

LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Exodus 9:13-26

Romans 9:14-24

Session Theme:

Power

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Our Least Favorite Things

When kids arrive, explain that there is a song in the famous musical "The Sound of Music" which is called "My Favorite Things." But rather than listing our favorite things like that song does, we are going to do the opposite and list our LEAST favorite things, instead! Bugs and other creepy crawlies? The dark? Being sick? Rotten food? Bad weather? Have kids call them out and write these items on the board. Then, circle (or add) any that are mentioned in today's Bible story.

The circled things are important. Why? Well in today's Bible story, we will hear how God used things just like these to save his people from an unfair king and from slavery. How? Let's begin our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Almighty God, you know when your people are suffering, and you care for them. Help us to trust you even when we feel scared and overwhelmed. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- *"When Israel Was in Egypt's Land" (hymn)*
- *"Pharaoh, Pharaoh" (Bible camp song)*

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Exodus

When the Hebrews were slaves to the Pharaoh in Egypt, God chose Moses to lead his people out of bondage. God did many signs and wonders, even parting the Red Sea to allow his people to escape.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

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Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Exodus 9:13-26

1. In a Bible dictionary, online, or by going through Exodus 6-9, can you list all ten plagues in order? What number is the plague of today's lesson?

   1) Water became blood
   2) Swarms of frogs
   3) Swarms of gnats (lice)
   4) Swarms of flies
   5) Disease on livestock
   6) Disease (boils) on people
   7) Hail and fire (lightning)
   8) Swarms of locusts
   9) Darkness over the land
   10) Death of the firstborn

2. Pay close attention to what God says to Pharaoh in verses 13-16. What was God's primary purpose in sending the plagues? What did he intend to prove?

   We often assume that the plagues were sent merely as a way of pressuring Pharaoh to do what God wanted. But actually, when God gives his reason for the plagues, he says it is to reveal his power and spread his fame. (Which is to say, God would have done the same thing whether the Pharaoh listened or not. See Exodus 7:3, where God says *he* will harden Pharaoh's heart.)

3. Did all the people of Egypt respond to Moses' warning in the same way the Pharaoh did?

   According to verse 20, there were Egyptians (even in the Pharaoh's household) who heard and believed what God had revealed through Moses. They were wise and took precautions, and so did not suffer the same consequences as their neighbors. (Note that we are not told whether the Israelites did anything precautionary, simply that God did not send hail on their land.)

4. Reread verses 20-21. How are these verses reflected in the lesson taught by Jesus in Matthew 7:24-27? What is the key to the different outcomes?

   In Jesus' parable of the house built on rock and house built on sand (Matthew 7), there were two very different results. But Jesus makes it clear that this was not just a lesson on good building practices. The two outcomes (good and bad) represent people who do or don't take God's Word seriously and do or don't act on it.

5. Visual dramatizations of this story have portrayed it in different ways. Was this a hail storm with flashes of lightning, or burning hail falling from the sky? By the description given in verses 23-25, what do you picture happened that day?

   The classic movie "The Ten Commandments" portrays hail that actually burst into flames. Other depictions paint a scene where fiery meteors fall from the sky. But "flashing fire" could also simply be a reference to lightning in the midst of the storm. (Compare Exodus 20:18a, Psalm 144:6, and Luke 17:24.)

6. In response to the plagues, Scripture says, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened" (Exodus 7:13-14). Sometimes it says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (8:15), but at other times that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (9:12). Is there a difference? Who is the cause of what happened?

   Refer to Question 2. Scripture gives the impression that God was responsible for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (making him stubborn and resistant). Whether Pharaoh resisted, or whether he relented and gave in, God made sure his heart was hardened (Exodus 4:21, 7:3, and 14:4). Compare Joshua 11:20.

7. In Romans 9:14-24, read what Apostle Paul says about God and the purpose God had for Pharaoh. Does this seem unfair? How does Paul respond? What point is Paul trying to make about the nature of God's grace vs. human action?

   The Apostle Paul uses the example of the Pharaoh to show that no human being can resist God's will; we are subject to God's sovereign choice and purpose. Ironically, Paul does not offer an explanation or defense on God's behalf, but simply says, "Don't talk back to God!"

   As people of faith, we must acknowledge that God's grace is "unfair" by our human standards. God is fully capable of acting despite, or apart from, our human obedience.

   This is a difficult concept for many people to understand and accept — even for believing Christians. Our human nature always wants to claim that *we* are in control of our lives, and that even God must respect our free will. But that is not the case. "For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" (Romans 9:15).

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Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Leap Frog Obstacle Course

Materials Needed:

- Large area for an obstacle course
- Chairs
- Books
- Bowls
- Pillows
- Timer (optional)



Instructions:

Set up an obstacle course for the kids, using the items listed above or substituting other things that can stand for each one.

Before starting this activity, explain that during one of the plagues (frogs), the little creatures got into everything — the Egyptians' beds, food dishes, furniture, even their drinking water. It must have been quite an infestation!

Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate how to hop like a frog. (To do this, the volunteer will squat down so their hands touch the floor and jump in this position across the room.)

Next, explain that each item in the obstacle course has to be approached a different way. "Frogs" should:

• Hop *up* to sit in the chairs

• Hop *around* the bowls in a circle

• Hop *over* the books and the pillows.

To add a competitive aspect to this, challenge the kids to play against the timer as a group. Consider your course and the number of kids, and set the timer for a reasonable amount of time. When you say, "Go!" the first kid in line would do the obstacle course as quickly as possible. Then the other kids would follow suit, one at a time, with each person starting after the one ahead finishes.

