with God how might we do it? (Prayer, listening for that still small voice)
- ◇ Can you think of a time when ceremony has been meaningful to you? (wedding?)

Joshua's Encounter with the angelic commander Joshua 5:13-15

The Fall of the City of Jericho Joshua 6:1-27

Before Joshua actually commanded his armies to begin marching around Jericho he saw a heavenly warrior before him who proclaimed himself commander of the army of the Lord. Experiences of God appearing in nature are called theophanies. The manifestation of the angelic commander reminds us of the story of the burning bush. Not only are the Israelites chosen but their land is holy. The tumbling of the walls of Jericho ensues. It could have been caused by an earthquake or the effect of the persistent vibrations of trumpets on the walls. In any event it was miraculous. A horrible and upsetting custom can be observed here: the custom of the ban or harem. The city and everything in it was to be taken and burned as an offering to God. And precious things were to be kept for the Lord's treasury. This practice is a leftover of more primitive religions. You can point out to the children that our sense of God's will has matured or developed over time. Continuing revelation, the concept that God's plan emerges in new ways and is not static, allows us to see that some past beliefs and practices represent only a partial understanding of God's will. It's also important to remember that even today our understanding of God's will is in development. In the New Testament John quotes Christ as saying "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16:12



- ◇ How do you feel about the miraculous events in this part of the story? What is a miracle? Have you ever experienced a miracle in your life?
- ◇ How do you feel about the vengeance visited upon Jericho? Do things like this happen today? How can we figure out what God is asking us to do?

Achan's Deception Joshua 7:1-26

The Taking of Ai Joshua 8:1-30

Achan admits that he stole a beautiful mantle, 200 shekels of silver and a bar of gold. The writers of Joshua convey that the theft is the reason for the first defeat at Ai. Clearly Joshua and his people believe that violation of the covenant results in disaster and a literal defeat.

There is another frightening concept at work here in this Joshua story - the concept of the Holy War. This is the concept that God is taking sides in a war. This concept exists today in different parts of the

world, but it is hard to believe, in light of Jesus' teachings to love our enemies. In Joshua's time there was no separation of church and state. All laws were considered divinely given and therefore to justify an act of war it was helpful to think of God as being for one side. God's revelation reflects the receptiveness of those who receive it.

- ◇ How do you feel about war? Are there times when it can be justified?
- ◇ God spoke to Joshua many times. Do you think he speaks to you and me?
- ◇ Do you think our understanding of God's will might be different depending on who we are and what our experience in life has been?

Deception of the Gibeonites Joshua 9:3-27

The Ammonite Conquest Joshua 10:1-27

The Gibeonites deliberately deceived Joshua but their deception was sanctioned because it involved a choice for the higher truth, choice to follow God.

In the battle that combines Joshua's men and the Gibeonites together against the Ammonite tribes, God fights for the Israelites with hailstones and Joshua's great faith in God gives him power to make the moon and sun stand still.

- ◇ Rahab lied and so did the Gibeonites. Is it ever all right to lie? Have you ever been in a position where you thought it was best to lie?
- ◇ How do you understand God to manifest himself in our lives?
- ◇ What do you think it means to have great faith?
- ◇ In whom do you trust?

Division of the Lands Joshua 13:1 - 21:43

Joshua's Final Address Joshua 24:1-28

God told Joshua to go out and survey and divide the rest of the promised land even though it was not actually in the Israelites' possession yet. "I will myself drive them out from before the people of Israel; only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you." Joshua 13:6. It is interesting to note that after the Promised Land was divided and allotted to the twelve tribes God asked Joshua to set aside cities of refuge. Cities of refuge were places where someone who had "accidentally" killed a person could live and be protected.

Years later when Joshua was an old man and close to dying he summoned all his people together at Shechem imploring them to be vigilant to keep their covenant with God. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15

- ◇ What do you think of the cities of refuge idea? Is there anything like a city of refuge today? If so, how is it similar? How is it different?
- ◇ Do you know of the idea of sanctuary? - a place of safety and protection for those fleeing their own country. Why do people seek sanctuary? What do you think Joshua meant when he said "we will serve the Lord"?

- ◇ What do you think Jeremiah's words mean: "I will put my law within their hearts; and I will be their God and they my people"? Jeremiah 33

IV. ACTIVITIES

1. Make a map showing the final allotment of lands to the twelve tribes. You could mark the cities of refuge too. Joshua 20: 7-9
2. Each of the twelve tribes had its own emblems. If this interests you, you might do a picture which includes all the emblems representing the tribes. These are the emblems:

1. Tribe of Reuben: The rising sun	7. Tribe of Naphtali: A doe
2. Tribe of Simeon: A Tower	8. Tribe of Dan: A serpent
3. Tribe of Ephraim: A Bull	9. Tribe of Gad: A tent
4. Tribe of Judah: A lion cub	10. Tribe of Manasseh: A palm tree
5. Tribe of Zebulun: A ship	11. Tribe of Benjamin: A wolf
6. Tribe of Issachar: A lean donkey	12. Tribe of Asher: An olive tree

Note: See the chapter on Joseph for more information on the tribes (page 21). Also note that the symbols in that chapter are not identical to those here. There are several versions of these symbols.

3. Build a diorama of Joshua, the priests with the trumpets of rams' horns, the ark of the covenant and the people surrounding Jericho.

Provide the children with shoeboxes and lots of materials such as clay, clothespins, fabric scraps, colored paper, twigs, etc.

4. Songs - "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho". Jazz it up. It's a spiritual. Use some instruments for color - like bells, sticks, a tambourine:

"JOSHUA"

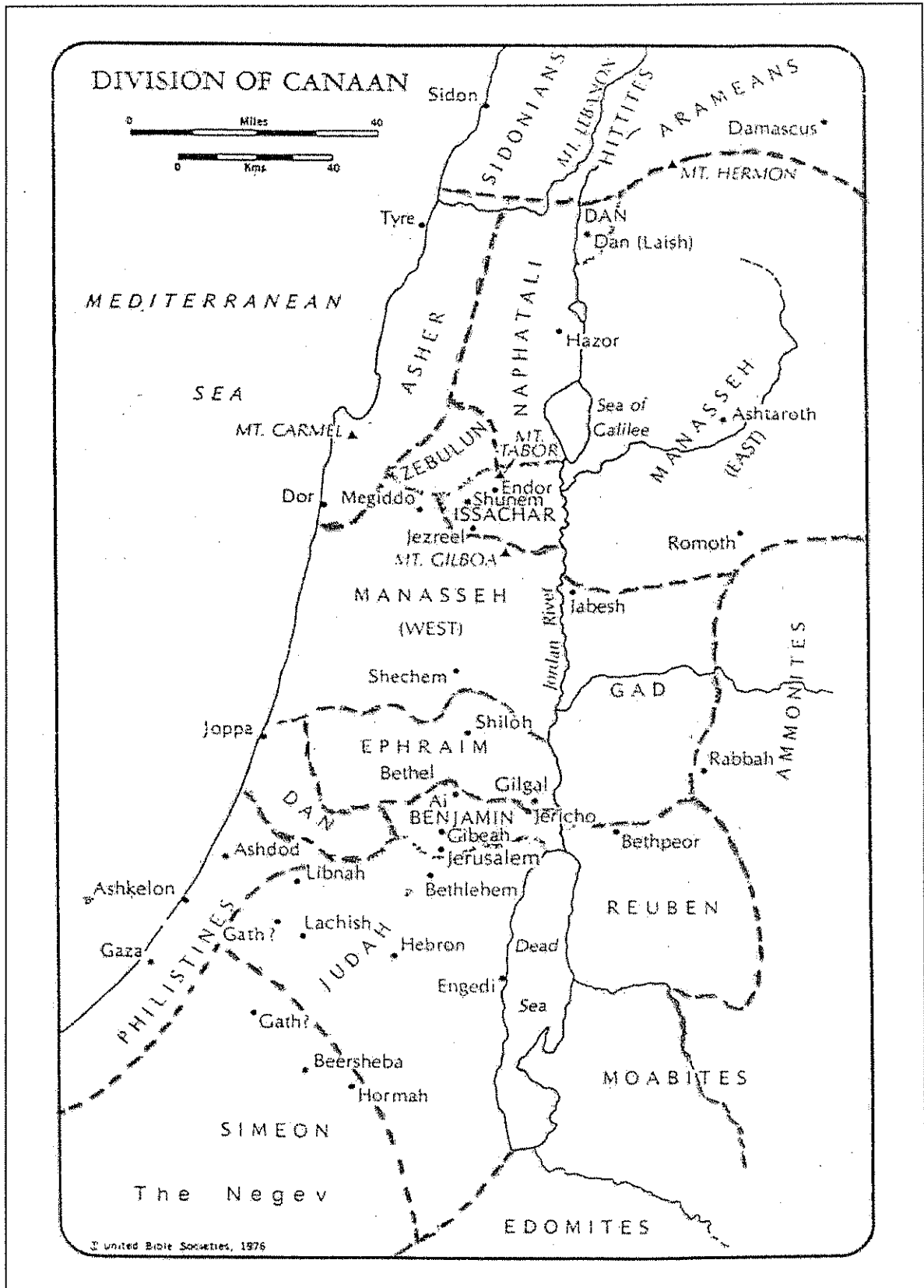
Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho Joshua fought the battle of Jericho And the walls came tumbling down.	Up to the walls of Jericho They marched with spears in hand Come blow them ram horns Joshua said 'Cause the battle is in our hands.
You may talk about the men of Gideon You may brag about the men of Saul But there's none like good old Joshua At the battle of Jericho.	Then the lamb ram sheep horns began to blow The trumpets began to sound Joshua commanded the children to shout And the walls came tumbling down.

5. Make a mural of the scene of Joshua commanding the moon and sun to stand still. See the chapter on Jacob, Page 7, for mural directions.
6. Make a meal that typifies what people eat in the land of milk and honey - unleavened bread, olives, figs, dates, almonds, etc.
7. Watch the Hanna-Barbera video of Joshua and the Battle of Jericho. The book and video are available from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library. Call the Library to reserve them: (215) 241-7220.
8. Act out one of the more dramatic sections.

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Carol Spears



RUTH: A LOVE STORY

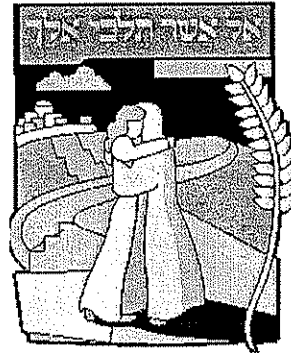
"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried."

Ruth 1:16

This chapter presents lesson ideas on the Book of Ruth. The story is divided into four sections so that you may teach some or all of the episodes. As you present the stories to your children, always tell or read the story first. Then choose appropriate background information to share and questions to ask. Follow up with an activity.

This chapter has four parts:

- I. Introduction
- II. Teacher Preparation
 - A. Possible Themes to Develop
 - B. Historical Background
- III. Teaching Ideas – includes summaries, questions and activities for the four parts of the story.
- IV. Bibliography



I. INTRODUCTION:

The Book of Ruth is possibly the most appealing and beautiful in the Bible. It is a short story, a kind of historical romance, written by an author who had several points to make by use of "friendly persuasion." It is based on traditional history passed down for generations prior to its actual writing, and as it unfolds we see a series of gently told chapters. Its loveliness and importance comes from the character of the individuals rather than from great happenings. The people are ordinary and the events are ordinary, but from them one draws a sense of beauty and serenity in living one's life with virtue, piety, goodness, and above all, love.

