

12.06a Plagues 1–5 (Exodus 7:14–9:7; Psalm 78:42–45)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- (optional) *Herein Is Love Commentary Series; Exodus, A Commentary for Children*, by Nancy Ganz, Shepherd Press, 2002. Thoughts gained from this book will be noted by (Ganz).

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *plague*: widespread calamity or hardship
- *Nile River*: [locate on a map] when the Nile flooded every August in ancient Egypt, the water carried nutrients to the soil (<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/geography/physical-geography/nile-river-facts/>). Egyptians worshiped this river as a god.
- *land of Goshen*: the delta area of Egypt where the children of Israel lived [locate on a map]
- *murrain*: a sickness that kills livestock

Scripture:

Exodus 7:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he is going out to the water, and station yourself to meet him on the bank of the Nile; and you shall take in your hand the staff that was turned into a serpent. 16 You shall say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness. But behold, you have not listened until now.”’ 17 Thus says the LORD, “By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood. 18 The fish that are in the Nile will die, and the Nile will become foul, and the Egyptians will find difficulty in drinking water from the Nile.”” 19 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their reservoirs of water, that they may become blood; and there will be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *vessels of wood* and in *vessels of stone*.’”

20 So Moses and Aaron did even as the LORD had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that *was* in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that *was* in the Nile was turned to blood. 21 The fish that *were* in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt. 22 But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said. 23 Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this. 24 So all the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the Nile. 25 Seven days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.

8:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 2 But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs. 3 The Nile will swarm with frogs, which will come up and go into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and on your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls. 4 So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants.”’” 5 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the streams and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.’” 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of

Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7 The magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Entreat the LORD that He remove the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD." 9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "The honor is yours to tell me: when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, *that* they may be left only in the Nile?"

10 Then he said, "Tomorrow." So he said, "*May it be* according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. 11 The frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they will be left only in the Nile." 12 Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh. 13 The LORD did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. 14 So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats through all the land of Egypt.'" 17 They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats through all the land of Egypt. 18 The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast. 19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

20 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, as he comes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 21 For if you do not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and on your servants and on your people and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians will be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they *dwell*. 22 But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land. 23 I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur.'"" 24 Then the LORD did so. And there came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants and the land was laid waste because of the swarms of flies in all the land of Egypt.

25 Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land." 26 But Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we will sacrifice to the LORD our God what is an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice what is an abomination to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not then stone us? 27 We must go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He commands us." 28 Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make supplication for me." 29 Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you, and I shall make supplication to the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow; only do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully again in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

30 So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD. 31 The LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people; not one remained. 32 But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

9:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 2 For if you refuse to let *them* go and continue to hold them, 3 behold, the hand of the LORD will come *with* a very severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks. 4 But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing will die of all that belongs to the sons of Israel.'"" 5 The LORD set a definite time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." 6 So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of

the sons of Israel, not one died. 7 Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not even one of the livestock of Israel dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Psalm 78:42 They did not remember His power,
The day when He redeemed them from the adversary,
43 When He performed His signs in Egypt
And His marvels in the field of Zoan,
44 And turned their rivers to blood,
And their streams, they could not drink.
45 He sent among them swarms of flies which devoured them,
And frogs which destroyed them.

Introduction/Review:

Since the beginning of time, when Adam trusted the devil and disobeyed the Creator, God and Satan have been at war, each seeking to gain citizens for His or his kingdom. We are not always aware of this “battle of the ages” being played out before our eyes, but in today’s story the contest is very obvious.

The challenge in Pharaoh’s court began when Aaron’s rod became a snake and devoured all the snakes of the Egyptian magicians. God was about to show forth His might that can supersede anything Satan can do. Even though Pharaoh’s heart was stubborn, God eventually would get him to let His people get out of Egypt.

Story:

Plague #1: Water to Blood

God told Moses, “Go to Pharaoh in the morning when he goes out to the Nile River. Tell him, ‘God says to let My people go,’ but you don’t listen to Him. God says, ‘This is how you will know I am the Lord: when I will touch the water with my rod, it will turn to blood. Fish will die. It will be very difficult to find water to drink.’”

“Now, Moses, tell Aaron to take his staff, the one that turned into a serpent, and stretch it over all the streams, ponds, and pools so that they may become blood all throughout Egypt.”

So Moses and Aaron did exactly as the LORD had commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, all the water in the Nile turned to blood. The fish died, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. Blood was throughout the land of Egypt.

The magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts,¹ but they couldn’t turn the blood back into water. “God gave blood to this blood-thirsty people” (Ganz).

