

The background of the cover features a blue-toned image of ancient stone carvings and ruins. The upper portion shows intricate relief work on a wall, including a large, stylized figure with outstretched arms. The lower portion shows a landscape with several standing stone columns of varying heights, some with decorative capitals, set against a clear sky.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The

LEARNING
BIBLE

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION

TEACHER'S GUIDE


The Learning BIBLE™

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY
NEW YORK

TEACHER'S GUIDE



CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION®

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Introduction

Loving something makes us naturally want to learn more about it. Unfortunately, many beginning students of the Bible find themselves faced with a difficult and confusing task. Many Bible reference books are written on a very high level of scholarship, and assume their readers have already devoted years to biblical study. Other Bible references provide too little information, and may create an understanding of the Bible that is unsatisfying to the general reader or incomplete. Yet even if a Bible reader gathers information and begins to study, the specialized nature of some materials can require a student to jump from one book to another, in a tiring process that can quickly kill the reader's enthusiasm.

Finally there is a single book that meets the needs of a beginning Bible student, a Bible with background information and reference tools that will inspire enthusiasm—a complete and convenient book that can open the world of Scriptures as never before. This is *The Learning Bible*, created by the American Bible Society.

The Learning Bible provides an exciting and unique opportunity for Bible students to learn more about the Bible and how its message relates to their lives. The study features of *The Learning Bible* are easy to use and are thoroughly integrated so that the reader is encouraged to explore the social, historical, and cultural context in which the various books of the Bible were written.

The Learning Bible has everything laypeople need to begin a meaningful, ongoing, self-guided exploration of the Scriptures. Clergy and church educators will find clear and concise explanations of important biblical concepts and themes as well as fresh ways of presenting them to novice Bible readers.

The best way to become familiar with all the exciting features that make up *The Learning Bible* is to take a moment to read the prefatory articles "The Contemporary English Version" (pp. 1–5 in *The Learning Bible*) and "How To Use the CEV Learning Bible" (pp. 7–10). "The Contemporary English Version" will tell you everything you need to know about this fresh, modern English translation of the Bible. Since some of your students may be more familiar with the language and phrasings of more traditional translations, it will be helpful if you have a working knowledge of the principles that guided the translators who prepared the CEV.

After you have acquainted yourself with the exciting features of *The Learning Bible*, use the sample lesson plan as a model so that you can actually see how these features are used in practice. What better way to introduce your students to the many benefits of this Bible *than to use it yourself!* The lesson plan will guide you in how to use the tools featured. Although every tool will not be described here, we encourage you to continue to explore the many ways *The Learning Bible* can enhance your knowledge. After you have become familiar with *The Learning Bible*, choose your favorite tools (and the ones which are appropriate for your needs) and use them each time you need to study or teach.

Features of The Learning Bible

Are you looking for a Bible that is so comprehensive that you would never have to leave your easy chair to look for references? Well, you've found it! *The Learning Bible* will provide you with all the information you need and more. Some of the main features are:

NOTES

Located on the outside margins of each page are unique colored symbols or icons which represent six different note categories (see below). These notes provide a brief commentary about the Bible text. Notes also link you to other information related to the text such as maps, mini-articles, charts—many of which will be described in this booklet.



Geography



People and Nations



Objects, Plants, and Animals



History and Culture



Ideas and Concepts



Cross References

MINI-ARTICLES AND BACKGROUND ARTICLES

Notes are great for short, quick references, but many times, you will need additional information. *The Learning Bible* makes this easy for you with fifteen background articles (for important topic overviews) and over one hundred mini-articles. Like the marginal notes, mini-articles are keyed to one of the six note categories. For a complete list of mini-articles, see the bookmark you received with your copy of *The Learning Bible* or the Index to Mini-Articles on p. 2380.