II. TEACHER PREPARATION:

There are a number of lessons that can be drawn from Ruth's story. Read the story to yourself (it's short, only four chapters,) in a good annotated Bible such as *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (RSV) and then decide which themes you think will work best for your class, taking into consideration ages and level of understanding. Also decide whether you want to emphasize a lesson from a particular part of the story or an over-all enjoyment of this beautiful book. There is material provided to spend a little or a lot of time on the story.

A. Possible themes to develop:

1. In a time of great wars in Israel's history, Ruth's story is one of warmth and peacefulness.

2. There is a great love and loyalty shared by the two women, Ruth and Naomi, even though they are of different ages, cultures, and religions.
- 3a. The story is a plea for compassion and tolerance of other religions and peoples. Ruth, the heroine, is a non-Jew, a Gentile, a foreigner, who eventually finds a welcome home in the Jewish community of her dead husband.
- 3b. Through Ruth's unflagging devotion to Naomi, her hard work, and sweetness of nature, she becomes an admired and respected member of her new community.
4. Throughout, there is a theme of divine providence caring for those who seek shelter "in the shadow of the wings of the Lord." (Ruth 2:2)
5. The story also establishes the family tree of David, one of Israel's greatest kings, and the important ancestor of Jesus, through a Moabite (foreign) woman.
6. The caring community taking in the stranger is a theme of particular importance for Friends.
7. In Hebrew scriptures Ruth is placed to be read at the time of the harvest festival called the Feast of Weeks. It has a possible tie to Thanksgiving.
8. The story also shows the faith of an *ordinary* person. The other characters are all good people but ordinary too. (It is interesting to point out that there is no villain in the story).

B. Historical Background:

The story's setting is in Judah (southern Palestine) at the time of the Judges (13th and 12th century BCE, but was written about 800 years later). The Israelites had come out of Egypt in the Exodus and had conquered the land of Canaan - the Promised Land. The Judges were individuals who achieved national leadership over the Israelites because of bold and imaginative deeds. The time was filled with conflict, and a new nation struggled with enemies at all sides as well as constant quarreling among the tribes. As the Israelites labored to become a settled people they had to assimilate much of the Canaanite culture. This helped them in many ways, but was always at odds with their religious beliefs. Nature, too, presented the new farmers with challenges. In the south the semi-arid land was fertile enough to grow wheat, barley, grapes, olives and figs, but if the rain didn't come the crops failed, resulting in famine. This then is the setting for our story.

III. TEACHING IDEAS

The story can be broken into four parts:

1. Naomi's bereavement and return to Bethlehem (1:1-22)
2. Ruth gleanes in the field of Boaz (2:1-23)
3. Ruth's night visit to the threshing floor (3:1-18)
4. The marriage and birth of a son (4:1-17)

A. Part 1 - Ruth 1:1-22

1. Summary of the Story

During famine, Elimelech and his wife Naomi and their two sons went east to Moab. The sons both married Moabite (Gentile) women, Ruth and Orpah. The father and sons died. The three widows face an uncertain future. Women could not directly inherit property, but could only hold it in trust for a male relative or future husband. They were dependent on the charity of others. The two young women might remarry and had families to care for them in Moab.

Naomi determines to go back to Bethlehem, her home, and the three women set out. She entreats her daughters-in-law to return to Moab, and not to tie themselves to an old woman who can give them nothing



more. Orpah heeds Naomi's loving and considerate advice and turns back, but Ruth persists in following Naomi, and makes her beautiful expression of total love to her mother-in-law. (Ruth 1:16). Naomi cannot refuse her devotion and they go together - on a journey of 120 miles - alone - without money or protectors.

They arrive at barley harvest time (a *bountiful* harvest) in April-June, with wheat to follow. It is through Ruth's quiet but unselfish commitment and abiding love for Naomi as the story continues that she wins the admiration of the people of Bethlehem. (Remember that she came from a hated land.)

2. Questions (Use the ones most age appropriate to spark a discussion):

- ◇ Why does Naomi want her two daughters-in-law to return to their own land? How does she feel about them?
- ◇ Do you think Orpah did the right thing in going back? Why?
- ◇ Do you think Ruth did the right thing in staying with Naomi? Why?
- ◇ Would *you* have stayed with Naomi or gone back? Why?
- ◇ Read Chapter 1:16-17. This is a beautiful passage of devotion and love. React to it. How does it make you feel? Do you think you could feel this way? Do you know examples (perhaps not so dramatic) that illustrate someone's commitment to a new way of life because of love?
- ◇ What do you think would have been hard for Ruth to give up when she followed Naomi?
- ◇ Why do you think Ruth went with Naomi?

3. Activities:

- a. This is a good place for role play for the class. Let the class act out the scene of the women and their journey and decision making. All of Ruth's story lends itself to drama. Other scenes can be acted out in the later chapters. Divide the play into four scenes that are the same as the four parts of the story listed in the introduction.
- b. Have a guest come in to class as Naomi to tell her story or do it as a reporter telling a TV news story (It has all the elements throughout the story for an exciting "human interest" news event!)
- c. Look up the names of the three men and three women in a "Who's Who in the Bible." Even the names of the characters have interesting meanings in respect to the story. (Example: Naomi means "pleasant one" which she changes to Mara, meaning "bitter one." Her two sons' names mean "pining away" and "sickly".)
- d. Use Elizabeth Watson's book *Daughters of Zion* as background for Ruth as a visitor to class. Ruth could tell any part of or all of her story. (The book has a "re-mythologized" story told by Ruth of her life with Naomi.)

B. Part 2 - Ruth 2:1-23

1. Summary of the Story

Harvesting was difficult work done by three types of labor. First, young men reaped the barley. The reaping was a long, hard job done by hand with wooden sickles which had sharpened pieces of flint embedded in them to form a blade. Handfuls of grain were grasped and cut.

The small bunches were tied into bundles called sheaves by men called binders. Small amounts would have been dropped in the process and gleaners would gather these stray stalks. The welfare system of the day allowed widows and orphans to be included with the gleaners and to be allowed to keep their

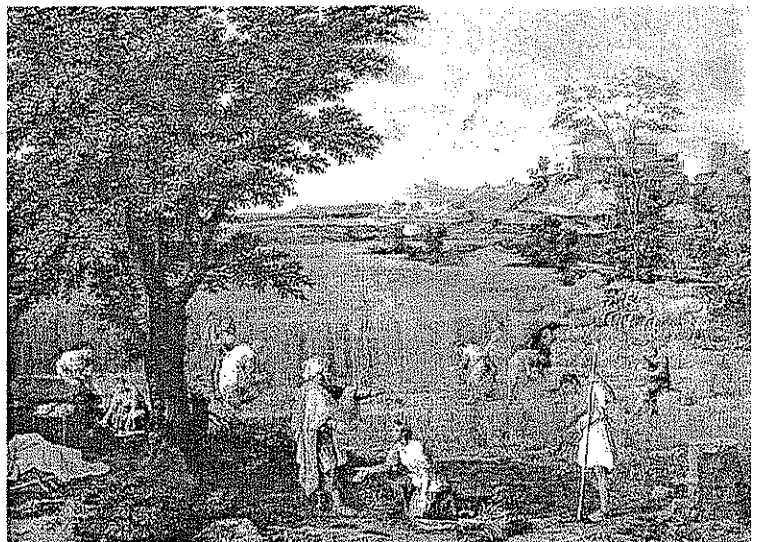
gleanings. It was this group that Ruth told Naomi she would join to get them food. Although as a foreign (Moabite) girl Ruth would likely be harassed, Naomi was too old for this hard work, so Ruth once again showed her devotion to her mother-in-law. Naomi advised Ruth to glean in the fields of Boaz, a wealthy kinsman of Naomi, who seemed to be a good man. Ruth did this (not calling attention to the fact,) but Boaz noticed her and reacted with great compassion after asking his workers about her. He looked after her, making sure that not only did no one bother her but that she had adequate water ... and he shared his midday meal with her. He, impressed with her commitment to Naomi, told her to stay only in his fields. Later he made sure that his men left more grain than usual for her in such a delicate way as not to hurt the pride of the women with his charity. The women were overjoyed with their good fortune and praised God for his providence.

2. Questions:

- ◇ Ruth was a foreigner in Bethlehem (from a hostile country). How does *she* deal with being a foreigner?
- ◇ How do the harvesters treat her?
- ◇ How does Boaz treat her?
- ◇ Have you ever felt like a foreigner? How? What would or did make you welcome?
- ◇ How does your Meeting or First-Day School treat "foreigners" or non-Quakers or people of different traditions or cultures? How can you make them welcome?
- ◇ How do you feel about Boaz? What kind of man does he seem like?
- ◇ React to the welfare system of gleaning for orphans and widows. Can you think of a modern style way of helping those in need?
- ◇ Naomi changed her name to "bitter" after her hard times. What bad times have made you feel bitter? Does having a friend like Ruth help?

3. Activities:

- a. Find an artist's conception of the story such as Nicolas Poussin's Ruth speaking to Boaz in the field. Point out details illustrating the story.
- b. The *Reader's Digest Great People of the Bible and How They Lived*, has good illustrations of the entire harvest process. Use these or similar pictures to illustrate the process to the class.
- c. Make a mural of the harvest process with one class or more. Divide it into sections showing the various activities and utensils used in the process. The next part of the story continues the harvest and can be incorporated into the mural.



Nicolas Poussin, *Summer. Ruth and Boaz* (1660-1664). Oil on Canvas, Louvre, Paris

- d. Act out the scenes between Ruth & Naomi, the harvesters, and Boaz, or use finger puppets. (Some good directions are in *Making Things* by Ann Wiseman.)
- e. Play the game "Ins and Outs" (4th - 7th grade) as described below. This idea is from *Discipleship Alive!*

Ins & Outs is a game to help you think about how it feels to be included or left out of a group. You need at least four players.

To Play: (1) One person is chosen to be OUT. "OUT" must leave the room so as not to hear the group. (2) All other players are "INS". They sit in a circle close enough to touch shoulders. INs choose an object, word, or color for everyone to think of (it can be visible in the room.). (3) Call "OUT" back into the room. OUT walks around the circle trying to get inside and to guess the secret. OUT cannot jump over the INS. OUT must squeeze between two INS. (4) The INs work to keep the circle tight so OUT can't get inside. The INs may not speak to OUT except to answer yes or no to the guesses. (5) Once inside the circle OUT must stand and guess the correct answer. OUT can only *join* the circle shoulder to shoulder when the secret is guessed. Repeat until everyone has been OUT. To hasten the game guesses can be limited to four.

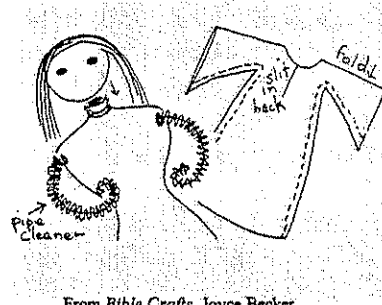
After the game, discuss these questions:

- ◇ How did you feel when you were OUT? When you were IN? Which was a happier feeling?
- ◇ What happens in your group that may make some members feel like OUTs? INs? How can you tell if someone feels like an OUT or an IN?
- ◇ Do you always want to let the OUT into the circle? Into your group? Why?
- ◇ Do you always want to be an IN? Is it ever more comfortable being an OUT? Explain?