If the whole group completes the obstacle course before the timer sounds, they "win" the race. If the timer goes off first, the timer "wins"!

Activity 2: Buzzy Fly Print Picture

Materials Needed:

- Heavy white paper
- Black markers
- Black nontoxic craft paint or tempera paint
- Paint brushes
- Small paper plates or bowls
- Paper towels
- Glitter glue (optional)



Instructions:

Give everyone a piece of heavy white paper and some markers. Invite kids to draw a large picture of Pharaoh. He can be sitting on his throne, or eating a meal, or talking with Moses, and so on. Let kids imagine any scene they want from today's Bible story and draw that.

Next, invite them to draw just the wings (not the body) of a small fly somewhere on the picture. (They will be using paint later in the project to make the fly's body.) After kids have drawn one set of wings, encourage them to draw many other wings all over the picture. Remind them that swarms of flies were part of the fourth plague that God sent to Egypt under Pharaoh's rule. At the bottom of their paper, kids can write, "God performed amazing acts to rescue his people from slavery."

When their drawings are done, give everyone a small paper plate or bowl, a paper towel, and a paintbrush. Pour a little black paint onto each person's plate.

Using a paintbrush, have kids put some black paint on a pinkie finger. Then, press that finger in the center or just below the wings of one of the "flies." Continue doing this until every set of wings has a black body attached. When finished, kids can emphasize the wings of each fly by adding dots of glitter glue to them. Allow the pictures to dry.

Flies were only one of the plagues that God sent to Egypt in order to convince Pharaoh to free the Israelite slaves. Yet Pharaoh didn't listen! Unfortunately, he would have to learn the hard way that God was in charge, not himself.

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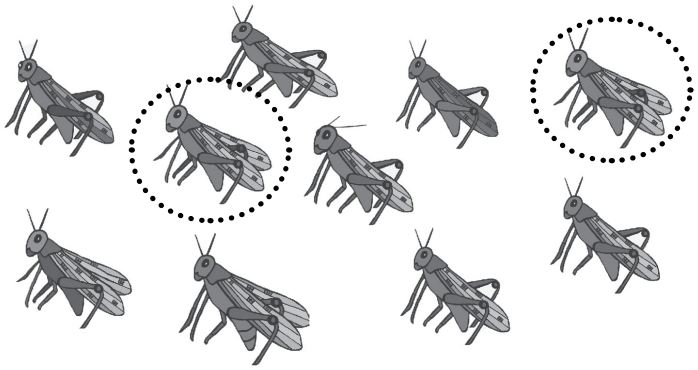
Worksheet Answer Key

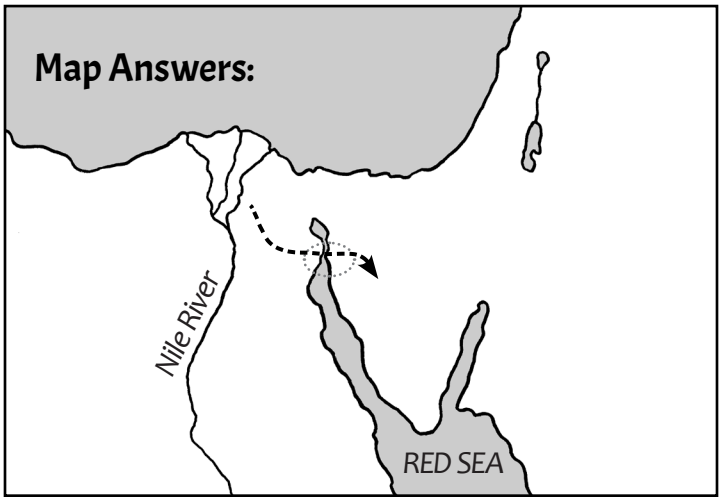
Shown below are the solution and answers to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:



The Ten Plagues

1.	Exodus 7:14-24	Water became blood
2.	Exodus 7:25–8:15	Swarms of frogs
3.	Exodus 8:16-19	Swarms of gnats (lice)
4.	Exodus 8:20-32	Swarms of flies
5.	Exodus 9:1-7	Disease on livestock
6.	Exodus 9:8-12	Disease (boils) on people
7.	Exodus 9:13-35	Hail and fire (lightning)
8.	Exodus 10:1-20	Swarms of locusts
9.	Exodus 10:21-29	Darkness over the land
10.	Exodus 12:29-32	Death of the firstborn

Today's lesson was the story of plague number 7!



Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Power

Strength and force

God always uses his mighty power for good purposes.

_____

Reflection for the Week Ahead



The King of Egypt was not a nice man! (This was a different Pharaoh than in last week's story about Joseph interpreting dreams.) This Pharaoh wanted to keep Israel in slavery, working them harder and harder, and wouldn't let them worship the Lord. God sent Moses to put Pharaoh on notice, saying, "Let my people go!" But as you know, Pharaoh wouldn't let them go.

See if you can name the ten plagues. If you can't get them all, you can start skimming at Exodus 7:14 where the first plague is listed.

Talk together about how each of the plagues would have caused great destruction on the land and in the lives of the people. For example, in the first plague the water was turned to blood.

What happened to the fish and other creatures that lived in that water? What would have happened to the water supply? Would there have been good water to drink?

How are all things in life connected?

The Practice of Prayer

On the lines below, write a prayer thanking God for freeing the Hebrews from slavery and for his power over the whole creation. Praise God for his salvation in your life and ask him to help you to be faithful too.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.

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