CROSS REFERENCES

The Learning Bible lists cross references to show where other related Scriptures are found, how one Bible book quotes another or makes a statement that is very similar to what another biblical author has written. Cross references are shown in one of three ways:

- > Listed within a note, footnote, or article
- > Included in a list of parallel passage references under a Scripture heading (see p. 7)
- > Listed after the orange “cross reference” symbol in the margin at the bottom of the page

FOOTNOTES

The Learning Bible contains the complete text of the Bible in the *Contemporary English Version (CEV)*, a translation made directly from the best available Greek and Hebrew texts. The footnotes at the bottom of each page were provided by the translators. They offer alternate renderings, explain linguistic issues (such as plays on words), alert the reader to places where ancient sources disagree, and identify places where the original language texts are unclear.

CHARTS AND BIBLE TIMELINE

In order to display information in an easy, useful and organized way, *The Learning Bible* provides a number of detailed charts throughout. Because keeping track of the sequence of the many events described by the biblical authors can be difficult and confusing, *The Learning Bible* has a detailed Bible Timeline which can be found on pp. 2360-2363.

MAPS

As a very valuable reference tool, *The Learning Bible* provides a Mini Atlas (see Table of Contents, p. ix “*Helps to the Reader*”). This Mini Atlas section, which contains sixteen color maps of Bible lands, begins on p. 2364. These maps are arranged chronologically and make it easy for the reader to understand the changing national and political landscape of the Holy Land. As an added convenience, *The Learning Bible* provides many small spot maps for quick reference. These maps are positioned throughout the text and provide detailed information that may not be found in the Mini Atlas.

INSTRUCTIVE ILLUSTRATIONS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Sometimes the clearest way to explain something is to show a picture. *The Learning Bible* combines illustrations, photographs, and diagrams to enhance your biblical study and to help you understand life in Bible times.



Making Bricks. In ancient times, bricks were made by adding straw or sand to a mud or clay mixture. Workers mixed the straw and mud together with a stick or by hand, sometimes standing right in the mud pit. The wet mud and straw mixture was put in wooden brick-shaped molds, and the wet bricks were laid out in rows so that they could dry in the hot sun. As the bricks dried and became hard, the straw made the mud bricks stronger and kept them from shrinking, cracking, or losing their shape. Bricks were the most widely used building material in the ancient Near East.

BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The Learning Bible includes hundreds of pieces of artwork from different eras in history and from the different cultures of the world. If the passage you are studying with your class is illustrated by one of these images, why not let the image be a "conversation starter." Ask your students how they feel about the image and whether they feel the artist did a good job of illustrating the Bible text. Then ask them how they would have illustrated the same story if they were an artist.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Each book of the Bible includes one or more sections of Questions designed to help readers engage with the Scripture text on a meaningful level. (Short books, like the letters in the New Testament, will have a section of Questions at the very end of the book; longer books, like the Gospels, will have several boxes of Questions positioned at different points within the book.) While these are ideal for personal Bible study, they can also be easily adapted for classroom use. When preparing a lesson, take a moment to locate the box of Questions that follows your selected Scripture passage and see if there isn't a question there that could help you get a classroom discussion started. (Keep in mind that in longer books the nearest box of Questions may be twenty or more pages beyond the page where your chosen text appears.)

MEMORY VERSES

The Learning Bible has highlighted some key verses and placed them in a yellow shaded area at the top of pages. Use these verses, or others you like better, as Memory Verses. Encourage your students to put them on posters for display in the class or in their bedroom at home. Or have them write them on index cards so they can carry them around with them and read and memorize them when they have a quiet moment during the day.

BIBLE READING PLANS

To help you with your own Bible study, *The Learning Bible* provides two different Bible Reading Plans (*A Moment with Scripture* and *Read through the Bible in a Year*) and memory verses for just about every book of the Bible.

Sample Lesson Plan for Teens and Young Adults

Delivered by God's Power

(AN EXAMPLE USING A STORY ABOUT MOSES)

THE LESSON GOALS

In this lesson, help your students to:

- > Discover the importance of trusting in God.
- > Realize the importance of relying on God's strength when facing impossible situations.
- > Understand that God's will, in any situation, may seem strange to human minds, but God does what's best when we obey him.
- > Reflect on how a particular Bible story relates to their own daily lives.

THE LESSON BACKGROUND

All of us, at one point or another, have feared something or someone. God wants to teach us to restrain our fears so that we are strong enough to face life's situations head-on. God wants to accomplish great things through us, but we must learn to trust him even when life seems hopeless.