- f. Make a Ruth Doll holding a sheaf of grain (using a soda- or dish-detergent-bottle)

Supplies:

- ⌘ 32-oz dish detergent bottle or 32-oz soda bottle
- ⌘ Black yarn
- ⌘ Styrofoam ball, 2 - 3" diameter
- ⌘ Needle and thread
- ⌘ Small black circles of paper for eyes
- ⌘ White glue
- ⌘ Pipe cleaner (pink)
- ⌘ Cloth for dress
- ⌘ Dried wheat (craft or florist store)



Directions:

1. Push styrofoam ball on bottle top, with glue to hold in place. Glue two black circles of paper for eyes. Let dry.
2. For hair cut 40 pieces of yarn 30" long. Tie in center and glue to top of head. Separate strands to fall evenly.
3. Push the pipe cleaner through the "shoulders" to form arms. Put a curl in each end for hands.
4. Cut a T-shaped dress from folded fabric long enough to cover bottle. Make sleeves long enough to cover pipe cleaner arms. Cut a neck hole at top with a slit in back to go over head. Stitch up or paste sides and under arms. Put on doll and adjust arms. Tie waist with a piece of yarn.
5. Cross arms in front of doll and insert a sheaf of wheat in her hands.

(From *Bible Crafts*, Joyce Becker)

C. Part 3 - Ruth 3:1-18

1. Background and summary:

This part of the story culminates this lovely romance. We do not know and only can guess at Ruth's beauty, but it is clear that her loveliness of spirit has touched Boaz, a good and compassionate man. Naomi takes a step on Ruth's behalf and instructs her to go to the threshing floor at night, where Boaz will be. During the harvest process the farmers would assemble to thresh and winnow the grain. Threshing was done at the "threshing floor", a common piece of property which was a dry, hard piece of ground or a rocky outcrop where it would be windy. The sheaves were spread on the floor and either beaten with a stick driven over by oxen, or crushed by threshing sled with a stone or iron studded bottom. The stalks were chopped and the kernels of grain loosened. The workers winnowed the mixture by lifting it onto a large shovel or five- to six-pronged fork and tossing it into the air. The wind would blow away the stalks (chaff) and the heavier grains of barley and wheat would fall back to the floor (cf. Psalm 1:4: "...like the chaff which the wind drives away.") The process was usually carried out at the end of the day when the cool sea breezes came up. Women further sifted the grain in round sieves of wood with leather mesh. The grain would then be stored in earthenware jars. During a good harvest the threshing and winnowing became times of joy, and festivities occurred for a period of days as farmers and workers gathered in turn at the communal floor. Overnights were usual both to guard the grain and because several days were needed to complete the process.

Naomi instructed Ruth to dress in her best, anoint herself and go to the threshing floor, but not to make herself known. After Boaz went to sleep Ruth was to go and uncover his feet and lie at them. Naomi had in mind the practice common then called a Levite marriage. The marriage law provided that a childless widow could marry the deceased husband's next of kin. The first child of the remarried widow was considered the son of the deceased first husband, and would inherit his property.

Ruth did as Naomi had instructed her and after the merrymaking Boaz went to the pile of grain to sleep. Ruth lay at his feet and only when something startled him did Boaz awaken. He couldn't recognize her in the dark but when she answered "I am Ruth" and asked him to "spread your skirt over your maidservant, for you are next of kin", he understood her request to marry her and be her protector, or "go'el." He was touched by the younger woman's request and chivalrously had her stay, only leaving before light so no one would molest her, and also not ruin her reputation. He gave her a large heap of

grain for Naomi, and sent word that he would accept the legal protection of Ruth. However, he first had to offer her to a closer kinsman. This explained his hesitancy in asking Ruth to marry earlier.

2. Questions:

- ◇ Naomi's advice to Ruth to go to the threshing floor at night may sound strange or improper. Why does Ruth trust in Naomi's advice?
- ◇ Where does Ruth get the courage to go at night through the fields to the threshing floor, a scene of revelry, and where she may be harassed or harmed by field workers?
- ◇ What do you think of the marriage law of the time? What does it say about women?
- ◇ Ruth and Boaz are both shown to believe in the idea of family responsibility. (Ruth's duty to perpetuate her dead husband's name and care for Naomi and Boaz's acceptance of his responsibility to "redeem" Ruth and thereby Naomi.) Do you think it is good or wise or favorable to a person to put family duty before one's own desires? Can you think of any famous (or infamous) families that require this? What do *you* think about it?

2. Activities:

a. Make "Honey Wheat Muffins":

- 3/4 c. all purpose flour
- 3/4 c. whole wheat flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 egg
- 1/2 c. milk
- 1/2 c. honey
- 1/4 c. salad oil



Optional:

- 1 c. chopped dates,
- 1/2 c. wheat germ

In a large bowl stir dry ingredients together. In a small bowl mix well egg, milk, honey and oil. Add to flour mixture with dates and stir until just blended. Fill greased muffin tins 2/3's full. Sprinkle with wheat germ if desired. Bake at 400 F 15-20 minutes. (Can be baked in a 9" sq. pan for 30-35 min.) Makes 12 regular sized muffins.

Show flours and wheat germ to class as products of the wheat field. Dates and honey were probably part of Bible days' diet too.

- b. If possible find some wheat to show children (or other grains such as rye, oats, or barley. If grown locally it will be available in late spring.) A craft store or florist that handles dried flowers may have wheat or other dried grain-like weeds. Use the grain to make:

- Sheaves tied with jute to use decoratively
- Designs of grain glued onto construction paper
- Dried arrangements with other collected dried seeds and pods.



c. Make a pastel picture of Ruth gathering grain in the fields according to the following directions from *Bible Crafts*, by Joyce Becker:

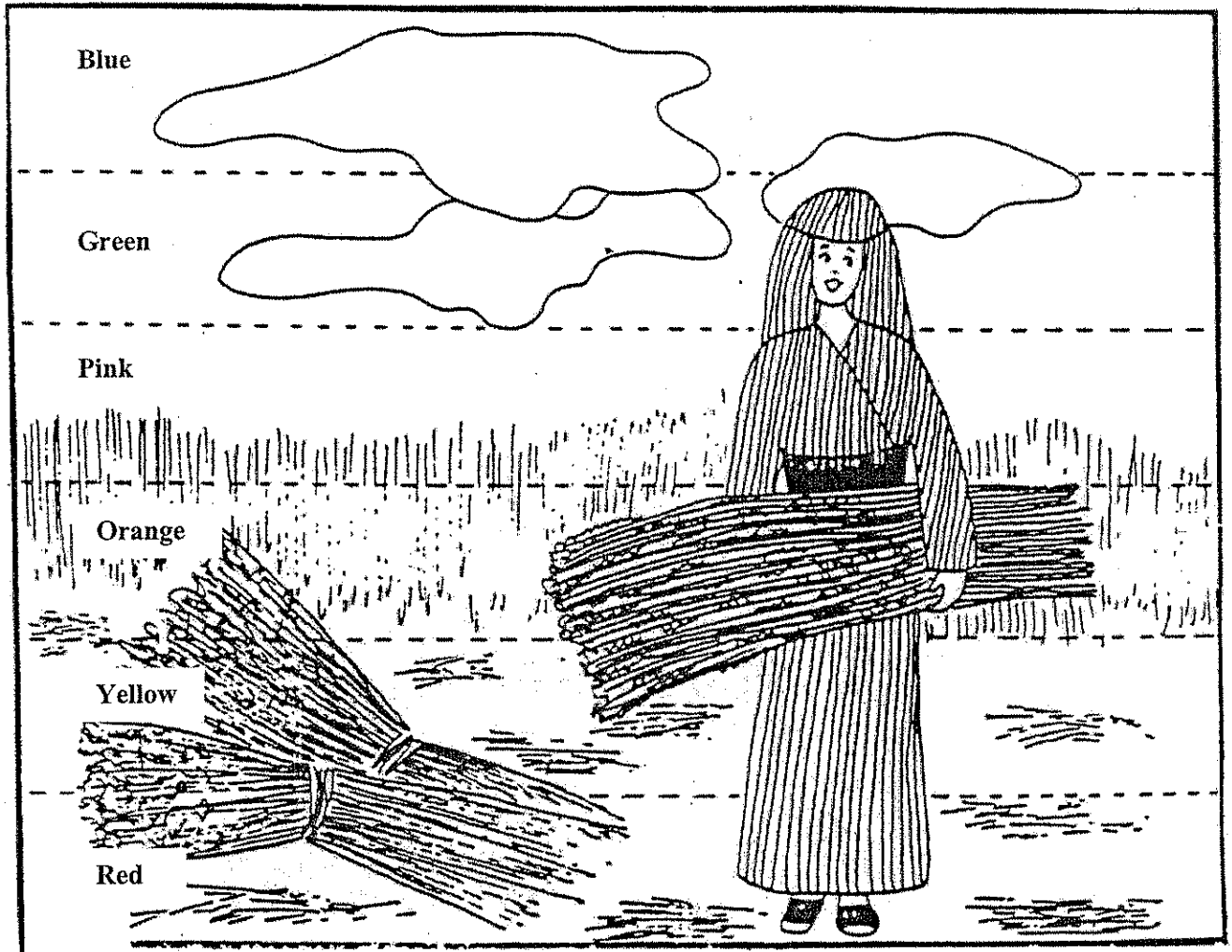
"Ruth Gathering Grain in the Fields of Boaz"

Materials:

1 piece white poster board, any size
Permanent felt-tip marking pen, black
Rubber cement in a tube
Pastels or chalk, different colors
Paintbrush
Dish of water
1 Piece colored poster board, at least 1" (2.5 cm.) larger all around than the white poster board
Glue-on picture hanger

Directions:

1. Using the marking pen, draw a picture on the white poster board of Ruth gathering grain in the fields of Boaz.
2. Holding the tube of rubber cement as you would a pencil, fill in only the areas of the drawing you want to remain white. Let dry.
3. Take each pastel separately, and holding it on its side, make a broad stroke across the surface of the white poster board set apart for that color (see drawing).
4. To soften the colors, brush water over the pastelled surface. Let dry.
5. With your index finger, gently rub off the rubber cement, along with any color sticking to it, so that the surface of the poster board shows. (Optional: Add extra details to the drawing with the marking pen.)
6. Using rubber cement, mount the drawing on the colored poster board.
7. Attach the glue-on picture hanger and hang.



D. Part 4 - Ruth 4:1-17

1. Summary

Boaz first must offer the choice of marriage to another closer kinsman and meets him at the city gate. This was where Israeli public life was centered. Before ten elders as witnesses Boaz suggests that the kinsman purchase a piece of ground belonging to Naomi to help her in her poverty and also thereby obligate himself to the Levite marriage to Ruth. Not wanting the land to go to Ruth's son, making less inheritance for his own sons, he lets Boaz have the obligation. This was made binding legally by removing his sandal and handing it to Boaz. This ancient ceremony signified the renouncing of all rights to the property of Ruth's dead husband by the other kinsmen. Thus by acquiring the land Boaz also will acquire Ruth as his wife. With her faithfulness and dedication she has reached the point of being raised from her poorness to a new life - by divine providence.

