

*You'll need signs to hold up with the people's responses on them.*

Last month at Messy Church, we heard a story about baby Moses. Moses grew up in the palace of Pharaoh - the king of Egypt - and became a very important man. But he never forgot that he had been born into a Hebrew family. And his people - God's people - were slaves.

Moses was very unhappy when he saw how badly the Egyptian masters treated their slaves. One day, when he saw an Egyptian whip a slave, Moses killed the Egyptian. Somebody saw him ... so Moses ran away.

He ran far away into the desert, and there he found a new family and worked as a shepherd. One day, when he was looking after the sheep, he saw a bush that was on fire but wasn't burning up. When he got close, God called to him from the burning bush.

God           Moses, Moses!

Moses        Here I am.

God           You must take your brother, Aaron, to Egypt and ask Pharaoh to let my people go. He won't agree. But when I make it happen, then all the world will know that I am a great big God. You will lead your people to a land where they will be free and have everything they need.

People        Our God is a great big God!

Moses didn't want to go. But God promised to go with him, and Moses obeyed. He and Aaron went to see Pharaoh.

Moses        God wants you to set his people free.

Pharaoh     Don't be silly! They do what I tell them. They work for nothing. I'll never let them go.

People        Oh, yes you will!

Moses I must warn you, Pharaoh. God will make some very bad things happen unless you change your mind.

Pharaoh I won't change my mind. In fact, I'll make them work even harder! They must carry on making as many mud-and-straw bricks as before - but now they'll have to find their own straw.

Moses Lord God, please help your people. Things are getting worse, not better.

God I am a great big God. I will never let you down. I will set my people free, and then they will know that I am God.

People Our God is a great big God!

It started almost at once. The rivers of Egypt turned into blood.

People Help! Help!

The houses of Egypt swarmed with frogs.

People Help! Help!

The dust of Egypt turned into gnats.

People Help! Help!

But still Pharaoh would not listen to Moses.

Pharaoh These people are my slaves. I'll never let them go.

People Oh, yes you will!

And so the plagues continued. The people in Egypt were covered in flies.

People Help! Help!

Moses Pharaoh, you can put a stop to all this if you let God's people go.

Pharaoh Ok, I will. You can go. Just don't go too far away.

So God took the flies away.

Pharaoh Flies all gone? Excellent! No need to lose my slaves after all. I'll *never* let them go.

People Oh, yes you will!

And so the plagues continued. The animals in Egypt grew sick and died.

People Help! Help!

Both animals and people were covered in boils.

People Help! Help!

Hail pelted the land and broke down the crops.

People Help! Help!

Moses Pharaoh, you can put a stop to all this if you let God's people go.

Pharaoh Ok, I will. Your God is a great big God, and I've been wrong. You may all go.

So God took the hail away.

Pharaoh Hail all gone? Excellent! No need to lose my slaves after all. I'll *never* let them go.

People Oh, yes you will!

And so the plagues continued. Locusts gobbled up all the crops that were left.

People Help! Help!

Darkness fell for three whole days.

People Help! Help!

But Moses trusted God. He knew that God had promised to set his people free.

God Moses! You must tell the people to get ready. Tell them to kill a lamb and put a little of its blood on the doorpost of each house. Then they must roast the lamb and eat it with bitter greens. The

bread they eat must be without yeast. They must eat this meal fully dressed, with their sandals on and their walking sticks in their hands. This is a day to remember.

So the people got ready. And then came the worst plague of all. The eldest child in every Egyptian family died one night. But all the Hebrew children were safe, because the plague passed over every house with lamb's blood on its doorpost. Then, at last, Pharaoh changed his mind.

Pharaoh     Go! Go, and never come back! Your God is a great big God and I cannot stand against him.

People        Our God is a great big God!

God's people were ready to go, and now there was no stopping them! But just as they reached the Red Sea and were puzzling out how to get across, the Pharaoh changed his mind again.

Pharaoh     Stop! Come back! You're my slaves, and I'll *never* let you go!

People        Oh, yes you will!

Pharaoh leaped into his chariot and led his army out after God's people. The deep, wide sea was in front of God's people, and the huge, terrifying Egyptian army was behind them.

People        Help! Help!

But Moses trusted God. He knew that God had promised to set his people free.

God           Stretch out your hand!

So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea - and the water split in two before them! God sent a strong east wind to blow away the water, making a dry path for them to hurry across.

People        Our God is a great big God!

Pharaoh     Stop! Come back! You're my slaves, and I'll *never* let you go!

People       Oh, yes you will!

And when the Egyptian soldiers tried to follow God's people, the sea rushed back and all the soldiers were drowned. God's people were free at last.

People       Our God is a great big God!

Let us pray.

Father God,

we thank you and praise you because you are a great big God.

You always keep your promises.

And when you sent Jesus to die on the cross and rise again,

you set *all* your people free.

Help us to listen to you, to trust you and obey you,

for Jesus' sake.

Amen.