Moses was no stranger to hopeless situations. Born a Hebrew, Moses was raised in the palace of the king of Egypt. After God spoke to Moses, Moses agreed to lead God's people to freedom after 430 years of slavery. To get a sense of when this event occurred in the history of the people of Israel, see the Bible Timeline on p. 2360.

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT AND THE WILDERNESS 1700 TO 1250 B.C.

1700-1290 B.C.
The descendants of Jacob are enslaved in Egypt.

1290 B.C.
Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt.

1290-1250 B.C.
The Israelites wander in the wilderness. During this time Moses receives the Law on Mount Sinai.

Moses and Aaron went to the king of Egypt and told him, "The Lord God says, 'Let my people go into the desert, so they can honor me with a celebration there.'"
(Exodus 5:1)

The story of Moses and the deliverance of the Israelite people from Egypt is an exciting story of God's guidance. As the story unfolds, ask yourself this question, "Will I follow God wherever God leads?" The drama of Moses and the Israelites continues...

THE LESSON INTRODUCTION

Begin the class with an exercise called "The Learning Bible Challenge." This game will help acquaint students with the background story of Moses and the Israelite people. As you do this you will become more familiar with the many features of *The Learning Bible* and discover your own ways to help your students make the most out of the time they spend using this valuable study resource.

Divide the students into two teams. Inform the students that there will be a list of six questions each worth 5 points. The team with the most points wins. The object of the game is to answer as many questions as possible without looking in *The Learning Bible*. If a team member gets stuck, they can take *The Learning Bible Challenge*, or if the answer to a particular question is not known, the player should respond, "I want to take *The Learning Bible Challenge*." The Leader will pass *The Learning Bible* to the stumped player and he/she will have sixty seconds to find the answer. If the player cannot answer the question when the time is up, the other team has a chance to answer.

Now let's begin our game.

1. What does the name "Moses" mean?

Since "Moses" is a person's name, information on him would be found by looking at the "People and Nations" note on page 132 (see right-IA). This note will lead you to a mini-article on Moses, p. 2241 (see below-IB). The mini-article on Moses will lead you to the "Key Events in Moses' Life" chart located on p. 2242 (see opposite page-IC).

2.10 *Moses*: In Hebrew the word "Moses" sounds like the word for "pull out" or "the one who pulls out." Moses is an Egyptian name that means "is born" and was part of Egyptian names such as Thutmose and Rameses. For more, see the mini-article called "Moses," p. 2241. See also Acts 7.21.

IA

MOSES

IB

Moses was born in Egypt to Hebrew parents but later was adopted by the Egyptian king's daughter (Exod 2.1-10). Growing up in Egypt, Moses saw how cruelly the Egyptians treated the Hebrew people. One day Moses killed an Egyptian guard and escaped to the land of Midian, where the LORD told him to go back to Egypt to free the Hebrew people from slavery (Exod 3.1-4.17). He did return to Egypt and warned Egypt's king that the LORD would send disasters on Egypt unless the king let the Hebrew people go free. Eventually, Moses led the people out of Egypt and through the Red Sea (Exod 5-15).

Moses was a great leader and a miracle-worker (Exod 15.22-25), but he had many other roles as well. He was the great "law-giver," chosen by the LORD to receive the Ten Commandments and other laws that were to guide the lives and worship of the Israelite people. These laws are described in detail in the books of EXODUS (20-40), LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, and DEUTERONOMY. Moses is also described as a prophet (Deut 34.10; 12.7), who preached God's words of judgment and promise to the people (Deut 7.12-15).

Though Moses is not called a "priest,"

the LORD gave to him the directions for building Israel's sacred tent and the rules that were to govern Israel's worship and sacrifices. He also prayed to the LORD on behalf of the whole people (Num 14.11-20) and went to the sacred tent to meet the LORD (Exod 33.7-11).

Moses also decided legal cases, and he appointed judges to help him make decisions on the basis of God's laws (Exod 18.13-26). Moses acted as a military leader when Israel had to battle unfriendly people on their way to the promised land of Canaan (Num 21.21-35).