Boaz soon marries Ruth and prayers are offered that she might be like Rachel and Leah, who produced the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.

It does seem that the author had in mind setting up the genealogy of David. After marriage to Boaz we can conclude that Ruth was a devoted wife and still a devoted daughter-in-law, seeing to it that Naomi was well cared for. At the birth of her first son, Obed, it was Naomi, as his nurse, who held him proudly for the others to see, and he was legally recognized as Naomi's grandson. Thus the names of Mahlon and Elimelech were redeemed. The women proclaimed Ruth to Naomi as "thy daughter-in-law who loves you and is more to you than seven sons", this being the ideal number of sons and reflecting the greater importance of male children. It is also clear from this story that women, normally not seen as important in society, have achieved God's blessing through their goodness and devotion to each other. We can assume their loving relationship will continue as they nurture the child who belongs to them both. Obed is stated as being father of Jesse, the father of David, so the point that a Gentile woman beyond reproach bore the grandfather of David is made very clear to any who did not want to accept that fact. When the prophet Ezra, centuries later, exhorted Jewish men to divorce their foreign wives and "purify" their society, the Book of Ruth appears in written form to gently and beautifully deny that notion.

2. Questions

- ◇ Does the story have a good conclusion for you? Do you like the way it turned out?
- ◇ Ruth seems to have the sweetness, wisdom, modesty and decisive qualities that make her able to do the right thing at the right time. How do you feel about her? Have your feelings changed since the beginning of the story? Why is it easy to love Ruth?
- ◇ Describe how you see Boaz as a man. Do you like him? What are his good qualities? Why did he do what he did?
- ◇ How do you feel about Naomi now? Is she still the tired sad Mara? What is it that has transformed her sad life? [Is it just the wealth of Boaz - or is it love?]
- ◇ How do you feel about the notion of a community of people lending a helping hand to those in trouble? What do Quakers have to say about this idea?
- ◇ If you look at the book as teaching us how life *should* be, how does it affect you? Does it work less or better than a "lecture" approach on how we should live?
- ◇ Ruth is a love story. Can you describe several kinds of love shown? (e.g. Boaz/Ruth, Ruth/Naomi, Naomi/Orpah, community/Naomi, community/Ruth)

3. Activities

- a. Make a collage from magazine pictures illustrating friendship.
- b. Make a family tree beginning with Elimilech and Naomi down to David.
- c. As a service project relate the idea of Boaz and his service to the poor by allowing them to glean to a form of helping others that the children can do. Make a chart such as this one with child-generated ideas:

<i>Problem:</i>	<i>Who has this problem?</i>	<i>What is being done?</i>	<i>What can I do?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sickness ● Loneliness ● Unfairness 			

Be sure to relate the ideas to the children's age and ability to realistically deal with a situation. *With* the class choose a project, carry it out, and evaluate it.

- d. As the gleaning was giving extra to those in need, so can we give extra food to those in need today. Organize a food drive for a neighboring distribution center.
- e. For little children, trace their hands on paper. Cut out and glue on another contrasting sheet. List on these "helping hands" ways they help others.

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Lynne Brick

DAVID AND GOLIATH

Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis of Assisi

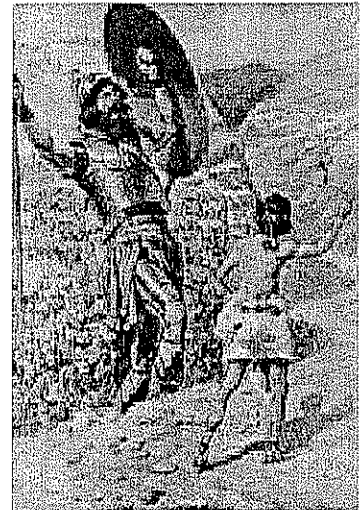
This chapter presents lesson ideas on the story of David and Goliath (I Samuel, 16-17). These ideas are clustered around three themes. You may choose to do more than one lesson on the story, if you decide to explore more than one theme. Always tell or read the story first. Then choose appropriate background information to share and questions to ask. Follow up with an activity. There is a Hanna-Barbera cartoon version of "David and Goliath" which you can borrow from the Yearly Meeting Library by calling (215) 241-7220.

This chapter has three parts:

- I. Introduction
- II. Teaching Ideas on three themes
 - A. Faith
 - B. Speak Truth to Power
 - C. Non-violent Conflict Resolution
- III. Bibliography

I. INTRODUCTION

There are two versions of how David came to slay Goliath. (I Samuel 16-17) In one version David is an unknown shepherd boy who meets Saul shortly before answering Goliath's challenge. In the other version David is Saul's musician who drives away Saul's sickness and sorrows. David volunteers to meet Goliath on the field and take part in the ensuing battle. Biblical scholars generally feel that the version of David as musician turned warrior is the older, more accurate one. While the intermingling of the two accounts may make reading the story somewhat confusing, the story of David the unknown shepherd lad does fire the imagination. It was probably incorporated into the story of David because it reflected the "idealized David traditions that had long circulated in Jerusalem" (P. Kyle McCarter, Jr, *I Samuel*).



Fortunately for those of us who are teaching the story there are many rewritten and simplified versions which choose one or the other way to tell the story. Older children may be interested in the overlay of the two stories in that it provides an "opportunity to talk with them about the nature of the biblical material and to help them think of David as a folk hero about whom many tales were told" (Ruth L. Sprague). The historical significance of either version seems to be to establish the power of David and describe the difficulties between himself and Saul. For the purpose of this Friendly Seed we have taken the story out of context leaving it to stand on its own. In this light the central issue is one of faith: that our individual relationship with God allows us to do things of great magnitude. Another theme we will explore comes from the traditional Quaker phrase "speak truth to power". Finally this Friendly Seed will examine ways to settle conflicts other than physical force. Each of the themes is presented with separate background information, questions, activities and songs.

II. TEACHING IDEAS

A. Faith

1. *Background:*

According to various dictionary definitions faith is: 1) reliance or trust in a person or thing; 2) allegiance to duty or a person; loyalty; 3) belief and trust in God; 4) confidence; and, 5) a system of religious beliefs. Elements of all of these definitions are found in the story of David. His confidence in himself and his God is supreme. He has already had many experiences (after all he has killed a lion and a bear to protect his sheep) that demonstrate the power of his faith. As we teach this story we can help our children develop similar strength of faith as they meet the stresses and "battles" that face them. A great deal of recent research has focused on identifying why some children seem resilient under great stress. A brief summary of some of the characteristics of these children follows:

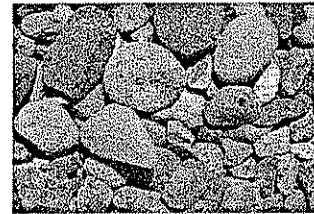
Resilient children generally have a strong sense of self identity, believing that their attitudes and aims really count. These children have what psychologists call an "internal locus of control", a belief that they can master their environment: that their fate depends on their own abilities and efforts, not on luck or "the breaks". A sense of order and stability during times of stress helps provide children with the feeling that the world still has some dependability. A continued and regular routine and practice of rituals such as birthdays and holidays can create this sense of order. One of the important feelings we all need to withstand stress is that someone is there for us, a sense of trust. Children living through difficult conditions have found this sense of trust in a few predictable ways. Often there has been a special person in their lives who has communicated caring and a belief in the child's abilities. Another important characteristic the helpful adults in these children's lives shared was an ability to listen. This means not giving advice but providing "a sympathetic hearing". Religious convictions also provide a sense that someone is there. One of the strong traits exhibited by resilient people at any stage of life is the ability to turn outward rather than becoming lost in self preoccupation. The ability to turn outward can be facilitated not only by providing opportunities for compassionate acts but also by supporting children's involvement in hobbies and special interests. A final factor in stress reduction that bears mentioning is humor. Humor not only diffuses many difficult situations but can help all of us reframe our negative thoughts and feelings so that setbacks are viewed as challenges or opportunities. While personality can leave a child (or adult) with a greater or lesser degree of vulnerability to stress the above summary suggests coping tools that reach beyond natural skills and tendencies. Faith like David's develops in children who are helped to become resilient and self-affirming.

2. Questions:

- ◇ Why do you think David decided to answer Goliath?
- ◇ If you had been there what do you think you would have done?
- ◇ Did David seem afraid at all?
- ◇ If the answer above is "no" ask: Why wasn't David afraid?
- ◇ How do you think the other characters in the story felt about David?
- ◇ What do you do when you are afraid?
- ◇ Have you ever met anyone like David or Goliath?
- ◇ Have you ever felt very small? Would you share something about a time when you felt "small"?
- ◇ Have you ever felt as powerful as Goliath felt?

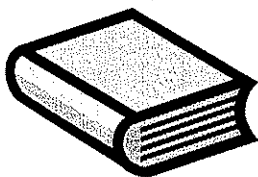
3. Activities:

a. Younger children will probably get more from the story and the questions if they have something to play with while talking. David and Goliath "rocks" are one possibility. You will need one large and one small rock for each child. On a nice day the children can find them. Decorate each rock with tempera paint or acrylic with older children. In order to keep the play appropriate suggest that these rocks have something to say about things that make them afraid and ask the children to find out what their rocks have to say. Use them as you would puppets.



b. Collages can be made with many different materials by all ages. Glue cut magazine pictures on to large sheets of stiff watercolor paper or poster board. Have the children (all ages) make an "I can do it" collage. Pictures can include things they want to be able to do some day as well as things they already do. If they can't find the right picture they could use fabric or paper scraps to make the picture.

c. Sharing responses to the questions above could be done at home in a journal or on a tape. Tape recorder journals tend to be quite different from written ones and open up journal possibilities for young children who cannot write well. Making a case to hold the tape makes it seem more like a journal to keep. Young children can make them of felt and glue, or sew them together with yarn and large needles. Older children can make them out of fabric they have tie dyed or designed with fabric crayons. Even older children might like to design punched leather cases. If real leather is unavailable at the craft store the fabric store will have thinner synthetic leather. The fabric will be difficult to punch designs onto but it is possible to embroider SIMPLE designs on it. The leather can be punched with tools similar to an ice pick. Work on the back side of the leather by first drawing the design, then working on top of a piece of wood use the punch to imprint the design. It is a good idea to practice on a scrap first.



d. A general feeling of confidence supports our search for "the Light" just as we in turn gain confidence as we move closer to God. The following are just a few confidence-building ideas:

- (1) Have an intergenerational "share-a-story" session. Individuals share an experience around a set topic such as "a time when you were afraid, but everything turned out all right".
- (2) Try some of these games. They are from the book *Bag of Tricks* by Jane Sanborn.
 - The Blob*: The whole group joins hands creating a large circle. This circle can never be broken during the game. The Blob must perform several tasks. For example, walk through a heavily forested area, or cross a fence, move an object from one place to another, and anything else the group can come up with.
 - Electric Fence*: A rope is tied about 4-5 feet high between two objects. Trees or posts are especially good for this purpose. Teams of about 6-8 people must get all of their players over the fence using only a 5-6 foot board. The board cannot touch the rope or the trees. The trees or posts are considered part of the fence and cannot be touched either. If anyone touches the "electric fence" the team must start over.
CAUTION: This game must be carefully supervised and alert spotters and catchers appointed.
 - Sandwiches*: All ages including quite young children can play this game. Groups of about five are picked. Each group is given everything they need to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Four players are blindfolded and prepare lunch by following the directions of the fifth player, who remains sighted. The fifth player may not physically help the others. Very young children can try a variation in which they are not blindfolded but must make their sandwiches in pairs without talking. A variation of this game is to have one person try to instruct a partner who is blindfolded in how to draw a picture or construct a structure out of blocks.
- (3) A share-a-hobby project is another way of building confidence and connections within the Meeting. Various adults might agree to work with interested children (or your class) sharing their own skills. CAUTION: For such a program to be satisfying and successful for everyone, teachers must spend time helping the adults involved understand the level of ability and interest of the children with whom the hobbyist will be working. This includes the organization of materials and safety precautions as well. It is especially helpful if the children have also considered the project ahead of time with their teacher, gaining background information, formulating questions and rules.