Seeing his magicians make blood, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to Moses and Aaron as the LORD had said. Pharaoh just turned and went into his house with no concern.

Somehow the Egyptians dug around the Nile so that they could get a little water to drink. For seven days—one full week—they had to do this until God restored water to the land.

Plague #2: Frogs

After the plague of blood, the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me. If you refuse to let them go, I will send frogs into your whole country. The Nile will swarm with frogs. They will get into your house, into your bedroom, into your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls.”’”

Then the LORD said to tell Aaron, “Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, the streams, and the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.”

Aaron did as he was told, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. Just imagine for a minute

what that must have been like. When I was a little girl, my family drove near a lake at night. Frogs were so numerous on the road and so many were killed by the cars' running over them that the road actually became slippery. But imagine something worse: getting into bed and finding a frog with you under your covers. Ick!

Again, the magicians also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt,² but his magicians' deed didn't harden Pharaoh's heart this time. He called Moses and Aaron to him and pleaded, "Ask the Lord to remove the frogs, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord."

Moses answered, "Pharaoh, you have the honor to tell me when I shall ask the Lord to destroy the frogs so that they are left only in the Nile. When shall it be?"

"Tomorrow," answered Pharaoh. Tomorrow!? Pharaoh, do you want more time in the company of frogs?!³ "Okay," said Moses. "So that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God, the frogs will leave tomorrow."

When Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried to the LORD about the frogs, and the LORD answered Moses' cry. The frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. People piled them in heaps, and the land stank because of all the dead frogs.

But then Pharaoh hardened his heart when he saw that there was relief; he did not listen, as the LORD had said.

Plague #3: Gnats (or Lice)⁴

Apparently, without warning Pharaoh, God told Moses to tell Aaron, "Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, and it will become gnats through all the land of Egypt."

Aaron struck the dust with his staff, and gnats came on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.

The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not. They could not even trick Pharaoh with this plague; so they said to him, "This is the finger of God." If Satan had done the previous signs through the magicians, he could go only so far as God allowed; he was permitted to go no further.

But it didn't matter to Pharaoh if this was something only God could do; he hardened his heart and did not listen to Moses and Aaron, as the LORD had warned.

Plague #4: Flies (No plague on Israel)

One day the LORD told Moses, "Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. If you do not let My people go, I will send swarms of flies on you and your people. The houses and the ground of the Egyptians will be full of swarms of flies. But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people live, so that no swarms of flies will be there. That's how you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land. Tomorrow this sign will occur.'""

The next day great swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh and everyone else except the sons of Israel. The land was wasted because of the swarms of flies in all the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land." Oh, Pharaoh seems to be weakening a bit. Could it be? He said to sacrifice—in the land.

But Moses said, "It is not right to sacrifice to the LORD our God what is an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice sheep before Egyptians, won't they stone us? No, we must go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to our God as He commands us."

Pharaoh answered, "Well, I will let you go into the wilderness; just don't go very far away. Pray for me."

Moses seemed to be satisfied with this compromise. He said, "I shall pray to the LORD to take away the swarms of flies tomorrow. But do not deceive me again in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the

LORD.”

So Moses left and prayed to the LORD. The LORD did as Moses asked and removed the flies.

But Pharaoh—you fill in the words—hardened his heart and did not let the people go.

Plague #5: Murrain

This is how things went in the fifth plague. The LORD told Moses to go to Pharaoh again and this time to tell him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For if you refuse to let them go, the hand of the LORD will come with a very severe sickness on your livestock that is in the field—on the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. The LORD will separate the livestock of Israel from the livestock of Egypt. Nothing will die of all that belongs to the sons of Israel. Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.’”

On the very next day the LORD did what He said He would do. All the livestock of Egypt died.⁵ How much livestock died of the children of Israel? Not one. Pharaoh sent to check out the land of Goshen, and he learned that not even one animal of Israel died.

Pharaoh still did not fear God. His heart was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

We asked after our last lesson, “How long will this go on?” It will take us two more lessons to complete the teaching about these plagues. There will be ten plagues in all. God will deal harshly with the stubbornness of Pharaoh, but He will deliver His people from Egypt as He said. He will win the battle with Satan in Egypt, and He will win the battle of the ages.

¹Commentator John Gill believes the magicians played a trick: “[They] very probably got a little water in a vessel, and by some juggling trick imposing upon, and deceiving the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, made it look like blood; and the devil might help them to a sufficient quantity of blood, and discolour the water with it, and make it appear as if it was blood . . . was a . . . mean and unworthy action (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/exodus-7-22.html>).