The LORD did not allow Moses to lead the people of Israel into the promised land (Num 20.12; Deut 3.23-29), but Moses was able to look across the Jordan Valley from Mt. Nebo and see the land that was to become the land of Israel (Deut 32.48-52).

The New Testament primarily refers to Moses' role as "law-giver" (Matt 19.7; John 1.17; 2 Cor 3.7-14), but he is also described as an example of faith (Heb 3.2; 11.23-28) and as a prophet (Acts 3.22,23).

See the chart on the next page for a list of key events and miracles in the life of Moses.

IC

KEY EVENTS IN MOSES' LIFE

EVENT	SCRIPTURE PASSAGES
Moses is born in Egypt	Exod 2.1-10
Moses kills an Egyptian and escapes to the land of Midian	Exod 2.11-15
Moses marries Zipporah, a Midianite	Exod 2.21,22
God speaks to Moses from the burning bush	Exod 3.1-4.17
Moses and Aaron confront the king of Egypt and the LORD brings about ten disasters (plagues)	Exod 5.1-12.30
Moses leads the people of Israel out of Egypt and across the Red Sea	Exod 12.31-42; 13.17-14.31
The LORD makes the bitter waters at Marah drinkable	Exod 15.22-25
The LORD sends bread (manna) from heaven	Exod 16.1-36; Num 11.4-9
The LORD gives water from a rock	Exod 17.1-7; Num 20.1-13
Moses receives the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai	Exod 20.1-17; Deut 5.1-21
Moses receives laws concerning community life matters	Exod 21.1-23.9; Num 30.1-16; 35.9-36.13; Deut 15.1-18; 16.18-20; 17.8-20; 19.1-25.16
Moses receives instructions about the sacred tent and other religious matters	Exod 25.1-31.18; 35.1-40.38; Lev 1-27; Num 19.1-22; 28.1-29.40; Deut 12.1-14.29; 15.19-16.17
The people make an idol in the shape of a bull and Moses breaks the stones with the LORD's Commandments written on them	Exod 32.1-35; Deut 9.6-29
The LORD gives a second set of commandments	Exod 34.1-9; Deut 10.1-5
Moses' face shines from being in the LORD's presence on Mount Sinai	Exod 34.29-35
The LORD gives Moses instructions about making the tribe of Levi into priests to serve in the sacred tent	Num 3.5-13; 8.5-26; 18.1-32; Deut 10.8,9
Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebel against Moses' leadership	Num 16.1-40
Moses makes a bronze snake to heal the people bitten by poisonous snakes	Num 21.4-9
The LORD refuses to let Moses enter Canaan	Deut 3.23-29; 32.48-52
The LORD gives Moses the most important commandment	Deut 6.1-9
Moses blesses the tribes of Israel	Deut 33.1-29
Moses dies in Moab	Deut 34.1-8

2. How was the baby Moses kept dry when his mother sent him down the Nile River?

The *Learning Bible* provides you with an “**Objects, Plants, and Animals**” note for easy reference (see p. 132). In addition to finding out that the object was a basket, you will find out other details about the basket, including how it was made, etc. Also, take time to study the illustration on p. 133 and to read the accompanying caption. What events in the Moses story seem to have been most important to the artist? Ask your students what aspects of the story they would focus on if they were illustrating it.

3. After Moses got angry and killed one of the Egyptians, where did he go?

In reading this background, you will realize that the answer is Midian. The “**Geography**” notes on pp. 133 and 136 will lead you to a **Mini-article** on Egypt which is located on p. 130. In reading about Egypt, the first sentence directs you to the **Maps** located on pages 2364 and 2365 (see opposite page).

Egypt and Sinai, 1400 to 1200 B.C.



4. What is the significance of the “burning bush?”

You will find an **“Ideas and Concepts”** note in your *Learning Bible* on p. 134 which tells you that “fire and smoke often signal the presence of God in the Bible.” Another useful part of this note is the listing of other verses. By reading these cross references, you will learn of other places where fire and smoke signal God’s presence.

5. Why did Moses have to take off his sandals?

Go to the **“History and Culture”** note on p. 134. “Removing sandals may have been an ancient custom connected with holy places.... What made the place special was the presence of God.”