e. Learning about prayer and developing our connection to God, which David seemed to naturally come by, is a life-long job for most of us. In our present age most families have extremely limited time to develop the skills of outward reaching toward God. Among the easiest to expose children to at First Day School are memorized prayers and religious passages, meditation techniques, prayers in children's own words and images from memory which move us closer to the Light. Guided Imagery is a technique that has gained credibility not only in religious circles but in scientific communities as well as it appears we can reduce the physical effects of stress and strengthen the immune system through its use. Bible stories, for instance the story of Elijah, can be turned into guided imagery. An example for younger children follows: Begin by having the children stretch high then slowly shrink to the ground until they are lying down flat. Tell them to close their eyes and imagine they are lying outside on a warm day. You can feel the warmth of the sun's rays, and as you take each breath you can feel the warmth spread from your stomach out to your fingers and toes. While you are lying there a cat comes and lies down on your stomach purring. Then a dog comes to lie down next to you... Above you there are fluffy clouds in the blue sky. Watch the shapes for a while. (Pause for a while before speaking again). Then the dog gets up and slowly walks away, then the cat licks you and gets up to walk away. Now open your eyes. Ask the children if they could imagine the things you talked

about. Was it easier to be silent and quiet while thinking about these things? What shapes did they see in the clouds?

f. With junior or senior high children watch the movie *Stand and Deliver*, available in videotape. This movie stresses the importance, first of adults' having faith in children, and second of children having faith in themselves.

4. Songs

From *Songs of the Spirit*:

- ♪ #6 Special Silence
- ♪ #9 Quiet Moments
- ♪ #13 Enter in the Meeting House
- ♪ #15 Prayer of St. Francis
- ♪ #30 Every Time I Feel the Spirit
- ♪ #51 Amazing Grace
- ♪ #64 Morning Has Broken

B. "Speak Truth to Power"

"Let all nations hear the word by sound or writing. Spare no place, spare not tongue or pen, but be obedient to the Lord God and go through the world and be valient for the Truth upon earth; tread and trample all that is contrary under... Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that in your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one."

George Fox 1656

1. Background

David "spoke truth to power" in a very clear, direct way. Like David each of us faces times when our values are tested. Perhaps our mechanic makes racist comments, a neighbor child steals something from our house, our company becomes active in military accounts... all our children's friends have Nintendo games we cannot afford (and probably don't want), and Aunt Emily gives our child a toy machine gun for Christmas. While Friends typically use this phrase in reference to making a religious stand against the demands of authority, for example tax resistance, the potency lies in the link between our spiritual lives and action in our daily life. We are called not just to think differently than our mechanic but to become, like David, involved actively, but without resorting to force. We are also called to move beyond confrontation to a deep respect for the very person or group we disagree with. All this might be impossible if we acted without the support of God and each other. This leads us back to a depth of conviction and caring which will in the end leave us "walking cheerfully over the world answering that of God in every one."

While the following section includes activities of people who have remarkable courage and creativity, we hope to focus on ways we each can follow the Spirit in smaller ways. The following questions and activities are aimed at ages no younger than upper elementary school due to both the complexities of the issues and the upsetting nature of some of the material.

2. Questions:

- ◇ Why did David feel he must meet Goliath's challenge?
- ◇ What effect did the death of Goliath have on the Israelis? On the Philistines?
- ◇ Can you think of any way David could have had the same effect without killing Goliath?

◇ Can you tell about a time when someone else stood up for what they thought was right?

3. Activities:

a. Draw a picture of something you would like to change in the world, or the country, your city or neighborhood or school. Draw another picture of how things would look after the change for the better. Share the pictures. Have the class brainstorm ways each of these pictures might be changed including actions they could take that might set change in motion. Your class will probably need help finding something they can do if the picture is of something "big" like "no more war". This might be the time to talk about how some of their concerns developed and then to move back into the discussion of how we can begin to make a difference. For example, what conditions lead to war? If you choose to focus on misconceptions about "the other side", then finding out more about that side or being "pen pals" are two good ideas. If the concern is homelessness, making a casserole for a local shelter is a possible action. Or contact one of the many Friends' groups which are active in areas of social concern to see what your class can do. NOTE: Occasionally a project like this will evoke a child to share a deep-rooted concern such as a serious family problem. If this happens we suggest you call the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Friends Counseling Service at 215-248-0489 for suggestions on ways to handle such a sensitive area.

b. Create a Peace Newspaper. This is an idea that could be an ongoing long-term project or cover a couple of First Day sessions. Start with some information about how reporters build a story. Some of your class may already have experience from working on school papers. Not only do you need the classic What When and Why but you need to have a feel for the impact of the story. You can work as a group or in teams of three or four; as not everyone is a writer or an editor make sure the visual and research needs are emphasized as well. Some stories to start with come from the past: responses to Joseph McCarthy in the fifties, the experience of conscientious objectors, the actions of Carl von Ossietzky in Hitler's Germany, Linus Pauling and the atomic era, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks. In our own times stories can be told of the experiences of peacemakers in the Middle East, Africa and Central America. While all these ideas are places to start they must be distilled to smaller stories if they are to be useful and brought down to a very human level. Friends have wonderful personal resources, people who have visited in many of these places and been involved in these concerns who can be interviewed. As brainstorming continues for stories to pursue your class will probably begin to discover actions close to home that fit into a peace paper. Keep children aware of the spiritual basis of Friends' actions. This reliance on the spirit helps Friends keep clear that the means to a better world must be as peaceful as the hoped-for ends. The following quotation is helpful:

"The real sign of a person who has the truth is that the person is free; even if captive, he is always the victor. If he abandons truth and nonviolence, and does not listen to the inner voice, then for the first time he becomes vanquished. If a real person of truth becomes vanquished, the fault is all his own."

Mahatma Gandhi

c. The ideas in the section on a newspaper for peace can also be used to write plays or as topics for a simulated Meeting for Business. The way the latter idea would work is to phrase an incident as a question for the Meeting to consider. For example, pretend that the Meeting is in Ireland during the demonstrations for peace organized by Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan. The "Clerk" would ask the "Meeting", "Should we support these walks by writing a letter of support to the local papers and the organizers?"

d. In *The World in Tune* Elizabeth Gray Vining has a section on prayer for our enemies:

"There is so much wrong that needs righting, so little we individually can do, and we should not underestimate the power of prayer. In some way that we do not understand, the very act of selfless prayer seems to open a channel for God's healing action. Evelyn Underhill wrote to a friend in this connection, 'Perhaps the prayer we make here may find its fulfillment on the other side of the world. Perhaps the help we are given in a difficult moment came from a praying soul we never know. It is all a deep mystery, and we should be careful not to lay down hard and fast rules'"

One activity First Day classes can do is to write their own prayers for the "enemy". Another possibility is to think of a personal "enemy", either a person or thing, and to draw a picture of a gift we might wish for them. This will work better if you read the prayer, "Prayer for Our Enemies", in E.G. Vining's book first (pg. 92).

e. Many of the activities in the Yearly Meeting packet, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers, Special Projects for First-Day Schools*, are particularly appropriate. The idea for folding paper cranes in the section called "To Take Away the Occasion of All Wars", can be supplemented with the following articles (which further point out the necessity of coming to terms with our own anger and bitterness in our search to become peacemakers).

"Testimony of Peace" by Ayako Sekiya, *Friends Journal*, November 1988, Vol. 34, No. 11, pg. 27

"On Wings of Forgiveness" by Jack Fincher, *Reader's Digest*, March, 1989, pg. 85

4. Songs

From *Songs of the Spirit*

- ♪ #23 Magic Penny
- ♪ #29 When I Needed a Neighbor
- ♪ #32 Study War No More
- ♪ #42 Peace Like a River

From *Rise Up Singing* (edited by Peter Blood-Patterson):

- ♪ If Rosa Parks Can Go to Jail (pg. 61)
- ♪ If You Miss Me from the Back of the Bus (pg. 61)
- ♪ Man Come Into Egypt (pg. 62)
- ♪ This Little Light (pg. 63)
- ♪ We Shall Overcome (pg. 63)
- ♪ Where Have All the Flowers Gone (pg. 65)
- ♪ I Ain't Marchin Anymore (pg. 159)
- ♪ Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream (pg. 161)
- ♪ The Times They Are A-Changing (pg. 219)

C. *Non-Violent Conflict Resolution*

1. Introduction:

The story of David and Goliath raises the issue of how to resolve disputes. David chooses force; Quakers try to use non-violence. Children need lots of help in learning how to resolve disputes peacefully. A brief summary of basic conflict resolution skills follows.

Step one: Identify the problem. This means asking questions. Break down big issues (like not getting along) into smaller pieces (such as, "How can we make story time more pleasant?"). Focus on the future; for example, "It would be great if we could ..." In the middle of an argument try to phrase things broadly, "We need to talk about Meeting for Worship" rather than, "You need to sit still in Meeting." The broader statement allows us to identify our concerns and the children a chance to explain their needs. When we are working with children as they settle their arguments we may need to help them re-phrase. Occasionally a cooling off period is necessary before we start this process.

Step two: Communication. Listening without interrupting is very hard. When someone is complaining, ask them open-ended questions. Try to figure out where the needs and interests of each party converge. Practice phrasing things in non-inflammatory phrases, "I would like it if ..." will be more effective than "You should...". Act as if you have all the time in the world to listen, to get rid of a sense of rush.

Step three: Generating options. Brainstorm solutions (without commenting on their viability). Try for at least ten; a couple of silly ones might help loosen up the imagination. The more each party participates, the more invested in the solution they will be. Make a list of all the suggestions.

Step four: Selecting a solution. The goal is to find something that will satisfy both sides. Encourage each party to view the solution from both points of view. Once you have a solution that might work, agree to try it for a set period of time and then review its effectiveness.

Step five: Be very specific. "Susan agrees to respect George", is rather vague, whereas "Susan agrees not to call George names" will be clearer. Aim for success by anticipating obstacles so the agreements can be kept.

The Yearly Meeting packet, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers* has numerous resources on teaching conflict resolution. It is available from Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch St., 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 561-1700.

2. Questions:

- ◇ Could David and Goliath have solved their problems any other way?
- ◇ When you have an argument with someone what do you dislike the most about it?
- ◇ When you have an argument how do you settle it usually? How do you become friends again?
- ◇ What things do you find yourself in arguments about the most often?