²Again, John Gill comments: “[W]hat they did either were only in appearance, deceiving the sight of Pharaoh and his people, or real frogs were brought to them by the help of devils, but not in such numbers: and besides, this was adding to the plague, and not diminishing it; had they done anything to the purpose, they should have removed it at once, or destroyed the frogs; but that they could not do, of which Pharaoh being sensible, he therefore entreated for the removal of them by Moses and Aaron” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/exodus-8-7.html>).

³This text has filled several Google pages with sermons entitled, “One More Night with the Frogs.”

⁴Which was it: *lice* or *gnats*? Bible versions are split in half on the translation of this word. A quick survey yielded 18 versions in favor of *gnats* and 14 in favor of *lice*. Interestingly, the Hebrew versions choose *lice*.

⁵ “[A]ll the cattle of Egypt died; not all absolutely, for we read of some afterwards, Exodus 9:9 but all that were in the field, Exodus 9:3 and it may be not strictly all of them, but the greatest part of them, as Aben Ezra interprets it; some, and a great many of all sorts, in which limited sense the word "all" is frequently used in Scripture” (<https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=gill&b=2&c=9>).

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:

The Egyptians worshiped the Nile River, calling it the “river of life.” This river was a false god. Jesus told the woman at the well of Samaria, “Everyone who drinks of this water [from the well] will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:13, 14). Jesus is the

true Living Water.

- Pharaoh hardened his heart against God and received more trouble for his stubbornness. Let us submit to God's will.
- Remember that if Satan appears to be powerful, God is all-powerful.

Activities:

- Play dough: frog; fly; staff; bowl
- Snack: Sugar cookies cut out with a frog cookie cutter, or a bread that has been kneaded
- Sing stanzas 1 and 2 of "Ten Plagues on the Land" (tune: "Ten Little Indians") found below.
- Sing stanzas 1 and 2 of "When Israel Was in Egypt's Land" found below. Make up a stanza about Plagues 1–5. Here is a suggestion:

The water, blood; frogs covered the land; Let My people go.
Lice, flies, murrain came from God's hand; Let My people go.

- Sing stanzas 1–3 of "Moses Gets out of Egypt," found in Lesson 12.01b or on the Songs page at teachingthebibleto kids.org, where an audio and a visual are available.
- Provide a bowl and enough yeast dough for one dinner roll for each student to knead.
- Review questions: (Game: place felt frogs on a flannel board for each correct answer, or print the page of frogs found below, back with paper towel, cut out, and use for correct answers.)
 1. What happened in the first plague? [Nile River and all streams and pools were turned into blood.]
 2. What happened as a result of the first plague? [The fish died; it was difficult to find drinking water.]
 3. What came up out of the Nile during the second plague? [Frogs.]
 4. What was Pharaoh's answer when Moses asked when the frogs should be taken away by God? [Tomorrow.]
 5. What was made out of the dust during the third plague? [Lice or gnats.]
 6. Fill in the blank. The fourth plague was swarms of _____. [Flies.]
 7. Which plagues were the Egyptian magicians able to "duplicate"? [First, blood; second, frogs.]
 8. Why did Moses refuse to sacrifice in Egypt as suggested by Pharaoh? [Because sheep were an abomination to the Egyptians; to sacrifice sheep might cause the Egyptians to harm the sons of Israel.]
 9. To what compromise about leaving the land did Moses agree with Pharaoh? [Not to go very far.]
 10. How did Pharaoh always respond after the first five plagues? [His heart was hardened.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Exodus 8:10 (NASB)—[Moses] said, "May it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God."

Handwork:

- Make an origami jumping frog from an index card. Directions may be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pddCghMF5og>.
- Younger students may color the picture found below.