6. Name three of the ten plagues.

(Make sure all three answers are correct). *The Learning Bible* makes this very easy. Locate the **Mini-article** and **Chart** on p. 145 (see opposite page) which describes all ten plagues in order of their occurrence and gives their Scripture reference. Remember, when looking at a Mini-article, you will see the category symbol or icon in the outer corner of the Mini-article title bar. In this case, the Mini-article is tagged with a **“History and Culture”** icon.

DISASTERS (PLAGUES)



In the Bible, God sometimes sends disasters (plagues) to punish evil-doers, to show his chosen people that he is angry because of their disobedience, or to show his power as the supreme God of nature. These plagues are so devastating that there can be no doubting that they come from God. In Genesis 12.10-20, Abraham’s wife, Sarah, goes to live with the king of Egypt, telling him that she was Abraham’s sister. God sent terrible

diseases on the king and those in his palace, because Sarah was Abraham’s wife, and no one else was to have sex with her. See other examples of plagues sent as punishment at 1 Samuel 5,6 and 2 Kings 19.35.

The most famous plagues in the Bible are those described in Exodus which occurred before the people of Israel escaped from Egypt. These ten disasters are listed below:

DISASTER	WHAT HAPPENED	EXODUS PASSAGE
1	Nile River’s water is turned into blood	7.14-24
2	Frogs swarm all over the land	8.1-15
3	Gnats cover all humans and animals	8.16-19
4	Flies swarm everywhere and fill the houses	8.20-24
5	Egyptian livestock are killed by a disease	9.1-7
6	Humans and animals are covered with sores	9.8-12
7	Hail, thunder, and rain knock down the crops	9.13-35
8	Locusts eat up all the plants	10.1-20
9	Darkness covers the whole land	10.21-29
10	Death of all first-born Egyptian males and animals	12.1-30

Although the Egyptian magicians were able to make some of these disasters happen, only God could cause the most serious ones, and only God’s people were saved from them. The magicians admitted that Israel’s “God has done this” when they couldn’t undo or perform one of these miracles themselves (Exod 8.19). Jesus used a similar phrase when he was showing how he could drive demons out of people (Luke

11.20). Some psalms (Ps 78.43-51; 105.26-36; 135.8,9; 136.10) and the writings of the prophets of Israel (Amos 4.10; Hab 3.5) highlight the importance of the disasters in making possible Israel’s escape from Egypt. In addition, the people of Israel were reminded that God could send such disasters on them if they did not live by the laws God gave to Moses (Num 14.12; Deut 28.21-23; 28.60-62; 32.22-24).

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON
(EXODUS 14.6-31; 15.19-21)

Exodus 14.6-18

The king got his war chariot and army ready. He commanded his officers in charge of his six hundred best chariots and all his other chariots to start after the Israelites. The LORD made the king so stubborn that he went after them, even though the Israelites proudly went on their way. But the king's horses and chariots and soldiers caught up with them while they were camping by the Red Sea near Pi-Hahiroth and Baal-Zephon.

When the Israelites saw the king coming with his army, they were frightened and begged the LORD for help. They also complained to Moses, "Wasn't there enough room in Egypt to bury us? Is that why you brought us out here to die in the desert? Why did you bring us out of Egypt anyway? While we were there, didn't we tell you to leave us alone? We had rather be slaves in Egypt than die in this desert!"

But Moses answered, "Don't be afraid! Be brave, and you will see the LORD save you today. These Egyptians will never bother you again. The LORD will fight for you, and you won't have to do a thing."

The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you keep calling out to me for help? Tell the Israelites to move forward. Then hold your walking stick over the sea. The water will open up and make a road where they can walk through on dry ground. I will make the Egyptians so stubborn that they will go after you. Then I will be praised because of what happens to the king and his chariots and cavalry. The Egyptians will know for sure that I am the LORD."

Exodus 14.19-31

All this time God's angel had gone ahead of Israel's army, but now he moved behind them. A large cloud had also gone ahead of them, but now it moved between the Egyptians and the Israelites. The cloud gave light to the Israelites, but made it dark for the Egyptians, and during the night they could not come any closer.