3. Activities:

- a. Act out David and Goliath trying to solve their problems using conflict resolution. For more fun and practice try the same thing with classic tales such as "Little Red Riding Hood" and "The Three Little Pigs". A variation is for each participant to write down an argument they have been involved in, with each participant's position stated. These are exchanged; the players work in teams of two to act out the argument and try conflict solving techniques to resolve it.
- b. This game is humorously referred to as "beating your head against a rock or the Goliath syndrome." Players divide into groups of two or three. Each group is given an object such as a ball. All of them want the item. Place the object on the floor. They then stand forehead to forehead and verbally try to work out a way to get the object. Standing this way with their hands behind their backs limits attempts at physical retrieval of the object. Players can be as imaginative as they want persuading the others to give them the object, and if they can work out a solution everyone likes, all the better.

c. Games:

"The human race has one really effective weapon and that is laughter" - Mark Twain
Some funny games are:

One-Legged Contest. Two or more players try to see who can stand on one leg the longest. Short of actually touching the two players, everyone else can do anything they want to make them lose their concentration.

Straw and tissue relay. Players are divided into teams. Each team lines up with a space of about three feet between. Everyone has a straw. Players pass a tissue all the way down the line and back again using suction from the straws. If the tissue drops it can only be picked up with suction from the straws. The first team to complete the task wins.

Back-Me-Up. Pairs of players sit back to back (try to match size and weight). They link arms and try to stand up using only their legs. After they are standing suggest they try to climb over a chair or crawl under a table in the same position.

4. Songs (from *Rise Up Singing*, edited by Peter Blood-Patterson):

- ♪ Let Us Break Bread Together (pg. 210)
- ♪ Pack Up Your Sorrows (pg. 67)
- ♪ With a Little Help from My Friends (pg. 68)
- ♪ Be Kind to Your Web-Footed Friends (pg. 70)
- ♪ Balm in Gilead (pg. 208)

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Priscilla Taylor-Williams

AMOS

This chapter uses the story of Amos as a way to introduce children to the Hebrew prophets. Read the book of Amos before you begin to plan your lesson(s). It is short enough, only nine chapters, so that, unlike the longer books of prophecy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, you can get an overview of the prophetic style and message relatively quickly. Be sure to use a good annotated Bible, such as the New Oxford Bible (RSV); the notes provide lots of background information.

You may choose to do one or several lessons on Amos. In addition, some of the activities can be adapted to the stories of other prophets. As an extension of this material, an older class might read one of the shorter books of prophecy such as Micah or Joel and compare it to Amos.

As you present those parts of Amos' story which you have selected to the children, read those passages aloud. The language is dramatic and poetic. Then choose appropriate background material to share; it is especially important that children understand what a prophet is and that Amos is part of a continuum which begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus. You can explain that prophecy does not stop with the Bible; early Quakers also saw themselves as prophetic.

Follow up with questions and activities.

This chapter has five parts:

- I. About the Prophets - General Background
- II. Amos
 - A. Background
 - B. Overview of the Book of Amos
- III. Questions
 - A. Specific
 - B. General
- IV. Activities
- V. Bibliography

I. ABOUT THE PROPHETS - General Background

The word prophet in the Old Testament means one who speaks for God, announces or heralds future events. The prophets speak a wisdom deeper than their own thoughts, a message of divine wisdom for their age. They are the wise guides, the spiritual statesmen of their times (Moon).

Harper's Bible Dictionary defines a prophet as "a person who serves as a channel of communication between the human and divine worlds." The prophets were the moral and ethical innovators who brought the Israelite religion to a higher level of development. They were "called" and in turn called mankind.

The Israelites thought of the prophetic experience as one that occurred when people were possessed by the "spirit of God." Prophets often viewed this experience negatively and tried to avoid it because it demanded great responsibility and risk. Isaiah, for instance, feels prophecy laid upon him as a hot coal on his tongue (Isaiah 6:6-7).

Prophets can be found in early Biblical times; Abraham, Moses, Miriam, Deborah, and Samuel were all prophets. Prophecy also existed in Mesopotamia and Egypt. The concept of the messenger from God was recognized beyond the borders of Israel. The most active time for the prophets was between about 750-525 B.C.E. There is a standard pattern for a prophetic message. The oracles begin with the account of the commissioning of the prophetic messenger, followed by the accusation against an individual or group who has violated Israel's covenant with God. After the accusation, an announcement of judgment is delivered by the prophet to the accused. There is a particular messenger formula, "thus says the Lord".

The prophets of the Old Testament were all different. They were an integral part of society; some were in secular occupations (Amos); others were priests transformed to prophets (Jeremiah and Ezekiel); others were part of the royal court. It was necessary for the prophet to have the social support of one group to gain legitimacy. The group did not hold the prophet responsible for his words or actions as they were subject to the will of God. The prophets who were a part of the court or temple sought change in an orderly fashion. Those not involved in social institutions often advocated radical change even if it destroyed the social order.

Despite the many differences among the prophets, there were certain beliefs that they held in common. First, they all believed that Israel was selected by God, and had a special relationship with God. The prophets all agreed that the people had not fulfilled their obligations and had rebelled against God. It was understood that Israel's rebelliousness would be punished, although the nature and severity of the punishment varied. The most important common thread was that God's final word was one of hope and promise. No matter what, God would remain faithful and would return the people to their land and begin a new relationship with them.

II. AMOS

A. Background

The prophet Amos lived during the relatively peaceful reigns of Jeroboam, King of Israel, and Uzziah, King of Judah. At this period the Hebrew people were divided into two nations, Israel to the north and Judah to the south. Amos prophesied in both. Historians place Amos' prophetic message sometime between 760-750 B.C.E.

Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, a small village in the Southern Kingdom located about five miles south of Bethlehem and ten miles south of Jerusalem. He was a rugged individual, whose occupation gave him constant exposure to the forces in nature. Amos was surely exposed to earthquakes (755 B.C.E.), fire storms, droughts, destruction of crops in the nearby farmland because of insects, as well as the eclipse of 763 B.C.E. As a shepherd he was also exposed to the sharp contrasts between the rural life and the life of the city with its opulence and corruption. Going to the city to market his wool must have made a strong impression on Amos.

Amos was called to preach the words of God in a time of tranquility and prosperity. He denounced Israel and her neighbors for social injustice, reliance on military power, and immorality. Amos preached his message at Bethel in the Northern Kingdom. He was in conflict with the authorities of the day, especially the priest Amaziah (7:10-17). Consequently, Amos was expelled from the sanctuary at Bethel

and ordered not to prophesy. (See the chapter on Jacob for the origins of the sanctuary at Bethel.) Amos returned to Judah, where his words were written down for following generations.

Amos was the earliest prophet whose words were handed down in writing. He believed that there was only one God. He was a monotheist and a universalist. His style and form of speech indicate that he understood the prophetic role. The visions which are described in the book reflect his rural life experience. It was a time of prosperity and relative calm for the region. Certainly it took a fearless and independent person to brave the temple at Bethel with God's message of the impending downfall of Israel. Amos' uncompromising integrity was undoubtedly an inspiration and an influence on the prophets who followed him.

Not all parts of the book of Amos were written at the same time. It is believed that some of the hymnic portions (5:8-9, 9:5-6, and 9:8-15) were added at the time of the Babylonian exile. The final passage does expand on genuine elements of Amos' own thought, and also illustrates a basic concept that the full prophetic word contains both judgment and salvation.

B. Overview of the Book of Amos:

1. Identifying Amos and the date (1:1-2)
2. Prophecies about other nations for their transgressions. (1:3-2:6)
3. Prophecies against Israel (3:1 - 6:4)
4. Visions and Prophecies
 - a. Visions of the Fall of Israel (7:1-9)
 - b. Amos speaks out against the House of Jeroboam (7:10-17)
 - c. Two more visions and prophecies of punishment (8:1-3 and 4-14, also 9:1-8)
 - d. The prophecy of Salvation (9:9-15)

III. QUESTIONS

A. Specific - Use these as you read or explain the different parts of Amos.

1. **1:3 - 2:6**
 - What nations or groups are in disfavor with God?
 - What have they done wrong?
 - The punishments reflect Amos' life experience in nature. How can you tell?
 - Would any group or person today be accused of the same things?
2. **3:1 - 6:4**
 - What does Amos predict will happen to Israel? (6:11-14)
 - Why are the "chosen people" out of favor with God? (4:1-13; 5:11-13, 21-24; 6:1-7)
 - What words indicate Amos' familiarity with nature and his experiences as a shepherd? (3:3-8)
3. **7:1-9**
 - What are the images Amos uses?
 - How do they reflect his background as a shepherd?
4. **7:10-17**
 - What is the reaction to Amos and his message?
 - What does Amaziah do? (7:10-12)
 - What is Amos' response to Amaziah? (7:14)
5. **8:1-14, 9:1-8**
 - What is going to happen?
 - Find the verse that suggests all is not lost. (9:8)
6. **9:9-15**
 - What does God promise?
 - The final message to mankind is?

How do you feel about this message?

What significance does this message have for following generations?

Explain how the book of Amos might have influenced the prophets who followed Amos.

B. General - These questions are for more general discussion.

1. *For Older Children* - for this age group read aloud several selected passages and tell Amos' story in your own words.

- What is there about Amos that makes his story believable for that time?
- For today?
- What empowered Amos to face the crowd and give his message?
- Do you know anyone who seems to have been similarly empowered?
- Is there a time in your life when you felt compelled to act? Share with the group if you are comfortable doing so.

Have a discussion about the concept of the prophetic message.

- Is prophecy going on today?
- If so, what form does it take?
- Who delivers it? (Scientists, Social Activists, World Leaders??)
- What characteristics do these spokespersons have in common with Amos?
- How are they different?
- What is the underlying motivation for the Amos' of today?

Look up the following passages: 4:1; 5:7; 11-12; 6:4-6; and 8:4-6.

- What is it that Amos thought people were doing wrong?
- Do these things happen today?

2. *For Younger Children* - with this age group read only selected verses and tell Amos' story in your own words.

- Ask the children if they have ever had to be like Amos. Ask them to describe a situation when they had to stand up for someone or something which was against what everyone else was doing or saying. Example: telling the truth when it was different from the false story that all their friends were telling. Stepping in to do something they thought was right even if they were scared. Example: rescuing the stray cat that everyone is throwing stones at, etc.
- Talk about the feelings that Amos probably had when he gave his message. Talk about how we feel when we have to be like Amos.
- Tell the Good Samaritan Story (Luke 10:29-37). Talk about what the Samaritan did to help. Why was he like Amos?

IV ACTIVITIES

Most of these activities can be adapted to several age groups. Age-range suggestions are very flexible.

A. Amos the Protester (these ideas are adapted from Caroline Pineo's work) - best for older elementary and junior high.

1. Have newspapers or news magazines available. Find examples of present-day protesters (e.g., Nelson Mandela, Greenpeace, etc.) Share the examples. Ask if the children have known any protesters.
2. Summarize Amos' life as a protester. Using the enclosed map, locate some of the places Amos lived and visited. Take turns reading aloud the passages in Chapters 1 and 2 in which Amos prophesies about Israel and her neighbors. Find these places on the map.