plague

Nile River

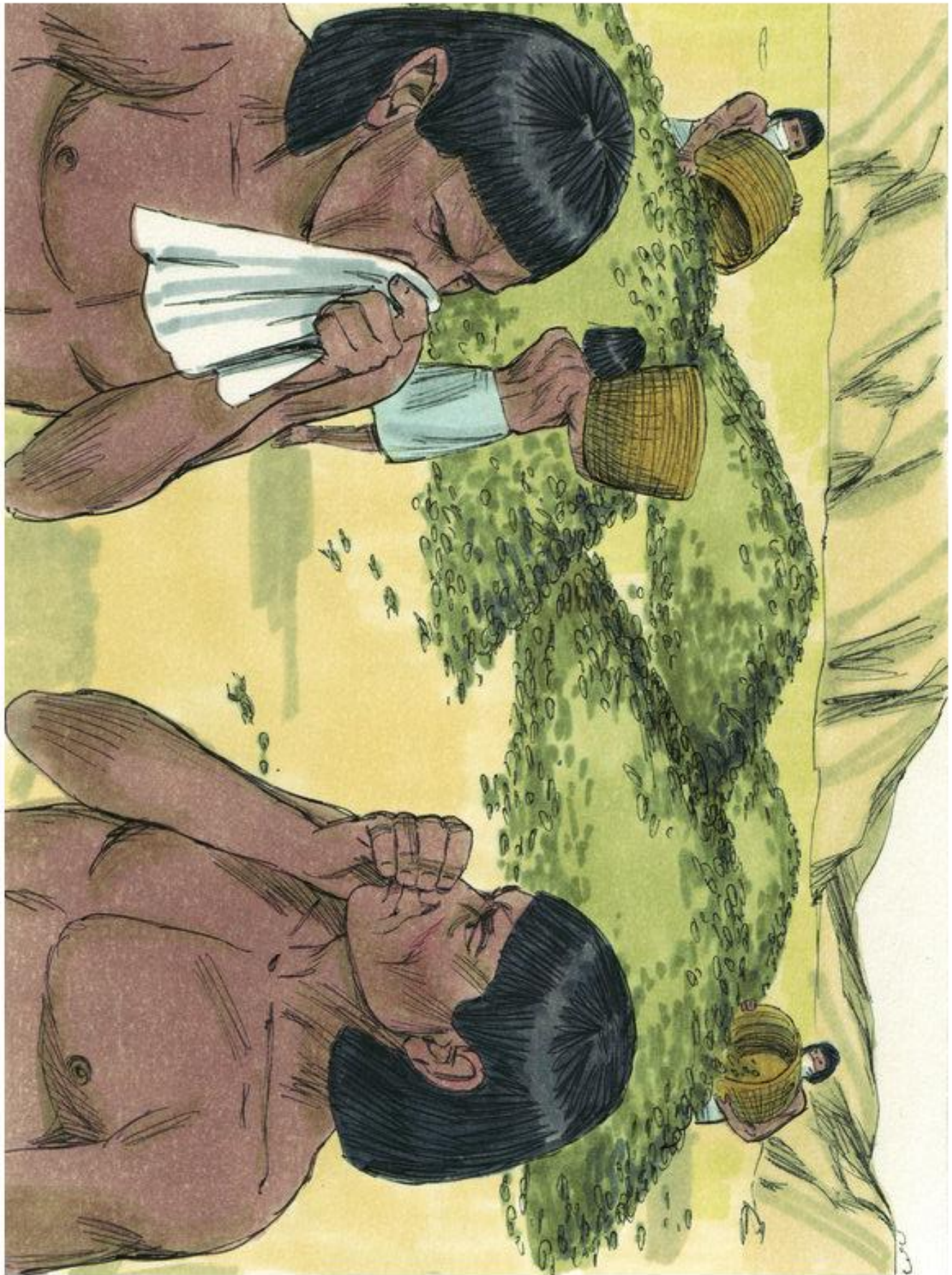
land of Goshen

murrain













Ten Plagues on the Land (tune: "Ten Little Indians")

One plague, two plagues, three plagues on the land,
Four plagues, five plagues, six plagues on the land,
Seven plagues, eight plagues, nine plagues on the land,
Ten plagues on the land.

First came blood in the Nile,
Second came frogs by the mile,
Third came lice for awhile,
These were the plagues on the land.

Number four was buzzing flies;
Fifth the Pharaoh's livestock dies;
Sixth came boils of every size;
These were the plagues on the land.

Number seven was fire and hail;
Eighth came locust over hill and dale;
Ninth came darkness like a veil;
These were the plagues on the land.

The saddest plague was the first-born died.
Pharaoh's people cried and cried;
Pharaoh let God's people go
Because of the plagues on the land

(by the teachers at Monte Vista Church of Christ; found on the internet)

42 When Israel Was in Egypt's Land

Unison *Gm* *Cm* *Gm* *Harmony* *D7* *Gm*

1 When Is - rael was in E - gypt's land,
2 The Lord told Mo - ses what to do, let my peo - ple go,
3 As Is - rael stood by the wa - ter - side,

Unison *Cm* *Gm* *Harmony* *D7* *Gm*

op-pressed so hard they could not stand,
to lead the He - brew chil - dren through, let my peo - ple go.
at God's com - mand it did di - vide,