Moses stretched his arm over the sea, and the LORD sent a strong east wind that blew all night until there was dry land where the water had been. The sea opened up, and the Israelites walked through on dry land with a wall of water on each side.

The Egyptian chariots and cavalry went after them. But before daylight the LORD looked down at the Egyptian army from the fiery cloud and made them panic. Their chariot wheels got stuck, and it was hard for them to move. So the Egyptians said to one another, "Let's leave these people alone! The LORD is on their side and is fighting against us."

The LORD told Moses, "Stretch your arm toward the sea—the water will cover the Egyptians and their cavalry and chariots." Moses stretched out his arm, and at daybreak the water rushed toward the Egyptians. They tried to run away, but the LORD drowned them in the sea. The water came and covered the chariots, the cavalry, and the whole Egyptian army that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them was left alive. But the sea had made a wall of water on each side of the Israelites; so they walked through on dry land.

On that day, when the Israelites saw the bodies of the Egyptians washed up on the shore, they knew that the LORD had saved them. Because of the mighty power he had used against the Egyptians, the Israelites worshiped him and trusted him and his servant Moses.

Exodus 15.19-21

The LORD covered the royal Egyptian cavalry and chariots with the sea, after the Israelites had walked safely through on dry ground. Miriam the sister of Aaron was a prophet. So she took her tambourine and led the other women out to play their tambourines and to dance. Then she sang to them:

"Sing praises to the LORD for his great victory!
He has thrown the horses and their riders
into the sea."

(Questions for each of the following three sections can be found at the end of the lesson.)

The Problem (Exodus 14.6-12)

After living in bondage for 430 years, the people of Israel were no longer slaves to the king of Egypt. However, back in Egypt, the king began to regret letting the Hebrew slaves go. He was excited to hear that they were trapped between the desert and the sea and he decided to go after them. He gathered a huge army of six hundred chariots (*see picture and note about chariots on p. 156*) and went in search of them. The Israelites were trapped and becoming very afraid. So being human, they looked for someone to blame for their predicament. They blamed Moses. They said, "Wasn't there enough room in Egypt to bury us? Is that why you brought us out here to die in the desert? Why did you bring us out of Egypt anyway?" (Exodus 14.11)

The Power (Exodus 14.13-18, 21, 22)

The Egyptian army was coming closer and the Israelites began to panic. Moses tried to calm the people down and answered, "Don't be afraid! Be brave, and you will see the Lord save you today. These Egyptians will never bother you again. The Lord will fight for you, and you won't have to do a thing." (Exodus 14.13, 14)

After Moses prayed, he prepared the people for their journey. God told Moses to stretch out his walking stick over the sea and it would open so that the people would be able to walk through on dry ground. (*Look at the map on pp. 2364 and 2365 and find the Red Sea*). Imagine God parting that huge body of water and making it stand up on either side. That is *absolutely amazing!* (*See also the "Geography" note on p. 155.*)

Although not a reference from our Scripture text, it is always good to scan *The Learning Bible's* marginal notes as the Red Sea is an important part of this lesson.

While the Israelites walked to safety, the cloud that had been leading them moved behind them, leaving the Egyptians in darkness. But the same cloud gave the Israelites light to see. (*Reflect on the illustration on p. 155.*) In the morning, God removed the cloud so that the Egyptians could see ahead of them. They charged after the Israelites. As their chariots were coming toward the sea bottom, God caused the chariot wheels to become stuck so that they couldn't move. Remembering the then disasters that had happened in Egypt, the Egyptians cried, "Let's leave these people alone! The Lord is on their side and is fighting against us." (Exodus 14.25b) After the last Israelite climbed out of the sea bottom, God told Moses to stretch his walking stick over the sea again. When he did, God released the walls of water and the Egyptian army and their horses drowned. Not one of them survived. The Israelites were saved! *Delivered by God's power!* (*Reflect on the illustration on p. 157.*)

The Praise (Exodus 15.19-21)

After the children of Israel looked back and saw what the LORD had done, they were amazed. They couldn't help but praise God for delivering them from the hands of the Egyptians. The Song of Miriam expresses the joy of the Israelites:

"Sing praises to the LORD for his great victory!
He has thrown the horses and their riders
into the sea." (Exodus 15.21)

(See the illustration on p. 159 depicting this event.)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (SEE P. 165)

The Problem

1. What did the Israelite people complain about? (Exodus 14.10-12)
2. How did Moses, with God's help, respond to those complaints?