3. Read Amos 7:7-9. Make plumb lines. Why does God use this image and the one of the basket of fruit in 8:1? Explain that Amos' prophecies came true. Israel did not change when Amos warned them of their wicked ways. King Jeroboam II died. His son, Zechariah, was killed after only six months as king. Twenty-two years later the Assyrians conquered Israel. The temple at Bethel was destroyed so completely that the site has never been found. A "remnant" of people was taken into captivity and the Kingdom of Israel disappeared forever.
4. Discuss a modern-day protester who has been heeded, e.g., Martin Luther King, the Vietnam protesters, or Lech Walesa. Does it take a long time for a protest to be heard? Are there different ways to protest?
5. Ask a Meeting member who has taken part in a protest to talk about his/her experience.
6. Help the children find ways to speak out:
 - Write letters to the editor on an issue of concern to the children
 - Visualize a situation against which children might speak out. Make simple drawings of the wrong or injustice being done (e.g. bullying). Discuss responses to the situation.
 - Using the newspapers and newsmagazines, make a collage of things which upset you or seem unfair. Discuss solutions and responses to these problems.
 - Develop a simple service project which responds to an injustice which the children identify, e.g. bread for a food bank.
7. Emphasize that protest is a legitimate way to seek change, that Quakers are often involved in protests and that nonviolence is a key part of the Quaker approach to protest.

B. Read the book, Love Notes by Kate Buckley, Niles Illinois: Albert Whitman & Co., 1989. - for younger children. What did Joe do that showed he was very brave? How did he finally act when he owned up to his real feelings? What do you think about how the story ended? Who made it hard for Katy and Joe to be friends? Show someone that you care about them. For instance, make cards for a Meeting member who is shut-in, or for a classmate who is sick.

C. Roleplay and Drama - All ages

1. Roleplay a section of Amos' story, or of the Good Samaritan story. Or if you've talked about difficult situations which require courage (see III, B. 2. above) act out some of these.
2. Create a dialogue or play about Amos talking to famous activists of the past several centuries. What would they be saying to one another about their times and their "callings"? Some suggestions for characters are: Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Elizabeth Fry, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, John Woolman, William Penn, or anyone else who has stood up for a cause despite the threat of personal danger. The curriculum, *Quakers Answer the Call* available from Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch St., 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 561-1700, is a good resource for this.
3. Take turns being Amos and deliver a series of his prophecies in a dramatic way. Write some prophecies for our time and then deliver these orally as well.

D. Posters

Pick a topic or topics about which the children feel strongly (e.g. homelessness, the environment, too much homework). Distinguish between personal and more general issues. Make posters which speak to the concerns the children are raising. Emphasize the need to look at ways to respond to problems as opposed to blaming and complaining. If more local or personal issues are raised, such as too much homework or a too-early bedtime, consider the role of compromise and discussion in addressing these issues.

E. Protest Songs

There are many, many protest songs in *Rise Up Singing* by Peter Blood. This book is available from Friends General Conference 1216 Arch St., 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 561-1700.

A few songs to sing:

- ♪ "We Shall Overcome" (pg. 63)
- ♪ "Go Down Moses" (59)
- ♪ "Down by the Riverside" (pg. 163)
- ♪ "If I Had a Hammer" (pg. 215)
- ♪ "Once to Every Man (Soul) and Nation" (pg. 216)
- ♪ "The Times They Are a-Changin'" (pg. 219)

F. Word Search (see page 104)

We found this in one of Caroline Pineo's files. Most of the words relate to Amos' story. Some don't; just find those and don't worry about their relevance!

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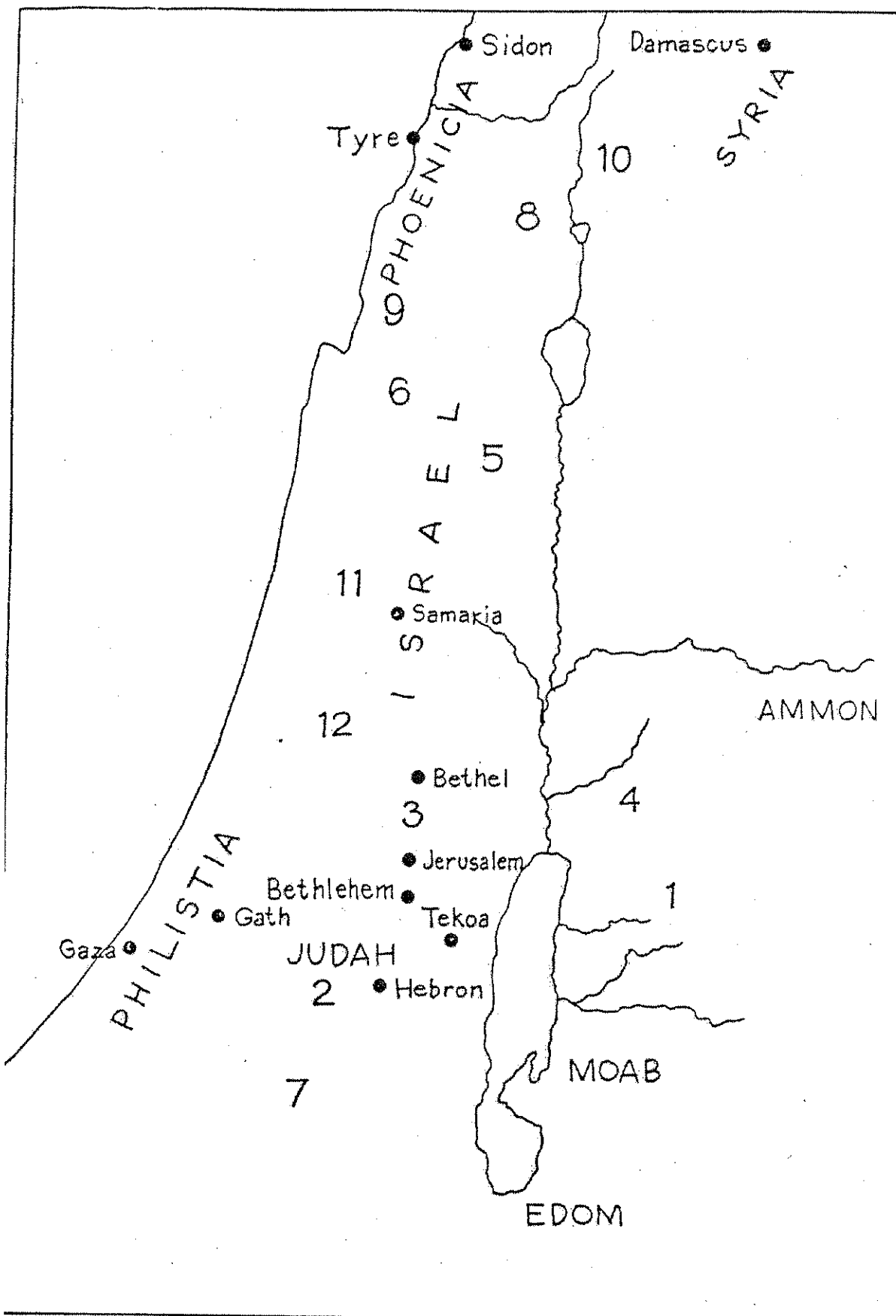
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To borrow books from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library, call (215) 241-7220 or stop in Friends Center, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102. Non-PYM Friends pay a \$25.00 annual membership fee, with no fee for renting videos.

Sally Farneth

WORD LIST

Amaziah	C	O	U	T	H	A	I	S	R	A	E	L	O	V	J	U	S	T	I	C	E	
Ammon	O	A	M	N	I	C	N	A	R	I	D	O	O	L	B	R	I	B	E	R	Y	I
Amos	U	O	N	T	A	R	I	O	U	W	O	O	L	B	R	I	B	E	R	Y	I	
Bethel	R	A	F	A	R	M	E	R	O	U	M	A	R	J	U	D	A	H	A	R	N	
Bible	A	L	M	I	D	A	M	A	S	C	U	S	Y	S	S	T	E	M	O	U	T	
Bribery	G	P	R	U	N	I	N	G	R	O	U	S	Y	C	A	M	O	R	E	A	R	
Cheat	E	L	F	L	O	O	A	R	G	J	U	D	U	C	L	I	K	O	P	R	A	
Courage	H	E	R	D	S	M	A	N	I	E	P	R	O	T	E	S	T	E	R	A	N	
Damascus	C	H	U	R	A	S	A	T	Y	R	E	L	M	O	M	H	I	C	I	U	S	
Dependable	J	O	I	U	N	U	T	U	R	E	R	Y	S	I	B	E	T	H	E	L	G	
Edom	A	L	T	U	D	R	A	M	O	B	A	M	O	S	G	P	I	U	S	R	R	
Farmer	T	I	C	M	A	R	K	E	T	O	U	R	I	E	G	H	S	O	T	I	E	
Fruit	P	O	O	R	L	I	K	I	G	A	S	E	L	L	I	E	O	U	S	G	S	
Gaza	A	L	R	O	S	O	U	G	A	M	I	L	U	Y	O	R	O	U	A	H	S	
God	F	L	U	O	R	U	D	A	M	M	O	N	A	R	M	D	R	O	C	T	I	
Hebrews	O	L	U	M	N	O	U	Z	B	C	H	E	A	T	R	E	A	L	R	E	O	
Herdsmen	J	M	O	A	B	T	R	A	G	O	D	D	L	E	A	R	E	D	I	O	N	
Israel	U	Q	U	A	K	L	O	N	E	L	Y	P	R	O	P	H	E	T	F	U	S	
Jereboam	D	D	L	Q	H	O	I	G	H	T	F	U	R	U	T	L	I	E	I	S	C	
Jerusalem	G	H	I	U	I	R	I	N	C	E	N	I	B	I	B	L	E	S	C	N	G	
Judah	E	E	I	A	E	D	G	N	E	I	A	R	A	A	B	A	C	T	E	E	G	
Judge	S	T	E	K	O	A	M	A	Z	I	A	H	D	A	K	A	L	A	I	S	T	
Justice	O	N	C	E	I	U	S	T	R	K	I	N	D	N	E	S	S	M	U	S	T	
Kindness	A	I	R	R	C	P	E	A	C	E	E	N	G	H	E	B	R	E	W	S	T	
Lonely	P	E	K	L	M	P	M	U	S	P	E	A	K	O	U	T	I	N	E	S	S	
Market	R	U	Z	Z	I	A	H	L	E	A	M	E	R	C	H	A	N	T	S	U	S	
Merchants	C	K	O	U	S	K	I	D	O	W	R	O	N	G	S	H	O	C	K	E	D	
Moab																						
Old Testament																						
Peace																						
Poor																						
Priest																						
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Pruning																						
Quaker																						
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Righteousness																						
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Samaria																						
Sandals																						
Sell																						
Shepherd																						
Shocked																						
Speak out																						
Sycamore																						
Tekoa																						
Transgressions																						
Tyre																						
Wool																						
Wrongs																						
Uzziah																						



JONAH

Like the Book of Ruth, the Book of Jonah is a self-contained story which incorporates many of the themes which reappear throughout the Old Testament. Jonah, like Amos, is a prophet. He resists God's call to warn the City of Ninevah of God's wrath; he pays for that resistance, and finally he delivers his message to Ninevah. Surprisingly, Ninevah obeys God, repents, and is forgiven. Jonah is angry because God forgives the city. In a sense Ninevah learns its lesson, while Jonah does not learn his. The themes of this story, obedience and forgiveness, are challenging and relevant. Lessons can focus on listening to God as well as on learning to forgive.