Refrain *Cm* *Gm* *D7* *Gm*

Go down, Go down, Mo - ses, Mo - ses, way down in E - gypt's land,

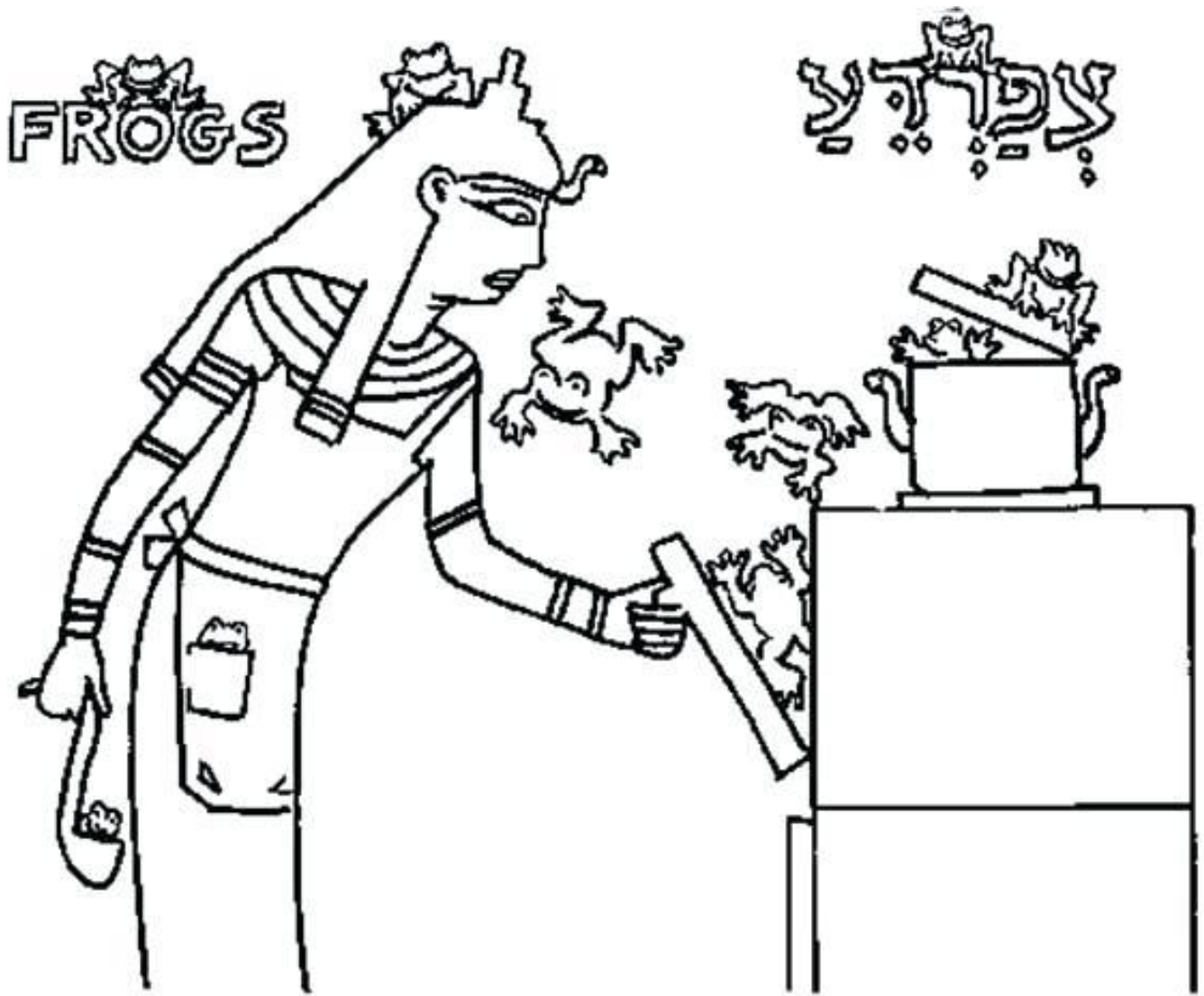
Cm7 *Gm* *D* *Gm* *D7* *Gm*

tell old Pha - raoh: let my peo - ple go.

- 4 When they had reached the other shore, let my people go,
they let the song of triumph soar,
let my people go. *Refrain*
- 5 Lord, help us all from bondage flee,
let my people go,
and let us all in Christ be free,
let my people go. *Refrain*

Words and Music (GO DOWN MOSES irregular): African American spiritual; harm. John W. Work (1871-1925), P.D.





<http://johnsimpkins.com/10-plagues-of-egypt-coloring-pages/>

“There is no one
like the LORD our
God”

(Exodus 8:10).