The Power

1. The crossing of the Red Sea was a great example of God's saving power on behalf of the people of Israel. (Exodus 14.21, 22) What happened to the pursuing Egyptian cavalry? What is your reaction to that? Have you ever felt as though you have been "saved"? If so, describe the situation.
2. Examples of God's miraculous help fill this section of Exodus. In your opinion, do such miracles still happen? Explain.

The Praise

1. The Israelite people sang praises and danced for joy after God delivered them from the Egyptians. (Exodus 15.19-21) How do you thank God for blessings?

THE LESSON IN YOUR LIFE

We, too, are like the Israelites. Many times we may become fearful when problems arise. But whenever we have a "Red Sea" experience and our problems seem insurmountable, how should we respond in faith? In the Moses story, Moses' walking stick, in and of itself, did not hold the power. It was God who was the power behind the walking stick.

When was the last time you had a problem and turned to God for help? We all must continue to learn to trust in God's power. When God acts on our behalf, consider it done! It's not for us to worry about when, where, and how, but to praise God for who he is and what he continues to do in our lives. As you continue on your life's journey, always remember to trust in God's saving power.

MEMORY VERSE

"Don't be afraid! Be brave, and you will see the LORD save you today."
(Exodus 14.13a)

Adapted Lesson Plan for Children (ages 6-10)

THEME: GOD'S GOT THE POWER

SUMMARY: GOD HAS ALL POWER IN HIS HANDS AND HE IS ABLE TO HELP YOU SOLVE ALL OF YOUR PROBLEMS.

PREPARATION

For this session, the following items will be needed:

- > Markers, Pens, Pencils
- > Blindfolds (handkerchief, scarf, etc.)
- > Rod (or long stick)
- > Newsprint
- > Tape

OPENING ACTIVITY

Ask the children to choose partners. When they have paired off, inform the children that one of them will be the voice to guide ("the leader") and the other child will wear the blindfold ("the follower"). After the children have chosen their roles, the teacher should blindfold all of the "followers." The teacher will position the followers at one end of the room and the leaders at the other. The teacher should put a few soft obstacles in the path (such as pillows or large stuffed animals). The teacher should then announce, "**Follow the voice of your leader, those who are not afraid!**" Each leader should then try to guide their follower through the maze so that they can reach the other side safely. (For older children and for added effect, the teacher can switch the lights off and have the children walk through the maze in the dark.)

The purpose of this exercise is to see if children trust "the voice" of their leader. Although we as God's children cannot see him, we must learn to trust him, and always listen to the right voice, God's voice. Moses could not have taken the children of Israel across the Red Sea without obeying God's voice and depending on his power. Let's read today's story.

READ SCRIPTURE STORY FROM THE LEARNING BIBLE

(Read the story from Exodus 14.6-31 to the children aloud.)

Divide the children into two groups. Choose one child to be the king of Egypt and the others to be his army. Then choose one child to be Moses and the other children to be the Israelites. Have fun and be creative in this role play.

The army was coming closer and closer. The Israelites began to panic. Moses tried to calm the people down by saying, "*Don't be afraid! Be brave, and you will see the LORD save you today. These Egyptians will never bother you again. The LORD will fight for you, and you won't have to do a thing.*" (Exodus 14.13, 14)

After Moses prayed, he prepared the people for their journey. God told Moses to stretch out his walking stick over the sea and it would open so that the people would be able to walk through on dry ground. Imagine God parting all of that water and making it stand up on either side. *God's got the power!*

CLOSING EXERCISE

After all of the children return to their seats, ask them to name people whom they think are powerful. Write *every* response on the newsprint. Having read the story, ask the children if they think anyone is more powerful than God. Why?

End the session with this special drill:

TEACHER: **Who's got the power?**

STUDENTS: **God's got the power!**

(Repeat three times)

CLOSE IN PRAYER

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