Before teaching, read the Book of Jonah in a good annotated Bible such as the New Oxford Annotated Bible, Revised Standard Version. The notes are very helpful for background. You can teach all or part of this story. Read or tell to the children the parts you are teaching, and give appropriate background material. Follow up with questions and activities.

This chapter has four parts:

- I. Background
- II. Discussion and Questions
- III. Activities
- IV. Bibliography

I. BACKGROUND

A. General

The Book of Jonah is a short, yet complex, parable near the end of the Old Testament. Jonah is one of the twelve "minor" prophets. It is believed that the Book of Jonah was written in approximately the 5th century BCE, when Jewish nationalism and post-exile prejudice against Gentiles, especially Assyrians, was at its height. The Assyrians were responsible for much destruction to the Jewish people. In 722-721 BCE they conquered and destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel, which then passed out of existence. The Babylonian Jews had maintained a solidarity that certainly carried them through their exile. Yet that very sense of eliteness caused problems when Emperor Cyrus granted their freedom to return to Judah. There was much suspicion and prejudice against the heterogeneous population of the natives of Judah who had not been exiled. They had intermarried and associated with many different races and religions, such as Phoenicians, Egyptians, Syrians and Greeks. So the issue of Jewish nationalism and religious superiority are central to the Book of Jonah.

The City of Ninevah, which interestingly enough was destroyed in 612 BCE (before the writing of the Book of Jonah), was clearly chosen because it was the capital of Assyria, the seat of the hated oppressors to Jews. What better way to ask for obedience from a prophet, than to ask Jonah to go right to the "heart" of the heathens?

B. Themes of the Story

Many scholars believe that the major theme of the Book of Jonah is contained in the very last statement, "And should not I spare Ninevah, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?" Jonah 4:11

Gentiles, or non-Jews, were likened to children who could not tell right from left (or possibly right from wrong), and cattle are creatures that God created on Earth along with Adam and Eve. Could the one true God's mercy and love extend beyond the Jews to encompass all people of the Earth and all creatures? This theme is one of universal mercy, love and forgiveness.

It is this very idea of forgiveness, and a change of outcome on God's part that makes Jonah so reluctant about being a prophet, an instrument of the Lord, to the people of Ninevah in the first place. Not only are they heathens in the eyes of Israel, they are oppressors. To have God forgive the people of Ninevah their sins would be to see a God who is compassionate and merciful to all people, not just the righteous Jews.

Jeremiah prophesies earlier in the Old Testament; he uses the symbol of a potter making a vessel out of clay, just as God holds the House of Israel in His hand to mold. "If that Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Jeremiah 18:8 The name Jonah means Dove, which is the symbol of Israel. This is clearly a parable where Jonah, the prophet, is meant to represent Israel. The great fish is thought to represent the exile of the Jews into Babylon, and their return to Palestine. Some scholars believe the great fish also represents Jonah's (or Israel's) coming to terms with God's omnipotence. "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple." Jonah 2:7 This symbolism is born out in the transformation the Jews had to make in order to restore themselves in the temples of the Promised Land.

In the City of Ninevah, the repentent king, citizens and animals symbolize a new consciousness towards the idea of one true God for all humanity. This parable lays the foundation for the sense of brotherhood that comes in the New Testament with Jesus. This book of the Old Testament emphasizes the idea of repentance, forgiveness and universal love. Jesus refers to the Book of Jonah in Matthew 12:39-41 and in Luke 11:29-32.

Unlike the Ninevites, Jonah did NOT learn this most important lesson at the end of the book. He remained angry at God for forgiving a heathen city their sins. Possibly the reason Jonah failed to understand this is because we are still struggling over 2,000 years later with this same universal truth - unless we embrace all humanity as one, we push ourselves away from the Light as well as others.

II. DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

Read or tell the story of Jonah. If you have several weeks, tell the story in parts. If time is limited, concentrate on the first part of the story in which Jonah learns to listen to God.

A. Chapter 1

"Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amitai saying, 'Arise go to Ninevah, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before me.'" Jonah 1:1,2 God called Jonah to be a prophet to Ninevah for the people to repent their sins and heathen ways. Instead of doing God's bidding, Jonah fled on a ship going to Tarshish (on the coast of what is now Spain). Then God sent a storm to the sea. After casting lots to see whose God was responsible for this evil, the mariners, at Jonah's request, threw him into the sea. The storm immediately calmed. The mariners, who were heathens and believed in many different Gods, learned to fear Jonah's God and were obedient and

respectful to Him. God had given Jonah another chance for obedience and salvation by having a great fish swallow him. Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for 3 days and 3 nights.

Questions:

- ◇ Why do you think Jonah ran away from God's call?
- ◇ Have you ever "run away" from God's call in your heart? Have you ever known right from wrong and not followed the right way?
- ◇ Casting lots was common at the time Jonah was written. It was used to decide many important events and decisions, such as the outcome for a criminal trial and even choosing a king. People felt divine influence would occur, that God was actually making the decision. What are ways that people decide outcomes for important decisions today? How are decisions influenced by God?

B. Chapter 2

"But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay THAT that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." Jonah 2:9 Jonah reached the bottom of despair in his soul and heart while in the belly of the great fish on the bottom of the sea. Then came his revelation through prayer that the Lord had brought him life. In Jonah's thanksgiving he vowed to do what God asked of him. Then the fish vomited Jonah out on dry land.

Questions:

- ◇ What do you think it felt like for Jonah to be in the belly of the great fish? Have you ever felt that you were in the belly of a big feeling like sadness or anger or loneliness or blame?
- ◇ Why did Jonah have to feel so much despair in order to understand that God gives us all life?
- ◇ Was there ever a time when you had to feel really bad about something that happened in order to understand why you were wrong? (Example: breaking something you were asked not to touch.)
- ◇ What are some ways that we can see that God gives life? (Examples: plants, babies, animals, chain of life cycle)

C. Chapter 3

"But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." Jonah 3:8 God asked Jonah, for a second time, to go to Ninevah and preach their downfall because of their evil ways. So Jonah did this. The King, citizens and animals all repented with fasting and wearing sackcloth. The Ninevites hoped with their repentance that God would change his mind and spare them. And so God did.

Questions:

- ◇ Why do you think Jonah changed his mind about obeying God? Are there times when you change your mind about obeying?
- ◇ Jonah did not like the people of Ninevah. How do you think he felt about trying to warn them and help them?
- ◇ Why do you think God forgave the people of Ninevah?
- ◇ Can you tell when someone is really sorry, and when they are not? How does it make you feel?
- ◇ What are some ways we can forgive people?

D Chapter 4

"For I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." Jonah 4:2 Jonah became very angry with God for sending him to Ninevah. Jonah was concerned only for his own welfare, and didn't like being wrong in what he said. Jonah wanted to die. When God questioned his anger, Jonah left the city to sit outside. God made a large gourd plant to grow over Jonah and cover him in the sun, and help him in his grief. To teach Jonah a lesson, God destroyed the plant. Jonah again became angry and wanted to die. Finally, God asked Jonah if he had a right to take pity on a simple plant that God made to shade him, when he (Jonah) did not care about the whole city of Ninevah. "And should not I spare Ninevah, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?" Jonah 4:11

Questions:

- ❖ Why was Jonah angry?
- ❖ Have you ever been angry because you felt wronged?
- ❖ Why didn't Jonah care about the people of Ninevah?
- ❖ Why do you think God did care about them?
- ❖ What is a way (or several ways) that we can show that we care about other people who are different?

III. ACTIVITIES

A. Do a guided imagery of Jonah's journey in the great fish's belly. This means telling the story slowly while the children close their eyes and listen. You can use more positive messages like: dealing with being mad at someone, and being in the belly and realizing a way to resolve peacefully the conflict and coming out again. Going into the fish's belly can be going inside ourselves to find God.

B. Rod Puppets

Materials Needed:

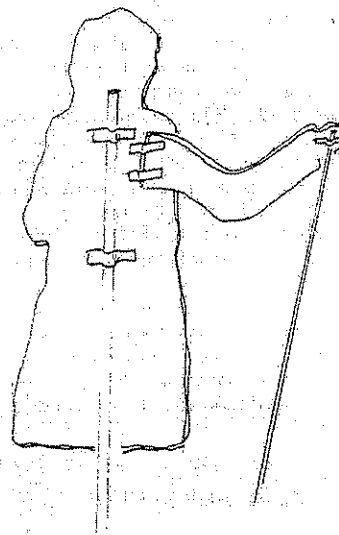
- Oaktag or light-weight cardboard
- Magic Markers
- Scissors; Glue
- Felt; Paper; Masking tape
- Dowels or rods (18" long; 1/2" and 1/8" diameter)

Directions:

Make rod puppets to tell the story of Jonah. A rod puppet is any picture to which a rod or stick is attached.

List the characters needed to tell the story of Jonah. What will be needed in addition to people? Decide who will make each one. Draw each figure on light-weight cardboard or oaktag. Try to have the figures in correct proportion to one another. Make them large enough to be seen from a distance.

Color the pictures with magic markers or crayons. Cut around each figure and attach a 1/2" rod to the back of each with masking tape. The stick should extend 8 to 12 inches below the picture to be a handle for the puppet.



For a more elaborate puppet, make arms that move. Design each figure so that one arm can be made out of light-weight paper or felt and glued to it. Attach an 18" length of 1/8" dowel to the hand.

To "work" the puppet, hold the main rod in one hand and the rod attached to the puppet's arm in the other hand.

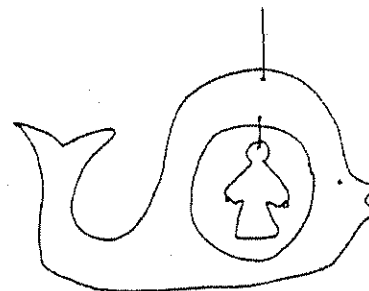
Use the puppets to retell the story of Jonah. Write a script with the children. If your group includes a variety of ages, little children can make puppets of the trees, ship, etc., while older children do the speaking characters.

C. Using clay, the children can mold the ship, the great fish, or Jonah. Do this in silence and encourage the children to understand the inward leading of this story. Have them share their creations and their feelings.

D. Using a Bible Atlas, have the children draw a large map of Jonah's journey. They can work together to draw various events along the way. Have them add drawings of thoughts, actions, feelings along with the geography. Do this as a time line map or as a mural of pictures - be creative.

E. Make a mobile of Jonah in the belly of the fish (see illustration) and discuss with the children ways in which we all can listen to God in our hearts.

F. Retell the story by using a book, e.g., *Jonah and the Lord* by George MacBeth or *Jonah and the Great Fish* by Warwick Hutton. (Both are available at PYM Library.) Make a large, dark cavern out of a refrigerator box or by putting sheets over tables to create the belly of a large fish. Let the children crawl in and out of the whale. Talk about how it feels "inside" and "outside" the whale.



G. Have each child draw a picture of a whale on a large piece of paper and then draw or write inside the whale things they might like to avoid, such as homework, recycling, broccoli, telling the truth all the time (examples can range from the sublime to the ridiculous). Discuss the drawings.

H. Make a mural of Jonah's story. This is a great project for a mixed-age group. Assign children different parts of the story. Use markers and shelf paper or brown wrapping paper.

I. Make a group list of things we want to be forgiven for and a second list of things we might be able to forgive. Talk about these lists. A good activity for middle elementary age children who are very rigid about right and wrong.

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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